Notas sobre "Against social inheritance", de Gosta Esping-Andersen (c. 2003)

Categoría: Dichos, comentarios, anotaciones
Visto: 1878

Tedesco, J. C. (c. 2003). Notas sobre "Against social inheritance", de Gosta Esping-Andersen. Portal Juan Carlos Tedesco, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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"What has changed?, Six major social changes merit special attention since they powerfully affect the distribution of social risks and needs.

The Life Course

In the Golden Age of the traditional welfare state the transition to adulthood occurred early and was typically smooth, orderly and, above, all, predictable. (…) The transition to adulthood today is both delayed and prolonged.(…) In all countries, first birth occur when women, on average, are 28-29 years old. Marital and employment instability combine to produce much less linear biographies and complex house-hold reconfigurations. It I increasingly common for a child to have eight or even twelve grandparents, all depending on the frequency of partnership change" (129)

Families and Households

…plurality of new household forms… one-parent, households, …two-earner norm, …informal partnerships, separations and divorces in steady growth…

"Marital selection means that households may be polarizing. We see, at once, a sizable share of 'work-poor' households, often very distanced from any solid employment relationship, and also a growing number of 'work-rich' households. The welfare gap between the two is likely to widen because less educated women are least likely to work. If they do, we shall most likely see a polarization between too low and too high wages." (129).

The new employment dilemmas

In the future we must rely entirely on services for job growth and this poses a new dilemmas, some of which are serous. Firstly, large share of services compete with the household's own ability to self-service" (…) "The second obstacle to a dynamic service economy lies in wage setting practice." (…) "The low-wage problem poses a particularly

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difficult welfare problem in the long run, to the extent that workers may find themselves locked into persistently poor quality employment. Since low-end services very rarely offer training and the opportunity to improve skills the likelihood of being trapped in this career is very real. From a life chance perspective the challenge is how to ensure the opportunity for social mobility and this, effectively, means ensuring that youth have adequate skills to begin with." (131)

The raising ante

"There is nothing new in the fact that skills are crucial for life chances. The knowledge economy, however, is raising the 'ante', i.e. the basic requirements for securing a good job and income. In the Golden Age, low-skilled workers could normally count on stable and decently paid jobs. This is no longer the case… Life long learning presupposes an adequate cognitive base to begin with, and there is a clear widening of the gulf in terms of the returns to human capital. In the knowledge economy it is quite probable that low education and insufficient cognitive skills will lock citizens into life-long precariousness, low wages and high unemployment risks. This, in turn, will raise the likelihood of poverty in old age. We see here a potent source of a coming welfare abyss between the postindustrial winners and losers" (132)… "In other words, if our goal is to equalize life chances we need to accompany any conceivable employment promotion policy with measures to sponsor upward mobility. This means investing in skills from the day children are born. Remedial programs, later in life, are costly and ineffective" (133)

Intensifying income inequalities

"… the driving forces behind the new inequalities are part and parcel of the emerging new social economy and, hence, they are likely to intensify. The challenge is to attack the roots of such inequalities and this implies, primarily, a two-pronged strategy biased towards high-risk households with the aim of equalizing the acquisition of human capital" (133)

A looming generational clash

"This generational contract is under pressure, not only because of population aging but also because contemporary retirees generally enjoy high living standards while young households encounter rising welfare risks" (…) "The challenge to social policy , therefore, is to realign our welfare edifice. The flagship policy in such a programme must be an active family policy invests in children." (134).

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Material inédito

Título del archivo Word: "Gosta Esping"

Fecha del archivo: 22 de septiembre de 2003

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