



Nurseries

Abstract In the long boom following the Second World War, it was working ‘migrant’ families and their specific needs that fostered the expansion of a nursery infrastructure. This was not done because mainstream values had changed, but because there was a practical need for such services. Indeed, it can be argued that it was the presence of this infrastructure that, together with other influences, led to a progressive normalisation of nursery childcare in Switzerland. Changing forms of life—whether adopted voluntarily or involuntarily—and the new infrastructure that emerged to cater to these needs assumed a force of their own and, gradually, effected a shift in social attitudes. In order to complete the revised picture of the relation between migration and gender innovation in Switzerland, this chapter ends with an examination of the personnel working in nurseries, this time focusing specifically on male staff members in the present day.

Keywords Nurseries · Infrastructure · Normalising effects · Changing forms of life · Male staff members · The intersection of discrimination and privileges

THE FIRST NURSERIES

The first institution declared to be a ‘nursery’ (crèche) was opened in Paris in 1844. In Switzerland, the first city to acquire a nursery was Basel in 1870.¹ Some thirty years later, Bern had six other nurseries and had thus become the leader in the establishment of this kind of infrastructure in Switzerland.²

Switzerland was industrialised early on, and its industries relied on female labour. By the middle of the nineteenth century, about half of factory workers were, according to Regina Wecker, women.³ When the first nurseries were created, medical discourses were extremely influential.⁴ It was a declared goal of these institutions to encourage mothers to breastfeed and to teach children and their parents civic hygiene concepts in order to guarantee a healthy and efficient workforce.⁵ In this logic, a sterile environment was more important than a stimulating one. In addition, it was considered a central task of these institutions to convey to the working class the bourgeois way of life and due respect for

¹In Switzerland, there are and have been numerous names for the facilities where children from the age of three months are professionally cared for. Not only the terminology but also childcare provision itself varies greatly within Switzerland. It is therefore very difficult to find comparable data and to make corresponding general statements for the whole country. Christine Zollinger and Thomas Widmer, Varieties of Childcare Policies in Swiss Municipalities: Bounded Possibilities for Gender Equality and Social Cohesion, in Liebig, Gottschall, and Sauer, *Gender Equality in Context: Policies and Practices in Switzerland*, Opladen: Barbara Budrich 2016, 111–136.

²Katharina Nuspliger-Brand and Alice Marcet, *Der Kindergarten im Kanton Bern. Geschichtliche Darstellung der bernischen Kindergartenbewegung*, Bern: Staatlicher Lehrmittelverlag 1982, 222. Institutions for unattended children from three to six years were established as early as 1828. Anna Bähler and Christian Lüthi, Die vielfältige Bildungslandschaft. Von der Gaumenschule bis zum Kindergarten, in Bähler, Barth, Bühler, Erne, and Lüthi, *Bern - die Geschichte der Stadt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Stadtentwicklung, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft, Politik, Kultur*, Bern: Stämpfli Verlag AG 2003, 275–276.

³Regina Wecker, The Oldest Democracy and Women’s Suffrage: The History of a Swiss Paradox, in Charnley, Pender, and Wilkin, *25 Years of Emancipation? Women in Switzerland, 1971–1996*, Bern: Peter Lang 1998, 25–40, 30.

⁴Jean Baptiste Firmin Marbeau, *Des crèches, ou, moyen de diminuer la misère en augmentant la population*, Paris: 1845.

⁵Ann F. La Berge, Medicalization and Moralization: The Creches of Nineteenth-Century Paris, *Journal of Social History* 25, 1 (1991), 65–87; Catherine Bouve, *L’utopie des crèches françaises au XIXe siècle: un pari sur l’enfant pauvre*, Bern: Peter Lang 2010.

the prevailing conditions in order to prevent political resistance and delinquency.⁶ The function of such nurseries was thus also to implant bourgeois values and norms into the working class.⁷

Regarding this first phase, it is still an open question whether the creation of this infrastructure had to do directly with migration. In fact, since it was in Paris that the first public nursery was established in 1844, it cannot be ruled out that people coming to Switzerland from places where nurseries had been created may have acted as brokers in the transnational diffusion of nurseries.⁸ In addition, it might have been the case that already at that time ‘foreign’ children were placed in nurseries more often than their Swiss counterparts. But so far, we do not know for certain.

THE SO-CALLED BOOM YEARS

Be that as it may, the important effect of migration on this process manifests itself at the latest in the so-called boom years. After the end of the Second World War, Switzerland experienced an exceptional economic boom and needed workers from other countries to sustain its high levels of growth.⁹ There is an assumption in the literature about this period that post-war migration policies reinforced traditional gender roles. ‘Migrants’ satisfied the demands of the booming Swiss job market, thus making it possible for the vast majority of Swiss mothers to stay at home

⁶Kaspar Burger, A Social History of Ideas Pertaining to Childcare in France and in the United States, *Journal of Social History* 45, 4 (2012), 1005–1025.

⁷Marcello Odermatt, “Nur unvollkommene Surrogate”. *Entstehung und Entwicklung und Wandel der Bedeutung und Funktionen von der Kinderkrippe als Fürsorgekonzept. Schweizer Diskurs und Stadtberner Praxis 1870 bis 1950*, Universität Bern: Lizentiatsarbeit Historisches Institut 2005. La Berge, Medicalization and Moralization: The Creches of Nineteenth-Century Paris, *Journal of Social History* 25, 1 (1991), 65–87.

⁸Such a situation can in fact be observed in relation to German refugees in America and England and the establishment of kindergartens: ‘In the long run, the suppression of liberalism in the German states after the abortive attempts at revolution in 1848 benefited the kindergarten movement, for it led to a widespread emigration of liberal-minded Germans to America and Western European countries, and in many cases, notably in America and England, the children of these emigrants became the first pupils of kindergartners who were seeking to promote Froebel’s ideas beyond the limits of their own country’. Phyllis Woodham-Smith and Evelyn Lawrence, *Froebel and English Education: Perspectives on the Founder of the Kindergarten*, New York: Schocken Books 1969, 24.

⁹A good overview of Switzerland in the twentieth century is given in Jakob Tanner, *Geschichte der Schweiz im 20. Jahrhundert*, München: C. H. Beck 2015.

and take care of their children—or so the argument goes.¹⁰ In this context, we can conceive of the following counterfactual argument: without migration, Swiss women would have been included in the labour market earlier and the use of nurseries would have been adopted more quickly by middle-class Swiss families. However, we cannot know whether this would actually have been the case—or whether there would have been an earlier outsourcing of industrial jobs, for example.

If, on the other hand, we start not from speculation, but from what is given, what do we see when we look with a different perspective at what happened? How can we challenge the assumption that ‘emancipation’ was prevented in Switzerland because of migration¹¹—by highlighting another side of the story? In what follows, I will present some preliminary considerations, which I intend to follow up on in further studies.

THERE IS NEVER A SINGLE STORY¹²

According to a commentary on the 1970 census, three-quarters of the growth in female employment between 1950 and 1960 was due to ‘foreigners’, and between 1960 and 1970, they were still responsible for

¹⁰‘Die Einwanderungspolitik der 1950er und 1960er Jahre diente somit gleichzeitig der Durchsetzung des bürgerlichen Familienmodells mit seiner klassischen Rollenverteilung von Alleinernährer und Hausfrau’. Elisa Streuli, Sonja Roest, and Lilo Roost Vischer, *Kommen, gehen oder bleiben? Migration in Basel heute*, in Ribbert, *In der Fremde. Mobilität und Migration seit der Frühen Neuzeit*, Basel: Historisches Museum 2010, 15–23, 16. ‘Die hohe Beschäftigungsquote ausländischer Frauen trug vielmehr dazu bei, die Trennung von Berufs- und Familienarbeit unter den einheimischen Frauen aufrechtzuerhalten’. Sarah Baumann, *...und es kamen auch Frauen. Engagement italienischer Migrantinnen in Politik und Gesellschaft der Nachkriegsschweiz*, Zürich: Seismo 2014, 82. See also Sarah Baumann, *Migration, Geschlecht und der Kampf um Rechte. Grenzüberschreitender Aktivismus italienischer Migrantinnen in der Schweiz der 1960er und 1970er Jahre*, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 65, 1 (2015), 65–82, 74. ‘Die Möglichkeit, von einem einzigen Verdienst leben zu können, macht die Erwerbsarbeit der Frauen fakultativ [...]’. Elisabeth Joris and Heidi Witzig, *Frauengeschichte(n). Dokumente aus zwei Jahrhunderten zur Situation der Frauen in der Schweiz*, Zürich: Limmat Verlag 1991 (1986), 78.

¹¹‘So zeigt sich, dass die zwei wohl wichtigsten strukturellen Besonderheiten der Schweiz, die Einwanderung von Fremdarbeitern und der Bildungsrückstand, sich beide negativ auf mögliche Emanzipationstendenzen auswirken’. Thomas Held and René Levy, *Die Stellung der Frau in Familie und Gesellschaft. Eine soziologische Analyse am Beispiel der Schweiz*, 1983 [1974], 38.

¹²On the dangers of single stories, see Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story* (2009), in: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en (4 April 2016).

more than half of the increase.¹³ Married women were far more likely to work outside the home if they belonged to a ‘migrant’ family than to a Swiss one.¹⁴ Many migrant women thus had to reconcile the conflicting demands of wage-work and family life well before this question was debated in ‘mainstream’ Swiss society.¹⁵ At least in the case of Switzerland, therefore, the impact of migration on the development of an infrastructure that made such ways of living possible should not be underestimated.

In post-war Switzerland, there was, in fact, a broad and long-lasting consensus about the temporary character of nurseries. For instance, at its annual meeting in 1964 the president of the *Swiss Nursery Association*¹⁶ stated that nurseries were merely a stopgap for cases in which nursery attendance could not be avoided.¹⁷ And a Swiss encyclopedia published in 1947 confidently stated that nurseries could and should be made largely redundant by higher wages and family allowances.¹⁸ And yet, in

¹³Cited from Gaby Sutter, *Berufstätige Mütter. Subtiler Wandel der Geschlechterordnung in der Schweiz (1945–1970)*, Zürich: Chronos 2005, 207.

¹⁴Werner Haug, *Einwanderung, Frauenarbeit, Mutterschaft. Probleme der schweizerischen Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Bevölkerungspolitik 1945–1976*, Bern: Peter Lang 1978, 63. Katharina Ley, *Frauen in der Emigration. Eine soziologische Untersuchung der Lebens- und Arbeitssituation italienischer Frauen in der Schweiz*, Frauenfeld: Huber 1979. Held and Levy, *Die Stellung der Frau in Familie und Gesellschaft. Eine soziologische Analyse am Beispiel der Schweiz*, 1983 [1974], 73.

¹⁵Here, a comparative perspective could be interesting. For instance, it has been showed that in the USA, African-American mothers were more than twice as likely to be employed as white mothers. Elizabeth R. Rose, *A Mother's Job: The History of Day Care, 1890–1960*, New York: Oxford University Press 1999, The same applies to women ‘migrants’ to the Federal Republic of Germany. Monika Mattes, *“Gastarbeiterinnen” in der Bundesrepublik. Anwerbepolitik, Migration und Geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2005, 82.

¹⁶In German: *Schweizerischer Krippen-Verband*. Today, this organisation changed its name to *kibesuisse*.

¹⁷‘Krippen sind und bleiben Notbehelfe’, sie sind dann vorgesehen, ‘wo der Krippenbesuch nicht abwendbar ist’. Krippenbericht 1964, No. 4, 2–4, 4. Regarding the official gazette of the *Swiss association for nurseries*, see Candid Berz, *Der “Krippenbericht”. Vereinsorgan des Schweizerischen Krippenvereins (1906–1972). Beschreibung und Auswertung eines Dokumentes aus einem sozialpädagogischen Tätigkeitsbereich*, Zürich: Lizentiatsarbeit 1974/1975.

¹⁸Krippen ‘sind grundsätzl. ein Notbehelf, der durch höhere Löhne u. Familienzulagen weitgehend überflüssig gemacht werden könnte u. sollte’. *Schweizer Lexikon in 7 Bänden*, Zürich: Encyclos-Verlag 1947, 1247.

the post-war period, rising wages and family allowances in Switzerland did not result in a decrease in the number of nurseries—quite to the contrary.

As is the case with any form of historical change, various causes were responsible for turning nursery childcare from an exceptional to a more normal phenomenon in Switzerland. Important factors were, for instance, the so-called new women's movement, which challenged the traditional division of labour, as well as the spread of part-time work as a model for mothers (though not in the same way for fathers).¹⁹ In addition, we should not forget that the golden era of the housewife was in fact a very short one. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that the ideal of the stay-at-home mother and housewife became a widespread reality in the Swiss working class.²⁰ In this context, Patricia Purtschert shows brilliantly how the restrictive requirements for women could be enforced by an affective integration of the Swiss housewife into a colonial imaginary. Purtschert outlines how the housewife emerges as the white head of a 'civilised' and consumer-oriented domesticity in constant differentiation from racialised others.²¹ Clearly, then, migration is not the only factor that needs to be considered when analysing such complex processes that took place under site-specific

¹⁹Sutter, *Berufstätige Mütter. Subtiler Wandel der Geschlechterordnung in der Schweiz (1945–1970)*, Zürich: Chronos 2005, 257–265. Sarah Schilliger, 'Umverteilung des 'Krimskrams'. Für eine neue Politisierung feministischer Bedürfnisse (2009)', in: http://www.frauenarchivostschweiz.ch/files/olymp/olymp_28.pdf (5 February 2016).

Today, the rate of women who work part-time is higher in Switzerland than in almost any EU country, which is in turn directly linked to a comparatively high level of female employment. However, the high employment rate of women in Switzerland is not comparable with other countries precisely because it does not correspond to a full-time equivalent. According to the 'glass-ceiling index' established by the *Economist* 'aiming to reveal where women have the best chances of equal treatment at work' Switzerland still ranks at the bottom when compared to EU countries. The best—and worst—places to be a working woman (2016), in: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2016/03/daily-chart-0> (25 July 2016).

²⁰Jakob Tanner and Brigitte Studer, 'Konsum und Distribution', in Halbeisen, Müller, and Veyrassat, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Schweiz im 20. Jahrhundert*, Basel: Schwabe 2012, 639–702, 678.

²¹Patricia Purtschert, *Kolonialität und Geschlecht im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Geschichte der weissen Schweiz*, Bielefeld: Transcript, forthcoming.

conditions.²² Furthermore, the development of the required nursery infrastructure was not, of course, completed by the end of the economic boom years; rather, this process is still ongoing (witness, e.g., the important decision by the Swiss Parliament, in 2000, to provide start-up funding to new childcare facilities).²³ Even today, there are still long waiting lists in some parts of Switzerland for a place in a nursery and nurseries are often very expensive. Therefore, for some families of the middle class, it is financially attractive to have the mother (who today still often earns less than the father) stay at home. Finally, we should not forget the far-from-easy working conditions in nurseries. This work is nowadays often done by generally very young ‘migrant’ or second-generation women who have experience of migration in one way or another. For these reasons, it is not a linear success story that I want to tell. There are good reasons not to equate wage labour per se with ‘emancipation’, especially from a perspective critical of capitalism. Moreover, we have to keep in mind that the working and living conditions of ‘migrant’ families were not at all easy. These parents often suffered from a particularly heavy workload, because, among other reasons, their own parents lived far away and were thus unable to offer assistance. The women in particular experienced a discrepancy between the role they had internalised and the way they actually lived.²⁴ Furthermore, female wage labour did not necessarily imply more personal autonomy for women, as female employment does not automatically result in gender equality in the family.²⁵ It has also been argued that the high regard for wage labour undervalues unpaid care work. As a consequence, some feminists like

²²For instance, it has been argued that in those parts of Switzerland where women worked in the watch-making industry, the benefits of female employment were also emphasised early on by the local elites. Stéphanie Lachat, *Les pionnières du temps. Vie professionnelles et familiales des ouvrières de l'industrie horlogère suisse (1870–1970)*, Neuchâtel: Alphil 2014.

²³Jacqueline Fehr, *Parlamentarische Initiative zur Anstossfinanzierung für familienergänzende Betreuungsplätze* (2000), in: <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20000403> (25 September 2017).

²⁴Giovanna Meyer Sabino, *Donne in emigrazione*, in Halter and Casagrande, *Gli italiani in Svizzera. Un secolo di emigrazione*, Bellinzona: Casagrande 2004, 203–220, 204.

²⁵Nelly Valsangiacomo and Luigi Lorenzetti, *Donne e lavoro. Prospettive per una storia delle montagne europee XVIII–XX sec.*, Milano: FrancoAngeli 2010, 11.

Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Silvia Federici called for a different concept of work that could not be reduced to subcontracted work and claimed that housework should pay a wage.²⁶ Moreover, they criticised the fact that the emancipation of women was often discussed exclusively with regard to female wage-employment and called for an egalitarian division of care work in society. In the Swiss case, it is also important to keep in mind that ‘migrant’ mothers were often obliged to work, as otherwise their residence permits would expire.²⁷ Once their situation allowed them to stay at home, this was perceived as a sign of social advancement by some—a phenomenon also observed in the Swiss working class at that time.²⁸

MIGRATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NURSERIES

It is impossible to know how many nurseries were established in these years because they were founded by various entities such as companies, private organisations, and municipalities. However, we can take

²⁶Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework*, Bristol: Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press 1975, in: <https://caringlabor.wordpress.com/2010/09/15/silvia-federici-wages-against-housework> (1 August 2017). See also Nicole Cox and Silvia Federici, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen. Wages for Housework: A Perspective on Capital and the Left*, Brooklyn, NY: New York Wages for Housework Committee and Falling Wall Press 1975; Silvia Federici, *The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution, Revolution at Point Zero*, Oakland, CA: PM Press 2012, 91–111; Silvia Federici and Arlen Austin, *The New York Wages for Housework Committee, 1972–1977: History, Theory and Documents*, Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia 2017. With regard to the Swiss context, see Simona Isler, Lohn für Hausarbeit? Befreiungsperspektiven der Frauenbewegung in den 1970er Jahren, in Bernet and Tanner, *Ausser Betrieb. Metamorphosen der Arbeit in der Schweiz*, Zürich: Limmat Verlag 2015, 216–236.

Mariarosa Dalla Costa had shown already in the 1970s how productive labour is fundamental to the functioning of capitalism. Mariarosa Dalla Costa, *Potere femminile e sovversione sociale con ‘Il posto della donna’ di Selma James*, Padova: Marsilio 1972.

²⁷Saffia Elisa Shaukat, L’approccio di genere alla prova delle migrazioni di stagionali in Svizzera (1949–1973). Questioni di metodo, in Badino and Inaudi, *Migrazioni femminili attraverso le Alpi. Lavoro, famiglia, trasformazioni culturali nel secondo dopoguerra*, Milano: FrancoAngeli 2013, 87–100.

²⁸Sutter, *Berufstätige Mütter. Subtiler Wandel der Geschlechterordnung in der Schweiz (1945–1970)*, Zürich: Chronos 2005, 264.

the membership numbers of the *Swiss Nursery Association* (founded in 1907) as a rough indicator for this development.²⁹ While the association only had 62 members in 1946, by 1961 the number had risen to 90. In 1970, there were already 120 members, and in 1978, membership had grown to 170.³⁰ In 1970, a book on *The Socio-cultural Problems of the Integration of Italian Workers in Switzerland* was published. According to the author, municipalities were reluctant at that time to tackle the issue of nurseries. As a justification for their attitude, municipal authorities emphasised that this was a task for the employers who had brought in the ‘foreigners’, that nurseries would encourage mothers to work (which was not perceived as desirable by the municipalities), and that nurseries financed with Swiss tax money would primarily benefit foreign nationals rather than Swiss citizens.³¹ And yet, for ‘migrant’ families, public nurseries were not always the first—or even a realistic—choice. In particular, before 1964, it was often not possible for ‘migrants’ to obtain a residence permit for their children.³² If children were allowed to take up residence, they would sometimes live with a Swiss family during the week and stay with their parents only on weekends. One reason for this was that placing one’s children with a Swiss family tended to be less expensive than any of the available nurseries. In addition, there were nurseries established by the Italian state and by the *Missione Cattolica*

²⁹The theoretically conceivable scenario that more nurseries became members—without an increase in the total number of nurseries in the country—seems according to the available data implausible.

³⁰Sandra Böhler-Fries, *Zwischen ‘Notbehelf’ und familienergänzender Institution. Das Deutschweizer Krippenwesen von 1945 bis 1985*, Universität Bern: Lizentiatsarbeit Schweizer Geschichte 2010, 8.

³¹Rudolf Braun, *Sozio-kulturelle Probleme der Eingliederung italienischer Arbeitskräfte in der Schweiz*, Erlenbach: Rentsch 1970, 362.

³²Martina Marina Frigerio, *Verbotene Kinder. Die Kinder der italienischen Saisoniers erzählen von Trennung und Illegalität*, Zürich: Rotpunktverlag 2014; Martina Marina Frigerio and Simone Burgherr, *Versteckte Kinder. Zwischen Illegalität und Trennung. Saisonierkinder und ihre Eltern erzählen*, Luzern: Rex 1992. Toni Ricciardi, I figli degli stagionali: bambini clandestini, in *Studi Emigrazione and Migration Studies XLVII*, 180 (2010), 872–886. See also the ongoing dissertation by Saffia Elisa Shaukat, *Travail temporaire et politiques migratoires en Europe: le cas des ‘saisonier-ère-s’ en Suisse (1949–2002)*, University of Lausanne.

specifically for ‘migrant’ children, in part because some nurseries had to give priority to Swiss families.

At the same time, the actual numbers of ‘migrant’ children in nurseries show that it was quite common for a high percentage of the nursery clients to be of ‘foreign’ origin. For instance, when the nursery in Chur was forced to turn down some Italian children in 1964 because of an ordinance by the city, it ended up being undersubscribed, much to the dismay of its staff.³³ Another interesting case is the city of Bern, where, if there was a shortage of places, Swiss children had to be given priority.³⁴ Nevertheless, the proportion of ‘migrant’ children in the Swiss capital’s nurseries rose to 60–70% by 1965, in part due to the sharp decline in demand for nursery places by Swiss families.³⁵ In the official gazette of the *Swiss Nursery Association*, various examples of this kind can be found—and this trend is not limited to cities. In more rural Valais, the development of nursery infrastructure is described in 1982 in the following terms: ‘At the beginning of the century, the canton was hit by tuberculosis. To help the temporarily orphaned children, the first nurseries were established. Later the problem of single mothers who had to work in order to survive arose. Then the foreign workers arrived. Again new nurseries came into being’.³⁶ Here too, migration was seen as important for the development of this kind of infrastructure.

This was also the case because, for a very long time, a child was likely to be prevented from attending a nursery if there was insufficient proof that the family depended on the extra income. In the annual report from 1964 of the St. Leonhard nurseries in Basel, for instance, we read: ‘In the case of each admission, the material circumstances are [...] checked

³³‘Leider hatten wir auch im vergangenen Jahre ein Zurückgehen der Kinderzahlen in Kauf zu nehmen. Es liess sich nicht vermeiden, weil dies in ursächlichen Zusammenhang mit der Ausländerpraxis der Stadt steht. Von einem gewissen Tag auf den anderen durften gewisse Italienerkinder nicht mehr in der Krippe aufgenommen werden’. Krippenbericht 1964 No. 4, 22.

³⁴Krippenbericht 1963, No. 4, 12–13.

³⁵Krippenbericht 1965, No. 3, 11.

³⁶‘Zu Anfang des Jahrhunderts war der Kanton von der Tuberkulose heimgesucht. Um den zeitweise verwaisten Kindern beizustehen, wurden die ersten Krippen gegründet. Später kam das Problem der alleinstehenden Mütter, die, um zu überleben, auswärts arbeiten mussten. Dann kamen die Fremdarbeiter. Wieder entstanden neue Krippen’. Krippenbericht 1982, No. 6, 7.

as accurately as possible, to ensure that really only those mothers will be considered who absolutely need to work'.³⁷

THE NORMALISING EFFECT OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE

With the effects of the first and second oil crisis, the situation changed. In the recession years, many 'migrants'—whose residence permits were often dependent on paid employment—had to return to their home countries. Under these circumstances, the established nursery infrastructure became under-used. The editor of the official gazette of the *Swiss Nursery Association*, for example, writes in 1982: 'With the substantial reduction of foreign workers in Switzerland, a further development goes hand in hand: never before in the last, say, 30 years have so many infants coming from middle-class and even well-off circles been found in nurseries as in 1982. This is a reliable sign that children of all social classes meet with universally satisfactory reception in nurseries'.³⁸ In this statement, the changing social composition of children attending nurseries is both diagnosed and legitimised. Remarkably, the established infrastructure was, in the wake of the oil crisis, opened to a different clientele. The increasing presence of a different clientele went hand in hand with (slowly) changing attitudes towards the nursery 'clients'. Increasingly, in the gazette of the *Swiss Nursery Association* contributions were being published that explicitly refrained from pathologising female work and which tried to take into account that couples had significant leeway in negotiating gender roles.³⁹ In 1985, for instance, we find an interview with a mother who, like her husband, worked 80%.⁴⁰

³⁷'Bei jeder Aufnahme werden [...] die äusseren Umstände möglichst genau geprüft, damit wirklich nur solche Mütter berücksichtigt werden, die unbedingt arbeiten müssen'. Krippenbericht 1964, No. 4, 22.

³⁸'Mit dem substantiellen Abbau der Fremdarbeiter in der Schweiz geht auch eine weitere Entwicklung Hand in Hand: Noch nie waren in den letzten vielleicht 30 Jahren so viele Kleinkinder in Krippen anzutreffen, die aus bürgerlichen und auch gut situierten Kreisen stammen, wie 1982. Das ist ein verlässliches Zeichen dafür, dass Kinder aller Bevölkerungsschichten durchaus in Krippen allseits befriedende (sic) Aufnahme finden'. Krippenbericht 1982, No. 4, 10.

³⁹This does not imply that such a change occurred abruptly or without ambiguities. In fact, in the official gazette of the *Swiss Association for Nurseries* such a normalisation is not approved by all from one day to the next.

⁴⁰Krippenbericht 1985, No. 4, 34–36.

In the same year, the example is mentioned of a Finnish mother who was plagued by guilt because she could not find a nursery place for her child.⁴¹ The article describes how she felt her child was being deprived of a valuable experience, and that she feared her offspring would grow up lonely. The readers of the journal of the *Swiss Nursery Association* thus learnt, through the perspective of this Finnish mother, that attending nursery could be assessed in a completely different manner that was common in Switzerland, and that ‘because of her socialisation, it was quite simply absolutely normal that children attend a nursery’.⁴² In addition, formative experiences of migration can also be found among the staff working for the *Swiss Nursery Association*. For instance, in 1989, the new manager of this association stated that she had lived in Paris und Ghent for several years, and that her experience abroad had taught her ‘that day care does not always have to be seen as an “emergency solution” or “substitute”, but can be viewed positively in terms of a distinctive educational contribution to the education of young children’.⁴³ Such a change in mentality was essential for her.

We can thus observe multiple effects of migration on the creation and expansion of childcare infrastructure. In the long boom following the Second World War, it was working ‘migrant’ families and their specific requirements that fostered the development and expansion of this infrastructure. In the course of these years, nursery infrastructure was not expanded because mainstream values had changed, but because there was a practical need for such services. Indeed, I would argue that it was the presence of this infrastructure that, together with other influences, led to a progressive normalisation of nursery childcare. Hence, it is not only open criticism that served to undermine supposedly incontestable norms and standards. Rather, changing forms of life—whether adopted voluntarily or involuntarily—and the new infrastructure that emerged to cater to these needs assumed a force of their own and, gradually, effected a shift in social attitudes. This is an aspect that has so far been overlooked.

⁴¹Krippenbericht 1985, No. 5, 3–9, here 7.

⁴²‘Von ihrer eigenen Sozialisation her ist es eben absolut normal, dass Kinder in die Krippe gehen’. Krippenbericht 1985, No. 5, 3–9.

⁴³‘Erfahrungen im Ausland lehrten mich auch, dass eine Krippe nicht immer als ‘Notlösung’ oder ‘Ersatz’ betrachtet werden muss, sondern unter dem Aspekt eines eigenständigen, pädagogischen Beitrags zur Erziehung kleiner Kinder positiv gewertet werden darf’. Krippenbericht 1989, No. 4, 9.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Today, some argue that the outsourcing of care work de facto enables traditional gender roles to be preserved.⁴⁴ However, a recent study has shown that, in Switzerland, each newly created afterschool care slot not only motivated mothers to accept a job outside the house, but also encouraged fathers to reduce their paid workload and to assume more childcare duties.⁴⁵ Financial support for nurseries in Switzerland—compared to other OECD countries—is still low, and the so-called Male Breadwinner Model is dominant.⁴⁶ The employment rate of mothers with children of preschool age has, however, almost tripled since 1980.⁴⁷ The proportion of women in wage-work is now high by European standards, as we have seen, but this is mainly because a large number of these women work part-time (and unemployment is generally low in Switzerland).⁴⁸ For example, 82.7% of working mothers are not currently in full-time employment. By contrast, fathers are more fully and not less fully employed than their childless peers: almost nine out of ten fathers aged 35–54 are in full-time employment in Switzerland. For men without children of the same age, eight out of ten work full-time.⁴⁹ Women who become mothers therefore reduce their paid workload—men who become fathers increase it. This, in turn, has to do with the presence or absence of care structures, as research has shown. According to one

⁴⁴See, for example, Mirjana Morokvasic, Gender, Labor, and Migration, in Ness, *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, Malden: Wiley 2013.

⁴⁵Christina Felfe, Rolf Iten, and Susanne Stern, Child care Services—A Relevant Policy Tool to Enhance Gender Equality? in Liebig, Gottschall, and Sauer, *Gender Equality in Context. Policies and Practices in Switzerland*, Opladen: Barbara Budrich 2016, 199–213.

⁴⁶Rosa von Gleichen and Martin Seeleib-Kaiser, Family Policies and the Weakening of the Male Breadwinner Model (2017), in: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318745017_Family_Policies_and_the_Weakening_of_the_Male_Breadwinner_Model (6 December 2017).

⁴⁷Francesco Giudici and Reto Schumacher, Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern in der Schweiz: Entwicklung und individuelle Faktoren (2017), in: <http://www.socialchangeswitzerland.ch/?p=1281> (1 November 2017).

⁴⁸Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffen, *Policies, Frauen und der Arbeitsmarkt. Die Frauenerwerbstätigkeit in der Schweiz im internationalen und interkantonalen Vergleich*, Wien: Lit Verlag 2007.

⁴⁹Michael Hermann, Mario Nowak, and Lorenz Bosshardt, Sie wollen beides. Lebensentwürfe zwischen Wunsch und Wirklichkeit (2016), in: https://sotomo.ch/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Bericht_sotomo_KPT.pdf (18 December 2017).

study, the reduction in the workload of mothers is mainly due to structural factors rather than individual preferences.⁵⁰ At the same time, many fathers would like to reduce their paid workload.⁵¹

In German-speaking Switzerland, the contribution to costs made by parents is generally considerably higher today (2/3 of the full costs) than in French-speaking Switzerland (1/3).⁵² In the cantons of Vaud, Fribourg and Neuchâtel, companies are also obliged to co-finance nursery infrastructure via a fund. The question arises as to whether we see here the influence of the respective neighbouring countries on developments in Switzerland, for instance regarding perceptions of motherhood. Especially after 1945, very different political approaches to the expansion of a nursery infrastructure were dominant in the then Federal Republic of Germany and in France. However, there are also major differences within the Swiss language regions. For example, the cantons of Geneva and Vaud have far more nurseries than the other cantons of French-speaking Switzerland. The question therefore arises as to whether such differences map less onto language borders than onto the difference between urban and rural areas.

MALE STAFF MEMBERS WITH A SO-CALLED MIGRANT BACKGROUND

To complete the revised picture of the relation between migration and gender innovation in Switzerland, we will now turn to the personnel working in nurseries, this time focusing specifically on male staff members in the present day.

Today, in various countries, there are attempts to encourage more men to work in nurseries, because as a social institution, it should reflect the diversity of society.⁵³ In 2015, 2000 people started apprenticeships

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Inés Mateos, Gleichgestellt? Facts and Figures 2012, in: <http://docplayer.org/74131920-Gleichgestellt-facts-figures.html> (5 March 2018).

⁵²In what follows, see https://www.kibesuisse.ch/fileadmin/Dateiablage/kibesuisse_Publikationen_Deutsch/1505011_Factsheet_Kinderbetreuung_CH.pdf (14 September 2017).

⁵³See, for example, The Swiss Project 'More Men in Childcare' <http://www.maenner.ch/mehr-maenner-in-die-kinderbetreuung-maki> (2 August 2016).

as specialists in nursery childcare in Switzerland, of whom 284 were men.⁵⁴ With respect to the background of male apprentices in nurseries, it would be very interesting to obtain accurate statistics, but at least at the moment they are not available.⁵⁵ It could be the case that among these male apprentices, the ratio of young men with a so-called migrant background is above average.⁵⁶ On the job, these adolescents become important role models and, at the same time, they renegotiate and redefine what masculinity means to them, as they have to find ways to manage ‘legitimate subject positions as both childcare workers and as men’.⁵⁷ Occupations that are considered as typically female are generally badly paid, and hence, compared to other professions, the remuneration of care work is comparatively low in Switzerland.⁵⁸ Young people who are perceived as ‘foreigners’ (e.g. because they have a name that ‘does not sound Swiss’) are moreover discriminated against when trying to find an apprenticeship.⁵⁹ For example, young people of ‘migrant’ families of the first generation with comparable formal qualifications to their Swiss

⁵⁴<http://www.savoirsocial.ch/grundbildung-fachfrau-fachmann-betreuung/zahlen-und-fakten/statistik-fabe-2006-2015.pdf> (9 August 2016).

⁵⁵Numbers were requested in vain at the *Federal Statistical Office, kibesuisse* and *avenirsocial*.

⁵⁶Interview done with a former manager of a nursery in Basel who was also responsible for coordinating different nurseries, 25 July 2016.

⁵⁷Julia Nentwich, Wiebke Poppen, Stefanie Schälin, and Franziska Vogt, The Same and the Other: Male Childcare Workers Managing Identity Dissonance, *International Review of Sociology* 23, 2 (2013), 326–345, 329. See also Eva Breitenbach, *Männer in Kindertageseinrichtungen. Eine rekonstruktive Studie über Geschlecht und Professionalität*, Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich 2015.

⁵⁸Philipp Mühlhauser, *Das Lohnbuch 2016*, Zürich: Orell Füssli Verlag. Franziska Schutzbach, Who Cares? (2017), in: <http://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/who-cares/> (26 June 2017).

⁵⁹Christian Imdorf, Die Diskriminierung ‘ausländischer’ Jugendlicher bei der Lehrlingsauswahl, in Hormel and Scherr, *Diskriminierung. Grundlagen und Forschungsergebnisse*, Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2010, 197–219.

According to a new study concerning Switzerland, young men who first express typically male career aspirations and later work in a field that is considered to be typically female seem to dispose of a particularly high level of resources. This is, however, only one subgroup of all those men who work in professions considered as typically female. In

peers have about four times worse chances of finding an apprenticeship.⁶⁰ This, in turn, increases the probability that they will finally choose a training position in certain specific professional fields. It is so far an open question whether the tendencies presumed to exist in this study can be proven statistically. In a future project, I would like to investigate this issue. Be that as it may, it seems to be the case that ‘gender norms can be shifted and the gendered division of work altered [...] through the combined impact of international migration and of men’s employment in feminised paid work’.⁶¹ Here again, certain privileges intersect with specific forms of discriminations and produce once again a quite ambiguous potential for new social and political configurations.

addition, the authors point to the small number of these cases in their setting and therefore recommend a cautious interpretation of these figures. Karin Schwiter, Sandra Hupka-Brunner, Nina Wehner, Evéline Huber, Shireen Kanji, Andrea Maihofer, and Manfred Max Bergman, Warum sind Pflegefachmänner und Elektrikerinnen nach wie vor selten? Geschlechtssegregation in Ausbildungs- und Berufsverläufen junger Erwachsener in der Schweiz, *Swiss Journal of Sociology* 40, 3 (2014), 401–428.

⁶⁰Mateos, Gleichgestellt? Facts and Figures 2012, in: <http://docplayer.org/74131920-Gleichgestellt-facts-figures.html> (5 March 2018).

⁶¹Ester Gallo and Francesca Scrinzi, Men and Masculinities in the International Division of Reproductive Labour, in *Macmillan, Migration, Masculinities and Reproductive Labour. Men of the Home*, Basingstoke: 2016, 1–36, 30.

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