



Studying after Bologna in Switzerland

The students viewpoint

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Outline of presentation

I. Introduction of the survey

I.A. Background, aims and issues

I.B. Design

I.C. Surveys data

II. Some of the main results

II.A. In their great majority, the students are satisfied by their studies

II.B. ... but (not a total satisfaction)

II.B.1. According to study area

II.B.2. According to social conditions

II.B.3. According to study level (bachelor/master)



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The survey ...

- ... was financed by CRUS (federation of Swiss universities), was conducted by OVE (Observatory of the student life, University of Geneva) with support of CRUS and UNES (national federation of students associations)
- ... aimed to know students concerns and difficulties in the Bologna system (survey conducted in 2008, after all Swiss universities had already entered in Bologna process)
- ... was the first global check in order to see what is possible and/or necessary to adjust
- ... investigated the assessments by students about their own studies conditions -> subjective assessment



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Design :Some hopes and some fears

- Universities (CRUS) expressed some hopes about the Bologna reform...
- Students (UNES, OVE surveys) expressed some worries about Bologna reform...

➔ Both gave us material for conceiving our questionnaire.



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Some hopes (from CRUS)...

Hopes	Tools
<p>Scaling of degree courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - studies focused on students, they know what is expected of themselves, assure that studies are feasible in predicted time, adequacy of workload, opportunities of reorientation... 	ECTS : learning outcomes, courses catalogue, workload
<p>Information and transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - studies focused on students, provide better information about the expectations, make link between evaluation and learning outcomes... 	ECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - publish all important types of information (about degree course, mobility opportunities, progress in the studies) 	Courses catalogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information about followed degree course 	Transcript of records
<p>Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make easier horizontal and vertical mobility, make possible to change of university during studies (without too much obstacles), acknowledgement of acquired skills in other institutions 	ECTS
<p>Social dimension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make studies more flexible (part-time studies, large range of courses to be chosen, flexible rules for individualized degree courses) 	
<p>Outside strictly Bologna reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equality of opportunity, students participation, quality insurance, attractiveness of European space of higher studies 	



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Some fears (from Students 2006 – OVE)...

- **Bologna means**

- More constraints... (more selective, more work, more requirements, more stress, less freedom, and –above all- longer duration of studies)
- ... but less quality (decreasing of teaching quality, threats on teaching independence, less creativity...)
- « Bologna offers nothing more but requires something more... »
- A different philosophy (standardization, conformism, studies become a merchandise, fear for the privatization of the university, Bologna=tool of neoliberal capitalism...)
- Reform conducted without collaboration of the students (students interests are pushed out by political and economical interests...)
- A “sacrificed generation” : students having begun in old system and having to continue in the new system (uncertainty, organization problems, administrative struggle...)



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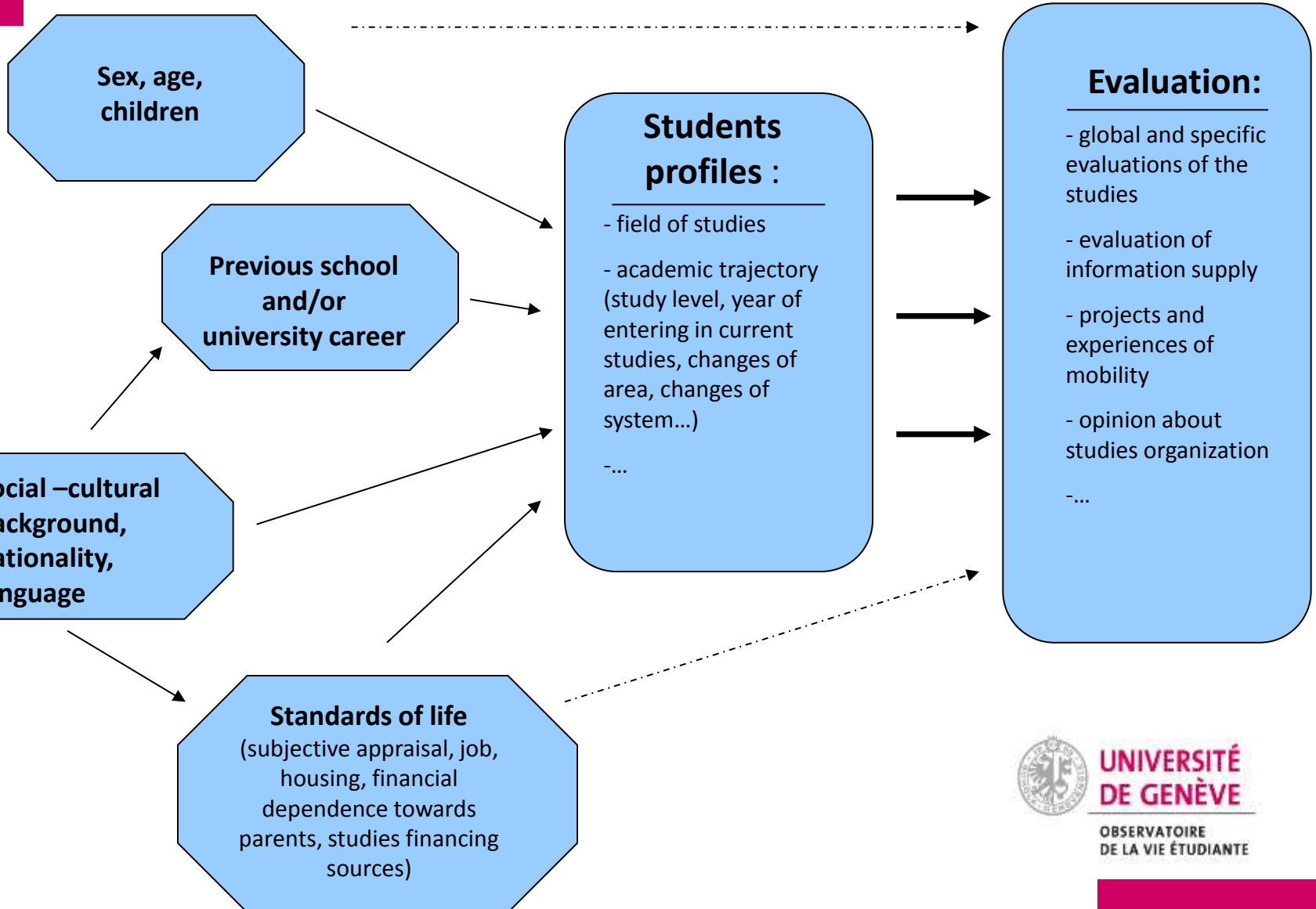
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Study conditions in Bologna system :

4 main dimensions:

- **information on...**
 - ... training
 - ... degree courses
 - ... services to students
 - ... mobility opportunities
 - ... study orientation
 - ... careers
- **teaching and learning**
 - skills
 - evaluation processes
 - workload and ECTS
 - communication of objectives
 - training evaluation by students
- **study trajectory**
 - vertical mobility (transition from Bachelor to Master)
 - horizontal mobility (foreign stay)
- **organization**
 - schedule
 - study
 - exams organization

Design



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Data of our survey :

- Representative sample : 11268 students following their studies in the new system (bachelor or master) in each Swiss university
- 5350 accesses to on line questionnaire, 4690 completed
- Responses rates : according to the universities, between 39% and 49%
- Respondents population is also representative (according to structural variables : sex, nationality, university, field of studies...)



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Some selected results :

- Globally, students are satisfied

Table 1 : Responses to the question « What do you think globally about your studies ?"»

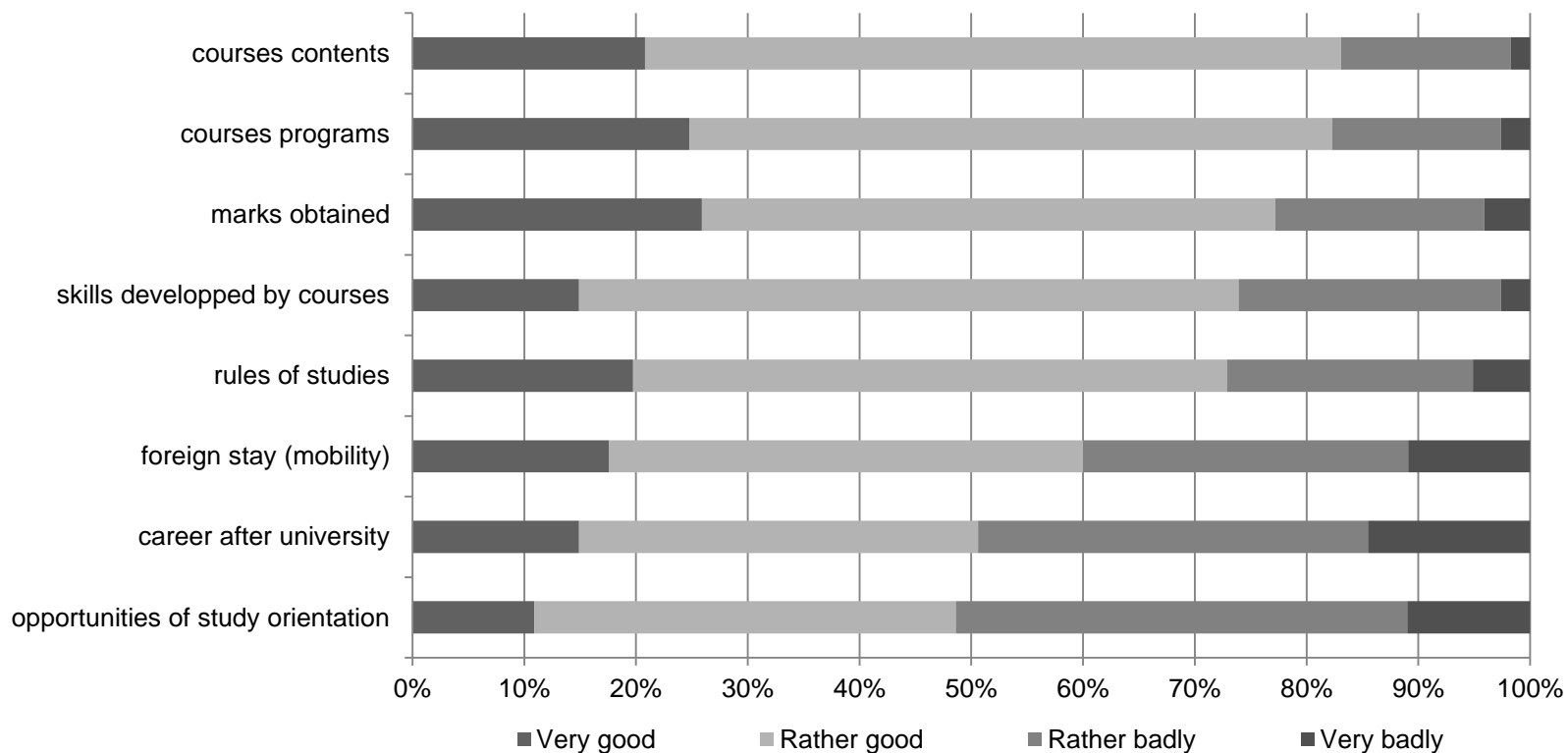
Very satisfied	15.5%
Rather satisfied	58.9%
Neutral	14.3%
Rather dissatisfied	9.6%
Very dissatisfied	1.6%
(N)	(4865)



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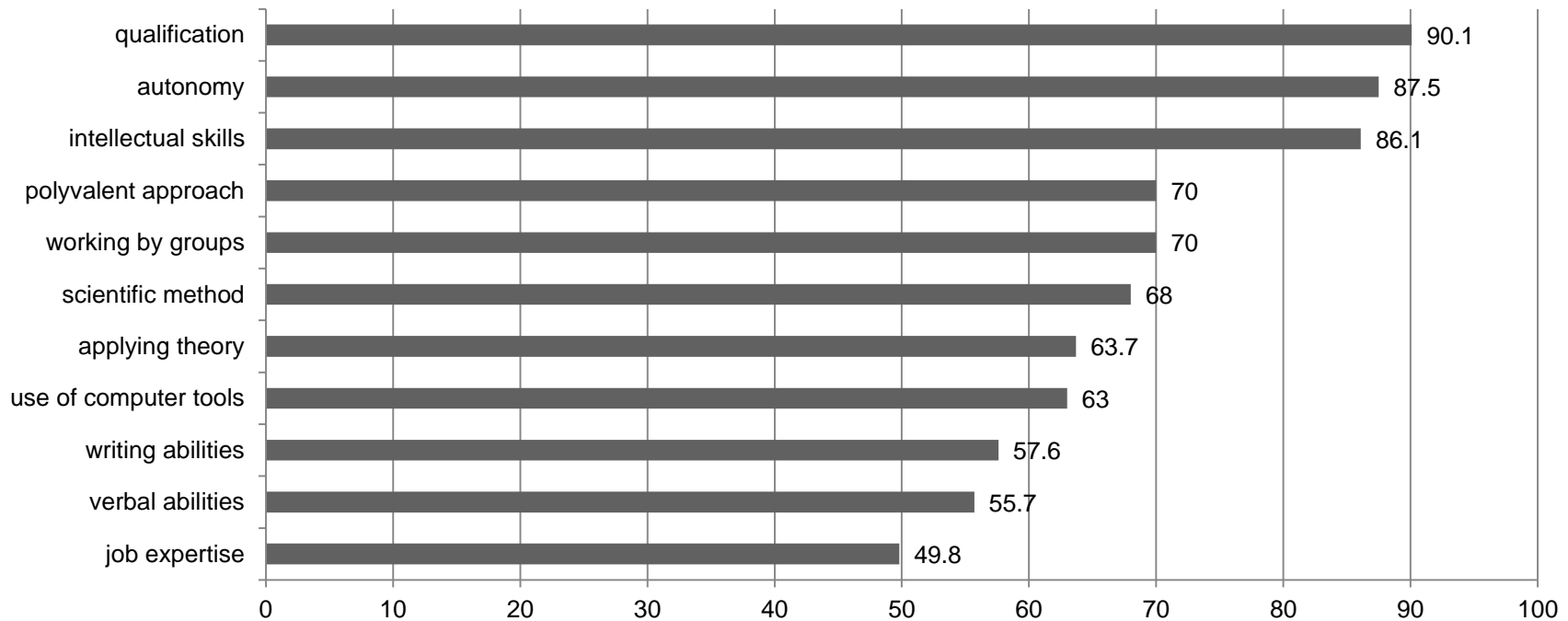
**Figure 4 : assessment by the students
of how the university informs the students about various topics**



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Figure 5: Percentages of students considering that their studies transmits the following skills



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Table 2: Opinion about ECTS

The ECTS allows to...	Agree	don't agree
...meet the programs requirements in the “right” time	69	31
...follow easily part of the studies in foreign university	69.2	30.8
...evaluate students according to the skills they acquired	44.7	55.3
...have freedom and flexibility in the studies	53.6	46.4



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Table 3: Opinion about organization problems

	Don't agree	Agree
Degree course is not diverse enough	70.1	29.9
Lack of coherence in courses	79.5	20.5
Courses overlapping	73.8	26.2
Some compulsory courses are useless	52.9	47.1
Too rigid. Not freedom enough.	62.5	37.5
Lack of some essential courses	72.8	27.2
Problems of exams coordination	88.7	11.3



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Globally, students are satisfied

This satisfaction is

- about all dimensions and their indicators
- clear (more than the majority)
- The first main conclusion : “The students are satisfied about their studies in the current system.”



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But...

- Often, this satisfaction is not total (“rather satisfied” is much more frequent than “very satisfied”)
- Besides satisfied students, there are some disappointed ones
- Even little percentages of students challenge universities: it’s impossible to neglect that, for instance...
 - 20% assess negatively the course contents
 - 4 students of 10 think that they are not able to complete their studies in the right time
 - ...



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But...

- A global satisfaction hides often some specific dissatisfactions
- -> some students categories may have less good assessments
- -> it's important to know these categories (and to understand how these factors affect the study conditions) if we want to make something against these harmful processes



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Variables indicating some variations (factors of students disappointment)

- Three variables selected
 - Field of studies
 - Standards of life
 - Study level (bachelor or master)



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The field of studies affects...

- ...the global satisfaction concerning the studies →
- ...the skills considered as transmitted by the studies →
- ...the perception of how the university takes into account the job expectations →
- ...the assessment of one ECTS workload →
- ...the project to continue studies after bachelor →
- ...the assessment of courses organization →



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Variation of social features according to field of studies

- level of parents education →
- having a job →
- financial dependence towards parents →
- Some students are cumulating low social-cultural background, job highly necessary, financial independence
- Some other students are cumulating high social-cultural background, job not necessary, financial dependence (in fact financial protection)



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Assessment of standards of life

Cumulating disabilities :

- Students having more difficult live conditions... →
 - ...experience also bigger cultural distance to University, →
 - ...may also less often rely on the financial support of their parents →
 - ...and are much to be required to have a job →
- and furthermore are also more probably to
- have a less good assessment of their studies →
 - want to have more time available for their studies →
 - are reluctant to continue their studies after bachelor →
 - renounce for economic reasons to a foreign stay (horizontal mobility) →
 - regret the studies rigidity or inflexibility →
 - think that they will be unable to complete their studies in the right time →



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Study level (Bachelor / Master)

- Two hypothesis:
 - Hyp.1 : the master students are more satisfied (they know better university and are more familiar to it, are better institutionnaly integrated...)
 - Hyp. 2 : the master students are less satisfied (their experience and the problems they met made them more critical)



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	Hyp 1: students more satisfied in Master	Hyp 2: students more critical in Master	Neither Hyp 1 nor Hyp 2




Table 9: Percentage of students satisfied about their studies according to area and level study

	Bachelor	Master
Engineering	93.3%	90.2%
Economics	86.1%	89.2%
Medicine et pharmacie	85.7%	88.9%
Law	84.7%	86.9%
Sciences	83.2%	80.8%
Social and human sciences	73.4%	79.3%
Interdisciplinarity	59.8%	77.1%
Total	80.8%	84.0%



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Table 10: Organization problems according to study level

	Bachelor	Master	Total
Courses catalogue not diversified enough	33	22.4	31.0
Degree course not cohesive	Ns		20.6
Schedules overlapped	Ns		27.1
Some compulsory courses not useful	Ns		47.4
Degree course too rigid. Not freedom enough	39.2	34.3	38.3
Lack of important courses	24.7	39.0	27.4
Exams coordination problems	11.0	14.2	11.6



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	Hyp 1: students more satisfied in Master	Hyp 2: students more critical in Master	Neither Hyp 1 nor Hyp 2
Global satisfaction	*	(* : for Engineering and Sciences)	
Lack of some important courses		*	
Courses supply is not diverse enough	*		

Table 11: answer to the question „Is there a difference between workload corresponding to diverse courses you followed?“ according to study level

	Bachelor	Master	Total
Very big difference	35.2%	41.1%	36.3%
Big difference	46.6%	46.3%	46.5%
Only a little difference	18.2%	12.6%	17.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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	Hyp 1: students more satisfied in Master	Hyp 2: students more critical in Master	Neither Hyp 1 nor Hyp 2
Global satisfaction	*	(* : for Engineering and Sciences)	
Lack of some important courses		*	
Courses supply is not diverse enough	*		
Unbalanced workload for one ECTS		*	

	Hyp 1: students more satisfied in Master	Hyp 2: students more critical in Master	Neither Hyp 1 nor Hyp 2
Global satisfaction	*	(* : for Engineering and Sciences)	
Lack of some important courses		*	
Courses supply is not diverse enough	*		
Unbalanced workload for one ECTS		*	
Transmitted skills			*

Transition between old and new system

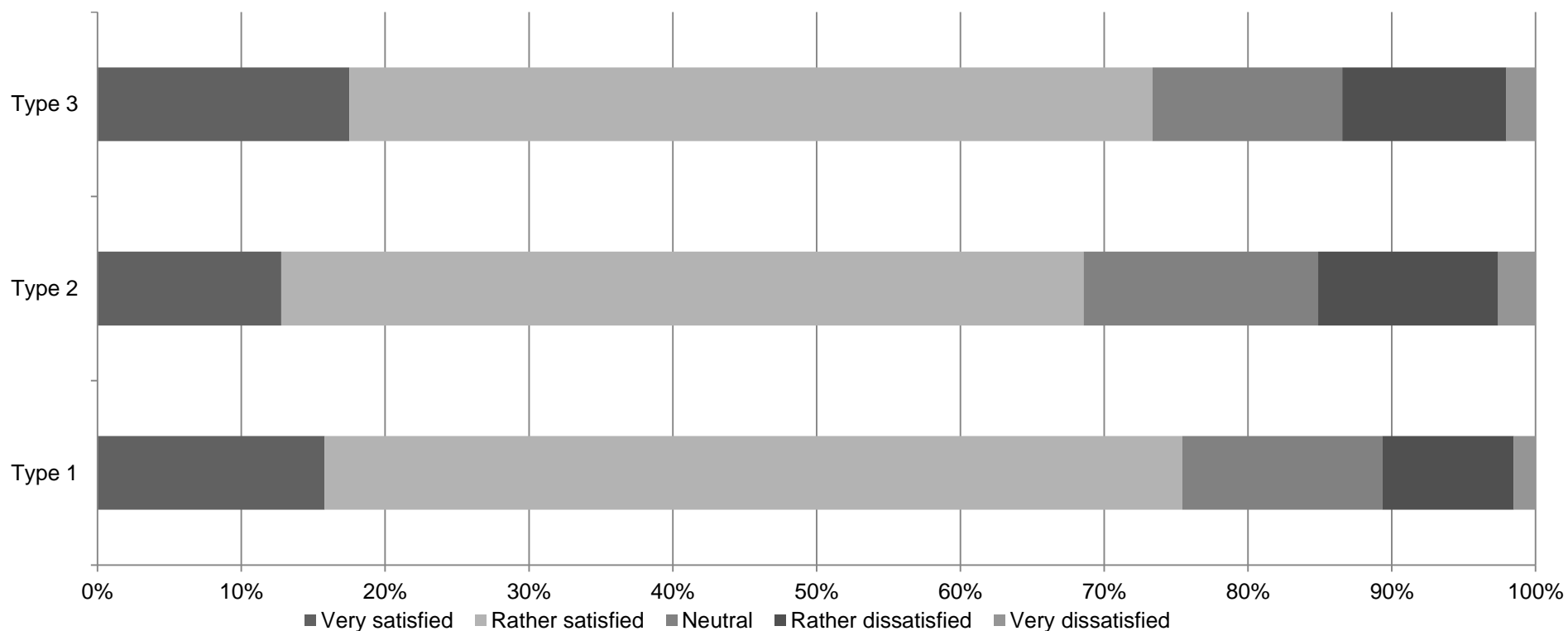
- 3 types of students:
 - **Type 1:** they have only known Bologna system
 - **Type 2:** the „shifters“ (they began in the old system and they was integrated to Bologna in course of studies)
 - **Type 3:** they knew only the old system in their entire previous studies and they know only the Bologna system in their current studies



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Figure 22: Global evaluation of their studies according to the experience they have of the old and the new system



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Transition from the old to the Bologna system


- The type 2 students (shiffters) have a less good evaluation than the other ones
- The students of types 1 and 3 have the same evaluation
 - ▶ The bad evaluation of the shiffters is due to their “shifting” rather than to the specific features of the Bologna system.
 - ▶ It’s reassuring while the shiffters are appealed to quickly disappear
 - ▶ Just a few concern about the accountability towards this “sacrificed generation”



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Transition from the old to the Bologna system

- But we have to speak cautiously about this satisfaction...
- If we examine the diverse features of studies organization, we observe the following points: 
 - The same evaluation for types 1 and 3 : organizational items (assessed positively) and lack of diversity (assessed negatively)
 - The same evaluation for all the students: uselessness of some courses and studies rigidity
 - The same evaluation for types 2 and 3 : lack of coherence and lack of important courses
- It seems thus that the current Bologna system is...
 - less diversified
 - less coherent, less consistent
 - more incomplete, containing more gaps



**Thank you for your
attention !**

<http://www.unige.ch/rectorat/observatoire>



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