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Gender Equality Policies in Switzerland: Institutional Factors of Success and Failure

Edited by Brigitte Liebig, René Levy, Birgit Sauer, and Alfonso Sousa-Poza

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175 How Cantonal Education Systems in Switzerland Promote Gender-Typical School-to-Work Transitions [E] | Christian Imdorf, Stefan Sacchi, Karin Wohlgemuth, Sasha Cortesi, and Aline Schoch

The paper asks how cantonal education systems in Switzerland promote gender-typed school-to-work transitions and gender segregation at work. Data from the Swiss TREE youth panel study is used to analyse the impact of cantonal provision of vocational education and training (VET) on gender-typical educational trajectories. The findings show that education systems with higher VET rates have higher allocations of men in gender-(male-) typical occupational careers. The paper concludes that the pronounced and persistent gender segregation on the Swiss labor market is partly due to a prominent VET system, which urges early gender-typed occupational career decisions.

Keywords: Education systems, vocational education and training, educational trajectories, gender segregation, Switzerland

197 Equality Policies in Compulsory School. Ambivalences that Dilute Gender Relations [F] | Farinaz Fassa, Valérie Rolle, and Chiara C. Storari

For more than 20 years, an education for gender equality in compulsory school has been called for at the Swiss federal level. Our research (critical discourse analysis of federal and cantonal school policy texts and interviews with the persons in charge of school- and equality policies in seven French-speaking cantons) shows that the implementation of these policies at regional (French-speaking area) and cantonal levels is ambivalent. We attribute this situation to a process of dilution of gender inequalities among other inequalities and relate this process to the changes of framing that affect educational policies.

Keywords: Equality, gender, teachers, education, education policy

215 How Schools Deal with Expectations of Gender Equality
 [E] | Regula Julia Leemann

The article looks at the implementation of “National Daughters Day” in a selected canton in Switzerland and investigates how schools as organizations deal with expectations of educational reform and equal opportunity policy geared toward gender equality. The article draws on the sociology of critique and justification (Boltanski and Thévenot) to get a conceptual grasp on the heterogeneous positions adopted in matters of gender equality. We analyze interviews with school administrators and teaching staff who are responsible for organizing Daughters Day and with its initiators at the cantonal level. The results show that actor interpretations and justifications derive from the orders of justification found in the civic, domestic, and industrial world, which are combined into formulas of compromise in multiple ways.

Keywords: Gender equity, school, organization, school reform, justification

237 The Swiss “agriculteur” and the Swiss “paysanne”: An Unequal Couple?
 [F] | Yvan Droz, Valérie Miéville-Ott, and Fenneke Reysoo

In French-speaking Switzerland it is taken for granted to use the terms “agriculteur” and “paysanne” to respectively refer to men and women active in family farming. We examine this lexical asymmetry by unraveling the underlying gender conceptions. Comparing designations (in official texts, curricula in agrarian education, communication campaigns) with self-designations (interviews) shows that the common use of the binary “agriculteur-paysanne” is the expression of a bisexual and unequal construction of men’s and women’s status, roles and responsibilities in agriculture. Embedded in a discourse of complementarity based on the gender division of labor, this asymmetry is represented as being essential for the good functioning of the family farm.

Keywords: Swiss agriculture, gender equality, family enterprise, gender division of labor, social representations

259 Institutions and Gender Time Inequality: A Fuzzy-Set QCA of Swiss Cantons
 [E] | Ruedi Epple, Martin Gasser, Sarah Kersten, Michael Nollert, and Sebastian Schief

This article compares Swiss cantons with respect to gender time inequality, defined as the gender gap in how men and women, on average, divide their time between paid work, housework, and family work. We conduct a fuzzy-set QCA analysis to find macro-level associations between gender time inequality and cantonal institutions. The results suggest (i) that traditionalism is a necessary condition for high gender time inequality, (ii) that several different institutional configurations are linked to high and low gender time inequality, and (iii) that high welfare spending, weak traditionalism, and a large public sector are in all configurations linked to lower gender time inequality.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Swiss cantons, gender division of labor, Qualitative Comparative Analysis, working time

279 Gender Wage Gap at Career Entry. A Quantitative Analysis for Switzerland [G] | Kathrin Bertschy, Philipp Walker, Annick Baeriswyl, and Michael Marti

Economic theories focus on gender differences in human capital investment, built up with occupational experience, to explain the gender wage gap. Given that young women now match or surpass men's educational achievements, gender differences in early career wages should not occur. Using Swiss longitudinal TREE Data, the empirical analysis of career entry wages in Switzerland show that young women have lower earnings because traditional female occupations are paid less. In addition, they often choose specific work contents that go together with lower compensation. Even equally qualified women with identical occupational training working in gender-mixed occupations start with lower wages than men. The unexplained component of the wage difference is about 7% when entering the labor market.

Keywords: Wage gap, wage discrimination, education, career entry, gender

307 The Gender of "Active Aging": From the Principle of Equal Treatment to the Multiplication of Contradictory Imperatives [F] | Nicky Le Feuvre, Morgane Kuehni, Magdalena Rosende, and Céline Schoeni

This article analyses the impact of "active aging" policies on gender (in)equality during the second half of working life. Through the inclusion of an intermediary level of analysis, it questions the potential hiatus between the gender norms that are promoted through public policies and those that underpin the action of human resource departments within large companies. On the basis of empirical fieldwork, it reveals the dissonance in "doing gender" between different institutional settings, that induces multiple contradictory imperatives on aging female workers in Switzerland.

Keywords: Equality, age management, gender, seniors, active ageing

325 Economic Benefit Instead of Equality Norms. Advantages and Risks of the Economic Benefit Discourse in the Swiss Policy for Gender Equality in the Workplace [G] | Lucia Marina Lanfranconi

The economy benefits from equality – with this argument, the actors of the current Swiss policy for equality want to motivate companies to introduce equality measures. By means of a discourse analysis of documents and interviews in a typical equality project, the central elements and consequences of this economic benefit discourse are elaborated. The discourse may work as an incentive for companies for equality measures. However, simultaneously, it may also be a legitimization for companies not to act. Moreover, the discourse bears the risk of implementing measures that do not aim to change gender inequalities or of even reinforcing them. The study reveals limits in the scope and effectiveness of the equality policy.

Keywords: Equality policy in the workplace, gender equality, social inequalities, discourse analysis, Switzerland

349 Gender Equality at the Margins of the Labour Market? A Gendered Perspective on Social Investments and Capabilities [G] | Eva Nadai and Alan Canonica

Labour market access is a core issue for gender equality. With data from ethnographic case studies, this paper analyses the impact of the social investment policy on the capabilities of unskilled unemployed women. Activating measures of the unemployment insurance and welfare turn out to be merely “replacement investments” that cannot compensate for structural disadvantages, but reinforce inequalities. However, some of the interviewed women were for the first time in their lives offered a chance to reflect on their occupational future and were assisted in first steps to realise their plans.

Keywords: Social investments, activation, gender, capability approach, equality