Do "his" education and class matter?

Séminaire joint OSC - LIEPP

98, rue de l'Université 75007 Paris - salle Georges Lavau

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Do ’his’ education and class matter?
The changing effect of the husband on women’s labour-market transitions
in Italy and Britain

A new stream of sociological and demographic theory emphasizes individualization as the key process in late modernity. As maintained by Catherine Hakim, also women have increasingly become agents of their own biographies, less influenced by the social class and the family. In this study, I intend to contribute to this debate by analysing how, in Italy and Britain, women’s movements between employment and housework are linked to their husband’s education and class, and how this link has changed across cohorts. Using discrete-time event-history modelling on the British Household Panel Survey and Italian longitudinal household survey (ILFI), my findings show that in both countries, if the woman’s educational and labour-market profile is controlled for, the husband’s occupation and education have lost importance. Yet, although based more on ‘her’ than ‘his’ profile, divisions along ‘classic’ lines are still evident and not context-free, and they assume different forms in the two countries with distinctive institutional and cultural settings. In ‘liberal’ Britain, women’s labour-market participation responds more to motherhood and class than to education, while in ‘familistic’ Italy education seems more important, which suggests the existence of returns over and above strictly human capital/economic ones.

Discussant: Hiroko Umegaki (Research Fellow, Sciences Po LIEPP).

Joint Seminar OSC - LIEPP, research group "Discriminations and Social Inequalities".

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