

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Class,
Race, &
Gender

in Sociological Perspective

edited by

David B. Grusky

SOCIAL  INEQUALITY SERIES

Social Stratification

*Class, Race, and Gender
in Sociological Perspective*

edited by

David B. Grusky

Stanford University

Westview Press

Boulder • San Francisco • Oxford

*For my parents and
in memory of my grandparents*

Social Inequality Series

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Social Stratification

SOCIAL INEQUALITY SERIES

Marta Tienda and David B. Grusky, *Series Editors*

Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, edited by David B. Grusky

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Study Guide

This book is designed to be used either as a stand-alone text or as a source of supplementary readings that might be assigned in conjunction with other texts. Although most of the chapters are reprints of past and present classics in the field, some are newly commissioned pieces that provide students with the conceptual background and introductory commentary that a stand-alone text requires. The lead chapter was formulated with this didactic objective explicitly in mind, and the concluding chapter for each of the other six parts of the book provides further commentary on the main subfields of stratification research and the analytic orientations underlying them. In all cases, the contributing authors were permitted to write with their own "voice," and the present book thus departs from conventional texts that seek to represent fields of research in (putatively) objective or balanced fashion.

In assembling this text, every effort was made to select articles that were both path-breaking and readable, yet on occasion it proved necessary to compromise on either of these two objectives. The following chapters, in particular, rest on concepts or methods that might be challenging to some undergraduate students:

- Karl Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes" (p. 65)
Edward Shils, "Deference" (p. 197)
David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, "A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility" (p. 265)
David B. Grusky and Robert M. Hauser, "Comparative Social Mobility Revisited: Models of

- Convergence and Divergence in 16 Countries" (p. 275)
James A. Davis, "Achievement Variables and Class Cultures: Family, Schooling, Job, and Forty-Nine Dependent Variables in the Cumulative GSS" (p. 439)
Michael T. Hannan, "Dynamics of Ethnic Boundaries" (p. 500)
Michael Hout, "Occupational Mobility of Black Men: 1962 to 1973" (p. 531)
Paula England, "Wage Appreciation and Depreciation: A Test of Neoclassical Economic Explanations of Occupational Sex Segregation" (p. 590)
William T. Bielby and James N. Baron, "Men and Women at Work: Sex Segregation and Statistical Discrimination" (p. 606)
William H. Sewell, Robert M. Hauser, and Wendy C. Wolf, "Sex, Schooling, and Occupational Status" (p. 633)
Talcott Parsons, "Equality and Inequality in Modern Society, or Social Stratification Revisited" (p. 670)

Although the foregoing chapters present materials that should be mastered by all advanced students (both graduates and undergraduates), they can be safely excised for the purposes of a purely introductory course. The remaining readings were selected so as to ensure that introductory students will still be acquainted with the most important concepts, findings, and debates in the field.

David B. Grusky

Preface and Acknowledgments

The standard rationale for publishing an anthology is that new concepts, theories, and findings have been accumulating so rapidly that some sort of organizing or synthesizing effort is needed. Indeed, given the frequency with which rhetoric of this kind appears in the prefaces of anthologies, the skeptical consumer of sociology might reasonably ask whether such a wide array of subfields and specialties can possibly be flourishing at once. In this context, there is something to be said for passing over the usual partisan rhetoric and providing, as much as possible, a more dispassionate reading of the current standing of stratification research. If, for example, one uses publication rates as an arbiter of disciplinary standing, the available evidence suggests that the position of stratification research has remained quite stable over the last thirty-five years (almost eerily so), with issues of inequality and mobility playing a featured role in roughly 25 percent of all articles published in major sociology journals (see Figure 1 in Mary Diane Burton and David B. Grusky, 1992, "A Quantitative History of Comparative Stratification Research," *Contemporary Sociology* 21, pp. 623–631). In characterizing the field, the appropriate conclusion is not that some sort of "take-off period" is still underway but rather that stratification research is firmly institutionalized and has successfully consolidated its standing as one of the dominant approaches within sociology.

The research literature has therefore become so large and complex that the task of culling it into a necessarily limited anthology poses difficulties of all kinds. In carrying out this task, it was clearly useful to start off with some "priors" about the types of contributions that should be featured, yet much of the organizational structure of the present volume emerged rather more gradually as the

project unfolded. As a result, one might view the prefatory comments that follow as a dissonance reduction exercise in which the goal is to infer, after the fact, the larger logic that presumably guided the project. The six organizing principles listed below should be interpreted accordingly:

1. In assembling this collection, the first and foremost objective was to represent the diversity of research traditions on offer while at the same time giving precedence to those traditions that have so far borne the greatest fruit. As is often the case, the pool of disciplinary knowledge has developed in uneven and ramshackle fashion, so much so that any attempt to cover all subjects equally would grossly misrepresent the current strengths and weaknesses of contemporary stratification research.

2. This sensitivity to disciplinary fashion reveals itself, for example, in the relatively large number of selections addressing and discussing issues of race, ethnicity, and gender. Among contemporary scholars, the prevailing view seems to be that race and gender are no longer secondary forms of status affiliation but rather are increasingly dominant forces in the evolution and functioning of modern stratification systems. If the concepts of class, status, and power formed the holy trinity of postwar stratification theorizing, then the (partly overlapping) concepts of class, race, and gender are playing analogous roles now.

3. The second disciplinary development of interest is the growing popularity of quantitative models of stratification and the consequent emergence of stratification analysis as the preferred forum for introducing, testing, and marketing new methods. Although the study of stratification has become increasingly technical in method, most of the articles selected for this anthology are nonetheless accessible to introductory sociology stu-

dents and other novices (see the Study Guide for details).

4. The readers of this volume will thus be disproportionately exposed to *contemporary* approaches to analyzing stratification systems. However, given that most stratification research has a strongly cumulative character to it, there is didactic value in incorporating earlier sociological classics as well as some of the “near-classics” that were written well after the foundational contributions of Karl Marx or Max Weber. The latter body of intervening work is often ignored by editors of anthologies, thereby perpetuating (in some small way) the view that all sociological research can or should be stamped with an exclusively Marxian or Weberian imprimatur.

5. In most anthologies, the classics so chosen make the research literature appear more coherent and cumulative than it truly is, since the natural tendency is to emphasize those aspects of the sociological past that seem to best anticipate or motivate current disciplinary interests. The novice reader may be left, then, with the impression that all past sociological work leads directly and inevitably to current disciplinary interests. This form of academic teleology will likely always be popular, yet in the present case I am hopeful that some inoculation against it was secured by commissioning a series of concluding essays that locate the selections within a broader historical and substantive context.

6. The final, and most difficult, task faced by editors of anthologies is to chart an optimal course between the Scylla of overly aggressive excerpting and the Charybdis of excessive editorial timidity. By the usual standards of anthologies, the course charted here was very much an average one; the (obvious) objective was to eliminate all inessential material while still preserving the analytic integrity of the contributions. To be sure, some of our readers and contributors would no doubt oppose *all* forms of excerpting, yet the practical cost of implementing such a radical stance would be a substantial reduction in the number of articles that could be reproduced.

The editing rules adopted throughout this anthology were in most cases conventional. For example, brackets were used to mark off a passage

that was inserted for the purpose of clarifying meaning, whereas ellipses were used whenever a passage appearing in the original contribution was excised altogether. The latter convention was violated, however, if the excised text was merely a footnote or a minor reference to a table or passage (e.g., “see table 1”) that was itself excerpted out. When necessary, tables and footnotes were renumbered without so indicating in the text, and all articles that were cited in excised passages were likewise omitted, without indication, from the list of references appearing at the end of each chapter. The spelling, grammar, and stylistic conventions of the original contributions were otherwise preserved. In this respect, the reader should be forewarned that some of the terms appearing in the original contributions would now be regarded as pejorative (e.g., *Negro*), whereas others have passed out of common usage and will possibly be unfamiliar. Although a strong argument could clearly be made for eliminating all language that is no longer acceptable, this type of sanitizing would not only exceed usual editorial license but would also generate a final text that contained inconsistent, and possibly confusing, temporal cues.

The truism that scholarly research is a collective enterprise probably holds for this book more so than others. Among the various functions that an anthology fills, one of the more obvious ones is to define and celebrate what a field has achieved and in so doing to pay tribute to those who made such achievement possible. I am duly grateful, therefore, to the dozens of scholars who allowed their work to be reproduced for this anthology or who agreed to write one of the commissioned essays that glue the various sections of it together. This book provides a well-deserved occasion to recognize the many successes of a field that is perhaps better known for its contentiousness and controversy.

The task of fashioning a book out of such a large and diverse field rested, in large part, on the careful labor of dedicated graduate research assistants. I relied extensively on Karen Aschaffenburg and Ivan K. Fukumoto to locate and review hundreds of possible selections, and Mariko Lin Chang provided invaluable help in constructing

the subject index and proofing the galleys. At the early planning stages of this project, I also profited from the advice and suggestions of the following scholars: James N. Baron, Mary Diane Burton, Phillip A. Butcher, Maria Charles, Paul J. DiMaggio, Thomas A. DiPrete, Oscar Grusky, Robert M. Hauser, Jerald R. Herting, Gerhard E. Lenski, Leonard J. Hochberg, Harold R. Kerbo, Robert D. Mare, John W. Meyer, Manuela Romero, Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Aage B. Sørensen, Jesper B. Sørensen, Eve B. Spangler, Ivan Szelényi, Marta Tienda, Nancy B. Tuma, Raymond S. Wong, and Morris Zelditch, Jr. If this book proves to be at all useful, it is in large part because my friends and colleagues guided me in fruitful directions.

The selections reproduced here have all been pretested in graduate and undergraduate stratification classes at the University of Chicago and Stanford University. I am indebted to the many students in these classes who shared their reactions to the selections and thereby shaped the final product more than they may appreciate or realize. The students attending my most recent stratification class require special mention in this regard, since they all read the galleys in their entirety and thus caught many errors both minor and major.

The funding for this project came from the usual assortment of public and private sources. The final draft of my introductory essay was completed while I was on fellowship leave funded by

the National Science Foundation through the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (NSF BNS-8700864). The honoraria for some of the commissioned essays were paid by the Stanford University Dean's Research Fund, and the monies for research assistance were provided by the Presidential Young Investigator Program of the National Science Foundation (NSF SES-8858467) and the Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children, and Youth. Although I am most grateful for the funding that these organizations so generously provided, they are of course in no way responsible for the views and opinions expressed herein.

It is fitting to conclude by singling out those contributions that make the concept of altruism seem all the more necessary. I would like to give special thanks to Kenneth I. Spenner for reading the entire manuscript and providing comments of a most helpful sort, to Ida May B. Norton for superb copy editing that made many of us seem more intelligent than we truly are, and to Dean Birkenkamp and Libby Barstow of Westview Press for their advice and support throughout the ordeal that publishing a book inevitably becomes. I am most appreciative, finally, of the grace with which Szonja Szelényi shouldered the triple burden of being a wife, an academic, and an in-house scholarly adviser to her husband. This book bears her imprint in innumerable ways.

D.B.G.

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Part I

Introduction

The Contours of Social Stratification

In advanced industrial societies, much rhetoric and social policy have been directed against economic and social inequality, yet despite such efforts the brute facts of poverty and massive inequality are still everywhere with us. The human condition has so far been a fundamentally unequal one; indeed, *all* known societies have been characterized by inequalities of some kind, with the most privileged individuals or families enjoying a disproportionate share of the total wealth, power, or prestige. The task of contemporary stratification research is to describe the contours and distribution of inequality and to explain its persistence despite modern egalitarian or anti-stratification values.

The term “stratification system” refers to the complex of social institutions that generate inequalities of this sort. The key components of such systems are (1) the institutional processes that define certain types of goods as valuable and desirable, (2) the rules of allocation that distribute these goods across various positions or occupations in the division of labor (e.g., doctor, farmer, or “housewife”), and (3) the mobility mechanisms that link individuals to occupations and thereby generate unequal control over valued resources. It follows that inequality is produced by two types of matching processes: The jobs, occupations, and social roles in society are first matched to “reward packages” of unequal value, and individual members of society are then allo-

cated to the positions so defined and rewarded.¹ In all societies, there is a constant flux of occupational incumbents as new individuals enter the system (and replace dying, retiring, or out-migrating individuals), yet the positions themselves and the reward packages attached to them typically remain much the same. As Schumpeter (1953) puts it, the occupational structure can be seen as “a hotel... which is always occupied, but always by different persons” (p. 171).

The contents of these reward packages may well differ across modern societies, but the range of variability appears not to be great (e.g., Treiman 1976). We have listed in Table 1 the various goods and assets that have been socially valued in past or present societies (for related listings, see Svalastoga 1965, p. 70; Duncan 1968, pp. 686–690; Runciman 1968).² In constructing this table, we have followed the usual objective of including all those goods that are valuable in their own right (i.e., consumption goods) but excluding any “second-order goods” (i.e., investments) that are deemed valuable only insofar as they provide access to other intrinsically desirable goods. The resulting list nonetheless includes resources and assets that serve some investment functions. For example, most economists regard schooling as an investment that generates future streams of income (see Becker 1975), and some sociologists likewise regard cultural resources (e.g., Bourdieu 1977) or social networks (e.g., Coleman 1990) as forms of capital that can be parlayed into educational credentials and other goods.³ Although most of the assets listed in Table 1 are clearly convertible in this fashion, they are not necessarily re-

This is an original article prepared for this book.