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**Abstract**

In this paper we investigate social selectivity in access to higher education in Germany and, unlike most previous studies, explicitly devote attention to semi-tertiary institutions such as the so-called universities of cooperative education. Drawing on rational choice models of educational decisions we seek to understand which factors influence upper secondary graduates from different social backgrounds in their choices of diverse tertiary institutions in Germany. We find that scholastic performance, expected job security, study duration, monetary costs and preferences for study content considerably contribute to the creation of socially selective choice patterns of post-secondary careers. The characteristics of semi-tertiary institutions?such as universities of cooperative education that combine firm-based training with tertiary education?constitute a potential alternative that could reduce inequities in access to higher learning. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Schindler, Steffen, E-Mail: Steffen.Schindler@mzes.uni-mannheim.de