

Students' pathways through Higher Education in the United Kingdom and Spain: a comparative analysis

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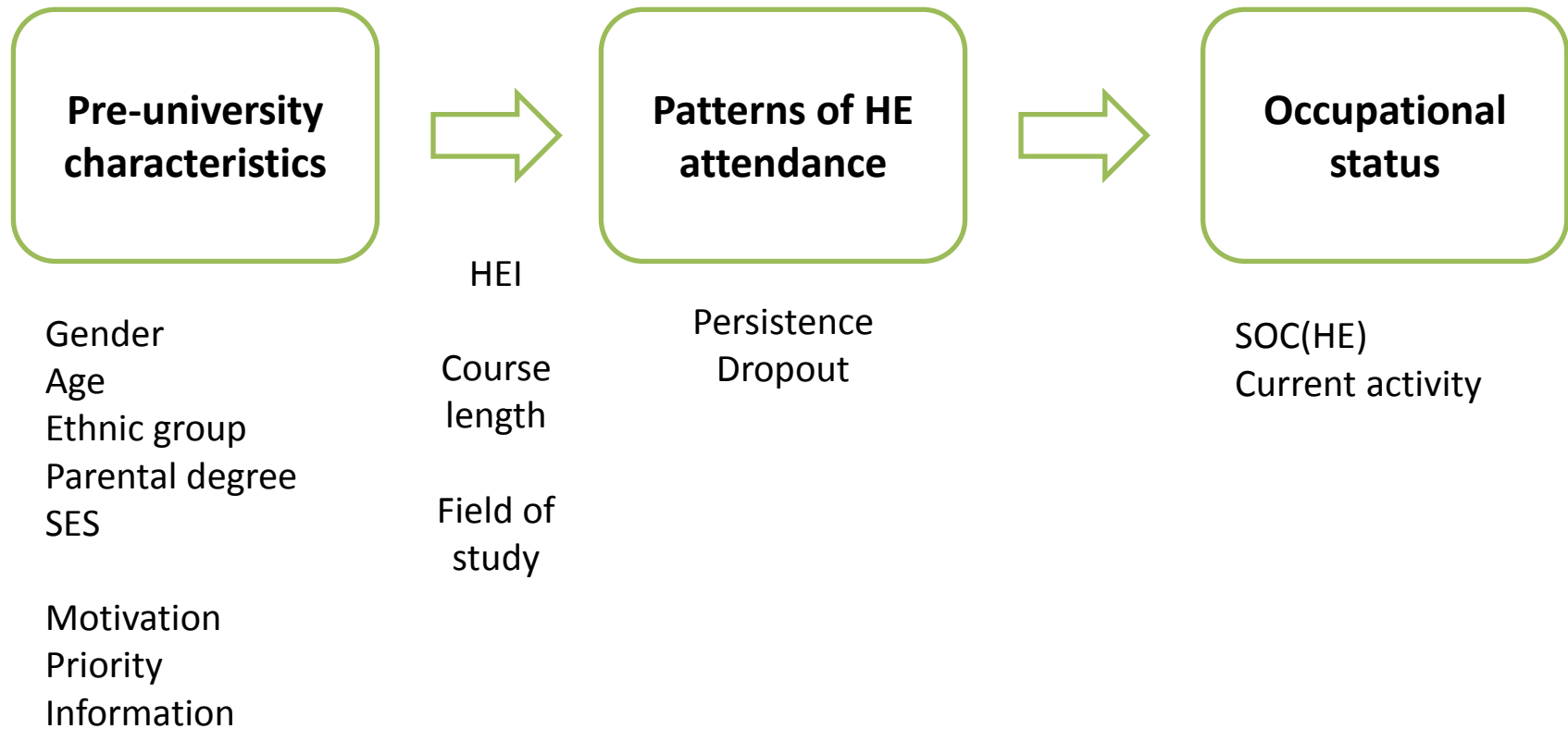
Workshop Warwick Institute for Employment Research

University of Warwick – 2nd of December 2014

Main objectives

- Explore undergraduate participation in Higher Education with special attention to students who leave their studies
- Analyze the relationship between pre-university variables and students' participation in higher education
- Compare patterns of attendance in Spain and the United Kingdom

General model of analysis



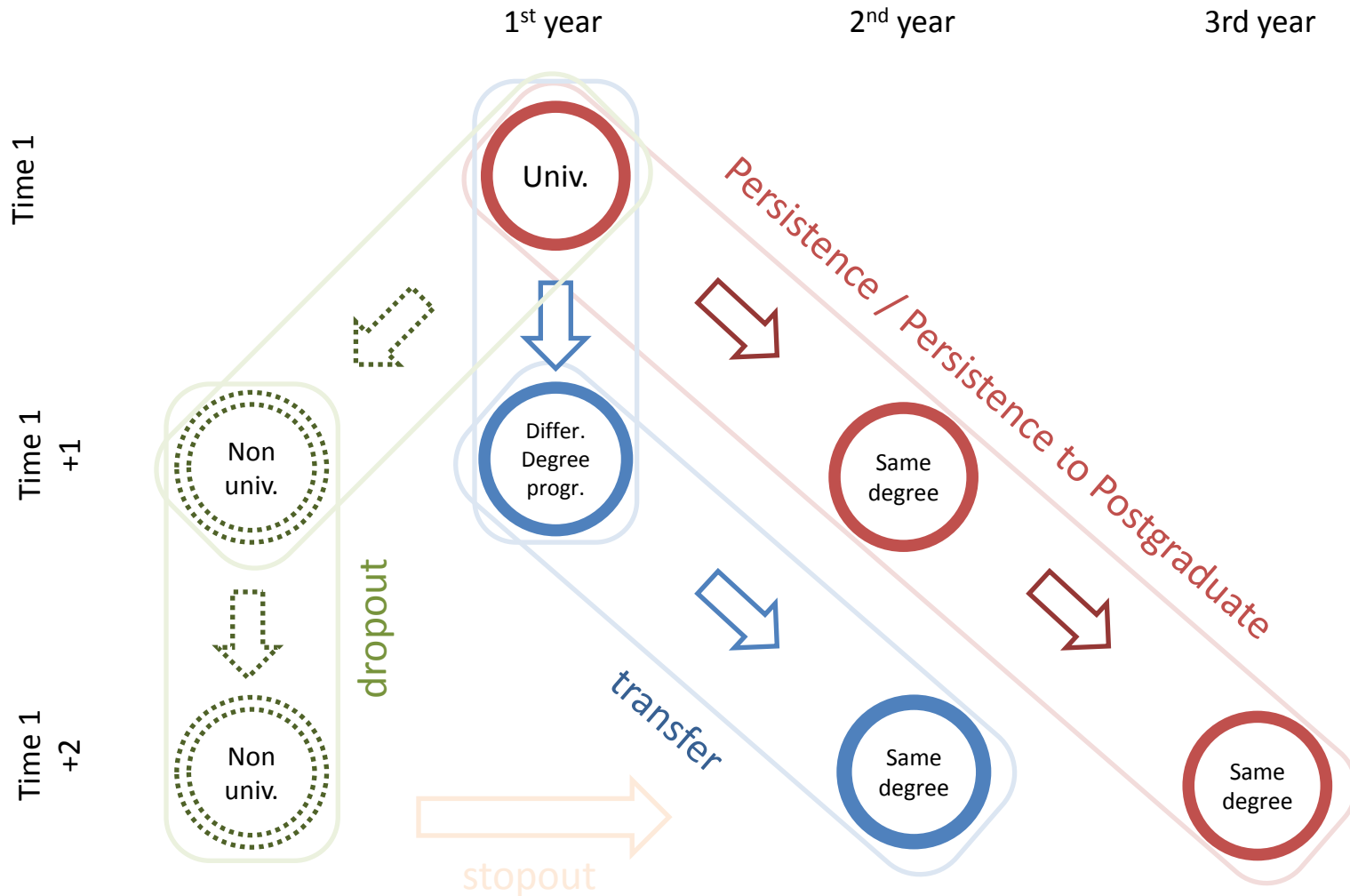
Dropout rates

- Non-continuation rates in England shows (HEFCE, 2013):
 - Entrants who left HE during the first year has remained steady since 2005-06 around (8.2%)
 - Entrants transferring to another HEI remained steady until 2009-10 around 2%.
- Drop out rates in Higher Education in Spain:
 - 30-50% (Latiesa, CIDE, Cabrera)
 - Around 30% (Triadó, Gairín)
 - 5-7% (CRUE – Dean's association)
- Lack of homogeneity in the definition of the phenomena leads to a difficulty of quantification in the Spanish case
 - Variety of meanings given to the term dropout

Dropout: a matter of definition

- Conceptualization (Tinto, 1975)
 - Leaving university or leaving course (or both)
 - Temporary/definitive dropout
 - Post-dropout situation (studying/working/unemployed)
 - Voluntary dropout
- Longitudinal approach (GRET-UAB)
 - Pathway / Longitudinal analysis (Casal et al., 2007, 2013; Goldrick-Rab, 2006; Robinson, 2004; Lassibille, 2011; O'Toole, D. M., Stratton, L. S., & Wetzel, J. N., 2003)
- Methodological individualism (Boudon, Gambetta)
 - Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen)
 - Behavioural, normative and control believes.

University pathway: general main scheme



Longitudinal Databases

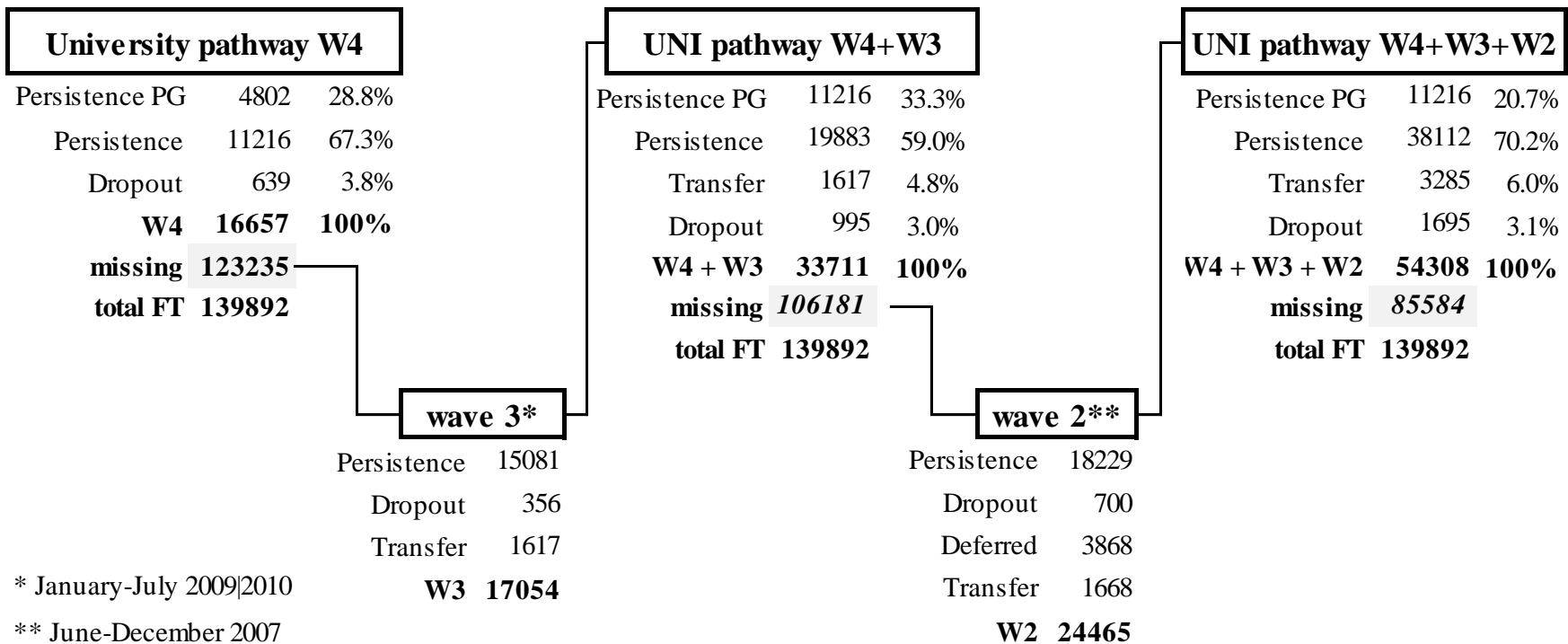
- Survey on the Transition from Education / Training to Labour Market Insertion (STETLMI-2005)
 - Graduates in Bachillerato and CFGS (VET) in 2000 (records for the next 5 years)
 - Pattern of five digits represents their pathway (11111 = persistence | 12222 = transfer | 11333 = HE dropout | 13311 = stopout...)

Longitudinal Databases (II)

- **Futuretrack**

- Students who applied to university through UCAS in 2005-06 for a full-time in a UK HEI.
- University pathways in Futuretrack: all waves
 - » *Wave 4. Which of the following applies to you now?*
 - *completed an UG or currently UG; completed UG and PG; not completed UG*
 - » *Wave 3 and 2: 2 questions were analysed*
 - *1. Which of the following applies to you now?*
 - *Registered same course; different course; not registered.*
 - *2. Which of the following most closely describes your participation in higher education since 2006?*
 - *Leave before completing my course; completed the course.*

University pathways: Joining samples



* January-July 2009|2010

** June-December 2007

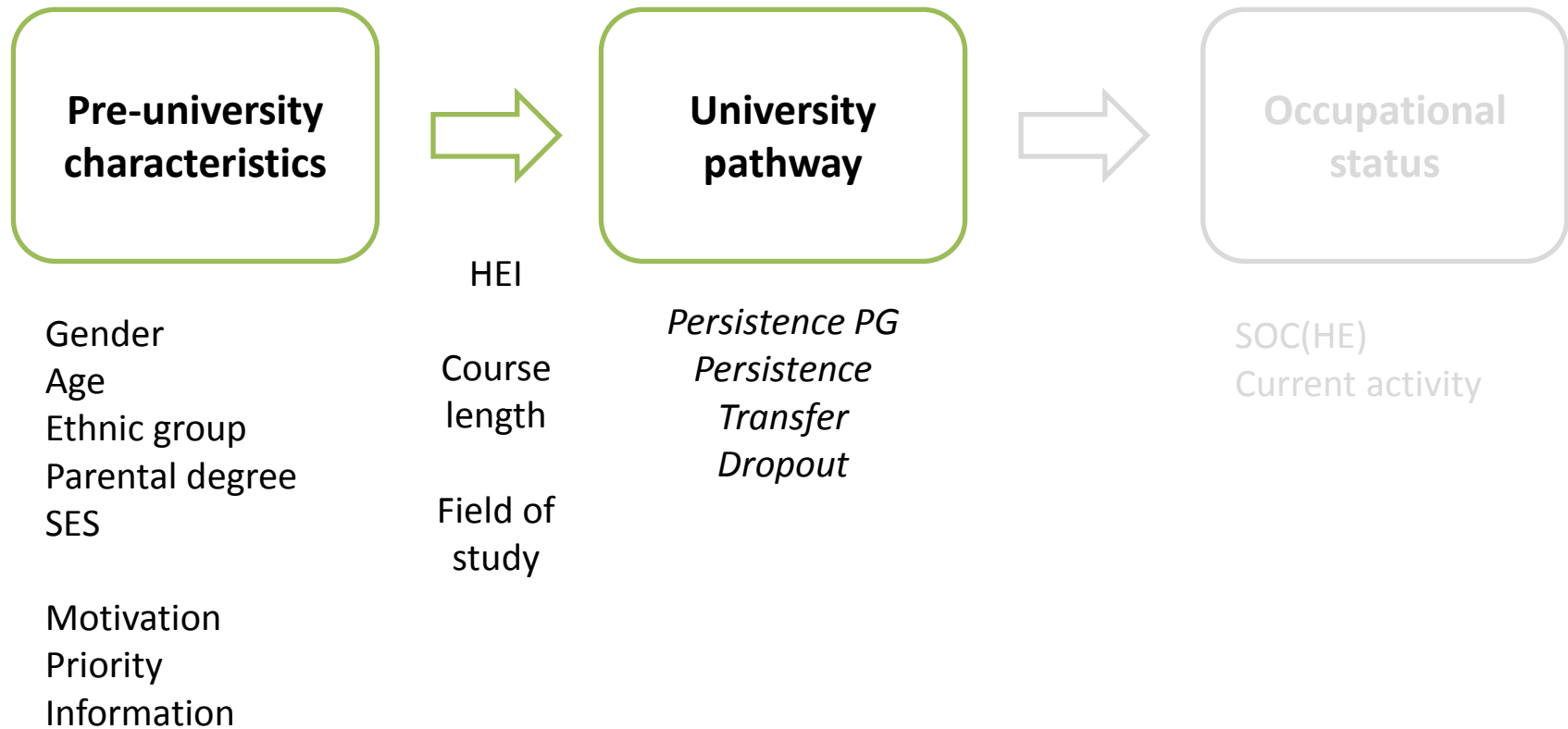
University pathways: a comparative analysis

	<i>University Pathways</i>	
	<i>UK</i>	<i>SP</i>
Persistence PG	13.2	79.6
Persistence	78.0	
Transfer	4.7	10.4
Dropout	4.1	9.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Futuretrack and STETLMI-2005 analysis (weighted)

- Persistence = 80% in the Spanish sample and more than 90% (91.2%) in the UK
- Dropout in Spain is more than the double than in UK (4.1% vs 9.9%)
- Transfer pathway is less than 5% in the UK while it represents more than 10% in the Spanish population

General model of analysis



Main characteristics: empirical findings

Sociodemographics

- *Gender (Fita et al.; Salvador; Infestas)*
- *Age (Hovdhaugen; Corominas; Lassibille y Navarro)*
- *Parental level of education (Lehmann, Latiesa)*
- *Socioeconomic status (Pascarella, Cabrera)*

Individual factors

- *Motivation (Masjuan, Bernstein)*
- *Priority/Clear (Pascarella and Terenzini, Lonka et al)*
- *Information*

Educational previous experiences

- *Access route (Corominas; Villar)*
- *Previous grades (Latiesa, Bethencourt)*

External factors

- *Working while studying (Vickers et al; Hovdhaugen; Cabrera et al.; Stratton et al.)*

Organizational

- *Field of study (Latiesa, Cabrera)*
- *Length of the course (short/long) (Cabrera)*
- *Higher Education Institution*



University Pathways

Persistence PG
Persistence
Transfer
Dropout

Bivariate analysis: characteristics of UK pathways

- Persistence to Postgraduate
 - Male and young
 - Highest tariff university
 - Longest degrees (4 and more than 4 year UG degree) and in the fields of Biology, Vet Sci, Agr & related, STEM, Social and Educational Science, Economic and Juridical Science, Humanities, Other (interdis.)
 - Highest economic and educational familiar background (Managerial and professional occupations and at least one parent with a degree) and Family as a source of information
 - “working during term time” or doing both “paid and unpaid work”
 - Mainly with expressive motivation and with a clear idea of the future occupational itinerary

Bivariate analysis: characteristics of UK pathways

- Persistence
 - Female and 19 and over
 - Non Highest tariff university and mainly related to 3-year UG degree. Related to Health Sciences, Social and Educational Science and Economic and Juridical Science
 - Lowest economic and educational familiar background (Intermediate occupations & Routine and manual occupations and with none of their parents with a degree) and report that family and guidance were important in applying to university.
 - Related to “unpaid and paid Work”
 - Related to not clear idea of the future occupational itinerary but related to professional motivations

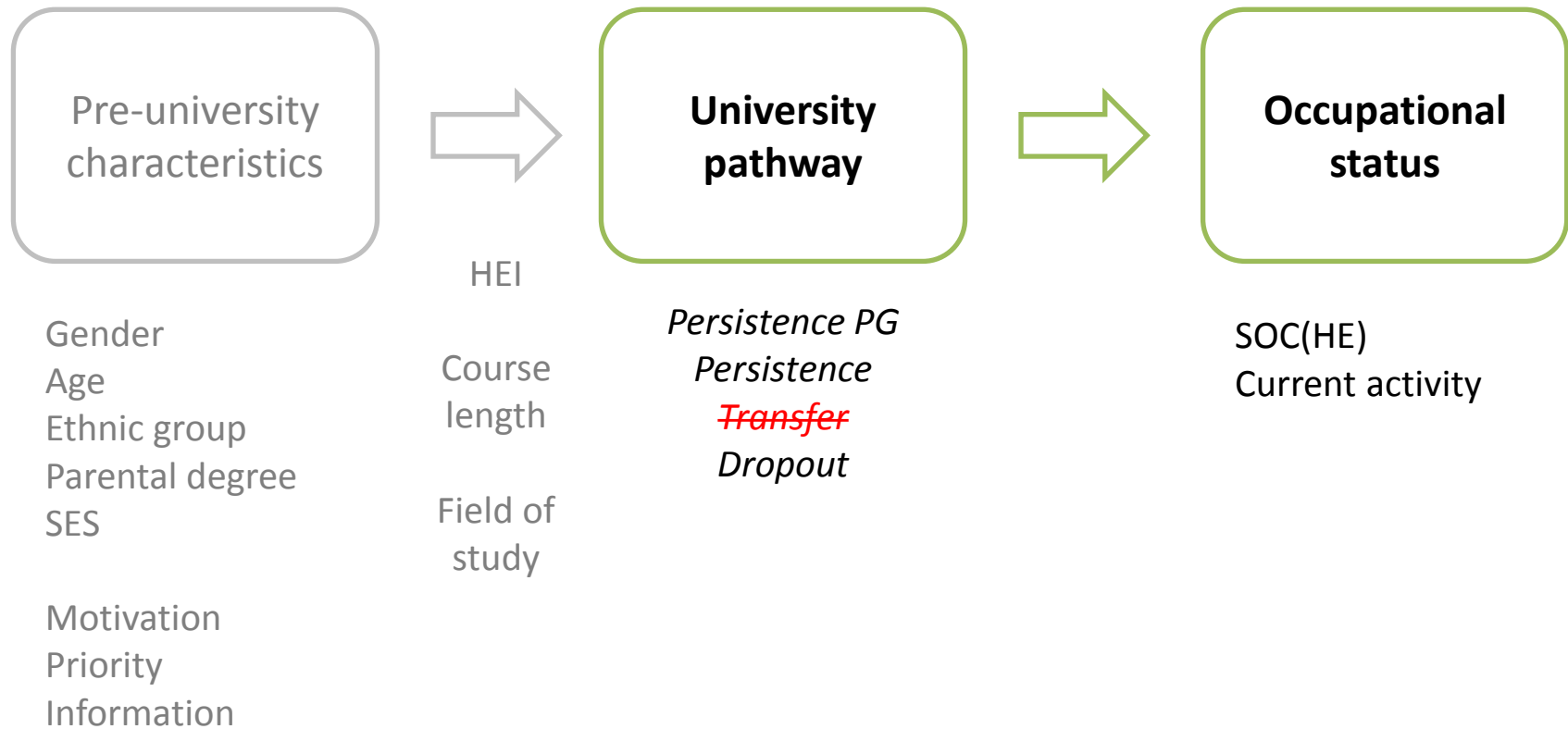
Bivariate analysis: characteristics of UK pathways

- Transfer
 - Male and younger students (18 and under)
 - Lowest tariff university and related to 4-year UG degree and Other (FD, HND, DipHE) and Economic and Juridical Science and STEM
 - Lowest SES but highest parental level of education
 - “Difficulties & more help needed” and “Website” as a source of information when they applied
 - Not working: neither paid or unpaid work
 - Not clear idea of the occupational itinerary and expressive and instrumental motivations

Bivariate analysis: characteristics of UK pathways

- Dropout
 - Lowest tariff university and related to short degrees in STEM, mainly
 - Male and older than 18 and related to lowest SES and parental level of education
 - Source of information/advice when applying to university: not related to family support/advice
 - Not working: neither paid or unpaid work
 - Not clear idea and professional motivations

General model of analysis



University dropout: occupational consequences?

	University pathways			Total
	Persist. PG	Persistence	Dropout	
Employee	39,0%	71,9%	61,1%	62,3%
Self-employed	2,7%	5,5%	9,7%	4,9%
Studying	45,1%	9,6%	7,6%	19,3%
Unemployed and looking for work	11,4%	10,8%	15,1%	11,2%
Other	0,6%	0,8%	2,0%	0,8%
Not looking for work	0,3%	0,9%	3,7%	0,9%
Unpaid work	1,0%	0,6%	0,8%	0,7%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$p \leq 0,01$ chi-square test

Although most of the students who dropout are employees (61,1%), dropout pathways are more related to precarious status (“unemployment”, “unpaid work”, “not looking for a job”, “other”)

University pathways and occupational status

	University pathways			Total
	Persist. PG	Persistence	Dropout	
Expert	47.9	39.5	17.1	39.8
Orchestrator	7.3	5.4	8.0	5.9
Communicator	13.9	14.6	7.0	14.1
Non-graduate	30.9	40.5	68.0	40.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

$p \leq 0,01$ chi-square test

Students with dropout experiences at university are overrepresented in “Non-graduate” occupations (SOC(HE)).

Conclusions

- Relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and university pathways: gender and age
- Individual factors: clear idea and motivations
- The importance of the family: as a economic and cultural background and as a source of information/advice

- Dropout or transfer: similar characteristics
 - Small differences: age, parental level of education and motivations.
- Persistence and Persistence to PG: big differences
 - Socio-demographic (age, gender), individual (motivational), organizational (HEI, course length) , familiar background

- Impact of university pathways on occupational status. Dropout related to non-graduate occupations and precarious situations

Thank you for listening...

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Results: University pathways

Spain

University pathways for the period 2000-2005 – Graduates in *Bachillerato* and *CFGS*

	%		%
Persistence	62.2	Persistence	79.6
Graduates	15.8	Transfer	10.4
Stop-out	1.7	Drop out	9.9
Transfer	10.4	Total	100.0
HE dropouts	4.0		
Drop out	5.9		
Total	100.0		

Source: STETLMI-2005 analysis (weighted)

United Kingdom

University pathways students who applied to university through UCAS in 2005-06

	%		%
Persistence PG	13.2	Persistence	91.2
Persistence	78.0	Transfer	4.7
Transfer	4.7	Dropout	4.1
Dropout	4.1	Total	100.0
Total	100.0		

Source: Futuretrack analysis (weighted)

University pathways: Similarities to the Spanish context

- Persistence
 - Women, young, with at least one parent with a degree, courses in Health Science and Social and Educational Science.
- Transfer
 - Male, young, higher educated parents, instrumental motivations, not working (paid or unpaid), in STEM degrees
- Dropout
 - Male 19 and over, professional motivations, short course, neither parent has a degree, in STEM degrees

Motivations

What was your MAIN reason for choosing your particular course of study?

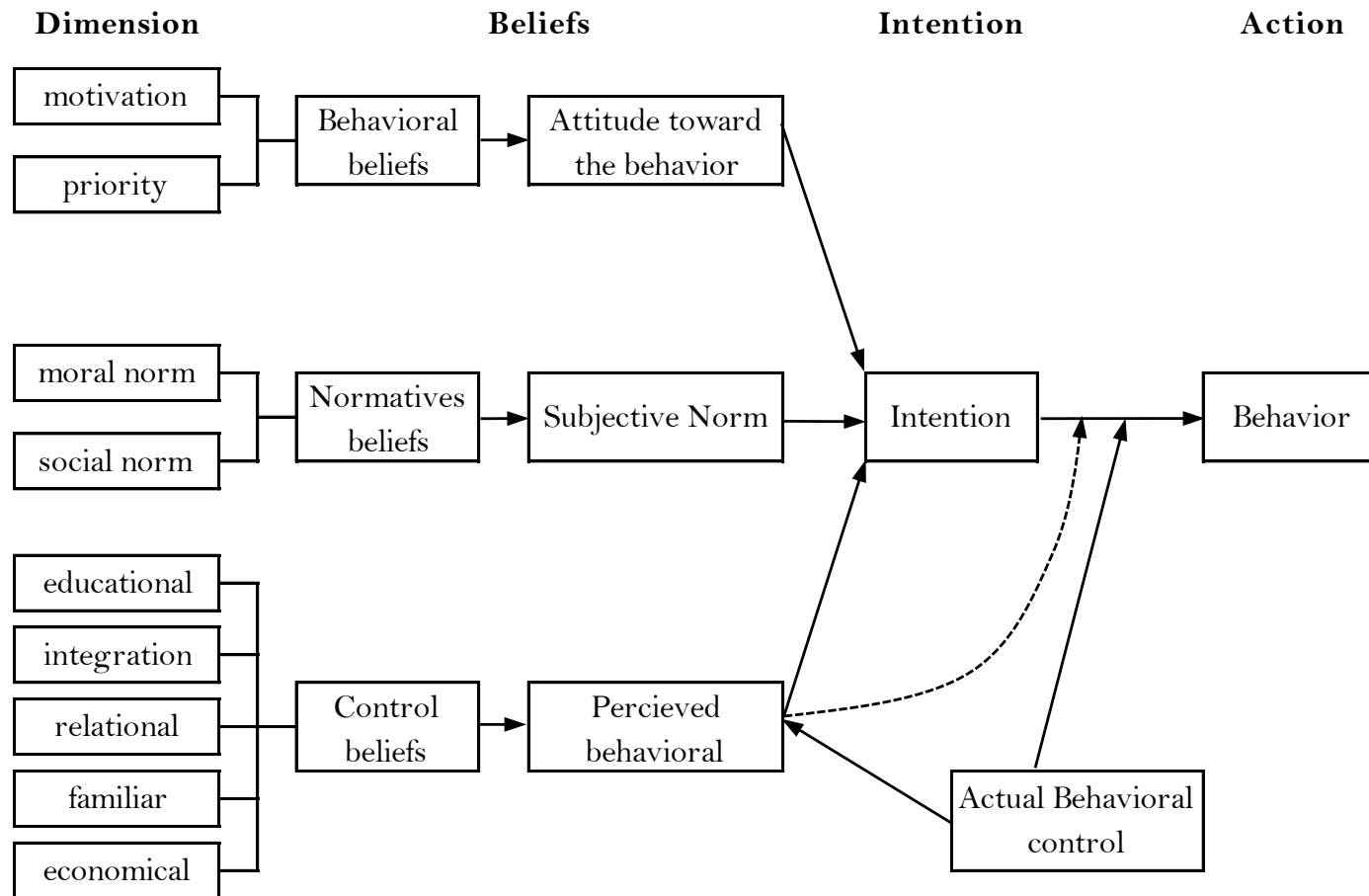
Item questionnaire Futuretrack	Motivations
Get good grades in subjects related to the course	Expressive
Enjoy studying the subject	
Interested in the content of the course	
Opportunity to spend part of the course abroad	Instrumental
Modular course, keeps options open	
Enables me to qualify for another course	Professional
Will lead to good employment opportunities	
Need the course to enter particular profession	
Had difficulty deciding, was a reasonable option	Other
Was advised that the course would be appropriate for me	

Previous information

In deciding to apply for a higher education course, how far do you agree with the following statements?

Item questionnaire Futuretrack	Information
<i>I had access to all the information I required about higher education courses</i>	Had all information
<i>I have had excellent careers guidance</i>	
<i>Teachers/lecturers were very helpful to me</i>	Guidance
<i>Careers guidance provided at my school/college was very helpful to me</i>	
<i>My friends influenced my choice(s)</i>	
<i>I needed more help and advice in choosing which course to study</i>	Difficulties & more help needed
<i>I found it difficult to choose course(s)</i>	
<i>I found the UCAS website easy to use</i>	
<i>University/college websites and prospectuses were helpful</i>	Website
<i>My family were very supportive in my choice of course</i>	Family

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen)



University pathways

Three *[or four]* main pathways:

- **Persistence**: remain or graduated on the same course they started.
- ***[Persistence to PG: students registered on a postgraduate course.]***
- **Transfer**: registered on a different course to the one they started.
- **Dropout**: leave higher education before completing they course.