

## **Educational systems and social inequality**

Dr. Rona Geffen

Seminar with proseminar (advanced BA level)

WS 2022/23

Thursday 16:00-18:00 (three classes will be between 14:00-18:00; for more details see below)

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### **Prerequisites**

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- The seminar is based on the module "Social Structure and Social Inequality".
- It is recommended that students complete the course "Introduction to Statistics" before participating in the seminar.
- The language of instruction and the readings will be in English.
- The seminar is in person.

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### **Content of the course**

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In spite of the major expansion of the educational system over the last few decades in liberal societies, social inequality in educational achievement persists. Children and young adults from disadvantaged social backgrounds have fewer educational attainments than those from more advantageous social backgrounds. Why does social inequality in education persist? This seminar discusses the role of the educational system in shaping social inequality over the life course. It focuses in particular on the life course mechanisms of educational inequality as well as the role of the characteristics of the educational system in fostering or reducing educational inequality from childhood to early adulthood. While using a comparative approach, the seminar presents the unique case of the educational system in Germany, especially in relation to ethnic educational inequality. The seminar also discusses how educational inequality is created and reproduced by the transmission of economic, cultural and social capital between parents and children. We will also investigate how changes in the educational system shape the inequality of opportunity over time. In this seminar, students at the advanced BA level will read and interpret empirical studies and develop research questions regarding the role of the educational system in shaping educational inequality, which will be tested empirically using survey data analysis. The skills learned in this seminar will provide students with the ability to conduct empirical social research in the field of

educational research and analytically evaluate policy implications for educational systems and social inequality.

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## References

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- The references should be read in preparation for each class

### Lesson 2:

Erola, Jani and Elina Kilpi-Jakonen. (2017). "Compensation and Other Forms of Accumulation in Intergenerational Social Inequality." *Social Inequality Across the Generations* 1-24.

### Lesson 3:

Allmendinger, Jutta. (1989). "Educational Systems and Labor Market Outcomes". *European Sociological Review*, 5(3): 231-250.

### Lesson 4:

Biedinger, Nicole, Birgit Becker and Inge Rohling. (2008). "Early Ethnic Educational Inequality: The Influence of Duration of Preschool Attendance and Social Composition". *European Sociological Review* 24 (2): 243–256.

Optional:

Shavit, Yosi and Walter Müller. (2000). "Vocational Secondary Education, Tracking, and Social Stratification". In *Handbook of the Sociology of Education*, edited by Hallinan, Maureen. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

### Lesson 5:

Jæger, Mads Meier. (2022). "Cultural Capital and Educational Inequality: An Assessment of The State of The Art". In *Handbook of Sociological Science*, edited by Klarita Gërxhani, Nan de Graaf, and Werner Raub. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

### Lesson 6:

Tieben, Nicole and Rohrbach-Schmidt, Daniela. (2021): "Expansion and Improved Permeability of Postsecondary Education in Germany: Consequences for Social Inequalities in Educational Attainment". In *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Inequalities and the Life Course*, edited by Nico, Magda and Gary Pollock. London: Routledge.

- Other complementary readings (optional):

Entwisle, Doris R., Karl L. Alexander and Linda steffel Olson. (2003). "The First-Grade Transition in Life Course Perspective". In *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Gamoran, Adam. (2009). "Tracking and Inequality: New Directions for Research and Practice". In *The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education*, edited by Apple, Michael W., Stephen J. Ball and Luis Armando Gandin. Taylor & Francis e-Library publication.

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### Grading and examinations

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Proof of participation:

- Reading the literature and participating in discussions
- Submitting two assignments: 1) A proposal for an empirical study (deadline: 12.12.2022), 2) An empirical analysis (a short report of a maximum of 4 pages with the most important empirical results, deadline: 26.01.2023)

Model exam:

- Reading the literature and participating in discussions
- Submitting two assignments: 1) A proposal for an empirical study (deadline: 12.12.2022), 2) An empirical analysis (a short report of a maximum of 4 pages with the most important empirical results, deadline: 26.01.2023)
- Submitting a term paper (deadline: 31.03.2023)

The educational system and social inequality – course plan

#### **Lesson 1 20.10.2022: Introduction**

- Introduction to the educational system and social inequality
- Presentation of the course and organizational aspects

#### **Lesson 2 27.10.2022: Life course theory and educational inequality**

- Principles and concepts of life course theory
- Applications of life course theory to research on educational inequality

#### **Lesson 3 03.11.2022: Educational systems: A cross-national comparison**

- Characteristics of educational systems
- Current trends in educational equity across countries
- How do characteristics of the educational system affect social inequality?

**Lesson 4 10.11.2022: The educational system in Germany: Characteristics and consequences**

- The characteristics of the educational system in Germany from childhood to early adulthood
- The role of early school tracking in social inequality in Germany

**Lesson 5 17.11.2022: Educational inequality: Individual characteristics and resources**

- Educational inequality: Ethnicity and familial processes
- The role of personal resources in shaping educational inequality

**Lesson 6 24.11.2022: Changes in educational systems across time**

- Educational expansion in Germany
- The role of educational expansion in educational inequality

**Lesson 7 01.12.2022: From theories to empirical study**

- Research questions and hypotheses
- Relationships and mechanisms

**Lessons 8+9 08.12.2022: Introduction to statistics A + lab work**

- OLS regression and STATA do file
- Empirical exercises

**Lessons 10+11 15.12.2022: Introduction to statistics B**

- Interaction effects
- Empirical exercises

**Lessons 12+ 13 22.12.2022: Lab work: Empirical analysis**

- Working on assignments and term paper

**Lesson 14 12.01.2023: Lab work: Empirical analysis**

- Working on assignments and term paper

**Lesson 15 19.01.2023: Future outlook on educational policy and educational inequality**

- Working on assignments and term paper
- Course summary