



Sociological Briefing

Mezquital Valley: university students and work experiences

Research on Sociology of Youth and Sociology of Work share common concerns about the transition of university students to the labour market. The contributions about this topic analyze the problems experienced by this group and how they adjust and overcome such difficulties. The article framing this sociological briefing focuses on a Mexican region to open new horizons about the situation in Mezquital Valley related to women university students and work experiences.

The author of “Experiencias laborales de estudiantes universitarias en el Valle del Mezquital” published in *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* developed in-depth interviews with women studying the Bachelor of Law degree in the Actopan College of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. The results show work conditions that weak the development and exercise of autonomy and economic rights in the initial integration into the labour market.

Framing the study

The work aims to approach how labour segregation is perceived by young women university students through their first labour experiences, especially between work and the economic care of the family.

The article provides an overview of the Mexican reality regarding the inclusion of young people in the labour market, mentioning the gender differences and

the high levels of labour segregation in the country. Moreover, Prof. Rosa María Huerta Mata introduces contributions that illustrate the role of capitalism, the situation of women, and the economic rights influencing this problem.

Amidst this context, the analysis conducted is qualitative and has been developed in the framework of the project “La economía de las estudiantes universitarias en el Valle del Mezquital”. The study provides details about the families of the participants, their educational level, and the employment situation of fathers and mothers. The topics underlying the interviews focused on the previous situation of economic autonomy and the accomplishment of economic rights.

First labour experiences: care, family business, support to father s work, and prohibition of fathers

The narratives of the young women illustrate that their labour experiences are linked to segregation, as the main responsibilities are related to the private sphere. They tend to be subordinated to activities of family support, facilitating their segregation of the general labour market. According to this, the voices of the young women show their roles in family care, family business, and support to fathers that work on the land. Furthermore, the results also show that

young women are integrated from the age of 14 or 16 into the labour market, mainly accompanied by their fathers. The research shows that some fathers do not allow their daughters to access the labour market without their supervision. This situation changes if the young women do not ask for permission but consider the support of other family members to be enrolled in other labour activities. To sum up, the initial integration of young women university students into the labour market is featured by the lack of autonomy and economic rights.