Work Package 6

Expert Survey on Policy Coordination

Deliverable D6.1

Experts' Opinion Report

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Executive summary

The EU-funded research project CLEAR – *Constructing Learning Outcomes in Europe: A Multi-Level Analysis of (Under-)Achievement in the Life Course* investigates the factors influencing the quality of learning outcomes within eight European Union Member States (i.e., Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) and in selected regions within them. Its goal is to inspire innovative policy strategies that should address academic (under)achievement and improve the life paths of European youth and adults in education and training. CLEAR explores the construction of learning outcomes, viewing them not as straightforward phenomena but as the result of several intertwining elements of institutional, spatial, relational, socio-economic, discursive, and individual dimensions. Moreover, it combines multiple quantitative and qualitative methods with the direct involvement of research participants through participatory events. It integrates research based on three main theoretical strands: Life Course Perspective, Intersectionality, and Spatial Justice.

The CLEAR project's Work Package 6 (WP6) contributes to these overall frameworks and aims by providing empirical insights on how policy debates about learning outcomes are structured across involved countries. Precisely, it does so by directly inquiring about selected stakeholders dealing with issues related to learning outcomes through the CLEAR *Expert Survey on Policy Coordination*, which is the basis of the present report and will inform the drafting of a European Policy Brief on the topics addressed within it.

The survey aims to construct future and desirable educational disadvantage scenarios and assess the multilevel governance of learning outcomes in CLEAR countries through the views expressed by its participants, which are analysed mainly through quantitative methods. It is articulated into two main sections corresponding to these macro-areas and a third part collecting the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Moreover, various scenarios are primarily investigated in the questionnaire through pairs of questions, which assess the relevance of a series of items on a scale from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost importance). Each pair deals with present and future perspectives or with likely and desirable situations. In some cases, open questions are used to explore more in-depth particular issues, such as crisis scenarios.

The *Expert Opinion Report* (Report) is the first output issued from the analysis of survey results, and it will be followed by a *European Policy Brief* (Deliverable D6.3) focusing on critical challenges for the construction of learning outcomes and policy coordination in this field. These documents represent the final step of three project tasks, respectively dealing with the construction of the survey and definition of experts' profiles, the administration of the survey, and data analysis and reporting.

The present report is based on three main research questions that have been variously declined throughout the survey:

- What are specific challenges for defining learning outcomes and (under)achievement, and how are these addressed in different contexts and by various actors?
- How are future likely scenarios of learning outcomes related to desired configurations of different actors and across various contexts?
- How is the multilevel governance of learning outcomes and (under)achievement structured in different contexts and perceived by different actors?

To disentangle these questions, the WP6 survey approaches the construction of scenarios using various quantitative tools based on questions and issues at stake. In most cases, this involves a combination of multiple regression models and cluster analysis, which enables the construction and comparison of present, future, and desirable scenarios built from participants' responses. In this context, various socio-demographic variables and national contexts are also considered to look at possible cleavages among groups of respondents.

The report is articulated in seven chapters. An introductory part presents the research design, describes how the survey was built and administered, and considers the final sample's general characteristics. After that, the empirical part is articulated into five chapters, focusing on specific dimensions emerging from the survey. The first one considers how learning outcomes and (under)achievement are conceived by involved stakeholders and how resulting understandings potentially relate to different implementations of learning outcomes regarding policy targets and aims. Here, two main axes distinguishing alternative conceptions of learning outcomes are identified. On the one hand, diverse relations between market-related dimensions and other aspects of learning outcomes' definition (i.e., citizenship skills and learners' potential realisation) are identified, distinguishing between market-oriented and multidimensional approaches. On the other hand, the role of grades and credentials is differently acknowledged with some respondents placing them at the core of learning outcomes and others questioning their relevance.

In the second empirical chapter, factors impacting learning outcomes are considered by looking at the relevance assigned by respondents to a variety of dimensions at the individual, relational, and institutional level. Again, different conceptions among actors and countries are found, especially for what concerns the importance assigned to individual factors, such as gender and minority or migration background, and the relation between learners' self-efficacy and social class.

The mismatches between likely and desirable scenarios are studied in the third empirical chapter, contrasting respondents' positions on three main trends: the standardisation and quantitative measurement of learning outcomes, the demonopolisation of education and the loss of relevance of formal education, and the individualisation of education. Findings point here towards some issues characterised by a certain level of consensus among respondents, such as the path towards learning outcomes' standardisation and

the role of public education in transmitting shared values, but they also highlight highly contentious trends. In particular, the use of standardised learning outcomes to categorise learners and the inclusion of "meritocratic" elements in education stand out for the mismatches of their likely and desirable scenarios.

Next, the possible effects of structural crises on the development of learning outcomes are explored through the responses provided on the specific open question. This allowed us to see how different framings of structural crises lead to different forecasted futures for learning outcomes according to respondents' perspectives, as well as to look at some previously identified trends more in depth. For instance, despite the overall positive attitudes towards the standardisation and quantification of learning outcomes, their reliability in crisis scenarios and situations of rising socio-economic polarisation is questioned.

The Multilevel Governance of learning outcomes, its evolution, and desirable structures are considered in the sixth chapter, which also explores the relevance of various spatial cleavages. Particularly, this chapter highlights how spatial inequalities are differently conceived across contexts and place local actors at the core of desired structures of multilevel governance, together with national ones. On the contrary, the role of supranational and private actors results as more contested. Lastly, the general conclusions present the main limitations of this work and final considerations about what is shaping policy debates about learning outcomes. They also stress one of main challenges identified in this report, which is the diversity of conceptions and implementations and learning outcomes across national contexts and types of actors.

As the above summary of findings suggests, findings presented in this report pertain to various interrelated issues. Nevertheless, some overarching results and key takeaways can be identified. First, respondents generally acknowledge that learning outcomes are multidimensional, at least in terms of their defining elements and objectives. Yet, scenarios diverge across contexts and actors regarding which dimensions should actually be considered in their design and implementation, as it emerges, for instance, by the different consideration of non-market elements and factors affecting learning outcomes. Second, the socio-economic and territorial polarisation caused by systemic crisis stands out as one of the main threats to learning outcomes' reliability. This dynamic also seems exacerbated by individualisation trends in education and questions the otherwise positively regarded path towards the standardisation of learning outcomes. Finally, beyond the country differences that emerge in the configuration of spatial cleavages, the multilevel governance of learning outcomes is seen as especially relying on the interplay between local and national actors.

These elements emerge as the main results at the general level, but need to be integrated with an important corollary, which stands out among the main challenges to aims of learning outcomes' harmonisation in the EU, i.e., the strong differences between national contexts. Moreover, albeit less frequent, divisions between different actors also emerge,

highlighting a lack of permeability between specific fields, such as the labour market and formal education, or between researchers and practitioners. The varied representations of learning outcomes are particularly significant for the approach and objectives of the CLEAR project. A multidimensional view of learning outcomes requires a multidisciplinary approach, which may be challenging to implement if actors from different fields are not involved in their development. Additionally, adopting a European perspective on learning outcomes requires creating tools that enable their comparison across countries. However, as the findings from this and other CLEAR research outputs suggest, this can only be achieved by adequately considering the specific characteristics of national and local contexts. Based on these general observations, this report provides valuable insights that will inform the drafting of the European Policy Brief on the construction of learning outcomes and policy coordination in this domain.

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1. Introduction

The EU Horizon-funded project *Constructing Learning Outcomes in Europe. A Multi-Level Analysis of (Under)Achievement in the Life Course* (CLEAR) investigates the factors affecting learning outcomes' quality in eight European Union Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and selected regions within them. The aim is to improve the understanding of such factors approaching their study through the intertwinement of different theoretical perspectives, particularly Spatial Justice, Intersectionality, and Life Course Research. Moreover, learning outcomes and (under)achievement are considered within the project beyond their traditional definitions as mere quantitative indicators of quality, focusing instead on their multi-dimensional and socially-constructed nature and looking at them in multiple intersecting dimensions (individual, institutional, structural, relational, and spatial).

The Work Package 6 (WP6) *Expert Survey on Policy Coordination* builds on this general framework and on previous research work within the project to forecast future scenarios of educational disadvantage and assess the multilevel governance (MLG) and coordination of different policy strands in defining learning outcomes and (under)achievement at the national and regional level. To do so, it conducts a survey with selected stakeholders from the eight CLEAR countries, including a variegated set of actors with expertise in different policy areas involved in the definition of learning outcomes and (under)achievement. Then, results of the survey are analysed by operationalising the construction of scenarios through quantitative methods. Scenarios describe likely or desirable futures starting from the assessment of a set of present conditions. In WP6, they are mostly directed at the production of research results for a better understanding of learning outcomes and (under)achievement, as well as at the delineation of policy recommendations for education and training stakeholders.

Therefore, the main research questions for the WP6 expert survey are:

- Which are specific challenges for the definition of learning outcomes and (under)achievement and how are these addressed in different contexts and by different actors?
- How are likely future scenarios of learning outcomes relating to the desired configurations of different actors and across different contexts?
- How is the multilevel governance of learning outcomes and (under)achievement structured in different contexts and perceived by different actors?

These two blocks, which correspond to the two main parts of the questionnaire, are then developed in a series of subtopics addressed by individual questions focusing on specific dimensions of learning outcomes and (under)achievement's definition, as well as on the multilevel governance of related policies. In both cases, the construction and comparison of present and future scenarios will enable the identification of relevant "ingredients" of each particular dimension.

The WP6 is consistently fed by the works done up to this point within the CLEAR project, being based on WP2, WP3 and WP4 literature reviews and analyses of the state of the art in the field at stake. In particular, results from WP2 have been used to select the topics to be included in the survey, as well as to set the overall theoretical framework referring to the three building blocks used in the project: Life Course Perspective, Intersectionality, and Spatial Justice. Moreover, results from this package and those from WP3 – especially regarding the definition of regional profiles – allow to identify respondents at the national and local levels, as well as to point out country specificities and crucial features of spatial inequalities that should be considered when analysing WP6 findings through a spatial justice perspective. As for the WP4, provisional results of this package, which runs in parallel with WP6, have been mainly used to inform the interpretation of some findings. Finally, the transversal participatory approach delineated in WP8 serves as a guide to the use of participatory tools in WP6, as in other WPs. In its turn, WP6 also contributes to other packages of the project, in particular by identifying possible interviewees for WP4, triangulating results with WP5, and providing findings for the comparative work foreseen for WP7, as well as feeding the discussion of WP8 innovation forums.

Two preliminary considerations are also necessary for what concerns the language used in this report. Since the present research is not just targeting the academic community, but also practitioners in various fields and countries, the methodological and theoretical technicalities have been reduced to what was strictly necessary for understanding how we arrive to results that will be shown in the next chapters. Moreover, in the same vein of making the used language more fluid, we use a different notation when we refer to pair of questions dealing with the same issue across different scenarios, written as Q#, and when we consider instead single question of the questionnaire, identified by their corresponding code either as A# or B#. For greater clarity, the full text of the questionnaire can be found in the Annex at the end of this report.

As for its general structure, this introductory chapter presents the overall research design and methodology, pointing out ethical issues and limitations, describing how the survey has been administered, and how the sample used in the analysis has been defined. Then, four research chapters follow, illustrating the main results of the survey on selected issues and taking into account specific questions' pairs. The first focuses on stakeholders' understanding of learning outcomes and (under)achievement and their policy implementations as they emerge from four pairs of questions: Q1 (understanding of learning outcomes), Q3 (aims of learning outcomes), Q4 (definition of (under)achievement), and Q5 (focus of learning outcomes policies). The second considers factors impacting learning outcomes listed in Q2, by separately addressing them at the individual, meso-level and macro-level dimensions.

Then, the third chapter builds on and contrasts likely and desirable scenarios of policy trends in the development of learning outcomes, starting from respondents' answers to

Q6. Scenarios of crisis are specifically considered in the fifth chapter, starting from responses on the A7 open question. Next, the second section of the questionnaire is taken into account in the last chapter before the conclusions, focusing on spatial issues and the Multilevel Governance of policies dealing with learning outcomes and (under)achievement. Finally, some general conclusions are drawn on the basis of previous results, pointing out possible future directions of learning outcomes in the selected countries as they emerged from survey respondents' perspectives.

1.1 Research design and methodology

This research is based on the construction of scenarios, carried out by using quantitative multivariate techniques to analyse survey results. The application of this framework – in line with aforementioned research questions – aims to identify patterns of likely or desirable futures concerning the policy issues at stake. Resulting scenarios are aimed to guide further research and provide decision-makers with suggestions for planning future policies. In this context, respondents and their preferences are also considered according to key socio-demographic variables and to the countries of administration, so as to point out potential inter-group differences in defining future scenarios.

A "scenario" is here understood as an assessment of a potential or preferred future regarding a specific issue, also considering the development that may lead to it starting from a set of present conditions (Kosow & Gassner, 2008). It is thus the definition of a likely or desirable future, designed from a set of assumptions about key factors and their evolution through time (Saussois, 2006; Alcamo & Henrichs, 2008). This methodology has already been applied in the education field, most notably in the works of OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, although they use a different operationalisation and rationale compared to CLEAR (OECD, 2020, 2022).

In the CLEAR WP6 survey, the construction of scenarios is mainly based on the assessment of the relevance of specific variables by key stakeholders, selected as respondents by each project's national research team. This approach enables to identify patterns of anticipation and ideas about the future as foreseen by crucial actors for the definition of learning outcomes and (under)achievement. Such patterns – beyond their certainty or predictability – shape opportunities for social and institutional change and define problem settings and possible solutions within the present, outlining the range of possibilities for the issues at stake (Thomas & Thomas, 1928; Eurofond, 2003; Barberis et al., 2023).

Moreover, this operationalisation of the scenario methodology allows conflicting visions to emerge among different groups of respondents, delineating potential clashes and cleavages in policymaking arenas linked to learning outcomes and (under)achievement. This is especially relevant since, as argued by Beckert & Bronk (2018), imaginaries and narratives about the future are tools through which power relations are exercised in the political debate, assuming a crucial role in the creation of the actual future within contemporary societies, marked by uncertainty.

The survey design builds on the aforementioned framework, focusing on different types of scenarios. In the first part, most questions deal with likely futures, by confronting the relevance of learning outcomes and (under)achievement's dimensions in the present and ten years into the future. However, at the end of the first section, crises scenarios are considered through specific open-ended questions and respondents were asked to forecast likely policy trends in comparison to desirable ones. Since the current structure of the MLG of education and training in the selected countries can be derived from previous desk research, the second part mainly includes questions about the assessment of likely and desirable futures, enabling for the direct comparison between the probability of a scenario to happen and its desirability according to various groups of respondents. Finally, the last part involves the collection of socio-demographic variables concerning respondents' gender, age, expertise and position, which have been used to investigate potentially conflicting visions of the future and as control variables.

Due to the nature of the research design, it has not been possible to arrange a probability sampling. Instead, a purposive sampling for each country has been set up to include different viewpoints and produce multiple scenarios and future patterns. Respondents have not been weighted, since the main aim is to analyse different discourses about the future emerging from various groups of stakeholders and not to produce results to be generalised. To improve the quality of data, data cleaning has been performed by looking for undifferentiated response patterns, acquiescence and extreme answers (Blasius & Thiessen, 2015; Jin & Loosveldt, 2020), especially focusing on Q6 which also allows to assess contradictory response patterns. This led to excluding 4 observations.[1] Finally, missing values have been excluded from the analysis, choosing to not impute them due to the small dimension of the sample and the relatively low number of missing values, which averaged 4,9% of observations on the 134 total items considered in this report and ranged from 0.8% of observations in question A2.9 to 9.9% in A6.13.[2]

Regarding the way in which scenarios are built, this report uses quantitative methods, adapting the methodology to the type of questions considered in each chapter. In all cases, the starting point is descriptive analysis, which is used – together with previous CLEAR research results – to formulate the guiding hypotheses. Then, two types of scenarios are considered: issue-specific scenarios, based on single questions' pairs, and general scenarios, originating from the combination of various questions. Issue-specific scenarios are used to analyse patterns of change in each item, and are usually produced through a three-steps procedure.

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1 Since no clear contradictions could emerge in the questionnaire, which does not contain programmed control questions, a conservative approach has been adopted, deleting only respondents with clear undifferentiated or identical response patterns.

2 An exception to this is represented by item B3.5, which has a high rate of missing values (22.2%) due to the fact that the item has not been mistakenly included in the Italian version of the survey.

First, the dataset is reshaped to have responses on parallel items of a questions' pair in the same column, and a dummy variable named "post" is created with value 0 when the corresponding response refers to the present and 1 if it refers to the future. Then, multiple linear regression analyses are performed for each reshaped item, using country of administration and socio-demographic characteristics as control variables. Finally, marginal means are plotted and compared across models, taking into account the "post" term to look at variations between present and future scenarios and to other predictors for differences among respondents' groups.

Marginal means are used because of their intelligibility, being in the same scale of the dependent variable and, despite some caveats, these can be compared because of the equivalence of sample, independent variables and outcome scale across models. Additional modifications to this framework are pointed out in the initial summary of each chapter. General scenarios are instead usually built in the report by using k-means cluster analysis to look at alternative futures forecasted by respondents, and then performing a multinomial regression using scenario clusters as the dependent variable to look at the main patterns in their occurrence across countries and socio-demographic groups. However, also in this case, methodological variations have been necessary on specific questions and they are thus discussed in the summaries of chapters dealing with them. All the analysis has been carried out using the statistical software Stata 17 with licence provided by the University of Urbino Carlo Bo, supported by the additional combomarginsplot module for results' visualisation (Winter, 2014; StataCorp, 2021).

In parallel to the quantitative analysis and within the context of CLEAR WP8, two WP6 participatory activities with relevant stakeholders in the field of education and training have been organised in the WP6 core team countries, i.e., Italy, Finland and Portugal. A first round of participatory activities with panels of experts and stakeholders has been done to support the design of the survey, while the second round has been aimed at enriching the discussion and validating the preliminary results before the final reporting. This second event has been used to question consolidated interpretations and perspectives derived from the scholarship and core team researchers' experience, by stimulating challenging discussions on the survey findings with selected experts in academic, policymaking and teaching arenas. Finally, after the publication of the present report, an additional validation step of the results will be performed in the context of CLEAR Innovation Forums, during which it will be also possible to downscale the assessment of the findings by discussing them with experts and stakeholders from the NUTS-2 regions.

1.2 Ethical issues and limitations

Within the context of CLEAR WP6, three main ethical concerns have been handled: representation of multiple voices, confidentiality of personal data, and data limitation. For what concerns the representation of multiple voices, this has been addressed during the

survey design and in the selection of stakeholders to include in the research purposive sample. However, due to different response rates among groups of respondents, it has not been possible to balance the sample along all selected relevant axes. Moreover, it must be noted that, due to intersecting features of the studied contexts and research design needs, individuals occupying positions of interest have been asked to foresee future scenarios also for out-group people (e.g., white upper-class men forecasting the future of minority lower-class women). This unavoidable bias has been taken into account within the analysis focusing on the construction of the issues at stake and how they may affect institutional actions rather than considering them as reality in itself. Participatory activities planned for the WP6 will also allow to balance the aforementioned issues, and other packages of the project (i.e., WP4, WP5, WP7 and WP8) will enable triangulating results and assess them also along axes that could not be directly considered in the survey analysis.

As for the second issue, the survey design has been submitted for clearance to the project ethical advisors of all involved institutions and to the Data Protection Officer at the University of Urbino Carlo Bo. Questionnaires have been administered in each country after obtaining an ethical clearance at the national level, too. Moreover, the questionnaire was introduced by a privacy statement, including all relevant information about the survey and the data processing, as well as references to the national and international legislations for the respect of research participants' privacy. Respondents could fill the survey only after providing explicit consensus to participation and to the privacy statement, and opting out was possible at every time during the administration. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were also asked whether or not they wanted to leave their contacts for being involved in other project's activities.

Their consents and authorisations can also be revoked at any time by contacting the persons in charge of data treatment, whose contacts were explicitly and clearly included in the privacy statement. To ensure the privacy of respondents' data, respondents' lists were shared by each national research team through the BSCW workspace. The anonymity of answers has been granted, activating the specific option for anonymous surveys in the LimeSurvey software. The software, which is installed on the servers of the University of Urbino Carlo Bo only, has also been used to collect data in a secure way, since access to it was password-protected with access limited to the staff who signed the project's Data Security Protocol. Results of the survey have been shared to other partners only in the anonymised version, while any personal identifier has been stored separately from the data matrix on the BSCW workspace.

Finally, regarding data limitation, it should be noted that – as stated before – the survey proposed by CLEAR WP6 is not based on a probability sample. Moreover, due to resource limitation and the nature of the research design itself, it can only count on a relatively small number of respondents, which, despite being selected for their role in the definition

of learning outcomes and (under)achievement, are not considered as representatives of their bodies. Building on these limitations, the aim of the present report is not to produce generalisable results; instead, it seeks to identify possible futures and desirable scenarios as forecasted by the diverse stakeholders and experts in the selected areas of expertise and positions. Therefore, this report contributes to the overall research of the CLEAR project primarily by exploring the realms of possibility and potential cleavages within the uncertain futures of education and training through the viewpoint of individual, experienced experts. In this sense, this research does not occur in the vacuum, but it must be read in strict relation to the other outputs of the project, which allow to triangulate and reinforce the main results presented in this report.

1.3 Design and administration of the survey

The survey is divided into three sections. The first two sections deal with the aforementioned main blocks of the WP6 research aims, while the third one asks questions about the respondent's profile (i.e., gender, age group, minority background, expertise, position) and the availability to be contacted again by CLEAR researchers. The core sections are mostly structured through multi-items pair of ranking questions, in which respondents are asked to rank from 1 to 7 the relevance of specific dimensions related to the main question in the present and ten years in the future. To integrate these ranks, a set of open-ended questions have also been included, both to allow respondents to include other relevant dimensions which were not part of the questionnaire and to collect more detailed information about key issues. Finally, two single-choice questions complete the second section, focusing on desirable horizontal and vertical MLG structure. For the complete text of the survey, please refer to the English version included in the Annex.

The administration of the survey lasted for a total of 23 weeks and has been carried out exclusively online using the LimeSurvey software provided through University of Urbino Carlo Bo licence (LimeSurvey GmbH, 2023). Since the survey has been separately administered in each national context, the time during which the survey remained open varies from country to country, as well as the number of rounds organised. Figure 1 provides the details about the administration time in each involved country. The questionnaire has been provided in relevant national languages (German, Bulgarian, Finnish, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan). Additionally, upon request of some respondents, the English version of the questionnaire was also provided in some cases.

Figure 1. Timing of the survey administration in each CLEAR country.

*	*October*		*November*		*December*		*January*		*February*		*March*	
Austria				*1°*			*2°*					
Bulgaria	*1°*		*2°*			*3°*						
Finland	*1°*											
Germany	*1°*			*2°*			*3°*		*4°*			
Greece	*1°*						*2°*					

Italy	*1°*			*2°*								
Portugal	*1°*											
Spain									*1°*			

*Minor inclusions have also been added during various rounds in many countries.

Each round of administration consisted of a series of personal invitations sent to potential respondents selected by CLEAR research teams within the selected countries, involving actors both at the national level and at the local level within the NUTS 2 regions involved in the project. Following guidelines based on the aforementioned cautions about personal data treatment, respondents were selected for their positions and expertise within one or more of the selected fields, including education, VET, adult learning, labour market policies, and youth. Moreover, they were also classified by researchers within four categories of actors (public, academia and policy analysis, market, and civil society), maintaining the balance between these figures as well as other relevant socio-demographic variables (gender in particular). Subsequent rounds have intervened on this distribution by including types of actors with lower response rate in the previous ones.

1.4 Structure of the sample

A total of 494 respondents participated in the survey with a total response rate of about 15%. The final sample, which is detailed per category in Tables 1-3, appears quite balanced across almost all selected categories, with some limitations. First, despite the gender balance being observed when considering the overall sample, in some countries female respondents are more represented than male ones, and it is more questionable in the case of non-binary people, who have been only marginally reached by the questionnaire. Similar imbalances can be noted when considering the oldest and youngest age cohorts, to the extent that these categories of the questionnaire have been merged and considered together in the analysis.[3]

Finally, the representation of people from a minority background is very limited in some countries, and a preliminary analysis of answers provided by respondents in the question asking to make their background explicit suggests that the notion of minority background may have been misunderstood in some cases compared to the aims of that question. However, the relatively low representation of some categories – particularly, non-binary, young people, and people from a minority background – should be considered in light of the questionnaire target, consisting of people occupying stakeholder positions within the selected fields, in which these categories may be under-represented within most of the selected EU countries.

[3] In particular, the age cohorts 18-24 and 25-34 have been merged in the Under 35 category, while the 65-74 and 75 and more groups have been united in the Over 64 categories.

Table 1. Number of survey respondents according to selected demographic indicators in each CLEAR country and relative frequencies (in italics).

	TOT	F	M	NB	Age: U35	Age: 35-44	Age: 45-54	Age: 55-64	Age: O64	Minority
TOTAL	494	277 *57.6*	199 *41.4*	5 *1.1*	32 *6.5*	74 *15.2*	181 *37.2*	170 *34.9*	30 *6.2*	38 *8.1*
Austria	55 *11.1*	26 *50.0*	24 *46.1*	2 *3.8*	13 *24.1*	16 *29.6*	18 *33.3*	5 *9.3*	2 *3.7*	6 *12.5*
Bulgaria	53 *10.7*	38 *71.7*	14 *26.4*	1 *1.9*	2 *1.9*	10 *18.9*	20 *37.7*	15 *28.3*	6 *11.3*	5 *9.6*
Finland	85 *17.2*	52 *62.6*	31 *37.4*	0 *0.0*	4 *4.9*	16 *19.5*	33 *40.2*	28 *34.1*	1 *1.2*	7 *8.6*
Germany	56 *11.3*	34 *61.8*	21 *38.2*	0 *0.0*	3 *5.4*	9 *16.1*	21 *37.5*	21 *37.5*	2 *3.6*	5 *9.3*
Greece	56 *11.3*	28 *50.9*	26 *47.3*	1 *1.8*	0 *0.0*	2 *3.6*	18 *32.1*	33 *58.9*	3 *5.4*	7 *13.5*
Italy	87 *17.6*	42 *50.6*	41 *49.4*	0 *0.0*	2 *2.3*	6 *7.1*	29 *34.1*	39 *45.9*	9 *10.6*	3 *3.5*
Portugal	61 *12.3*	35 *57.4*	25 *41.0*	1 *1.6*	3 *4.9*	10 *16.4*	25 *41.0*	20 *32.8*	3 *4.9*	4 *6.7*
Spain	41 *8.3*	22 *56.5*	17 *43.6*	0 *0.0*	5 *12.5*	5 *12.5*	17 *42.5*	9 *22.5*	4 *10.0*	1 *2.6*

As for the distribution of respondents within the selected fields of expertise, a majority of people active in education, VET and adult learning is observed.[4] On the one hand, at the general level, although the education field remains prevalent, areas of expertise are well distributed, in line with the survey aims. On the other hand, some national samples present imbalances due to the difficulty to reach specific categories of stakeholders, especially in the fields of labour market and youth policies. Such an issue also connects with the fact that selected respondents do not necessarily identify themselves in the same categories as those in which they were initially selected by researchers, causing discrepancies in some cases between the potential respondents' lists and actual respondents.

Table 2. Number of survey respondents according to fields of expertise in each CLEAR country and relative frequencies (in italics).

*	TOT	Education	VET	Adult learning	Labour market	Youth	Other**
TOTAL	494	245 *49.6*	191 *38.7*	186 *37.6*	142 *28.7*	102 *20.7*	55 *10.9*
Austria	55 *11.1*	16 *29.1*	18 *32.7*	26 *52.7*	9 *16.4*	18 *32.7*	12 *23.1*
Bulgaria	53	27	16	16	16	8	5

[4] In order to make fields correspond to those selected among respondents in the first place and considering the low number of respondents in the category "Special education", this has been merged with "General education" in the "Education" category.

	10.7	*50.9*	*30.2*	*30.2*	*30.2*	*15.1*	*9.6*
Finland	85 *17.2*	35 *41.2*	27 *31.8*	40 *47.1*	37 *43.5*	13 *15.3*	10 *19.2*
Germany	56 *11.3*	28 *50.0*	21 *37.5*	16 *28.6*	15 *26.8*	21 *37.5*	8 *15.4*
Greece	56 *11.3*	32 *57.1*	20 *35.7*	24 *42.9*	2 *3.6*	6 *10.7*	1 *1.9*
Italy	87 *17.6*	55 *63.2*	38 *43.7*	30 *34.5*	29 *33.3*	23 *10.7*	11 *21.1*
Portugal	61 *12.3*	31 *50.8*	31 *50.8*	20 *32.8*	21 *34.4*	7 *26.4*	4 *7.7*
Spain	41 *8.3*	21 *51.2*	20 *48.8*	11 *26.8*	13 *31.7*	6 *14.6*	3 *7.3*

*multiple responses allowed.
**Respondents who filled the open question *Other* in the survey.

Finally, different actors' types have been selected to participate in the CLEAR WP6 expert survey. The questionnaire initially included eleven categories, which have been reduced in the analysis to five, identifying the groups initially identified in the construction of the potential respondents' lists.[5] As for the balance of respondent actors, all categories are almost equally represented with the exception of a relative over-representation of public actors (45.0%[6]) and research actors, which could be probably due to their higher propensity to participate in research in general, and an under-representation of private actors, which is particularly pronounced in some country samples. Indeed, as in the case of area of expertise, imbalances exist in some national samples between different groups, but this should be also considered under the light of the diverse roles that these actors assume in shaping learning outcomes and (under)achievement in the selected countries, as also noted in the CLEAR WP2 Report (Deliverable D2.3).

Table 3. Number of survey respondents according to actor's types in each CLEAR country and relative frequencies (in italics).

*	TOT	Public – National	Public – Subnational	Research	Private	Civil society
TOTAL	494	118 *23.9*	118 *23.9*	187 *37.8*	63 *12.7*	128 25.9
Austria	55	14	10	19	9	25

5 The new categories are the result of the merging of some actors' types proposed in the survey. National actors include: planning/programming actors in a national public body (1), implementing actors in a national public body (2), persons with responsibility roles in political parties (11). Local actors consist of: planning/programming actors in a local public body (3), implementing actors in a local public body (4). Research actors are the result of the union between: researchers in a university of research centre (5), and members of think tank (6). Private actors include: planning/programming actors for a private agency (7), implementing actors for a private body (8). Finally, civil society actors result from: persons with a role in a civil society organisation (8), and persons with a role in a youth association (9).

6 This results from the sum of people who answer to be a national public actor and/or a local public actor (218).

	11.1	*25.4*	*18.2*	*34.5*	*16.4*	*45.4*
Bulgaria	53 *10.7*	10 *18.9*	11 *20.7*	25 *47.2*	0 *0.0*	15 *28.3*
Finland	85 *17.2*	19 *22.4*	22 *25.9*	31 *36.5*	8 *9.4*	16 *18.8*
Germany	56 *11.3*	15 *26.8*	18 *32.1*	15 *26.8*	4 *7.1*	17 *30.4*
Greece	56 *11.3*	14 *25.0*	12 *21.4*	26 *46.4*	8 *14.3*	4 *7.1*
Italy	87 *17.6*	14 *16.1*	23 *26.4*	31 *35.6*	23 *26.4*	22 *25.3*
Portugal	61 *12.3*	27 *44.3*	14 *22.9*	15 *24.6*	8 *13.1*	20 *32.8*
Spain	41 *8.3*	5 *12.2*	8 *19.5*	25 *61.0*	3 *7.3*	9 *22.0*

*multiple responses allowed.

2. Understanding of Learning Outcomes and (Under)Achievement

Within the CLEAR project, learning outcomes (LOs) are considered the result of multi-faceted intersections of multiple dimensions at various levels. Despite LOs' definition being debated, they have been applied to a wide set of objectives, and interact with the definition of learners' (under)achievement. Following the approach delineated in Deliverable D2.2, CLEAR conceives LOs and (under)achievement as simultaneously constructed through individual experiences of learners and by processes of collective modelling, in which some groups can set the agenda and define problems at the societal level. While the first issue is explored in other work packages, the WP6 expert survey enables researchers to investigate the latter.

This chapter addresses this aspect by considering four pairs of questions. The first two deal with respondents' understanding of LOs (Q1) and their perception of (under)achievement definitions in the national policy debate (Q4). The latter concern how these are mobilised in the policymaking arena, considering the aim of LOs measurement (Q3) and the primary target of policies about LOs (Q5). After the presentation of key descriptive statistics and hypotheses, these questions are considered independently to construct issue-specific scenarios, with a focus on the variation between present and future scenarios.

This analysis will allow a preliminary test on identified hypotheses and refine them to define general scenarios, which is the second step carried out in this chapter. General scenarios are here primarily built by using k-means cluster analysis to identify potentially conflicting future understandings of LOs and (under)achievement (B1 and B4). These are then related to the main independent variables, and their influence on the positioning of respondents is examined using multinomial logistic regression. Finally, multiple linear

regressions are used to examine the influence of supporting one of these scenarios on respondents' perceptions of LOs' aims and policy focus (B3 and B5).[7]

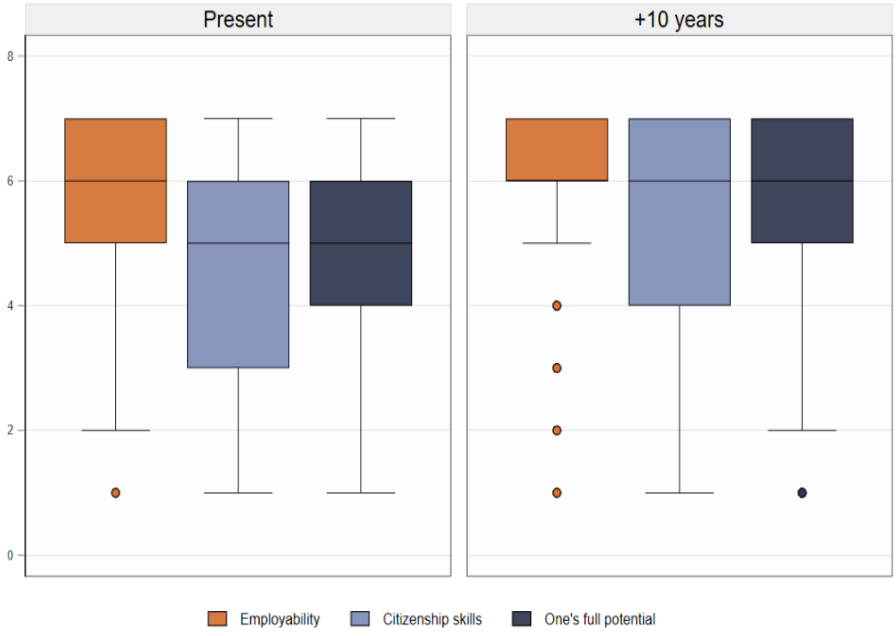
2.1 Descriptive statistics and basic hypotheses

LOs and (under)achievement are investigated through three questions, dealing with the most relevant components of LOs, their aims and the most important definitions of (under)achievement.

Q1: Understandings of learning outcomes

The first topic is addressed in Q1 and considers LOs as a tool with three possible orientations, taken from Deliverable D2.2: developing professional qualifications and enhancing employability; developing citizenship skills as critical thinking or social participation; developing individuals' potential. According to survey respondents, the first appears to be the most relevant on average, both in the present and 10 years from now, increasing the mean score from 5.80 to 6.06 between the two periods. Yet, despite remaining the one with the highest reported relevance on average, the distance to other components appears to narrow between the present and the future, with citizenship skills' development and individual potential's realisation respectively growing from 4.75 and 4.85 to 5.45. This seems to suggest a tendency to progressively shift from an employability-centred understanding of LOs towards a more multifaceted definition. This element is also hinted at when looking at the upward compression of the distribution of responses in all items between present and future scenarios (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Boxplots of distributions of items about understandings of LOs (Q1).

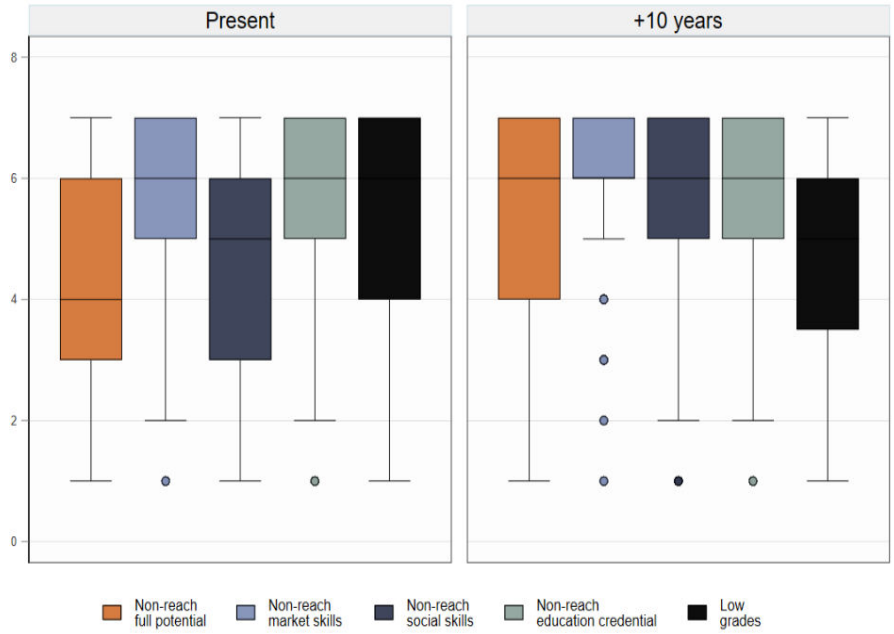


7 Regression results for this chapter are presented in Tables 12-15 in the Annex.

Q2: Definitions of (under)achievement

The most relevant definitions of (under)achievement in national policy debate (Q4) have similar patterns. (Under)achievement is defined in this question as the failure to achieve individual potential, market skills, or social skills, but also as not achieving education credentials or getting low grades – definitions from Deliverable D2.2. The item with the highest average score is the definition of (under)achievement as not reaching the skills needed for the labour market (5.52 in the present, 6.03 in the future). An increasing relevance is also acknowledged for social skills and individual potential realisation, with the mean response moving from 4.62 and 4.28 to 5.46 and 5.27 between present and future. Education credentials and getting low grades show instead an opposite trend, decreasing from mean scores of 5.51 and 5.19 to 5.39 and 4.73, thus falling from being the second and third most relevant definitions to the least important ones in the future on average. This is reinforced by the fact that such items do not experience the same upward compression in the distribution of other responses between scenarios (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Boxplot of distributions of items about definitions of (under)achievement (Q4).



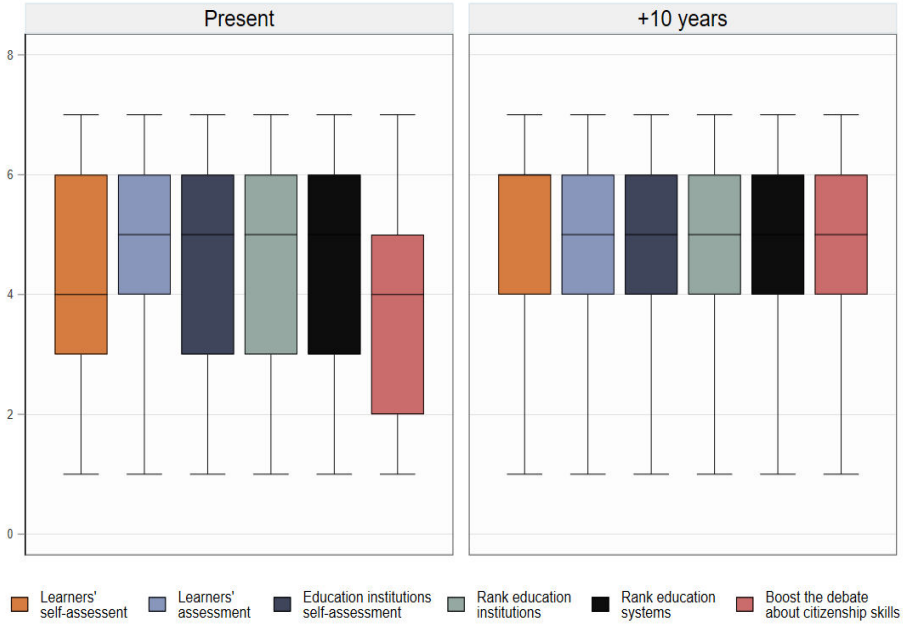
Q3/Q5: Aims and focus of policies about learning outcomes

In Deliverable D2.2, we have argued that LOs cannot be separated from their assessment, yet, the definition of their objectives is not an uncontested field. Moreover, the varying nature of LOs' aims is further mirrored by that of the considered policy targets. This multiplicity of aims has been summarised in Q3 through six items: learners' self-assessment, learners' assessment, educational institutions' self-assessment, educational institutions' ranking, educational systems' comparison, and boosting the public debate on

skills for active citizenship.[8] In parallel, Q5 asks to rank four possible policy targets: non-achievers, under-achievers, people at any level of achievement, or top achievers.

Using descriptive statistics, survey responses seem to reflect the contentiousness of this issue. Average scores in Q3 show a prevalence of learners' assessment as the main aim of LOs in the present scenario (4.97) while boosting the debate on skills for active citizenship results is the lowest (3.69). Yet, changes still appear in the future scenario, particularly concerning the role of LOs in the public debate, which moves to an average score of 4.85. Overall, also looking at the distribution of responses (see Figure 4), the distance between the different items seems to narrow, and all of them move upwards on average from the present to the future, potentially suggesting a tendency towards more multi-faceted conceptions.

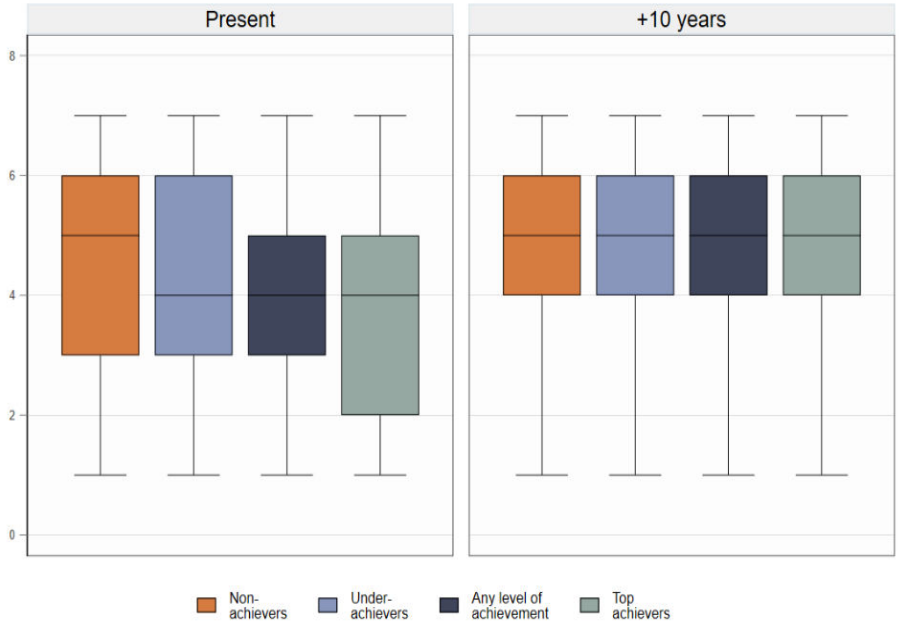
Figure 4. Boxplot of distributions of items about LOs' aims (Q3).



A similar situation emerges in Q5. The lowest level of achievement has a slightly higher mean score in the present scenario, with non-achievers and under-achievers respectively at 4.54 and 4.25 against the 4.03 and 4.02 of people at any level of achievement and top achievers. However, this distance narrows in the future, in which the importance of all policy targets increases, ranging from 4.97 for under-achievers to 4.84 for top achievers. The same appears to be true for what concerns responses' distribution (see Figure 5).

8 Due to a technical problem, the fifth item (i.e., "rank and compare educational systems") has not been correctly recorded in the survey administration in the Italian context for what concerns the future scenario and it thus results as entirely missing in that country's sample.

Figure 5. Boxplot of distributions of items about LOs' policy targets (Q5).



Guiding hypotheses

Cross-breeding the scholarship with this preliminary look at descriptive data from the survey, the next section explores the following hypotheses:

1. Market-oriented conceptions are crucial blocks of LOs and (under)achievement; yet, their gap with other dimensions – namely, social aspects and learners' potential – may narrow in the future;
2. Formal tools – i.e., credentials and grades – reduce their relevance from present to future scenarios;
3. LOs may follow an overall trend towards increased multidimensionality.

2.2 Patterns of change in definitions and policies

The aforementioned hypotheses are firstly considered through the construction of multiple regression models aimed at investigating patterns of change, following the methodology described in the previous chapter for constructing issue-specific scenarios.[9]

H1: The relationship between market, social and individual dimensions

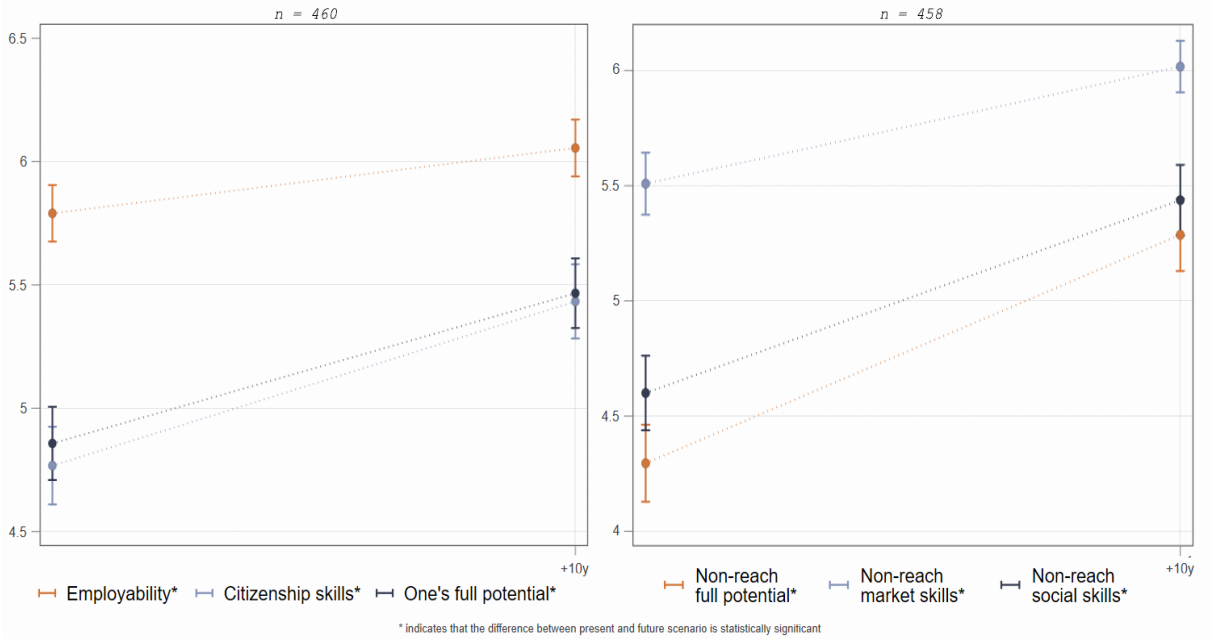
As for Q1, the variation between present and future items is always significant and is consistent with the findings above when controlling for the selected independent variables. According to survey respondents, employability remains the most important component of LOs in the present and in 10 years. Yet, the gap with other dimensions is reducing. The same applies to the definitions of (under)achievement (Q4), where the future relevance of individual potential's realisation and social skills increases. despite this

[9] Detailed results of the models, including coefficients, standard errors and significance level, can be consulted in the Annex section dedicated to Chapter 2.

not being enough to challenge the centrality of market skills, which also consistently increases (see Figure 6). Socio-demographic dimensions have no meaningful impact in most cases – an exception being the country, which accounts for potentially relevant differences concerning the importance of one's potential realisation and citizenship and social skills.

The aforementioned trends align with H1 and the scholarship on the topic, showing the parallel relevance of employability and other social and individual dimensions. Indeed, employability emerges as a crucial component of LOs, and it is also connected with policymakers' aim to see readily measurable outcomes for education investments (Clarke, 2018). At the same time, research also noted a growing focus on so-called "social outcomes of learning" by acknowledging that education effects go beyond mere economic-centred dimensions (Desjardins et al., 2006) while achieving full learners' potential has long been recognised as relevant for defining (under)achievement – particularly in psychological approaches (Levesque, 2011). However, it is worth noting that these dimensions are not necessarily in opposition, and the importance of social skills and individual potential in the context of an employability-dominated framework may also be read through their increasingly acknowledged role in fostering labour market outcomes, as argued by Dias & Soares (2018).

Figure 6. Marginal means of items about understandings of LOs (Q1) and items 1-3 about definitions of (under)achievement (Q4) according to the post term.



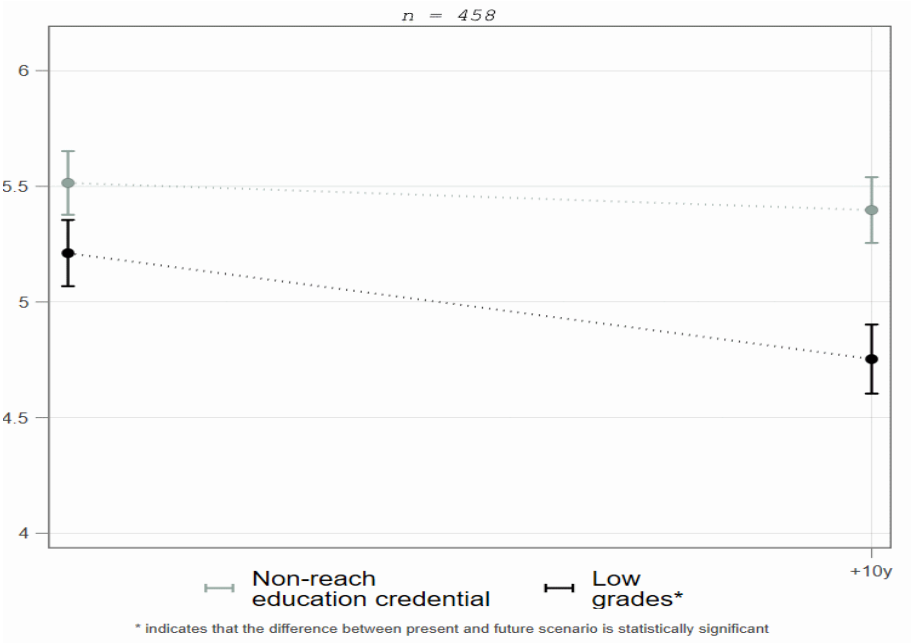
H2: The relevance of formal evaluation and attainment tools

H2 focuses on the link between the definition of (under)achievement and formal evaluation tools and attainment recognition. In this case, differences between present and future scenarios are limited to the importance of getting low grades for (under)achievement definition, which will become the least important item in the future

scenario (see Figure 7). The different trends between this dimension and the relevance of credentials may also be linked to the more ambiguous and evolving nature of the former in the EU. Indeed, despite their connection with employability being increasingly questioned (Brown & Souto-Otero, 2018), there are pushes towards adapting education credentials to the changed nature of the labour market, as is witnessed by the debate about micro-credentials (Romero-Llop et al., 2022; Deliverable D2.2). Conversely, although they remain widespread in this field, the use of grades for the definition of LOs and (under)achievement is increasingly criticised within and outside the academic debate (Caspersen et al., 2017).

National policy debates show that the importance of qualification frameworks and grading tools manifests unevenly across CLEAR countries (Deliverable D2.2). This is consistent with significant differences among countries along these dimensions. Particularly, respondents from Portugal, Bulgaria, and Greece seem to consider both these dimensions significantly more relevant than most other countries. In contrast, Finnish ones stand out for the comparatively low relevance assigned to grades to define (under)achievement. This situation suggests that H2 can only be partially confirmed since potentially diverging scenarios emerge when considering different national debates. Coupled with what was noted above for the test of H1, it also hints that national differences may be among the most relevant elements for the emergence of conflicting scenarios. Therefore, the country of administration will be particularly considered when analysing general scenarios in the next section.

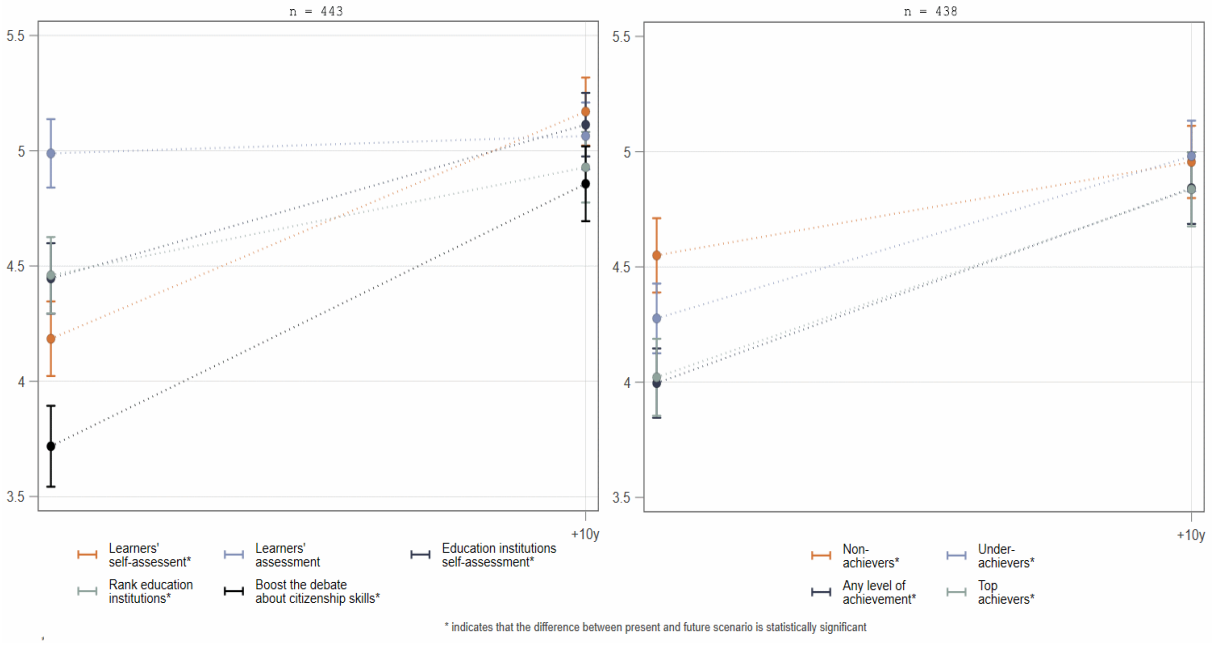
Figure 7. Marginal means of items 4-5 about definitions of (under)achievement (Q4) according to the post term.



H3: Multidimensionality of learning outcomes' aims and foci

The last two questions to consider (Q3 and Q5) show similar patterns. Indeed, models about Q3 items suggest the passage from a situation in which learners' assessment is the primary aim of LOs to a more multifaceted situation, originated by the consistent effect that shifting from the present to the future scenario seems to have on some dimensions. This is particularly true for the role of LOs in learners' self-assessment and in boosting the public debate about skills for active citizenship, which significantly increases between the two scenarios. Trends detected in Q5 items start from a less clear demarcation in the present scenario, despite non-achievers and underachievers being considered slightly more important as a policy target when comparing marginal means across models. Yet, the other two possible targets reduce the gap in the future scenario thanks to the sharper effect of scenario change on them, suggesting that their relevance for LOs policies consistently increases in the future. Figure 8 shows the aforementioned results for Q3 and Q5.

Figure 8. Marginal means of items about LOs' policy aims (Q3) and targets (Q5) according to the post term.



Beyond the parallel tendency towards multidimensionality, the uneven growth of the dimensions considered within the two questions can be traced back to different frameworks. On the one hand, the increased recognition of LOs' aims that are not limited to learners' assessment may be seen as developing in parallel with the reception of the Bologna Process's various purposes, including pedagogical, managerial and socio-economic aims (Caspersen et al., 2017; Deliverable D2.2). On the other hand, the changes identified in stakeholders' responses about targets of LOs policies potentially hint at a progressive shift from a major focus on equality of opportunities towards a more competition- and result-oriented perspective, which is also aligned with the neoliberal policy discourse in education (Tikkanen, 2019).

Moreover, other variables seem again to play a role in shaping the relevance assigned by survey respondents to items in Q3 and Q5. As for LOs objectives, the country of administration appears to have a crucial role. For instance, Italian respondents score learners' self-assessment comparatively lower than all other countries except Spain. In contrast, Finnish ones stand out for the lower relevance assigned to learners' assessment compared to all other countries.

However, other findings that are worth looking at emerge from socio-demographic variables. In particular, being a public actor – both local and national – appears to positively impact the importance assigned to LOs in the public debate, hinting at a difference in the use of LOs for these actors. Socio-demographic variables also seem to matter for Q5. Here, local actors assign higher ranks in all categories except for top-achievers, while the opposite is true for private actors. This distinction may be linked to the different priorities among these actors, as well as to the different levels of pervasiveness of the neoliberal discourse within their reference contexts.[10]

Gender also seems to play a role, with male respondents considering the relevance of non-achievers and underachievers lower than female ones. Finally, the country plays a role in this case, too. Peculiar patterns emerge in Finnish responses, showing comparatively higher ranks for non-achievers as a policy target, while underachievers are considered less important than in most other countries. German respondents also appear to assign higher centrality to non-achievers and underachievers, while Greek and Bulgarian ones stand out for the higher consideration of top achievers.

Hypotheses' check and refinement

Based on the findings above, the three guiding hypotheses of this chapter seem to be confirmed by survey participants' responses. Yet, some necessary specifications and corollaries to them need to be considered. Despite the general trends appearing mostly in line with what is expected, results also suggest that some major distinctions – especially but not exclusively among countries – may emerge, giving rise to conflicting scenarios.

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[10] In a nutshell, neoliberalism is a political ideology rooted in free market and reduced state intervention, which strongly emphasises issues of competition, privatisation of public assets and deregulation of economy. The translation of this ideology in education has taken the form of marketisation of schools and the reorganisation of the education system on principles of economic rationality and efficiency, also fostering competition among institutions and free consumer choice (Tikkanen, 2019). Moreover, following the centrality of the individual and individual responsibilities within the neoliberal discourse, issues of "merit" and deservingness have been increasingly included in education, as the role of structural inequalities is seen as less relevant than individual self efficacy (Ibid.). The questionnaire did not directly address the neoliberalisation of education; nonetheless, many proxies for this have been included. In particular, a higher relevance assigned to top achievers as policy target and a positive attitude towards privatisation of education and the inclusion of "meritocratic" element in education are seen as signs of a more pronounced tendency towards neoliberalisation of education.

Moreover, the relation between LOs' understandings and their policy implementation remain unexplored, raising some important side questions:

1. Is the tendency towards multidimensionality a general trend, or are some contexts and actors still not acknowledging such a shift?
2. Does the recognition of the multi-faceted nature of LOs correspond to its proliferation of aims and uses, or are there different patterns to consider?

These questions will be at the core of the general scenarios proposed in the next section, which will particularly consider potentially conflicting future understandings and implementations of LOs and (under)achievement.

2.3 Future scenarios of learning outcomes and (under)achievement

2.3.1 Conflicting definitions in the future scenario

The preliminary look at selected control variables proposed in the previous section shows possible nuances in the identified general trends, hinting at the emergence of potentially conflicting scenarios. To explore such nuances with specific reference to the future scenario, a k-means cluster analysis has been performed based on B1 and B4 items, grouping respondents into four groups according to their average ranks on different components of LOs and (under)achievement.[11] Then, multinomial regression has been used to relate clusters with selected socio-demographic variables.

Cluster of alternative scenarios in the understanding of learning outcomes

This procedure allows us to identify four concurring scenarios, which are detailed according to the used variables in Table 4:

1. *Multidimensional credentialism*: The first cluster gathers respondents with above-average scores in all selected categories and accounts for about 38% of clustered observations, including the largest number of observations among the resulting groups. These respondents epitomise the aforementioned tendency towards the multidimensionality of LOs and (under)achievement, ranking similarly the relevance of market, social and individual dimensions. Moreover, they stand out for the above-average scores when evaluating the centrality of grades and credentials for defining (under)achievement, outlining a future where these formal tools still maintain an important role.[12]

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[11] The number of clusters *k* has been inductively determined by using both Makles's (2012) operationalisation of the "elbow method" in Stata and the Calinski-Harabasz Pseudo-F (Milligan & Cooper, 1985).

[12] The generally high responses assigned by this group on all items included in the clustering may also be due to the presence of several undifferentiated response patterns, which have not been removed

2. *Multidimensional anti-credentialism*: This is the second largest group of observations (about 32%), which includes respondents with response patterns mostly similar to the first cluster but with one relevant distinction regarding the role of credentials and low grades in the definition of (under)achievement. Indeed, they present below-average scores in both these categories – and especially in what concerns grades – suggesting that these tools may have a negligible role in the future they forecast.
3. *Market-oriented credentialism*: Similar to the first cluster, this group includes respondents with above-average scores for what concerns the relevance of grades and credentials, which result in the most important factors on average. Yet, unlike the first two clusters, it presents a very different balance between market dimensions and citizenship skills / learners' potential realisation. The importance of non-market-related dimensions is much lower on average than in all other groups, suggesting that employability will hold its dominant position in the future definitions of LOs.
4. *Market-oriented anti-credentialism*: The last and smallest cluster has below-average scores in all selected dimensions. Employability and market skills score higher than social dimensions and learners' potential for respondents in this group. However, the distance between these categories is lower than in the previous cluster. Finally, education credentials and grades are considered less important in future LOs, as they have the lowest mean score across all clusters, forecasting the decline of formal tools for the definition of LOs and (under)achievement.

Table 4. Clusters' centres/means for each item of future understandings of LOs (B1) and (under)achievement (B4) used in the cluster analysis.

	Multidimensional credentialism	Multidimensional anti-credentialism	Market-oriented credentialism	Market-oriented anti-credentialism	TOT
B1.1 *Employability*	6.48	6.08	5.35	5.71	6.06
B1.2 *Citizenship skills*	6.10	6.17	3.73	3.95	5.44
B1.3 *One's potential*	6.31	5.83	3.90	4.15	5.46
B4.1 *Not reach potential*	6.20	5.92	3.54	3.60	5.31
B4.2 *Not reach market skills*	6.58	5.81	5.68	5.42	6.02
B4.3 *Not reach social skills*	6.26	5.96	3.30	4.65	5.46
B4.4 *Not reach credentials*	6.22	4.73	5.96	4.11	5.40
B4.5 *Low grades*	5.91	3.38	6.25	2.95	4.73
Number of observations	170	143	71	65	449
%	*37.9*	*31.8*	*15.8*	*14.5*	*100.0*

Factors affecting positioning between scenarios

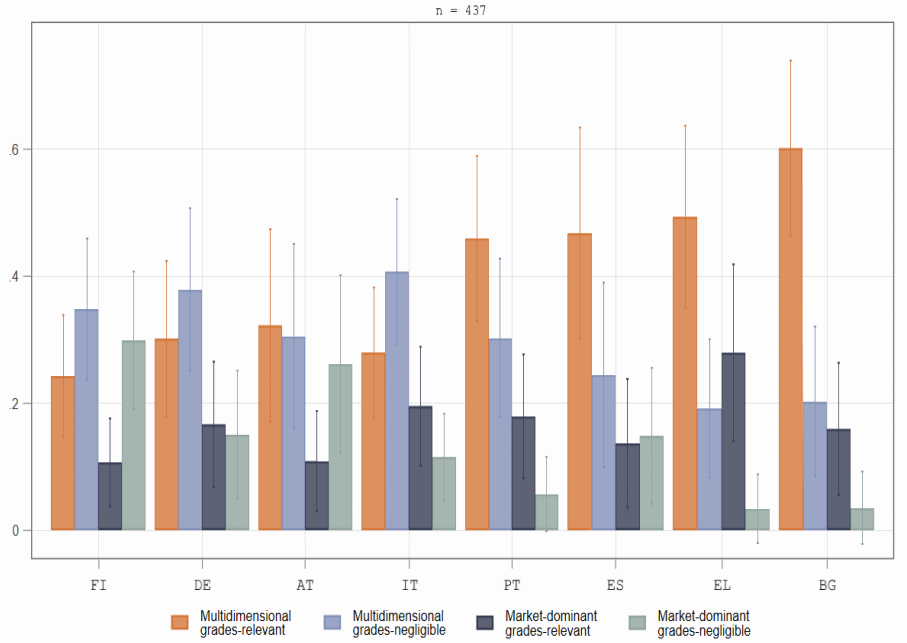
from the dataset for the conservative approach to data cleaning exposed in the introductory chapter. However, it is worth noting that these patterns of responses do not contain logical contradiction; conversely, they are consistent with what has been noted in the academic literature and with previous results of the project (Deliverable D2.2), identifying a trend towards growing recognition of the multi-faceted nature of LOs.

According to regression results, the main differences seem to occur among countries of administration (see Figure 9). Parallel patterns can be identified in most Southern European countries and Bulgaria:

- Both Bulgarian and Greek respondents have a higher probability to be in the Multidimensional credentialism cluster, and are less likely to foresee the Market-oriented anti-credentialism scenario.
- Portuguese respondents have the lowest probability of forecasting the Market-oriented credentialism scenario compared to all other ones.
- Observations from Spain are more likely to be into the Multidimensional credentialism cluster.

These countries seem thus to tend towards a more multidimensional conception of LOs and to preserve a certain importance of formal evaluating tools in the definition of (under)achievement compared to the others.

Figure 9. Predictive margins of resulting clusters per country of administration.



However, within the group of Southern European countries, Italian respondents stand out for their proximity to Continental countries and other considerations emerge for the remaining national samples, considering pairwise comparisons presented in Table 5:

- Despite Italian respondents having a higher probability of falling into the two multidimensional clusters than in the market-oriented ones, they differ from aforementioned countries for their lower probability of falling into the Multidimensional credentialism cluster.
- Similarly, German respondents are also more likely to fall into anti-credentialism clusters than into credentialism.
- Finally, observations from Austria and Finland are those more distant from Southern European and Bulgarian ones for their higher probability of fitting in market-oriented clusters, particularly market-oriented anti-credentialism. Finnish

respondents are also more likely to belong to the Market-oriented anti-credentialism cluster and less likely to be in the Multidimensional credentialism one than most countries.

Table 5. Pairwise comparisons of predictive margins of resulting clusters per country (only significant pairs shown).

	AT	BG	DE	EL	ES	FI	IT	PT
C1. **Multidimensional credentialism**	<BG	>AT >DE >FI >IT	<BG	>FI >IT	>FI	<BG <EL <PT <ES	<BG <EL <PT	>FI >IT
C2. **Multidimensional anti-credentialism**		<DE <IT	>BG >EL	<DE <IT			>BG >EL	
C3. **Market-oriented credentialism**	<EL			>AT >FI		<EL		
C5. **Market-oriented anti-credentialism**	>BG >EL >PT	<AT <DE <FI	>BG >EL	<AT <DE <FI		>BG >EL >IT >PT	<FI	<AT <FI

> significantly higher than; < significantly lower than.

Main characteristics of concurring scenarios

Beyond these general trends, the existence of concurring future scenarios has been thus highlighted by the cluster analysis proposed in this section, shedding light on minority conceptions of LOs and (under)achievement that emerged in the survey. Possible cleavages especially arise along two axes: the relationship between market-oriented dimensions, social skills and learners' potential as components of LOs; and the relevance assigned to education credentials and grades in the definition of (under)achievement. Yet, such concurring scenarios also seem to manifest in different shapes and relations in the futures forecasted by respondents from the various CLEAR countries. Despite most of them recognising the tendency towards an increasing multidimensionality of LOs, the competition with the persistence of market-oriented conceptions varies from country to country.

Moreover, according to survey respondents, (under)achievement seems to be still tied to formal assessment tools in some countries, while others appear to follow – albeit with different intensities – the tendency towards their progressive marginalisation. What remains to consider at this point is whether such alternative conceptions correspond to different policy outputs as identified within the survey. Therefore, the next section will conclude this chapter by relating the above identified future scenarios to different implementations of LOs in terms of aims and targets.

2.3.2 Alternative conceptions and learning outcomes implementations

How do different conceptualisations of LOs and (under)achievement, socio-demographic variables, and national contexts influence the definition of objectives and targets? This section investigates this issue via multiple linear regression models using B3 and B5 items

as dependent variables, including the clusters above among the independent ones. These questions serve as proxies for approaches and ideologies regarding LOs.

Alternative scenarios and learning outcomes' aims

Starting from future policy objectives outlined in B3, alternative scenarios about the conceptualisation of LOs and (under)achievement seem influencing the outcomes in all items:

- Both credentialism clusters assign higher ranks to learner assessment and educational institutions ranking than their anti-credentialism counterparts.
- Both market-oriented clusters assign significantly lower ranks than multidimensional ones to the importance of learners and educational institutions' self-assessment and to the role of LOs in boosting the debate about skills for active citizenship.
- The market-oriented anti-credentialism cluster systematically assigns lower ranks to all items, while the opposite is true for the multidimensional credentialism one.

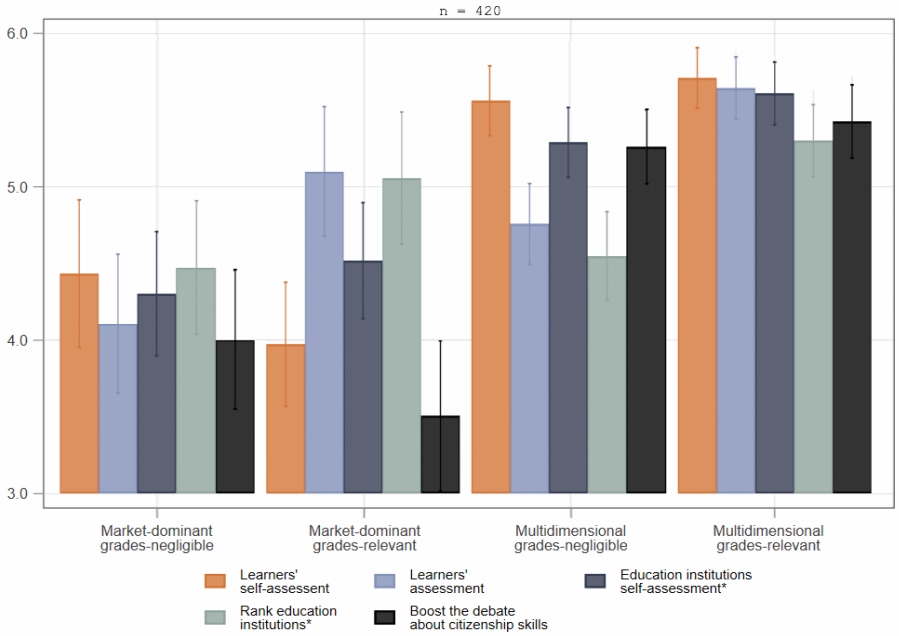
The two axes which distinguish concurring scenarios in the cluster analysis seem thus to potentially play a role also in the definition of LOs' aims. On the one hand, the acknowledgment of multidimensionality is associated in the sample with a greater emphasis on the importance of self-assessment and of the discursive power of LOs, while market-dominant conceptions appear to be more closely aligned with aims of evaluation and external classification. On the other hand, the importance of grades and education credentials also potentially influences the value attributed to learners' assessment and education institutions ranking.

However, as shown in Figure 10, it is important to note that none of the alternative scenarios presents a clear preference for only one objective. This suggests that – albeit to varying degrees – survey respondents generally perceive LOs as a multipurpose tool. The dominance of objectives' multidimensionality is thus confirmed as a prevailing viewpoint in the sample, although it is less pronounced in the Market-oriented credentialism and in the Multidimensional anti-credentialism clusters. These clusters appear to represent opposite ends of a spectrum: the former aligns more with neoliberal stances about education assigning a greater role to LOs conceived as an external validation tool, while the latter places seemingly greater importance on objectives related to self-assessment and orientation of the public debate.

However, alternative scenarios are not the only variables contributing to the diversification of outcomes for B3 items within the proposed models. Once again, the countries where the survey was administered play a significant role. In particular, Finnish respondents stand out due to the significantly lower ranks assigned to learner assessment and the ranking of educational institutions compared to most other countries. This – coupled with the lower consideration of grades and credentials –

suggests that survey respondents rarely tie LOs with external validation tools in Finland. Significant effects also emerge for actor types. Local public actors appear to place more importance on the self-assessment of educational institutions, hinting at a potentially greater concern among these respondents for their local educational contexts.

Figure 10. Marginal means of items about future LOs' aims (B3) according to clusters of LOs conceptions.



Conversely, the role of LOs in public debate seems more recognised by public and civil society respondents. Indeed, an active debate on education is considered crucial for the advocacy role of civil society actors (Gebremedhin et al., 2023). Moreover, the academic literature has argued that policymakers must engage in public debates about education to design new policies in this field, especially within the context of spending cuts and the rising focus on employability-centred paradigms (Tomlinson, 2012; Clarke, 2018).

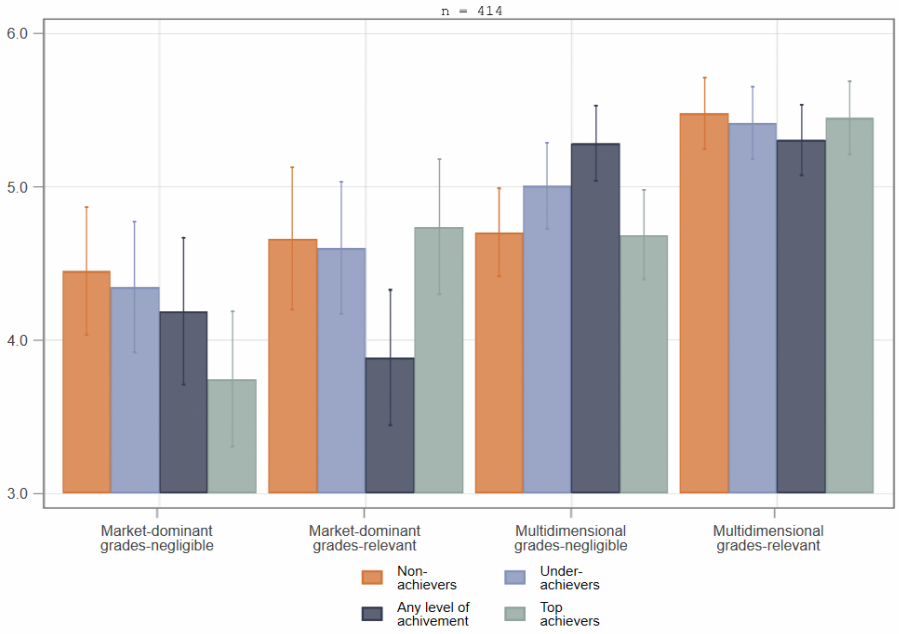
Alternative scenarios and focus of learning outcomes' policies

Regarding the focus of future policies on LOs, the models built on B5 items reveal similar patterns to those observed for B3. Significant differences among alternative scenarios emerge for all outcomes, and other significant effects are noted when considering the countries where the survey was administered and the types of actors. As for the clusters' effect:

- Respondents in the Multidimensional credentialism cluster assign higher relevance to all policy targets.
- Those in the Market-oriented anti-credentialism cluster rank top achievers as less important than respondents forecasting other scenarios.
- Learners at any level of achievement are rated lower in both market-dominant clusters than in the multidimensional ones.

Such differences, summarised in Figure 11, may suggest that respondents in the market-oriented clusters forecast a future in which LOs policies will be predominantly targeted at specific categories, that, in the case of Market-oriented anti-credentialism clusters, seem to mostly correspond to the groups with the lowest levels of achievement.[13] Conversely, respondents inclined to define LOs as a multidimensional tool seem more directed towards recognising a multiplicity of focuses for policies in this field.

Figure 11. Marginal means of items about future LOs' policy targets (B5) according to clusters of LOs conceptions.



Looking at the effects of the country of administration:

- Portuguese respondents stand out for their greater consideration of non-achievers as a policy focus compared to all other national samples, except for Finland and Spain; on the contrary, responses from Austria and Greece show lower ranks on this item than all other countries apart from Italy.
- Greece appears to be connected with lower values in the rankings of under-achievers, which significantly differs from most countries, except Bulgaria, Finland, and Italy.
- On the contrary, Bulgarian respondents tend to assign higher relevance to learners at any level of achievement and to top achievers compared to most other countries,

13 These findings may look in contrast with what one could expect, being the focus on learners at any level connected with issues of equality of opportunity and to market economy ideal types. However, it is important to remember that these are futures identified as likely by respondents and do not necessarily correspond to desirable ones. Such differences will be considered more broadly in the fourth chapter of this report, in which a comparison between likely and desirable scenarios among respondents will be presented.

with the comparison with Greek respondents being the only non-significant one in the latter dimension.

Regarding the effect of actor types, two distinctions emerge as potentially interesting:

- Local policymakers appear to be more inclined to assign higher importance to learners at lower levels of achievement.
- Private actors tend to believe that top achievers will be a major focus of LOs policies, assigning significantly higher ranks to this category.

The aforementioned findings are consistent with what emerges in the academic literature. Indeed, a major focus on equality of opportunity and on top achievers, which serves as a proxy for the pervasiveness of neoliberal ideas in education (Tikkanen, 2019), is more clearly identified in countries that are seen as experiencing a relatively recent – albeit not uncontested – neoliberal turn in education policies, such as Bulgaria (Silova & Eklof, 2013; Chankselyani & Silova, 2018). Not surprisingly, private actors, primarily represented by economic and market stakeholders in the sample, are also more inclined towards this discourse, which reflects the application of ideal-typical market economy principles in the education system (Keep & Mayhew, 2014; Owen & de St. Croix, 2020).

The specificities emerging for local actors require a separate discussion. Kerr et al. (2014) highlight how local policymakers are often compelled to actively address situations of disadvantage in the education context of their localities. Indeed, within this study, the overall tendency to view learners at lower levels of achievement as an important target may indicate greater concern about the social impacts of educational disadvantage at the local level. Alternative patterns seem thus to emerge along various axes in the case of LOs' aims and targets, contributing to enrich the framework delineated up to this point.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter considers the findings of four questions derived from the CLEAR WP6 survey. These questions pertain to the definition of LOs, (under)achievement, and the implementation of related policies, including targets and objectives. The responses have been analysed by looking at patterns of change and potential divergences between the scenarios envisioned by survey participants.

The results indicate that stakeholders conceptualise LOs as comprising multiple economic, social, and individual components, consistent with the approach adopted by the CLEAR project. On average, they also think that such plural understanding will be more important in future policy-making arenas. Our data suggests that there is an increasing recognition within the sample of the need for multiple objectives and targets in LOs policies. These objectives and targets extend beyond the mere assessment of learners or institutions' performance, or the exclusive address of under-achievement. However, it is important to note that this scenario – albeit dominant among respondents – is not the

sole vision envisaged. The findings reveal a variety of concurrent or diverging perspectives emerging along different axes.

In this context, it is important to highlight the significant role played by market-related factors. Alongside the multifaceted nature of LOs, employability issues continue to hold a prominent position in the definition of LOs across various future scenarios, remaining dominant for certain respondent groups. Furthermore, the significance of formal instruments, such as grades and educational credentials, appears to vary depending on the context. While some respondents identify a clear decline in the importance of these elements, others do not question their role. These two dimensions are linked to the projected policy objectives regarding LOs, influencing their role in public discourse, as well as the emphasis placed on learner assessment and the ranking of educational institutions.

Alternative scenarios also relate with the likely focus of policies 10 years in the future, since respondents inclined towards multidimensional conceptions of LOs seem to consider a broader range of targets compared to those who prioritise market-related dimensions. These divergent visions of the future of education partly reflect variations in respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. Among these characteristics, the type of actor appears to have a significant impact in certain cases. For example, local actors tend to place greater importance on addressing under- and non-achievers, whereas private actors attach more relevance to top achievers.

However, the most significant differences regarding the topics examined in this chapter appear to be closely tied to the country where the survey was conducted. Although no clear-cut groups have been identified, certain common patterns among countries can be discerned. On the one hand, Bulgaria and Greece often exhibit similar characteristics, with respondents being more likely to view LOs as multidimensional and to still consider grading as important in their definition. This is combined with a relatively greater emphasis on learners with higher levels of achievement in future scenarios, hinting at a more pervasive influence of neoliberal education concepts. These characteristics support the notion that multidimensionality does not necessarily conflict with the adoption of market-oriented approaches in education, as the acquisition of social skills is increasingly seen as a valuable outcome for employability (Dias & Soares, 2018).

On the other hand, other Southern European countries show different trends: while Portugal and Spain display similar patterns across various dimensions, the relationship between alternative conceptions of LOs among Italian respondents seem closer to that observed in Continental countries, particularly Germany. Finally, Austria, Germany, and Finland often share similar characteristics, presenting peculiar patterns of change in the main components of LOs and (under)achievement. However, Finnish respondents stand out for their relatively lower emphasis on grades, learner assessment, and the ranking of educational institutions. This also means that - notwithstanding the internationalisation of public debates about education, and the importance of supranational actors (e.g., the

EU) and the circulation of ideas and policy models (e.g., neoliberalism and related New Public Management approaches) - national arenas still matter, and local and national contexts are a relevant frame for policy debates.

The findings of this chapter thus show how alternative scenarios can emerge even within the context of overarching common trends in education, highlighting that standardisation cannot be assumed in the implementation of LOs across different EU countries. Minor divergences are evident along other axes, suggesting potential conflicts, for example, between market actors and public policymakers, particularly at the local level. However, according to responses in the survey, the main disparities in the conception and design of LOs are anticipated to occur between countries. If confirmed by further studies, this factor would be crucial to consider for the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework and other EU tools in this field.

3. Factors impacting learning outcomes of individuals in education

The CLEAR project adopts an intersectional approach to studying learning outcomes (LOs) and their applications (Deliverable D2.2). In this context, LOs are viewed as influenced by multiple factors that interact with and within the educational environment. Socio-demographic characteristics of learners are considered particularly significant, as the intersection of gender, migration background, and social class affects educational attainment and experiences (Gross et al., 2016). Other attributes such as self-efficacy and personal motivation have also been identified as central to (under)achievement (Levesque, 2011). However, LOs are not solely related to individual-level features. As a relational and social construct, they also result from interactions between learners and their learning environment. This includes social relations with peers and teachers, family background, and macro-level and institutional factors such as policies, locations, and the overall structure of the education system. Through a systematic review of the academic literature on the topic (Deliverable D2.2), 18 potential factors impacting LOs have been selected for the CLEAR WP6 survey and included in Q2.

Thus, this chapter builds on these factors to analyse scenarios of their impact on LOs according to surveyed stakeholders. In building issue-specific scenarios, factors have been initially divided into three groups: micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level. Each group was first analysed independently to determine the most relevant factors at different levels and how they may evolve. Then, underlying general dimensions are explored, and alternative general scenarios are drawn, also looking at the main differences between groups of respondents. The research presented here mostly follows the methodology adopted in the previous chapter for both issue-specific and general

scenarios. Still, it also uses exploratory factor analysis to reduce the number of variables at stake.[14]

3.1 Descriptive statistics and primary hypotheses

Q2 considers a wide range of possible factors influencing LOs and achievement: the micro-level (gender, sexual orientation, social class, minority background, citizenship, disabilities, and self-efficacy), the meso-level (peer group, family, social relations, and teachers), and the macro-level (education systems, education policies, employment policies, youth policies, schools, places, and systemic crises).

Q2.1-7: Micro-level factors

Among the seven individual dimensions included in the survey, social class and self-efficacy have the highest mean in the present (5.56 and 5.71) and in the future (5.36 and 5.85). Other factors range between 4 and 5 on average, indicating that respondents identify them as having a moderate impact on LOs and achievement. An exception is represented by gender and sexual orientation, which have the lowest mean ranks in the present (3.73 and 2.89) and in the future (3.46 and 2.67), meaning that they do not seem to be considered by survey respondents as influential as other dimensions on LOs.

This is somewhat surprising since many studies have pointed out the relevance of gender both *per se* and in interaction with other dimensions, especially migration or minority background (Gillborn, 2015; Ro & Loya, 2015; Gross et al., 2016). Looking at the distribution of ranks assigned to different items further confirms the framework, showing class and self-efficacy as the most relevant factors, while gender and sexual orientation present generally low ranks (see Figure 12). Finally, when looking at descriptive statistics, very few differences emerge between the present and future scenarios, with disabilities being the most declining factor on average (-0.44).

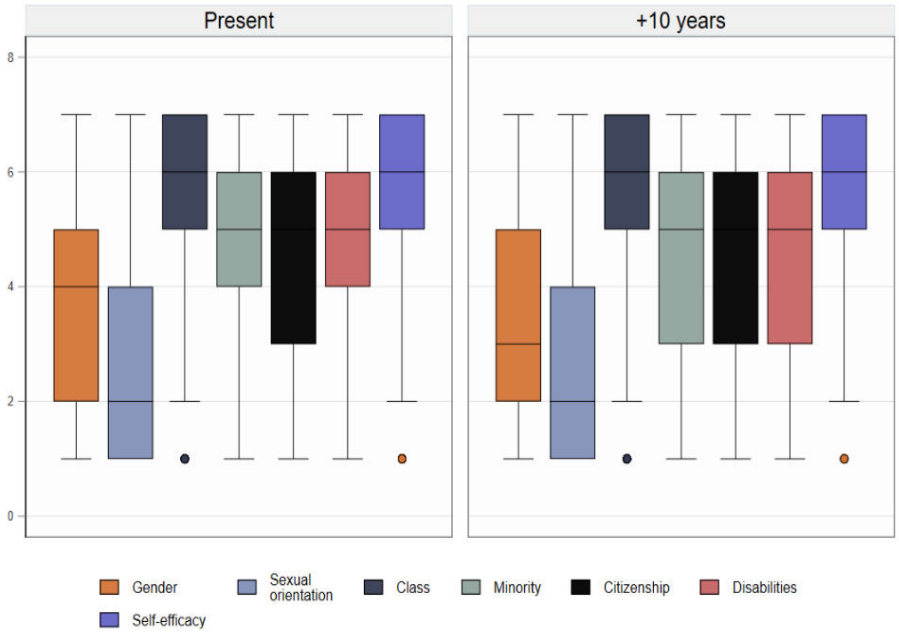
On average, relational factors are deemed more relevant than individual ones with only peer group and social relations being slightly below class and self-efficacy in both scenarios (5.12 and 5.26 in the present, 5.13 and 5.31 in the future). The family and teachers appear particularly relevant, scoring on average 5.94 and 5.93 in the present and 5.74 and 5.97 in the future. This also makes the role of teachers the most relevant factor on average among all those listed in Q2. The distribution of ranks in the meso-level items similarly shows a more upward compression of these two factors (see Figure 13).

Their importance is consistent with the academic literature on the topic, showing how family backgrounds affect learners' educational expectations and outcomes (Goeke-Morey et al., 2013; Giancola & Salmieri, 2020) – also interacting again with minority background (Herzog-Punzenberger & Schnell, 2019) – and the central role of teachers'

[14] Regression results for this chapter are presented in Tables 16-19 in the Annex.

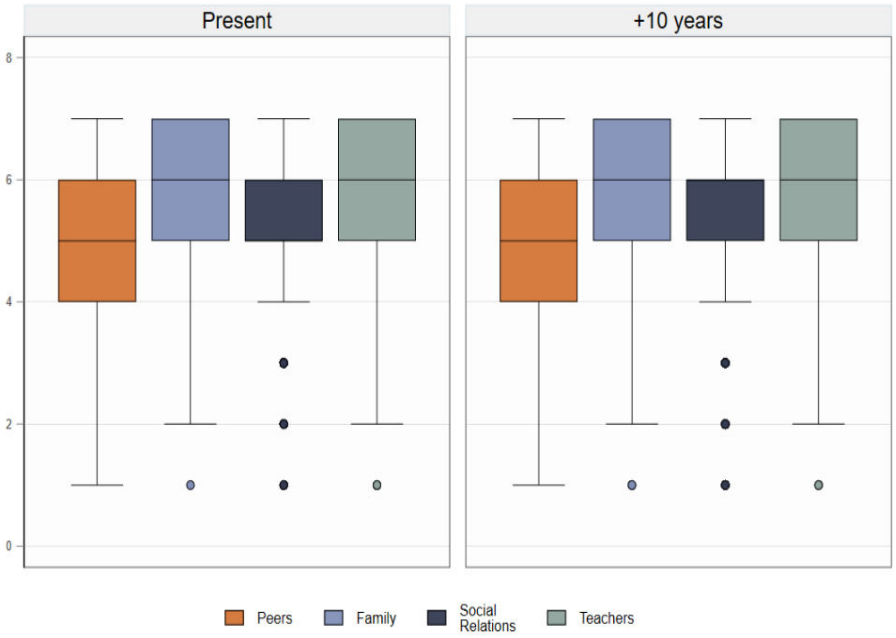
competencies and representations of learners for their achievement and educational paths (Muzenda, 2013; Tarabini et al., 2021).

Figure 12. Boxplot of the distribution of items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) at the micro-level.



Q2.8-12: Meso-level factors

Figure 13. Boxplot of the distribution of items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) at the meso-level.

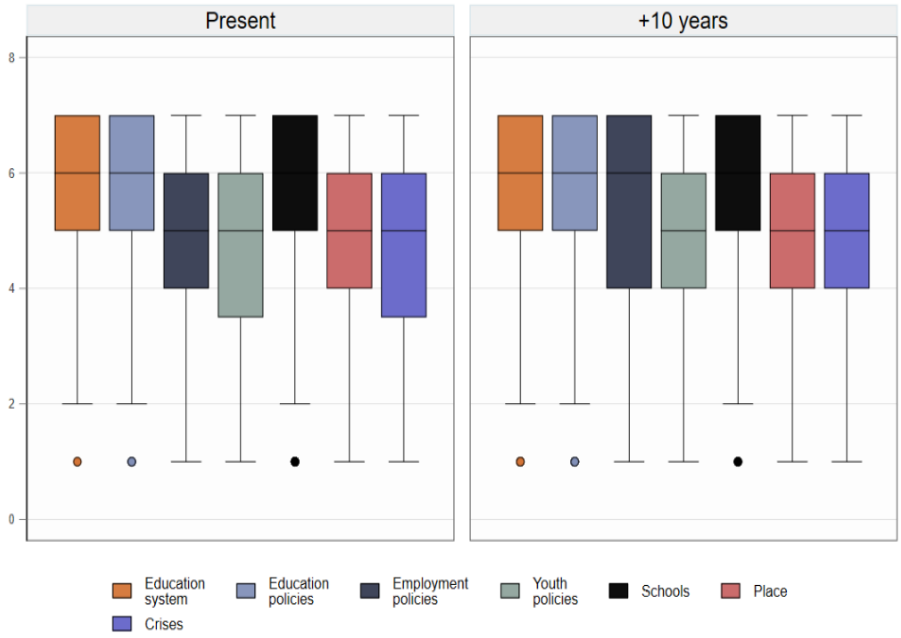


Q2.13-18: Macro-level factors

Among institutional and structural factors, respondents averagely assign greater ranks to the features specifically dealing with education – namely the education system, education

policies, and schools – which show relatively high means in the present and slightly grow in the future.[15] Albeit not at the same level, employment and youth policies are also deemed important and their centrality grows between scenarios, with the first passing from a mean score of 4.92 to 5.26 and the second from 4.62 to 4.90. Employment policies' impact on LOs is the factor showing the highest average growth, followed by systemic crisis, which is also acquiring more relevance between scenarios (4.76 in the present, 5.11 in the future). Conversely, despite being still considered impactful, place is the only macro-level dimension which slightly decreases in importance, passing from 5.03 to 4.96.

Figure 14. Boxplot of the distribution of items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) at the macro-level.



Guiding hypotheses

Some preliminary hypotheses may be formulated based on the comparison between the aforementioned descriptive statistics within each level of analysis:

1. The lower relevance of widely considered factors in the academic literature – e.g., gender and minority background – paired with the seeming dominance of two factors pertaining to opposed discourses – i.e., self-efficacy and class – suggest that relevant cleavages may emerge in considering individual dimensions impacting LOs among groups of respondents.
2. Teachers and family background seem to be two of the most critical factors and emerge as particularly dominant among the relational ones.

[15] Particularly, education system mean ranks are 5.77 in the present and 5.84 in the future, education policies are at 5.64 in the present and 5.76 in the future, and schools at 5.75 and 5.88.

3. The increased multidimensionality of LOs noted in the previous chapter may emerge again in the growing importance of policies in fields different than education, despite this remaining the most relevant arena.

3.2 What will shape learning outcomes in the future?

3.2.2 Patterns of change at the micro-, meso- and macro-level

This section considers the hypotheses above by looking at patterns of change of various dimensions within each level of analysis.[16] Findings will also serve as a cornerstone for constructing general future scenarios.

H1: Alternative conceptions of individual characteristics

The comparison among marginal means confirms the dominance of self-efficacy and class as the main micro-level factors impacting LOs in the present and future scenarios (see Figure 15). However, different patterns among the main dimensions emerge when considering the country of administration:

- Responses from Bulgaria show significantly lower ranks for the importance assigned to class than all countries except Portugal;
- Austrian, German and Italian respondents rank self-efficacy significantly lower than most other countries.

These peculiarities are unsurprising if coupled with the national specificities in the previous chapter. Indeed, hints of a neoliberal discourse on education, previously noted in Bulgarian respondents, may also explain their lower consideration of social class as a factor impacting LOs and the relatively high rank assigned to self-efficacy compared to other countries. Conversely, Austrian, German, and Italian respondents have already forecasted similar scenarios about LOs conception, and their similar framing of self-efficacy may reinforce their commonalities.

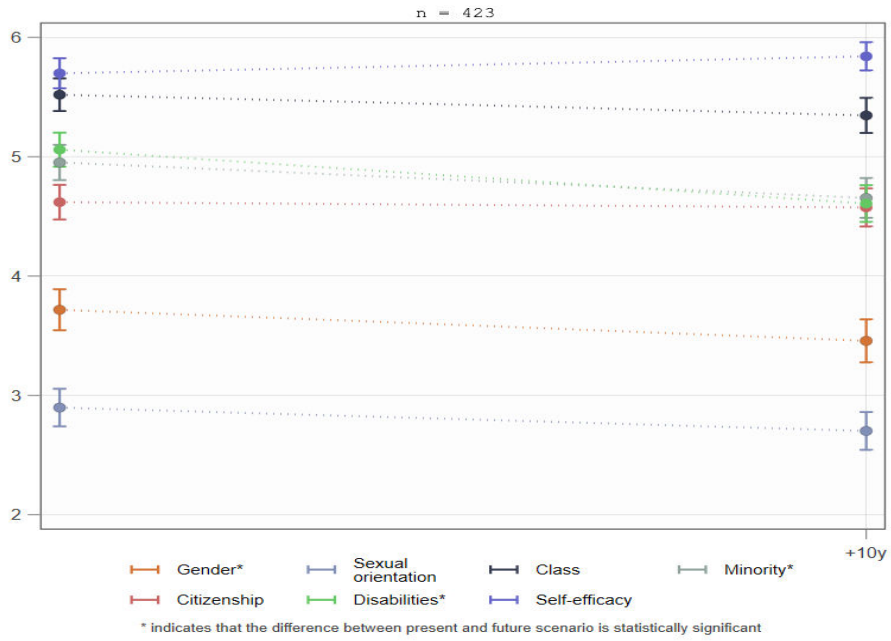
As for patterns of change in other items, only three have significant variations between present and future scenarios, and all of these show declining patterns. Notably, these factors are gender, minority background and disabilities. However, the former stands apart from the others for showing a relatively low marginal mean for both values of the post term, suggesting that gender is generally considered unimportant for LOs by survey respondents. The same holds true for sexual orientation, presenting even lower marginal means. In this context, the country of administration appears to have little effect on these outcomes, with only minor distinctions, as in the case of Bulgarian or Portuguese respondents, who show significantly lower ranks than most countries for the importance of gender. Significant effects are also shown in other dimensions:

[16] Detailed results of the models, including coefficients, standard errors and significance level, can be consulted in the Annex section dedicated to Chapter 3.

- Younger respondents, those experienced in youth policy and civil society actors consider sexual orientation as a more relevant factor, hinting at a possible generational and social divide on the recognition of this dimension.
- Moreover, as implied in H1, being a researcher impacts the importance assigned to gender and sexual orientation.

Yet, in no cases, do the resulting marginal means for these items show values above 4, meaning that they are still considered as little relevant even by these categories.

Figure 15. Marginal means of items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) at the micro-level according to the post term.



Concerning minority backgrounds and disabilities, the country of administration seems to play a key role:

- Finnish and Greek respondents show significantly higher acknowledgement of disabilities' influence on LOs than all other national samples.
- On the contrary, German respondents stand out for the low relevance assigned to this dimension, which results significantly lower than all other national samples and presents a marginal mean below 4, suggesting that these respondents generally consider disabilities as having a minor influence on LOs.

Results about Germany are quite surprising in light of the heated debate about special education schools following the reception in 2009 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Powell et al., 2015). However, this may also point out that German stakeholders participating in the survey have a quite optimistic view of the announced "paradigm shift" on disabilities, despite criticisms about its actual implementation persisting (Powell et al., 2015; UN, 2023).

Conversely, the persistence of disabilities as a major factor impacting LOs in Finland and Greece may be linked to different situations observed in these countries. On the one hand, the shift towards inclusive education in Finland seems to be slowed down by the still relevant presence of separated education environments (Sundqvist & Hannås, 2021), and concerns about the educational achievement of people with disabilities were also raised in the electoral programme of the former Prime Minister Sanna Marin (Deliverable D2.3). On the other hand, despite multiple recent legislative provisions being adopted, Greece is still seen as lacking a clear framework for implementing inclusive education, which hinders the effective inclusion of people with disabilities in education (Giavrimis, 2019; Warren et al., 2021).

Similar peculiarities also emerge when considering the impact of minority or migration background on LOs, as reported by survey respondents. This dimension is considered a key axis in most countries involved in the CLEAR project (Deliverable D2.3) and is especially relevant in some of the selected regions (CLEAR, 2024). Indeed, the model plotted on this item highlights again a greater acknowledgement of this dimension among Greek and Finnish respondents, with the latter assigning it significantly higher relevance than all other national samples. This peculiarity is also further confirmed by results about citizenship, which shows Finnish and Greek respondents considering it much more relevant than all others except for Portuguese ones. Interestingly, a positive effect on the relevance assigned to minority background's impact on LOs is also observed when looking at researchers. As noted in the case of gender, this may suggest that despite being a significant focus of academic research and considered a crucial intersectional dimension (Gilborn, 2015; Gross et al., 2016), its importance in policy arenas is less acknowledged. More details on the comparisons among countries on the main micro-level dimensions are shown in Table 6.

H1 seems thus partially confirmed in the sample for most micro-level dimensions. In particular, a different consideration of these factors emerges from research actors, potentially suggesting a limited permeation of the academic debate and the intersectional approach to LOs outside the scientific community. Yet, significant distinctions also result again by countries of administration, suggesting diverse penetrations of alternative discourses about education among national contexts.

Table 6. Marginal means per countries of administration and significant pairwise comparisons of items about factors impacting LOs at the micro-level (n = 423).

		AT	BG	DE	EL	ES	FI	IT	PT
Gender (_1)	*Marginal means*	**3.41**	**2.86**	**3.53**	**4.03**	**4.04**	**3.95**	**3.64**	**3.14**
	Significant pairwise comparisons	<EL <ES <FI	<DE <EL <ES <FI <IT	>BG	>AT >BG >PT	>AT >BG >PT	>AT >BG >PT	>BG >PT	<EL <ES <FI <IT

		AT	BG	DE	EL	ES	FI	IT	PT
Class (_3)	*Marginal means*	**5.54**	**4.88**	**5.54**	**5.89**	**5.46**	**5.04**	**5.38**	**5.23**
	Significant pairwise comparisons	>BG	<AT <DE <EL <ES <IT	>BG	>BG >FI >IT >PT	>BG	>BG <EL	>BG <EL	<EL
Minority/ Migration (_4)	*Marginal means*	**4.80**	**4.49**	**4.30**	**5.26**	**4.86**	**5.46**	**4.63**	**4.44**
	Significant pairwise comparisons	<FI	<EL <FI	<EL <FI	>BG >DE >IT >PT	<FI	>AT >BG >DE >ES >IT >PT	<EL <FI	<EL <FI
Disabilities (_6)	*Marginal means*	**4.50**	**4.52**	**3.81**	**5.38**	**4.75**	**5.60**	**4.89**	**4.78**
	Significant pairwise comparisons	>DE <EL <FI	>DE <EL <FI	<AT <BG <EL <ES <FI <IT <PT	>AT >BG >DE >ES >IT >PT	>DE <EL <FI	>AT >BG >DE >ES >IT >PT	>DE <EL <FI	>DE <EL <FI
Self-efficacy (_7)	*Marginal means*	**5.51**	**6.03**	**5.43**	**6.12**	**5.98**	**5.79**	**5.61**	**5.82**
	Significant pairwise comparisons	<BG <EL <ES	>AT >DE >IT	<BG <EL <ES <FI <PT	>AT >DE >IT	>AT >DE >IT	>DE	<BG <EL <ES	>DE

> significantly higher than; < significantly lower than.

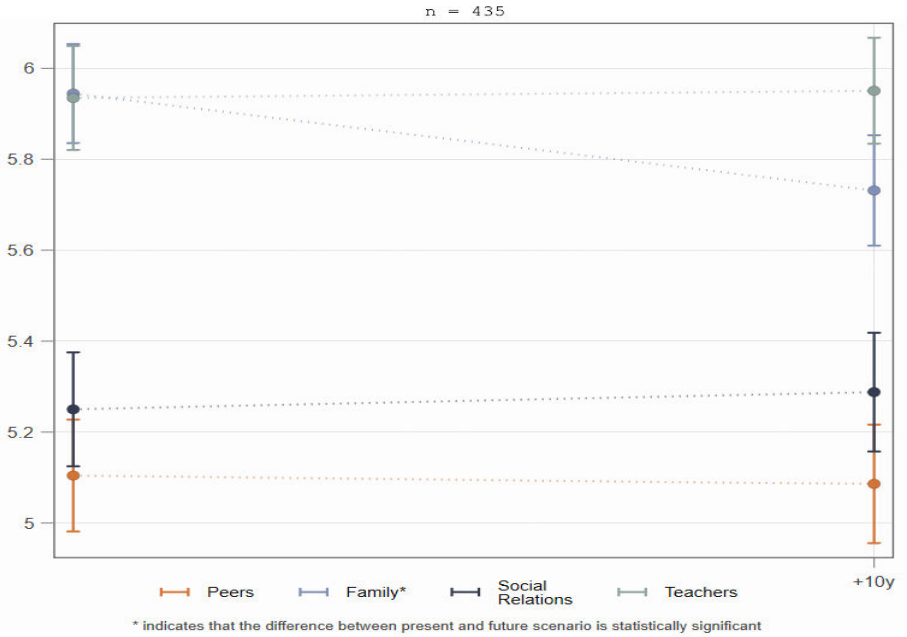
H2: Acknowledgement of relational factors' relevance

The variation between scenarios of meso-level factors appears quite low, with only family's importance having a significant slight decrease when shifting to the future (see Figure 16). As argued in H2, all relational dimensions considered in these items are deemed as relevant by respondents, showing marginal means below 5 in all cases. Still, teachers and family background particularly stand out, with the former also showing no significant variation from present to future scenarios. As mentioned above, the centrality of these factors is strengthened by the evidence from the academic literature. Here, teachers' role is increasingly attracting attention (Muzenda, 2013; Tarabini et al., 2021), and family emerges as a key driver of class and minority's effects on LOs (Giancola & Salmieri 2020).

The relevance of these factors in shaping LOs shows almost no significant effects of selected independent variables. Yet, some exceptions exist. First, being an expert in the VET field has a slightly negative effect on the importance assigned to relations with peers and social relations in general, suggesting that these actors may consider strictly relational aspects a bit less critical than others. Second, Finnish respondents stand out for their significantly lower consideration of teachers as actors influencing learners' LOs compared

to other countries. However, despite these differences, the relevance of meso-level factors is not questioned in any case.

Figure 16. Marginal means of items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) at the meso-level according to the post term.



H3: Institutional factors within and outside the education field

Respondents generally acknowledge the relevance of macro-level dimensions – with some differences. Indeed, although employment and youth policies assume a more prominent role in the future, as suggested by H3, this shift is not enough to challenge the primacy of education policies. This pairs with the high relevance in shaping LOs assigned to the education system and schools, suggesting that the overall structure of the education field is one of the most relevant aspects to consider for LOs. Figure 17 summarises the variation across scenarios of items dealing with macro-level dimensions impacting LOs.

However, beyond the primacy of these dimensions, some crucial distinctions emerge among countries of administration (see Figure 18). These primarily concern the relevance assigned to the education system and different types of policies:

- Respondents from Finland, Austria, and Germany rank significantly lower than other countries in terms of the impact of the education system and education policies on LOs, albeit these remain among the most influencing factors.
- Again, Finnish, Austrian and German samples assign significantly lower relevance to employment and youth policies than most others; unlike for education systems and policies, the gap between these countries and the others is, in this case, wider.

- Italian respondents appear as an exception: they are similar to Continental countries in terms of the influence assigned to the education system and employment policies but closer to Southern European ones for education and youth policies.

Figure 17. Marginal means of selected items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) at the macro-level according to the post term.

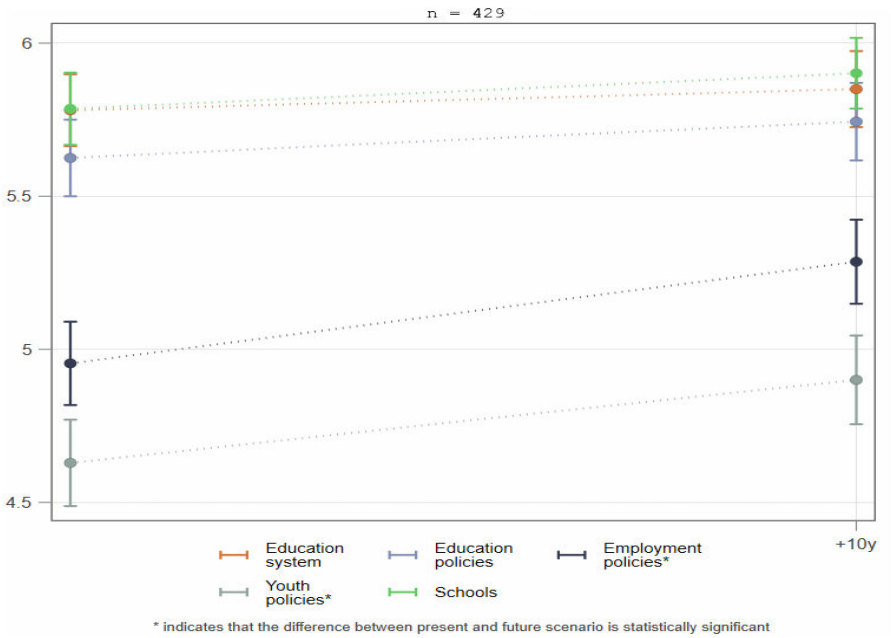
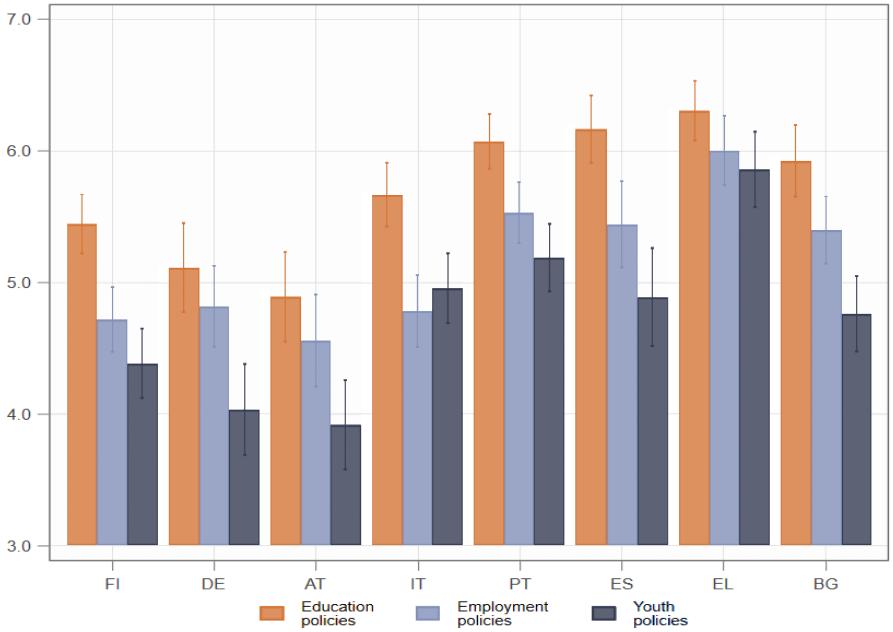


Figure 18. Marginal means of selected items about factors impacting LOs (Q2) according to the country of administration.



The analysis of institutional factors thus appears to reinforce H3, albeit with a necessary corollary. Notably, findings about policies' impact on LOs suggest a significant cleavage within the survey sample between Continental countries and Finland and Southern European countries. In line with the previous chapter, the latter acknowledges LOs'

multidimensionality more, increasingly recognising the potential impact of policies adopted outside the education field. However, Italy also confirms its in-between characteristics, positioning halfway between the two groups, as it did when exploring the relation among alternative scenarios of LOs' understandings.

3.2.2 Future scenarios of factors shaping learning outcomes and cross-level comparison

Building on the issue-specific scenarios above, ancillary aspects of the initial hypotheses are considered here to construct general scenarios. Indeed, despite macro- and meso-dimensions seeming more critical to our respondents, some micro-level factors are still deemed crucial. In this section, we perform an exploratory factor analysis to identify underlying structures among various dimensions in the future scenario.[17] Resulting factors are labelled according to the dimensions with the highest loadings, and factor score estimates are used in a K-means cluster analysis to look for alternative scenarios in our sample. Finally, a multinomial regression is performed to explore the relation of resulting scenarios with selected socio-demographic characteristics and countries of administration.[18]

Alternative future patterns of factors shaping learning outcomes

Three main factors result from our exploratory factor analysis, identifying the main structures that may shape LOs in the future:

- *Institutional characteristics*: This factor presents the highest loadings on institutional policy dimensions, but it also includes other features that specifically pertain to the education field, such as the role of teachers, trainers, and schools;
- *Structural inequalities*: It primarily includes individual dimensions linked to structural inequalities; however, it is worth noting that social class, despite still having high loadings on this factor, is more consistently linked with the third factor, while the opposite is true for place;
- *Social environment:* It shows a higher connection with relational dimensions and with family in particular, but high loadings on this factor are also observed for the relevance of self-efficacy and social class, which both show a high correlation with family background, also in line with the academic literature on the topic (Wiederkehr et al., 2015).

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17 The number of factors (4) has been determined by considering eigenvalues greater than 1, and they contribute to explain 62% of the total variance.

18 The number of observations included in this model is relatively low (394) due to the cross-cutting elimination of missing values in Q2 items. Yet, all variables that are considered in further analysis – i.e., country of administration, area of expertise, and actor types – still maintain a number of observations above 30, which is the established minimum threshold for the analysis. Moreover, the sample size is also above the minimum thresholds recommended for the application of exploratory factor analysis (Beavers et al. 2013).

These cross-cutting dimensions are thus used to investigate the main future scenarios of factors shaping LOs resulting from the sample. Observations are gathered into four clusters (see also Table 7):

1. *Intersectional*: these respondents stand out for their relatively higher consideration of individual factors and structural inequalities' influence on LOs.
2. *Institutional*: Respondents in this group – the smallest one – consider institutional dimensions and aspects specifically related to the education environment as the essential factors while valuing very low the importance of structural inequalities; interestingly, despite showing low scores on the importance of the social environment, they still have above average consideration of self-efficacy.
3. *Multidimensional*: the largest cluster of respondents presents all above-average scores, and they especially stand out for their consideration of structural inequalities, suggesting that they value all dimensions worth being considered in the future;
4. *Social*: The last group includes respondents who consider the social environment as highly important for LOs in the future, potentially acknowledging a connection of class and self-efficacy with relational dimensions and family background.

Table 7. Clusters' means for each factor score estimate and for each selected item about future factors impacting LOs (B2).

	Intersectional	Institutional	Multidimensional	Social	TOT
F1: *Institutional dimensions*	-1.42	0.44	0.66	-0.34	0.00
F2: *Structural inequalities*	-0.27	-1.10	0.86	-0.29	0.00
F3: *Social environment*	-1.16	-0.62	0.57	0.28	0.00
B2.1 *Gender*	3.21	1.67	4.91	2.89	3.48
B2.3 *Social class*	4.77	3.40	6,21	5,73	5.35
B2.4 *Minority/migration*	4.32	2.49	5.93	4.54	4.66
B2.7 *Self-efficacy*	4.55	6.06	6.19	5.99	5.85
B2.9 *Family*	4.65	4.97	6.28	6.08	5.73
B2.11 *Teachers/Trainers*	4.39	6.31	6.46	6.05	5.99
B2.12 *Education system*	4.02	6.36	6.53	5.51	5.81
B2.14 *Employment policies*	3.82	5.64	6.06	4.97	5.32
B2.16 *Schools*	4.18	6.04	6.57	5.85	5.89
B2.17 *Place*	3.98	3.39	6.03	4.94	4.92
Number of observations	62	70	147	115	394
%	*15.7*	*17.8*	*37.31*	*29.2*	*100.0*

Scenarios resulting from cluster analysis call for reconsidering the prevalence of macro- and meso-dimensions hinted at in the previous section. Despite these remaining crucial for most respondents, their relevance must be considered, given the seemingly higher consideration of other factors in some scenarios. This is especially true for the *intersectional* respondents, who still have a key role in structural inequalities in the future, and for social ones, who deem learners' social environment and class position as core dimensions for LOs. The *multidimensional* cluster shows a more complex picture, which

prompts various factors that need to be considered together with institutional ones. This also potentially hints at a difference in how institutional dimensions are framed across different scenarios.

On the one hand, *multidimensional* respondents may see them as related to other factors, also potentially assigning a high role to these dimensions for their role in addressing the influence of structural inequalities and social environment on LOs. On the other hand, *institutional* respondents may be more inclined towards an "equality of opportunity" framework, in which institutions set the stage where learners act to reach certain LOs according to their self-efficacy. This latter factor also shows a potentially different framing in this cluster compared to the *social* one, in which self-efficacy's relevance seems paired with that of family and class.

Who endorses different scenarios?

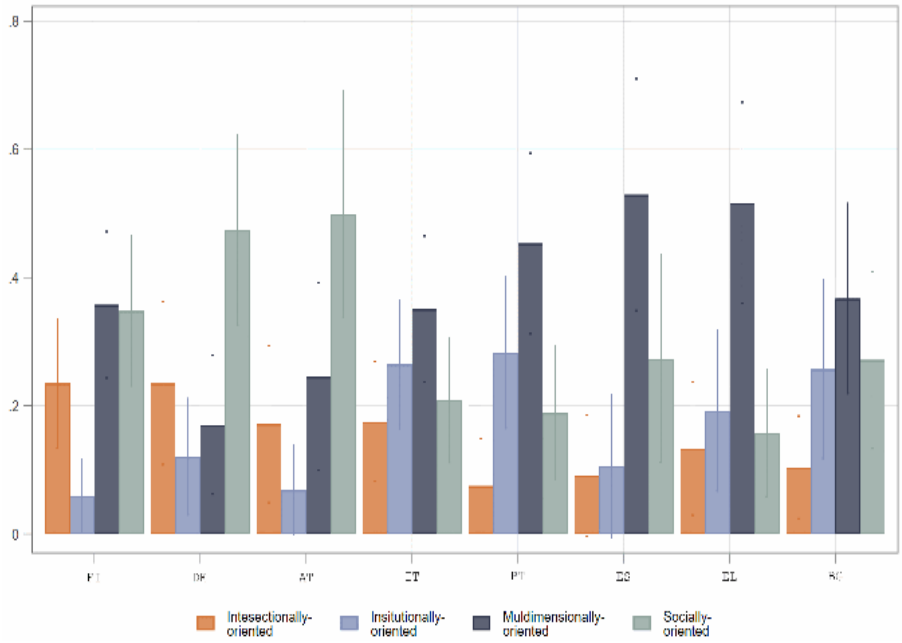
Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and country of administration are related to their endorsement of specific scenarios. Gender seems to play a role, with male respondents showing a significantly greater likelihood than females of foreseeing an *intersectional* scenario. Moreover, differences among types of actors show that both researchers and private actors have a lower probability of forecasting an *institutional* scenario than a *social* or a *multidimensional* one.

Yet, despite associating with this aspect, such effects of private and research actors may be due to different characteristics of the *institutional* cluster. On the one hand, private actors may be less present in this group for the high consideration of institutional dimensions of such respondents; on the other hand, researchers may be less likely to forecast this scenario for the low relevance assigned by respondents in this cluster to structural inequalities. A further peculiarity concerns the higher probability of civil society respondents forecasting the *intersectional* scenario.

Finally, as shown in Figure 19, countries of administration have an essential effect in positioning respondents among clusters, also strengthening the previously noted specificity of Austria, Germany and Finland:

- Austrian and German respondents stand out for their higher likelihood of forecasting the *social* scenario, significantly higher than all other national samples except the Finnish one;
- Conversely, the *institutional* scenario is the most unlikely to occur for Finnish respondents;
- Responses from Portugal are less likely to be in the *intersectional* cluster, while Greek ones are most likely to be associated with the *multidimensional* cluster.

Figure 19. Predictive margins of clusters according to country.



3.3 Conclusions

This chapter has addressed which factors are shaping and will shape LOs within CLEAR countries by considering responses on the Q2 items. When looking at patterns of change, our results suggest that survey respondents are not seeing significant transformations over the next decade on this issue. General features of the education field also result among the most relevant factors together with social class, self-efficacy and family background, which the academic literature also suggests being related (Wiederkehr et al., 2015). Surprisingly, gender has not been considered a relevant dimension influencing LOs by most survey respondents despite being identified as a critical dimension in education scholarship (Gilborn, 2015; Gross et al., 2016). However, we found different scenarios, and such general patterns do not occur evenly across various groups.

In particular, after identifying three main underlying dimensions among considered items – i.e., institutional characteristics, structural inequalities, and social environment – four future understandings of factors influencing LOs emerge among respondents. These are differently represented within the sample but contribute to distinguishing futures forecasted by respondents based on the prevalence assigned to particular dimensions. Respondents more frequently identify two scenarios: a *multidimensional* future in which all the dimensions above will matter and one in which the relation between learners' social environment, class and self-efficacy will jointly contribute to shaping LOs. Other minoritarian scenarios forecasted by respondents include either a dominant role of institutional factors and self-efficacy or a relative prevalence of structural inequalities, albeit within a context where most factors have a limited impact. Yet, beyond the prevalence of more multifaceted scenarios, it is again necessary to consider groups' specificity among respondents.

A first significant distinction emerges in the sensitivity of some actors towards structural inequalities. Respondents from the research field particularly tend to value these factors' influence on LOs more, hinting at a cleavage between the academic community and practitioners on the acknowledgement of dimensions widely addressed in the scholarship, such as gender or minority and migration background. According to survey respondents, the analysis of alternative scenarios seems to reinforce their relatively minor importance and the low permeation of the contemporary academic debate in some groups. This is also suggested by the fact that respondents oriented towards a seemingly intersectional conception of factors influencing LOs are the least represented in the sample. However, the higher probability of civil society actors being part of this category may point to an increased openness of some actors towards these themes.

Secondly, national debates present their specific characteristics, contributing to delineating some differences between countries of administration. The prominent cleavage is between Austria, Germany and Finland against Southern European countries and Bulgaria, following the distinction between vocational and general education systems (Lavrijsen & Nicaise, 2016). Specificities emerge from the lower consideration of institutional factors by the first group, which is significantly pronounced when considering employment and youth policies' relevance, as in the case of Finland. Moreover, these countries also stand out when looking at the influence of the social environment on LOs, with German and Austrian respondents being more likely to forecast a *social* future scenario.

This chapter thus brings other evidence to the contentiousness of LOs' understandings in the EU, strengthening the conclusions of the previous section about the divergence between countries and shedding light on possible blind spots in the debate about LOs within different fields. Being aware of what is influencing LOs is a crucial issue for their construction at the European level. Yet, the findings above suggest that if multiple voices and views are not adequately considered, this objective may find an obstacle in the diverse framing of the debate about LOs among different actors and within different national contexts.

4. Future mismatches among desired and forecasted scenarios in learning outcomes

An important part of scenario building is represented by desirable scenarios and their relation with futures considered likely. In the previous chapters, we mainly focus on alternative scenarios forecasted by respondents, highlighting diverging future visions. However, we haven't considered whether these futures are deemed desirable by survey respondents. This is the main topic of this chapter. Desirable scenarios are taken into account by analysing responses on the items of B6, focused on policy trends in LOs, and compared with the corresponding likely scenarios resulting from A6 items. This allows us to shed light on intergroup gaps not just about alternative forecasts but also on diverse

desirable realisations of the future they pursue and on the perceived distance between current and wished trends. In the economy of this report, we didn't focus on all 20 items in Q6, but on three main thematic areas, and within them on three items each.

These are Q6.4 (relevance of LOs' statistical measurement in policymaking), Q6.7 (policy stakeholders' opposition to LOs' standardisation) and Q6.11 (use of LOs for learners' categorisation) for what concerns the first macro-area; Q6.1 (declining importance of formal education for school-to-work transition), Q6.2 (relevance of credentials for dividing social classes) and Q6.15 (LOs defined by formalised descriptors) for the second; and Q6.14 (growing importance of "merit" in the debate), Q16 (role of public education in vehiculating common values) and Q6.17 (increase in groups advocating the transmission of their values through education) for the third. Each pair of likely/desirable items has been analysed using multivariate regression to take care of the potentially different effects of all selected predictors distinctly for likely and desirable scenarios[19]. Due to the variety of issues at stake and the different structures of the question, general scenarios have not been built in this chapter. Still, each issue-specific one has been analysed more in-depth, considering the influence of selected variables.[20]

4.1 Descriptive statistics and basic hypotheses

The three macro-areas of Q6 are crucial topics for constructing LOs, which contribute to defining how they are defined, which actors may influence them, and which purposes they have. The first, identified by items 4, 7 and 11, concerns the increasing importance of the statistical measurement of LOs and its effects. The second, studied through items 1, 2 and 15, deals with the demonopolisation of education and, consequently, of the capacity to define LOs and (under-)achievement. Finally, the last one, summarised in items 14, 16 and 17, considers the process of individualisation of education from different angles, including its potential loss of relevance as a vehicle of shared norms and values.

Q6.4,7,11: Quantitative measuring of LOs

Survey respondents think that it is likely that the statistical measurement of LOs will gain relevance for policymakers, showing a relatively high mean score on item A6.4 (4.95) and a narrow distribution of answers. However, the situation changes when the desirability of this trend is taken into account. While the average score does not decrease much (4.69), the distribution appears more scattered and stretched downward. This would suggest

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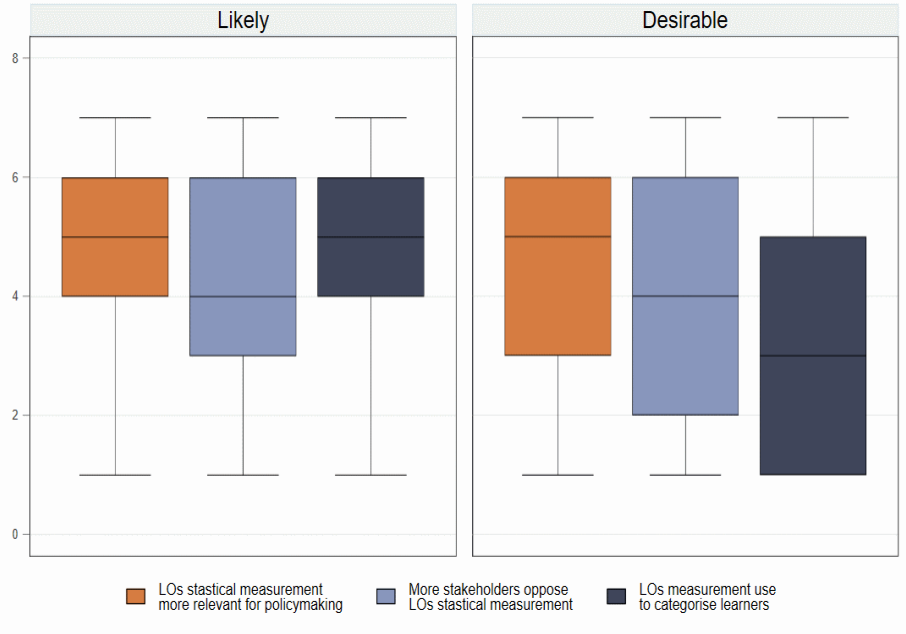
19 Multivariate regression allows one to take into account more than one related dependent variable at once, showing separated coefficients for each of them but still allowing the comparability among them. It has been chosen in this case because, unlike in the previous chapter, we are not interested in the general effect of selected socio-demographic variables and countries, but we want to consider their influence on both likely and desirable scenarios and compare them to look at potentially more likely than desired issues or vice versa.

20 Regression results for this chapter are provided in Tables 20-22 in the Annex.

that, despite respondents being concordant in forecasting the increased relevance of LOs' quantitative measuring and averagely favourable, the interpretation of such a shift may be contentious. Looking at descriptive statistics about other items further reinforces this idea. Indeed, the average ranked likelihood of policy stakeholders opposing LO's quantitative measurement and questioning its reliability is 4.27, and its average desirability is even lower (3.88), but again, responses show high variability. Finally, using LOs as a tool for learners' categorisation is seen as likely (4.89) but not desirable (3.38) on average, suggesting that even those thinking that enhancing LOs' measurement on its aims. Descriptive statistics seem thus to strengthen our claim about the increasing dominance of a statistically-based understanding of LOs (see Deliverable D2.2). Still, it also suggests that some groups of respondents may see limits in this conception.

Figure 20. Boxplot of the distribution of selected items about likely/desirable trends (Q6) dealing with LOs measurement.

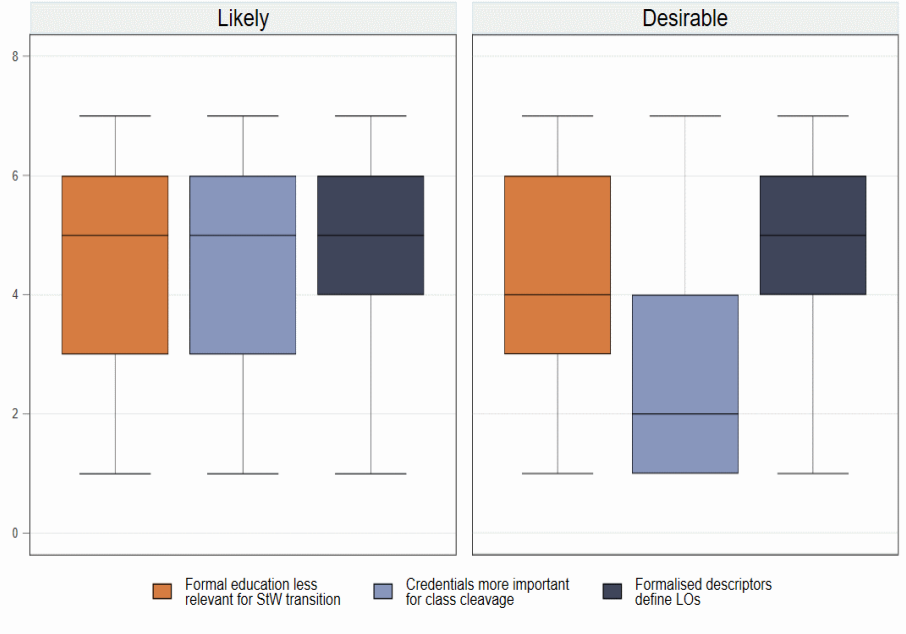


Q6.1,2,15: The demonopolisation of education

A similar framework also emerges from descriptive statistics of the second group of items. Indeed, the loss of relevance of formal education for school-to-work transition is seen as slightly less desirable (4.27) than likely (4.45) on average, with the distribution of responses appearing stretched in both cases (see Figure 21). According to our respondents, the persisting role of education credentials in defining class cleavages averagely appears much more likely (4.61) than desired (2.98). However, as discussed in the second chapter, formal education and formal evaluation tools represent a terrain where significant divergences emerge in our sample, suggesting conflict may arise even in this case. This does not seem the case, however, of the introduction of formalised descriptors of learning levels and qualifications in the LOs' definition, which show high mean scores on both likelihood (5.13) and desirability (4.78), hinting at a certain level of

consensus among respondents about the necessity of a clear definition of LOs and alignment with EU objectives of comparability among national qualification frameworks (Deliverable D2.2).

Figure 21. Boxplot of the distribution of selected items about likely/desirable trends (Q6) dealing with the de-monopolisation of education.



Q6.14,16,17: The individualisation of education

The third item group also presents important divergences between likely and desirable scenarios. Indeed, the importance of discourses about "merit" and "excellence" in the policy debate is averagely seen as likely to occur (4.97). Still, its desirability seems more questioned, showing a mean score of 4.19 and a scattered distribution (see Figure 22). Among selected items, Q6.16 represents an exception in the sense that it is the only one presenting a higher mean score in the desirable scenario (5.70) than in the likely one (4.97), suggesting that respondents averagely forecast and agree that the public education will maintain a role in vehiculating shared norms and values. Yet, this role does not seem unquestioned since groups advocating their right to transmit their values through education are seen as likely to occur on average (4.81), albeit not much desired by respondents (3.67).

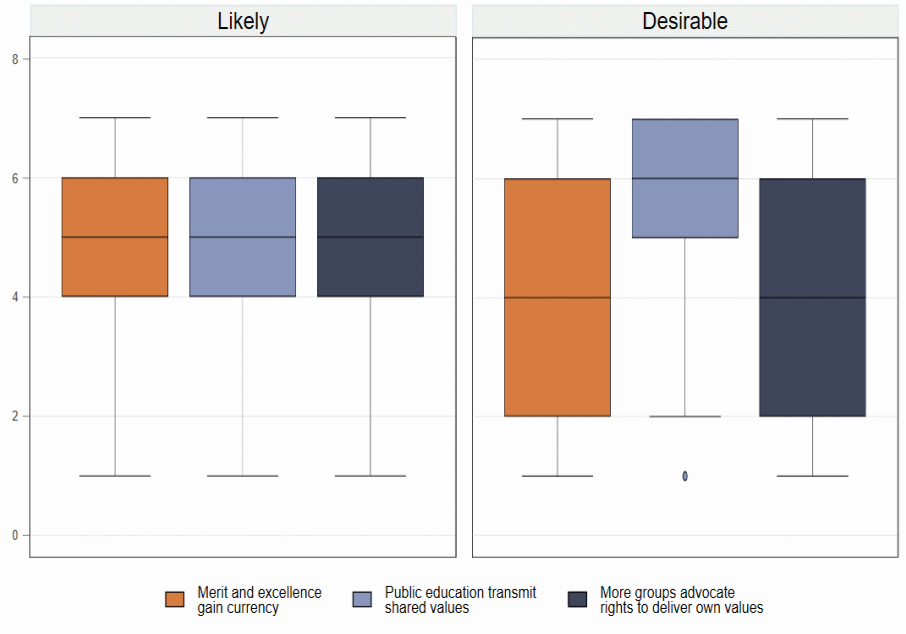
Guiding hypothesis

Based on hints from descriptive statistics and project findings presented in previous reports (Deliverables D2.2, D2.3), four main hypotheses are formulated:

1. Statistical measurement of LOs will increasingly become dominant according to respondents, and this is accepted by most of them. However, contentiousness still arises, whereas some groups may disagree, and the use of statistically measured LOs is uncertain.

2. Formal education and credentials will likely maintain a role in the transition to the labour market and the definition of social classes. Still, this role appears increasingly questioned and potentially unevenly acknowledged across groups despite agreeing on the necessity of a comparable framework of qualifications and learning levels' descriptors.
3. Public and formal education is seen as maintaining an important social role. Still, individualisation processes are simultaneously pushing it towards an increased pervasiveness of the neoliberal discourse about education and towards a growing relativisation of values to be transmitted through education.

Figure 22. Boxplot of the distribution of selected items about likely/desirable trends (Q6) dealing with the individualisation of education.



4.2 Discrepancies between desired and forecasted futures of education

Unlike previous chapters, this section does not consider patterns of change; instead, it considers divergences between what is identified as likely and desirable for survey respondents. The aim is to look at the relation between these scenarios across selected socio-demographic variables and countries of administration to test and refine the aforementioned hypotheses.

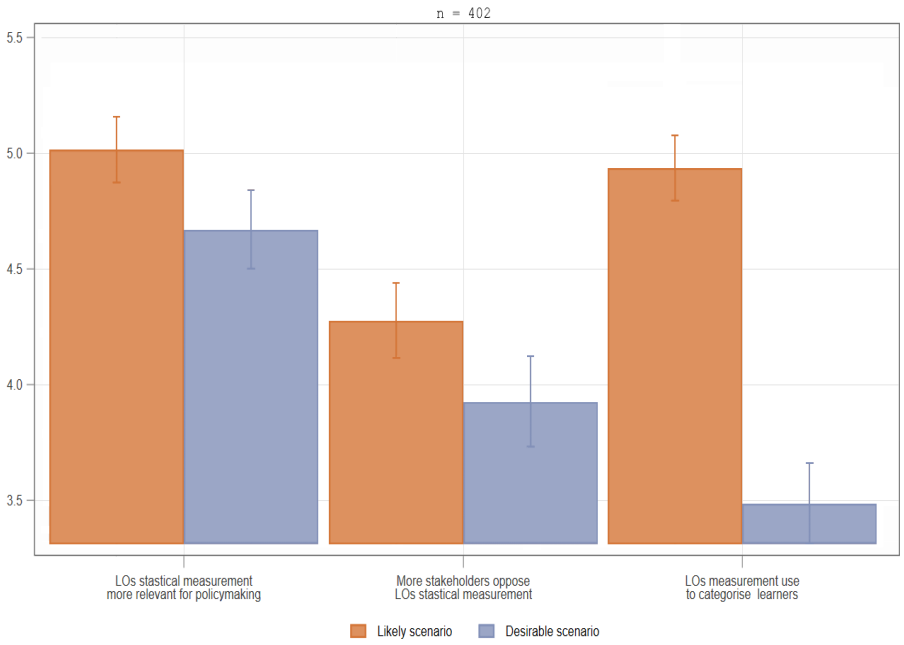
H1: The pervasiveness and contentiousness of LOs statistical measurement

Analysis of item 6.4 seems to confirm that respondents look at the quantitative turn in LOs as very likely, and – at the general level – they appear to consider it quite desirable. Policy stakeholders' opposition is also deemed probable, but its low desirability reinforces the overall favourable attitude of respondents towards the quantitative measurement of LOs. However, item 6.11 points at a first contentious element in the way LOs are implemented: while respondents tend to think that it is likely that they will be used to sort

out and categorise learners, the desirability of this trend appears very low (see Figure 23). A first crack thus emerges in the overall dominance of statistically measured LOs.

As mentioned, multiple times in other project outputs (Deliverables D2.2, D2.3), the CLEAR project aims to depart from the exclusive quantitative conception of LOs not just to understand their socially constructed nature better but also to move away from the mere categorisation of learners into high or low achievers, which is seen as closely linked to implementing LOs only based on statistical measurement. In this sense, the opposed trend in desirable scenarios between the growing centrality of quantitatively defined LOs and their use for learners' categorisation potentially contains tension, which may be relevant in the future implementation of LOs. Overall, H1 seems confirmed: while the quantitative turn in LOs is seen as very likely to happen with relatively low opposition from policy stakeholders, the seed of conflict still appears in respondents' divergence between the likelihood and desirability of the aims of such LOs' implementation.

Figure 23. Marginal means of selected items about likely/desirable trends (Q6) dealing with the statistical measurement of LOs.



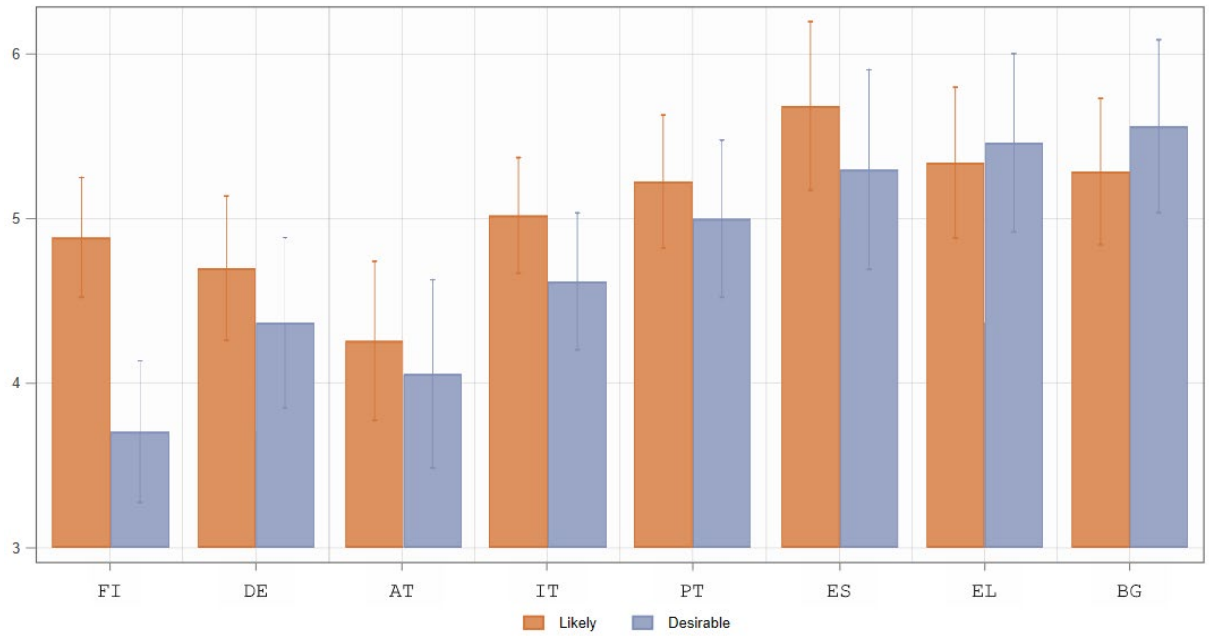
The divergence and potential for conflict, consistent with what has been noted in chapter 2 about the variety of LOs' aims recognised by respondents, is further strengthened when looking at how socio-demographic variables and countries of administration interact with these items. Indeed, the quantitative turn in LOs' measurement is considered very likely in most countries, with only Austria showing significantly lower scores than all others except Germany. The situation is, however, overturned when considering desirable scenarios. Here, consistent differences among countries emerge (see Figure 24):

- Finnish and Austrian respondents appear very sceptical about LOs' statistical measurement, with the former especially showing desirability scores significantly lower than all other countries. Moreover, Finland is the only country in the sample

for which the implementation of LOs' statistical measurement is significantly more likely than desirable.

- Italian and German respondents were positioned in the middle, presenting scores that were not significantly different from Austrian and Portuguese ones but still higher than Finnish and lower than the remaining countries.
- Responses from Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Greece show significantly higher desirability than most other countries, with the last two being substantially higher than all others.

Figure 24. Marginal means of item Q6.4 ("LOs statistical measurement will become more important for policymakers") in the likely and desirable scenario according to the country of administration.



The analysis of other items further enriches this framework. Indeed, the opposition of policy stakeholders is seen as very likely in all Southern European countries and Bulgaria and significantly higher in all these countries compared to Austria, Germany and Finland. Yet, Italian and Bulgarian respondents see this issue as significantly more likely than desirable, suggesting that they forecast a conflicting scenario while still being generally favourable towards the statistical measurement of LOs. Conversely, the Bulgarian and Greek samples emerge as peculiar on the third considered item.

While respondents from other countries follow the general trend identifying the use of LOs to categorise learners as more likely than desirable, this comparison is not significant for Bulgarian and less consistent for Greek ones, who also show significantly higher scores than other countries on the desirability of this trend. Such findings thus add another layer to what emerged in the second chapter, in which these two countries were presented as more oriented towards the future use of LOs for learners' assessment and towards formal evaluation tools, such as grades. Indeed, scenarios built in this section reinforce the

identification of such trends and show that respondents from these countries look at them as generally desirable.

Moreover, differences on the last item do not emerge only by country. While other issues do not show particular differences among socio-demographic groups, categorising learners through LOs shows some significant cleavages in the desirable scenario. First, male respondents think this trend is slightly more desirable than female ones. Second, being a national actor or a private actor has a positive effect on the attitudes towards LOs as a categorisation tool. In the latter's case, this again adds to the findings presented in the second chapter, in which private actors emerged as forecasting a future scenario of top achievers having more relevance as a policy target. Thus, as for Bulgarian and Greek respondents, the fact that these actors think that learners' categorisation is not just likely but also desirable strengthens the idea of a greater pervasiveness of the neoliberal discourse about education in these groups, which brings a push towards the hierarchisation of people in education and training (Keep & Mayhew, 2014; Owen & de St. Croix, 2020).

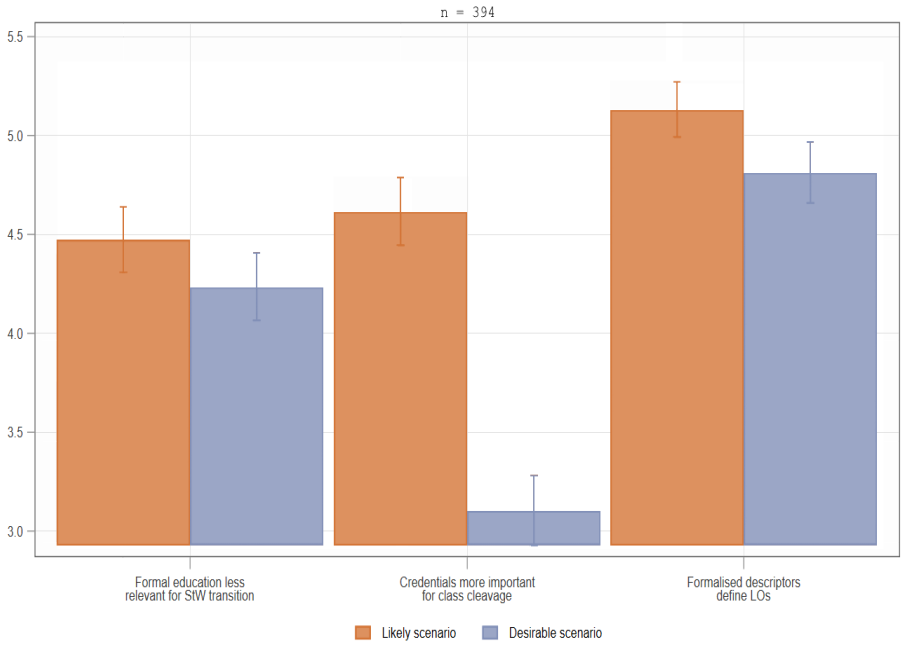
H2: What role of formal education?

Formal education seems confirmed as an essential supporting element for the transition to the labour market. However, respondents consider this situation significantly more likely than desirable at the general level. The growing importance of national qualification frameworks in the definition of LOs also shows similar patterns despite being generally considered as both quite likely and desirable. The gap between likelihood and desirability is much wider when considering the role of credentials in separating upper and lower classes, which – albeit quite likely – appears generally not desired by respondents (see Figure 25). Again, as hinted at in the second chapter and as suggested in H2, credentials and their functions appear to be highly contentious issues within our sample.

The contentiousness of issues of demonopolisation and informalisation of education is further confirmed when looking at differences among groups. Opposing trends at the country level on the first item can be observed in the Austrian sample, which sees the loss of relevance of formal education for school-to-work transition as more desirable than likely, and in the Spanish and Italian ones, which instead show the opposite pattern, deeming this development as more likely than desirable in their national contexts. Most significant differences by country emerge, however, in the desirability of credentials as a class-separating element, which is shown in Figure 26 and follows national peculiarities that emerged up to this point:

- On the one hand, Greek and Bulgarian respondents consider the persisting relevance of education credentials significantly more desirable than all others.
- On the other hand, Finnish, Italian and Austrian ones show lower levels of desirability, which, in the latter case, are also significantly lower than all other national samples.

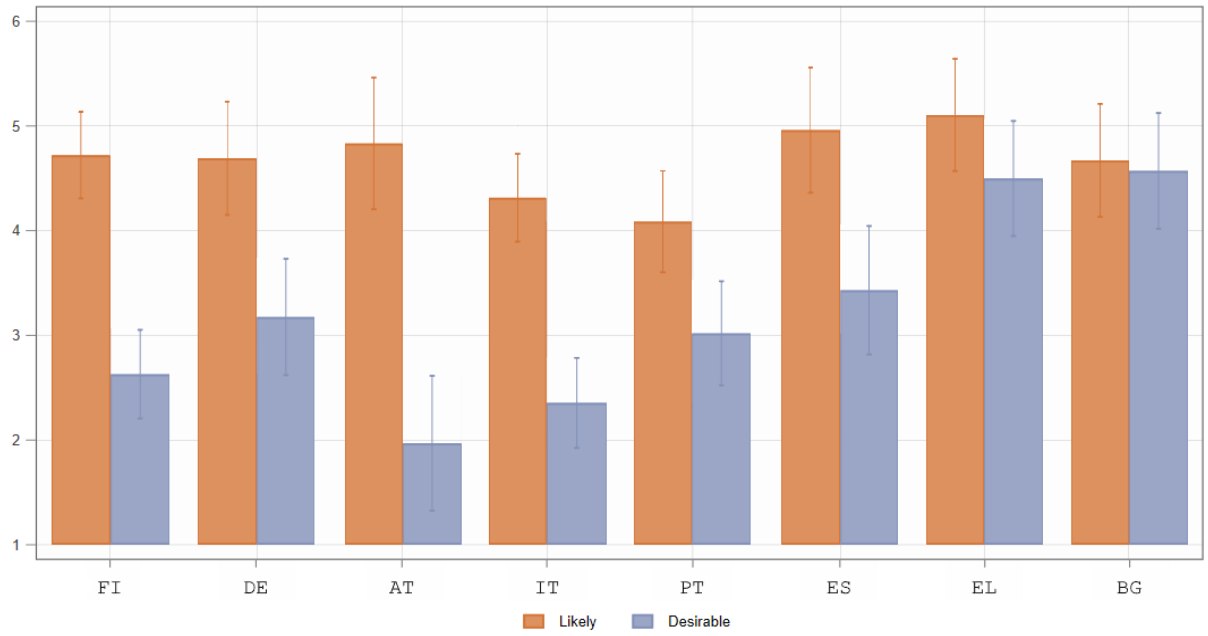
Figure 25. Marginal means of selected items about likely/desirable trends (Q6) dealing with the de-monopolisation trends in education.



The Greek and Bulgarian samples are thus confirmed as the most inclined towards maintaining and strengthening stratification mechanisms based on formal tools within education and training. On the contrary, other respondents – especially those from Austria, Finland and Italy – show more negative attitudes towards the social stratification role of credentials. However, while in the Austrian sample this is coupled with a relatively high desirability of decline in the relevance of formal education for labour market transition, the opposite is true for the Italian one.

Similar trends and attitudes were already identified in Deliverable D2.2 in previous WPs of the CLEAR project, where they link the higher acknowledgement of informal and non-formal LOs to a better coordination between education and the labour market in these countries. For instance, they note how skills acquired outside formal education are especially relevant in Finland for the integration of some groups at risk of social exclusion, while lifelong learning programmes and initiatives aimed at reskilling and upskilling are increasingly introduced in the Austrian context also to foster the acquisition of skills matching labour market's demands (Ibid.). Italy probably needs a separate discourse, as these processes are still ongoing. On the one hand, the importance of non-formal education has already been recognised in this country for some vulnerable groups, mainly young migrants (Bonizzoni & Pozzi, 2012). On the other hand, the relatively widespread perception of public education being downsized (Grimaldi & Serpieri, 2013) – as it will emerge more clearly afterwards – may raise doubts among respondents about the loss of relevance of formal education as a whole.

Figure 26. Marginal means of Q6.2 ("Education credentials will be more important in separating upper and lower classes") in the likely and desirable scenario according to the country of administration.



In addition to the country of administration, socio-demographic variables play a role even in this case. For instance, dealing with education or labour market policies has opposing effects on the attitudes towards formal education's role, with the first positively affecting them and the second negatively impacting them. This may suggest a detachment between these two worlds and a potentially growing distrust of market actors towards formal education, as opposed to education ones pushing to maintain their position. As for the impact of actor types, the wish to strengthen their positions may also be behind the significantly positive effect of being a public actor – both national and local – on the desirability assigned to the implementation of national qualification frameworks, which is, however, considered both likely and desirable by all groups of respondents.

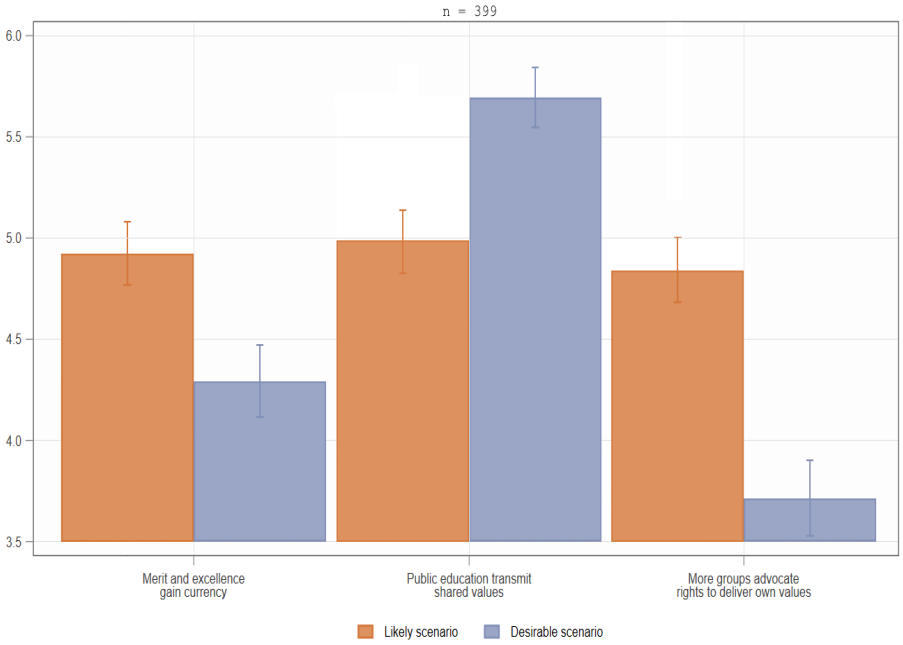
H3: Diverging trends of individualisation in education

Processes of individualisation of education are explored in Q6 by looking at the pervasiveness of the neoliberal discourse about "meritocracy" and the relativisation and the parcelling out of values within European societies. Here, important divergences between desirable and likely scenarios emerge on all dimensions, showing how – at the general level – respondents think that a shift towards a more individualistic view of education and training is not desirable but likely. However, they also tend to forecast a still relevant role for public education in the future.

In particular, "merit" and "excellence" are seen by respondents as assuming an increasingly central role in the debate about education. Still, the significant difference between the likelihood and the desirability of such an issue hints at the potential emergence of conflicts within this process. The role of public education in vehiculating

shared norms and values is generally considered very favourable by respondents, as witnessed by the high desirability shown in item 6.16 and the low desirability in item 6.17. However, es emerging from Figure 27, despite public education being forecasted as holding this function in the future, respondents also deem it likely that the role of groups challenging this position and advocating the transmission of their values through education will grow. H3 claims thus appear to be reinforced by the tension between public education's role and the push towards individualisation.

Figure 27. Marginal means of selected items about likely/desirable trends (Q6) dealing with individualisation trends in education.



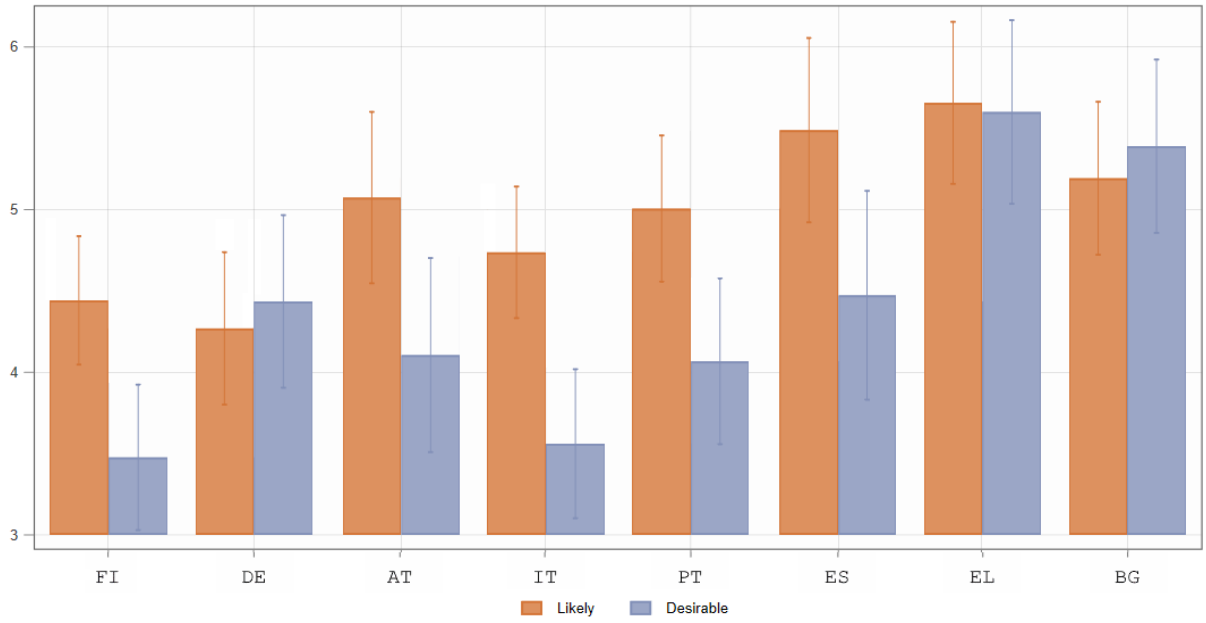
Yet, such general trends show some variations among countries of administration. First, the desirability of the meritocratic discourse seems to be a key distinguishing element (see Figure 28):

- On the one hand – following the positive attitudes shown up to this point for the neoliberal discourse about education – Bulgarian and Greek respondents show significantly higher desirability scores on this item. The growing importance of merit in the education discourse also seems to be well received in the Spanish and German samples, which show significantly higher values than all other countries except for Greece and Bulgaria;
- On the other hand, the desirability of meritocracy is particularly low for Italian and Finnish respondents, presenting scores significantly lower than all other countries and – together with Portugal and Austria – significantly more likelihood than desirability.

National peculiarities also emerge on other items. Despite not emerging significant differences among countries in the desirable scenario, the likelihood of public education maintaining a role in transmitting shared values is significantly lower in Italy than in all

other countries. Finally, the advocacy of groups to deliver their values through education reproduces a frequently noted cleavage among countries of administration, with Austria, Germany, Finland and Italy showing significantly lower desirability than all other countries on this issue.

Figure 28. Marginal means of Q6.14 ("Merit and excellence will gain currency in the policy debate") in the likely and desirable scenario according to the country of administration.



If related to the findings exposed in the previous chapters, the distinctions emerging on this issue are not surprising. Indeed, the meritocratic discourse – as the consequent push towards learners' stratification – is a constitutive part of the neoliberal discourse about education (Mijs, 2019; Owen & de St. Croix, 2020; Robertson & Nestore, 2022), which has already been identified as more pervasive in countries such as Bulgaria and Greece. This does not mean that respondents from other countries do not identify such trends, which are considered likely across all national samples, but rather that the mi smatch between the likely and the desirable scenarios vary from country to country, with some of them suggesting a less positive attitude towards neolibearlisation of education.

The discrepancy between forecasted and desired futures is significantly higher among Italian and Finnish respondents. Indeed, despite the relevant differences between these countries, the academic literature suggests that in both cases, the neoliberalisation of education is taking hold against previous paradigms and is also connected with a push towards LOs implementation. On the one hand, the ongoing "evaluation turn" in the Italian system has been linked to various forms of privatisation, also involving the inclusion of a private sector ethos within public education fostered by a strong push on the "merit" discourse (Grimaldi, 2013; Grimaldi & Serpieri, 2013). On the other hand, many authors have highlighted how Finland is progressively departing from an egalitarian conception of education to moving towards ideas of "equality of opportunity" and

competitiveness, which are connected to the risk of rising social and spatial inequalities (Tervasmäki et al., 2020; Kettunen & Prokkola, 2021).

4.3 Conclusions

This chapter has considered what respondents would see as the best educational developments in opposition to what they deem likely to happen. In this sense, the findings presented here allow us to put into perspective previously identified future scenarios, focusing more on the potential conflict underlying them. Three main aspects have been investigated: the statistical turn in LOs' measurement, the demonopolisation and (in)formalisation of education, and different processes of educational individualisation. Although distinct, results suggest that these dimensions may be interrelated and connect to general considerations about education status and the pervasiveness of neoliberal conceptions of education across countries, which are the main distinguishing group (see Table 8).

First, as previously noted in the CLEAR project (Deliverable D2.2), the shift towards the quantitative measurement of LOs is deemed generally likely and desirable by survey respondents, strengthening the idea of the future dominance of this definition. This development hides potential conflicts in some national contexts. Indeed, Finnish and Austrian samples show less desirability, while Southern European respondents consider the opposition of policy stakeholders as likely to occur. Moreover, the categorisation of learners through LOs, which may derive from their quantitative implementation (Deliverable D2.2), emerges as highly conflictual in most national samples, showing relevant discrepancies between likelihood and desirability.

Second, a consensus emerges among respondents in the likelihood and desirability of public education maintaining a pivotal role in transmitting shared norms and values. Yet, challenges to this function are identified from various sides, including introducing principles of competitiveness and "merit" and the growth of advocacy for the vehiculation of alternative group values through education. Both these trends are considered more likely than desirable by respondents and potentially draw future lines of conflict in this dimension. The contentiousness is particularly pronounced in the Finnish and Italian samples on the pervasiveness of the meritocratic discourse, coupled in the latter's case with the perception of public education being more at risk of losing its role.

Finally, the relation between formal and informal or non-formal education shows more ambiguous trends at the general level. On the one hand, respondents forecast a progressive loss of relevance of formal education for the transition to the labour market, with diverse degrees of desirability across countries. On the other hand, they also deem as likely the persistence of education credentials as a social stratification tool, despite this being considered little desirable in all countries except for Bulgaria and Greece. This peculiarity is consistent with findings that emerged up to this point in the report, which

has identified these countries as contexts where the neoliberal discourse about education – with related emphasis on stratification and meritocracy – is most pervasive.

Table 8. Differences in marginal means between the likely and the desirable scenarios per country (only significant comparisons shown; negative values mean more likely than desirable).

	AT	BG	DE	EL	ES	FI	IT	PT	TOT
_4 LOs statistical measurement more relevant						-1.18***			-0.35**
_7 Policy stakeholders oppose LOs	-0.69*						-1.03***		-0.35**
_11 LOs use to categorise learners	-2.75***		-1.11**	-0.90**		-1.76***	-2.03	-1.27***	-1.45***
_1 Formal education loses relevance for labour market							-0.76**		-0.24*
_2 Credentials relevant to separate social classes	-2.86***		-1.52***		-1.53***	-2.09***	-1.96***	-1.07***	-1.51***
_15 LOs defined by formal descriptors							-0.62**		-0.32***
_14 "Merit" gains currency	-0.97**				-1.01**	-0.97***	-1.18***	-0.94**	-0.63***
_16 Public education vehiculates shared values			0.84**	0.91**		0.66**	1.61***		0.72***
_17 Groups advocate the right to deliver own values	-1.25***		-1.43***		-0.89*	-1.19***	-1.59***	-0.80**	-1.13***

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

Overall, comparing the likelihood and desirability of different scenarios strengthens the idea that change in education and LOs' implementation will be conflictual (Deliverables D2.2, D2.3). However, the battleground of LOs does not seem to assume the same shape, especially when considering national contexts. Bulgarian and Greek respondents have generally positive attitudes towards the quantitative turn in LOs and neoliberal understandings of education and LOs. Conversely, such developments seem highly contentious in countries such as Italy and Finland, which potentially clash with consolidated conceptions of (public) education. Finally, Finnish respondents stand out again together with Austrian ones for the general opposition towards standardisation in

education, expressed in the limited desirability of LOs' quantitative measurement, education credentials and in the higher importance assigned to informal education.

5. Learning outcomes and education in crisis scenarios

Within this report, as in other CLEAR outputs (Deliverables D2.2, D2.3), we argue that learning outcomes (LOs) are tools depending on and affecting the broader societal contexts in which they are entrenched. As such, they may undergo sudden and unexpected changes, whether short-lived or with long-lasting effects, emblematically represented by systemic crises. The latter can be understood as shocks that question some of the foundation elements of a given society and lay the grounds for change in its structures and institutions, including the education field. The 2008 financial crisis and the more recent Covid-19 pandemic are examples of systemic crises that profoundly impacted education within EU countries. Nevertheless, other crises are also affecting our societies, such as the environmental one or the rise of global conflicts.

For this reason, together with the definition of likely and desirable scenarios, which assume a more or less straightforward development of the future of education, the present report also considers crisis scenarios. Such scenarios were addressed via open questions asking respondents to describe how LOs and the education system of their countries would change in the face of a new systemic crisis. This also allowed us to go beyond within-sample generalisations and hear the voice and perspectives of respondents first-hand and in-depth, directly quoting their responses.

Therefore, this chapter approaches the construction of crisis scenarios by relying on qualitative methods to analyse responses to question A7. In particular, responses have been manually coded following a deductive strategy to examine the main concepts and visions emerging from them. Then, results are reported by focusing on three main dimensions: how respondents have framed crises and related effects on the education field, the impact on LOs, and possible aggravating factors or solutions. Quotes from responses have been reported here with minimal information about respondents and in an anonymised format to grant their privacy. Since the question was optional and responses were not standardised, we will not generalise findings. Yet, the overall depth and number 321) of responses provide relevant insights into how survey respondents think LOs would change in relation to systemic crises.

5.1 Diverse framing of crises

Systemic crises can take different shapes. Actually, respondents refer to multiple shocks that can affect the education system, suggesting differential impacts according to the nature of such crises. This is evident, for instance, when considering the two most frequently mentioned crises, i.e., the economic and the pandemic one. In both cases, respondents usually start from previous experiences – namely, the 2008 Financial Crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic – to forecast potential future scenarios.

On the one hand, all respondents referring to the economic crisis think that its effects on LO and the education system would be negative. This circumstance is frequently associated with a general defunding, a decrease in the quality of public education, and a strong polarisation of societies along social, economic, and spatial dimensions. These elements are exemplified in the following responses:

> *It depends on the nature of the crisis. Actually, the pandemic has brought schooling back to the centre of the public debate and thus also greater attention to the public resources to be invested. A worsening of the economic or geopolitical framework could instead divert precious resources towards new austerity policies and consequent privatisations or towards armaments. The link between schooling and efficiency in the world of work is likely to become increasingly central, both because families have less money to invest and because of potential cuts in public spending. […]* (male, Italy, 25-34 y.o.)[21]

> *The economic factor is the most important in any country. Economic measures take precedence over the real needs of a well-functioning education system as a fundamental pillar of societal development. As a result, the school has ceased to fulfil its primary function as a social elevator providing equal learning access. There are marked differences in access to education, particularly concerning higher education. […]* (female, Portugal, 45-54 y.o.)

On the other hand, responses about the pandemic are more varied. Some respondents have highlighted the serious impact on learners' and teachers' mental health and social skills and the difficulties and inequalities of distance learning during Covid-19. Others have argued that such a crisis has enabled the education system to take innovative stances, foster its technologisation, and shed light on the importance of planning ahead of time to adapt to external shocks. These alternative claims are visible, for instance, in these excerpts:

> *The pandemic has highlighted major deficits in our education system and institutions. The lack of social mobility, discrimination, and a mental health crisis, none of these deficits have been addressed. Structural change is unlikely in our current very immovable education policy situation. (female, Austria, 18-24 y.o.)*

> *In my region, a pandemic would cause learning outcomes to fall. Skills would increasingly depend on the individual's guts and motivation, as well as on digital skills and tools. A significant proportion of education and teaching staff would no longer be able to cope but would change jobs if employed in other areas. […] A new pandemic would divide people into those who will persevere and choose to cope despite the circumstances and those who cannot cope with the latest adversity. All people, not just teachers and learners, would lose their interpersonal skills and ability to interact in close situations. […] (female, Finland, 45-54 y.o.)*

[21] Translation of all quotes has been done by the report's editors from local languages to English.

The previous COVID-19 crisis has, above all, made inequalities more visible. It has also shown the irreplaceable role of teachers and schools in socialising children and young people. […] (male, Portugal, 65-74 y.o.)

Depending on the type of crisis, there may be some setbacks or progress. However, a critical situation, for example, the COViD-19, may positively lead to progress and technological improvements in learning processes. (female, Spain, 55-64 y.o.)

Another issue many respondents framed as a crisis potentially affecting education is immigration and the related socio-cultural diversification of learners. This has been raised in connection to language problems and the difficulties of integration for learners from a migration background within the context of education systems' limited resources. Although it cannot be generalised for the sample, some German respondents consider immigration a challenge, stressing that their education system is not ready to deal with such changes, especially when intertwined with other crises. This is in line with what has been already noted in our project (Deliverable D2.3) – including CLEAR regional profiles (CLEAR, 2024) – in which the inclusion of people from a migration background is identified as a significant challenge for education. Few exemplary excerpts:

[…] The current influx of immigrants is overwhelming schools and teachers. In most classes, there are pupils who would need additional support, but this is not available due to a lack of staff. If further systemic crises were to occur, difficulties would arise whose consequences would be felt for decades. (female, Germany, 25-34 y.o.)

The education system is already under a lot of pressure and faces various challenges, particularly associated with migration due to the crises mentioned above. Teacher shortages, inadequately equipped school buildings, and too little support for pupils with weak performance… are just some of the challenges that a new crisis would overburden the system in its current state. In particular, it is to be feared that social inequalities will increase. (female, Germany, 35-44 y.o.)

The influx of children with a non-German language of origin without making any change to the current school system can lead to a decline in quality, as is already the case. (female, Germany, 45-54 y.o.)

However, Germany is not the only place where the diversification of learners is framed as a crisis for the education system. As suggested by findings from Chapter 2, the increase of learners from a migration background is seen as a critical challenge also in Finland, although in that case this issue is mainly framed as a language-related obstacle:

The wave of refugees would affect access to quality education. Language problems would be highlighted. […] (female, Finland, 45-54 y.o.)

For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has forced some Ukrainians to flee to Finland. Preparatory teaching exists, but inevitably, the large number of Ukrainian children requires more resources and has a negative impact on learning outcomes, simply for linguistic reasons. (male, Finland, 35-44 y.o.)

The last quote also introduces another crisis mentioned by our respondents, i.e., the rise of armed conflicts in the world, and in the EU neighbouring areas in particular. Within this frame, a twofold effect on education and LOs is assigned to global war. On the one hand, it is seen as a source of distress and increased pressure on teachers and learners, particularly refugee ones. On the other hand, relatedly, some respondents emphasise the indirect consequences of wars on the public debate and the education environments, highlighting the narrowing of spaces for self-expression or critical thinking of learners.

> *Every systemic crisis causes learners worry and often also emotional suffering. The example of Israel and Palestine shows very clearly how great the need is for people to be able to take a position. This is often very unobjective and biased because only a few people are interested in objectivity. People need to be able to attach meaning to the world and belong somewhere to be happy or optimistic. [...]* (male, Austria, 25-34 y.o.)

> *As a matter of fact, it seems to me that we are already experiencing a new systemic crisis that is currently holding back the horizons of many young people and consists of the real threat of climate change, housing shortages, low wages, and armed conflicts that have created an even sharper divide between so-called "Western culture" and the rest. As I see it, it seems to me that there will be an ever-increasing political trend towards a less plural teaching and learning model, one that is more permeable to the exclusion of divisive topics and increasingly shaped to prepare young people for a precarious labour market.* (male, Portugal, 25.34 y.o.)

> *Young people, in particular, are already suffering from ongoing climate change and conflicts. Why invest in the future when it is so uncertain instead of a now and immediate culture of empowerment?* (female, Finland, 55-64 y.o.)

As the above examples show, the reduction of pluralism in education and the increased stress and pressure on learners are not a prerogative of war's influence on education environments. At least two other crises are addressed within analysed responses with similar forecasted consequences: the environmental and political crises. As for the first one, respondents point out two main possible impacts on education and LOs. In addition to the already mentioned increase in the stress and anxiety of learners and education professionals, the environmental crisis and the effects of climate change are tied to the exacerbation of inequalities, particularly spatial ones. For instance, a respondent traces a parallel between environmental and economic crises:

> *Systemic crises generally reinforce existing inequalities, with different dimensions of inequality playing a more significant role depending on the type of crisis: regional factors in the case of environmental disasters, and social class in the case of economic factors.* (male, Austria, 25-43 y.o.)

Regarding the political crisis, respondents generally refer to a democratic backlash with a consequent reduction in pluralism that may affect the education field and how LOs are built. This issue will be treated more in-depth in the next section, specifically dealing with

the consequences of these crises on LOs. However, we can anticipate here that this concern is especially raised by Austrian respondents, albeit present also in other country samples:

> *[Consequences of a systemic crisis would be] negative. A positive political agenda with more equality/freedom will become more complex. Inequalities in the distribution of resources and opportunities will increase and intensify. Radical forces will want to push ahead with the dismantling of democracy.*(male, Austria, 45-54 y.o.)

> *I fear education will no longer be a political priority in time of crisis. There will be less money available. I could also imagine that some political groups will want to use the situation to spread their ideas at school.* (female, Austria, 35-44 y.o.)

> *[...] I expect policies to accentuate the dimension of control, as has already happened, and the reduction of opportunities. The education system is healthy when diverse, welcomes different pedagogies, allows a good interface with students and families, and thinks about work without making it a closed discourse. A crisis weakens all these characteristics, so it would take a proactive political will to counter the degradation in real-time. In my region or on a national level, I don't see the possibility of this will.* (female, Italy, 55-64 y.o.)

Finally, beyond the aforementioned negative views, some respondents see crises as a possibility to foster innovation and rethink the education system. This possibility, albeit largely minoritarian, is envisioned in particular by responses from the Bulgarian sample, in which the potentially innovative character of crises and its role in raising awareness on education issues are emphasised:

> *Every crisis affects the quality of training. Lack of clarity and planning for the future would have a negative impact because of the degradation of the labour market and some areas in the social fabric. On the other hand, it is possible that innovations could emerge to support good outcomes.* (female, Bulgaria, 65-74 y.o.)

> *Any systemic crisis stresses institutions, including educational institutions, and worsens the quality of education. On the other hand, crises are a litmus test for those problem areas in society that can and should be addressed by educational institutions, i.e., crises are also a stimulus for social change.* (female, Bulgaria, 55-64 y.o.)

> *If we think about how the previous crisis during the Covid pandemic affected education, it led to an expansion of the volume of factors affecting the quality of education. For example, it has been seen that there is no inability to digitise textbooks, no drama in "distance learning," especially for upper-class students, and no drama in developing e-courses, presentations, etc., etc. I think the impact of technology will increase and expand in the coming years. Resistance to students working and learning simultaneously will disappear and the influence of informally acquired knowledge and skills will grow. In Bulgaria, there is resistance from the highest political level down to the level of parents and teachers (mainly due to misunderstanding) to all three of the above, but change in these directions will be inevitable.* (female, Bulgaria, 45-54 y.o.)

> *Initially negative, but perhaps also positive in the long term because overcoming crises strengthens self-efficacy and creates space to become active and develop yourself.* (female, Austria, 35-44 y.o.)

To summarise the contents of this section, two crises are emerging as the most potentially disruptive, according to our respondents: the economic one and the pandemic. Yet, other crises are also highlighted, pointing out a diverse range of consequences on education – both direct and indirect, and not necessarily negative. Interestingly enough, beyond this diversity of effects, all crises have been connected to increased stress and pressure within education environments and society as a whole, which mainly – albeit not exclusively – affects the youth. This further reinforces the need of integrating a Life Course perspective within research and policy, as our project maintains (Deliverable D2.2). Indeed, responses from survey participants hint at the disruptive force of crises in shaping not just how life courses of people in education and training unfold but also their possibilities to conceive future paths. Such a dynamic affects their choices and motivation and consequently impacts their LOs.

5.2 The impact of systemic crises on learning outcomes

Regarding the specific impact of systemic crises on LOs, a large number of respondents to A7 question (240 out of 321) explicitly argue that the consequences would be negative, while others (52) delineate scenarios in which both positive and negative effects occur. The remaining ones do not take a clear position. Most of the forecasted adverse effects are strictly related to the impact mentioned above on the education and training sectors, with three elements standing out:

1. The polarisation of results along social, economic, and spatial dimensions;
2. The consequences of the deterioration of learners' mental health and loss of motivation on their outcomes in education and training;
3. The decrease in the measurement of LOs and their quality and reliability.

Starting with the first issue, new systemic crises – in particular, economic, pandemic, and environmental – are seen as widening the gap between groups of learners, polarising between upper and lower classes and among territories. Responses suggest the worsening of such inequalities, which are already present in all contexts, would have a huge impact on LOs. In particular, it would result in categorising achievers at different levels, mainly based on available resources. Some examples can be seen in the following responses:

> *Being a profoundly unequal country across the board, any disruption in the functioning of the systems would reveal the social, economic, and cultural asymmetries that translate into unequal school performance since the conditions, support, and resources that are accessible to students are different, giving advantages to some and disadvantages to others.* (female, Portugal, 45-54 y.o.)

The last two crises (COVID-19) and inflation have had a demonstrably massive impact on learning outcomes. Declines in skills and the more frequent failure to achieve minimum standards are more pronounced among pupils from less privileged families after COVID-19 than among their peers from more socially privileged families. The same applies to the inflation crisis: vulnerable groups, such as single parents or families at risk of poverty, are significantly more likely to have to consider making savings in education. (male, Austria, 35-44 y.o.)

[In case of a systemic crisis,] social class and family background come more strongly into play - those who have done well still do well, and those who didn't think they would do well drop out. This is further reinforced by the probable future social cuts. (female, Finland, 25-34 y.o.)

However, some respondents also identify a reverse relation between social polarisation and LOs, stressing how some of their conceptions may conceal or even exacerbate the harmful effects of systemic crises on learners in disadvantaged positions. In particular, respondents argue that the statistical measurement of LOs fails to consider the impact of learners' backgrounds on their education paths. Moreover, they further point out that the focus on merit and competitiveness, which is meant to increase in a crisis scenario, would make the consequences on vulnerable groups' LOs more serious. This stance seems to emerge with more emphasis in the case of Italian and Portuguese respondents:

In the event of a systemic crisis, pupils from the most vulnerable social classes, whose learning results are the lowest, will continue to be the most affected because, in addition to the segregation in schools, we continue to insist (for populist reasons and in the interests of big business) on statistics based on learning results measured by tests, without taking into account a whole range of variables between meaningful projects that many of these organisations develop and which have such an impact on these communities, but which count for nothing in the statistics. (female, Portugal, 35-44 y.o.)

A systemic crisis would negatively affect the quality of learning outcomes since there are still many economic, social, and cultural inequalities, which would be even more pronounced. […] Measuring learning results statistically without taking into account the cultural, social, and economic contexts in which schools are located will always have a negative and ineffective impact on improving anything because classifying schools on the basis that they all have the same conditions will certainly not lead to an improvement in anything. (female, Portugal, 45-54 y.o.)

The opportunity gap between students from different social classes will keep widening, and more emphasis will be placed on merit and excellence at all levels (from student achievement and territories). (male, Italy, 55-64 y.o.)

[…] A new system crisis could negatively affect learning outcomes because gender, social and spatial gaps would emerge, and there would be fewer and fewer policies to support the most fragile and weak but in favour of individualism, competitiveness, and excellence. (female, Italy, 45-54 y.o.)

This limitation of LOs measurement within a crisis scenario also emerges in connection to the psychological impact of systemic crises on learners. Again, respondents identify a straightforward effect, seeing the increase in stress and mental health deterioration as negatively affecting results in education and training. Moreover, such a situation is connected to decreased motivation to pursue education due to the growing uncertainty associated with all the crises we mentioned above. In this context, some respondents also raise doubts about the capacity of standardised and statistically based LOs to capture the social and psychological impact of crises on learners. These positions are expressed, for instance, in the following quotes:

> *Systemic crises would cause psychological stress for some learners who are less resilient and also have a negative impact on learning outcomes.* (female, Austria, 35-44 y.o.)

> *Anxiety about the state of the world and the environment can affect young people's learning outcomes, especially if they lack confidence in the future and that their efforts will make a difference.* (female, Finland, 25-34 y.o.)

> *Judging from the impact of the recent health crisis, a new crisis will have a substantial impact on the quality of learning outcomes. The statistical measure may appear relatively high, but distance education and crisis outcomes on student mental health are essential. Key policy trends tend to ignore this problem.* (male, Greece, 55-64 y.o.)

> *Systemic crises lead to psychological stress for learners and teachers. This can have an even more drastic effect on younger learners in particular. Considering such psychological stress in the statistical measurement of learning outcomes is particularly challenging. It could also further emphasise the importance of social relationships, peer groups, and the family and increase inequalities if there is no social safety net. Considering such factors is important, especially in standardised measurement, but not easy to implement.* (male, Austria, 35-44 y.o.)

According to respondents, the most common effects of systemic crises have thus highlighted how the measurement of LOs could become trickier in a crisis scenario. This criticality is potentially reinforced by the impact of such crises on how LOs are implemented. Indeed, many respondents argue that an economic crisis and the consequent defunding and de-prioritisation of LOs and education, in general, would have a severe effect not just on the quality and reliability of these tools but also on the attention given to them in the public debate. This is summarised in the following excerpts:

> *The learning outcomes will likely decline in quality, particularly for students facing disadvantages or from low socio-economic backgrounds. We can anticipate a rise in the percentage of underperforming students and a decrease in the number of high-achievers. Unfortunately, a robust commitment to measuring learning outcomes and making evidence-based decisions doesn't seem likely in this scenario.* (female, Bulgaria, 45-54 y.o.)

> *[In the case of a systemic crisis,] the education system and its qualitative development would take a back seat, and less attention would be paid to measuring learning outcomes.* (male, Germany, 45-54 y.o.)

Such dynamics are also further exacerbated in some respondents' perspectives by the inadequacy of policies and politicians. As shown in the quotes below, this could lead to LOs being more dependent on the willingness of the national politics, resulting in an unclear and changing implementation, as well as to a decrease in the quality of LOs measurement or even to their marginalisation:

> *A public finance crisis could give opponents of standardised tests the pretext to abolish Invalsi or similar bodies [the national institution measuring LOs,* ed*] to achieve 'savings.' It would be a severe outcome for the Italian education system, like a sick person throwing away the thermometer to avoid bad news.* (male, Italy, 55-64 y.o.)

> *[…] In Greece, in particular, a change of government implies reforms and a different assessment of learning outcomes. For example, the different approaches to excellence and performance in education between the neoliberal government of Nea Dimokratia at the beginning of the economic crisis and today and the left-wing government of Syriza in the second half of the 2010s. Therefore, in Greece, it depends, of course, on European education policy but also on who is in government and how the issue of the energy crisis, wars, etc. will develop.* (male, Greece, 55-64 y.o.)

> *Politicians are increasingly reacting to crises by lowering the general level of education to achieve politically desired statistical values for educational qualifications that have little to do with learners' actual knowledge and skills.* (male, Germany, 45-54)

Within this context, the political crisis and the related democratic backlash also play a role. As mentioned above, responses from the Austrian sample particularly stress this issue, connecting the rise of right-wing populism to an instrumental use of LOs to foster division within the society:

> *[…] What would a crisis have to do with measuring learning outcomes? Learning outcomes have been and are being exploited (e.g., ÖIF [Austrian Fund for Integration, providing language tests]) to argue that "undesirable'" migrants are illiterate, unwilling to learn, etc… in this respect, a refugee flow that enters the public discourse as a crisis could change the learning outcomes.* (male, Austria, 45-54 y.o.)

> *Every further crisis will strengthen right-wing extremism, and empirical and scientific evidence will no longer play a role. The measurement of learning outcomes will become a farce (e.g., used to stigmatise certain groups) or be discontinued. Ideologies will more strongly determine learning outcomes and their quality. […]* (gender undeclared, Austria, age undeclared)

However, beyond these general adverse effects, some respondents point out that systemic crises may also bring opportunities for understanding and implementing LOs. As in the cases of the impact on education in general, the potentially positive effects are

mostly tied to the "lessons learned" in a crisis, which may mitigate the effect of future ones or the push towards more technological or social innovation. This is shown, among others, in the responses reported below:

> *A major systemic crisis could contribute to a move away from degree-holding in Finland, i.e., a greater appreciation of smaller learning modules.* (female, Finland, 45-54 y.o.)

> *The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the electronic tools developed during and after this pandemic, as well as the adaptation of educational policy and the pedagogical strategies designed to meet the basic needs of the educational process, are factors that will, in the event of another pandemic, mitigate the negative consequences on the educational process.* (male, Portugal, 55-64 y.o.)

Albeit present, these stances remain minoritarian among respondents. Most of them look at systemic crises as something that would profoundly and negatively affect LOs, both in terms of registered results of learners and in terms of quality and reliability of measurement. Such an impact is particularly relevant for disadvantaged groups, such as people from lower classes or marginal areas. This would thus exacerbate existing inequalities and increasingly tie achievement in education to the availability of personal and family resources. Moreover, in the absence of innovation or adaptation, LOs are considered inadequate to take care of the social, economic, and spatial polarisation resulting from systemic crises due to their rigidity and lack of consideration of background elements. Yet, all these circumstances do not happen in a vacuum, and both possible ways out and aggravating factors are identified. The following section will thus conclude the analysis of crisis scenarios by focusing on those aspects.

5.3 Exacerbating factors and possible solutions to systemic crises in education

According to respondents, as crises affect education and LOs in many ways, many factors potentially worsen or help to face crises. Among the first ones, internal deficiencies of education systems play a decisive role, according to our respondents. Quotes reported in the second section have already shown how – according to respondents, particularly German ones – more investment and more comprehensive training of teaching staff are needed to face challenges related to the socio-cultural diversification of learners. Similar problems are also presented at a more general level within the sample, noting how the defunding of education systems may affect LOs in a crisis scenario and further exacerbate inequalities:

> *Systemic crises, such as an economic crisis, require increased budgetary resources. It is feared that fewer resources will be available to the education sector and that the quality of learning outcomes will continue to decline as a result because important reform projects are not implemented. This mainly affects disadvantaged populations (e.g., low-income families, migration, disability, etc.). In my opinion, education is currently not given the importance it deserves in the political discourse.* (female, Austria, 45-54 y.o.)

> *Without sustainably better funding for education, well-trained teachers, and other educators, the school system will not find answers to the global crises due to excessive demands and uncertainty. The quality of learning outcomes will suffer. [...]* (female, Germany, 55-64 y.o.)

> *The education system is already very less resilient and would no longer be able to maintain the current, already impaired standard of learning in the face of further challenges. The main reason for this is the considerable lack of specialised staff and their multiple burdens of administrative tasks in addition to pedagogical tasks, the inflexible design of the teaching setting, and the lack of autonomy of school management, for example, when it comes to decisions on staff and resources and much more.* (female, Germany, 55-64 y.o.)

However, the characteristics and resources of education systems are not the only aggravating factors pointed out by respondents. As mentioned above, some respondents manifest dissatisfaction with an alleged lack of vision in policies about education and LOs. This also resonates with what many consider the primary deficiency in a crisis: underplaying inequalities already present in education and the general unreadiness of education systems and policies to deal with systemic crises. Similar points are raised by respondents in most countries, often referring to the pandemic as a case in point, and stressing the necessity to act beforehand:

> *It will have bad effects; we are not prepared for severe crises of any nature.* (female, Bulgaria, age undeclared)

> *It will reduce the quality of learning outcomes. It is not as much as the recent pandemic, but it will undoubtedly reduce them because we are unprepared to deal with such major systemic crises.* (male, Greece, 55-64 y.o.)

> *The lesson of the pandemic is that the bigger the systemic crisis, the less prepared you are. I don't know what kind of risk analysis is currently being done, but it may be worth considering alternative scenarios. A quick response is also improved when considering the options in advance. Do we understand which crises have the most significant impact on learning outcomes and which have the least?* (female, Finland, 55-64 y.o.)

> *An increase in social inequalities always accompanies crises. To deal with them from the educational field, compensatory measures are needed in the form of resources that require sufficient public investment. Currently, the budget allocation to public education in Catalonia is around 2.5% of GDP, far from the 6% established by the Llei d'Educació de Catalunya [Catalunya Education Law,* ed*]. In an underfunded education system, a new crisis would have a very negative impact, causing an increase in school segregation, dropouts, etc. Public investment, aimed at what professionals and educational centres really need, is what really makes the difference when it comes to achieving a quality education system.* (male, Spain, 35-44 y.o.)

Confronting such difficulties, four main possible antidotes can be found within A7 responses. First, as noted in many of the quotes above, respondents point out the necessity to invest more in education and improve its systemic resilience, which implies

not only stopping budgetary cuts in this field and injecting new funds but also a symbolic repositioning of education at the core of public debates and policy priorities. Similarly, preparing for crises involves constant training of teachers and other educators to provide skills necessary to properly consider and counter the impact of crises on learners, especially vulnerable ones. Moreover, considering the consensus among respondents on the polarising and inequality-boosting effects of crises on education, some of them suggest that investments are needed to increase the support for (multi-)disadvantaged learners and compensate for the lack of consideration of inequalities in LOs.

Finally, a crucial transversal point that has been raised multiple times is that systemic crises require a paradigm shift in education and training, as well as in how LOs are conceived. This is especially present among responses in connection to the lessons learned by the pandemic, but it is also framed differently by various respondents, pointing out diverging interpretations. Some of them claim that it is necessary to adopt more analytical and standardised approaches to the organisation of the education system, also using LOs as a tool for this aim. This can be noted, for instance, in these excerpts:

> *[…] Facing this scenario [the consequences of systemic crises of the last decade,* ed*], which would require a change of paradigm […] to come back to imagine a desirable future, the political system and a large part of the cultural and education environment are alarmingly drifting away, tending towards dangerous simplifications and the detachment from any analysis of factors. Either we will introduce elements of discontinuity […] or virtuous paths as the analysis of learning outcomes will be more and more marginal in public decisions.* (male, Italy, 45-54 y.o.)

> *In my opinion, there is still a high probability that future systemic crises will impact students' learning outcomes - especially children and young people from less privileged families. Standardised measurements provide the opportunity to promptly capture such effects and review the impact of measures designed to counteract the trend. In my opinion, increasing the resilience of the education system is an important issue that is not yet being pursued consistently enough.* (female, Germany, 55-64 y.o.)

> *[…] In the event of a new emergency, it would be appropriate to consider the assessment as a guiding element for the organisation of education/training policies as well as work and culture, inquiring what is overall useful (taking into account all factors/needs) for the greater good of the community and the environment.* (male, Italy, 45-54 y.o.)

On the contrary, other respondents emphasise the need to invest more in psychological and material support to learners and practitioners, putting their perspectives and need at the core instead of using standardised indicators. They consider the pandemic as a moment that made clear that the education environment and social relations – especially face-to-face ones – are crucial for LOs. Quotes below exemplified this vision:

> *The physical presence of the student in school teaching, the practical application, the guidance, and the teacher/student relationship are fundamental both in the pathway and in the process of learning and applying them in a real context. A systemic crisis would lead*

to an even more significant weakening of this link, which has already been negatively fuelled by policies that weaken teaching but simultaneously demand results and numbers for the statistics. Creating fairer conditions for the educational community (teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and students) will improve the desired results, which will be reflected in society. (male, Portugal, 35.44 y.o.)

Education monitoring is already providing important indications of the need for action with regard to supporting individual groups of pupils, for example, as a result of the pandemic or the wave of refugees caused by the numerous global hotspots. According to this, in my federal state, targeted support measures and all-day programmes have enabled most pupils who arrived in 2016 to complete their education. On the other hand, the long school and daycare closures in 2020/21 have revealed considerable learning deficits with various causes that will continue to occupy us in the coming years. Areas of action here include increased psychosocial support, more daily learning time, and strengthening basic skills. (female, Germany, 55-64 y.o.)

The current economic-social system is in crisis. Capitalism, as an element that regulates the market, the welfare state, and unlimited growth, is in its final moments. More people, more diversity, the climate crisis will mark the education system of European countries. The "formal" school will be the personal support space for children and young people to "learn" to live together. Curricula must change; educational outcomes cannot be focused on the acquired knowledge. (female, Spain, 55-64 y.o.)

However, this is not the only take-home lesson stemming from the pandemic. A different interpretation of what was missing during that crisis is provided by other respondents, who see investments in digital infrastructures and new pedagogical methodologies as key counteracting elements to future crises. According to them, distance learning and digitalisation would be meaningful countering tools in case of another pandemic, but also for other types of crises, such as environmental ones. Below, some examples of such stances are presented:

Investing in distance learning may reduce the impact of a crisis on learning outcomes compared to the past. (female, Greece, 45-54 y.o.)

I admit that I'd be looking above all to establish conditions for access to training [...] and to increase the technological paraphernalia for interacting with people (students/teachers), namely through AI. (male, Portugal, 55-64 y.o.)

The use of distance learning methods needs to be developed for quality assurance. In the context of environmental and health crises, this form of training will be increasingly applied. (female, Bulgaria, 35-44 y.o.)

The occurrence of a crisis can affect the quality of learning outcomes differently depending on its nature. For example, as with the Covid-19 pandemic, a very rapid change in the way teaching was necessary and was delivered with a transition to an on-line environment, which made it very difficult for lecturers to teach subjects in a form that was appropriate to the conditions, and there was, at least initially, a problem with the results. Eventually, the

whole organisation adapted to the new conditions. When a new crisis occurs, if the methods and means by which learning is delivered in a form other than face-to-face are in place and have been worked out, e.g., the results will not be significantly affected. (gender undeclared, Bulgaria, age undeclared)

[…] The pandemic has been overcome once, and it is likely that in the future teaching methods and new technology will help to get through another crisis. […] (female, Finland, 55-64 y.o.)

The quality of learning outcomes would decline. This could be effectively counteracted by using digital teaching and learning programmes. However, the average equipment in schools is too poor. (male, Germany, 45-54 y.o.)

To sum up, respondents argue for the necessity of bringing education back to the political agenda's core, but they also suggest that this may not be enough in the event of another systemic crisis. A recurring topic is education and LOs' need to adapt to new – and seemingly inevitable – crisis scenarios, preparing in advance and improving their resilience to such a situation. Yet, there seem to be no unique recipes for this aim. On the one hand, responses hint that policy solutions must be tailored to the type of crisis. For instance, teachers' training appears particularly useful in dealing with immigration-related challenges, while digitalisation may crucially help during pandemic crises or environmental disasters. On the other hand, despite agreeing that changes and reforms are needed, potential conflicts about how education and LOs should be adapted to respond to crises also emerge, with alternatives ranging from the improvement of social dimensions of education and education environments to an increased push towards implementing standardisation and data-supported strategies.

5.4 Conclusions

In the previous sections, we highlighted how respondents have conceived systemic crises that may affect education and LOs, their consequences, and their possible solutions. The emerging crisis scenarios are related to different crises, among which the economic and pandemic ones are the most frequently referred to. These different shocks have neither the same consequences nor the exact solutions, and respondents have stressed a variety of possible outcomes for each of them. Moreover, although findings from this chapter cannot be generalised for the whole sample, national specificities seem to emerge – e.g., framing immigration as a crisis among the German respondents, or the generally more optimistic position towards coping crises by Bulgarian respondents. Table 9 summarizes the main effects and solutions identified for the different crises.

Table 9. A summary of the main effects on education and LOs emerged from A7, as well as possible solutions proposed by respondents.

Type of crisis	*Main effects*	*Proposed solutions*
Economic	• Defunding of education; • Less focus on LOs;	• Avoid cutbacks in education; • Address pre-existing systemic inequalities;

Type of crisis	*Main effects*	*Proposed solutions*
	• More focus on merit; • More stress on learners/teachers; • Economic and territorial polarisation.	• Integrate LOs to consider learners' backgrounds; • Keep education at the centre of the public debate.
Pandemic	• De-prioritisation of education and LOs; • Unequal access to education; • Learners' mental health deterioration.	• Adequately train teachers/trainers; • Increased support for learners; • Foster digitalisation in an inclusive way; • Foster social contacts among peers and in education environments.
Environmental War	• Increased stress on learners and teachers; • More need for self-expression; • Reduced access to education for most affected categories.	• Increased support for learners; • Create an open education environment; • Enhance distance learning and digitalisation.
Immigration	• More pressure on teachers and trainers; • Impact of language issues on LOs of people from a migration background.	• Adequately train teachers/trainers; • Provide targeted support to handle barriers for people from a migration background
Political	• Reduced space for self-expression; • Discrimination of some groups of learners; • Instrumentalisation of LOs for political purposes.	• Create an open education environment; • Foster the use of standardised LOs and evidence-based education paradigms.

First, although a minority of respondents tied crises to potential innovation or learning processes, most respondents see them as detrimental to the education system in general and to LOs in particular. The impact of systemic crises on LOs is not limited to the reduction of learners' achievement. Still, it may also negatively affect the quality of LOs measurement due to a lack of investments and interest or political exploitation. Second, a clear link emerges in many responses between systemic crises and the deterioration of mental health due to increasing stress on learners and educational staff. This is seen as directly impacting LOs by reducing the commitment of learners and motivation to pursue education paths in the face of growing uncertainty about the future – in line with the Life Course Research literature (Deliverable D2.2). The more stressful societal and educational environment is also connected to a rise in the relevance of self-efficacy in determining LOs since personal dedication to education is seen as a critical factor in limiting the impact of crises' psychological effects.

However, the possibilities of dealing with the consequences of crises are not equal among learners. Within almost all crisis scenarios, existing inequalities in society are assigned a key role in determining the impact of a systemic crisis on learners, highlighting how people in the most vulnerable situations would be the most negatively affected. The central dimension identified by respondents concerns the role of social class, with lower-class youths considered the category that, more than any others, would see their LOs decline. Such findings bring us back to Chapter 3, where we focussed on the dichotomy between self-efficacy and social class and their importance for the definition of alternative conceptions of LOs. Yet, the polarisation of LOs is not only seen to happen along purely economic axes and other social and spatial dimensions are also acknowledged by respondents. In this sense, the claim for a more comprehensive consideration of

individual backgrounds within the definition of LOs is increasingly considered necessary, and it is consistent with the growing recognition of LOs' multidimensionality, as well as with CLEAR framework and aims.

6. Spatial inequalities and preferences of learning outcomes' governance

While researching learning outcomes (LOs), the CLEAR project commits to integrating a Spatial Justice perspective, looking at how spatial inequalities may interact with the definition and formation of LOs, and acknowledging national, regional and local specificities. This dimension has already been considered in depth in previous reports within the project – notably the WP3 one (Deliverable D3.2) – and in further publications (Cefalo et al., 2024). Starting from survey results, this chapter considers spatial dimensions by examining how respondents framed spatial divides in constructing LOs. Moreover, it considers which actors at different levels of governance will and should be responsible for the definition of LOs, according to survey respondents.

To fulfil these aims, we mainly consider Q9, which concerns present and future configurations of spatial cleavages in LOs, and Q12, which delineates future and desirable scenarios of actors responsible for LOs. As in previous chapters, we first discuss the main descriptive statistics. Then, Q9 items are analysed using multiple regressions on reshaped items described in the introduction and considering the most relevant dimensions that shape respondents' answers. As for Q12, we focus on gaps between likely and desirable scenarios using multivariate regression and looking at patterns according to selected socio-demographic variables and countries of administration.[22]

6.1 Descriptive statistics and basic hypotheses

Spatial cleavages are summarised into Q9 items considering four divides: interregional, rural/urban, interurban, such as between large cities and others, and intraurban, e.g., centre-periphery divides. As for Q12, six scenarios are presented, including dimensions of both horizontal and vertical governance. In these scenarios, the policy responsibility for LOs is assigned to a specific level, or shared among different levels of governance or between private and public actors.

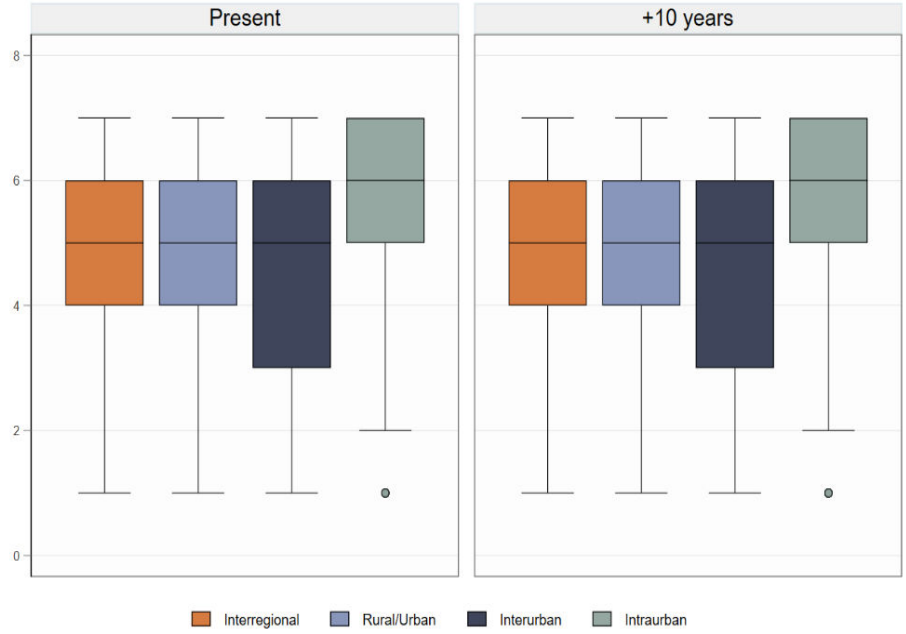
Q9: Spatial cleavages influencing LOs

The first emerging element when analysing descriptive statistics of Q9 items is that variation between present and future scenarios is minimal, and respondents do not foresee changes in most relevant spatial cleavages impacting LOs. In both scenarios, the intraurban divide is considered the most important, with a mean score of 5.56 in the

[22] Throughout the analysis, we also examined possible connections between the configurations of spatial cleavages in LOs and respondents' preferences about their MLG structure. However, no significant results have been found with this exploration, which has thus been excluded from the report. Regression results for this chapter are provided in Tables 23-25 in the Annex.

present and 5.50 in the future, followed by the divide between urban and rural areas (on average, 5.26 in the present and 5.14 in the future). Mean scores of the latter show only a slight difference with the relevance of the interregional divide, rated by respondents 4.91 in the present and 4.94 in the future. The gap with the ranks assigned to the interurban cleavage is broader since this item scores 4.49 in the present and 4.56 in the future. The relevance of interurban divides and the proximity of other items is also reinforced when looking at their distribution: they have similar medians and interquartile range – with the minor exception of the third bar, stretched downwards (see Figure 29). Based on this preliminary analysis, we are thus not expecting significant differences across scenarios in the relevance assigned to various cleavages and, potentially, minor distinctions across groups on most dimensions.

Figure 29. Boxplot of the distribution of items about spatial cleavages relevant for LOs (Q9) according to present/future scenarios.

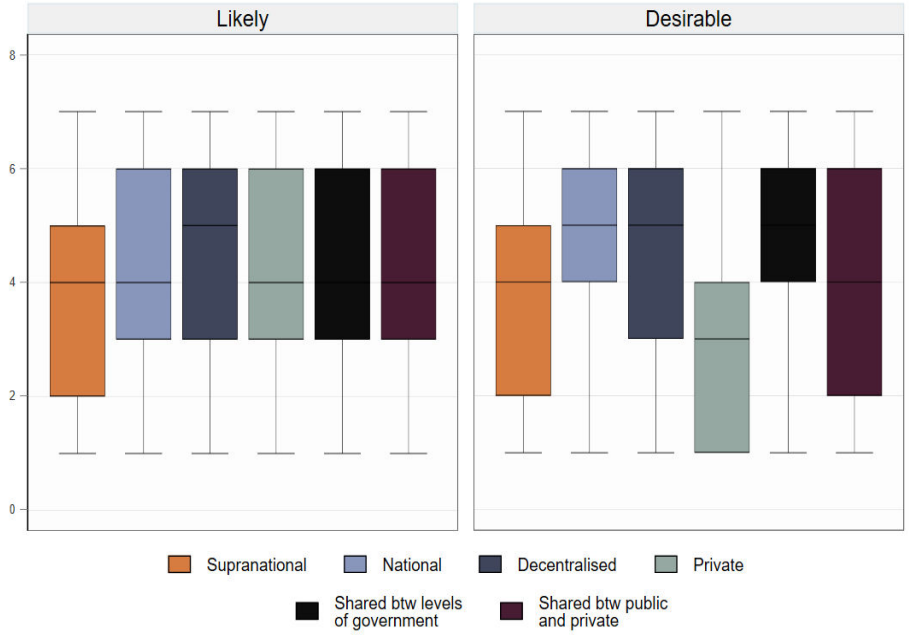


Q12: Likely and desirable asset in the MLG of LOs

When considering which actors should have responsibility for LOs, respondents prefer, on average, that it remains in the hands of national governments (4.70) or is shared between governance levels (4.75). On the opposite side, mean scores for the desirability of more privatisation or delegation towards supra-national organisations are the lowest, respectively being 3.03 and 3.71. Yet, despite narrow gaps, some distinctions emerge between desirable and likely scenarios from descriptive statistics. Indeed, the most likely scenario, on average, is that policy responsibility for LOs will be increasingly decentralised towards local actors (4.44), followed by a growth in the role of national actors (4.35) or the sharing of responsibilities among different levels (4.22). The least likely configuration emerging from mean scores is that supranational organisations will count more (3.75). In contrast, an increased role of private actors emerges as the dimension with the most

relevant gap between likelihood and desirability, showing an average difference between the two of 1.03. Overall, Figure 30 shows that Q12 items show a more stretched distribution, suggesting more variations among responses.

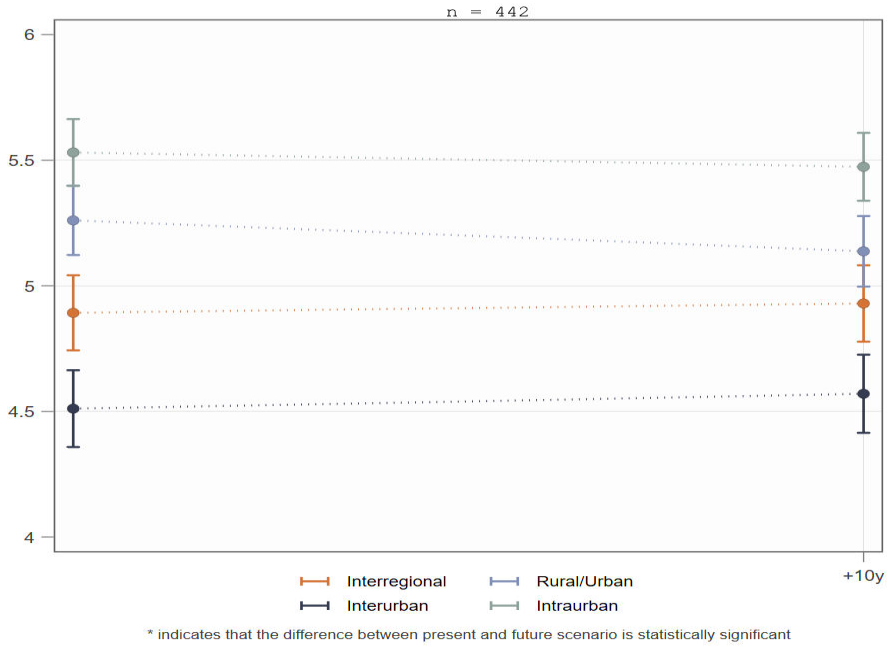
Figure 30. Boxplot of the distribution of items about multilevel governance of LOs (Q12) according to likely/desirable scenarios.



6.2 Present and future of spatial inequalities in learning outcomes

As highlighted in Figure 31, regression results show no significant differences for all Q9 items when considering gaps between present and future scenarios. It also confirms that intraurban divides are deemed more relevant and interurban less. However, respondents from different backgrounds frame spatial cleavages in LOs differently. For instance, being a local actor has significant adverse effects on the relevance assigned to all dimensions except the intraurban one. This trend could be linked with the scope of action of such actors, who are less concerned by macro-level dimensions, observing micro-level ones in their daily work. On the contrary, respondents with expertise in youth policies seem to be significantly more worried about interregional and rural/urban cleavages than others.

Figure 31. Marginal means of reshaped items about spatial cleavages relevant for LOs (Q9) according to the post term.

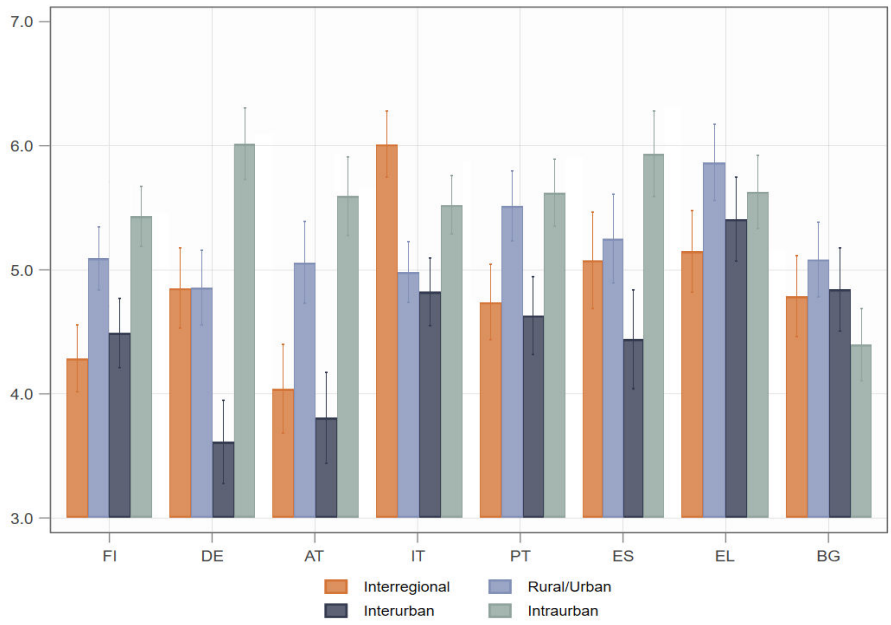


The most important differences emerge by countries of administration (see Figure 32):

- The interregional divide is considered significantly more relevant by Italian respondents compared to all other countries. Italy is also the only country where this spatial set is deemed significantly more relevant than all others.
- The cleavage between urban and rural areas is significantly more acknowledged in the Portuguese and Greek samples. In general, the gaps between localities in LOs matter more for Greek respondents, since they also significantly consider the interurban divide more relevant than all other respondents.
- Despite being relevant in almost all countries, the interurban divide is significantly the most relevant spatial dimension in responses from Austria, Finland, Germany and Spain; however, in Finland, the rural/urban divide also emerges as important, being considered significantly more relevant than both intraurban and interregional cleavages.
- Bulgarian respondents represent an exception, as the intraurban divide is significantly less relevant than other gaps.

Some possible explanations emerge when confronting these findings with the national and international literature on CLEAR countries. Indeed, the gap between Northern and Southern regions in Italy is well documented, affecting learners' achievement and LOs (Di Giacomo & Pennisi, 2015; Giancola & Salmieri, 2020), as noted in Deliverable D3.2. Rural/urban divides in countries such as Portugal and Greece are also discussed by Salvati (2016): they note that an effect of the economic crisis in Greece has been to widen the gap not just between cities and rural areas but also between Athens and the rest of the country, which may explain the attribution of more relevance to interurban divide in the Greek sample.

Figure 32. Marginal means of reshaped items about spatial cleavages relevant for LOs (Q9) according to country of administration.



An element that may impact the recognition of a territorial cleavage in Portugal is the higher share of NEETs and youth in vulnerable situations within rural areas compared to urban ones (Simões et al., 2020), which is paired with reduced educational opportunities in these localities, especially regarding tertiary education (da Silva et al., 2021). Moreover, these conditions may have been emphasised by the pandemic, and the shift to education in a digital environment since Greece, Portugal and Bulgaria have been identified as the EU countries where the digital divide between urban and rural areas is the most extensive (European Committee of the Regions, 2022). Evidence for the relevance of the rural/urban cleavage can also be found in Finland, where the regional disparities in education and LOs are often conceived through the gap between cities and more sparsely populated areas (Beach et al., 2018). This is further hinted at in the CLEAR profile of the predominantly rural region of Kainuu, which shows the lowest educational level of the population in the country (CLEAR, 2024).

However, the intraurban cleavage emerges as the most relevant for Finnish respondents, as well as for those from Austria, Germany and Spain. Indeed, strong effects of neighbourhoods and schools' socio-spatial segregation on LOs have been noted for the largest cities in Finland, to the extent that these are conceived as one of the main threats to the Finnish egalitarian education system (Kauppinen, 2008; Bernelius & Kosunen, 2023). Similar findings can also be found in Spanish cities, where school segregation is crucial (European Commission, 2021). This is, for instance, the case of Barcelona, where Bona et al. (2019) observed a relation between residential and school segregation, which is further reinforced by the supply of private schools in some neighbourhoods and a quasi-market approach to school choices.

The Bulgarian sample is an exception in these general trends, as differences within cities are considered less important than multilocal gaps between localities and regions. This peculiarity is in line with previous CLEAR findings, in particular the profiles of the Bulgarian regions involved in the project (South Central and North Central), in which one of the main challenges is the mitigation of the gap between rural and urban areas and between larger and smaller settlements (CLEAR, 2024).

Different framings of spatial cleavages impacting LOs seem to emerge among countries. Responses from Continental countries and from Spain show common patterns, assigning much more importance to the gap within cities. The intraurban divide is similarly relevant for Finnish and Portuguese respondents, but they consider the rural/urban cleavage almost equally relevant.

Other national samples show distinct patterns. Indeed, the Italian one stands out for the greater acknowledgement of regional inequalities in LOs, which reflect well-documented and long-lasting imbalances between North and South in particular. Finally, differences among localities along various axes seem more important in shaping LOs for Greek and Bulgarian respondents, although it is more difficult to identify clear patterns in their responses.

6.3 Gaps between desired and forecasted futures of learning outcomes' governance

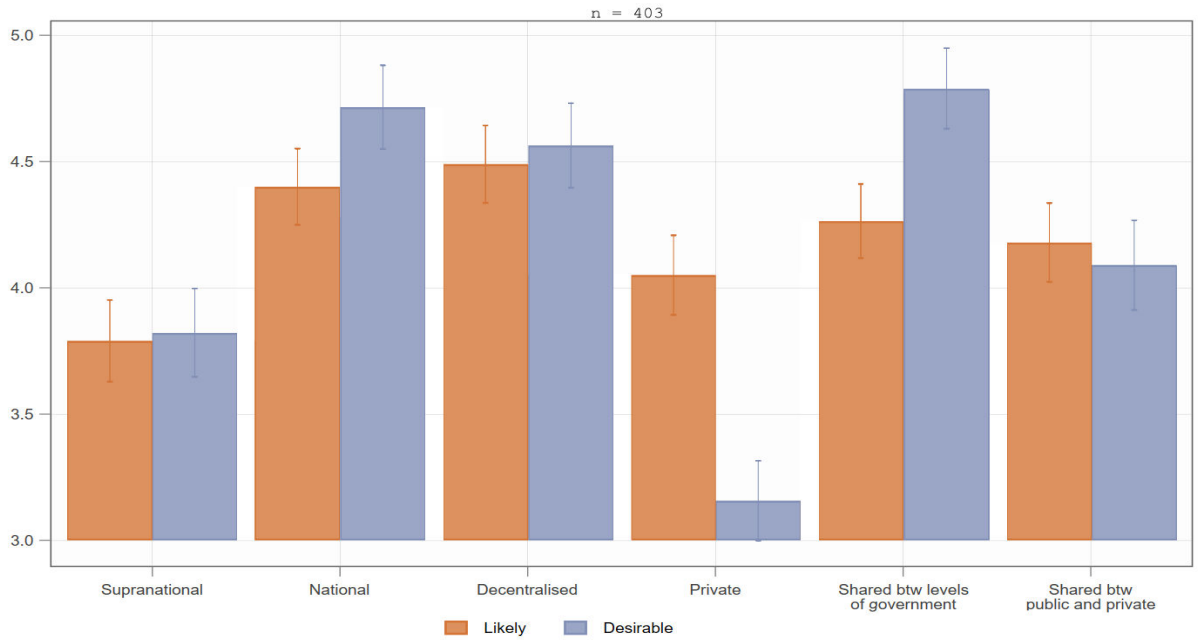
Despite not being the only one, differences among scrutinised nation-states are the most relevant finding from analysing the likely and desirable structure of the LOs' governance. Overall, the gaps between forecasting and the expectations of respondents are twofold. On the one hand, respondents consider devolution trends from central to decentralised administrations significantly more desirable than likely. On the other hand, respondents generally see an increasing role of private actors in the definition of LOs as more likely than desirable. Yet, national differences emerge on almost all considered dimensions (see Figure 33).

Firstly, respondents generally see the growing role of supranational actors in the governance of LOs as unlikely and undesirable. This is especially true for Austrian, German and Finnish respondents. This trend is considered significantly less likely in all these samples than in all other countries, but this is also identified as significantly less desirable in the German and Finnish ones. Moreover, responses from Austria and Bulgaria, stand out for showing a marked mismatch between forecasting and desires – the involvement of supralocal actors in LOs being considered significantly more desirable than likely to occur in these countries.

As shown in Table 10 and Figure 34, different preferences regarding the relationship between central and decentralised administrations seem to emerge between countries:

- The growing role of central government is framed as especially desirable by German respondents, the only group considering this trend significantly more desirable than likely.
- Austrian and German respondents also show significantly lower values than all others on the desirability of shifting more responsibilities for LOs to decentralised administrations and the desirability of a trend towards the sharing of responsibilities between levels of government.
- On the other hand, the desirability of shared governance of LOs among levels of government is higher in Southern European countries, with Italy and Spain standing out for significantly greater desirability than likelihood on this issue.

Figure 33. Marginal means of likely and desirable scenarios of items about multilevel governance of LOs (Q12).



Finally, the involvement of private actors in the governance of LOs appears contentious. This is the only dimension on which some effects are noted beyond the country of administration, with private actors showing a positive impact on the desirability of such a trend and education experts the opposite. Yet, national specificities are again the main ones:

- An increased involvement of private actors is considered significantly more likely than desirable in all country samples except the Greek and Bulgarian ones, with this mismatch being especially relevant in the case of Italian respondents.
- Moreover, responses from Italy and Finland show significantly lower scores assigned to the desirability of this trend than those from other Southern European countries and Bulgaria.

- On the contrary, Greek and Bulgarian respondents show the highest scores, with the first considering private involvement significantly more desirable than all other national samples.
- Finally, Austrian, German, and Finnish respondents also tend to consider sharing responsibilities for LOs between private and public actors significantly less desirable than those from other countries.

Table 10. Differences in marginal means between the likely and the desirable scenarios per country (only significant values shown; negative values mean more likely than desirable and vice versa).

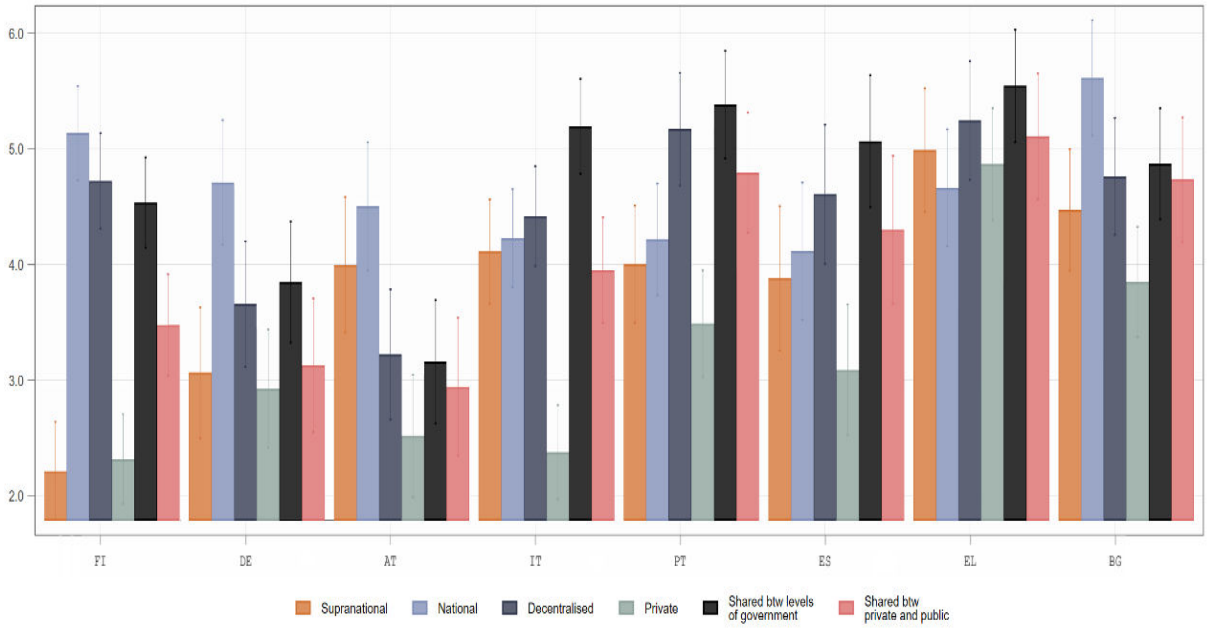
	AT	BG	DE	EL	ES	FI	IT	PT	TOT
B12.1 More relevance to supra-national	1.06***	0.51*							
B12.2 More relevance to national			0.82***						0.31***
B12.3 More relevance to decentralised						0.43*			
B12.4 More relevance to private	-0.95**		-0.99***		-1.42***	-0.58**	-2.21***	-0.71**	-0.89***
B12.5 More shared btw central and decentralised			0.63*	0.63*	1.16***		1.11***		0.52***
B12.6 More shared btw private and public	-0.76**								

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

Some tentative explanations of the data above are provided here. First, decentralised systems, such as Germany, Austria, Spain, and Italy, show identifiable patterns in the distribution of responsibilities for LOs between central and regional/local administrations. On the one hand, Continental countries show that further decentralisation is not deemed desirable according to survey respondents.

On the other hand, Italian and Spanish respondents stand for the necessity of increased coordination and sharing of responsibilities between levels of governance. Despite being framed with pessimism about its realisation, this claim relates to the literature on the topic, showing how coordination between levels of governance in Italy and Spain is an open issue. For instance, Del Pino & Pavolini (2015) argue that these two countries have undergone parallel processes of change in their decentralised structure due to economic crises, which have deteriorated the relations between the national government and regions in many sectors, including education.

Figure 34. Marginal means of desirable multilevel governance structure of LOs (B12) according to countries of administration.



Second, the debate about privatising LOs' governance confirms its relevance again, consistent with Chapter 4. Indeed, Bulgarian and Greek respondents consider the involvement of private actors more desirable, which may be seen as a further element of the neoliberalisation of education (Tikkanen, 2019) – in line with other results in previous sections. On the contrary, such trends are particularly disliked in Finland and Italy, countries where processes of neoliberalisation of education seem particularly contentious – notwithstanding different starting points: while privatisation processes within the education sector are still limited and opposed in Finland (Dovemark et al., 2018), they are instead already occurring in Italy in various areas, including that of evaluation and LOs (Grimaldi & Serpieri, 2013).

6.4 Conclusions

Within this chapter, we look at spatial issues which may be relevant to the definition of LOs on two levels. First, we consider the different ways survey respondents have conceived spatial cleavages potentially impacting LOs, looking at four types of spatial divide: interregional, rural/urban, interurban, and intraurban. Then, we investigate how respondents think that the MLG of LOs will evolve in the future of their countries and compare it to the governance structure they would prefer, considering the actors responsible for LOs at various levels. These two understandings of how LOs are shaped through multiple arenas (expressed in different types of space or diverse relations among levels of governance), but show consistent findings. Indeed, each country involved in the survey shows peculiar patterns in both dimensions.

Anyway, it is worth first focusing on some overarching trends characterising case countries. First, the relevance of the cleavage between central and peripheral,

disadvantaged and privileged areas within cities, which is identified among the most relevant spatial divides for LOs across various countries. The fact that spatial inequalities are on the rise in European urban areas is well documented (Cassiers & Kesteloot, 2012), as the factors exacerbating such gaps in the field of education (Bona et al., 2019; Bernelius & Kosunen, 2023). In this sense, findings from our survey further contribute to pointing out the necessity to act on such issues.

An additional crosscutting element identified within survey participants' responses concerns the role of central governments. Despite some minor differences and diverse relations with other levels of governance, the increasing centrality of national actors associates with all respondents' groups, and suggests this will be a crucial arena for the definition of LOs. This trend is further reinforced by the low relevance of supranational actors in both likely and desirable scenarios. Such findings cast a shadow on the aims of harmonisation of LOs within the EU, which may find resistance and obstacles in seemingly bounded national debates on this issue.

The situation is even more complex when considering differences among countries. Indeed, when looking at survey responses, the impact of spatial cleavages on LOs is nation-dependent. In Italy, for example, the interregional divide is deemed dominant, suggesting that LOs are related to North-South divides. Moreover, imbalances between different types of localities emerge as relevant in Bulgaria and Greece, while rural/urban divides are more worrying for Finnish and Portuguese respondents.

A varied framework results from the preferred governance structures of LOs, too. In particular, desirable scenarios are diversified, suggesting potential contentious debates. This is especially true for decentralisation and privatisation of the governance of LOs. As for the former, respondents from decentralised systems present different patterns, with German and Austrian ones seemingly opposing further devolution and those from Italy and Spain leaning towards a more sharing of responsibilities. Instead, the latter is particularly contentious in Italy and Finland, and it is questioned in Continental countries, while it seems more accepted by Bulgarian and Greek respondents. These findings align with previous results, suggesting common patterns in neoliberalisation trends across different sections of our survey.

This chapter provides evidence of plural national debates concerning LOs in CLEAR countries. The significance of differing structures in the MLG of LOs and the variety of spatial inequality configurations need comparative insights between and within European countries. In this context, a key takeaway from our survey responses is that there is no one-fits-all approach when designing measures for LOs. This consideration is critical at the EU level, as it challenges any push towards harmonisation and standardisation of LOs.

7. Conclusions

This last chapter wraps up the main conclusions of the present report, trying to answer the three general research questions based on research findings. In particular, these questions respectively deal with: a) specific challenges for learning outcomes' (LOs) definition and the different ways these are addressed across contexts and fields; b) potential mismatches between likely and desirable futures; and c) structure and perception of the multi-level governance of LOs in different contexts. The various aspects related to such research aims have been considered in the report by focusing on multiple aspects of the definition and implementation of LOs through the lens of policy stakeholders and experts surveyed within the WP6 of the CLEAR project. Even though not based on a representative sample, this survey has defined scenarios – either future or desirable – which may contribute to understanding the possible paths through which debates about LOs will evolve within the eight CLEAR countries. Moreover, common and diverging trends and potential conflicts identified in this research according to respondents' views include relevant implications for policymaking in this field, which will inform the forthcoming CLEAR European Policy Brief on the construction of LOs.

Therefore, building on the CLEAR general theoretical framework (Deliverables D2.2, D2.3) and the specific design and methodology illustrated in the first chapter, the Report has considered five core dimensions regarding LOs derived from our questionnaire.

First, it has investigated how LOs and (under)achievement are understood by our respondents, identifying two main dimensions along which their representations diverge: one confronting multidimensional and market-oriented understandings of educational achievement and another related to opposing considerations of credentials and grades. These concurring scenarios to LOs and (under)achievement also result in respondents' perspectives on different targets and implementations of LOs, suggesting that – beyond a general prevalence of multidimensionality – contentiousness may arise from the very beginning of conceptualisations and implementations of these tools.

Second, the Report has considered various factors that may impact LOs at the individual, relational and institutional levels. Alternative approaches emerged with few individual factors deemed more relevant, albeit few exceptions especially in the intersection between the influence of social class and self-efficacy. The interplay between these two dimensions also stands out as one of the main results of the second participatory activity foreseen in CLEAR WP6. In this occasion, alternative perspectives emerge among participants: on the one hand, a strict relation between self-efficacy and social class of learners and their families has been pointed out by most of them; on the other hand, others have highlighted that it cannot be taken for granted that lower class learners are characterised by lower self-efficacy and that schools assume in this context a crucial role, potentially being able to compensate for disadvantaged starting positions and inequalities affecting this aspect. Some participants also raise concerns about the term

self-efficacy itself, proposing to replace it with broader notions, such as that of "ability self".

Third, after analysing the likely futures in the configuration of LOs, the following chapters consider how forecasted paths relate to respondents' desired outcomes and their assessment of peculiar situations. The mismatch between likely and desirable scenarios is primarily investigated in three dimensions: the pervasiveness of statistical measurement of LOs, the demonopolisation of education and the role of formal education, and the processes of individualisation of education. In all cases, forecasted and desired futures show the potential for conflicts among different groups and conceptions, with pushes towards learners' categorisation and "merit" being especially contentious in some contexts. This is also confirmed by the second participatory activity, during which participants criticise approaches to LOs exclusively focused on individuals and their self-efficacy as neglecting the impact of contextual elements and being functional to neoliberalisation of education.

Fourth, we have investigated what would happen to LOs and the education system in the face of another structural crisis. Respondents identify multiple types of crises that may affect education and LOs, with diverse and sometimes divergent outcomes. Most likely, structural crises may lead to the marginalisation of education and LOs and exacerbate polarisation within the society in general; also crises are deemed as innovation engines.

Fifth, following the CLEAR claim to consider LOs through the lens of Spatial Justice, spatial issues have been considered by looking at how respondents frame the impact of cleavages between and within regions, cities, and rural/urban areas on LOs. Also, mismatches between desired and likely governance of LOs are considered, noting in particular how most respondents value the role of national-level actors as crucial, and supranational ones as much less important.

Based on the reported findings on these dimensions, some general trends and challenges can be identified to contribute to aforementioned research questions:

- LOs are inherently multidimensional, but this origins challenges in their definition and implementation as the acknowledgement of which dimensions to consider is not consistent across groups.
- A crucial challenge emerges in the threat that inequalities pose to LOs, especially to their standardised form and within crisis scenarios. This is also further reinforced by the relative limited recognition of some dimensions concerning structural inequalities, such as gender.
- The quantitative turn in LOs measurement and their standardisation seem to be largely accepted. However, mismatches between likely and desirable scenarios emerge when looking at how this standardisation may impact on learners, especially regarding their categorisation in achievement groups. Moreover, doubts are

expressed about the reliability of standardised, quantitative LOs in situations of systemic crisis and rising socio-economic polarisation.

- Despite the consensus on the role of public education as a vehicle of shared values, processes of individualisation – particularly the inclusion of "meritocratic" elements in education – emerge as contentious, presenting important mismatches between likely and desirable futures.
- The main actors within the multilevel governance of LOs remain national and local ones, which are identified as crucial by most respondents, while the involvement supra-national organisations appear less likely and also less desired in some contexts.
- Contentiousness emerges when considering the involvement of private actors in LOs governance, which is generally seen as not desirable in itself by respondents, although some of them positively value forms of shared public-private governance.

However, when considering possible conflicts and mismatches in LOs' design and implementation, the most relevant challenges seem to related to cleavages between different national contexts and fields. Indeed, relevant distinctions emerge on various issues, suggesting that LOs may be differently understood across actors and contexts. The following two sections briefly summarise such group specificities, trying to look at the broad picture before the conclusions.

7.1 Socio-demographic differences

This Report has considered the effect of various respondents' socio-demographic characteristics on the configuration of LOs, including gender, age, area of expertise and type of actor. Overall, these variables seem to play a minor role compared to differences among countries of administration. Still, relevant findings can be highlighted, especially regarding possible cleavages among actors and their expertise. Three main trends are cases in point: position-holding tendencies, attitudes towards neoliberalisation, and the lack of permeability between diverse areas of the debate about LOs.

Regarding the first issue, respondents are generally more inclined to forecast and desire scenarios that allow them to retain or strengthen their positions. For example, this is the case of private actors potentially downgrading the importance of institutional factors on LOs or valuing more positive scenarios of privatisation of LOs' governance. However, it seems to be true also in the opposite direction, with education experts tending to consider the role of formal education more relevant and desirable in the future and public actors being more in favour of National Qualification Frameworks and similarly formalised descriptors of LOs.

Private actors, and partly labour market experts, seem more oriented towards praising the neoliberalisation of education, identified with proxies like individualisation, the introduction of market or quasi-market frameworks, emphasis on merit and competition,

and privatisation. The opposite holds true for local public actors, who show, for instance, a more positive inclination towards non- and under-achievement as policy targets for LOs.

Finally, a few hints on the effect of working and social contexts on debates about LOs. Two main potential cleavages are to be noted. First, there is a difference in attitudes towards skills acquired through formal education between actors dealing with labour market policies and those focusing on education. Indeed, this division is connected to the above-mentioned position-holding attitudes and permeability to neoliberal discourses. Still, it may also strengthen the idea of a detachment between educational institutions and the labour market. Similarly, relevant topics in the academic debate do not take hold outside research bubbles. This is relevant for the perspective adopted in the CLEAR project since the intersectional approach in shaping LOs is among the relevant dimensions. It is vital to properly recognise the multidimensionality of LOs not just in their definitions and aims, but also in their determinants - but this issue is not recognized by most policy-makers.

7.2 National differences in the understandings of learning outcomes

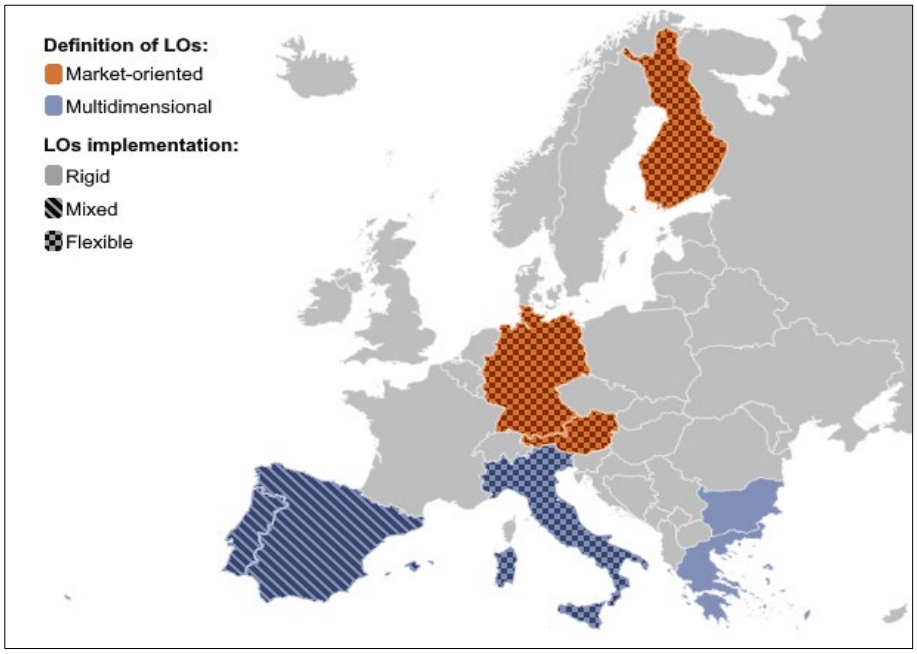
While socio-demographic variables are relevant for just a limited number of dimensions, the country of administration is significant in differentiating almost all considered issues, suggesting that national debates are crucial arenas for the definition of LOs and their implementations. Indeed, respondents from different national samples find themselves on opposite sides of the fence on multiple issues, and, despite general and common patterns emerging among countries, these represent the primary variable impacting likely and desirable futures of LOs. Differences may be found on multiple dimensions, including the definition of LOs, the flexibility of tools used to implement them, attitudes towards neoliberalisation of education, and the different framing of spatial cleavages impacting LOs.

As for the future configurations of LOs forecasted by respondents from different national contexts, the first distinction emerges between Continental countries, Finland, on the one hand, and Southern European countries, Bulgaria, on the other. Indeed, the former group tends to conceive LOs as more connected to the labour market, placing employability at the core of their definitions more often and focusing more on skills that allow a smooth transition from training and education to the labour market. Conversely, the latter assumes a multidimensional approach to the definition of LOs, placing issues of citizenship and fulfilment of individual potential almost at the same level of employability. This difference remains relevant despite respondents seeing the beginning of a convergence towards the second conception in the future.

Such a diversity of approaches is also mirrored in the tools for implementing LOs. Austrian, German, and Finnish respondents regard the increased flexibility of LO measurement and the education system in general as more positive. For instance, this is shown in the negative attitudes towards credentials and grades and towards standardised and quantitatively measured LOs, as well as in the higher consideration of

the role of skills acquired through informal education. Conversely, Bulgarian and Greek respondents are usually much more inclined towards categorising and rigid tools, mainly grades. Stakeholders from other Southern European countries remain in the middle on this issue, with Italy leaning towards the position of Finland and Continental countries.

Figure 35. Classification of CLEAR countries according to LOs definition and types of implementation tools, elaborated by report's authors based on survey responses.



The proximity of Italy to this group is even more evident when considering attitudes towards the neoliberalisation of education. Indeed, Italian and Finnish respondents show the most negative consideration of these dynamics, which also seem to be not popular within the Austrian sample. Portuguese, Spanish and German responses appear more ambiguous. However, the first ones follow the trend of Italian, Finnish, and Austrian respondents regarding the desirability of a merit-centred approach to education and LOs. However, beyond similar attitudes, a crucial difference emerges between these countries when confronting likelihood and desirability.

While respondents from Finland and Austria identify many of the processes associated with neoliberalisation as unlikely, those from Italy and Portugal consider the same dynamics as likely to occur in the next ten years, forecasting a future in which this dimension is one of the central conflict areas. A higher coincidence of likely and desirable scenarios on this issue is observed in the Bulgarian and Greek samples: an education system in which LOs are used as a categorisation tool and notions of "merit" and "excellence" are guiding appears to be likely and desirable for respondents from these countries, who also consider top-achievers as a more probable target for LOs measures.

Finally, countries of administration differ in how the spatial cleavages potentially affect LOs. Opinions on this issue are related to pre-existing spatial patterns and inequalities.

Again, Bulgaria and Greece show parallel situations, showing a higher consideration of the gap between localities. However, Bulgarian respondents generally assign lower values to almost all spatial dimensions. Conversely, these cleavages are predominantly framed as intraurban in other countries, with Portugal and Finland pairing this more often with the rural/urban divide. Not surprisingly, in light of the wide North-South gap, Italy represents a peculiar exception, being the only country sample in which spatial divides are framed at the interregional level. Table 11 summarises the main characteristics noted in this report at the national level in each involved country.

Table 11. Summary of the position of national samples on the main dimensions considered in the report.

	Definition of LOs	*Tools for LOs implementation*	*Attitudes towards neoliberalisation*	*Main frame of the spatial divide*	*Likely/ desirable mismatch*
Finland	Market-oriented	Flexible	Negative	Intracity, Rural/urban	Low
Austria	Market-oriented	Flexible	Negative	Intracity	Low
Germany	Market-oriented	Flexible	Mixed	Intracity	Low
Italy	Multidimensional	Flexible	Negative	Interregional	High
Portugal	Multidimensional	Mixed	Mixed	Intracity, Rural/urban	High
Spain	Multidimensional	Mixed	Mixed	Intracity	High
Greece	Multidimensional	Rigid	Positive	Intracity, Inter-locality	Mixed
Bulgaria	Multidimensional	Rigid	Positive	Inter-locality	Mixed

This last issue also relates to regional characteristics within each country involved in the project, summarised in the CLEAR collection of research sites (CLEAR, 2024). Regional dimensions have only been indirectly considered within the survey. This limitation derives from the difficulty to collect sub-national data through the survey, since it has not been possible to ask for specific regional origins of respondents to avoid identification issues and findings about local level were not solid enough to be analysed by themselves. Yet, these aspects will be considered more in-depth when assessing the WP6 results in the Innovation Forums planned in the project and by triangulating them with results from other WPs, especially WP4 and WP5. Moreover, throughout the report, hypotheses on the regional levels have been presented at some points, where survey findings were in line with the aforementioned regional profiles of CLEAR fields of research and previous results of the WP3 (CLEA, 2024; Deliverable D3.2). Indeed, as crucially argued within that research and in other related works (e.g., Cefalo et al., 2024), EU countries are characterised by critical spatial differences mirrored in LOs, making some regions and localities potentially differ from the leading national patterns. This must also be considered when contextualising the results presented in this report.

7.3 Final conclusions and limitations

The results of this Report must be interpreted within the broader context of the CLEAR project's research efforts, which focus on various aspects of the construction of LOs in eight EU countries. The Report has contributed to this framework by specifically examining how selected stakeholders from diverse areas of expertise and positions perceive these tools, their impacts, and other related aspects. Ultimately, the findings provide further evidence to support the view that LOs are not fixed and subject to debate and potential conflicts, spanning multiple dimensions of education and training and broader societal dynamics. As repeatedly emphasised in CLEAR outputs, LOs are intrinsically multidimensional and must be understood within the broader social contexts in which they are implemented. This recognition is also evident among respondents of the expert survey, although acknowledging the multifaceted nature of LOs varies in configuration and outcomes across different groups.

Indeed, respondents generally perceive LOs as a multidimensional tool in terms of their definitions and objectives. However, except for some actors, this understanding appears less widespread and questioned when considering external factors that may influence them beyond educational systems.

Moreover, as previously noted, national peculiarities frequently arise and must be further understood concerning regional and local characteristics, thereby challenging the reliability of rigid tools for defining LOs. The heterogeneous nature of LOs' conceptions, implementations, and determinants at different levels complicates efforts to achieve standardisation and harmonisation across EU countries. This calls for a context-dependent approach that balances comparability across diverse locations and socio-economic conditions by recognising their specificities. CLEAR is committed to addressing such a complex task in the drafting of a European Policy Brief on the construction of LOs and policy coordination in this field.

However, as we approach the conclusion of this Report, it is necessary to reiterate the limitations of the present work. The research has an exploratory nature and is not intended to produce generalisations, but rather to provide insights into the future of LOs from experts in related fields. The perspectives of selected stakeholders are at the core of this report, with all the advantages and biases inherent in such a choice. Respondents are often asked to forecast or assess the desirability of scenarios that may partly or primarily affect other groups or individuals in different positions. Therefore, the forecasts and wishes presented in the Report should not be interpreted as representing dominant or universally desirable conceptions of LOs. Instead, they reflect the ideas and positions of the respondents and explore issues concerning LOs that are present in the national debates of CLEAR countries. The Report is thus a piece within a broader research framework, and its findings build upon and will contribute to other CLEAR work packages,

thereby triangulating results to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the construction of LOs in Europe.

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Annex 1 – Text of the survey

Section 1. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND (UNDER)ACHIEVEMENT

A1. In the policy debate, there are competing ideas on what learning outcomes are and are relevant for. In your opinion, to what extent are the following understandings of learning outcomes relevant in the policy debate in your country? *Please, rate each understanding from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. Knowledge, skills and abilities to develop professional qualification and enhance employability
2. Knowledge, skills and abilities to develop citizenship skills (critical-thinking, representation, social participation, collective action…)
3. Knowledge, skills and abilities to develop one's full potential

A1 Other. Are there any another understandings of learning outcomes in the policy debate of your country? *(open question)*

B1. Now, look forward to the next ten years. In your opinion, to what extent will the following understandings of learning outcomes be relevant in the policy debate in your country in that timeframe? *Please, rate each understanding from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. Knowledge, skills and abilities to develop professional qualification and enhance employability
2. Knowledge, skills and abilities to develop citizenship skills (critical-thinking, representation, social participation, collective action…)
3. Knowledge, skills and abilities to develop one's full potential

B1 Other. Do you think there will be other understandings of learning outcomes in the policy debate of your country in ten years? *(open question)*

A2. In your opinion, what is the impact of the following factors on learning outcomes and achievement in your country? *Please, rate each understanding from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. Gender
2. Sexual orientation
3. Social class
4. Ethnic/religious/migrant minority
5. Citizenship
6. Disabilities
7. Self-efficacy (self-confidence, motivation, resilience…)
8. Peer group
9. Family
10. Social relations
11. Teachers/Trainers
12. Organization of the educational system
13. Educational policies
14. Employment policies
15. Youth policies
16. Schools
17. The place (region, district) where one lives
18. Systemic crises (economic crises, wars…)

A2 Other. Are there any other relevant factors influencing learning outcomes and achievement in your country? *(open question)*

B2. Now, look forward to the next ten years. In your opinion, what will the impact of the following factors on learning outcomes and achievement be in your country in that timeframe? *Please, rate each understanding from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. Gender
2. Sexual orientation
3. Social class
4. Ethnic/religious/migrant minority
5. Citizenship
6. Disabilities
7. Self-efficacy (self-confidence, motivation, resilience…)
8. Peer group
9. Family
10. Social relations
11. Teachers/Trainers
12. Organization of the educational system
13. Educational policies
14. Employment policies
15. Youth policies
16. Schools
17. The place (region, district) where one lives
18. Systemic crises (economic crises, wars…)

B2 Other. Do you think there will be any other relevant factors influencing learning outcomes and achievement in your country in ten years? *(open question)*

A3. Please, rate the relevance of the following statements. In your country, measuring learning outcomes is meant to… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. improve learners' self-assessment of own performance and learning.
2. support learners' assessment, grading and ranking.
3. improve educational institutions' self-assessment.
4. rank and compare educational institutions (e.g. schools, training agencies).
5. rank and compare educational systems.
6. boost public debate on desired social and professional skills for active citizenship.

A3 Other. Are there any other relevant functions of measuring learning outcomes in present-day policy-making in your country? *(open question)*

B3. Please, rate the relevance of the following statement: Now, look forward to the next ten years. In that timeframe, measuring learning outcomes will be meant to… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. improve learners' self-assessment of own performance and learning.
2. support learners' assessment, grading and ranking.
3. improve educational institutions' self-assessment.
4. rank and compare educational institutions (e.g. schools, training agencies).
5. rank and compare educational systems.
6. boost public debate on desired social and professional skills for active citizenship.

B3 Other. Do you think there will be any other relevant functions of measuring learning outcomes in policy-making in your country in ten years? *(open question)*

A4. Underachievement in education is part of policy debates in many countries. In your country, how would you rate the following statements according to their relevance in policy discourse? In my country, underachievement in education means… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. not reaching learners' own potential.
2. not acquiring skills needed in the labour market.
3. not acquiring skills needed to participate adequately in society (political and civic participation).
4. not acquiring educational credentials.
5. getting low marks/grades.

A4 Other. Are there any other relevant definitions of underachievement in the policy debate in your country? *(open question)*

B4. Now, look forward to the next ten years. How would you rate the following statements according to their relevance in policy discourse in that timeframe? In my country, underachievement in education will mean… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. not reaching learners' own potential.
2. not acquiring skills needed in the labour market.
3. not acquiring skills needed to participate adequately in society (political and civic participation).
4. not acquiring educational credentials.
5. getting low marks/grades.

B4 Other. Do you think there will be any other relevant definitions of underachievement in the policy debate in your country in ten years? *(open question)*

A5. How would you rate the following statements? In my country, the focus of policies dealing with learning outcomes is placed on… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not at all) to 7 (strongly)*

1. non-achievers
2. underachievers
3. learners at any level of achievement
4. top-achievers

B5. Now, look forward to the next ten years. How would you rate the following statements? In ten years, the focus of policies dealing with learning outcomes will be placed on… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not at all) to 7 (strongly)*

1. non-achievers
2. underachievers
3. learners at any level of achievement
4. top-achievers

A6. Look again forward to the next ten years. How likely the following statements on policy trends will be in that timeframe? *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not likely at all) to 7 (very likely)*

1. Formal education will be less relevant in supporting the transition to the labour market.
2. Educational credentials will be more important in separating upper and lower social classes.
3. Skills acquired outside formal education will be more important in the transition to the labour market.

4. Statistical measurement of learning outcomes will become more important in the policy-making arenas.
5. A national system of standardized measurement of learning outcomes will become part of the education system.
6. The results of international comparative surveys will set the agenda in policy debates.
7. More policy stakeholders will oppose statistical measurement of learning outcomes questioning its reliability.
8. The reliability and validity of statistical measurement of learning outcomes will considerably improve.
9. The statistical measurement of learning outcomes will contribute to impoverish the use of varied teaching and training methods.

10. The statistical measurement of learning outcomes will lead to more efficient and effective management of educational institutions.
11. Measurement of learning outcomes will be used more frequently to sort out and categorize learners.
12. The increased role of measures of learning outcomes will become more stressful for educators and learners.
13. Measuring learning outcomes will show a decline of educational attainment
14. "Merit" and "excellence" will gain currency in the policy debate.
15. A formalized structure of learning level descriptors and qualifications (i.e. a national qualification framework) will increasingly define learning outcomes.
16. The public education system will have an important role in the transmission of a shared set of social norms and values .
17. More and more groups will advocate their right to deliver own values for their children through alternative education paths.
18. The statistical measurement of learning outcomes will reduce educational inequalities.
19. The spatial differences in the quality of schools and education opportunities will become wider.
20. Policy-makers will make efforts to reduce spatial inequalities in educational provisions.

B6. Look again forward to the next ten years. How desirable the following statements on policy trends will be in that timeframe? *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not likely at all) to 7 (very likely)*

1. Formal education will be less relevant in supporting the transition to the labour market.
2. Educational credentials will be more important in separating upper and lower social classes.

3. Skills acquired outside formal education will be more important in the transition to the labour market.
4. Statistical measurement of learning outcomes will become more important in the policy-making arenas.
5. A national system of standardized measurement of learning outcomes will become part of the education system.
6. The results of international comparative surveys will set the agenda in policy debates.
7. More policy stakeholders will oppose statistical measurement of learning outcomes questioning its reliability.
8. The reliability and validity of statistical measurement of learning outcomes will considerably improve.
9. The statistical measurement of learning outcomes will contribute to impoverish the use of varied teaching and training methods.

10. The statistical measurement of learning outcomes will lead to more efficient and effective management of educational institutions.
11. Measurement of learning outcomes will be used more frequently to sort out and categorize learners.
12. The increased role of measures of learning outcomes will become more stressful for educators and learners.
13. Measuring learning outcomes will show a decline of educational attainment
14. "Merit" and "excellence" will gain currency in the policy debate.
15. A formalized structure of learning level descriptors and qualifications (i.e. a national qualification framework) will increasingly define learning outcomes.
16. The public education system will have an important role in the transmission of a shared set of social norms and values .
17. More and more groups will advocate their right to deliver own values for their children through alternative education paths.
18. The statistical measurement of learning outcomes will reduce educational inequalities.

19. The spatial differences in the quality of schools and education opportunities will become wider.
20. Policy-makers will make efforts to reduce spatial inequalities in educational provisions.

A7. In the set of questions above, we have asked you opinions on the present and on a ten-year scenario. In your opinion, if a new systemic crisis (e.g. global economic crisis, global pandemic, environmental disasters, armed conflicts…) appears, how would it affect the quality of learning outcomes in your region/country? Please, consider at least one of the issues presented above (statistical measurement of learning outcomes, factors affecting the quality of learning outcomes, key policy trends). *(open question)*

A8. In the set of questions above, for the sake of simplicity, we have predefined definitions, trends, focuses and functions related to learning outcomes. If there is any relevant issue about learning outcomes and achievement that we failed to acknowledge and you would like to add, please feel free to comment here. *(open question)*

Section 2. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

A9. In every country, spatial cleavages have specific configurations and effects on learning outcomes. From your viewpoint, how relevant are the following spatial cleavages in your country? *Please, rank each statement from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. Interregional divides
2. Rural/urban divides
3. Interurban divides (e.g. capital city/other cities)
4. Intraurban divides (e.g. centre/periphery; urban ghettoes).

A9 other. Are there any other relevant spatial cleavages that influence learning outcomes? *(open question)*

B9. Now, look forward to the next ten years. From your viewpoint, how relevant the following spatial cleavages will be in your country in that timeframe? *Please, rank each statement from 1 (not relevant at all) to 7 (of utmost relevance)*

1. Interregional divides
2. Rural/urban divides
3. Interurban divides (e.g. capital city/other cities)
4. Intraurban divides (e.g. centre/periphery; urban ghettoes).

B9 Other. Do you think there will be any other relevant spatial cleavages in your country in ten years? *(open question)*

A10. According to your opinion, what is the desired governance of policies dealing with learning outcomes and underachievement in your country? (only one option is possible)

a) Central government is responsible, and decentralised authorities implement decisions taken at national level
b) Responsibility is shared between central government and decentralised administrations
c) Responsibility lies primarily with the decentralised administrations

A11. According to your opinion, what is the desired governance of policies dealing with learning outcomes and underachievement in your country? (only one option is possible)

a) Public actors define responsibilities and finance private actors
b) Responsibility is shared equally between public and private actors
c) Private actors define their own strategies independently from the public actor

A12. Now, look forward to the next ten years. How likely the following statements on policy responsibility are? Policy responsibility on learning outcomes and underachievement will… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not likely at all) to 7 (very likely)*

1. lie more than now with supranational organizations.
2. lie more than now with the nation state
3. lie more than now with the decentralised administrations.
4. lie more than now with the private sector.
5. be more shared between different levels of administration.
6. be more shared between public and private sector.

A12 Other. Do you think there will be any other relevant policy responsibility on learning outcomes in ten years? *(open question)*

B12. Look again forward to the next ten years. How desirable the following statements on policy responsibility are? Policy responsibility on learning outcomes and underachievement will… *Please, rate each statement from 1 (not desirable at all) to 7 (very desirable)*

1. lie more than now with supranational organizations.
2. lie more than now with the nation state
3. lie more than now with the decentralised administrations.
4. lie more than now with the private sector.

5. be more shared between different levels of administration.
6. be more shared between public and private sector.

B12 Other. Do you think there will be any other desirable policy responsibility on learning outcomes in ten years? *(open question)*

Section 3. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

A13. Which of the following genders do you most closely identify with? *Please, select all relevant options*

a) Woman
b) Man
c) Non-binary / gender diverse
d) Prefer not to say
e) Other

A14. Which age group do you belong to? *One option only*

a) 18-24 years
b) 25-34 years
c) 35-44 years
d) 45-54 years
e) 55-64 years
f) 65-74 years
g) 75 years or older
h) Prefer not to say

A15. Do you identify with any ethnic, religious or cultural minority?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Prefer not to say

A15specify. Please specify here the ethnic, religious or cultural minority you identify with. *(open question)*

A16. Which of the following fields does your expertise cover the most? *Please, select all relevant options*

a) General education
b) Special education
c) Vocational education and training
d) Adult learning
e) Labour market
f) Youth
g) Other (please specify)

A17. Which of the following statements best describes your current position? I am a... *Please, select all relevant options*

a) person in charge of planning/programming policy measures within a public body at national level
b) person in charge of implementing policy measures within a public body at national level
c) person in charge of planning/programming policy measures within a public body at subnational level
d) person in charge of implementing policy measures within a public body at subnational level
e) researcher in a university or research centre
f) member of a think tank
g) person in charge of planning/programming policy measures in a private agency
h) person in charge of implementing policy measures in a private agency
i) person with a role in a civil society organization
j) person with a role in a youth association
k) person with a role of responsibility in a political party

A18 If you wish to be informed about results of the survey, please enter your e-mail address.

A19 If you wish to be informed about results of the survey and contacted to participate in other project activities (e.g., interviews, policy roundtables), please enter your e-mail address

A20 If you wish not to be contacted further, please click here [ ].

A21 If you wish to contribute to our research, it would be useful for us to have the contacts of other experts on the survey's topic. If you think there is someone we should contact, please enter their email address.

Annex 2 – Tables

Table 12. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models based on Q1 and Q4 reshaped items.

Independent variables	**Employability** (1_1)		**Citizenship skills** (1_2)		**One's full potential** (1_3)		**Not-reach own potential** (4_1)		**Not reach market skills** (4_2)		**Not reach social skills** (4_3)		**Not reach education credentials** (4_4)		**Low grades** (4_5)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR
Time																
Present	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
10 years in the future	**.265****	*.083*	**.666*****	*.111*	**.609*****	*.104*	**.991*****	*.117*	**.508*****	*.089*	**.837*****	*.113*	-.117	*.101*	**-.458*****	*.105*
Countries																
Austria	**.346***	*.168*	**-.481***	*.242*	**-.840*****	*.216*	-.097	*.246*	-.062	*.175*	.243	*.237*	.419	*.214*	-.242	*.227*
Bulgaria	-.046	*.181*	.339	*.227*	.173	*.206*	.190	*.220*	.011	*.190*	**.463***	*.227*	**.612****	*.218*	**.556***	*.224*
Finland	.263	*.151*	**-.438***	*.206*	**-.697*****	*.193*	**-.506****	*.217*	.128	*.155*	**.549****	*.205*	.277	*.181*	**-1.260*****	*.195*
Germany	.075	*.162*	.072	*.208*	**-.461***	*.184*	.113	*.219*	.084	*.176*	**.469***	*.227*	**.400***	*.200*	**-.455***	*.222*
Greece	-.027	*.188*	.244	*.247*	.170	*.225*	.323	*.228*	-.039	*.195*	.425	*.235*	**.697****	*.227*	**1.051*****	*.199*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	.217	*.151*	**.676****	*.199*	.239	*.187*	.086	*.217*	**-.401***	*.167*	.030	*.221*	**.731*****	*.188*	**.530****	*.198*
Spain	**.367***	*.155*	.355	*.235*	.193	*.212*	.171	*.261*	-.039	*.190*	.172	*.256*	.285	*.249*	**.566****	*.213*
Gender																
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.040	*.086*	-.208	*-117*	.048	*.106*	-.171	*.121*	**-.196***	*.095*	**-.257***	*.120*	-.129	*.105*	-.095	*.113*
Non-binary	**.693****	*.222*	.168	*.650*	**.917***	*.465*	**1.36***	*.609*	**.494***	*.217*	.664	*.476*	-.496	*.535*	-.731	*.431*
Age groups																
Under 35	.031	*.213*	-.273	*.262*	-.359	*.245*	**-.697***	*.285*	**.424***	*.195*	.113	*.252*	.052	*.240*	.428	*.241*
35-44	.132	*.120*	.172	*.172*	**.378***	*.156*	.189	*.179*	**.262***	*.131*	-.248	*.180*	-.079	*.149*	.209	*.160*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	.026	*.010*	.086	*.130*	.184	*.124*	.145	*.141*	.202	*.202*	.053	*.136*	-.013	*.123*	.092	*.128*
65 and over	.079	*.176*	-.171	*.254*	-.100	*.250*	**.639****	*.221*	.293	*.293*	.180	*.245*	.356	*.196*	.078	*.237*
Field of expertise																
Education	-.083	*.092*	.108	*.122*	.222	*.115*	-.196	*.125*	-.022	*.102*	.173	*.125*	-.038	*.107*	.153	*.115*
VET	-.009	*.098*	.113	*.128*	-.036	*.123*	.011	*.134*	.009	*.103*	.106	*.130*	-.169	*.116*	.007	*.115*
Adult learning	.019	*.098*	-.056	*.132*	-.110	*.127*	-.162	*.133*	.177	*.099*	.071	*.129*	.189	*.112*	.109	*.119*
Labour market	-.196	*.101*	.135	*.131*	.069	*.129*	.087	*.142*	.084	*.112*	.090	*.140*	.112	*.125*	.003	*.133*
Youth policies	**-.236***	*.117*	-.021	*.146*	.158	*.133*	.169	*.150*	-.119	*.121*	-.061	*.153*	-.010	*.141*	**.300***	*.146*
Type of actor																
Public (national)	-.038	*.120*	.138	*.153*	.146	*.140*	.031	*.170*	-.134	*.132*	-.022	*.163*	-.198	*.152*	.076	*.145*
Public (local)	.020	*.125*	.099	*.151*	.075	*.142*	**.357***	*.169*	-.031	*.139*	.142	*.160*	-.082	*.154*	**-.463****	*.150*
Research	-.114	*.121*	**-.358***	*.156*	-203	*.139*	**-.392***	*.165*	-.064	*.132*	**-.438****	*.157*	-.040	*.146*	.020	*.143*
Private	-.237	*.157*	.020	*.195*	.086	*.179*	-.030	*.233*	-.068	*.161*	-.098	*.208*	.044	*.171*	-.305	*.193*
Civil Society	-.251	*.128*	-.011	*.154*	**-.335***	*.141*	**-.350***	*.170*	**-.303***	*.129*	**-.493****	*.160*	-.160	*.144*	.155	*.140*
cons.	**5.912*****	*.188*	**4.727*****	*.247*	**4.911*****	*.227*	**4.522*****	*.247*	**5.552*****	*.209*	**4.519*****	*.251*	**5.241*****	*.222*	**5.063*****	*.238*
N[1]	920		920		920		916		916		916		916		916	
R-squared	0.053		0.114		0.135		0.145		0.077		0.113		0.038		0.212	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

[1]Observations refer to the reshaped vector.

Table 13. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models based on Q3 and Q5 reshaped items.

Independent variables	**Learners' self-assessment** (3_1)		**Learners' assessment** (3_2)		**Education institutions self-assessment** (3_3)		**Rank education institutions** (3_4)		**Boost the debate on citizenship skills** (3_6)		**Non-achievers** (5_1)		**Under-achievers** (5_2)		**Learners at any level of achievement** (5_3)		**Top-achievers** (5_4)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR		
Time																		
Present	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
10 years in the future	**.985*** **	*.112*	.076	*.106*	**.667*** **	*.105*	**.469*** **	*.115*	**1.139*** **	*.122*	**.405*** **	*.115*	**.704*** **	*.110*	**.846*** **	*.110*	**.816*** **	*.118*
Countries																		
Austria	**.924*** **	*.237*	**.473***	*.210*	.049	*.231*	-.014	*.262*	.309	*.280*	.090	*.254*	.125	*.214*	-.064	*.229*	.165	*.246*
Bulgaria	**.913*** **	*.228*	**.900*** **	*.212*	**.448***	*.202*	**.852*** **	*.218*	**.944*** **	*.246*	.391	*.240*	.239	*.230*	**.902*** **	*.230*	**1.152*** **	*.228*
Finland	**.509***	*.199*	**-.513***	*.208*	**-.431***	*.191*	**-.727****	*.216*	.382	*.211*	**.825*** **	*.221*	**-.531***	*.208*	.005	*.198*	.023	*.208*
Germany	**.458***	*.208*	.279	*.201*	-.335	*.194*	**-.550***	*.221*	.329	*.236*	**.542***	*.225*	**.705****	*.210*	-.181	*.220*	.030	*.236*
Greece	**.889*** **	*.235*	**.804****	*.233*	.427*	*.215*	.346	*.234*	**.829****	*.254*	-.022	*.265*	-.267	*.247*	**.837****	*.245*	**.776****	*.267*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	**.541****	*.206*	**.615****	*.199*	.260	*.176*	.359	*.209*	**.541***	*.225*	**1.423*** **	*.207*	.201	*.210*	**.655****	*.210*	.058	*.220*
Spain	.405	*.254*	.269	*.248*	-.034	*.259*	.107	*.260*	.489	*.251*	**.930*** **	*.248*	**.470***	*.232*	**.516***	*.242*	.015	*.277*
Gender																		
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.144	*.116*	.016	*.111*	**-.127**	*.108*	.009	*.120*	-.153	*.127*	**-.354****	*.123*	**-.341****	*.120*	-.196	*.118*	-.204	*.126*
Non-binary	-.791	*.757*	**-1.304***	*.605*	.999	*.701*	-1.210	*.580*	-.597	*.697*	**1.095****	*.398*	**1.567*** **	*.312*	.277	*.702*	-.232	*.842*
Age groups																		
Under 35	-.104	*.283*	**.149**	*.255*	-.476	*.287*	-.011	*.288*	-.138	*.304*	-.043	*.256*	-.133	*.220*	-.334	*.249*	-.017	*.273*
35-44	-.093	*.174*	**.136**	*.160*	-.251	*.157*	-.117	*.175*	-.101	*.187*	.012	*.170*	.309	*.161*	-.119	*.164*	.040	*.178*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.095	*.132*	.046	*.129*	-.105	*.125*	-.084	*.138*	.037	*.146*	-.026	*.141*	.013	*.138*	-.065	*.133*	.120	*.143*
65 and over	**.578***	*.223*	.105	*.211*	.207	*.226*	-.138	*.269*	.065	*.287*	**.588***	*.246*	**.635****	*.224*	.226	*.230*	.268	*.255*
Field of expertise																		
Education	-.044	*.120*	.137	*.116*	.062	*.111*	-.058	*.124*	-.043	*.131*	.116	*.129*	.055	*.121*	.033	*.120*	-.068	*.131*
VET	-.008	*.129*	.115	*.121*	.032	*.121*	-.038	*.126*	-.085	*.140*	.012	*.128*	.098	*.124*	.200	*.122*	-.076	*.134*
Adult learning	.157	*.130*	.180	*.123*	-.217	*.124*	.019	*.132*	.006	*.141*	.150	*.134*	.153	*.124*	.067	*.124*	.182	*.135*
Labour market	.221	*.139*	.225	*.138*	.202	*.124*	.104	*.142*	.342*	*.146*	-.164	*.140*	-.077	*.142*	-.130	*.140*	.212	*.147*
Youth policies	-.022	*.151*	.059	*.138*	.026	*.136*	.110	*.151*	-.079	*.157*	-.092	*.143*	-.092	*.143*	.007	*.147*	.175	*.156*
Type of actor																		
Public (national)	.246	*.165*	-.067	*.143*	.172	*.143*	-.099	*.157*	.531**	*.174*	-.121	*.161*	-.038	*.149*	.188	*.166*	.227	*.159*
Public (local)	-.062	*.172*	-.022	*.156*	**.307***	*.151*	.309	*.166*	**.452***	*.174*	**.452****	*.164*	**.513****	*.150*	**.487****	*.158*	.276	*.167*
Research	**-.686*** **	*.162*	-.067	*.140*	-.264	*.146*	.193	*.161*	-.184	*.169*	**.441****	*.150*	.210	*.143*	**-.326***	*.152*	-.143	*.154*
Private	-.082	*.192*	-.162	*.170*	-.096	*.190*	.087	*.205*	.091	*.211*	-.010	*.201*	-.144	*.195*	-.249	*.191*	**.570****	*.201*
Civil Society	**-.455****	*.161*	-.017	*.136*	-.085	*.141*	.024	*.159*	.095	*.171*	-.159	*.152*	-.077	*.148*	-.117	*.156*	-.095	*.161*
cons.	**3.981*** **	*.252*	**4.455*** **	*.243*	**4.573*** **	*.231*	**4.363*** **	*.256*	**3.119*** **	*.261*	**3.874*** **	*.256*	**4.013*** **	*.244*	**3.764*** **	*.248*	**3.574*** **	
N[1]	886		886		886		886		886		876		876		876		876	
R-squared	0.164		0.087		0.120		0.098		0.145		0.126		0.140		0.166		0.119	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

[1]*Observations refer to the reshaped vector.*

Table 14. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of selected variables' effects on Q1/Q4-based cluster positioning (C1: Multidimensional pro-grades as base outcome).

Independent variables	**Multidimensional anti-grades** (C2)		**Market-dominant pro-grades** (C3)		**Market-dominant anti-grades** (C3)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR
Countries						
Austria	-.436	*.543*	-.789	*.659*	.721	*.636*
Bulgaria	**1.514****	*.500*	-1.044	*.610*	**-2.067***	*.985*
Finland	-.008	*.442*	-.507	*.615*	**1.164***	*.528*
Germany	-.151	*.456*	-.261	*.607*	.201	*.623*
Greece	**-1.366****	*.483*	-.158	*.587*	-1.900	*.999*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	-.820	*.456*	-.625	*.557*	-1.267	*.706*
Spain	-1.050	*.538*	-.933	*.659*	-.275	*.637*
Gender						
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	.433	*.252*	.247	*.335*	.355	*.332*
Non-binary	.649	*1.609*	**-13.490*****	*2.159*	2.927	*1.627*
Age groups						
Under 35	-.353	*.659*	1.150	*.601*	.141	*.665*
35-44	-.140	*.363*	-.292	*.438*	-.278	*.475*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.266	*.293*	-.081	*.376*	-.396	*.393*
65 and over	-.714	*.571*	-.343	*.617*	-.994	*.822*
Field of expertise						
Education	-.073	*.256*	.420	*.326*	.274	*.345*
VET	.113	*.269*	-.591	*.353*	-.065	*.384*
Adult learning	.034	*.269*	**.782***	*.352*	-.312	*.388*
Labour market	-.329	*.286*	.043	*.369*	-.339	*.410*
Youth policies	.068	*.320*	-.073	*.375*	-.433	*.431*
Type of actor						
Public (national)	.641	*.353*	.265	*.445*	-.079	*.517*
Public (local)	.605	*.346*	-.719	*.526*	.481	*.501*
Research	.440	*.361*	**.802***	*.396*	**.963***	*.455*
Private	.383	*.429*	.085	*.501*	.877	*.519*
Civil Society	.593	*.346*	**1.339*****	*.382*	.738	*.474*
cons.	-.225	*.520*	**-1.487***	*.661*	**-1.465***	*.687*
Number of observations	437					
R-squared	0.118					

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

Table 15. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models plotted on B3 and B5 items using clusters among predictors.

Independent variables	**Learners' self-assessment** (3_1)		**Learners' assessment** (3_2)		**Education institutions self-assessment** (3_3)		**Rank education institutions** (3_4)		**Boost the debate on citizenship skills** (3_6)		**Non-achievers** (5_1)		**Under-achievers** (5_2)		**Learners at any level of achievement** (5_3)		**Top-achievers** (5_4)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR		
Time																		
C1: MD/C	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
C2: MD/AC	-.148	*.151*	**-.884*** **	*.172*	**-.319***	*.155*	**-.753*** **	*.188*	-.165	*.172*	**-.777*** **	*.188*	**-.410***	*.190*	-.023	*.169*	**-.762*** **	*.195*
C3: MO/C	**-1.735*** **	*..232*	**-.544***	*.240*	**-1.090*** **	*.215*	-.244	*.252*	**-1.918*** **	*.278*	**-.817** **	*.266*	**-.815** **	*.250*	**-1.419*** **	*.260*	**-.710** **	*.259*
C4: MO/AC	**-1.276*** **	*.273*	**-1.534*** **	*.261*	**-1.307*** **	*.239*	**-.827** **	*.258*	**-1.420*** **	*.271*	**-1.028*** **	*.245*	**-1.070*** **	*.250*	**-1.117*** **	*.273*	**-1.702*** **	*.258*
Countries																		
Austria	.561	*.293*	.321	*.295*	-.128	*.295*	-.062	*.354*	.000	*.374*	-.384	*.344*	.043	*.287*	-.081	*.293*	.583	*.310*
Bulgaria	**.763** **	*.263*	**.601***	*.288*	.200	*.252*	**.685***	*.283*	**.963** **	*.329*	.361	*.335*	.333	*.308*	**.913** **	*.292*	**1.175*** **	*.302*
Finland	.413	*.255*	-.552	*.294*	-.431	*.252*	**-.749***	*.302*	.468	*.297*	.545	*.321*	.066	*.290*	-.087	*.267*	.527	*.285*
Germany	.156	*.281*	.258	*.298*	-.509	*.264*	-.325	*.319*	.043	*.317*	.442	*.311*	**.760***	*.302*	-.529	*.298*	.292	*.339*
Greece	**.976** **	*.292*	**.642***	*.315*	**.627***	*.252*	**.677***	*.299*	**.962** **	*.341*	-.436	*.385*	-.545	*.358*	.506	*.353*	.506	*.376*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	.275	*.263*	-.041	*.273*	.152	*.230*	.002	*.288*	.595	*.317*	**1.067*** **	*.302*	.416	*.318*	.276	*.296*	.077	*.322*
Spain	.243	*.331*	.399	*.336*	-.249	*.326*	.127	*.359*	.395	*.366*	**.720***	*.366*	.502	*.332*	.277	*.336*	.192	*.404*
Gender																		
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.040	*.148*	.141	*.153*	.053	*.133*	.204	*.156*	-.151	*.162*	-.208	*.168*	-.264	*.169*	-.215	*.165*	-.232	*.175*
Non-binary	-1.384	*1.068*	-.840	*.864*	-1.452	*1.626*	-1.328	*1.057*	-.398	*.877*	**.994** **	*.304*	**1.345*** **	*.284*	.003	*.501*	.081	*.903*
Age groups																		
Under 35	.104	*.365*	.174	*.328*	-.634	*.374*	.166	*.411*	-.098	*.368*	-.023	*.341*	.079	*.277*	-.109	*.368*	-.092	*.387*
35-44	-.099	*.202*	-.025	*.221*	-.359	*.193*	-.017	*.235*	-.131	*.235*	-.056	*.217*	.300	*.224*	-.173	*.213*	-.083	*.227*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.320	*.164*	.014	*.175*	-.205	*.155*	-.035	*.190*	-.035	*.186*	-.103	*.199*	-.069	*.196*	-.106	*.183*	.231	*.194*
65 and over	.183	*.267*	-.093	*.278*	-.349	*.288*	-.350	*.338*	-.257	*.358*	.288	*.330*	.447	*.333*	.048	*.299*	.399	*.325*
Field of expertise																		
Education	.006	*.152*	.204	*.159*	.136	*.139*	-.159	*.167*	.035	*.162*	.150	*.175*	.136	*.171*	.014	*.169*	.017	*.175*
VET	-.135	*.156*	.087	*.163*	.044	*.147*	-.001	*.167*	-.130	*.172*	.152	*.180*	.144	*.175*	.102	*.162*	-.028	*.178*
Adult learning	.252	*.162*	.123	*.161*	-.134	*.155*	-.004	*.176*	.102	*.174*	.194	*.182*	.213	*.177*	.174	*.169*	.238	*.172*
Labour market	.291	*.175*	.150	*.199*	.143	*.159*	-.145	*.190*	.299	*.187*	.106	*.195*	.058	*.198*	-.159	*.187*	-.027	*.195*
Youth policies	-.232	*.192*	-.122	*.185*	-.096	*.179*	.063	*.213*	-.235	*.186*	.172	*.183*	.046	*.180*	-.167	*.204*	-.160	*.198*
Type of actor																		
Public (national)	.170	*.194*	-.028	*.204*	.240	*.172*	-.081	*.226*	**.514***	*.215*	.090	*.214*	.102	*.210*	.245	*.226*	.187	*.216*
Public (local)	-.104	*.204*	.002	*.214*	**.492** **	*.176*	.350	*.238*	**.476***	*.212*	**.603** **	*.207*	**.508***	*.197*	**.437***	*.205*	.397	*.212*
Research	-.319	*.200*	.151	*.208*	.270	*.180*	.236	*.238*	.249	*.198*	**.658** **	*.196*	**.401**	*.191*	-.211	*.193*	.091	*.197*
Private	-.014	*.234*	-.006	*.214*	.005	*.233*	.110	*.268*	.230	*.262*	.169	*.262*	.032	*.275*	-.250	*.263*	**.617***	*.257*
Civil Society	-.064	*.193*	.096	*.199*	.198	*.168*	-.153	*.233*	**.481***	*.215*	-.100	*.197*	-.078	*.205*	.162	*.208*	.176	*.202*
cons.	**5.490*** **	*.301*	**5.166*** **	*.341*	**5.465*** **	*.302*	**5.244*** **	*.3660*	**4.610*** **	*.379*	**4.661*** **	*.373*	**4.757*** **	*.351*	**5.195*** **	*.336*	**4.494*** **	*.371*
N	420		420		420		420		420		414		414		414		414	
R-squared	0.262		0.208		0.240		0.169		0.269		0.196		0.157		0.243		0.189	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

C1: Multidimensional credentialism; C2: Multidimensional anti-credentialism; C3: Market-oriented credentialism; C4: Market-oriented anti-credentialism.

Table 16. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models plotted on Q2 items dealing with micro-level factors.

Independent variables	**Gender** (2_1)		**Sexual orientation** (2_2)		**Social class** (2_3)		**Minority/Migration background** (2_4)		**Citizenship** (2_5)		**Disabilities** (2_6)		**Self-efficacy** (2_7)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR
Time														
Present	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
10 years in the future	**-.260***	*.127*	-.196	*.114*	-.173	*.102*	**-.297****	*.113*	-.044	*.110*	**-.451*****	*.107*	.142	*.088*
Countries														
Austria	-.233	*.270*	.016	*.234*	.163	*.217*	.165	*.243*	**-.724****	*.237*	-.383	*.243*	-.100	*203*
Bulgaria	**-.788****	*.258*	.001	*.237*	**-.500***	*.220*	-.148	*.254*	**-.922*****	*.246*	-.368	*.249*	**.412***	*.164*
Finland	.302	*.229*	.140	*.193*	.124	*.175*	**.825*****	*.183*	**.588****	*.200*	.718***	*.188*	.178	*.156*
Germany	-.111	*.248*	-.089	*.211*	.157	*.198*	-.329	*.216*	**-.818*****	*.224*	-1.080***	*.208*	-.181	*.180*
Greece	.386	*.250*	**1.072*****	*.249*	**.509***	*.204*	**.628****	*.222*	**.525***	*.229*	.492*	*.217*	**.507****	*.182*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	**-.507***	*.245*	.183	*.223*	-.149	*.198*	-.192	*.221*	**.594****	*.216*	-.102	*.203*	.209	*.163*
Spain	.392	*.278*	.398	*.259*	.085	*.227*	.228	*.272*	.338	*.230*	.135	*.271*	**.369***	*.180*
Gender														
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.131	*.133*	-.141	*.117*	.040	*.107*	**-.315****	*.117*	**-.435*****	*.113*	**-.251***	*.113*	**-.193***	*.094*
Non-binary	-.224	*.631*	-.138	*.604*	-.460	*.483*	.027	*.617*	-.413	*.514*	.012	*.334*	.383	*.374*
Age groups														
Under 35	.295	*.282*	**.578***	*.249*	.318	*.242*	.311	*.257*	.327	*.238*	.160	*.243*	-.502*	*.238*
35-44	.101	*.200*	-.148	*.168*	**.152**	*.152*	.210	*.181*	.249	*.163*	.112	*.167*	.048	*.120*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.069	*.154*	-.022	*.141*	-.062	*.126*	.215	*.138*	-.013	*.137*	.128	*.132*	-.168	*.106*
65 and over	.496	*.282*	.081	*.245*	.233	*.212*	.108	*.241*	.257	*.243*	**.633****	*.188*	.148	*.171*
Field of expertise														
Education	.008	*.136*	.028	*.124*	.078	*.106*	-.073	*.120*	-.126	*.119*	.012	*.111*	-.179	*.097*
VET	**-.296***	*.144*	-.246	*.127*	-.106	*.122*	-.154	*.127*	-.165	*.124*	-.112	*.119*	-.023	*.099*
Adult learning	.095	*.144*	-.220	*.126*	-.159	*.119*	-.148	*.127*	-.099	*.124*	-.176	*.118*	.167	*.096*
Labour market	.111	*.155*	.027	*.134*	.190	*.123*	-.024	*.132*	-.138	*.127*	.029	*.125*	.019	*.108*
Youth policies	.107	*.170*	**.578*****	*.154*	-.016	*.132*	.276	*.144*	.137	*.143*	.250	*.142*	.211	*.113*
Type of actor														
Public (national)	.049	*.175*	.123	*.162*	-.160	*.154*	-.010	*.160*	**.342***	*.157*	.144	*.145*	.046	*.130*
Public (local)	-.081	*.180*	-.124	*.163*	-.214	*.154*	-.055	*.158*	-.029	*.154*	.029	*.150*	.147	*.131*
Research	**.334***	*.170*	.336	*.161*	**.338***	*.142*	.538***	*.145*	.268	*.141*	.245	*.148*	-.156	*.124*
Private	-.075	*.214*	-.099	*.201*	-.203	*.187*	.002	*.197*	-.093	*.190*	-.362	*.191*	-.101	*.146*
Civil Society	.248	*.168*	**.335***	*.153*	.235	*.144*	.211	*.138*	**.620*****	*.142*	**.312***	*.145*	-.059	*.139*
cons.	**3.647*****	*274*	**2.602*****	*.248*	**5.369*****	*.223*	4.653	*.242*	**4.605*****	*.244*	**4.992*****	*.256*	**5.719*****	*.192*
N[1]	846		846		846		846		846		846		846	
R-squared	0.072		0.103		0.072		0.106		0.159		0.144		0.073	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

[1]Observations refer to the reshaped vector.

Table 17. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models plotted on Q2 items dealing with meso-level factors.

Independent variables	**Peers** (2_8)		**Family** (2_9)		**Social relations** (2_10)		**Teachers/Trainers** (2_11)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR
Time								
Present	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
10 years in the future	-.018	*.091*	**-.213***	*.083*	.038	*.092*	0.159	*.083*
Countries								
Austria	-.284	*.201*	.254	*.183*	.266	*.203*	-.256	*.190*
Bulgaria	.203	*.173*	.287	*.174*	.059	*.188*	-.041	*.163*
Finland	-.014	*.153*	.068	*.146*	-.113	*.160*	**-.730*****	*.158*
Germany	-.187	*.171*	.036	*.164*	-.081	*.172*	**-.391***	*.163*
Greece	**.377***	*.169*	.230	*.177*	.179	*.192*	.160	*.156*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	-.219	*.173*	.102	*.163*	.020	*.159*	.122	*.141*
Spain	.165	*.197*	-.006	*.195*	-.048	*.214*	.123	*.171*
Gender								
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	**-.227***	*.095*	-.111	*.086*	-.053	*.097*	-.140	*.085*
Non-binary	-.135	*.568*	.325	*.251*	-.425	*.551*	.431	*.257*
Age groups								
Under 35	.105	*.213*	**.334***	*.170*	-.006	*.202*	-.217	*.192*
35-44	.003	*.138*	.215	*.116*	-.212	*.149*	-.098	*.129*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	.022	*.110*	-.014	*.101*	-.031	*.111*	-.105	*.097*
65 and over	**-.569****	*.210*	.036	*.188*	-.114	*.225*	-.396	*.216*
Field of expertise								
Education	-.167	*.094*	.121	*.092*	**-.212***	*.099*	-.056	*.090*
VET	**-.279****	*.103*	-.080	*.104*	**-.250***	*.112*	-.099	*.099*
Adult learning	.012	*.102*	.087	*.099*	.011	*.103*	.117	*.094*
Labour market	-.020	*.111*	-.008	*.103*	.119	*.112*	.005	*.103*
Youth policies	**.335****	*.118*	-.044	*.111*	.101	*.121*	.036	*.112*
Type of actor								
Public (national)	-.059	*.129*	-.101	*.119*	.186	*.130*	-.097	*.134*
Public (local)	**-.278***	*.131*	.022	*.127*	-.014	*.125*	-.029	*.127*
Research	-.087	*.120*	.149	*.118*	-.080	*.124*	**-.234***	*.118*
Private	-.215	*.150*	.058	*.155*	-.018	*.155*	.032	*.141*
Civil Society	-.026	*.129*	-.116	*.134*	.016	*.129*	**-.332***	*.136*
cons.	**5.505*****	*.178*	**5.755*****	*.185*	**5.435*****	*.195*	**6.457*****	*.175*
N[1]	870		870		870		870	
R-squared	0.068		0.041		0.030		0.081	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

[1]*Observations refer to the reshaped vector.*

Table 18. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models plotted on Q2 items dealing with macro-level factors.

Independent variables	**Education system** (2_12)		**Education policies** (2_13)		**Employment policies** (2_14)		**Youth policies** (2_15)		**Schools** (2_16)		**Place** (2_17)		**Systemic crises** (2_18)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR		
Time														
Present	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
10 years in the future	.069	*.087*	.118	*.091*	**.332****	*.098*	**.271****	*.103*	.116	*.083*	-.110	*.102*	**.364****	*.105*
Countries														
Austria	-.201	*.202*	**-.775*****	*.218*	-.225	*.230*	**-1.037*****	*.224*	.125	*.172*	**-.745****	*.227*	-.249	*.228*
Bulgaria	**.501****	*.174*	.257	*.187*	**.614****	*.192*	-.194	*.198*	.204	*.168*	-.217	*.214*	**.850*****	*.223*
Finland	**-.550****	*.174*	-.222	*.172*	-.065	*.187*	**-.571****	*.190*	**-.449****	*.157*	**-.692*****	*.186*	-.124	*.194*
Germany	-.172	*.189*	**-.553****	*.209*	.035	*.208*	**-.920*****	*.217*	.056	*.173*	**-.391***	*.194*	.029	*.212*
Greece	**.677*****	*.167*	**.637*****	*.172*	**1.219*****	*199*	**.902*****	*.204*	.284	*.175*	.248	*.183*	**1.461*****	*.203*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	**.430****	*.155*	**.405**	*.165*	**.745*****	*.181*	.233	*.191*	.237	*.151*	**-.470***	*.193*	**.680****	*.198*
Spain	**.379***	*.188*	**.498*****	*.179*	**.657****	*.221*	-.067	*.234*	**.464****	*.180*	.002	*.228*	**.565***	*.264*
Gender														
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.026	*.089*	**-.215***	*.093*	**-.404*****	*.103*	**-.326****	*.105*	-.137	*.087*	-.020	*.108*	**-.391****	*.112*
Non-binary	-.534	*.358*	-.705	*.534*	-.075	*.436*	-.247	*.661*	-.125	*.375*	.413	*.370*	-.302	*.519*
Age groups														
Under 35	.236	*.221*	-.277	*.249*	.035	*.258*	-.133	*.262*	-.007	*.201*	.182	*.256*	.263	*.237*
35-44	-.019	*.137*	.137	*.135*	-.018	*.160*	.062	*.158*	-.013	*.128*	.189	*.163*	.303	*.167*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.160	*.100*	-.160	*.107*	.051	*.115*	-.055	*.123*	**-.217***	*.100*	-.056	*.122*	.174	*.131*
65 and over	-.071	*.209*	-.037	*.204*	.123	*.218*	.095	*.217*	-.371	*.194*	-.138	*.224*	.155	*.185*
Field of expertise														
Education	-.083	*.094*	.043	*.097*	-.044	*.104*	-.049	*.109*	.079	*.092*	.089	*.112*	-.027	*.113*
VET	-.022	*.105*	-.071	*.104*	-.008	*.110*	-.032	*.114*	-.062	*.100*	**-.352****	*.120*	**-.447*****	*.125*
Adult learning	.190	*.102*	**.250***	*.101*	**.234***	*.110*	.110	*.119*	.133	*.101*	.072	*.118*	.113	*.120*
Labour market	.021	*.103*	.108	*.110*	-.038	*.119*	.047	*.122*	.102	*.100*	.008	*.125*	-.075	*.132*
Youth policies	**.296***	*.114*	.057	*.122*	-046	*.134*	**.316***	*.133*	.088	*.110*	.204	*.126*	**.428****	*.126*
Type of actor														
Public (national)	-.012	*.124*	.012	*.140*	.002	*.142*	-.090	*.141*	-.086	*.126*	-.154	*.146*	.197	*.140*
Public (local)	.026	*.126*	.007	*.136*	.025	*.161*	.032	*.140*	-.054	*.128*	-.206	*.148*	.263	*.160*
Research	**-.251***	*.122*	-.154	*.128*	**-.300***	*.142*	-.230	*.134*	-.180	*.119*	-.043	*.132*	.044	*.147*
Private	.193	*.142*	-.037	*.156*	.109	*.186*	-.019	*.171*	.014	*.143*	-.267	*.176*	.192	*.189*
Civil Society	-.042	*.135*	-.125	*.135*	.012	*.138*	.045	*.127*	**-.288***	*.133*	-.029	*.131*	.205	*.141*
cons.	**5.737*****	*.196*	**5.718*****	*.213*	**4.810*****	*.226*	**4.982*****	*.231*	**5.938*****	*.175*	**5.521*****	*.222*	**4.314*****	*.236*
N[1]	858		858		858		858		858		858		858	
R-squared	0.101		0.121		0.135		0.141		0.061		0.069		0.156	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

[1]*Observations refer to the reshaped vector.*

Table 19. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of selected variables' effects on Q2-based cluster positioning (C3: Multidimensional as base outcome).

Independent variables	**Intersectional** (C1)		**Institutional** (C2)		**Social** (C4)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR
Countries						
Austria	.387	*.686*	-1.066	*.748*	**1.332***	*.609*
Bulgaria	-.591	*.625*	-.076	*.559*	.221	*.555*
Finland	.323	*.517*	**-1.605***	*.668*	.527	*.477*
Germany	1.089	*.632*	-.115	*.655*	**1.620****	*.574*
Greece	-.684	*.636*	-.743	*.548*	-.694	*.549*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	-1.157	*.707*	-.184	*.488*	-.376	*.532*
Spain	-1.091	*.737*	-1.399	*.719*	-.147	*.582*
Gender						
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	**.734***	*.332*	.450	*.331*	.083	*.281*
Non-binary	-11.423	*.999*	.777	*1.079*	1.393	*1.272*
Age groups						
Under 35	-.213	*.683*	-.637	*.808*	-.510	*.636*
35-44	.393	*.508*	-.397	*.515*	.124	*.411*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	.306	*.383*	-.383	*.372*	.426	*.318*
65 and over	.284	*.709*	.002	*.669*	-.340	*.641*
Field of expertise						
Education	.412	*.361*	-.396	*.340*	.196	*.291*
VET	.225	*.381*	.639	*.349*	.342	*.303*
Adult learning	-.053	*.356*	-.316	*.372*	-.190	*.307*
Labour market	.066	*.400*	.035	*.349*	.144	*.319*
Youth policies	-.767	*.468*	.075	*.384*	**-.822***	*.383*
Type of actor						
Public (national)	-.477	*.505*	.099	*.439*	-.094	*.353*
Public (local)	-.375	*.461*	-.102	*.453*	.272	*.368*
Research	-.179	*.426*	-.823	*.483*	.243	*.334*
Private	-.939	*.580*	-.141	*.530*	.320	*.438*
Civil Society	.390	*.465*	-.427	*.424*	.243	*.326*
cons.	-1.111	*.671*	.134	*.676*	-1.012	*.576*
Number of observations	387					
R-squared	0.097					

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

Table 20. Regression coefficients and standard errors of models plotted on Q6 items dealing with quantitative measurement of LOs.

Independent variables	**LOs statistical measurement more relevant for policymaking** (6_4)				**More policy stakeholders oppose LOs statistical measurement** (6_7)				**LOs measurement used to categorise learners** (6_11)			
	Likely scenario		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*	
	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR
Countries												
Austria	**-.762***	*.313*	-.561	*.370*	**-1.100****	*.354*	-.759	*.427*	-.118	*.310*	**-.838***	*.384*
Bulgaria	.267	*.290*	**.943****	*.343*	.115	*.328*	.673	*.395*	.407	*.287*	**2.415*****	*.355*
Finland	-.134	*.261*	**-.912****	*.309*	**-.966****	*.295*	-.009	*.356*	-.187	*.258*	.086	*.320*
Germany	-.321	*.287*	-.250	*.339*	**-1.277*****	*.325*	-.507	*.391*	**-1.164*****	*.284*	-.245	*.352*
Greece	.321	*.289*	**.843***	*.342*	-.275	*.327*	**1.003****	*.394*	**1.119*****	*.286*	**2.253*****	*.355*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	.206	*.273*	.381	*.323*	.438	*.309*	**1.189****	*.373*	-.104	*.270*	**.660***	*.335*
Spain	**.665***	*.317*	.680	*.375*	-.509	*.359*	.713	*.432*	**.739***	*.314*	**1.528*****	*.389*
Gender												
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	.075	*.152*	.251	*.179*	.004	*.172*	-.349	*.207*	-.047	*.150*	**.439***	*.186*
Non-binary	.183	*.872*	.287	*1.032*	1.057	*.988*	.371	*1.190*	-.975	*.864*	1.060	*1.070*
Age groups												
Under 35	.096	*.332*	.554	*.392*	-.232	*.376*	**1.009***	*.452*	-.353	*.328*	.330	*.407*
35-44	-.028	*.232*	-.191	*.274*	.049	*.262*	.042	*.316*	-.103	*.229*	.164	*.284*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.146	*.175*	.238	*.207*	.014	*.198*	.132	*.238*	-.159	*.173*	.293	*.214*
65 and over	-.328	*.316*	-.372	*.373*	.654	*.357*	.299	*.430*	.223	*.312*	.089	*.387*
Field of expertise												
Education	.220	*.154*	-.125	*.182*	-.295	*.175*	-.250	*.210*	.087	*.153*	.097	*.189*
VET	-.013	*.164*	-.040	*.194*	-.178	*.186*	-.393	*.224*	-.211	*.163*	-.081	*.201*
Adult learning	**.327***	*.166*	-.035	*.196*	.229	*.188*	.223	*.226*	**.416***	*.164*	.271	*.203*
Labour market	.181	*.176*	.174	*.208*	-.352	*.199*	-.238	*.240*	.140	*.174*	.247	*.215*
Youth policies	.058	*.196*	.052	*.232*	**.637****	*.222*	.398	*.267*	.242	*.194*	-.018	*.240*
Type of actor												
Public (national)	-.137	*.202*	.377	*.239*	.031	*.229*	-.401	*.276*	.372	*.200*	**.587***	*.248*
Public (local)	-.224	*.207*	-.041	*.245*	.271	*.235*	-.057	*.283*	-.236	*.205*	.138	*.254*
Research	-.088	*.196*	-.174	*.232*	.006	*.222*	.283	*.268*	.044	*.194*	-.320	*.241*
Private	-.370	*.254*	.098	*.301*	.503	*.288*	.010	*.347*	.317	*.252*	**.661***	*.312*
Civil Society	-.009	*.189*	.041	*.224*	.005	*.214*	-.078	*.258*	.025	*.187*	-.023	*.232*
cons.	**4.929*****	*.309*	**4.404*****	*.366*	**4.633*****	*.350*	**3.894*****	*.422*	**4.710*****	*.306*	**2.198*****	*.379*
N[1]	402		402		402		402		402		402	
R-squared	0.084		0.152		0.159		0.137		0.189		0.291	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

Table 21. Regression coefficients and standard errors of models plotted on Q6 items dealing with de-monopolisation of education.

Independent variables	**Formal education less relevant for School-to-Work transition** (6_1)				**Credentials more important to define class cleavages** (6_2)				**Formalised descriptors, e.g. NQF, define LOs** (6_15)			
	Likely scenario		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*	
	β	SR	β	SR	β	RSR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR
Countries												
Austria	**-.893***	*.380*	.404	*.394*	.519	*.396*	-.386	*.406*	**-.649***	*.321*	-.363	*.359*
Bulgaria	.017	*.337*	.624	*.349*	.357	*.351*	**2.215*****	*.360*	-.106	*.285*	.555	*.319*
Finland	-.525	*.293*	-.030	*.303*	.407	*.305*	.273	*.312*	**-.584***	*.248*	-.246	*.277*
Germany	-.656	*.336*	.227	*.348*	.377	*.350*	**.820***	*.358*	**-.625***	*.284*	-.233	*.317*
Greece	.625	*.328*	**1.116****	*.340*	**.791***	*.341*	**2.143*****	*.350*	.451	*.277*	**.824****	*.310*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	.151	*.315*	**.818***	*.326*	-.228	*.328*	**.664***	*.336*	.184	*.266*	.326	*.298*
Spain	.160	*.358*	.345	*.370*	.646	*.372*	**1.075****	*.382*	.554	*.303*	**1.102****	*.338*
Gender												
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	0.74	*.174*	-.064	*.181*	.020	*.182*	.163	*.186*	-.057	*.148*	.029	*.165*
Non-binary	-.126	*.856*	-.272	*.886*	.874	*.890*	1.372	*.913*	.105	*.724*	.663	*.809*
Age groups												
Under 35	-.200	*.385*	.244	*.399*	.249	*.401*	.519	*.411*	-.056	*.326*	.356	*.364*
35-44	-.218	*.274*	-.174	*.283*	.018	*.285*	-.169	*.292*	.031	*.231*	.190	*.259*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.101	*.200*	-.023	*.207*	.424	*.208*	.413	*.214*	-.044	*.169*	**.499****	*.189*
65 and over	-.046	*.354*	.268	*.367*	.580	*.369*	.598	*.379*	-.312	*.300*	-.150	*.335*
Field of expertise												
Education	-.190	*.180*	**-.586****	*.186*	.079	*.187*	-.133	*.192*	.095	*.152*	-.084	*.170*
VET	-.347	*.192*	-.280	*.198*	-.225	*.199*	-.084	*.204*	-.010	*.162*	-.103	*.181*
Adult learning	**.441***	*.192*	.215	*.199*	-.063	*.200*	.034	*.205*	**.457****	*.162*	.239	*.181*
Labour market	.292	*.200*	**.465***	*.207*	.225	*.208*	-.155	*.214*	-.227	*.169*	.110	*.189*
Youth policies	.063	*.226*	-.306	*.234*	.174	*.235*	-.361	*.241*	-.155	*.191*	-.084	*.214*
Type of actor												
Public (national)	.248	*.226*	.071	*.234*	-.229	*.235*	.100	*.241*	-.028	*.191*	**.707****	*.214*
Public (local)	.298	*.237*	.085	*.246*	-.170	*.247*	.088	*.253*	.036	*.201*	**.471***	*.224*
Research	-.153	*.222*	-.277	*.230*	-.096	*.231*	-.134	*.237*	-.060	*.188*	-.141	*.210*
Private	-.093	*.292*	.026	*.302*	.037	*.304*	.475	*.312*	-.012	*.247*	.223	*.246*
Civil Society	.243	*.214*	.352	*.222*	.079	*.223*	.219	*.228*	-.267	*.181*	.075	*.202*
cons.	**4.513*****	*.353*	**4.107*****	*.366*	**4.166*****	*.368*	**2.156*****	*.377*	**5.293*****	*.299*	4.082	*.334*
N[1]	394		394		394		394		394		394	
R-squared	0.098		0.120		0.063		0.229		0.125		0.144	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

Table 22. Regression coefficients and standard errors of models plotted on Q6 items dealing with individualisation processes in education.

Independent variables	"Merit" and "excellence" will gain currency in education debate (6_14)				Public education transmit shared norms and values (6_16)				More groups advocate the right to deliver their own values through education (6_17)			
	Likely scenario		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*	
	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR
Countries												
Austria	.336	*.348*	.545	*.394*	**1.206****	*.345*	.062	*.328*	-.144	*.355*	.195	*.413*
Bulgaria	.455	*.319*	**1.829*****	*.361*	**1.250*****	*.316*	-.168	*.300*	**.772***	*.324*	**2.180*****	*.378*
Finland	-.295	*.291*	-.084	*.330*	**1.061*****	*.289*	.118	*.275*	.121	*.297*	-.078	*.346*
Germany	-.468	*.316*	**.875***	*.358*	**.746***	*.313*	-.023	*.298*	-.027	*.322*	.139	*.375*
Greece	**.919****	*.323*	**2.040*****	*.366*	**.804***	*.320*	.111	*.304*	**.819***	*.329*	**1.855*****	*.383*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	.269	*.307*	.506	*.347*	**1.020****	*.304*	-.311	*.289*	.521	*.312*	**1.314*****	*.364*
Spain	**.751***	*.357*	**.913***	*.405*	**1.020****	*.354*	-.274	*.337*	.611	*.364*	**1.317****	*.424*
Gender												
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.132	*.168*	.265	*.191*	-.061	*.167*	-.071	*.159*	-.070	*.172*	-.272	*.200*
Non-binary	-.240	*.821*	.798	*.930*	-.797	*.814*	.097	*.774*	1.358	*.836*	-.327	*.975*
Age groups												
Under 35	.068	*.358*	.340	*.405*	-.073	*.355*	.315	*.337*	.225	*.364*	-.027	*.425*
35-44	.047	*.253*	.132	*.287*	-.146	*.251*	.140	*.239*	.070	*.258*	-.346	*.301*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	.247	*.194*	.272	*.220*	-.039	*.192*	-.025	*.183*	.308	*.198*	.200	*.230*
65 and over	**.831***	*.358*	**1.011***	*.405*	.163	*.355*	.170	*.337*	**.901***	*.364*	.065	*.425*
Field of expertise												
Education	.037	*.171*	-.024	*.194*	.033	*.170*	.109	*.161*	.052	*.174*	**-.405***	*.203*
VET	-.106	*.183*	.037	*.207*	.228	*.181*	.321	*.173*	-.186	*.186*	.082	*.217*
Adult learning	.195	*.181*	.213	*.205*	-.032	*.180*	-.301	*.171*	.336	*.185*	.148	*.215*
Labour market	.015	*.195*	.278	*.221*	.028	*.193*	.056	*.184*	.155	*.198*	-.103	*.231*
Youth policies	.157	*.209*	-.301	*.237*	-.171	*.207*	-.121	*.197*	.393	*.213*	.177	*.248*
Type of actor												
Public (national)	.270	*.219*	-.005	*.248*	.086	*.217*	-.155	*.207*	-.127	*.223*	.106	*.260*
Public (local)	-.042	*.226*	.484	*.256*	.387	*.224*	.131	*.213*	.217	*.230*	.174	*.268*
Research	.054	*.214*	-.446	*.242*	-.346	*.212*	-.215	*.201*	.075	*.218*	.124	*.254*
Private	.100	*.284*	.068	*.321*	-.205	*.281*	-.455	*.267*	.308	*.289*	-.082	*.337*
Civil Society	-.039	*.210*	-.149	*.238*	.098	*.208*	-.138	*.198*	.203	*.214*	.334	*.249*
cons.	**4.476*****	*.341*	**3.218*****	*.386*	**4.141*****	*.338*	**5.847*****	*.321*	**4.014*****	*.347*	**2.956*****	*.405*
N[1]	399		399		399		399		399		399	
R-squared	0.102		0.196		0.104		0.047		0.098		0.202	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.*

Table 23. Regression coefficients and robust standard errors of models based on Q9 reshaped items.

Independent variables	**Interregional cleavage** (9_1)		**Rural/urban cleavage** (9_2)		**Interurban cleavage** (9_3)		**Intraurban cleavage** (9_4)	
	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR	β	RSR
Time								
Present	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
10 years in the future	.037	*.109*	-.123	*.100*	**.059**	*.111*	-.057	*.097*
Countries								
Austria	**-1.972*** **	*.200*	.077	*.206*	**-1.014*** **	*.223*	.071	*.187*
Bulgaria	**-1.227*** **	*.216*	.104	*.223*	.020	*.241*	**-1.127*** **	*.233*
Finland	**-1.727*** **	*.179*	.110	*.185*	-.329	*.184*	-.092	*.170*
Germany	**-1.160*** **	*.196*	-.124	*.205*	**-1.209*** **	*.215*	.490	*.171*
Greece	**-.865*** **	*.200*	**.883*** **	*.180*	**.586** **	*.195*	.105	*.182*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	**-1.273*** **	*.196*	**.534** **	*.191*	-.189	*.200*	.096	*.182*
Spain	**-.936*** **	*.233*	.269	*.228*	-.381	*.242*	.410	*.196*
Gender								
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	.051	*.110*	.007	*.101*	-.083	*.114*	-.050	*.099*
Non-binary	-.312	*.806*	**1.094*** **	*.285*	.646	*.753*	**.739***	*.306*
Age groups								
Under 35	.372	*.249*	.123	*.204*	-.013	*.231*	-.016	*.196*
35-44	.168	*.172*	.253	*.143*	.249	*.178*	.153	*.155*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.001	*.130*	-.224	*.125*	.092	*.134*	.075	*.119*
65 and over	.348	*.217*	.051	*.219*	.474	*.244*	**.596** **	*.190*
Field of expertise								
Education	.072	*.112*	-.173	*.104*	.117	*.117*	.099	*.103*
VET	-.008	*.125*	.081	*.118*	**.323***	*.130*	**-.264***	*.118*
Adult learning	.072	*.123*	-.151	*.119*	-.071	*.128*	.117	*.112*
Labour market	.036	*.130*	.043	*.124*	-.137	*.139*	.124	*.118*
Youth policies	**.561*** **	*.136*	**.421** **	*.133*	.253	*.148*	.039	*.130*
Type of actor								
Public (national)	-.193	*.155*	.098	*.144*	-.127	*.157*	-.074	*.135*
Public (local)	-.312	*.165*	**-.463** **	*.161*	**-.477** **	*.172*	-.230	*.143*
Research	.020	*.142*	-.030	*.132*	-.024	*.150*	**.293***	*.122*
Private	-.258	*.185*	-.297	*.175*	-.168	*.199*	-.036	*.166*
Civil Society	.088	*.150*	-.039	*.139*	-.069	*.152*	-.144	*.131*
cons.	**5.841*** **	*.224*	**5.222*** **	*.222*	**4.744*** **	*.230*	**5.448*** **	*.213*
N[1]	884		884		884		884	
R-squared	0.156		0.084		0.118		0.113	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001*

[1]*Observations refer to the reshaped vector.*

Table 24. Regression coefficients and standard errors of models plotted on Q12 items dealing with supranational, national and decentralised actors.

Independent variables	More responsibility to supranational organisations (12_1)				More responsibility to national actors (12_2)				More responsibility to decentralised administration (12_3)				More sharing of responsibilities between different levels of governance (12_5)			
	Likely scenario		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*	
	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR
Countries																
Austria	**-1.093****	*.359*	-.117	*.388*	.018	*.335*	.276	*.368*	**-.786***	*.340*	**-1.200****	*.372*	**-.820***	*.325*	**-2.036*****	*.353*
Bulgaria	-.067	*.329*	.359	*.355*	**1.274*****	*.307*	**1.386*****	*.338*	.329	*.312*	.342	*.342*	.576	*.298*	-.323	*.324*
Finland	**-1.458*****	*.296*	**-1.901*****	*.320*	**.829****	*.277*	**.909****	*.304*	-.090	*.281*	.304	*.308*	.244	*.269*	**-.661***	*.292*
Germany	**-1.400*****	*.341*	**-1.049****	*.368*	-.084	*.318*	.483	*.349*	-.446	*.323*	**-.760***	*.354*	**-.866****	*.311*	**-1.341*****	*.338*
Greece	**1.421*****	*.324*	**.876***	*.350*	**.636***	*.303*	.437	*.333*	**.635***	*.307*	**.827***	*.337*	**.828****	*.294*	.350	*.319*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	.302	*.319*	-.114	*.345*	-.043	*.298*	-.010	*.327*	.471	*.303*	**.753***	*.331*	**.855****	*.289*	.187	*.314*
Spain	.288	*.363*	-.231	*.392*	.192	*.339*	-.112	*.373*	.417	*.345*	.190	*.377*	-.178	*.330*	-.129	*.358*
Gender																
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	.116	*.172*	.323	*.186*	-.017	*.161*	-.006	*.177*	.193	*.163*	-.081	*.179*	-.149	*.156*	-.169	*.170*
Non-binary	-.279	*.51*	-.391	*.920*	.235	*.795*	.627	*.873*	.448	*.808*	.861	*.884*	-.435	*.772*	-1.016	*.839*
Age groups																
Under 35	.325	*.387*	.209	*.418*	.384	*.361*	.064	*.397*	.250	*.367*	.444	*.402*	.337	*.351*	.136	*.381*
35-44	.425	*.266*	.251	*.287*	.094	*.248*	-.178	*.273*	.281	*.252*	.212	*.276*	**.624***	*.241*	.324	*.262*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	-.107	*.198*	.375	*.214*	.023	*.185*	-.011	*.203*	.206	*.188*	.171	*.205*	**.506****	*.180*	.172	*.195*
65 and over	.688	*.357*	.483	*.386*	.298	*.333*	.214	*.367*	**.670***	*.339*	.449	*.371*	**.901****	*.324*	**.803***	*.352*
Field of expertise																
Education	.092	*.178*	-.009	*.193*	-.178	*.167*	.172	*.183*	-.094	*.169*	-.034	*.185*	**-.353***	*.162*	.002	*.176*
VET	-.328	*.188*	-.033	*.203*	.043	*.176*	.163	*.193*	.253	*.179*	-.065	*.196*	.101	*.172*	-.123	*.186*
Adult learning	**.374***	*.189*	-.017	*.204*	.176	*.176*	-.012	*.193*	-157	*.179*	.089	*.196*	**.420***	*.171*	**.570****	*.186*
Labour market	.142	*.200*	.262	*.216*	-.218	*.186*	-.117	*.205*	-.100	*.189*	-.112	*.207*	-.088	*.181*	.131	*.197*
Youth policies	**.131**	*.220*	.286	*.238*	-.076	*.206*	.218	*.226*	.270	*.209*	.047	*.229*	.006	*.200*	.074	*.218*
Type of actor																
Public (national)	.344	*.228*	.304	*.246*	-.067	*.212*	-.048	*.233*	.036	*.216*	.029	*.236*	-.262	*.207*	.202	*.225*
Public (local)	.143	*.236*	.209	*.254*	.041	*.220*	-.032	*.242*	-.251	*.223*	.029	*.245*	-.058	*.214*	.248	*.232*
Research	.199	*.221*	.144	*.239*	-.206	*.207*	-.024	*.227*	-.074	*.210*	-.187	*.230*	-.136	*.201*	.292	*.218*
Private	.318	*.300*	.088	*.324*	.092	*.280*	.293	*.308*	-.350	*.285*	-.550	*.312*	-.305	*.272*	-.280	*.296*
Civil Society	-.146	*.220*	-.110	*.238*	-.248	*.205*	-.437	*.226*	-.169	*.209*	.010	*.228*	.123	*.201*	.345	*.218*
cons.	**3.576*****	*.361*	**3.488*****	*.391*	**4.135*****	*.337*	**4.181*****	*.371*	**4.266*****	*.343*	**4.445*****	*.375*	**3.941*****	*.328*	**4.611*****	*.356*
N[1]	403		403		403		403		403		403		402		402	
R-squared	0.269		0.219		0.108		0.093		0.105		0.133		0.198		0.202	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.*

Table 25. Regression coefficients and standard errors of models plotted on Q12 items dealing with public/private relationships.

Independent variables	More responsibility to private actors (12_4)				More sharing of responsibilities between public and private actors (12_6)			
	Likely scenario		*Desirable scenario*		*Likely scenario*		*Desirable scenario*	
	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR	β	SR
Countries								
Austria	**-1.125****	*.350*	.141	*.351*	-.618	*.347*	**-1.009***	*.395*
Bulgaria	**-.810***	*.321*	**1.472*****	*.322*	-.004	*.318*	**.783***	*.362*
Finland	**-1.700*****	*.289*	-.062	*.290*	**-.736***	*.287*	-.474	*.327*
Germany	**-.672***	*.332*	.549	*.333*	**-.757***	*.329*	**-.824***	*.375*
Greece	.439	*.316*	**2.492*****	*.317*	.611	*.313*	**1.156****	*.357*
Italy	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Portugal	-.393	*.311*	**1.110*****	*.312*	.433	*.308*	**.843***	*.352*
Spain	-.082	*.355*	**.711***	*.356*	-.524	*.351*	.349	*.400*
Gender								
Female	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
Male	-.137	*.168*	.054	*.168*	-.116	*.166*	-.281	*.190*
Non-binary	.407	*.831*	.738	*.833*	.460	*.823*	.491	*.938*
Age groups								
Under 35	**1.065****	*.378*	.062	*.379*	.544	*.374*	.091	*.426*
35-44	.391	*.260*	-.036	*.260*	.428	*.257*	-.012	*.293*
45-54	*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*		*ref.*	
55-64	.192	*.193*	.311	*.194*	**.550****	*.191*	.055	*.218*
65 and over	.321	*.349*	**.371****	*.350*	**.778***	*.345*	**1.350****	*.394*
Field of expertise								
Education	-.106	*.174*	**-.382***	*.175*	**-.364***	*.172*	-.260	*.197*
VET	-.169	*.184*	-.018	*.184*	.317	*.182*	.068	*.208*
Adult learning	.258	*.184*	.277	*.185*	.161	*.182*	.353	*.208*
Labour market	.032	*.195*	-.014	*.196*	-.213	*.193*	-.142	*.220*
Youth policies	.172	*.215*	**.426***	*.216*	.382	*.213*	.361	*.243*
Type of actor								
Public (national)	.140	*.222*	.180	*.223*	-.107	*.220*	.255	*.251*
Public (local)	.123	*.230*	.105	*.231*	-.034	*.228*	.154	*.260*
Research	**.516***	*.216*	-.413	*.217*	-.149	*.214*	-.053	*.244*
Private	.556	*.293*	**.705***	*.294*	-.064	*.290*	.627	*.331*
Civil Society	.330	*.215*	.078	*.215*	.063	*.212*	.067	*.242*
cons.	**4.009*****	*.353*	**2.167*****	*.354*	**4.086*****	*.349*	**3.723*****	*.398*
N[1]	403		403		403		403	
R-squared	0.197		0.271		0.145		0.194	

** p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.*