

Projektnummer

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Gender inequalities in educational and career pathways

Substantial gender inequalities still prevail in the educational and career pathways of young adults in Switzerland today. How can they be explained? What factors and mechanisms play a role? And where can changes be identified?

Background

Despite considerable efforts, in comparison with other European countries the educational and career pathways of young people in Switzerland are still very gender typical: Men seldom become primary school teachers, and only few women become heads of large banks. Women and men are very limited in their opportunities and cannot realise their full potential. In addition, these inequalities solidify the traditional division of labour within the family. At present, we still lack knowledge as to why these old patterns persist and how they can be changed.

Aims and methods

This project aims to explain the inequalities between men and women in their educational and career histories taking into consideration both personal and institutional factors. The focus is on the life phase of education and training up to labour market entry. The researchers use a mixed methods design and analyse quantitative longitudinal data from the TREE (Transitions from Education to Employment) study, which has been following the transition from education to employment for 10 years. Semi-narrative interviews will be conducted with 30 persons who have gender-typical and gender-atypical biographies. Attention will focus in particular on family background, personal and institutional experiences, and ideas about career and family. The findings will also yield information on the individual gender habitus of the interviewees.

Significance

The project will contribute new insights into the complex interaction of parenting, the education system, family and career patterns, and gender norms. The findings on why gender-specific differences in educational and career histories persist or change will serve as a basis for designing sustainable gender policies and developing an education system that is more fair to both men and women.

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