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193 Meso-social Structures and Stratification Analysis - a Missing Link? [E] |
René Levy

Current stratification research is shown to rely on a series of implicit assumptions of homogeneity of the social space in terms of crystallisation and meso-social structures. Three assumptions are spelled out as explicit hypotheses; none of them turns out to be plausible in contemporary Western societies. Hence, the relative weakness of many results in stratification research may well be due to the neglect – by research design – of important meso-structural sources of variance rather than to the supposedly lost relevance of stratification in real life.

217 Inequality and Deprivation: Switzerland in a three country comparison [G] |
Christian Suter and Denise Paris

The present contribution applies for the first time the British deprivation concept to the Swiss context. Applying Halleröd's "Proportional Deprivation Index", the perception of the minimum acceptable standard of living and the actual standard of living, as well as level, distribution and determinants of deprivation are investigated for Switzerland in comparison to Germany and Spain. The empirical analysis is based on the recent "European Welfare Survey" data (2000). The results indicate high consensus regarding the perception of the minimum standards of living among the three countries. The risk of deprivation is substantially lower in Switzerland than in Germany and Spain. In all three countries there is a close relationship between the classic employment-based dimensions of social inequality and the risk of deprivation.

- 241 **Inequality of Income and openness to foreign trade [F] | Yves Flückiger, José Ramirez , Joseph Deutsch and Jacques Silber**

This paper analyses the impact of openness to international trade on the income distribution in Switzerland. In a first part, using aggregated data covering the period 1960 to 1996, one finds an examination of how the evolution of the income distribution has been affected by the increasing openness of the Swiss economy, measured as the ratio of the sum of imports and exports to the GDP. The results of this macroeconomic analysis are then confronted, in the second part, to a microeconomic approach that is centered on an analysis of wage inequality based on a large employee-employer database.

- 267 **Social Change, Mobility, and Inequality in Switzerland in the 1990s [E] | Manfred Max Bergman, Dominique Joye and Beat Fux**

This article focuses on changes in economic, cultural, and social capital (as measured by income, educational attainment, and membership in associations), and their association with social stratification in Switzerland in the 1990s. Data were provided by an inequality study from 1991 and the 1999 ISSP on social inequality. The first section deals with social inequality across time and gender. In the second section, changes in the structure of these indicators are examined. Notable exceptions to the stability in the inequality structure are the increase in under- and unemployment, a decrease in low-pay full-time employment, and a moderate increase in women's educational attainment. Nevertheless, despite the economic crisis in the 1990s, little significant change has taken place in the social and opportunity structure in Switzerland.

- 297 **Poverty, Stratification, and Gender in Switzerland [E] | Monica Budowski, Robin Tillmann and Manfred Max Bergman**

In this paper we explore the relations between poverty, social stratification, and gender, based on data from the Swiss Household Panel. It has long been recognized that it is too simplistic to conceptualize poverty as merely a monetary revenue that falls below an arbitrarily set amount. Consequently, we conceptualize poverty in terms of a combination of low income and deprivation of living conditions. The issues we address are who is poor in terms of demographic characteristics, whether a gendered pattern of poverty exists, and how social position relates to gender and poverty. The Results indicate that households most likely affected by poverty are those where a woman is the main contributor to household income. Furthermore, the socio-demographic characteristics differ among poor households, depending on whether a man or a woman is the main income contributor. Among the working population, social stratification was by far the strongest predictor of poverty, ahead of gender, nationality, or education level.

- 319 **Living Arrangement and the Dynamics of Poverty: Lone Parenting in the Life Courses of Mothers [E]** | Monica Budowski and Christian Suter
- Is poverty persistent among and specific to lone mothers, or is it transitory and widespread? Do formerly lone mothers exit poverty when moving in with a partner? Interviews in 1992, 1993 and 1996 with the same set of women who were lone mothers in 1992, allow us to address these issues (for the City of Zurich). Changes in living arrangements are interwoven with the dynamics of living conditions and financial poverty. Lone mothers consolidate their financial situations but not at a level that is very high above the defined poverty threshold; cohabiting women fare better. Education and position at work are important factors but do not protect against financial hardship. Opportunities in the labor market are most important.
- 339 **On wealth and social compatibility [G]** | Ueli Mäder and Elisa Streuli
- The question of social inequality is often focused on aspects of poverty. But what about wealth? The first part of this paper discusses the definition of wealth and the distribution of income and wealth (in Switzerland). Interviews with wealthy respondents take up this thread in the second part of the paper. They provide insight into how the wealthy reflect on their situation and in particular on questions of social compatibility. The discussion sketches possible perspectives of research on the wealthy and pleads for a sharpened view of vertical inequalities.
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