

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ

Journal of Gender and Power

Vol. 7, No. 1, 2017



POZNAŃ 2017

Journal of Gender and Power is aimed at providing an international forum for discussing various issues and processes of gender construction. It is a scholarly, interdisciplinary journal, which features articles in all fields of gender studies, drawing on various paradigms and approaches. We invite scholars to submit articles and reviews reporting on theoretical considerations and empirical research.

Journal of Gender and Power is published
by Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań - Poland).

Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Editorial Assistant

Emilia Szymczak & Michał Klichowski
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Cecilia Asberg (Linköping University, Sweden), **Zygmunt Bauman** (University of Leeds, England), **Francesca Bettio** (University of Siena, Italy), **Mary Blair-Loy** (University of California, USA), **Doris Chang** (Wichita State University, USA), **Miranda Christou** (University of Cyprus, Cyprus), **Lorraine Dowler** (Pennsylvania State University, USA), **Catherine Driscoll** (University of Sydney, Australia), **Virginia Ferreira** (University of Coimbra, Portugal), **Eva Fodor** (Central European University, Hungary), **Eleanor Gordon** (University of Glasgow, Scotland), **Lawrence Grossberg** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA), **Anita Harris** (Monash University, Australia), **Beata Kowalska** (Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland), **Michael A. Messner** (University of Southern California, USA), **Joanna Pawelczyk** (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland), **Adriana Piscitelli** (State University of Campinas, Brazil), **Lydia Potts** (Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany), **Renata Siemienska** (University of Warsaw, Poland), **Krystyna Slany** (Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland), **Vappu Sunari** (University of Oulu, Finland), **Bogusław Śliwerski** (The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education & Christian Theological Academy, Poland), **Sarah Thebaud** (University of California, USA), **Iris van der Tuin** (Utrecht University, Netherlands), **Valentina I. Uspenskaya** (Tver State University, Russia), **Denise Walsh** (University of Virginia, USA), **Eva Zamajska** (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland)

Language Editor

Lukasz Pakula
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Statistical Editor

Krystyna Katulska
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Publikacja sfinansowana przez Wydział Studiów Edukacyjnych UAM

© Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2017

Wersja pierwotna czasopisma: drukowana

Opracowanie komputerowe okładki: K. & S. Szurpił

Na okładce: © Patrick Eckersley/arabianEye/Getty Images

ISSN 2391-8187

Contents

Editor’s Preface (Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik)	5
---	---

ARTICLES

LUCA SALMIERI Education and the utopia of gender equality: treacheries in the labour market	9
LEKAN BALOGUN “Òtún we òsì, òsì we òtún”: gender, feminist mirroring, and the yoruba concept of power and balance	27
RENATA MICHALAK Individualization as the fundamental principle of educational proceedings. The neurocognitive perspective	49
MICHAEL C. UZORKA Values and women empowerment among the Delta Igbo-speaking communities of Rivers State	67
JAREMA DROZDOWICZ Chasing Cinderella: love and affection in the age of the mobile device industry	89
ALYSSA ECK, MELINDA R. PIERSON Effective social skills strategies for teaching boys and girls identified with Autism Spectrum Disorders	99
KAMILA KACPRZAK Adolescents’ experiences of being in a romantic relationship—an example of using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse data in pedagogical study	109
SHANNON LYNN SPARKS Postsecondary education and gender outcomes for individuals with disabilities	131

BOOK AND JOURNAL REVIEWS

JOANNA CHOJNICKA

Urszula Kluczyńska, Wiktor Dynarski and Anna M. Kłonkowska. *Poza schematem. Społeczny konstrukt płci i seksualności*. Gdańsk 2016: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. pp. 145. 143

MICHAL KLICHOWSKI

Randy Schekman. *eLife*—absolutely new, free and equal journal. elifesciences.org. 150

Submissions 155

Editor's Preface

In the preface to this issue of the *Journal of Gender and Power*, I would like to adduce two important theoretical approaches which form the basis for the analyses presented here. The first one is called the gender hierarchy theory and is based around the belief of male dominance in the society and the discrimination of women. The basic categories which are associated with this theory are those of gender (in)equality. It is assumed that male domination and the resulting forms of inequality are of structural nature. Inherent for this approach is the conviction that women and men constitute “competing groups with different chances in the market” (and, I should add, in the overall social life). Within this tradition, categories of masculinity and femininity are of static character, which is internally integrated (at times, differing natures of men and women are adduced, as if referencing biological determinism) (Gullvåg Holter, 2005, p. 17).

In turn, from the perspective of the theory of structural inequality, one traces “overall discrimination or inequality in society and their causes, rather than direct gender hierarchy as such”. Within this paradigm, issues of gender inequality in the context of broader social stratification are pursued (very often drawing on class theory). Critics of this approach, however, point out the fact that, as Øystein Gullvåg contends, “structures of structural inequality are often comparatively hidden and difficult to recognise, especially as they often appear to be gender neutral”. Also, it seems that within this approach “action-related figure [...] disappear[s]” (Gullvåg Holter, 2005, p. 18–19).

I believe there is rationale for both of these approaches and that their applicability depends on the problem under analysis. In some contexts, as will be shown in this issue, there is a visible opposition between the two social groups that we call women and men. Divisions related to accessibility to various forms of socialisations and identities, as well as education and market are correlated with gender. In turn, at other times

it seems that it is the social background that determines this accessibility. These approaches, then, should not be seen as contradictory but rather as complementary.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCE

- GULLVÅG HOLTER, Ø. (2005) Social Theories for Researching Men and Masculinities. Direct Gender Hierarchy and Structural Inequality. In: M. S. Kimmel, J. Hearn, R. W. Connell (eds) *Handbook of Studies on Men & Masculinities*. London: Sage Publishing.



ARTICLES



Vol. 7, No. 1, 2017

Luca Salmieri
Università di Roma (Italy)

Education and the utopia of gender equality: treacheries in the labour market

ABSTRACT. The rapid growth of women's educational attainment is one of the most striking trends in statistics on education. After the Second World War in many industrialized countries, women's educational attainments have been increasing and are now higher than men's educational attainment. Nowadays women represent the majority among graduates in secondary and tertiary in most of EU countries almost. Judging by recent trends in international data, it seems likely that female dominance in educational attainment will become stronger in the decades ahead. Women extraordinary advancements in education comes out as the realization of what in the past was considered a utopia, i.e. equality of access and treatment of girls and boys in all track and field of education. I raise questions about the reasons why the utopia of equality between women and men has not yet been reached in the labour market too and on the mechanism preventing the conversion of female educational attainments in occupational and professional outcomes.

KEYWORDS: education, gender, women

Introduction

The relationship between education and the labour market is a particularly fertile area for analysing whether and how the expectations and hopes of 20th century utopias have been successful: in fact, one of the fundamental theses on the social mission of education is that it must prepare individuals to fulfil the needs of the labour market. It is no coincidence that the theory of human capital assumes that the most important benefits for the individual in education are the direct returns to the labour market. Education should increase the productivity of individuals and lead to higher gains and strengthen the competitiveness of nations on a global scale in the knowledge society. But this vision is more like an empty rhetoric than a genuine aspiration for equality of opportunities among social classes and between the sexes.

On the utopia of gender equality

The *Utopia* of Thomas Moore was certainly a project that reflected the historical conditions of the time in England, plagued by religious intolerance (on the threshold of the Protestant Reformation), but well before the misery of the poorer classes and the opulence of an oligarchy accustomed to the privilege of robbery. However, *Utopia* does not draw a dream of escape to the land of plenty. It rather tells a society in harmony with that forthcoming ethics which would have inspired, but not entirely structured, modern societies. An exercise of imagination that denounces the disorder of the society then existing and shows the principles for correcting it: a criminal justice mild but effective and truly equal for all; mutual religious tolerance between the different religious confessions; the harmony between the hard work and the free recreational activities and, finally, with great anticipation, equality between men and women before the law, in the work activities as well as in the arts. None of these things has been fully accomplished. Except the last one and only in the century we just left behind. Indeed, in terms of social inequalities, the biggest change we've seen in the twentieth century, at least in Western societies, is the advancement of women in education, labour market and political positions. If women represented a class (but they do not), it would certainly be the only one—in half a century—to show a massive process of upward social mobility. Nevertheless, this advancement has been entirely completed in the field of education, while it is just in opaquely in progress in labour market, careers and professions.

The achievement of gender equality in education

If it is true that «most great utopias do not come from educational institutions» (Petitat, 2016), it is also true that the utopia of gender equality has become reality only in education. To understand how this was possible, the historical evolution of the attributes of public education systems must be analysed, since they have been designed and developed all long the XX and XXI centuries, an era in which States strengthened their universalist interventions throughout the widening of citizenry, civil rights and access to welfare and education until the coming of a new governmentality which reduced provisions by standards, numbers and competitiveness (Landri, 2014).

Access to secondary and tertiary education for girls has had very different routes throughout Europe. However, long-term similarities emerge, since traditional and conservative models that excluded women's access to valuable education or relegate it to the ritual dimension of home life, religious ethics and labels have stood well beyond, the legitimate aspirations of families and their daughters, and have been eroded only by the ruptures of feminist and / or reformist and pedagogical movements. Throughout Europe, secondary education was oriented towards the training of 'public' men. This vision left little room for middle-class women whose main mission was that of the 'good woman' the wife and the mother (Albisetti et al., 2016).

Since the 1860s and 1870s, most European countries have witnessed a debate on the content of women's education (whether it should be identical to that of boys), its location (co-educational schools or segregated by sex?) and its objectives (training mothers, citizens or professionals?). The American democratic high-school had fascinated European observers but had no equivalent in Europe until the second half of the twentieth century and European girls were virtually excluded from enrolment. School systems were often very differentiated by class and even deeper by gender, so that in each country, contemporaries sent their children to establishments corresponding to a specific social and educational ethic. In general, the most prestigious and elitist of these institutions—the German *Gymnasium* and the French *Lycée*—were not available to girls until the end of the 19th century and as was largely the case of the British *public schools* (Goodman & Martin, 2004).

In England, until the First World War, girls whose families wanted them to marry were still faced with an education at home or in day schools of varying quality. But more importantly, girls' secondary education had a single sex predominant until comprehensive schools became widespread in the 1970s. The Post-1944 *Education Act* provided all children with up to the age of fifteen, the right to free secondary education. However, the girls' modern secondary education program was based on the humanities and heavily domesticated, with little access to science and technology. The *Board of Education* continued to oppose co-education for a long time, being certain of that would have a detrimental effect on boys (Spencer, 2005).

In France, although in 1673 François Poulain de la Barre published a treaty in which he maintained that «the mind had no sex» and that women should have access to the same studies as boys, enter the university

and acquire professional diplomas, a serious education for girls did not emerge until the end of the 19th century (Mavrinrac, 1997; Rogers, 2010).

In Italy, after unification in the 1860s, girls, excluded from knowledge and power, were considered as citizens only in an ideal way. They were prevented from practicing and occupying regulated professions, and were trapped—in the middle class—at home. The State had no concern for their education. The various ‘educational institutes for girls’, almost all of them religious, had rarely moved away from the holy triad of prayer, catechism and the domestic tasks of women. An attempt by municipalities to promote girls’ colleges—the 3-year-old schools called *scuole femminili superiori*—took off in a few cities in north-central Italy (Soldani, 2010; Dei, 1987).

As elsewhere in Europe, the 1870s and 1880s marked the first major turning point in the development of girls’ education. In France, Victor Duruy, Liberal minister of public education for Napoleon III (1863–1869), developed the network of girls’ primary schools and urged the creation of secondary courses for girls in 1867. His 1864 inquiry into residential schools for girls had highlighted the growing weight of the religious order that had run 2,338 out of 3,480 schools (Rogers, 2005). In 1914, about 35,000 French girls received some form of public secondary education compared to 100,000 boys. However, the social groups involved in this education were strongly middle-class with a high percentage of Protestant students, although there were, of course, regional variations. In Italy, during the 1880s, the *scuola normale* became more and more feminine: enrolments rose from about 9,000 girls in 1885 to as many as 22,000 ten years later, assisted by numerous institutions established by the provinces, municipalities and foundations. In Germany, in the same period, the women’s movement was beginning to campaign for the right of middle-class women to education (and work outside the home). In Prussia and other German states, some women’s associations favoured a six-year curriculum that began earlier, at age 13 or 14, after seven years of schooling (Albisetti, 1988).

During the interwar period, feminists, catholics and educators debated the virtues or dangers of co-education, positioning themselves against to the hostility of Pius XI to the “coeducation of sexes” expressed in his encyclical of *Divini illius magistri* of 1929 (Offen, 2000). In 1924, the Law Bérard extended the secondary public program for French girls aged 5 to 6 and introduced an optional program that allowed girls to prepare for the *baccalauréat* (Offen, 1983). In 1930, the educational

program specifically targeted for girls had virtually disappeared, even though separate girls' institutions flourished, while the concept of separate but equal schooling satisfied many French educators and especially school administrators who defended the traditional learning environment. In Germany, where transformation went on from 1910 to 1938, the tracks of secondary education acquired their tripartite structure. After a compulsory 4-year public primary school (*grundschule*), regulated in 1919, pupils were sent to one among three types of secondary education: *volksschule* did not grant a career opportunity, while *gymnasium* and the *oberschule* would give access to higher learning levels. After 1935, the need for full employment and the demand for more university graduates led German women to enrol in university (Jaraus, 1984). But ideological discrimination against women who wanted to attend studies programs for the *Abitur* and universities had not disappeared. Since the Nazis took the power, the *gymnasium* was no longer offered to girls, and the *oberschule* remained the only secondary school preparing girls for the *Abitur*. In Italy, co-education, never established by principle, but practised as exceptional or tolerated as transitory, had no explicit legal authority. Fascism changed the school system with a detrimental effect on girls' secondary education rights. The 'Gentile Reform' (1923) of the Italian school system, with the creation of obstacles to educate the lower classes and those who lived furthest from the big cities, not only increased considerably the costs, including tuition fee, but placed a legal barrier to girl's enrolment in various types of school, with the sole exception of complementary schools (an endless course, designed merely to ensure minimum literacy). Girls who used to continue post-primary school generally came from higher social classes than boys. As Giovanni Gentile, had previously insisted in 1918, women did not and will never «have the originality of thought derived from the spirit, nor the real inner vigour which is the superior intellectual and moral forces of men and on which the school will form the body of the nation» (Gentile, 1918, p. 8).

While the first quarter of the nineteenth century represented a moment of intense educational ferment for middle-class girls, the third moment of widespread change occurred after the Second World War, when demands for secondary education were spreading. The presence of women in secondary education were beginning to grow. This movement was largely eclipsed by a global democratization of education involving the middle and even the lower classes. In France, most secondary girls' schools disappeared in favour of coeducation (Lelièvre &

Lelièvre, 1991). More dramatic changes occurred at the secondary level: a massive restructuring created a system that was no longer divided so strongly according to the terms of the class (Baudelot & Estabiet, 1992).

Many reforms in Europe had anticipated the wave of feminism of the seventies (Offen, 2000). Already in 1950, the German Democratic Republic adopted the Law for the Promotion of Youth, declaring that all children, regardless of gender, should receive the same school training, vocational training, higher education learning, access to sport, and transformed its general schools into the polytechnic secondary schools of 10 years' compulsory education (*Polytechnische Oberschule*) in 1959. In Portugal, compulsory schooling was increased to 4 years, first for boys in 1956 and then for girls in 1960 (Araújo, 2000). In France, while democratization was the proclaimed and much more reluctant rationale of these realignments, coeducation accompanied the emergence of a common secondary school for pupils aged 6 to 15 years, with the single college after primary school. The decision that first announced this change to coeducation had no feminist connotations, but argued that the growth of collateral secondary education was intended to «serve families in their immediate neighbourhood or in the best conditions of pedagogical approaches». In 1963, the new secondary schools were co-educational at the outset and the decrees implementing the Haby Law of 11 July 1975 were also extended to coeducation in secondary schools. In 1971, more girls than boys had the *baccalauréat*. The existence of a feminist voice was decisive in noting that for women to have an impact in civil society, they needed education that equalled, if not surpassed, that of men (Rogers, 2010).

In Eastern Europe socialist countries, reforms were implemented in accordance with what utopian communist States were developing to promote women's emancipation (Ewing, 2010). The early 1970s were of great interest for pre-school education in Western Europe, but most reforms concerned the creation of child care centres organized by municipalities for very young children to meet the needs of working parents (in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Sweden), like those already established in the 1950s and 1960s in the Eastern bloc to enable full employment of women.

In West Germany, the Dahrendorf pamphlet of 1965 *Bildger ist Bürgerrechts* emphasized that girls accounted for only 41% of those accepted in secondary schools preparing for the *Abitur*. Only 36% of girls had completed high school and only 26% of university students were women. At the same time, the new debate on general secondary education influenced the development of the gymnasium, as more and more pupils fre-

quented and were trained at this type of school. The silent incursion of girls into the gymnasium was accompanied by a rapid shift in secondary schools, from sexual segregation to coeducation, which took place in almost all German schools in the early 1970s (Kleinau & Opitz, 1996).

It was only with the active efforts of women themselves that things changed in the United Kingdom, where the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s called for equal educational opportunities for both sexes. The Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 has put an end to discrimination in entry into mixed schools and direct discrimination in the type of courses offered to students, although schools went on addressing teaching programs and contents according gender in the program studies. In addition, the women 's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s did much more to address the expectations of working-class girls in cultural terms than the many but small reforms did in the past aimed removing barriers to access to schools and workplaces (Wiborg, 2009)

In Italy in 1963, three-year school courses with Latin and vocational training courses were merged into the unified secondary school (*scuola media unica*), which eventually raised compulsory schooling to eight years (the only major legislative reform of public education in the republican Italy). In the following years, public schools absorbed the enormous increase in enrolment in secondary education, from 840.000 in 1961 to over 2.500.000 in the early 1980s with girls approaching half of all enrolments (Soldani, 2010).

Yet women's silent revolution in education pushed ahead by the feminist movement and cultural turn in the 1970s, oriented girls' attitudes toward educational attainments, professional achievements and economic independence in many generational waves after, finally endorsing the centrality of gender policies as a crucial key, even in non-Western developing countries (Spencer, 2003). This is the most important reaching for the initial concrete utopia of ensuring a concrete principle based on equal access and equal opportunities.

Education and educational outcomes

Although the transnational historical comparison presents many difficulties—the name and meaning of different types of schools have varied according to time and nation, and similar names have often

masked institutional differences—almost the entire twentieth century tells of a democratization foregoing a gradual increase to education for the masses of Western and Eastern Europe, partly because of extensive school participation in the United States. It is also proven that teenage girls scored higher in tests that measured non-cognitive skills such as attention, organizational skills and self-discipline which in turn contributed to clean away residual traditional stereotypes. In most Western countries, women, as aggregate student population, experience less drop-outs, higher average grades, pursue higher education and enrol in university at higher rates than their male peers (Buchmann et al., 2008).

Using international databases (Barro & Lee, 2010) it is possible to examine international trends in the gender gap in educational attainment: globally, among individuals born between 1975 and 1979, women had more years of schooling than men in 74 of 144 countries. In the United States, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, men had higher levels of education in cohorts born between the 1920s and 1940s, but from the cohorts born after 1950, the average level of education has widened in favour of women. Whereas in 1950 women had more years of education than men in only 11 countries (Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States among them) out of 146, by 2010 this figure was already 43. These 43 countries include all European Nordic countries as well as Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Overall, in 9 of the 24 advanced economies, the overall female population is on average more educated than the male population. Except for China, Korea and Ireland, women account for most upper secondary graduates in general programs, on average 55% of graduates from OECD countries. The proportion of young people leaving education and training in 2015 in the EU-28 was 2.9 percentage points higher for young men (12.4%) than for young women (9.5%). More significantly, young men are less likely than young women to complete high school in all OECD countries where data are available (OECD 2015). The higher the gap in secondary schools for women, the higher the sex ratio of university enrolment in their favour. This positive correlation suggests that in countries where women play relatively better in secondary education, women also participate in higher education in greater numbers. The pool of university graduates has therefore become increasingly feminine in many countries. Already in 2010, there were more women than men among university graduates in 13 out of 24 OECD countries (OECD, 2012).

Tertiary education

The first country where the number of female tertiary students surpassed the number of male students was in the United States where this occurred in 1980. The countries of Northern Europe followed the United States about five years later. In many EU countries, more young women than men have received tertiary education in 2005, while the share of lower secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education is generally the same for young men and women (OECD 2016b). More than one-third (37%) of the European population aged 30–34 had completed tertiary education in 2013: 41% of women and 31% of men. The proportion of women with a university degree was already higher than that of men in all EU Member States.

The widening gap in favor of women reflects the fact that in most industrialized countries, the growth of men's educational attainment has slowed down as the level of education of women continues to grow. In the United States, for example, male academic achievement began to fall after cohorts born in the 1950s. At the same time, female performances in tertiary education continued to increase. It seems that female dominance in educational attainment is becoming a global phenomenon.

Even though among university students, women are now a majority, they still choose different fields of studies than men. According to the OECD (2016c), girls remain underrepresented in some areas, such as science and engineering, and overrepresented in others, such as education and health. In 2014 there were, on average, three times as many men as women with engineering degrees and four times as many women as men with education degrees in the OECD dataset. Here, it is difficult to draw conclusions about long-term international trends, as there are no long and internationally comparable time series. However, some studies on individual countries suggest that gender differences in the choice of field of study at the tertiary level may decrease. In most OECD countries, the dissimilarity index declined in 2000, with Denmark, Iceland, Japan and Switzerland showing declines of more than 5 percentage points.

A metaphor frequently used to describe the fact that women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is the “pipeline with leaks” occurring from Secondary education to university and STEM jobs. This pipeline avoids several students at different stages: students who show an interest in scientific careers sometimes change their minds when applying to high schools and universities and

choose other fields of study. Others start their post-secondary studies in a STEM program, but switch to other non-STEM fields of study before graduation (Xu, 2008). Finally, some students leave the pipeline after graduating in STEM when they choose another field as a professional career. Women escape more than men. The effect of differential leakage is to create a gender-based filter that removes a single sex from the stream and removes the other to arrive at the end of the pipeline. No one in a position of power consciously decided to filter women out of the stream, but the cumulative effect of many separate but related factors causes the sexual imbalance in the STEM fields observed today (Penner, 2015). However, if we look closely at the different fields within the STEM sector, we note that in many countries the only area that remains highly dominated by men is the engineering group, while the other disciplines undergo a continuous process of feminization (Kutlis et al., 2002; De Vita & Giancola, 2017).

When the dramatic increase in girls' education is considered, as soon as secondary education and higher education have been opened up, we find faced with the paradox with which we opened the debate. If one considers that dominant groups use education to reproduce their advantage, as can be seen about social inequalities, how to account for the fact that in secondary education and universities, women rank before the dominant sex? (Duru-Bellat, 2008). It could then be seductive, in the end, to innocent the school and the university of any inegalitarian behavior, since the difficulties of the girls are manifested at the time of entry into the labor markets. In fact, «it is enough for the school to function as a 'normal' environment [...] so that gendered (as well as social) inequalities are continuously produced» (Duru-Bellat, 2008, p. 142) since relations of domination that are prevalent in society will pass through education at the same ease that they inhabit other social fields. But can education being a 'normal' environment be a satisfying policy? Among the different instances of youth socialization, namely family, school, media, peer groups, school should be one with an explicit project of emancipating individuals and fostering substantial equality.

Transition to labor market

The gap between education and women's employment, although different from one country to another, is a cornerstone of inequality in all western labor markets. Gender inequalities in the labor market persist

everywhere, in terms of wage differentials, in terms of horizontal and vertical segregation, in terms of career opportunities. Growing female employment rates have narrowed the gender gap in the occupational rates, but have not dissolved other basic gender disparities. Even more decisive are the inequalities linked to the type of contracts, career opportunities and duration of unemployment: in all European countries women, especially those of the new generations, work with fixed-term contracts and part-time working more than they did to their male peers. They receive lower wages. If they lose a job, they take much longer than men to find another job (Scheele, 2002; Hakim, 2004)

Women have access to lower-paying occupations than men, work much more often on a part-time basis and are responsible for almost all domestic tasks that are not remunerated (housework, welfare and education of children). Girls are much less likely than boys to get a job content matching their field of qualification or to pursue a career that allows them to gain access to high-level positions in the professional hierarchy. Women tend to aspire to high-qualified professions rather than boys, but still have greater difficulty than men in achieving their aspirations. In all OECD countries, mothers' employment rates are lower than the 90% or higher rates reported for fathers. When mothers are employed they have fewer hours of paid work than fathers and are more likely to take career breaks to care for children or other family members. Due largely to interruptions for the care of children, employed mothers are less likely than their male counterparts to work in higher-level occupations with consequent lower earnings (OECD, 2016a).

We should divert attention from the thesis of the rational and automatic return of education on labor market, careers and earnings and rather look at gaps between female expectations and labor market dynamics. It is true that, between 1980 and 2007, the male workforce decreased in all OECD countries (except Iceland) while women participation rates increased in all these countries, but this has been accompanied by rapid growth in female unemployment and precarious employment, which appear to be feminized in all OECD countries. For graduates, employment rates in all Euro-European countries confirm the gender gap, with women continuing to be at a disadvantage in employment rates with overeducation hitting more female than male workers. It should also be emphasized that it is mostly women with Phd degrees who are able to achieve more impressive performances in the labor market, confirming that women need additional training to reach positions that men can achieve with an undergraduate degree.

The 'non-amendability' of the labor market and other explanations

The disappearance of gender inequality has occurred only in education and not in the labor market (neither in the political world). This would lead us to reason that the utopia which has informed education systems in the recent past has been completely defeated and betrayed by the neoliberal ideology applied to both the economy and politics. In fact, the power of this ideology lies in the fact that it makes us believe that a set of axioms and political rigidities come from undeniable economic proofs, while being exactly the reverse.

Labor markets, by definition, are systems producing and reproducing inequalities per se. They are not modifiable. They cannot be regulated—if not partially. Principles and norms of equality, especially in private enterprises, cannot transform the rationale and the methods by which a semi-skilled man is preferred to a highly-qualified woman. Here, norms can alter marked discriminations, but cannot function against subtle discriminatory mechanisms. If post-compulsory education systems are open to all and they generally treat men and women in an almost equal way, leaving individuals and their families the chance to choose, on the other hand, the expectations of candidates to job positions collide with those of employers and must be channeled according to limited options, defined and controlled by companies.

It is true that the difference between the two worlds—education and labor market—exists today as (less than) in previous decades, when workplace was a male kingdom, but the transition from education to work is much less motivated by academic achievement today than in the age of social Fordism. At the time of the «social compromise» of the Glorious Thirties of Fordism (1945–1975) described by the sociologist Colin Crouch (1999), the utopia of equality in education ran with the utopia of scientific meritocracy and with the idea that jobs and occupations should be allocated according to levels and titles of education. Scientific management had been applied to the consistency between educational performances and work requirements. Not only would modernization, scientific progress and technical advancement have reduced deprivation, but meritocracy, both at school and at work, would have put each one in the right position: the scientific-rational link between the level and the type of education, on the one hand, and the job, the position, the wage and the pres-

tige of the other would have severed the role of family background and class origins in reproducing inequalities.

Even if in reality they are inextricably linked together, it is possible analytically to isolate at least six mechanisms of inequalities in professional success between men and women: 1) the direct transmission of a professional activity between the family; 2) social networks; 3) the feminization of certain fields of study, and certain areas of work; 4) risk aversion; (5) gender asymmetry in the work-life balance system; (6) the existence of genuine discrimination between men and women by employers.

1) The most obvious explanation concerns the inheritance of a professional activity directly from the family. The direct transmission of the family business goes more often to the benefit of sons. When it concerns entrepreneurs and self-employed workers, craftsmen and traders, independent professionals, holders or associates of professional firms, success still requires the acquisition of educational qualifications, but nevertheless it is relevant for gender inequalities, as several studies showed the persistence of choices by fathers rewarding boys rather than girls in the transmission of professional networks (Pellizzari, 2013).

2) The first mechanism reveals the second. A basic thesis is that decision-making networks made up of people with higher positions in the labor market are able to create in many ways a valuable reputation that protects more men than women, regardless of the skills in their possession and beyond the value of academic qualifications. These professional networks are largely inhabited by men in top ranked positions. The relevance of social networks is decisive for entry and progress in the labor market and, above all, is not uniform in terms of social capital or in terms of those who are part of these networks. Social networks can provide first-hand information on employment opportunities (also and especially for wage laborers) and the know-how to exploit it. Even more directly, social networks can act through recommendations and other practices of nepotism. Being that men more than women occupy strategic positions in professional networks thanks to *le monde des hommes*—sociality, amusements, camaraderie—men and not women can better benefit from those networks. There are also more sophisticated forms of direct influence, linked to cultural and social skills, as well as attitudes and preferences developed in socialization processes and which are relevant for the professional destiny (Bourdieu, 1979). Furthermore, to distinguish technical and professional skills from cultural and social

ones is getting more and more difficult and thus *savoir faire* and social *habitus* may be crucial in the transition to labor market. For example, since the early years of life, a male lawyer, son of a lawyer, has become familiar with the language and cultural codes, dispositions and attitudes typical of this occupational group, developing an attitude of polite rhetoric, standing and self-confidence: all aspects that can be appreciated by professional circles, and favor the success among the counterparts and the clientele. The daughter of a lawyer could also share the same parental disposition toward a societal circle, but in her socialization to feminine identity she will miss many masculine *habitus* that accompany the social formation of the attitudes and styles typical of the profession.

3) Women are more likely to be employed in occupational sectors characterized by a high value of employability of educational titles (*credentialism*): skilled occupations in welfare, health and education have regulated recruitment systems that States has codified to evaluate the level and type of educational outcomes. On the other hand, access to top qualified occupations or more simply technical occupations in the private sector, more often male, is less oriented to decoding the level and type of educational attainments and is open to interference from personalist sources of recruitment (internal markets, recruitment via informal networks, soft and relational skills, personal portfolio, etc). In addition, the sociological literature on glass ceiling shows that women are over-represented in administrative jobs or in medium-ranked jobs, and encounter many difficulties in accessing senior positions (Davidson & Copper, 1992; Jalalzai, 2013). As a result, the feminization of some fields of study directly linked to formal and codified skills of recruitment confirms that the increasing female investment in education should theoretically be a successful strategy for employment and self-career advancement, except that in many other areas of the labor market, *credentialism* and meritocracy do not apply or functions to a minimum degree (Brown, 2001). It is not by chance that the more girls invest in certain areas of tertiary or non-tertiary post-secondary education, the more these areas get feminized and the more the related values lose social prestige and therefore pay-off in the labor market.

4) The fourth mechanism producing a direct influence on differentiating educational pay-offs on labor markets by gender is conceptualized by the theories of *Interest-Bearing Asset* (Erickson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthorpe, 2007). According to these theories, even with the same economic, social and cultural backgrounds, and with the same level of edu-

cation, male students aspire in global terms to greater ambitions. In short, women look at women and men at men. Thus, means that individuals with the same social backgrounds and levels of education, when comparing themselves to others, they do it within rather than across gender.

5) From the beginning of the 1970s, the gender division of work has been occupying a central place in feminist literature, encouraging the emergence of a strong political interest in domestic, caring and cognitive unpaid activities usually performed by women (Dauphin & Marc, 2008). Almost a decade later, at the beginning of the 1990s, the problem of work-life balance, alongside the individualization of social rights, was one of the means of implementing the right of equality of treatment between women and men (Lanquetin & Letablier, 2004). The European Union advocates for the promotion of dual-breadwinner models (Lewis, 1992), the most cited arguments being linked to the need to increase employment rates, the need to redefine public welfare systems of the Member States, and finally, to foster the principle of gender equality. However, it is just in this vision that one can grasp the non-changeability of the labor market; Because, although the growing institutional pressures at European level and regulatory reforms by the institutions in each country or the obligations to facilitate work-life balance, employed women continue to face household burdensome and family responsibilities, education and care of children and old persons more than men do. Therefore, the argument based on the notion of «institutional pressure still insufficient» explains only partially the persistent disparity between men and women in the labor market. Overall, work-life balance arrangements among partners remains traditional even among dual-earner couples. Women spend more time on domestic and parental activities and less time on work and career than men. While stressing the role of the employer in favorizing gendered family-friendly policies, accounts should be taken of the fact that employers could transfer the actual costs of these measures to employees in the form of lower wages or reduced careers opportunities. But above all, employers anticipate this transfer by preferring the recruitment of men rather than women, because daily practices of combining work and family duties still follow the male dominant culture and assign women the task of caring for the home, children. Formal childcare appears to be particularly inadequate, although solutions often take the form of parental leave or informal arrangements. However, parental leave does not always favor gender

equality and the use of such leave is still a typically female practice with very negative collateral effects in terms of return to work, career opportunities, wage levels.

6) At workplaces and in the labor market, the conversion from formal to de facto gender equality policies is far from being achieved. Recruitment, careers, training, remuneration or the articulation of working times are still influenced by gender stereotypes. A strict application of the principle of non-discrimination, the monitoring of gender-based indicators, the introduction of a principle of proportionality and, even positive actions are all commitments that fail in being imposed on companies. The reason is that it would be easy to circumvent them (as a matter of fact when they are effective companies usually circumvent them). Only a cultural and political transformation based on long-term perspective and integrated into a general remodeling of public policies in the field of labor market, a serious set of efforts for labor market de-commodification, could lead to substantial gender equality. For the moment, it is a utopia.

Having gradually put into practice what seemed like a utopia only 60 years ago, educational policies have made additional efforts in the field of gendered socialization—from the very first years of schooling—when the context seems suitable to prevent and contrast gender stereotypes and traditional choices of boys and girls. From this point of view, a cultural policy is certainly a valid translation and a plausible update of social criticism elaborated by feminisms, humanist movements and postmodern thought. But there is still an open space in sociological criticism. This concerns the role that education systems should and could play in preventing the reproduction of other social inequalities: certainly, the debate continues, increasingly dense and fully enriched by sociological contributions.

REFERENCES

- ALBISETTI, J. C. (1988) *Schooling German Girls and Women. Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- ALBISETTI, J. C., GOODMAN, J. & ROGERS, R. (2016) *Girl's Secondary Education in the Western World*. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan.
- ARAÚJO, H. C. (2000) Mothering and Citizenship. Educational Conflicts in Portugal. In: Arnot M. & Dillabough J.-A. (eds.). *Challenging Democracy: International Perspectives on Gender and Citizenship*. London: Falmer Press. p. 105–21.

- BARRO, R. J. & LEE, J.-W. (2010) *A new data set of educational attainments in the world, 1950–2010*. NBER Working Paper.
- BAUDELLOT, C. & ESTABLET, R. (1992) *Allez les filles!*. Paris: Seuil.
- BOURDIEU, P. (1979) *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- BROWN, D. K. (2001) The social sources of educational credentialism: Status cultures, labor markets, and organizations. *Sociology of Education*. 74. p. 19–34.
- BUCHMANN, C., DIPRETE, T. A. & MCDANIEL, A. (2008) Gender inequalities in education. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 34. p. 319–37.
- CROUCH, C. (1999) *Social Change in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- DAHRENDORF, R. (1992) *Bildung ist Bürgerrecht. Plädoyer für eine aktive Bildungspolitik*. Hamburg: Zetverlag.
- DAUPHIN, S. & MARC, C. (2008) Articulation vie professionnelle-vie familiale. *Recherches et Prévisions*. 92. p. 119–123.
- DAVIDSON, M. J. & COOPER, C. L. (1992) *Shattering the glass ceiling: The woman manager*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- DE VITA, L. & GIANCOLA, O. (2017) Between Education and Employment: Women's Trajectories in STEM Fields. *Polis*. 1. p. 45–72.
- DEI, M. (1987) Lo sviluppo della scolarità femminile in Italia. *Polis*. 1. p. 143–158.
- DURU-BELLAT, M. (2008) La (re)production des rapports sociaux de sexe : quelle place pour l'institution scolaire? *Travail, genre et sociétés*. 19 (1). p. 131–149.
- ERICKSON, R. & JONSSON, J. O. (1998) Social Origin as an Interest-Bearing Asset: Family Background and Labour-market, Rewards among Employees in Sweden. *Acta Sociologica*, 41 (1). p. 19–36.
- EWING, E. T. (2010) From an Exclusive Privilege to a Right and an Obligation: Modern Russia. In: Alibisetti, J. C., Goodman, J. & Rogers, R., (eds). *Girl's Secondary Education in the Western World*. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan. p. 165–180.
- GENTILE, G. (1918) *Esiste una scuola in Italia? Lettera aperta al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione onorevole Berenini*. republished in Gentile. *Il problema scolastico del dopoguerra*. Napoli: Ricciardi (1919).
- GOLDTHORPE, J. H. (2007) *On Sociology*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- GOODMAN, J. & MARTIN, J. (2004) *Women and Education. 1800–1980*. London: Routledge.
- HAKIM, C. (2004) *Key issues in women's work: Female diversity and the polarisation of women's employment*. London: Glasshouse Press.
- JALALZAI, F. (2013) *Shattered, Cracked, Or Firmly Intact? Women and the Executive Glass Ceiling Worldwide*. Oxford: University Press.
- JARAUSCH, K. (1984) *Deutsche Studenten 1800–1970*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- KLEINAU, E. & OPITZ, C. (1996) *Geschichte der Mädchen und Frauenbildung*. Frankfurt: Campus.
- KULIS S., SICOTTE, D. & COLLINS, S. (2002) More than a Pipeline Problem: Labor Supply Constraints and Gender Stratification Across Academic Science Disciplines. *Research in Higher Education*. 43 (6). p. 657–691.
- LANDRI, P. (2014) Governing by standards: the fabrication of austerity in the Italian education system. *Education Inquiry*. 5 (1). p. 25–41.
- LANQUETIN, M.-T. & LETABLIER, M.-T. (2004) *Concilier vie familiale et vie professionnelle en France. Du droit aux pratiques*. Rapport pour l'AFEM.

- LELIEVRE, C. & LELIEVRE, F. (1991) *Histoire de la scolarisation des filles*. Paris: Nathan.
- LEWIS, J. (1992) Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes. *Journal of European Social Policy*. 3. p. 159–173.
- MAVRINRAC, M. (1997) Conflicted Progress: Coeducation and Gender Equity in the Twentieth Century French School reforms. *Harvard Educational Review*. 67. p. 772–795.
- OECD (2012) *Education at a Glance 2011*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2015) *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2016a) *Education at a Glance 2015*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2016b) *Educational attainment and labour-force status*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2016c) Fields of Education, Gender and the Labour Market. *Education Indicators in Focus*. 45. p. 1–4.
- OFFEN, K. (1983) The Second Sex and the Baccalauréat in Republican France, 1880–1924. *French Historical Studies*. 3, p. 252–258.
- OFFEN, K. (2000) *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- PELLIZZARI, M. (2013) *Family ties in licensed professions*. [Online] Available from: http://www.frdb.org/upload/file/family_professions_frDB_050711.pdf. [Accessed: 23th January 2017].
- PENNER, A. M. (2015) Gender inequality in science. *Science*. 347 (6219). p. 234–235.
- PETITAT, A. (2016) Utopies et Trans-formation. Utopiens et utopiennes en mouvement. Introduction. *Education et sociétés*. 1 (37). p. 5–14.
- ROGERS, R. (2005) *From the Salon to the Schoolroom. Educating Bourgeois Girls in Nineteenth-century France*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- ROGERS, R. (2016) Culture and Catholicism: France. In: Albisetti, J. C., Goodman, J. & Rogers, R. (eds). *Girl's Secondary Education in the Western World*. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan. p. 25–39.
- SCHEELE, A. (2002) *Non-permanent employment, quality of work and industrial relations*. EurWORK.
- SMITH, D. (1978) A Peculiar Eclipsing: Women's Exclusion from Man's Culture. *Women's Studies International Quarterly*. 1. p. 281–295.
- SOLDANI, S. (2010) Chequered Roots to Secondary Education: Italy. In: Albisetti, C., Goodman, J. & Rogers R. (eds). *Girl's Secondary Education in the Western World*. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan. p. 59–76.
- SPENCER, S. (2003) Schoolgirl to Career Girl: The City as Educative Space. *Paedagogica Historica*. 39 (1–2). p. 121–133.
- SPENCER, S. (2005) *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950's*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- XU, Y. J. (2008) Gender Disparity in STEM Disciplines: a Study of Faculty Attrition and Turnover Intentions. *Research in Higher Education*. 49 (7). p. 607–624.
- WEILER, K. (2006) The Historiography of Gender and Progressive Education in the United States. *Paedagogica Historica*. 42 (1–2). p. 161–176.
- WIBORG, S. (2009) *Education and Social Integration. Comprehensive Schooling in Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.