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# TOWARD COMPARABLE DATA ON INEQUALITY AND STRATIFICATION: PERSPECTIVES ON THE SECOND GENERATION OF NATIONAL MOBILITY STUDIES

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In the early 1950's a research committee within the International Sociological Association (ISA) was formed around the topics of social stratification and mobility. An important impetus to this convocation of international interests was the dearth of empirical studies of occupational mobility in the industrialized and industrializing nations of the world by which to assess sociological speculations regarding the interplay of cultural values, economic development, and changes in institutionalized inequalities and social stratification (ISA, 1951). Although plans for exactly comparable studies of intergenerational occupational mobility were not to materialize, parametric studies were conducted, for example, in Great Britain (Glass, 1954), Sweden (Carlsson, 1958), and Denmark (Svalastoga, 1959), with subnational studies in still other countries. Writing under commission of the ISA, Miller (1960) has summarized and reviewed these early studies. Subsequent parametric estimates of mobility in Italy, the United States, and Australia were published by Lopreato (1965), Blau and Duncan (1967) and Broom and Jones (1969) respectively. Now, a second generation of national mobility studies is underway, with some already out of the field and others well under plan. Owing to interim developments within the discipline, these second generation studies promise greater comparability of data and clearer insights into comparative sociological processes than did the first generation. It is these developments, the revitalization of the ISA Committee on Stratification, and the second generation of mobility studies, that we wish to report.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The senior author thanks the Center for Coordination of Research on Social Indicators, Social Science

Perhaps the two major developments within (American) stratification research stem from the Blau and Duncan (1967) analysis of the American occupational structure. First, Blau and Duncan altered the issue of prime interest to the student of social (occupational) mobility. They deemphasized the prior focus of analysts on rates of mobility and on the comparison of zero-order (bivariate) relationships of fathers' and sons' occupational distributions (in out-flow matrices, for example). In part this turning away from the exclusive analyses of inter- and intragenerational mobility tables was motivated by Duncan's (1966) identification of substantial methodological issues, associated with tabular techniques, that frustrated if not precluded comparative research across time and space.

Aside from methodology, however, Blau and Duncan reconceptualized social mobility as the "process of stratification," the latter being an intergenerational (primarily, though with an intragenerational component) mechanism linking statuses of destination with statuses of origin (of the family of socialization). Framed in this way, the distribution of fathers' occupations does not refer to some occupational structure or labor force at some earlier point in time (which, for methodological reasons, it could not anyway; see Duncan, 1966). Instead, the distribution of fathers' occupations classifies sons (respondents in

Research Council for the travel grant enabling him to attend the Rome meetings of the I.S.A. Research Committee on Social Stratification, December, 1972. This draft, a revision of a report on file with SSRC, was assisted by the suggestions of nearly a dozen conference participants, whose helpfulness is much appreciated. Copies of ISA Conference papers are on file and available through the SSRC Center on Social Indicators, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, Mr. Robert Parke, Director.

some survey) by paternal occupations. When cast in the metric of prestige or socioeconomic status, fathers' occupations, as characteristics of the sons, index the social status or context of rearing (up to sons' sixteenth birthdays, as in the case of Blau and Duncan's data). The zero-order relationship between fathers' and sons' occupations refers to a correlation of *two sons' characteristics*, and the estimate of correlation measures the rigidity in occupational stratification (or social mobility) in the population of interest at that point in time.

The emphasis upon the identity of the concept of social mobility with that of stratification as an intergenerational process redirected the major task of the analyst of mobility. Rather than describing tables of inflows and outflows and bivariate mobility relationships, analysts began to decompose the zero-order relationship between paternal and filial occupations and to inquire into the process of stratification: What accounts for the correlation of these two characteristics of the son at two points in his life cycle? The ability to answer this question was enhanced by the second major development within American stratification research—multivariate causal modelling of the process of stratification. Duncan's (1966) discovery of path analysis for sociologists and the embodiment of this technique in the Blau and Duncan "basic model" of stratification (Blau and Duncan, 1967:Chapter 5) are widely known and illustrate how developments in theory and method have altered the enterprise of American stratification research since the first generation of mobility studies.

There is yet another development, although occurring outside of the domain of mobility research, which is pertinent to our discussion of the second generation studies and their potential value. Within the last decade some sociologists have been caught up in the social indicators movement. While we do not wish to recite the course of this movement (see Land, forthcoming, for a recounting of the thinking on social indicators over the decade), we would underscore the connections between social indicator models, or "analytic indicators" (Sheldon and Land, 1972), and the Blau and Duncan "paradigm" of stratification research.

Land (1971) has argued that from the perspectives of both the student of society and

the monitor-reporter of social trends, social indicators will become most valuable (in units of information) when they are chosen from the framework of theory and conceptions of how society and its institutions work; they should be components of social process models. In addition, changes in parameter estimates of social indicator models (of social processes) provide unambiguous readings on changing institutional patterns only when the time series data underlying these estimates are generated from exact replicates rather than re-studies in which one or more elements of design or operational definition is altered in the series (cf. Duncan, 1969).

Clearly the Blau and Duncan "basic" model of the process of stratification conforms to Sheldon and Land's definition of analytic indicators. To the extent that the second generation of mobility studies replicate (or provide for replication in secondary re-analysis) major design and measurement elements of the Blau and Duncan study, these researches increase the fund of analytic indicators of achievement processes in nations of varying political, economic, and historical circumstances. These indicators could serve as indirect inputs to public policy. For example, several European countries are concerned about the influx of immigrants on their domestic economies and the mobility chances of native workers. Other nations, particularly in Eastern Europe, are debating the role of inequality in modern economies and political systems. More directly, analytic indicators of this sort would expand the perspective of theory on comparative societal processes.

These potential values of the second generation of mobility studies are problematic insofar as differential efforts and successes are achieved at replication. In the case of the second American study, substantial plans to replicate have been laid (Featherman and Hauser, forthcoming), and the field work will be completed by November 1973. But what of the other investigations? To what extent will they permit the estimation of social indicator models which are comparable with the American benchmark and the replicate?

Our ability to answer these questions is limited, mostly by our lack of specific details on all designs, but at this juncture we are cautiously optimistic. The ISA Research Committee on Social Stratification has been recon-

stituted, and Professor Kaare Svalastoga has been elected Chairman. We attended the re-organizational meeting in Rome in December 1972, at which time researchers undertaking parametric studies described their plans and explored the potentials for designing replicates. What follows is our account of these discussions, as seen from the perspective of social indicator models.<sup>2</sup>

### Reports

In the first day's sessions, participants from each attending nation were polled, with a representative from each characterizing and summarizing his compatriots' studies of stratification over the last several years. A synopsis of these presentations follows, with the country's representative identified in parenthesis.

*Australia* (F. Lancaster Jones). A national survey of mobility conducted along the lines of the 1962 "Occupational Changes in a Generation" (OCG) study by Blau and Duncan went into the field in June 1973. The target population of the survey was persons aged 30-69; both men and women were interviewed. The questionnaire is quite similar in content and focus to the British questionnaire that has been administered by sociologists at Nuffield College. The Australian survey will have a larger population base than their 1965 baseline study. (Jones, and Featherman and Hauser of the United States, plan to reanalyze the Australian and the 1962 American OCG data in order to establish baseline comparisons in preparation for later collaboration on comparative analyses, once the results of the Australian and American replicates are available.)

*Japan* (Saburo Yasuda). The Japanese plan a third national study of mobility in 1975. The previous two surveys were in 1955 and 1965.

*France* (Daniel Bertaux). The events of

May 1968 forced a reorientation of the then growing trends toward American-style stratification and mobility research. Current work tends to be strongly focused on class relationships in the process of production itself and in hierarchical institutions (the school, the health system, etc.), in urbanization, and in social movements. In this context, a national survey of prestige is rendered even more unlikely than ever. On the other hand, the National Institute of Statistics (INSEE) has replicated in 1970 (N=60,000) the national mobility survey (the benchmark) of 1965 (N=24,000). The data of both studies are being made available currently.

*Germany* (Karl Mayer). Stratification and mobility studies are not now in the central focus of sociology in West Germany. However, there are several developments with implications for stratification research:

1. Sociologists of education are investigating educational inequality with a view to reform, e.g. they are looking at rates of school attendance and level of attainment in school by social class. To flesh out these data they are inquiring into various social and psychological processes that may account for differential access to and performance in schools. Typical for this kind of work is the study by Ulrich Oevermann *Sprache und soziale Herkunft* (Linguistic skills and social origin), which can be understood as a contribution to the debate on the theoretical issues raised by Basil Bernstein in Britain.

2. Industrial sociologists are concerned with the problems intrinsic to factory work and the ensuing attitudes of workers at differing technological levels toward work and industrial conflict. An adjunct of this effort is a debate on the potential of working class politics.

3. The work by Edward Laumann (U. of Chicago) on community stratification has been the model for studies by a group of sociologists at the University of Cologne, who among others have also maintained a long-standing research interest in the influence of social class on political behavior, especially voting.

4. There is a recent movement to do small-scale mobility studies of an empirical nature, especially by the German members of the I.S.A. Committee. These efforts will expand with the projected analyses of data collected

<sup>2</sup> This article is not intended as a summary of the full proceedings of the Research Committee's Rome meetings. Our effort has been to extract from these sessions important developments for the compilation of comparable data on inequality and stratification derived from national mobility studies. Clearly, the membership of the Committee holds diverse interests in stratification research, not all of which can be encompassed by the rubrics of social (analytic) indicators and parametric mobility studies. These perspectives are ours.

by the Federal Office of Statistics on a one-percent area cluster sample of the West German population, which for the first time will allow reliable estimates of the rates of inter- and intragenerational mobility and of the determinants of occupational status.

These studies will be carried out in conjunction with attempts to establish a system of social (analytic) indicators and simulation models as a basis for political decision-making in the area of social and economic welfare.

*Hungary* (Rudolf Andorka). The issues of stratification and mobility are quite central to sociologists in this country. There are two major fronts on which this research is going forward. The first is a series of surveys on the inequality and the distribution of household income. The first survey was conducted in 1963 with additional cross-section samples taken in 1968 and a (planned) third sample in 1973. The second major research front is social mobility, and Professor Andorka remarked that it was quite natural in a socialist society that the rates of social mobility should be well scrutinized. Several data bases have been assembled and additional ones are planned. For example, between 1962 and 1964 there were surveys of approximately 16,000 families from which life histories of occupations were obtained and merged with information on education, marriage, fertility, and social origins (parental statuses). Additionally, information on mobility were derived from the 1930 and the 1949 Censuses which contained a question on paternal occupation status. These data will serve as baseline measurements for future mobility studies. Indeed a new survey of mobility (a 5% sample planned for early 1973) will link to a 2% microcensus of all persons. There is a 25% overlap between the survey and the census, involving interviews of persons aged 14 and over. The latter study is designed to generate a system of social statistics on the mobility of families, of cohorts and so on, and it has been designed in the spirit of the international effort, sponsored by the United Nations, to organize comparable social indicators of change in countries throughout the world.

*Poland* (W. Wesolowski). As in many eastern European countries, sociologists are concerned with theoretical issues and debates on concepts. They have been constantly searching for the most appropriate and comprehensive

framework for the description and explanation of the transformation in class structure under the impact of revolution and industrialization. They have been discussing the problem of the relevance of Marxian theory of class structure to a more advanced socialist society; they question the necessity of social stratification in all societies: What types of social inequalities will characterize modern socialistic societies? Empirical studies of stratification flourish as well as debates. For example, there are studies of social differentiation in urban and rural areas and investigations on class imagery among various socio-professional groups. A survey of 14,000 males aged 30–39 for the purposes of assessing intergenerational and intragenerational mobility is under way. In preparation is a study of consumption, of life style, and of aspirations. This work is done in the context of a continuing debate as to the limits of equalitarian ideas and the necessities of a socialist economy.

*Canada* (Jacques Dofny). The studies in French-Canada were differentiated from those in English-Canada, and this report spoke to the former. Many of the stratification studies in Quebec are oriented to the nationalist movement. One major survey of mobility in Quebec was attempted from a vital statistics sample of marriage in 1954; this study was replicated in 1964, and a third replicate is planned for 1974. One major component of most analyses in Quebec is the comparison of Anglophones and Francophones with regard to rates and patterns of mobility.

*Denmark* (Tom Rishoy). There are two major projects under way: 1) Project Metropolitan sponsored by the University of Copenhagen; 2) a study of Danish youth sponsored by the National Institute. The first study looks at the determinants of career mobility, adjustment in marriage, and deviant behavior. The project has drawn samples from Copenhagen and Stockholm. The population is young boys born in 1953 who will be followed up to the time they are 30 years of age. The original samples totaled 12,000. Data are drawn from four major sources: 1) ecological, 2) documentary, 3) institutional, and 4) survey. Ecological data are gathered to establish the presence or absence of "neighborhood effects," and these data are being gathered in all of the major Scandinavian capitals listed above. The documentary data include birth certificates,

the central personnel register (1971 data), and health certificates. Institutional data include a 1965 school study which gathered IQ information, sociometric details, aspiration data, and scores on creativity. A supplementary study in 1966 focused on school placement with additional information on verbal and mathematical test scores. The survey data were gathered from 3,000 respondents who were in the highest and lowest 10 percent of the IQ distribution plus a random sample of all of the eligible population. The purpose of the survey was to contact families of the respondents and gather information about parents, family structure, child rearing and so on. The continuing investigations up to 1983 will get information on migration, on job histories, criminal records, health care, marital histories, and psychological and social adjustments. The second study, that of Danish youth, is focused on the educational careers and occupational choices of some 3,000 students who were in school at age 14. The major problem in this investigation is the effects of social and economic origins and ability on career potentials, especially performance in school.

*Finland* (Hannu Uusitalo). A comparative study of inequality and mobility in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden is being conducted by the Research Group of Comparative Sociology, University of Helsinki, with Professor Erik Allardt as director. Data were collected in the spring of 1972 from about 1,000 respondents per nation. One of the major outgrowths of this study is comparable (as these are exact replicates) data on occupational mobility and attainments, in the style of Blau and Duncan. Additionally, inequalities in living conditions (e.g. health, residence, education, degree of employment, economic and political resources) are being assessed, and the correlations among these dimensions of levels of living are being calculated in order to assess the crystallization of inequality in the societies as a whole and amongst occupational categories and social groups in each country.

*United Kingdom* (John Goldthorpe). There are several large-scale studies of stratification and social mobility under way in Britain at this time. One is the Oxford Mobility Study (the Nuffield College group), which currently is in the field with a national mobility study

along the lines of that planned for Australia, the 1962 study by Blau and Duncan, and the replicate of that by Featherman and Hauser in 1973. Follow-up studies on the relation of occupation to social mobility are planned. A second study is by J. W. B. Douglas and his colleagues who have been following a cohort born in March, 1946. A third is a study of recruitment to elites by Anthony Giddens and P. Stanworth at Cambridge. A second set of studies relevant to the field of stratification might be labelled social anthropological community studies. Most notably, Margaret Stacey is updating her study of Banbury in the 1950's. The overall effort of stratification research in Britain is to bridge the gap between distributional and relational aspects. This is illustrated by the work of Basil Bernstein, Frank Parkin, Frank Bechhofer, W. C. Runciman, and of Goldthorpe and his colleagues (e.g. *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*). Finally, Goldthorpe reported on the study of mobility being conducted in Northern Ireland and The Irish Republic. This study is planned for 1973 or 1974 and is being conducted by Professors John Jackson and Sugiyama Iutaka at The Queen's University of Belfast.

*United States* (Thomas Lasswell). This reporter believed one of the major efforts in the United States had been the fitting of definitions to theories. Verification has become one of the major interests of sociologists in the United States who continue to use Census data and employ occupation and education as the major indicators of status in their studies of mobility. Despite efforts at conceptual clarity there still appear problems of redundancy and circularity in the operations used to define concepts and, indeed, in the concepts themselves. [Note was not given to the replicate study of mobility scheduled for 1973 (Featherman and Hauser, forthcoming).] There is increasing interest in age stratification, in class consciousness, in the comparative analyses of stratification systems across society, and in ethnic and racial stratification. There is a growing tendency for research on stratification to be supported by funds from mission-oriented agencies and social goals agencies. The reporter saw new bases for theory and research from developments in phenomenology, ethnomethodology, philosophy, study of significant others; he also saw a

return to a more atomistic view of theory and process.

*Yugoslavia* (Vojin Milic). Yugoslavian sociologists are concerned with the problem of inequality in socialist societies, much as are their colleagues in Poland and Hungary. In this regard, the important question seemed to include: What are the important dimensions of inequality in socialist and nonsocialist societies? Unlike the United States and many other countries, stratification and mobility researches were not historically a central part of the substance of sociology. However, in the early 1960's a pilot census gathered information on gross mobility, and Yugoslavian sociologists were able to establish baseline data on intergenerational mobility. More recent studies of processes of mobility and stratification include field studies in schools to examine the selection processes of children from different social origins. Other studies by younger sociologists include examinations of the depletion of rural population, the trend away from farm to nonfarm employment, and the patterns of migration from rural to urban areas.

*Switzerland* (Roger Girod). Studies are under way of the assimilation of foreign workers into the economy. Other studies are approaching the issue of social inequality from a multi-dimensional perspective. This focus holds not only the occupational role as central but includes in a broader sense unequal access to health and medical services, the development of the personality, and the integration of the individual into the social system (including his social participation in organizations and social groups).

*Italy* (Paolo Ammassari and others). In the research project "Occupational Structure and Mobility in Italy, 1951-71," now being undertaken at the University of Rome, the attempt is being made to test hypotheses derived from a working model of the relationships between social change, economic growth, and patterns of upward career mobility. The investigation deals with three main problems:

1. The social processes that promote, accompany and follow trends in the occupational structure;

2. The effects of changes and trends in the occupational structure on the degree of occupational inheritance and self-recruitment, especially with regard to mechanisms con-

trolling the choice of first job and changes between jobs and occupations;

3. The impact of occupational stratification: the societal prerequisites, correlates and implications of the societal ranking of occupations.

Empirical data is being collected by means of the decennial Italian Census, the periodic statistical sampling of the labor force, and by means of a national sample of 5,000 units to be interviewed. The interview schedule covers the entire occupational career and bears upon several aspects of occupational and social origin, life, and attitudes.

The analysis of occupational structure through Census data is of particular importance in the light of a general sociological perspective which frames career mobility in a societal context. In this perspective, individual mobility data (analyzed by survey techniques) must be supplemented by information on a societal scale.

The use of Census data entails a particular set of methodological problems: problems of ecological correlation with regard to group and individual mobility and problems of the validity and reliability of historical statistical data in a retrospective analysis of the Italian occupational structure and occupational changes since Italy's unification in 1861.

Problems of analysis also arise in connection with the relationship between geographical mobility (internal migration) and occupational mobility. In this context, inter-sectorial mobility plays an important role, particularly with respect to Italian economic development in the last decade. Colin Clark's theory on the development of economic sectors has been found inadequate; the hypothesis of a "two-step flow of sectorial relocation from agriculture into manufacturing industry" by means of an intermediate stage, represented by urban-industrial non-manufacturing occupations, has been found to correspond more closely to conditions of occupational mobility in given stages of economic and industrial development.

The second and third days of the conference were devoted to descriptions of substantive papers and the reading of manuscripts giving overviews of research projects under way. Inasmuch as these papers are available for public inspection, we do not summarize them here. Instead we concentrate on a few specific studies and projects which pertain to

stratification research at the national level and which have import for the accumulation of comparable mobility data for countries throughout the world during the next few years.

1. Ireland (Jackson and Iutaka). In both of The Irish Republic and Northern Ireland a study of occupational prestige is under way that ultimately will establish rankings for some 1,200 occupational titles and will differentiate between male and female incumbents of these occupations. Plans are also under way for a 1973 national mobility study based on approximately 5,000 cases (half in each of Northern Ireland and The Irish Republic). These investigators anticipate using a life history technique (similar to the one developed by Coleman, Rossi and others at Johns Hopkins University and used subsequently in Detroit and Yokahama, Japan by Professors Cole and Siegel of the University of Michigan).

2. United Kingdom (Goldthorpe). There have been some efforts to coordinate the studies in Northern Ireland and The Irish Republic with those under the direction of the Nuffield College group in Britain. However, these researches are essentially separate operations and are based on slightly different techniques for data collection. The British effort aims to model its investigation upon the earlier work in Britain of David Glass and the American effort by Blau and Duncan (cf. Hope, 1972). This study extends its inquiry beyond analysis of mobility into the political consequences of mobility as well as into status inconsistency of "positional incongruity," as the latter has implications for political behavior.

3. West Germany (Mayer). New mobility data were gathered in April 1971 by way of a one percent micro-census of West Germany. The ostensible purpose of this study was to gather information on the assimilation of refugees and was sponsored by the federal government. The case base is about 200,000 households. At present there are logistical problems in debugging the unit-record data and in merging this supplementary sample with the one percent sample of census records taken from a concurrent survey. Assistance was solicited in solving some of these technical problems and an invitation was extended to assist in the analysis of these data.

### *Summary*

In summarizing these international researches, we find substantial evidence that the second generation of parametric mobility studies will be more comparably designed than the first. Developments in the methodology of comparative stratification research in the interim period have assisted in this convergence of design, and the Blau and Duncan (1967) work has been singularly influential in this regard.<sup>3</sup> The emergence of a thrust toward social indicators in the organization of social statistics within many nations (and under the auspices of the United Nations) also has encouraged replication, across panels of a time-series and within multi-nation comparisons (e.g. the cooperative effort in four Nordic countries described by Uusitalo). Consequently, mobility data at the national level will be available shortly for the following nations: Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, Australia, United States, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Japan, Italy, and Hungary. (Although the Canadian study by John Porter and associates at Carlton University was not reported, this project is expected to reach the field in 1973 or 1974 in connection with the annual labor force survey by Statistics Canada. Private communications with Polish colleagues leads us to anticipate a parametric study there in the near future.)

Aside from the concurrence in time and method of several mobility studies, there are other researches that will build our understanding of the process of stratification in comparative perspective. Take for example the work of W. H. Sewell and associates in the U.S. (e.g. Sewell and Hauser, 1972) which develops a model for the process of stratification. It includes both structural and personality variables and addresses the development of occupational aspirations and educational

<sup>3</sup> One of the interim methodological developments which did not receive much attention at the sessions comes from the work of Professor Donald Treiman at Columbia University. Treiman (forthcoming) has constructed a prestige scale based on the classification of occupations of the International Labor Organization. The claim of Treiman's scale is that it is translatable across societies with high validity and reliability. Insofar as it is based on the ILO classification, the occupational structures of virtually all societies are easily classified into this system. We feel this tool will facilitate the movement toward comparability.



aspirations as these become important in the attainment of schooling and of early occupational status and earnings. There are several European researches similar to Sewell's efforts that will render interesting comparisons. For example, the Project Metropolitan described previously, which is going on in two Scandinavian capitals, is nominally about the same process but extended over a longer period of the life cycle than is the American analysis. Also, the work of J. W. B. Douglas and his colleagues in Britain (e.g. Douglas, 1964; Douglas et al., 1968) in following a birth cohort into school, the labor force and later adulthood will generate data of a similar nature.

In short, we are seeing the emergence of both national parametric studies of mobility for several countries throughout the world while at the same time noting more detailed investigation of the process by which these parameters are established in several societies. Insofar as this research will effect replication or insure comparability in secondary reanalysis, surely we shall learn more answers to the basic questions of mobility, stratification, and inequality that occupy theorists, especially in Eastern European nations. At the same time, these researches will lead us to more complete and comparable analytic indicators of stratification and societal change.

During the next two years the reconstituted Research Committee plans to meet twice to further the work initiated in Rome. The first meeting is anticipated for the spring of 1974 in Warsaw, Poland, and will attract (principally) the researchers undertaking large-scale (national) mobility studies. A second session is scheduled for the Toronto meetings of the I.S.A. in August, 1974. The Research Committee will organize a session entitled, "Social Class and Political Action," and other sessions to accommodate submitted papers on methodological, theoretical, and empirical studies of stratification. A program committee will coordinate these efforts for the Committee.

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