

# Multi-actor and Multi-level Governance in German Higher Education: The Rise of Dual Study Programs

*Prof. Dr. Lukas Graf*

*Swiss Federal University of Vocational Education  
and Training (SFUVET)*

[www.lukasgraf.info](http://www.lukasgraf.info)

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THE **POLITICAL ECONOMY** OF  
**COLLECTIVE SKILL FORMATION**



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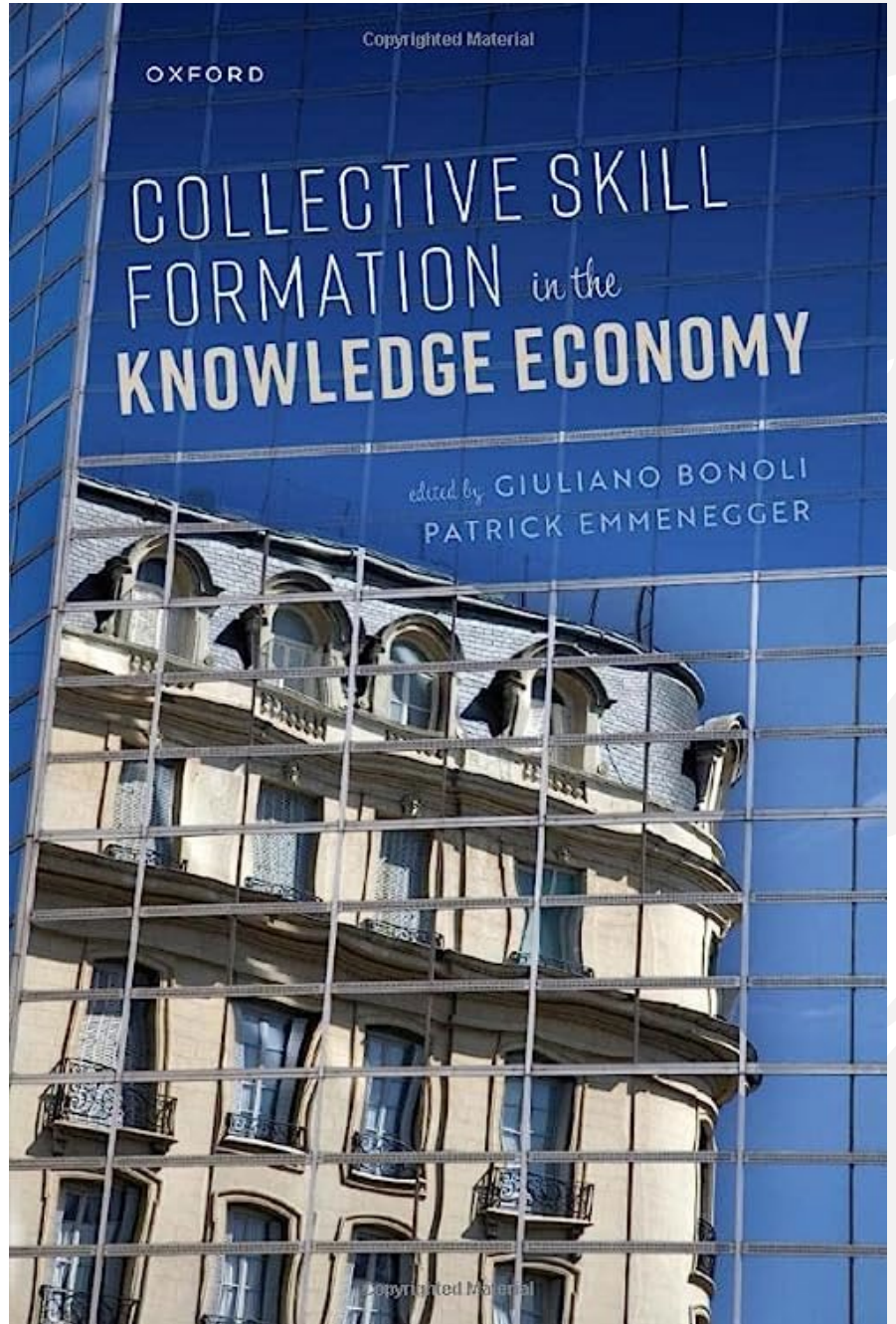
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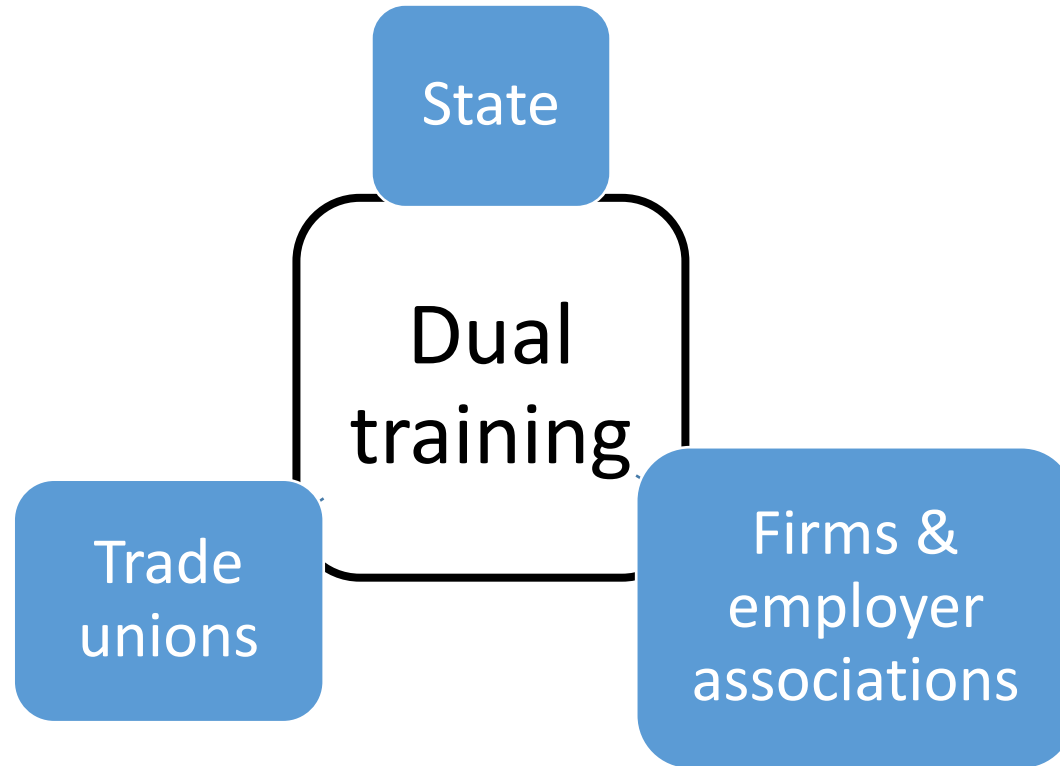
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# Defining Collective Skill Formation

“The main characteristic of the **vocational training systems** of these countries is that they are collectively organized, because firms, intermediary associations, and the state cooperate in the process of skill formation in initial vocational training.”

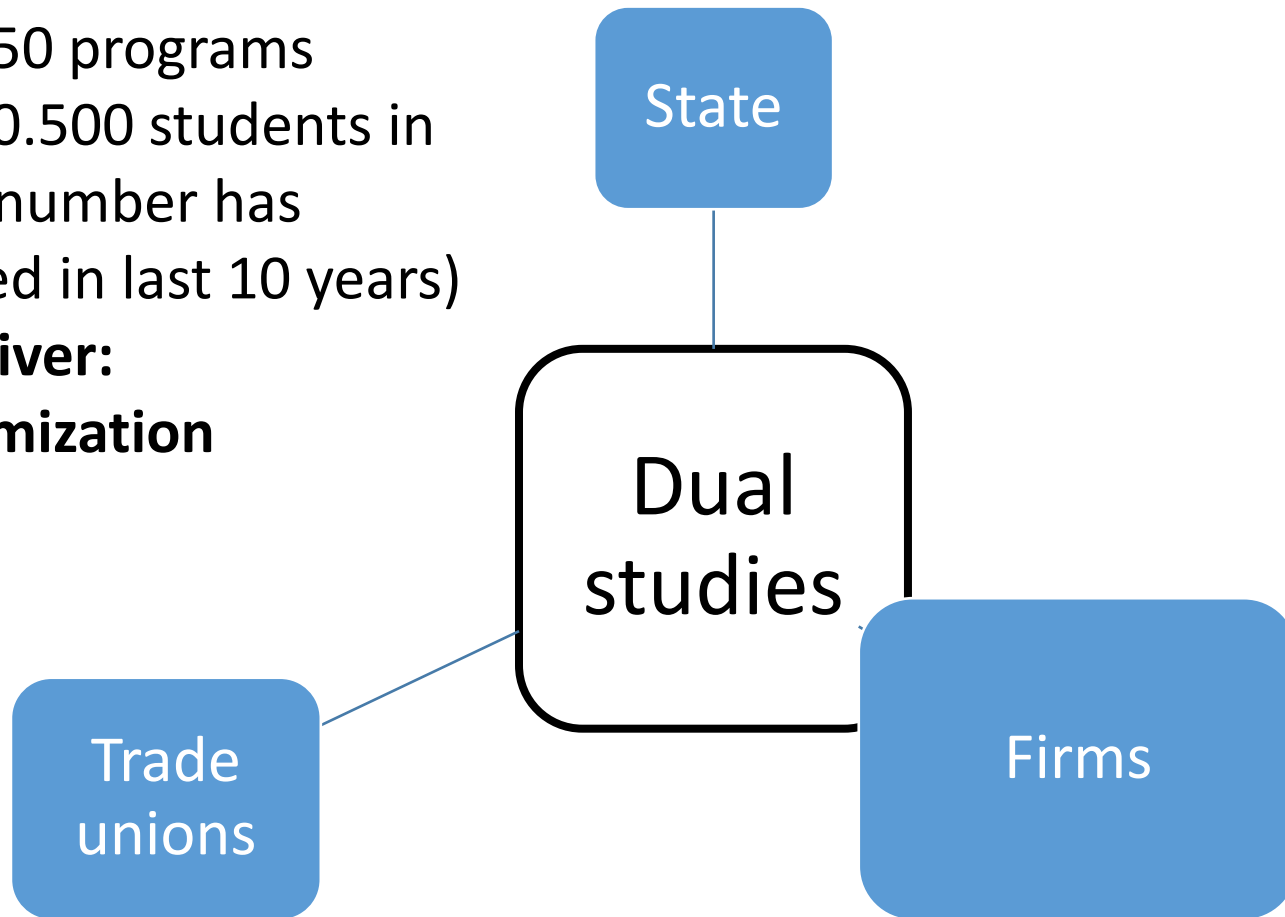
*Busemeyer & Trampusch (2012) The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation, Oxford University Press, p. 4.*

# Collectively Organized Skill Formation

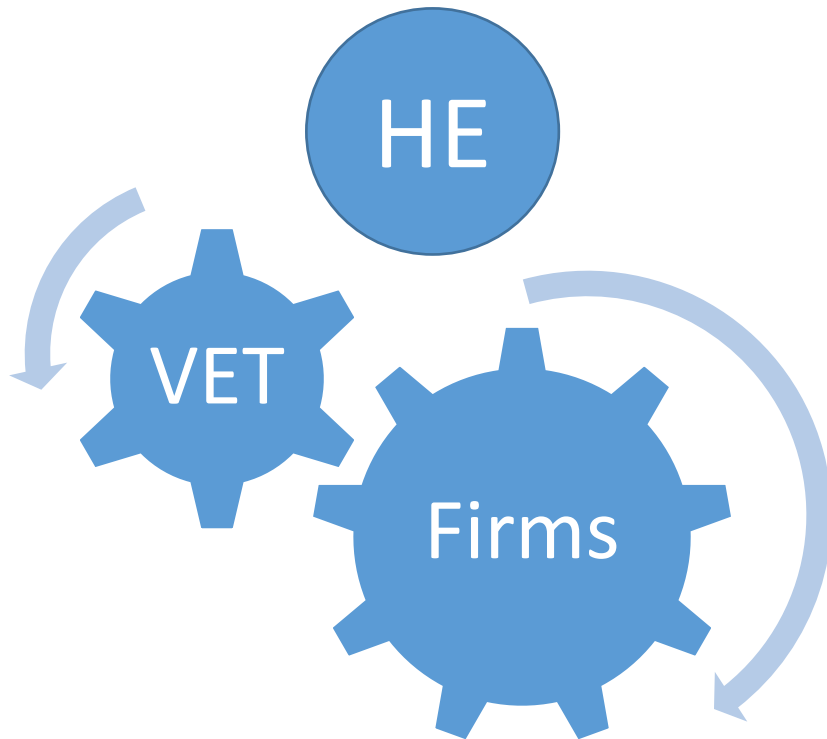


# Dual Study Programs

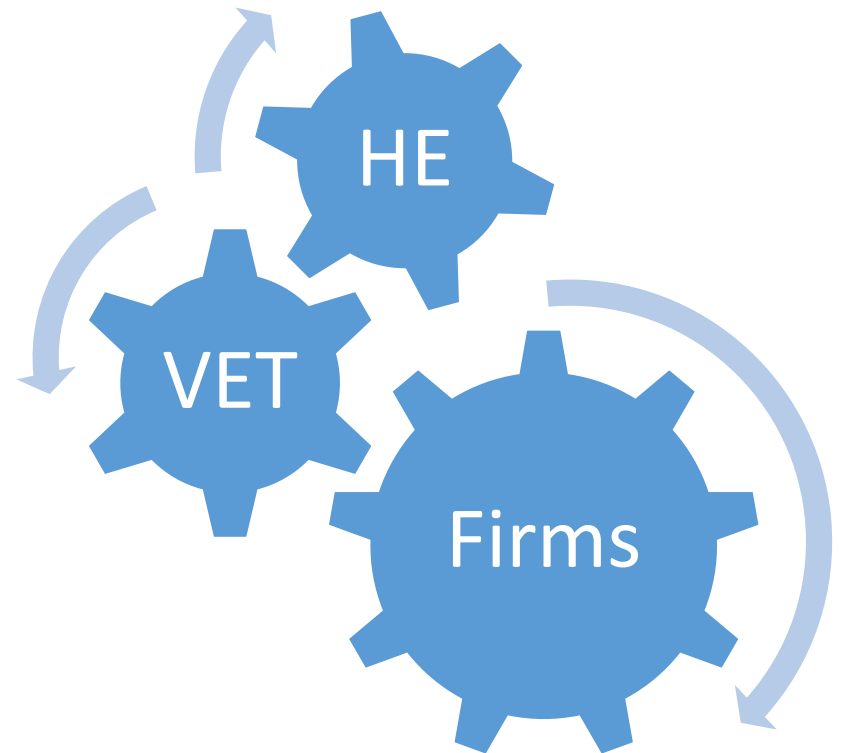
- Ca. 1750 programs
- Ca. 120.500 students in 2022 (number has doubled in last 10 years)
- **Key driver: academization**



## Old Configuration: “Educational Schism” btw. VET and HE



## New Configuration: Firm strategy to “invade” HE



# Research Design

- **Question:** How could hybrid dual study programs develop despite strong path dependence and the „educational schism“? What is their impact?
- **Theoretical school:** Historical institutionalism and theory of gradual institutional change (e.g., Mahoney & Thelen 2010)
- **Methods & data:** Systematic process tracing (e.g., Hall 2008), 15 expert interviews, document analysis

# Theory of Gradual Institutional Change

		<i>Characteristics of targeted institution</i>	
<i>Characteristics of political context</i>			



# Theory of Gradual Institutional Change

<b><i>Characteristics of political context</i></b>	<i>Strong veto possibilities</i>		
	<i>Weak veto possibilities</i>		

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		<i>Low level of discretion in interpretation</i>	<i>High level of discretion in interpretation</i>
<b><i>Characteristics of political context</i></b>	<i>Strong veto possibilities</i>	<b><u>Layering</u></b>	<b>Drift</b>
	<i>Weak veto possibilities</i>	<b>Displacement</b>	<b><u>Conversion</u></b>

# Phase I

## Genesis (late 1960s)

<i>Key locus</i>	VET
<i>Key change agent</i>	Large industrial firms
<i><b>Veto possibilities</b></i>	<b>Strong</b> as trade unions & small firms powerful in VET
<i><b>Discretion in interpretation</b></i>	<b>Low</b> as traditional dual principle firmly embedded in VET
<i>Key change process</i>	<b>Layering</b> in a niche between VET & HE

# Process II

## Expansion (1970s to today)

<i>Key locus</i>	HE
<i>Key change agent</i>	Large & medium-sized firms; universities
<i><b>Veto possibilities</b></i>	<b>Weak</b> as trade unions & small firms not much involved in HE
<i><b>Discretion in interpretation</b></i>	<b>High</b> as HE allows experimentation with dual principle
<i>Key change process</i>	Expansion through <b>conversion</b> within HE

# Characterizing the change process: From Layering to Conversion

		<b><i>Characteristics of targeted institution</i></b>	
		<i>Low level of discretion in interpretation</i>	<i>High level of discretion in interpretation</i>
<b><i>Characteristics of political context</i></b>	<i>Strong veto possibilities</i>	VET <b>Layering</b>	<b>Drift</b>
	<i>Weak veto possibilities</i>	<b>Displacement</b>	<b>Conversion</b> HE

# Discussion & Outlook

- **Expansion of work-based HE has significant consequences** regarding, e.g., standardization within German HE
- It **increases the number of actors** in HE and **differentiation** within the **multi-level system**
- **Universities** are becoming key players in setting beneficial constraints for collective skill formation



# Thank you for your attention!



## References

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You can download the papers here:

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