Gendered Life Courses and Personal Networks in Switzerland

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Presentation Plan

- Theoretical framework
- The 'Family tiMes' survey
- Life course data on main results
- Network data on main results
- Personal networks in light of life trajectories
Theoretical background

Processes of pluralization:
- individualization of life trajectories
- diversification of personal networks (kin and non-kin ties, electivity)

Life trajectories constitute a powerful generative mechanism of development of personal networks, as they provide “reservoirs” of personal ties which can be turned into significant relationships (availability ≠ significance).

Persistent gendering effects: women & family sphere and men & work sphere (master status)
Family tiMes Survey

- Random sample of 803 individuals living in Switzerland
- Representative of the 3 main linguistic regions (German, French, Italian)
- Two age groups: 36-41 (1970-1975) and 56-61 (1950-1955)
- Data collected in 2011
- Standardized questionnaire in 3 parts:
  - retrospective life course data
  - cross-sectional network data
  - values and attitudes
- International partnerships with Portugal and Lithuania
Life course data

**Instrument**: retrospective life history calendar

**4 trajectories**: family, partnership, occupation, spatial mobility

**Focus**: family (coresidency) & occupational trajectories

**Period**: 1991-2011 (20 last years)

**Method**: multi-channel sequence analysis (Gauthier, Widmer, Bucher, & Notredame, 2010)

**Co-residence statuses** (9): living with two parents, with one parent, alone, with a partner, with a partner and child(ren), with child(ren) only, with relatives, with roommates, and other.

**Occupational statuses** (12): education/training, low part-time employment, high part-time employ., full-time employ., part-time self-employ., full-time self-employ., occasional work, unpaid family work, unemployment., at home, illness, and other.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Gendering?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st (32.6%)</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>male + young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd (19.2%)</td>
<td>Nuclear family life</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>male + old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd (15.1%)</td>
<td>Nuclear family life</td>
<td>Home &amp; part-time</td>
<td>female + old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th (14.7%)</td>
<td>Solo &amp; Conjugality</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th (7.8%)</td>
<td>Conjugality</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>female + old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th (6.5%)</td>
<td>Nuclear family life</td>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>male + old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th (4.1%)</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Erratic employment</td>
<td>old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Network data

Name generator: “Who are the individuals who, over the past year, have been very important to you, even if you have not got along well with them?”

Mean size: 3.9

Prominence of the partner and children

Importance of friendship

Network structure (interdependencies): densely interconnected

=> Mean density of interaction (0.74), of emotional support (0.62), of conflict (0.36)
Personal networks in light of life trajectories

- Importance of the family (coresidence; family transitions, events, and stages) and partnership trajectories (number of partners)

- Less impact of the occupational and spatial mobility trajectories

- The gap between individuals with children (transition to parenthood) and single individuals

- The “hierarchy” of ties: individuals without children develop networks based on the extended kinship, siblings, friends

- Gendering: women focusing on female friends and female family members; and men focusing on male friends and work-related relationships

- Social stratification: high education and work-related relationships; and low education and densely interconnected networks based on family
Thank you for your attention!

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