

Andrea Pfeifer Brändli¹, Christian Imdorf², Regula Julia Leemann¹

¹) School of Education FHNW, Basel-Muttenz, Switzerland

²) Leibniz Universität Hannover, Germany

andrea.pfeiferbraendli@fhnw.ch

General and Vocational Oriented Pathways to Higher Education: Does the Regional Provision of Education Moderate Social and Gender-specific Inequalities in Switzerland?

Keywords: Higher education access, social origin, gender, regional disparities, Switzerland

Abstract

In Switzerland, two vocationally oriented secondary school programs have been institutionalised in the 1990's: The Vocational Baccalaureate School which supplements basic Vocational Education and Training and the Specialised Baccalaureate Schools. They prepare pupils for Universities of Applied Science and of Teacher Education.

We ask whether these two schools can bring more young people into higher education (HE; *institutional permeability*) and whether they are less socially selective (*social permeability*) compared to the classical general education pathway (General Baccalaureate School). Furthermore, we are interested in how different cantonal offers of educational pathways matter for social disparities in HE access. Theoretically, we link policy-driven educational opportunities with the concepts of institutional and social permeability and with intersectionalities of social origin and gender.

Using LABB data from the Federal Statistical Office, we analyse educational trajectories of the cohort with a first upper secondary degree in 2012 over four years. We apply multilevel binary logistic modelling to examine how educational pathways impact on HE access differently by canton. Moreover, we analyse how the cantonal educational offers structure social inequality in HE access.

Preliminary results show that institutional permeability varies at the cantonal level in consequence of regional educational policy. Regarding social permeability, young women from socially advantaged families transition to HE twice as often as young men from disadvantaged families. Remarkably, the educational pathways can almost exhaustively explain these educational inequalities. Still, Specialised and Vocational Baccalaureate Schools are important pathways to HE for young women and men respectively from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.