Educational Inequality

Dr. Rona Geffen

Seminar (MA level)

SS 2023

Tuesday 14:00-16:00 (one date (June 6) will include two classes from 14:00-18:00; for more details see below)

Prerequisites

- 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.

Content of the course

In meritocracies, people get ahead in society based on their skills, effort and motivation rather than their social origin. Inequality of educational opportunity exists, therefore, when the educational attainments of children and young adults are strongly determined by their social origin. While many liberal societies have sought to improve societal fairness and efficiency by expanding educational opportunities, inequality of educational opportunity continues to be a major social problem. Sociological theories use micro, meso and macro levels of analysis to explain this inequality. While micro-level theories focus on people's traits and their resources and those of their families, macro-level theories focus on socio-economic conditions and the educational system in a given country. In between these two types of theories, meso-level theories suggest explanations that relate to the characteristics of the school and the area of residence. This seminar will discuss the problem of educational inequality across OECD countries and consider the three levels of analysis in explaining it. Students in this seminar will read and interpret empirical studies and develop research questions on educational inequality, which will be tested empirically by analyzing survey data. The skills learned in this seminar will provide students with the ability to conduct empirical studies in the field of educational research and evaluate the implications of educational policy analytically.

• 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:

Jackson, Michelle, Jan O. Jonsson and Frida Rudolphi. (2012). "Ethnic Inequality in Choice driven Education Systems: A Longitudinal Study of Performance and Choice in England and Sweden". *Sociology of Education*, 85(2): 158–178.

Lesson 4:

Crowder, Kyle and Scott J. South. (2003). "Neighborhood distress and school dropout: the variable significance of community context". *Social Science Research* 32: 659–698.

Lesson 5:

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

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 6:

Blossfeld, Pia N., Gwendolin J. Blossfeld and Hans-Peter Blossfeld. (2015). "Educational Expansion and Inequalities in Educational Opportunity: Long-Term Changes for East and West Germany". *European Sociological Review*, 31 (2): 144–160.

• Other complementary readings (optional):

Breen, Richard and Jan O. Jonsson. (2005). "Inequality of Opportunity in Comparative Perspective: Recent Research on Educational Attainment and Social Mobility". *Annual Review of Sociology*, 31:9.1–9.21.

Erikson, Robert. (2019). "How Does Education Depend on Social Origin?" In *Research Handbook* on *The Sociology of Education*, edited by Becker, Rolf. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Grading and examinations

Proof of participation:

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

Model exam:

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

Educational inequality – course plan

Lesson 1 11.04.2023: Introduction

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

Lesson 2 .25.04.2023: Educational inequality from a life course approach

- Life course principles
- Mechanisms of educational inequality

Lesson 3 02.05.2023: Micro-level explanations of educational inequality

- Primary and secondary effects of social origin
- Educational inequality on the basis of ethnicity
- Social, cultural and economic resources

Lesson 4 09.05.2023: Meso-level explanations of educational inequality

- The role of schools, neighborhoods and regions

Lesson 5 16.05.2023: Macro-level explanations of educational inequality

- Educational systems
- Socio-economic conditions
- Social policies

Lesson 6 23.05.2023: Changes in educational inequality over time

- Educational expansion and equality of opportunity

Lesson 7 30.05.2023: From theories to empirical study

- Research questions and hypotheses

- Relationships and mechanisms

Lessons 8+9 06.06.2023: Introduction to statistics A + lab work

- OLS regression and STATA do file
- Empirical exercises

Lessons 10 13.06.2023: Introduction to statistics B

- Interaction effects
- Empirical exercises

Lessons 11 20.06.2023: Lab work: Empirical analysis

- Working on assignments and term paper

Lesson 12 27.06.2023: Lab work: Empirical analysis

- Working on assignments and term paper

Lesson 13 04.07.2023: Future outlook on educational policy and educational inequality

- Working on assignments and term paper
- Course summary