

# IAB-DiskAB

Einladung  
12/2009

## **Who goes to university – social background, sibship size and birth order Determinants of upper secondary graduates' educational decisions (Abiturienten) in Germany Hans Dietrich (FB E1)**

From an empirical perspective up to on third of all German Abiturienten choose apprenticeship training as a first vocational choice instead of university study. This indicates graduates from the German Gymnasium own multiple options of educational choice (e.g. apprenticeship training, school based training, training at universities for applied sciences and university).

Going back to Boudon (1974) and educational decision is modelled from a rational choice perspective. From a Boudon perspective the striking assumption is the motive of status reproduction. Erikson et al (2005) developed a research strategy to identify primary effects of different levels of academic performance of students of different class background and secondary effects of differences in the educational choices that these students make at given levels of performance. Empirical findings support that hypothesis (see e.g. Jackson et al 2007).

From a G.S. Becker perspective sibship size and birth order arguments are introduced, strengthening cost related argument of education. Depending on families' economic power the number of children defines individual opportunity structure receiving families' economic support for choosing a university study.

In this paper the distinction between primary and secondary effects or direct and indirect effects of class background on educational decision is applied for German Abiturienten. German Live History Data (GLHD) are used to estimate the educational decision of members of birth cohort 1964 and 1971 choosing an

university study in stead of an vocational training after graduating from the German Gymnasium. Additional the model will be extended by introducing sibship size and birth order variables. Probit models and decomposition techniques are employed.

Results show both social background effects and sibship size/birth order effects. Further on there are some indications that birth order effect become more precisely modelled by controlling for gender.

Keywords: educational decision; Class origin; sibship size, birth order, primary effect, secondary effect, fairlie, ldecomp.

**Mittwoch, 15. Juli 2009**

**14.00 Uhr**

**Sitzungssaal 126a**