

System formation in the Swiss vocational education and training system using the example of commercial and business education

Susanne Burren, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Switzerland

Lucien Criblez, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Martina Späni, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Switzerland

System formation within commercial & business education differs from that within other vocational educational fields in Switzerland. An important difference is that the former not only developed as part of the field of vocational training in the narrow sense of the word (apprenticeships, professional and vocational examinations/*Fach- bzw. Berufsprüfungen*), but also as part of the general training system in the early stages (e.g. in the form of cantonal commercial schools (*Handelsschulen*), graduation from which gives access, albeit limited, to university). A reconstruction of the options within the commercial & business education system not only exemplifies long-term differentiation but also hierarchical processes within the general education and vocational training fields. The first part of this presentation introduces a phase model of system formation within commercial & business education. It is built around the genesis of the standardisation process of the particular educational types as a representation of the generalisation and consolidation of career profiles and graduations. The focus is on the location and hierarchical structuring of specific new educational and certification options. In part two, we will discuss an example of these processes of differentiation and hierarchical structuring, which is both interesting and informative from a historical point of view: the development of the full-time educational options at upper secondary level. This second part aims to a) give a historical and statistical overview of the differentiation of the full-time educational options at upper secondary level in Switzerland (*niedere, höhere Handelsschulen, Wirtschaftsgymnasium*), b) give possible reasons for participation in both strands of the educational system – as opposed to other vocational fields – and c) discuss the current situation against the background of the historical development.