


Book Review: Gender, Education and Employment: An International Comparison of School-to-Work Transitions by Hans-Peter Blossfeld, Jan Skopek, Moris Triventi, & Sandra Buchholz

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Blossfeld, Hans-Peter, Jan Skopek, Moris Triventi, and Sandra Buchholz, eds. *Gender, Education and Employment: An International Comparison of School-to-Work Transitions*. Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2015. xx + 394 pages. Hardcover, \$150.00.

The restructuring of labor markets in post-industrial societies has facilitated increased educational opportunities for girls and women. However, despite such gains, inequality continues to exist among employment outcomes for females versus males. Utilizing a comparative approach to analyze gender differences globally, *Gender, Education and Employment: An International Comparison of School-to-Work Transitions* focuses upon the specific point of labor market entry for identifying where inequality gaps persist.

Sociologists Blossfeld, Skopek, Triventi, and Buchholz have curated the collection from twenty-six contributors with expertise across a variety of social science disciplines including sociology, political science, and economics. The work encompasses two comparative studies of aggregated data from Europe, and thirteen case studies for the following individual countries, grouped by similarity or 'regime': Liberal (United States, Britain, Australia), Mediterranean European (Spain, Italy), Social-Democratic (Sweden, Denmark), Conservative (West Germany, France, Switzerland), and Post-Socialist (Estonia, Russia, Hungary). A set of four research questions, concerning the concepts of vertical inequality (job rewards and positions) and horizontal difference (gender concentrations in labor market segments and occupations), weave together the compilation: (1) Do both vertical inequality and horizontal difference exist at labor market entry?, (2) How do horizontal gender difference and vertical inequalities evolve over time?, (3) Do educational pathways impact horizontal difference and vertical inequality at labor market entry?, and (4) Does horizontal difference impact vertical inequality?

The comparative research studies utilize data from the European Community Household Panel and the European Labor Force Survey. One interesting analysis concerns the dynamics and impact of underemployment and inactivity among men and women. Among their many findings, the research shows that, although women are not more likely to enter inactivity than men, it is more difficult for women to return from inactivity to employment than men.

The thirteen case studies presented by country provide a wealth of data and research stemming from various credible population surveys. Each researcher makes a strong case for the quality of the methodology employed, and many are careful not to overstate their results. The findings appear to be consistent with the initial assumptions presented in the Introduction's taxonomy regarding attributes of regime types. Overall the data is comprehensive and robust, but given the broad scope across numerous cases, a detailed reading is required to make sense of the comparative insights. Those interested in a particular country may be satisfied by a specific chapter, but should reference the text's Introduction for context and framework. Many of the findings lend well to a discussion of policy and economic implications. Lastly, an additional

volume would be valuable for expanding and validating the theoretical regime categorization to other countries.

Gender, Education and Employment: An International Comparison of School-to-Work Transitions teaches us a tremendous amount about the state of gender inequalities at labor market entry across countries. Overall, the comprehensive research presented is relevant in both theoretical and applied contexts, and this text will appeal to students and experts in the fields of education, sociology, gender studies, social policy, political science, and economics. Given the important implications of such work, organizations including the World Bank have conducted rigorous research projects assessing factors such as access to employment opportunities by gender for European populations and beyond. Finally, for those interested in looking more closely into horizontal difference, one can review the European Commission's 2009 report titled *Gender Segregation in the Labour Market*, with over twenty-eight expert contributors from across Europe.

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