

Stratification

Sophie Moullin

Princeton University

Overview

‘A stratification system is that complex of social institutions that generate inequalities in valued goods, including but not limited to income, wealth and power’. This syllabus takes this definition of Grusky’s (2007) as a starting point. It considers (a) the social processes that define certain types of goods as valuable (b) the logic of allocation that distribute these goods across various social positions; and (c) the mobility mechanisms that link individuals to positions. Throughout, it considers how gender and race/ethnicity intersect with class or socio-economic dimensions of stratification.

The syllabus begins by introducing social theories of stratification, and recent trends in inequality and social mobility. It then takes six major institutions as sites in the production and reproduction of inequality: families, neighborhoods, schools, labor markets, capital/credit markets, and state institutions. This social-institutional analysis of inequality is characteristic of sociology. However, some works from economics are included, aiding an interdisciplinary dialogue on inequality. The course concludes by considering the evidence for the consequences of inequality.

Learning Objectives

The course aims to develop an understanding of how inequality is produced and reproduced. This includes:

- **Fluency** in the major concepts in, and social theories of, stratification and empirical studies that support or contest them;
- **Knowledge** of key methods in the analysis of inequality and mobility, of recent trends in the United States and how they compare to peer, rich countries, and
- **Critical appraisal** of the theories, methodologies, and interpretations of recent research findings. Students will be prepared to contribute to current scholarly and policy debates about inequality.

One **textbook** contains many of the readings, often helpfully in a reduced, edited form:
Grusky, David (ed). 2014 *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective (4th Edition)*. Westview Press.

Structure of the Course

This 12-week course has four parts:

- 1) Theories of stratification (3 weeks);
- 2) Trends in stratification (2 weeks);
- 3) Institutions of stratification (6 weeks); and
- 4) Consequences of stratification (1 week).

Part 1: Theories of Stratification

Week 1: Major Theories

1.1 Classical theories

Tumin (1953) 2014. *Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis*. in Grusky, D. B (ed). *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 4th edition Westview Press

Wright, Erik Olin. 2005. "A Framework of Class Analysis in the Marxist Tradition." in *Approaches to Class Analysis*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 6-40.

Breen, Richard. (2005). "Foundations of Class Analysis in the Weberian Tradition". In E. O. Wright (Ed.), *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 31–50.

1.2 Contemporary theories

Weininger, Elliot. (2005). "Foundations of Pierre Bourdieu's Class Analysis" in In E. O. Wright (Ed.), *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 82-118

Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.6-38; 130-2

Lamont, M., Beljean, S., & Clair, M. (2014). What is missing? Cultural processes and causal pathways to inequality. *Socio-Economic Review*, 12(3), 573–608.

Week 2: Human Capital and Social Capital

2.1 Human Capital and Market Failures

Acemoglu, Daron & David Autor. Chapter 1. The Basic Theory of Human Capital in *Lectures in Labor Economics*, MIT

Weeden, K. A., and D. B. Grusky. 2013. "Inequality and Market Failure." *American Behavioral Scientist* 58(3):473–91.

2.2 Social Capital and Social Closure

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003 (1986). "The Forms of Social Capital." In Halsey, A.H, Lauder, H., Brown, P. & Wells A.S. (eds). *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 46-58.

Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:1-24.

Week 3: Theorizing Intersections

3.1 Race/Ethnicity and Nativity

Desmond, M. & Emirbayer, M. (2009) What Is Racial Domination? *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 6:335

Bonacich, Edna (1972) A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market *American Sociological Review* pp.547-559

3.2 Gender

Walby, Sylvia. 1990. *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Wiley Blackwell. pp.1-24

England, Paula. 2010. The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled. *Gender & Society* 24(2):149–66.

Part 2: Trends

Week 4: Trends in Economic Inequality

4.1 Employment and Wages

Mouw, T., & Kalleberg, A. L. (2010). Occupations and the Structure of Wage Inequality in the United States, 1980s to 2000s. *American Sociological Review*, 75(3), 402–431.

Emily Greenman and Yu Xie. 2008. “Double Jeopardy: The Interaction of Gender and Race on Earnings the United States” in Grusky, D. B (ed). *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 4th edition Westview Press pp.942-952

4.2 Top Incomes and Wealth

Piketty, T., & Saez, E. 2014. Inequality in the Long Run. *Science*, 344(6186), 838–43.

Pfeffer, Fabian T., Sheldon Danziger, and Robert F. Schoeni. 2013. “Wealth Disparities before and after the Great Recession.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 650(1):98–123.

Keister, L. A., and H. Y. Lee. 2014. “The One Percent: Top Incomes and Wealth in Sociological Research.” *Social Currents* 1(1):13–24.

Week 5: Fluidity and Difference

5.1 Mobility trends

Mitink, Pablo A., Victoria Bryant, Michael Weber, and David B. Grusky. 2015. “New Estimates of Intergenerational Mobility Using Administrative Data.” *IRS/ Stanford Center for Poverty and Inequality*. Abstract and Introduction, pp.1-7

Bloome, D., & Western, B. 2011. Cohort Change and Racial Differences in Educational and Income Mobility. *Social Forces*, 90(2), 375–395.

5.2 Comparative Trends

Beller, E., & Hout, M. 2006. Intergenerational Social Mobility: The United States in Comparative Perspective. *Future of Children*, 16, 19–36.

Corak, M., Lindquist, M. J., & Mazumder, B. 2014. A comparison of upward and downward intergenerational mobility in Canada, Sweden and the United States. *Labor Economics*, 30, 185–200.

Part 3: Institutions of Stratification

Week 6: Families

6.1 Family structures and resources

McLanahan, Sara, and Christine Percheski. 2008. "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34(1):257–76.

Akee, R., Simeonova, E., Costello, E. J., & Copeland, W. 2015. How Does Household Income Affect Child Personality Traits and Behaviors? NBER Working Paper.

6.2 Family processes

Kalil, Ariel, Rebecca Ryan, and Michael Corey. 2012. "Diverging Destinies: Maternal Education and the Developmental Gradient in Time with Children." *Demography* 49(4):1361–83.

Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review* 67:747–76.

Week 7: Schools

7.1 Education in Inequality

Hout. 2012. "Social and Economic Returns to College Education in the United States." *Annual Review of Sociology*

Torche, Florencia. 2011. "Is a College Degree Still the Great Equalizer? Intergenerational Mobility across Levels of Schooling in the US" *American Journal of Sociology* 117(3): 763-807.

7.2 Inequalities in Education

Duncan, Greg & Richard Murnane, (eds.) 2012. Introduction in *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools and Children's Life Chances*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Bradbury, Bruce, Miles Corak, Jane Waldfogel and Elizabeth Washbrook. 2015. *Too Many Children Left Behind: The US Achievement Gap in Comparative Perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation. Introduction.

Dobbie, Will, and Roland G. Fryer. 2013. "Getting beneath the Veil of Effective Schools: Evidence from New York City." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5(4):28–60.

Golann, J. W. 2015. "The Paradox of Success at a No-Excuses School." *Sociology of Education* 88(2):103–19.

Week 8: Neighborhoods

8.1 Evidence for neighborhood effects

Sampson, Robert J. 2008. "Moving to Inequality: Neighborhood Effects and Experiments Meet Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(1):189–231.

Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2015. "The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children : New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment." *Harvard University and NBER* (May).

8.2 Mechanisms of neighborhood effects

Wilson, 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged, Chapters 1 and 2*.

Sharkey, Patrick. 2010. "The Acute Effect of Local Homicides on Children's Cognitive Performance." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107(26):11733–38.

Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003). Moving to opportunity: an experimental study of neighborhood effects on mental health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(9), 1576–82.

Week 9: Labor Markets

9.1 Structural Inequalities in Labor Markets

DiPrete, T. A., Eirich, G. M., & Pittinsky, M. (2010). Compensation Benchmarking, Leapfrogs, and the Surge in Executive Pay. *American Journal of Sociology*, *115*(6), 1671–1712.

Kristal, T. 2013. “The Capitalist Machine: Computerization, Workers’ Power, and the Decline in Labor’s Share within U.S. Industries.” *American Sociological Review* *78*(3):361–89.

Goldin, C. (2014). A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter. *American Economic Review*, *104*(4), 1091–1119.

9.2 Inequalities in the Workplace

Cha, Y., and K. A. Weeden. 2014. “Overwork and the Slow Convergence in the Gender Gap in Wages.” *American Sociological Review* *79*(3):457–84.

Lyness, K. S., Gornick, J. C., Stone, P., & Grotto, A. R. (2012). It’s All about Control: Worker Control over Schedule and Hours in Cross-National Context. *American Sociological Review*, *77*(6), 1023–1049.

Pager, D., B. Bonikowski, and B. Western. 2009. “Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment.” *American Sociological Review* *74*(5):777–99.

Week 10: Capital/Credit Markets

3.6 Wealth

Pfeffer, Fabian T. and Alexandra Killewald. 2015. "How Rigid Is the Wealth Structure and Why? Inter- and Multigenerational Associations in Family Wealth." PSC Research Report No. 15-845.

Pfeffer, Fabian T and Martin Hällsten. 2012. "Mobility Regimes and Parental Wealth: The United States, Germany, and Sweden in Comparison." PSC Research Report 12-766

3.6 Credit and Financialization

Lin, K.-H., & Donald Tomaskovic-Devey. (2013). Financialization and U.S. Income Inequality 1970-2008. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(5), 1284–1329.

Fourcade, Marion., & Kieran Healy. 2013. Classification situations: Life-chances in the neoliberal era. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 38(8), 559–572.

Dokko, Jane, Geng Li, and Jessica Hayes. 2015. Credit Scores and Committed Relationships *Finance and Economics Discussion Series* 2015-081. Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17016/FEDS.2015.081>.

Week 11: States

11.1 Policing and the Penal System

Western, Bruce, and Katherine Beckett. 1999. "How Unregulated Is the U.S. Labor Market? The Penal System as a Labor Market Institution." *American Journal of Sociology* 104(4):1030–60.

Wacquant, Loic. 2001. "Deadly Symbiosis." *Punishment and Society* 3(1):95–134.

11.2 Welfare Systems

DiPrete, Tom 2002. Life Course Risks, Mobility Regimes, and Mobility Consequences: A Comparison of Sweden, Germany, and the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(2), 267–309.

Brady, David, Andrew S. Fullerton, and Jennifer Moren Cross. 2010. "More than Just Nickels and Dimes: A Cross-National Analysis of Working Poverty in Affluent Democracies." *Social Problems* 57(4):559–85.

Week 12: Consequences of Inequality

12.1 Health and Mental Health

Starr, Paul. 2015. The Shocking Rise in White Deaths in Midlife – and what it says about American Society. *The American Prospect*, Nov. 2. 2015. <http://prospect.org/article/shocking-rise-white-death-rates-midlife-and-what-it-says-about-american-society>

Sigerist, Johannes and Marmot, Michael. 2004. Health Inequalities and the Psychosocial Environment: Two scientific challenges (originally from *Social Science & Medicine*), in Grusky, pp. 1046-1049

12.2 Status and Power

Sennett, Richard and Jonathon Cobb, 1993. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Faber. pp.220-242 and pp. 263-272

Gilens, Martin. 2005. “Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69(5):778–96.