Mobilising difference in today's labour markets:

How gender, culture and mobility are used to legitimise inequalities

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Content

PART 2: PAPERS

On gendered labour market segregation

On neoliberal subjectivity

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1 Research Interest

Who looks after your frail grandmother? How often do you encounter a foreign accent when you talk to the staff who cleans the toilets you use? When was the last time you saw a women driving the train you boarded? Have you ever seen a man staffing the welcome desk at your dentist's?

I have always been intrigued by the question of how people end up in their respective niches in the labour market. And ever since I learned that – according to an analysis of the last Swiss census – train driver is the most male dominated profession in Switzerland, with a workforce consisting of 99.7% men (Charles 2005, 10), I have checked countless driving cabs before boarding and wondered, why don't more women drive trains?

Put in simple words, the overarching question that drives my research presented in this habilitation is: **What kind of labour is done by whom and under what conditions?** With growing numbers of jobs becoming more precarious under neoliberal governance and globalised capitalism, inequalities in the world of work pose one of the key challenges of our contemporary society. Addressing this challenge, I want to contribute to a better understanding of **how social differenciations are mobilised to today's labour markets**. I ask: How do we legitimise our contemporary logics of allocating jobs to specifically categorised people and the working conditions in these employment fields? This habilitation aims at shedding light on a number of key aspects of this big question.

After briefly introducing some basic assumptions of orthodox labour market theory, I discuss more recent feminist and critical approaches that challenge the classics and offer alternative explanations for labour market segregation by gender and ethnicity (section 2). The methodology chapter (section 3) outlines my feminist approach to doing science. The following three sections each tackle one aspect of my research question, focussing on different employment fields and categories of differenciation. I explore: How is gender mobilised and contested in young people's trajectories through the education system and into the labour market (section 4)? How are categories of differenciation internalised and responsibility individualised as part of a neoliberal subjectivity (section 5)? How are culture and mobility employed to legitimise precarious working conditions in live-in care work for the elderly (section 6)? I close with a synthesis (section 7) and with an outlook on future research (section 8). The original papers that form part of this cumulative habilitation are included in part II.

2 Theoretical perspectives

Orthodox economic theory argues that the division of labour, i.e. the specialisation of workers in specific tasks, is beneficial because «it allows for every person to learn and practice the job that s_he is most skilled in and that s_he likes best» (Bathelt & Glückler 2012, 55, my translation). It further assumes that all participants enter the market als equals and jobs are allocated to individuals following to the supposedly universal laws of supply and demand (Fassmann & Meusburger 1997, 44). According to human capital theory (cf. Becker 1993), it is then an individual choice how much a person wants to invest in her_his human capital – i.e. in education and training – and thus how much s_he will get as a return on investment in the form of higher wages (Gillies 2017, 2). In this rational, failure to obtain good employment it thus attributed to the individual who did not put enough effort into obtaining education and training (Fassmann & Meusburger 1997, 50).

Heterdox economic theory, however, has pointed out that commonly known economic theories such as the ones mentioned above are not simply descriptions of 'reality'. Economic theories are performative in that they contribute to producing the phenomena they merely purport to describe (Callon 2007). Taking the labour market as an example, this means that orthodox economic theories frame the allocation of individuals to jobs as return on investment in education and training. In this framing process, other aspects that contradict this logic must be disentangled, hidden or veiled. A performativity approach thus aims at shedding light on what remains hidden and discusses the performative effects of these framings. Instead of taking the functioning of markets for granted, it analyses their specific logics, their arrangements and the in- and exclusions they produce (Berndt & Boeckler 2009).

Already from the 1970s onwards labour market segmentation theorists have shown that labour markets are compartmentalised into subfields that work according to different rules and provide very different employment conditions and remuneration (Berndt 2017). Labour markets, they argue, are socially regulated. This means that social norms govern the participation of different groups of people. They contribute to sorting specific groups of workers into specific fields of work. Thereby, jobs with favourable employment conditions are allocated predominantly to white men, while low paid and precarious fields are filled with women, ethnic minorities and immigrants (Peck 1996).

In addition, feminist economic geographers have shown that labour markets display a fundamental gender bias in how work, skills and competencies are valued. Areas that are related to what is often assumed to be 'women's work' such as child care, education and inter-personal care are often poorly paid, low status and dead end jobs (Johnson 2011, 356). Furthermore, feminist research has explored how individual workplaces have become associated with very specific embodied performances. In *Capital Culture*, for example, Linda McDowell (1997) employs Butler's (1990) performativity theory to analyse how being

accepted as a successful trader in London's investment banks requires performing an aggressive, promiscuous heterosexual masculinity. She describes a work place in which successful traders are dubbed 'big swinging dicks' and femininity is constructed as deficient. This framing effectively inhibits women from becoming traders (McDowell 1997, 179).

In a similar vein, certain types of work are being racialised or have become associated with specific groups of migrants. Employers of domestic workers in Canada, for instance, expect a performance of subservience that is attributed specifically to women from the Philippines. In reverse conclusion, Filipinas are generally seen as best suited for jobs as domestic workers and have difficulties entering other employment fields (cf. England 1997; Pratt 2004). In sum, existing research has shown that jobs require specific gendered and racialised performances to conform to the prevalent cultures in the respective working environments (Coe et al. 2007, 349). In consequence, workers who do not 'fit' into the prevalent work culture are deemed 'unfit' for the job.

In spite of these findings, orthodox economic theory has been performative in the sense that it had and still has huge influence on policy making. Orthodox economists propagate that labour markets need to be 'freed' from regulations so that workers can be flexibly allocated according to supply and demand. In many countries, policy makers have adopted this logic and introduced large scale deregulations of labour markets (cf. Theodore 2016). Heterdox economic geographers have discussed this development as a process of neoliberalisation (Peck & Tickell 2002). They have shown that while the deregulation of labour markets might have led to an increase in the absolute number of jobs and reduced official unemployment rates as orthodox economists had predicted, it has brought about a structural shift towards contingent work (Peck & Theodore 2001). The new forms of work are typically temporary and precarious, often offered only as fractions of full jobs or as day labour.

Currently, labour and migration geographers work on better understanding how migration schemes and labour regulations interlink and how these legal-institutional frameworks translate into particular socio-spatial patterns of precarity (Strauss & McGrath 2016). Furthermore, there is a growing interest initiated by feminist scholars for economic geography to open its scope beyond the employment relation and include social reproduction and unpaid labour into analyses of work (Strauss 2017).

My own research contributes to this body of literature on the performativity of economic theories and labour and migration geographies by exploring how social categorizations of workers are mobilised in specific fields of today's labour markets and what effects they produce.

3 Working with a feminist methodology

My research builds on a feminist methodology. From the 1970s onwards feminist academics have challenged the basic assumptions of how academic knowledge is gained, what is deemed as worth knowing and in who's interest knowledge is produced (Women and Geography Study Group 1997; Moss 2002; Wastl-Walter 2009; England 2015; Oberhauser et al. 2018). They unveiled implicit sexisms, racisms and classisms that pervaded the purportedly 'objective' scientific analyses and to some extent still do so today. Furthermore, feminist perspectives on science have questioned the ways in which universities keep sustaining their steep hierarchies, how they measure sciencentific excellence in metrics and thereby reduce it to mere quantitative output in ranked yournals and how they continue to fail in supporting promising researchers who do not neatly fit into their narrow academic career scheme (Mountz et al. 2015).

Building on their seminal contributions to the development of science, adopting a feminist methodology for me today above all means four things:

First, I understand science as political. This statement challenges the often implicitly made assumption that scientific knowledge is neutral. By choosing a specific research topic and formulating a research question I take a political stance. I foreground one issue above all others and thereby shed light on some aspects and not others. I see it as the responsibility of science to contribute to addressing the key challenges that our societies face in the 21st century. My focus on inequalities in the world of work is thus a deliberate choice because I want to foster the societal debate on who does what kind of work and under what conditions.

Second, I understand scientific knowledge as situated. This statement questions the assumption that researchers can 'objectively' describe a phenomenon. As a feminist researcher, I am aware that I am not the objective narrator of 'the truth'. Instead, I acknowledge that I am myself an intrinsic part of the creation of knowledge. My identity as a white, well educated, middle-class and female academic shapes what background knowledge I bring to the field, what I see as relevant, how I interact with and relate to my research partners and interviewees and how I interpret my findings. This requires reflecting my stance throughout the research process. However, it does not make my research any less scientific. On the contrary, it allows me to include the specific context and the relationships that informed my work and, thus, make knowledge production more transparent.

Third, *I understand scientific knowledge as result of collaboration*. This statement challenges the imagination of researchers as autonomous individuals who come to their insights single-handedly. Adopting a feminist perspective means producing knowledge in collaboration with others inside and outside academia. This requires building long term relationships in the field

and understanding the social groups I work with as research partners (Wynne-Jones et al. 2015). Since the start of the *Care Markets* project in 2013 (cf. section 6), for example, I participated in the workers' network *Respect*, and collaborated in the working group *Precarity* of the Swiss think tank *Denknetz*. In both groups care workers, activists, unionists and researchers collaborate with the aim of improving working conditions in Swiss live-in care arrangements. Participating in these groups outside academia was and still is tremendously important for me to grasp new aspects of the phenomenon I explore, encounter different perspectives and reflect my own. It allows for learning from others, sharing my own knowledge and combining research with activism.

Furthermore, my emphasis on research as collaboration also addresses how we work academia. I am tremendously indepted to my colleagues with whom I worked in the *TREE* project (cf. section 4) and in the *Care Markets* project. In addition, several collaborative networks provide plattforms to discuss new theories and approaches, share and develop ideas in confortable environments. On the local level, these are the long standing *Gender Studies Group* and the more recent Innovation-Pool group *Science Down to Earth* at the Department of Geography in Zürich. On the international level, leaning from and sharing knowledge in the *Arbeitskreis Gender and Geography* and more recently from the *Arbeitskreis Migrationsforschung* and the network *Feminist Geography and New Materialities* of the German Society of Science (DFG) mean a lot to me.

Additionally, understanding research as collaboration for me means subverting the assumption that single authored texts are more important or more valuable with regard to scientific excellence. It invisibilises the work that goes into working through different perspectives and across hierarchies and disciplines to building a coherent communal argument. Up until today I remember the immense challenges we faced in our mixed-methods project until we had a common understanding of how to bring together quantiative and qualitative results in our final paper of the *TREE* project (cf. paper 2). Additionally I find it important to make visible the contributions not only of PhD but also of master students and support them in framing their academic work for publication. Several of my publications include contributions of my master students (cf. papers 11, 12 and Schwiter et al. in review). It is my aim to support them, learn from them and make their contributions visible in the authorship of the publications.

Fourth, I understand scientific knowledge as a public good. I see it as a huge priviledge to be paid to produce scientific knowledge. Consequently, I see it as my responsibility to share my results with a wider audience not just within but also outside academia. Working on issues in Switzerland this involves making our results and thoughts available in German and publishing them in journals or newspapers that reach an audience that goes beyond academia. As part of our *TREE* project, for example, we wrote short articles for several journals that are read by practitioners. We published them in *Betrifft Mädchen: Deutsche Fachzeitschrift für Mädchenarbeit*, the German journal for jouth workers that focusses on girls (Wehner et al.

2012), in *Panorama: Fachzeitschrift für Berufsbildung* (Maihofer et al. 2012), the Swiss journal for occupational councillors, in *HR Today: Fachzeitschrift für HR-Verantwortliche in der Schweiz,* the Swiss journal for human ressources experts (Wehner et al. 2013), or in *Forum: Zeitschrift der Fach Frauen Umwelt,* the journal for women in environmental professions (Schwiter 2013). Furthermore, we collaborated with *Schauspielhaus Zürich* and Zurich Graduate Campus to create the two audio pieces *Liebe ist Verhandlungssache. Wie junge Erwachsene über Arbeitsteilung nachdenken* and *Altenbetreuung zwischen Love and Labour* (Mähner et al. 2015a; Mähner et al. 2015b), which were shown in the theater *Schiffbau* and at diverse events later. These articles and audio pieces are not formally part of this cumulative habilitation. Nevertheless, for me they are an important part of doing science.

In addition, understanding scientific knowledge as a public good means for me that I do not only provide results for others to read, but that I also aim at creating spaces that foster a dialogue with practitioners outside academia. Based on the results from our *TREE* project, I offered several further education workshops on gender sensitive career councelling, for example for Zurich's jouth workers, Zurich's career coaching centre, for the vocational councellors in the canton of Schwyz and for the *Schweizerisches Dienstleistungszentrum für Berufsbildung* - the Swiss service center for vocational training. Additionally, I participated in numerous public panel discussions and held outreach presentations at events of associations, unions, gender equality offices, seniors' organizations and the like. I am deliberately mentioning this engagement here, because understanding scientivic knowledge as a public good means for me that I actively seek to put my research up for discussion and foster dialogues with various groups of society.

4 Gendered trajectories into the labour market

Heterodox and feminist economic geographers have pointed out that the allocation of jobs is fundamentally gendered. In this section I want to explore how exactly and to what effect gender is mobilised in todays labour markets.

Gender segregation exists in labour markets around the world (Anker 1998). However, its patterns and its extent differ widely (Estévez-Abe 2006, 143). Thus, gender segregation has a history as well as a geography. Taking a temporal perspective, we find that some jobs have changed their gender connotations over time. At the beginning of the 20st century, for example, teaching was a male dominated profession. Over the course of a century, it has become utterly feminised. Taking a spatial perspective, we can observe that similar jobs are gendered differently in different contexts. The heavy manual labour of planting, tending and harvesting agricultural crops, which is associated with masculine bodily strength in our context, is seen as women's work in others.

Analysing the overall geography of gender segregation more closely, we encounter the somewhat surprising finding that segregation in the labour market is much more pronounced in Switzerland than in many other countries (Rothböck et al. 1999, 479 et sqq.; Sousa-Poza 2004, 411; Charles 2005, 26; Buchmann & Kriesi 2009). In a comparison of 44 OECD countries Charles and Bradley calculate a gender segregation index. According to this index, Switzerland ranks among the bottom four countries with most pronounced segregation – and lies far behind countries such as Turkey, Tunisia or Iran (Charles & Bradley 2009, 941).

This begs the question of how this gendering in Switzerland is produced and what effects it has. From 2011 to 2013 I had the opportunity to work with a interdisciplinary team of researchers who explored this phenomenon. Our project *Gender inequalities in educational and career pathways* was part of the *National Research Programme 60* on *Gender Equality*. Focussing on young people entering the labour market, we asked:

> *What are the key mechanisms that contribute to the gendering of young people's educational and career pathways?*

Current debates on occupational gender segregation

In a first paper, we discuss the existing literature and develop our conceptual framework:

Paper 1: Schwiter Karin, Wehner Nina, Maihofer Andrea und Huber Evéline 2011: Zur Hartnäckigkeit geschlechtssegregierter Ausbildungs- und Berufsverläufe. Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zu einer empirischen Untersuchung. In: *femina politica. Zeitschrift für feministische Politikwissenschaft*, 14(2), 20-32.

A large part of the orthodox scientific literature as well as many media representations conceptualise educational and career pathways simply as individual choices (for an overview see e.g. Eglin-Chappuis 2007, 26 et sqq.). Those studies understand careers as results of freely taken decisions by autonomous individuals. This perspective allows for measuring gender gaps in career choices. However, it contributes to naturalising and essentialising gender in implicitly or explicitly assuming that men and women are essentially different and that is why men and women also differ in their occupational preferences.

Feminist research has shown that this limited view veils the social constitution of gender. Thus, it falls short of explaining the historicity and the geography of occupational gender segregation. In this vein, a growing body of feminist research explores how gender stereotypes impact on young people's educational trajectories and shape their preferences, aspirations and self-understandings from kindergarden (Cornelißen & Gille 2005) to young adulthood (Buchmann & Kriesi 2012).

Furthermore, feminist research has demonstrated that educational institutions themselves are gendered. In the German speaking countries, for example, technical professions are typically institutionalised as apprenticeships, while service and teaching professions are often accessible via schools (Ryser & von Erlach 2007; Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2008). In the former, young adults are treated as workers and receive a salary, in the later they are perceived as students and pay tuition. This differential institutionalisation of masculinised and feminised occupational fields has its roots in the historical development of our education systems. Up until today, it contributes to the persistance of gendered occupational cultures (Leemann & Keck 2005, 72 et sqq.). Consequently, countries with two-tiered educational systems with apprenticeships and schools such as Germany and Switzerland show higher segregation rates than educational systems that are primarily school based such as the US and Canada (Estévez-Abe 2005).

In sum, the existing literature identifies a various factors that contribute to gendering educational and occupational pathways of young people. In doing this, most studies use either solely quantitative or solely qualitative data and they focus on one single moment in the biographical trajectory. Thus, several authors identify a need to shift the perspective from single moments of decision making to educational and occupational pathways as long-term processes (Charles 2005, 26; Cornelißen & Gille 2005, 52; Cornelißen 2009, 74 & 84). Furthermore, there have so far been only few any attempts at bridging the gap between quantitative and qualitative studies. Addressing these two research gaps, our project adopts a longitudinal perspective and combines quantiative and qualitative data.

Conceptual framework: Bourdieu's Gender Habitus

In order to conceptualise educational and occupational pathways as long-term processes, we draw on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *gender habitus* (Bourdieu 2005). Bourdieu understands gender habitus as incorporated patterns of perception, thought and behaviour that produce a differentiation between men and women. On the one hand, these patterns always already shape what young people perceive as fitting educational pathways for themselves and in which educational and occupational contexts they feel they belong. On the other hand, gender habitus is not fixed, but it is continually (re)produced in everyday encounters within and outside the educational system. Gendered perceptions and behaviours can become naturalised over time or they might be irritated and challenged. In this sense, the concept of gender habitus understands individual, institutional and normative aspects as co-constitutive (Jäger et al. 2011), which makes it especially valuable for our study. It allows for conceptualising gender habitus as being continually shaped during the educational and occupational trajectories of youths and young adults.

There already exists a number of studies that use Bourdieu's habitus concept to analyse occupational gender segregation (e.g. Engler 2001; Leemann 2002). Krais and Beaufaÿs (2005), for example, employ it to explore the causes for the *leaky pipeline* in adacemic careers. They show that a successful career in science requires the development of an academic habitus, which consists of many traits that are connotated as masculine. While these studies provide valuable insights into the causes of gender segregation, most of them analyse the academic labour market and they focus primarily on women's exclusion from male dominated professions. Building on this existing body of literature, our project includes non-academic professions and it opens up the perspective to include both genders.

Methodology: Parallel mixed-methods design

Empirically, our project adopts a parallel mixed-methods design (Bergman 2008). In contrast to the more common sequential combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, we did not employ one method after the other, but worked with both in parallel. This procedure allows for a continuous back and forth between the two approaches. Thus, we discussed preliminary findings and included knowledge from quantiative analyses into our interview guide and ran further tests on the survey database based on knowledge from our first interviews. The methodological setup and selected key results from our study are summarised in the following paper, which won the *Schweizer Preis für Bildungsforschung 2016* – the Swiss award for educational research, awarded by the federal president:

Our empirical material is based on the so-called TREE survey (TREE 2010). The acronym TREE stands for *Transitions from Education to Employment*. The TREE survey is a nation-wide longitudinal study that tracks young people after their completion of compulsory school. It consists of data from a representative sample of more than 6000 youths, who participated in the PISA test and finished their ninth and last year of obligatory schooling in Switzerland in the year 2000. From 2000 to 2014, the participants were contacted nine times and asked to fill out a survey on their educational and occupational pathways.

In the sample, we identified gender-typical and gender-untypical trajectories. In order to do this, we defined a profession as feminised, if – according to the most recent census data – more than 70% of the current workforce in Switzerland was female and as masculinised, if more than 70% were male. This 70% threshold is often used in studies on gender segregation (cf. e.g. Achatz 2005; Abraham & Arpagaus 2008; Gianettoni et al. 2010). It is assumed that once the representation of one gender falls below 30% the underrepresented gender is visibly perceived as a minority.

As a first result, our quantitative analysis confirmed that gender-untypical trajectories are still rare. Within the whole sample, we found only 22 women (2.8%) who anticipated a masculinised profession in 2000 and also worked in a masculinised profession seven years later and 20 men (3.3%) who anticipated a feminised profession and worked in one in 2007 (for more details see Paper 2).

This first step of analysis gave us valuable insights into the occurrence of specific trajectories. However, it did not explain the how and why these trajectories came about. To lean more about this, we carried out 32 qualitative interviews with selected respondents from the TREE survey. The interviewees were selected randomly from the survey sample so that it covered an equal share of gender-typical and gender-untypical trajectories and trajectories that shifted from gender-typical to -untypical and vice versa with an equal number of female and male interviewees in each of the subgroups. The interviews were carried out in 2011. Thus, the interviewees were about 26 years old and stood roughly ten years after they finished the last year of compulsory education. They were analysed using Narration Analysis as outlined by Riessmann (2008).

Already during the interviews we realised the immense value of recruiting our interviewees from the TREE sample. In comparison to many other qualitative studies who have to rely on

people volunteering to participate, we got in touch with many young adults who would never have voluteered for an interview study. They had initially been recruited for the TREE survey at school at age 16. Over the course of ten years the TREE research team had done an amazing job at building and sustaining a relationship with their respondents. In regular intervals, they have informed their population about research results that were produced with the data they submitted and have sent them small goodies to thank them for their continued participation. In this way, they managed to establish a less extractive relationship between researchers and researched than other survey studies, in which respondents provide information but get very little in return.

Thus, when we called them 10 years after their first contact with TREE, many of the respondents were willing to share their stories with us. In the interview, we asked the interviewees to tell us their educational and occupational pathway from the very beginning to current time, including all their deliberations at the different stages in their biographies. We did deliberately not mention gender as a focus of our analysis, because we wanted to leave it up to the interviewees, if and when they wanted to make gender relvant in their narratives. Our interview guide included only one question that explicitly mentioned gender: Towards the end we asked what they thought would have happened differently in their educational trajectories if they had been a boy/a girl. In addition, at the time of the interviews, we as interviewers did not know whether the interviewees had been classified as having gender-typical or gender-untypical trajectories.

The fact that many of the interviewees were not used to participating in interview studies posed additional challenges for us as interviewers. A number of interviewees initially felt unsure what of their life stories would be relevant for a scientific study and needed encouragement. However, this sampling method allowed us to include people into the study who are often not included in qualitative samples, namely young adults with very little education or interrupted occupational pathways. This reduced the educational bias of many other qualitative studys, in which participants typically constist of academics and other well educated people.

Underestimated segregation

As a first result from our qualitative interviews, we came to realise that people in gender-untypical jobs are more rare than the quantitative numbers had suggested. Several of our interviewees who were categorised as working in a gender-untypical profession, reported being in work contexts that were rather gender-typical. In the profession of clerk *(kaufmännische Angestellte)*, for example, more than 70% of the workforce are women. However, we interviewed male clerks who worked in tax offices or in financial consulting and described their work environment as rather masculinised. Especially large professions, such as clerks or salespersons show further segregation within the profession. While salespersons

in perfumeries are predominantly female, men are probably overrepresented in shops for sports or hunting goods.

Furthermore, several of our interviewees with gender-untypical trajectories worked in gender-typical nishes within their professions. For instance, we talked to a female metal worker, who did work in a metal processing plant, but she was in fact doing mostly secretarial work. A female constructing engineer's main job was to advertise the produced goods at sales fares. Several of the male nurses in our sample did not actually tend to patients in their beds, but worked as in-house trainers for young nurses or as anaestethics assistants, supervising respiration machines and the likes.

This further gender segregation within professions has been identified before (cf. Wetterer 1993; Heintz et al. 1997; Krüger 2001; Riessman 2008). However, we consider it an important result of our mixed-methods design that we could shed light on the large extent of the phenomenon. The repeated occurrence of interviewees who had been categorised as working in a gender-untypical profession and who were working in a rather gender-typical employment context makes visible that solely quantitative categorizations of professions provide only limited insight into the specific working contexts and systematically underestimate actual occupational gender segregation.

Entering gender-untypical pathways

Based on identifying gender-untypical trajectories as being rather rare, we aimed at finding out more about the individuals who succeded in establishing themselves in gender-untypical professions. Our quantitative analyses of the TREE sample disclosed that the group of women with gender-untypical trajectories received higher scores in the PISA examinations – in reading as well as in mathematics. Furthermore, on average they showed more confidence in their own abilities at age 16 and came from families with higher ressources than their female peers with gender-typical trajectories. These findings correspond with existing research showing that young women who enter masculinised professions bring above average competencies and ressources (Jacobs 1989; Helbig & Leuze 2012).

Surprisingly, however, most of this is true for the group of young men with gender-untypical trajectories, too. On average, they grew up in families with higher ressources and they received better PISA scores in reading as well as in mathematics than their male peers with gender-typical trajectories. Only their confidence in their own abilitities is lower in comparison. This is an important finding of our study, because it disproves the common belief that young men end up in feminised professions such as nursing or child care because they were not good enough to enter masculinised professions. Our data indicates the opposite: On average, young men entering gender-untypical professions have higher competencies than their male peers (for more details on the analyses see Paper 2, 413 et seq.).

Based on these quantiative findings we turned to the qualitative interviews again and compared the narratives of interviewees with gender-typical to those with untypical trajectories. I discuss some of the findings of this analysis in the following paper:

Paper 3: Schwiter Karin 2015: Auf dem Weg in den Arbeitsmarkt. Junge Erwachsene im Spannungsfeld zwischen Individualität und Geschlechternormen. In: Micus-Loos Christiane et al. (Hrsg.) *Des eigenen Glückes Schmied_in!? Geschlechterreflektierende Perspektiven auf berufliche Orientierungen und Lebensplanungen von Jugendlichen*. Heidelberg: Springer, 61-75.

In sum, the narratives of the interviewees suggest that gender-untypical trajectories might still *require* higher competencies: As long as occupational pathways correspond with gender norms, gender is not made relevant by the interviewees. A young women for example told us that she is "just not the type of person" for a career. And a young man argued that success at work had always been important to him. Whenever their occupational choices fit with gendered expectations, they do not refer to what is expected from them as women or as men. Instead, they legitimise their educational and occupational decisions solely by referring to their individual interests or talents. Gender thus remains invisible.

Interviewees with gender-untypical trajectories, however, often feel obliged to legitimise their choices with regard to their gender. In their interviews they narrate many experiences in which they were confronted with being gender-untypical. In accordance with the existing literature (cf. Heintz et al. 1997; Teubner 2010), we find that women in masculinised professions often face additonal challenges at the workplace, while men in feminised professions tend to be priviledged. A female electrician, for instance, told us that at every new building site she would initially face distrust and would have to proof anew that she knew what she was doing. The fact that her colleagues on the building sites were simply not used to female electricians, she said, produced many tiring confrontations. Sie summarised: "As a woman, it's a fight."

On the contrary, our male interviewees in feminised professions recalled many instances of being priviledged. Several male nurses told us that their mostly female colleagues were tremendously happy to finally have a man join their team. The interviewees remembered hospital or nursing home wards literally celebrating their arrival. Instead of a questioning of their competences, they experienced a privileging. They were soon given additional responsibilities and received fast promotions. Up to this point, our findings correspond with the existing literature. In correspondance to the *glass ceiling* that women often face, the priviledging of men in feminised professions is refered to as a *glass escalator* (Wetterer 2009, 52; Williams 2013).

However, including our interviewees' experiences outside of work, their narratives discrimination and priviledge flip. On the one hand, the women in gender-untypical professions typically told us that their peers, families and their friends were awed by their entering a masculinised profession. Whenever the topic of their job came up in conversations, they recalled being viewed as tough, courageous and clever. On the other hand, the men with gender-untypical trajectories experienced disesteem and ridicule. A male nurse, for instance, told us that when commenting on his job his two brothers loved to joke that they had always wanted a sister. Another interviewee mentioned that when he sat together with some guys for a beer and he mentioned being a nurse, noone would ever say: "Wow, that's cool. Tell me more about it." They let him feel, he said, that he was at the bottom of the hierarchy. In general, our interviews suggest that – outside their workplaces – men in feminised profession are often also confronted with the implicit or explicit assumption that there must be something wrong with them for choosing a gender-untypical profession.

Thus, broadening our perspective beyond the workplace, we find that men, too, face additional challenges when they enter feminised professions. This corresponds well to our quantitative findings: It might explain why not only the group of women, but also the group of men with gender-untypical trajectories have (or even: *require*) above average ressouces. Moreover, these findings suggest that there are probably more young adults with an interest or talents for gender-untypical employment fields who do not enter these professions. Either they already anticipate these additional challenges and opt for gender-neutral or -typical pathways instead, or they attempt establishing themselves in a gender-untypical profession, but fail to do so and revert to a gender-neutral or -typical profession again. In the literature, the later is termed the *revolving door effect* (Jacobs 1989).

Supporting gender-untypical pathways

Based on these findings, we wanted to find out more about what helps young adults establish themselves in gender-untypical professions. Thus, we searched the qualitative interviews for hints as to supporting mechanisms. Comparing the experiences of young adults with gender-typical pathways to those with gender-untypical ones, we found that the later include many narrations of positive feedback that they received. These feedbacks from people or from institutions – we argue – are key for the young adults to develop a professional habitus. In Paper 1, we illustrate this in the example of a female economist. In her narrative, she emphasises many instances in which she received positive feedback that encouraged her to continue on her pathway. For instance, she recalls how her parents had always encouraged her to 'reach for the stars' and aim at becoming the boss rather than the servant. At school, her mathematics teacher made her aware that she was good with numbers. In addition, she received positive institutional feedbacks such as continously good grades in mathematics. When she started studying economics at university, the positive

feedbacks suddenly went missing. She felt uncomfortable and unwelcome among her peers, received unsatisfactory grades, started questioning whether she was truly cut out for economics and quit her studies. Only when she tried studying economics a second time at a technical college, she felt in place again. Getting praise from her lectureres, receiving good grades and having four job offers to choose from, helped her regain her confidence in her talent in economics. She summarises her narrative with the statement: 'I'm simply the economist. That's exactly the role I want to play.'

Analysing her story with Bourdieu's habitus perspective means understanding the development of a professional habitus as a long term process. A professional habitus is formed in a multitude of everyday encounters with various persons and institutions that contribute to strenghten or challenge the habitual security of young adults. As our interviews with young adults in gender-untypical professions suggest, receiving repeated positive feedback from family, peers, teachers, career councellors as well as institutional bodies was especially important for them. We consider this a key finding of our study that we often shared and discussed in our knowledge transfer workshops with teachers and career councellors.

Family plans as key challenge

In addition to supporting mechanisms our analysis identified a common challenge that our interviewees with gender-untypical trajectories struggled with. Women as well as men feared that they would have to quit their jobs when they had a family. Among others, we discuss this aspect in the fourth and last paper presented in this section:

Paper 4: Wehner Nina, Schwiter Karin, Hupka-Brunner Sandra und Maihofer Andrea 2015: Geschlechterungleichheiten in Ausbildungs- und Berufsverläufen junger Erwachsener in der Schweiz. Ergebnisse aus einer Mixed-Methods-Studie. In: Faustich-Wieland Hannelore (Hrsg.) *Berufsorientierung und Geschlecht*. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Juventa, 23-38.

When our interviewees in gender-typical professions talked about their family plans, they generally expected their profession to be compatible with having a family. Some of the men told us that they would have to adjust their current work schedules or slightly reduce their working hours so that they could be home earlier in the evenings. A few planned to negotiate for a four day week in order to have a daddy-day with the child (cf. Schwiter & Baumgarten 2017). Analogously, several women had ready-made plans as to how they would balance employment and childcare. A nurse for example had already confirmed that the hospital she worked for would offer her a half-time job once she became a mother.

Many of our interviewees in gender-untypical trajectories, however, anticipated mayor problems with aligning their career with their family plans. The fact that they worked in gender-untypical professions did not mean that they necessarily wanted a gender-untypical division of labour in the family, too. Just like their peers, the men usually expected that they would become the main earners and the women expected to become the main carers. Unlike their peers, however, they often did not see how their family plans could be aligned with their jobs.

Several of the male nurses we interviewed were concerned that their current jobs would not allow them to support their families financially. Some of them tried to get into better paid niches within the nursing profession and work as emergency medical technicians (paramedics/ambulancemen), as anaestethics specialists, teachers for nursing or as managers of hospitals or nursing home wards. Others expected that they would have to quit nursing and find a more lucrative job in another employment field altogether.

Several of the women in gender-untypical professions voiced similar worries. They were afraid that their jobs would not allow them to substantially reduce their working hours in order to take care of their children. A female electrician for example told us that it would be literally impossible to get a part time job working on building sites. She feared that as a part time electrician, she would be relegated to what she called 'boring office or stock-room work'. Similarly, a female landscape gardener feared ending up selling pot plants in a garden center and an economist expected to be downgraded to being the accountant for a bunch of small NGOs.

In sum, our interviewees in gender-untypical professions often anticipate their employment to be incompatible with their family plans. This finding shows some correspondence to our quantitative data. Our survey data indicates that women who were sure that they wanted to have children one day (when they filled out the questionnaire at age 16) were significantly more likely to anticipate feminised professions and also work in feminised professions seven years later – even though they do not differ from their peers regarding their PISA results or their levels of ambition. Thus, it might be the case that these women avoid masculinised professions from the outset because they already expect them to be incompatible with their family plans. The male survey respondents who were sure early on that they wanted to have children show significantly higher levels of ambition. Their high ambitions might be linked to their anticipation of being responsible for earning a family income later in life.

Thus, while existing literature emphasises the relevance of family plans for occupational trajectories of women, our findings suggest that family plans are highly relevant for the occupational choices of both women and men. From an early age, they might deter young people from considering gender-untypical pathways and thus let their gender-untypical talents go to waste. Based on these findings, we argue in paper 4 that preventing this waste of talent and reducing occupational gender segregation requires interventions on several levels:

First, it requires familiarising young adults not just with a broader variety of professions, but also with a broader variety of family arrangements. This includes ways of sharing responsibilites for caring and earning in the couple as well as diverse forms of childcare. Knowing that there are many different ways of organising a family might encourage youths to enter a profession that is not easily compatible with the female carer/male earner family model. This recommendation of broadening career consulting to life consulting that includes future earning and caring responsibilities addresses career consultants in particular. Therefore, we put it up for discussion it in the workshops we organised for career consultants.

Second, it requires adjustments in our educational system: There are still a number of feminised professions which include long waiting periods due to age requirements, demand previous internships before an apprenticeship can even be started or offer none or very low salaries during the training period. These and similar hurdles must be eliminated so that the training for feminised and masculinised professions becomes equally attractive – both for women and for men. We emphasised this recommendation in our hearing with the Federal Committee for Science, Education and Culture of the Council of States (*Komission für Wissenschaft, Bildung und Kultur des Ständerats*).

Third, it requires employers to improve job-compatibility with a variety of familial responsibilities. For masculinised professions, this often involves allowing for reduced working hours and part time employment. For feminised professions, it mainly means paying a salary that allows for supporting a family. We foregrounded this recommendation in our workshops with human ressources managers.

Interim conclusions

Critically assessing our study in hindsight, I see several limitations to it: Our deliberate focus on gender-segregated professions allowed for exploring what it means for young adults to enter a profession in which their gender constitutes a visible minority. This draws attention away from the considerable number of people working in gender-mixed professions. Consequently, it might fuel the misinterpretation that all occupations are inherently feminised or masculinised and thereby reify gender as a category of social differentiation. We tried to prevent this by always emphasising the historical and geographical variation of occupational segregation patterns. Furthermore, we challenged the gendering of professions by foregrounding young adults with gender-untypical trajectories. However, focussing on gender as the main category of social differentiation always holds a certain danger of inadvertedly reifying it.

Furthermore, we had to work with the ISCO-88 (International Standard Classification of Occupations of the ILO) to aggregate jobs and classify them as feminised, gender-mixed or masculinised. This international classification scheme has its limits in that some occupational

groups are quite large and lump together jobs with differing gender connotations. Sales persons, for example, aggregate people working parfume and cosmetics shops as well as the ones in stores for hunting goods. Similarly, clerk was classified as a feminised occupation as a whole although it entails employment fields (e.g. in accounting) that are predominantly occupied by men. This segregation within one occupation could not be captured in our quantitative analyses and it limits the explanatory power of our statistical results. In addition, our longitudinal perspective on occupational trajectories resulted in a rather small number of gender-untypical cases. This limited the statistical analyses we could run.

In spite of these limitations, our study extended the existing knowledge in our research field in several respects:

First, it broadens the existing debate on occupational gender segregation that was and still is mainly focused on the exclusion of women from masculinised professions. Our study shows that no only women but also men with gender-untypical occupational pathways on average (have to) have above average grades and familial ressources. Both genders face additional hurdles when entering gender-untypical occupations. With these findings, we shift the debate from framing occupational segregation as a women's problem to it being a societal challenge. The additional hurdles for women who want to enter masculinised and men in feminised professions keep people away from doing the jobs they could do best and thus let a lot of talent go to waste.

Second, our study added to the existing literature with its longitudinal perspective. This lense allows for a different way of understanding occupational segregation. Rather than conceptualising it as the result of single moments of individual decision making (i.e. choosing a job), it helps us understand occupational trajectories as long term processes that depend on and are mediated by continuous feedback from co-workers, superiors, peers, family members and from institutions. It is these continuous interactions with others that enable the young adults to attain habitual security in their occupations (or prevent them from attaining it).

This ties our study back to my overarching interest in exploring how social categorizations of workers are mobilised in today's labour markets and what effects they produce. In this respect, our study has shown that young adults' pathways into the labour market are shaped by imaginaries of gender traits that are reinforced or challenged in interactions with relevant others. Thus, it challenges existing conceptualisations that reduce occupational trajectories to individuals 'choosing' the jobs that they like best. Instead, we demand shifting our attention to how gendered norms and institutions govern the allocation of jobs and hinder people with gender-untypical occupational aspirations from realising their talents. In sum, the additional hurdles for men in feminised and women in masculinised jobs pose a key challenge that today's societies must address. Not only does it violates their founding principle of equal opportunities. But it also exacerbates the skills shortage

(*Fachkräftemangel*) that is worsening particularly in masculinised occupations such as IT or engineering and in feminised occupations such as nursing.

5 Tracing neoliberal subjectivity

The second set of papers in this habilitation ties in with the previously discussed problematic of framing occupational trajectories as mere individual choices. This individualising of responsibility has been discussed as one of the key features of neoliberal governance (Lemke et al. 2000). Neoliberalism operates as a governing logic that shifts responsibility for social risks such as poverty and unemployment onto the shoulders of individuals (Harvey 2005). It addresses human beings as solely responsible for the conditions under which they live.

Various scholars have pointed out that this neoliberal logic is not just embedded in policies, it also transforms human beings themselves. Bröckling (2007), for example, argues that neoliberal reforms of labour market regulations and welfare provision produce 'entrepreneurial subjects' who must continously work on optimising themselves to ensure their own employability. Langley (2006) shows how recent transformations of Anglo-American pensions systems individualise risks and thereby force people to become 'investor subjects'. In a similar vein, numerous studies explore how the neoliberal restructuring of education systems (and of academia in particular) produce 'competitive subjects' who are continously pitched against each other and forced to focus primarily on their own survival within their institutions (e.g. Mitchell 2003; Archer 2008; Dowling 2008; Abelmann et al. 2009).

This question of how neoliberal thought is being internalised and constitutes human beings as neoliberal subjects has intrigued me for a long time. However, when reading the existing literature on neoliberal subjectification, I have often felt that the studies somehow did not get close enough to the subjects they were studying. This is because most authors in this field put their focus on the neoliberal policies, technologies of governance or public discourses that people are confronted with. They then explore how individuals adopt or contest them. In this conceptualisation, neoliberal thought remains an outside force that pushes people to adapt or offer resistance. However – apart from some notable exceptions such as Hörschelmann (2008), who explores concepts of self-reliance in youth narratives or Berg (2012), who points out neoliberal aspects in our subjectivities as critical geographers – few studies have traced neoliberalims to within the individuals themselves. This is the theoretical and methodological endeavour that the papers presented in this section aim at. I want to explore the extent to which the logic of neoliberalism has become a taken-for-granted part of human beings' understanding of themselves. Thus, the overarching question that frames this set of papers is:

How can we conceptualise and trace neoliberal subjectivity and what effects does it have?

Methodology: Applying discourse analysis to qualitative interviews

In paper 5 I make the methodological suggestion of employing a discourse analytical approach in combination with qualitative interviews in life course research. I illustrate my argument by exploring how individualised responsibility has become part and parcel of young adults' narratives. The paper received the Area Prize 2012 granted by The Royal Geographic Society for the best article by a new researcher.

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Paper 5: Schwiter Karin 2011: Anticipating the Transition to Parenthood: The Contribution of Foucaultian Discourse Analysis to Understanding Life Course Patterns. In: *Area*, 43(4), 397-404.

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Paper 5 sets out with an overview of the existing research on life courses. I argue that the field is constituted by two main approaches. On the one hand, scholars employ an structural perspective to show how life course trajectories are shaped by institutions. They use mostly quantitative survey and census data and compare how differing child care policies, school systems or social security regimes create historically and geographically particular life trajectories (cf. Heinz et al. 2009; Krüger 2009) – i.e. a geography of life course patterns (Katz & Monk 1993). On the other hand, biographical research mostly focuses on how individual agency shapes life courses. These studies often use narrative interviews to understand why individuals choose certain life paths (Barabasch 2006; Leccardi 2006). There have already been many attempts of bridging the two approaches (e.g. Elder & O'Rand 2009). However, these attempts usually bear the mark of the shore from which the bridge was built. Thus, developing a research perspective which successfully combines the two strands of research has been identified as one of the key challenges in life course studies (Settersten & Gannon 2009).

Contributing to this debate on the relevance of institutions versus agency for biographical trajectories, I suggest a discourse theoretical approach as a third perspective that allows studying life courses in a novel way. The discourse theoretical perspective shifts attention from institutions and individual agents to the societal norms that shape biographical decisionmaking. These norms are embedded in language. The way we speak and write about something produces the object of study in a particular way (Foucault 1972). In this sense, discourses create a common frame of reference that defines what is 'sayable' and 'thinkable' about a topic in a particular historical and geographical context. They govern what counts as 'normal' or 'natural' and what is considered 'deviant' or 'problematic' (Hall 2001).

In paper 5, I apply this discourse analytical perspective to study the transition to parenthood. In order to find out how this biographical step is discursively constituted, I resort to 24 narrative interviews with young adults aged 24 to 26, which I had collected previously for my dissertation research. At the time of the interview, the interviewees lived in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and had not yet had children. Apart from these common

features, the theoretical sampling method (Glaser & Strauss 1967) aimed for the highest possible variability with regard to educational, occupational and family backgrounds. The analysis was guided by Foucault's (1972) methodical outline in *Archaeology of Knowledge* and Bublitz's (2006) suggestions of how to apply Foucault's approach to studying discourses in current societies. Thus, instead of choosing the more common way of analysing interviews longitudinally to make sense of individual life stories, I analyse them diagonally and use them as discourse fragments. This enables me to identify what is sayable when young people anticipate parenthood.

The interview analysis shows that the transition to parenthood is constituted by two conflicing discourses. First and foremost, young adults understand themselves as autonomous designers of their own life courses. Mirroring Beck and Beck-Gernsheims' (2001) theory of individualisation, they emphasise that their life paths are freely chosen according their individual preferences. An interviewee would for instance say: *'It all comes down to individual choices. Everyone has got to decide for himself, what's best for him.'* Accordingly, parenthood is conceptualised as a free choice.

However, the interviews entail a second discourse that demands several requirements be fulfilled before one is entitled to have a child. The person should have completed their education, found stable employment, have a long term partner, enough savings to support a child financially and be psychologically ready to bear the responsibility of being a parent. If any of these prerequisites are not met, the discourse suggests that one should rather not have a child. In the narratives of the young adults, these preconditions are additionally emphasised by many lurid tales of people who had children in spite of them and suffered for it.

This latter discourse has often remained unnoticed in the existing debate. While quantitative approaches explore institutions as shaping factors of life courses, biographical approaches document how individuals legitimise and reflect their biographical 'choices'. A discourse analytical approach offers an important additional perspective by identifying the societal conventions that govern these 'choices' in specific geographical and historical contexts. To institutions and agency, it adds norms, which link micro-, meso- and macro-levels of analysis. Applying this lense allows for understanding 'individualisiation' itself as a normative discourse. It demands that young adults perceive themselves as autonomous actors who freely choose their life paths. In our empirical case here, this discourse of individualisation veils the co-present norms that prescribe who is legitimated to have a child. Thus, the current discoursive framing of the transition to parenthood has the powerful effect of individualising the responsibility for 'choosing' to become a parent, while at the same time delegitimising a considerable number of young people from having a child.

Conceptual framework: Neoliberal Subjectivity

Paper 6 follows up on the discourse of 'individualisation' as part of a neoliberal subjectivity. It offers a theoretical argument on how this neoliberal subject can be conceptualised.

Foucault (1972) rejects the idea of a stable, autonomous subject. If all meaning and knowledge is historically and geographically contingent, he argues, this includes the subject. In this sense, subjects are not just authors of discourses, but they are also products of these. Subjectivity – how people make sense of themselves – is part of contingent regimes of truth and power and thus varies over time and space.

As outlined in the introduction to this section, scholars have demonstrated how subjectivity today is shaped by neoliberal thought (Lemke 2007). Most studies draw this conclusion from the analysis of policies or institutions. They show how cut-backs in public services and the implementation of new public management reforms have created arenas of competition in which individuals are forced to strive for competitive advantages and are made responsible for their own survival (e.g. Mitchell 2003; Pühl 2003; Michalitsch 2006). They argue that people then internalise and normalise these repeated appellations as autonomous, self-reliant competitors and become neoliberal subjects. While these studies offer valuable insights into the transformation of policies and institutions and how they address people, they rarely investigate how the appellations are actually internalised.

This is why I argue for shifting our attention from policy and institutional transformation to the people themselves and their self-concepts. Paper 6 suggests tracing neoliberal subjectivity one step further, by analysing how people talk about themselves and about their lives. In other words, we move from Peck et al.'s (2009) institutional focus on neoliberal roll-back and roll-out measures to what Keil (2016) termed roll-with-it-neoliberalism – a context in which neoliberal thought has become the unquestioned way of how we understand the world and ourselves.

In order to do this I revert to the 24 narrative interviews with young adults introduced above and read them through the lense of Foucauldian discourse analysis (Waitt 2010). The analysis shows that young adults do not position themselves as part of a group with similar aims or interests – for example their age group or their social milieu. Instead, they understand themselves as one of a kind with a unique set of talents, needs and aspirations. They would emphasise, for instance: *'Every human being is different. You can never generalise about others from yourself.'* Based on this perceived difference, the interviewees argue that every

human being has to choose their own life path. In consequence, the individuals must bear full responsibility for the consequences of their choices.

In paper 6 I illustrate this narrative logic with the example of reconciling work and family. One interviewee argues for instance: *'I don't expect any work-family conflicts because I say to myself: you made your bed, now sleep in it. If there is a conflict, it's your job to solve it.'* This quote is typical, in the way it assigns responsibility to the individual: *'your choice – your success or failure'*, the mantra goes. These ideas of free choice and individualised responsibility lie at the core of neoliberal thought. Thus, using interviews with young adults as discursive text fragments, we can show that neoliberalism is not just embedded in policies and institutions, but also in the self-concepts of people. It has created what can indeed be called a neoliberal subjectivity.

Paper 6 illustrates the extent to which this neoliberal understanding of self is problematic, because it disregards institutional, financial and normative obstacles to reconciling work and family. It effectively veils the responsibility of the state, municipalities and employers to provide child care and working arrangements that facilitate reconciling work and family and leaves it to the individuals to find their own solutions.

Effects: Individualising responsibility in the field of work

Paper 7 further explores the effects of neoliberal subjectivity in the field of work.

Paper 7: Schwiter Karin 2016: Neoliberal Subjectivity and Gendered Inequalities. In: Worth, Nancy et al. (eds.): *Geographies of Identities and Subjectivities*. Springer: Singapore, 1-17.

In the conceptual section, paper 7 juxtaposes Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2001) theory of individualisation with Foucault's (1988) theory of neoliberal governmentality. Both concepts theorise how people understand themselves and both emphasise that people are increasingly asked to manage and control themselves. External policing has been replaced by self-regulation. This 'freedom' results in an individualised responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that this results in a precarious freedom. The human being is transformed into a 'homo optionis' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2001, 5) who is asked to make uncountable decisions without being able to foresee their effects. In consequence, they argue, individuals feel increasingly uncertain and at a loss in the face of the choices they should make and the individualised responsibilities that follow them. They are paralysed and overwhelmed by the tyranny of possibilities. While Beck and Beck-Gernsheim emphasise people's struggle in the new world of uncertainties, Foucault (1988; 2008) conceptualises

neoliberal governmentality not as a transformation that remains external and forces people to adapt. Instead, the notions of a freedom to choose and individualised responsibility for the consequences of these choices are internalised. They become an intrinsic part of how subjects understand themselves. Rather than being overwhelmed by a world that has changed, the self-concepts of human beings themselves transform and they become neoliberal subjects. In this sense, Foucault historicises the subject as produced by discourses. As I argue in paper 7, the latter conceptualisation allows for tracing processes of neoliberalisation to within subjects.

Following Foucault's train of thought, I analyse how young adults talk about finding a job. For this analysis, I complemented the 24 narrative interviews from my disseration with 32 in-depth interviews from our study on occupational segregation outlined in chapter 4. The discourse analysis followed Waitt's (2010) methodical suggestions on how do discourse analyses in human geography.

The analysis discloses a prevalent discourse of 'choice'. The young adults perceive the future as a multitude of biographical options from which they have to choose what corresponds to their unique set of interest and talents. In order not to miss a promising opportunity, biographical pathways must be continously reflected and cleverly managed. In this sense, their narratives depict an 'entrepreneurial self' (Kelly 2006) that actively works on its biography. Among other things, this entails constant investments in further education to keep up with an unpredictable labour market.

This discourse, I argue in paper 7, does not only individualise responsibility for being made redundant or failing to achieve in the competitive labour market, but also for continuing inequalities in the world of work. Taking young adults in gender-untypical professions as an example, we find that the interviewees perceive the prejudices, the jokes and the challenges to their aptitude they face at work simply as a given: *'If you choose a male dominated field as a woman (…) that's just how it is. If you go into an exotic field, you're the minority. And as a minority you will always have to stand your ground.'* According to the logic of free choice, these are simply consequences that result from the choice of a gender-untypical job. This rational makes it all but impossible to challenge discrimination at the workplace: 'Why do you complain?', one would ask and add: 'You knew what to expect when choosing a gender-untypical profession. If you didn't want that, why didn't you choose a different occupation?'

In consequence, the discourse of free choice necessarily throws people back on their own choices and makes them blame themselves. This veils discrimination and structural inequalities. It obscures the fact that the choices available to young people depend on their gender, race, class, ability and other markers of inequality. Unequal power relations become all but invisible. Whenever they do come to the fore, they are not perceived as societal problems, but as the responsibility of individuals. This neoliberal subjectivity thus produces a type of human being who focusses on her_his own choices and sees the world out there as

mostly a given. As I argue, this hinders the formation of collective alliances to challenge existing power relations and combat discrimination.

Being different but equal

While the discussion of neoliberal subjectivity in paper 7 presents a rather grim outlook that leaves little scope for social transformation, paper 8 pursues young adults' notion of being different from others to explore the extent to which it might also hold some emanciatory potential.

Paper 8: Schwiter Karin 2013: Selbstkonzepte junger Erwachsener: Der Diskurs der individuellen Einzigartigkeit als Bestandteil neoliberaler Gouvernementalität. In: Grisard Dominique et al. (Hrsg.): *Verschieden Sein. Nachdenken über Geschlecht und Differenz.* Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 229-239.

In this paper, I draw on Maihofer's (2001) argument that gender equality does not necessarily imply that men and women must become the same. Rather, she argues, we need to develop a new understanding of difference that does not automatically hierarchise. Citing Adorno, she makes a case for a society in which people can be different without having to fear negative consequences ("ohne Angst verschieden sein" Adorno 1969, cited in Maihofer 2001). Reflecting my interviews with young adults on their life plans, paper 8 discusses how they perceive sameness and difference. Does their emphasis on being unique – being different from others – hold the potential for the recognition of others as equals?

I explore this question by focussing on how young adults envision the division of labour in families. According to the prevalent discourse of every person being different from others, the interviewees argue that there is no standard model that fits all. Each couple must decide for themselves what fits their preferences. Thereby they do not imply that mothers and fathers are different in the sense that one gender is necessarily better suited for a particular task than the other. They argue it all depends on individual interests and talents. In this respect, the discourse renders gender irrelevant.

However, when analysing how the young adults anticipate the division in their own families, I find that the narratives resort to the female-carer/male-earner model as a blueprint from which to start from. Typically an interviewee would explain how the father intends to reduce his working hours to look after the children – i.e. 100% employment minus X. When talking about the mother, the interviewees would discuss what percentage of employment would be possible for her besides taking care of the children – i.e. 0% employment plus X. Depending on the interviewee, the anticipated arrangement remains closer or diverges farther from the

female-carer/male-earner model. Nevertheless, it implicitly attributes primary responsibility for caring to the mother and for earning to the father and is thus implicitly gendered.

Reflecting the discourse with regard to Maihofer's (2001) notion of being different while being equal, I come to an ambivalent conclusion. On the one hand, the discourse of being different allows for transcending gendered expectations. Understanding human beings as unique legitimises choosing pathways that are gender-untypical. Consequently, gender loses much of its diciplinary power. It's no longer possible to say that a person should do this or that simply because she is a women or because he is a man. This holds a considerable emanciatory potential. It provides the legitimation to act in opposition to established gender stereotypes and thereby contributes to weaken persisting expectations as to how men and women should be.

On the other hand, the discourse individualises the effects of persisting structural and institutional inequalities. Understanding everything as the consequence of individual choices makes it hard to question and challenge norms and conventions on the level of society. In consequence, the discourse of being different immunises current inequalities. With regard to gender, it veils persisting discriminations and effectively 'privatises' gender relations. In order to combat them on the level of society, I argue that we need shift the debate from the individual 'freedom to choose' to the persistence of systematic (gendered, raced, classed, …) inequalitites. I see achieving this discursive shift as one of the biggest challenges that gender studies and research in diversity and difference face at the present moment.

Aversions to commodified child care

Ending on a more positive note, the last paper in this section traces the discourse of individual responsibility to the field of child care and explores the potential for a nascent new ethics of care:

Paper 9: Schwiter Karin 2013: Aversions to the commodification of care: How young Swiss adults plan to organise their future families. In: *Social and Cultural Geography*, 14(5), 500-516.

In the global north, the recent academic debate identifies a marked shift towards market-based provisions of care (Green & Lawson 2011). As welfare benefits are being replaced by workfare programmes and increasing numbers of families need two incomes to make ends meet, the female-carer/male-earner family model gradually transforms to an adult-worker model – or at least to a one-and-a-half-earner model (Daly 2011). This means that care work must either be squeezed into ever shorter time slots or outsourced (McDowell 2004). In consequence, increasing numbers of families become consumers of commodified care

services for their children, disabled or elderly family members (Hall 2011). Recent studies on the reframing of care as a commodity highlight that the 'freedom to choose' their preferred care arrangement in the newly emerging care-marketplace remains limited to well off households (Green & Lawson 2011). Furthermore, care continues to be naturalised as a gendered obligation that is done out of love rather than for pay and thus remains badly remunerated even when commodified (Daly 2011). Thereby, geographers in particular have pointed out that the question of who cares for whom and under what circumstances is bound to cultural norms and values – resulting in variegated 'landscapes of care' (Milligan & Wiles 2010).

In paper 8, I use the narrative interviews introduced above to analyse how young adults in Switzerland plan to care for their children. Surprisingly, the narratives disclose a pronounced discourse of aversion against any form of commodified childcare. For example, one interviewee emphasises:*'It's not good for children to be in day care when they're small. In the early years they should be raised in the family home.'* The vigour and conviction with which the young Swiss adults disapporve of paid care for children is astonishing. There is a broad agreement that – from the point of view of a child's well-being – day care should not be used for more than a few hours and not on more than one or two days a week. Instead, the interviewees argue, the primary caregivers should always be the parents.

Reflecting this pronounced aversion to commodified care, I discuss a number of aspects that foster this discurse. These include the limited availability and high costs of child care in Switzerland and the normative ideal of good motherhood that idealises stay-at-home mothers. Furthermore, the interviews show that children are no longer perceived as as matter of course that follows adulthood and marriage, but as a key life project. The interviewees repeatedly use the expressions that they want to *'mould'* or *'shape'* their children themselves. For instance, one interviewee argues: *'I don't want anyone else to raise my children. I want to bring them up myself, according to my own ideas.'* This discourse ties in with the discussion on individualised responsibility introduced above. The idea that parents are responsible for 'shaping' their children makes them individually responsible for whatever is later perceived as 'problematic behaviour' of their offspring.

In conclusion, I argue in paper 9 that the stark aversion to commodified care might contribute to perpetuating gendered divisions of labour in the family that expect mothers to be main carers. However, it also holds a promising transformative potential: it challenges the universal adult worker model that is propagated by neoliberal policies. By demanding time to care for their children, the young adults contest the trend to squeeze the time available for reproductive work. It might pave the ground for a renewed debate on alternative ethics of care and alternative role models, such as a universal adult caregiver model which foregrounds that all adults need time to care – be it for children, parents, relatives, neighbours or friends.

Interim conclusions

Reflecting on the set of papers compiled in this section, I have been grappling with one major point of potential critisism: Does it make sense to use interview transcripts for discourse analysis? More commonly, discourse analytical studies work with preexisting text fragments such as news articles, government proceedings, legal documents or even blogs or twitter messages. These text fragments had been part of the public debate before researchers showed an interest in them. In contrast, working with interviews means first producing the empirical material with the explicit aim of later analysing it. Critics argue that such texts are not 'natural' speech or writing but artificially produced and therefore unsuited for an analysis that wants to understand how an issue is discussed (cf. O'Rourke & Pitt 2007). I disagree with this stance, because it creates a highly problematic distinction between 'natural' and 'artificial' texts. It wrongly suggests that interviews could produce statements that somehow stand outside the discourses prevalent in a given society. From a Foucaultian perspective, all utterances are valid empirical material as long as their context of production is reflected in the analysis.

This leads to the second critical aspect regarding the use of interviews for discourse analyses. Foucault discusses interviews as a historcially specific form of confession. In the current regime of truth, he argues, they have become a powerful technology for the production of 'truth' (Foucault 1983, 61-68). Willingly or not, they force the interviewees to speak about themselves. According to Foucault, human beings have not always had the urge to talk about their experiences, wishes, fears, ambitions, secrets and the like in this way. Interviews are a historically specific cultural technique that requires and produces a specific relation to one-self. It demands of speakers to identify with their deeds and to take responsibility for them.

In this sense, when I invite interviewees to reflect on their biography and speak about their plans for the future, I address them exactly as the neoliberal subjects who must take responsibility for their life plans. In other words, I use a method of producing data that already conceptualises the subject as a responsible individual. This contributes to the fact that the narrations produced focus on individual strategies of survival in a given world, rather than on their notions of transforming society. In hindsight, I would love to complement and contrast the interviews with other methods such as, for instance, group discussions which address young adults as part of an age group rather than as individuals. It would be fascinating to see whether the discourses of individual difference and individualised responsibility would still appear so prominently and whether such other methods of producing discourse provide more opportunity to imagine collective action for social transformation.

Notwithstanding this valid critique, I find interviews a very apt and productive method to explore what is 'sayable' and what is normalised or 'othered' in a given context. In this sense, the papers in this section extend the existing debate on neoliberal subjectivity from policy and institutional analyses to the self-understanding of people themselves. They show, how

the idea of being different and being responsible for all consequences of ones choices have become naturalised elements of how young people understand themselves.

Even though neoliberal thought plays a dominant role in their self-concepts, discourses are never set in stone or without fractures. The above discussion of the emancipatory potential of understanding oneself as different and the trend towards a new ethics of care might point to such fractures and offer glimpses of how current self-concepts might transform in the future.

6 Mobilising gender and migration in care labour markets

The third set of papers follows up on the timely question of who cares for whom and under what conditions? Demographic aging, changing gender relations and neoliberal reforms in the provision of public services have brought care to the forefront of public and academic agendas. Many countries in the global north face what is often called a 'care crisis' (England 2010). In order to meet the rising demand for a labour force that is willing to accept the poor pay and long hours characteristic of care work, they turn to migrant workers (Wills et al. 2010; Fudge 2012). By setting up specific migration schemes governments facilitate the recruitment of migrants into care work (Huang et al. 2012). This strategy has led to the development of 'care chains' that stretch around the globe. They are comprised of workers emigrating from poorer countries to work in richer households in the global north (Lutz 2002).

Within the last decade, Switzerland, too, has witnessed a growing number of migrant workers who look after elderly people in private households (Schilliger 2009). The development was fostered by the Free Movement of Workers Agreement with the EU, which came into full effect for Switzerland only in 2011. The agreement allows EU and EFTA citizens to take residence and find work anywhere in Switzerland. In combination with other factors, it led to the emergence a new market for live-in elder care. The commercialisation of home care has been accompanied by a mushrooming of care agencies which recruit migrant workers who are willing to live in the households of the care recipients and look after them around the clock (Truong et al. 2012). The workers – nearly all women – typically come from Eastern European countries. They stay in Switzerland for a few weeks or months at a time, before they return home for a roughly equal stretch of time while an alternate worker takes over (Medici & Schilliger 2012).

Studies from many different contexts have shown that care workers in private households typically face very precarious working conditions (Anderson 2000; Yeoh & Huang 2010), frequent abuse (Arat-Koç 2001) and very scant and sketchy legal protection (Fudge & Strauss 2014; Medici 2015). However, comparatively little is known about the care agencies which recruit the workers from abroad and place them in the households of the elderly. As labour market intermediaries they play a key role in shaping local care markets. Lindquist et al. (2012) identified them as 'the black box of migration research' and call for a more differenciated analysis of their roles.

In our project '*Care Markets. The role of care agencies in the commodification of elderly care*' we take up this call and analyse the strategies and practices of care agencies in Switzerland. Our project aims at developing a differenciated understanding of the emerging market for live-in care in Switzerland. By focussing on care agencies as key drivers of marketisation, we want to explore the consequences of the current reconfiguration of elderly care for states,

households, families, care workers as well as care recipients. The three and a half year project was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation from 2013 to 2017. It ties in with the overarching theme of this habilitation as it addresses the question:

> *In what ways are gender, culture and mobility mobilised in the emerging market for live-in care services?*

Conceptual framework: the performativity of markets

Our study is based on the 'performativity of markets' perspective (Berndt & Boeckler 2012). This approach starts from the assumption that markets are not just given, but they are continously produced. Their functioning is only ever temporarily stabilised by repeated performative acts of all involved actors such as companies, workers, consumers, state bodies and others. Markets come into being through the establishment and continuous re-negotiation of procedures and scripts regarding prices, products, places of exchange and mechanisms of control (Callon 2007). While the existing literature on the performativity of markets focuses on tangible commodities, our study further develops this approach by extending it to the service sector.

A performative perspective on markets is particularly fruitful in our case, because market provision of live-in care services is still in its infancy. This means that the processes of operation in this market are even more fluid. Market actors stuggle to attain favourable positions, they negotiate the rules of the trade and mould the product they want to sell. While following the market development closely during the last seven years since our first exploratory study for the city of Zurich (Truong et al. 2012), we had the chance to witness incredibly fast paced developments: The federal council (*Bundesrat*) intervened against wage dumping by introducing a minimum wage for domestic workers. Workers launched and won law suits in which they demanded payment for excess working hours. Agencies shifted their strategies of recruitment and placement accordingly. The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) started monitoring the agencies closely and sanctioned violations of Swiss law. Unions started organising care workers. Agencies founded an employer's association, dissolved it again and joined an existing one. An NGO launched a 'fair care' agency as an alternative. The federal council reintroduced quotas to limit the influx of migrant workers from the two youngest EU countries. In sum, we happened to observe an emerging market in which rules and procedures were constantly shifting. While following these rapid developments, we focussed our attention to the overarching question of how these market processes convert the emotional labour of care work into a commodity - into a temporarily stabilised, sellable object.

Methodology: Actor-network-theory

The performative approach to markets draws on Actor-network-theory, which was originally developed in Science and Technology Studies and gradually adopted in other social science disciplines. ANT conceptualises their objects of interst as temporarily stabilised arrangements of human and non-human actants (Caliskan & Callon 2009; 2010). It aims at shedding light on the specific constellations of people and things that frame the object of interest in a particular way. It deliberately refutes a merely anthropocentric perspective by emphasising the role of socio-technical devices as actants in the network. In our case, such devices could for instance be the migration infrastructure that allows the workers to circulate between their workplaces and their homes abroad, the website plattforms which agencies use to connect to customers, the sorting algorithms that are used to match care workers to households or even the working contracts that distinguish work from leisure time.

Thereby, actor-networks are understood as inherently unstable and changeable. In order to stabilise a specific arrangement, certain relations must be cut and aspects veiled. This process of framing is always threatened by so-called overflows - moments when hidden aspects come to the fore. They irritate the current arrangement and might lead to a transformation of the actor-network (Berndt & Boeckler 2012). Empirically analysing such a fraiming means identifying all the actants invested in the object of study and the linkages between them.

In line with these suggestions, we set up our research design as a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995) and followed the market actors and their network connections to various sites. Huey Shy Chau, one member of our research team, for example accompanied care agencies to their recruitment sites in Hungary and Slovakia (Chau 2018). As instruments of data collection, we used expert interviews (Gläser & Laudel 2009), narrative interviews (Helfferich 2009) and document analysis (of policy documents, working contracts, websites, advertisements, etc.). Furthermore, we collected ethnographic material through participant observation during various meetings of market actors.

Switzerland's relationship with austerity and neoliberalism

In the wake of the financial crisis of 2007/2008, many governments in the global north implemented harsh austerity measures. With marked cuts in spending and neoliberal reforms they attempted to restore confidence in investors and jump-start a new period of economic growth. While Europe heatedly discussed the pros and cons of austerity and researchers increased their efforts to explore the long term effects of neoliberal transformations, Switzerland appeared largely unaffected. In paper 10, we discuss Switzerland's relationship with austerity and neoliberalism, in order to outline the context in which private for profit providers of home care for the elderly emerge.

10) Schwiter Karin, Berndt Christian and Truong Jasmine 2015: Neoliberal austerity and the marketization of elderly care. In: *Social and Cultural Geography*. published online ahead of print.

In the paper, we argue that austerity has not surged in Switzerland in a similar extent as in many other countries in the global north in the aftermath of the recent financial crisis. This is because (neo)liberal values of fiscal discipline and prudence have always had a strong influence on Swiss social and economic policies. We illustrate this claim in the example of elder care policies. While other countries have addressed the societal challenge of an aging population by introducing new cash benefits or insurances for long term care, the Swiss state has so far largely refrained from direct involvement in elderly care. In consequence, the elderly in Switzerland cover a much larger share of long-term care costs out of their own pockets than in other member countries of the OECD (OECD 2011).

Furthermore, the Swiss health system has been transformed by a number of new public management reforms. Many state run hospitals were given indipendent legal forms and global budgets in order to facilitate competition. Refunds based on actual costs were replaced by a case-based accounting system that aims at improving cost efficiency (Berger et al. 2010). In a similar fashion, seniors' homes and home care services had to adopt a rigid time control scheme that limits how much time a care worker is allowed to spend on a specific task (Greuter 2010). In sum, these changes might not be as overtly visible as the harsh austerity cuts in other countries. Nevertheless, we argue that they are part of a neoliberal transformation that has paved the way for the emergence of for-profit suppliers of home care services for the elderly.

Capitalising on mobility, culture and gender

Following this discussion on the specificities of neoliberal austerity in Switzerland, papers 10 and 11 present results from our analysis of home care agencies' websites and interviews with their representatives to illustrate how this new market is performed. We show that the agencies use the neoliberal restructuring of state services outlined above to portray themselves als pioneers of a market that is 'more social than the state'.

11) Schwiter Karin, Berndt Christian und Schilling Linda 2014: Ein sorgender Markt. Wie transnationale Vermittlungsagenturen für Seniorenbetreuung (Im)Mobilität, Ethnizität und Geschlecht in Wert setzen. In: *Geographische Zeitschrift*, 102(4), 212-231.

In paper 11 we show how the agencies draw on current discourses of individualisation and autonomy to point out that their business is not about making profit, but about filling the care gap that has resulted from public institutions' failure to provide the services that people need. Only a live-in home care worker who is available around the clock, they argue, will relieve elderly people from the unbearable time pressure under which care is provided in state institutions. Instead of the clocked and predefined rhythms of nursing homes, a live-in home care arrangement will allow them keep the daily routines they prefer. One agency sums up: '*The Spitex [public mobile care services] don't have time and we have time.*'

A second argument of the agencies draws on gendered and culturalised stereotypes to advertise care quality: '*The quality of the Polish women is often higher than of a German, a Swiss or a French person, because they bring a different understanding of care. They are very loving, hard working, modest, not smart-alecky and sensitive to the whole situation,*' a care agent states. Because the workers are women and because they are Polish, they are attributed to be especially suited to this type of work and provide excellent care.

Furthermore, the agencies foreground their contribution to emancipation and development. They argue that the employment they provide for women from Eastern European countries enables them to escape the limited opportunities they have in their home countries. They get the chance to break free from traditional gender roles and become providers for themselves and their families. Additionally, the money they bring home will contribute to the development of their countries of origin.

In sum, the way the agencies frame their market activities suggests a win-win-win situation: Their services allow the elderly to retain their autonomy, they alleviate their families from the care burden and simultaneously offer opportunities for emancipation and development by providing employment for Eastern European women.

In papers 10 and 11, we contrast this progressive framing of the market by the agencies by drawing attention to the connections that had to be cut and veiled in order to produce this narrative. The first issue concerns the difficulty of defining what is work in a care setting in which the workers live in the households of the elderly and remain on call around the clock. The agencies define work by referring to the six or seven hours a day stipulated in their work contracts. By this, they cut off all the additional hours the workers care for the elderly or stay on call. These hours are simply redefined into shared leisure time: '*When the ladies [i.e. the care worker and the care recipient] watch a film together in the evenings. That's leisure.*' Thus, their narratives are based on the gendered assumption that the women workers enjoy spending their leisure time in the household. In consequence, the hours on stand-by which they are required to spend in the household remain unpaid. This framing enables the agencies to capitalise on the *immobility* of the workers in the live-in setting.

Second, the agencies use the *mobility* of the workers as circular migrants to legitimise why their salaries are considerably lower than those paid to locals. A care agent for example

argues: '*If you live in Switzerland, the job is heavily underpaid. But if you live abroad, it is very well paid.*' Thus, the redefinition of the workers as 'not living in Switzerland' is used to legitimise wages far below a Swiss living wage. This contributes to further immobilising the workers in the households, because they cannot afford to take part in social and leisure activities in Switzerland. Secondly, it immobilises the workers in their countries of origin, because it prevents them from moving to Switzerland permanently, as their salaries could not sustain them.

In our conclusions, we discuss the newly emerging market for live-in home care as a prime example of the way markets work under today's neoliberal capitalism. The political rational of neoliberal austerity that limits state involvement in elderly care has enabled the agencies to position themselves as 'social entrepreneurs' that fill a widening 'care gap'. These new labour market intermediaries play a key role in framing the market and in defining labour conditions. They position themselves in contrast to the rationalised and clocked public care services and draw on the positive discourses of autonomy, emancipation and development to create an image of 'social entrepreneurship'. At the same time, they skillfully mobilise and immobilise workers and draw on gendered and culturalised stereotypes to capitalise on exaclty these social and spatial differenciations they purport to overcome. Thus, the priviledge of the Swiss elderly to be cared for at home relies on mobilising Eastern European women as circular migrants and immobilising them in the households they work at.

Blind spots of the media debate on live-in home care

In paper 12, we turn from the websites and interviews with care agencies to the media representation of live-in home care in Switzerland.

12) Schwiter Karin, Pelzelmayer Katharina und Thurnherr Isabelle (forthcoming 2018) Ein boomender Markt? Die Konstruktion der 24-Stunden-Betreuung für ältere Menschen in den Schweizer Medien. In: *Swiss Journal of Sociology*.

We used the media databases Lexis-Nexis and Factiva to identify all articles that discussed the phenomenon within the last ten years (2003-2013). The analysis discloses a market increase in media attention in the last three years of our observation period. We attribute this increase inter alia to the opening of the Swiss labour market for workers from the Eastern European countries in June 2011, when the free movement of persons act between Switzerland and the European Union came into full force. This enabled workers from Eastern European countries to take residence and find work in Switzerland.

Our media analysis identified a totel of 115 articles. Most of them appeared in fee-based quality papers such as *Tages-Anzeiger* and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, as well as on Swiss Radio

and Television (SRF). The free newspapers – *20 Minuten*, *Blick am Abend*, *Migros Zeitung*, *Coop Zeitung*, etc. – reported marketly less on this issue. Furthermore, we were surprised that we found hardly any articles in the francophone Swiss press. (We did not search for articles in Italian.) Apparently, live-in home care has received much less attention in the French-speaking than in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. On the one hand, this might be attributed to the stronger presence of publicly-subsidised mobile care (Spitex) (Gmür & Rüfenacht 2010, 391), which limits the demand for live-in home care. On the other hand, care workers in these cantons tend to originate from Latin American countries and the Philippines rather than from Eastern Europe (Flückiger & Pasche 2005, 21). This means that they do not fall under the free movement of persons act. In consequence, the discussion in the francophone media focusses much more on the problematic of 'sans-papiers' – of people without papers (cf. Carreras 2014). In sum, the lack of articles from the French-speaking part of Switzerland meant that we had to limit our analysis to the German language press.

Analysing the articles from a Foucaultian discourse perspective (cf. Waitt 2010), we identified four key discourses. First, the media discourse is dominated by a vilification of nursing homes. It a appears as a nearly unquestionable truth that aging at home with a live-in carer is preferable to institutional care. Second, live-in home care is presented as a booming market on which dubious care agencies make huge profits. Third, the care workers are situated in a tension between exploitative working conditions on the hand and their gratitude that they can earn money in Switzerland on the other. In sum, they are portrayed in a somewhat contradictory image of people who are exploited but still happy with what they have got. Forth, the state is presented as overwhelmed and unable or unwilling to address the care crisis, which forces people to resort to live-in care arrangements.

In our discussion in paper 12, we challenge these representations and point to the blind spots of the media discourse. First of all, we question the purported boom of live-in home care. There is no statistical data on the number of live-in care workers available. Our verification of the numbers that are often cited in the news press revealed that they were mere extrapolations from an analysis in Austria. While our interviews showed that some agencies have grand expansion plans, many of them still had surprisingly small numbers of clients. The supply of workers seems to surpass the demand by far. Based on the available data, we problematise the fact that the depicted boom of live-in home care appears to become a self-fullfilling prophesy: The media reports of a boom encourage more families to consider live-in home care as a viable option for their elderly. Therefore, the media articles play a key role in initiating the boom they purport to observe.

Moreover, we question the nearly unchallenged preference of home care over institutional care by drawing attention to the fact that the home can also be a place of isolation and abuse. Studies from other context show that the lacking oversight, the isolation of the workers in the households and their nonstop on-call-duties, which hinder their regeneration, foster abuse (Arat-Koç 2001). While there is a prominent discussion on the quality of care in

hospitals and nursing homes, this discussion is virtually absent with regard to home care settings. We argue that the idealisation of the home as the best place to be cared for veils the question of care quality. We identify this as a problematic blind spot of the current media debate.

Finally, the current discourse vilifies the profit oriented care agencies and the state that fails to address the care crisis. We argue that this media representation disregards the responsibility of the families who use live-in home care. In many cases, they are the formal employers of the care workers, and even if they buy the services of a live-in care worker via an agency, they retain the authority to give directives *(Weisungsrecht)*. In both cases, they bear a large share of the responsibility for the labour conditions in the household. Even though the working contracts say otherwise, they often expect the live-in care workers to remain in the households and be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, the families' responsibility for fair working conditions and living wages remains utterly absent in the media discourse.

Based on our media analysis, we argue that it would be advisable to record live-in care workers in Swiss labour statistics in order to get a better idea of the prevalence of this type of care arrangement. In addition, we suggest extending the current media debate to include the quality of care in home care settings and the responsibility of families as employers. In the light of the growing number of private households that hire nannies, cleaners, gardeners, dog-sitters and care workers for the elderly, we point to the urgent need for a public debate on what it means for families to become employers and the responsibilities that come along with it.

Claiming rights to the city as circular migrant workers

With the last paper of this section we want to challenge the image of live-in care workers as victims. Drawing on Lefebvre's concept of the 'right to the city', paper 13 explores what urban participation and belonging might mean in a context of hightened mobility.

13) Chau Huey Shy, Pelzelmayer Katharina and Schwiter Karin 2017: Short-term circular migration and gendered negotiation of the right to the city: The case of migrant live-in care workers in Basel, Switzerland. In: *Cities. The international journal of urban policy and planning*, published online ahead of print.

In *Le droit à la ville* Lefebvre (1968) argues that all inhabitants of a city should be able to participate in decision making and have the right to their share of social, economic and cultural resources of the city. This demand for a 'right to the city' for all denizens of an urban space means that participation is no longer defined through nationality, place of birth or

capital, but by spending one's everyday life in that space (Purcell 2002). Lefebvre's concept has been adopted widely by scholars and activist groups alike (e.g. World Social Forum 2004; Mullis 2014). Feminist and critical scholars have pointed out that Lefebvre's idea includes more than just universal rights-based claims of individuals. It encompasses reshaping processes of urban transformation collectively, by forming alliances and changing existing norms and regulations (Harvey 2008). Furthermore, it also means appropriating a city through the routines and rhythms of everyday life, which might context existing rules (Kofman & Lebas 1996, 17; Fenster 2005).

So far, studies working with the 'right to the city' framework partially retain an implicit notion of sedentarism. Even when focussing on migrants, they assume that the new denizens will inhabit the city for a longer period of time. In our paper, we want to challenge this assumption and extend the framework to a situation of hightened mobility. We take circularly migrating care workers as an example to explore what the 'right to the city' can mean for inhabitants who live in a city intermittently and only ever for short periods of time.

Existing research has shown that circular migrants often lack the rights of sedentary citizens (e.g. Marchetti 2015). In our results section, we first show how the interplay of migration and work regimes indeed produce specific moments of social and political exclusion for live-in care workers in Switzerland. For example, even though they work on several assignments a year, care workers' contracts typically only cover one assignment at the time. In consequence, their residence permits expire at the end of each assignment, too. This hinders the care workers from accessing unemployment benefits or claiming social assistance. While they pay the same share of unemployment insurance and they are de jure eligible for benefits, they can often not access unemployment subsidies due to the missing residence permits. In sum, they face a number of hindrances that restrict their 'rights to the city'.

However, our interviews with care workers also point to strategies of appropriating their cities in the Lefebvrian sense. For example, live-in care workers make extensive use of social media plattforms such as Facebook. Within specific chat groups, they exchange information about their workplaces, share news and pictures and comment on the posts of others. These practices enable them to participate in the local everyday life in their cities of residence as well as in their cities of work, even though they are intermittently physically absent in both. In this sense, they become denizens of two cities at once.

Furthermore, these online communication forums also facilitate the collective organisation of care workers. In paper 13 we discuss the example of the worker's network *Respect* in the city of Basel. The network started as a small gathering of Polish live-in care workers who met after the polish-language church service on Sundays. By allying themselves with researchers and union representatives, they formed a community in which care workers support each other and share information. In the meantime, they launched and won several court cases in which they sued their former employers for unpaid wages.

In our conclusion, we discuss the members of *Respect* as examples of city inhabitants who are only intermittently present, but still manage to organise and collectively appropriate a place in the sense of the Lefebvrian 'right to the city'. This perspective of being a city dweller even during periods of absence challenges the requirement of presence in the 'right to the city' debate and replaces it with a relational understanding of space (Massey 2005). It shows that inhabitance might not be limited to only one city at a time and it is produced through interrelations to other cities.

It is not our intention to veil the additional hurdles that result from a situation of hightened mobility and complicate the participation as inhabitant of a city. Nevertheless, our paper shows that internet-based communication technology facilitates new forms of being present while being absent. Furthermore, it creates a more differenciated picture of the women working as live-in care givers and challenges their prevalent victimization.

Interim Conclusions

Reflecting on the papers in this section, the key challenge for me is my positionality the field as a feminist researcher. Over the last seven years of following the development of the live-in care market in Switzerland, I have formed close ties to care workers, representatives of care agencies as well as activists and representatives of labour unions. I have participated in countless meetings, workshops and informal discussions on how the emerging care market should or should not be regulated or (re)framed. In participating in the field, I have tried to do research 'with' people rather than 'about' people. However, the challenge goes beyond avoiding 'extractive research' by mutually sharing information and supporting eachother: As an academic, I take the privilege to write and speak on this matter inside and outside academia. My position as a researcher grants weight and legitimacy to my arguments and allows me to become a voice of authority about 'others'. Therefore, I ask myself, whom and what do I use this power for?

The Charter of Decolonial Research Ethics (Decoloniality Europe 2013) suggests using the privilege of being white and being a researcher to serve the causes and struggles of colonised or marginalised groups of people. It demands that not the privideged researcher, but the marginalised define what those causes are and how they are best served. While I acknowledge the importance of this claim, I would argue that researchers are hardly ever confronted with just one homogeneous group with a single, rightful cause. Regarding our question of regulating live-in care work, for instance, I have talked to workers who are against regulating live-in home care because they anticipate it would make their employment opportunities in Switzerland disappear altogether. Other care workers opt for regulations, because they hope that this will generate better paid employment opportunities. Furthermore, there are workers employed in related fields who fear the low wages in live-in care work will put their own salaries under pressure – not to mention the diverging interests

of different care agencies, activist groups or unions. As our example shows, research fields consist of continually shifting alliances of people with variegated, intersecting interests and their own internal power struggles. Therefore, while remaining sensitive to the arguments and causes of marginalised groups is a must in feminist and decolonial research, the decision of what stance to take always remains with the researcher. I find it the most important and most difficult task of all. It needs to be questioned and reevaluated throughout the research process.

Within the last three years, the Swiss Federal Council has proposed six possible strategies of regulating the Swiss live-in care market (Bundesrat 2015). In order to assess the consequences of the six strategies we – as researchers – were asked for our expert assessments. Based on this report (*Regulierungsfolgenabschätzungsbericht*) (BSS 2016), the Federal Council decided this summer on which strategy to pursue (Bundesrat 2017). While I am writing this text, we are asked again to assess and comment on the draft regulations, which the Federal Council recommends the cantons to adopt (Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft SECO 2018).

I see it as part of my privilege as a researcher that I am allowed to participate in the respective hearings with the Swiss State Secretariate for Economic Affairs SECO on this matter. It allows me to draw attention to the highly precarious working conditions in live-in care labour. Furthermore, I have the chance to highlight the problematic framings that have come into being with the commodification of care labour that redefine parts of care work as leisure (see papers 10 and 11). For me this demonstrates the societal relevance of our research. Nontheless, it remains a key challenge for me to reflect my positionality in this field.

7 Synthesis

I consider it a a challenge to pack my academic work of the last seven years into one coherent story. Even after trying to do so, I am not utterly convinced whether it is at all useful to attempt this endeavour. It streamlines thought processes into one targeted direction and thereby brushes over much meandering and cuts off linkages to neighbouring topics. However, on a more positive note, it presented me with the opportunity to reflect on my contributions to the field of geography.

The research presented in this habilitation employs a range of theoretical approaches to explore the overarching question of who does what kind of work and under which conditions. With each of these approaches my work attempts to challenge the prevalent orthodox understanding of labour market allocation as result of the 'free choices' of autonomous – and equal – human beings. I aim at shifting our theoretical lenses so that it becomes visible how social differenciations are mobilised in today's labour markets and create marked inequalities.

- In section 4, we suggested introducing **Bourdieu's habitus perspective** to studying young people's occupational 'choices'. This approach transforms our conceptualisation of these 'choices' from one time decisions for an employment field to the long-term development of a (gendered) habitus which gets a person to fit into one employment field rather than another. Our research has shown that the positive and negative feedbacks from institutions, peers, parents and others are key to this habitus development. It results in unequal access to gender-untypical employment fields and therefore a waste of gender-untypical talents.

- In section 5, I attempted to shift the existing debate on neoliberal subjectivity from the analysis of government programs to human beings themselves. Extending the **Foucaultian discourse perspective** to interview material, I argued, allows us to identify a historically specific form of neoliberal subjectivity. We can make visible how neoliberal thought has become an integral part of how people understand themselves in our current age. In effect, this self-concept individualises responsibility and legitimises inequalities as mere consequences of free choices taken by autonomous individuals.

- In section 6, we aimed at further developing the **performativity of markets perspective**, by shifting our attention from marktes for tangible goods to the service sector. Analysing the framings in the emerging market for live-in elderly care enabled us to show how not just gender and ethnicity, but also mobility differentials are used to legitimise precarious working conditions.

In sum, all the projects outlined above contribute to contemporary debates in economic, social and cultural geography in that they provide a differenciated understanding in what moments and in which ways social differenciations such as gender, ethnicity or mobility are

mobilised in labour markets and to what effects. They show these categorisations of people legitimise channelling specific groups of people into particular employment fields and hindering them from entering others. Moreover, they illustrate how these mechanisms are veiled by a neoliberal rational of individual choice that allocates responsibility to the individual and immunises structural forms of discrimination against criticism.

8 Outlook

The project on educational and occupational pathways of young adults I presented in papers 1 to 4 has shown inter alia that employment trajectories of both women *and men* are influenced by anticipated parental responsibilities from a very early age. This observation led us to submit a follow up project to further explore how exactly anticipated parenthood and employment become entangled when young adults plan their occupational trajectories. The project '*Antizipierte Elternschaft und Berufstätigkeit*', which I co-lead together with Andrea Maihofer from the University of Basel und Sandra Hupka from the University of Bern, has been funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation from 2014 to 2017. It has not been included in this habilitation, because we are only just in the process of publishing the results. Two papers have already come out (Baumgarten et al. 2016; Schwiter & Baumgarten 2017). In these, we discuss the extent to which gendered norms and parental responsibilities transform when young men start working part time and claim 'daddy days'.

Through this and following projects in the future, I aim to develop a better understanding of the changing role that employment plays in the current age of neoliberal capitalism. Can we observe nascent criticism of life plans dominated by omnipresent employment demands? Are there indications of the emergence of an universal caregiver model (cf. paper 7)? Or are we moving further towards an universal adult worker model (Daly 2011), in which full time employment is the norm for all adults irrespective of their familial situation? Does that mean time for care is increasingly squeezed into ever shorter time frames or outsourced altogether?

This trend to outsource care labour, lies at the core of our *Care Markets* project (cf. papers 9 to 13). In order to further explore the fundamental question of what it means for our societies when we increasingly outsource care to a highly mobile, precarious migrant workforce I have broadened my perspective through adopting a comparative lense. In a paper with is about to come out in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* in collaboration with Kim England from the University of Washington in Seattle and Kendra Strauss from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver we bring together the theoretical concepts of social reproduction and constrained agency to compare transnational care markets in Canada, the UK, Austria and Switzerland (Schwiter et al. forthcoming). Furthermore, I have started working with the research teams Helma Lutz from the University of Frankfurt and Brigitte Aulenbacher from the University of Linz to compare the specific circular migration schemes, labour regulations, welfare provisions and market acteurs of the transnational live-in home care markets in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Our project has received funding from the Research Foundations of all three countries and runs from 2017 to 2020. Together, we want to deepen our comparative knowledge on how the transnational

care markets that are emerging in many countries in the global north are framed and what effects these framings produce.

Besides, in collaboration with Geraldine Pratt from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, I have started exploring the phenomenon of inverse care chains. The emerging practice of placing elderly people in care homes abroad – for instance in Thailand – raises a number of intriguing and highly controversial questions, because it challenges the often taken for granted privilege of sedentarism in the global north. A first paper, which is currently in revision at *Global Networks*, reflects on the global power structures that foster mobility differentials – which force some people to be mobile to for others to remain sedentary.

Apart from the topic of care, I'm interested in expanding my work on the historicity of subjectivity. For example, how do our imaginaries of 'self' and 'other' shift in regard of the nationalist discourses that are currently (re)emerging in many contexts in the global north? How do societal trends such as the emergence of an increasingly digitalised society or new forms of work in a sharing economy shape how people understand themselves in relation to others? Do they accentuate individualisation or do they move towards emerging forms of post-neoliberal collectivism?

While pursuing these research interests, I want to foster the pressing debate on how we work in academia. This ties in with my feminist methodology and challenges the current trends to assess the quality of academic work by measuring quantitative output via impact factors and citation indexes. I question universities' strategies to strive for excellence by creating ever more competitive selection mechanisms that produce highly precarious working conditions for young researchers.

As part of this endeavour, I have co-initiated and co-organised the innopool project '*Science Down to Earth*'. The project consisted of a series of lunch events that fostered a dialogue on how to create more caring work environments in our department. In collaboration with colleagues from our DFG research network '*Feminist Geographies and New Materialities'* I recently co-organised a workshop on slow scholarship and plan to co-author a book chapter to launch this debate in the German language geography community.

Reflecting academic practice includes teaching, where I currently co-organise a summer school on gender and space in summer 2018, at which alternative forms of academic collaboration and knowledge production take center stage. With this, we want to offer the next generation of young scholars an opportunity to engage with feminist methodologies and geographies. In a similar vein, I initiated the '*Self-organised Seminar*', a new master course in Geography that aims at dehierarchising teaching and learning. It invites students to reflect on what they felt is missing in their curricula and work collectively in their peer group to acquire knowledge in these identified fields.

In addition, it is my aim to continue my dialogue with people outside academia. This includes writing for applied journals, online forums or newspapers, setting up workshops with

stakeholders, participating in public round table discussions or even creating 'sound bites' that make my work accessible as brief audio pieces (Mähner et al. 2015a; cf. 2015b). It means taking a stance in consultations with government bodies and organisations. In this sense, it is my aim to be what Katharyne Mitchell (2008) termed a 'public scholar'.

In all this, my focus lies on drawing attention to social inequalities in the world of work. I regard the increasing precarisation of parts of the workforce as one of the key challenges of the 21th century. It forms the often invisible undercurrent that fuels unrest – for instance the current controversies on migration and the new right in Europe. I see the aim of my work making inequalities visible and thereby challenge them.

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Karin Schwiter, Zurich, February 2017

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PART 2: PAPERS