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A PhD Researcher Scholarship (4 years, full time) at the Sociodemography Research Group (DEMOSOC), Department of Political and Social Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University

Job description

The PhD researcher will work in the project funded by the Spanish Research Agency (Agencia Estatal de Investigación) ***Revising the equality of educational opportunities by social origin: access to undergraduate and postgraduate studies, and distribution by field of studies (CSO2016-80399-R)***

The PhD will write a dissertation based on a set of research articles publishable in international refereed journals. The dissertation should focus on one topic related to the research project (see below for a summary; further details on request). He/she will have to apply to be admitted to the PhD program in Political and Social Sciences of the Pompeu Fabra University, and s/he will work under the supervision of the principal researcher of the project. S/he will become member of the Sociodemography Research Group, will get the opportunity to participate in the Department's training program for PhD students and will draw up a personal training and supervision plan.

Qualifications

We are looking for a candidate with:

- * A Master degree in sociology, social psychology, demography, economics, or another relevant social science;
- * Excellent study results and CV;
- * Excellent quantitative research skills and proven experience in multivariate statistical analyses of large survey or register data sets;
- * Knowledge of experimental research design
- * Good writing skills and fluency in written and spoken English; experience in academic writing in English;
- * Great curiosity and enthusiasm for scientific research.

Procedure

After being admitted to the PhD program in Political and Social Sciences of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, the candidate should apply to the call for doctoral researchers by the Spanish Research Agency (Agencia Estatal de Investigación, AEI). This call is expected for September 2017.

The AEI will shortlist a number of applicants with the minimum required qualification (master degree level), among which the members of the DEMOSOC selection committee will make the final decision.

The appointment of the PhD researcher is at the University Pompeu Fabra, according to the conditions of employment stipulated by the AEI.

Those interested are invited to send their CV and a motivation letter to Meritxell Canals (sociodemo@upf.edu). Please indicate in the e-mail subject: PhD position DEMOSOC.

Project summary:

Revising the equality of educational opportunities by social origin: access to undergraduate and postgraduate studies, and distribution by field of studies

The role the university plays as a mechanism of upward social mobility might have been affected by two phenomena that have recently shocked university systems throughout the so called European University Space: the economic crisis (Great Recession) and the fundamental restructuring of those systems the Bologna Reform has entailed. The general objective of this research is to assess the effects of these two phenomena on the inequality of access and progression at the university level by social origin.

This general objective will be split up in the following more specific ones: a) to assess the eventual increase in the inequality of access to higher education (university) by social origin; b) to assess the eventual increase of educational segregation by social origin into different fields of study; c) to assess the unequal distribution of the risk of dropout by social origin among university students, prior to an eventual access to postgraduate studies; d) to assess the inequality of opportunities of access to postgraduate studies by social origin, upon completion of undergraduate studies

In order to attain these objectives, the research team intends to use the UNEIX database, which centralizes data on enrolment into graduate and postgraduate degrees at the Catalonian level. The research team will also explore other national databases of possible interest for the study of this research topic. The evidence drawn from the analysis of UNEIX data will be complemented by other research techniques. First, two experiments will be carried out among last-year upper secondary students and last-year undergraduate ones. These experiments are aimed at researching on the evaluation of costs and benefits made by these students in the year prior to making an important decision in their educational trajectory: enrolling in university graduate or postgraduate studies, respectively. Second, six focus groups (among lecturers, students and parents) will be organized in order to the considerations made by these collectives as regards the costs and benefits of further human capital investment for upper secondary graduates and undergraduate last-year students. It is expected that both the Great Recession and Bologna Reform have had a somehow adverse effect on equality of educational opportunities by social origin

Principal researcher: Luis Ortiz (luis.ortiz@upf.edu)