
Social Differentiation and Inequality: Some Reflections on the State of the Field

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We believe the various contributions to this volume do justice to their authors' mentor, John C. Pock. Like him, these essays are provocative, innovative, ambitious, careful and sophisticated in their reasoning and inference, and focused on some of sociology's central issues. At the same time, this collection also highlights the obvious fact that our theories and research addressing status attainment provide a decidedly incomplete picture of the social forces involved. In particular, too little emphasis has been paid to both macro- (demographic, structural, and institutional) and micro- (individual and primary group) influences. We sketch the beginnings of a more comprehensive framework here, and we show how a number of the chapters in this volume address issues that fit comfortably within such an expanded view of how the process of status attainment works in modern industrial societies. We also discuss some implications of this broadened conception of the status attainment process for future research.

Macrosocial Underpinnings of Status Attainment

We suggest that a comprehensive theory of status attainment must include an account of both the factors that determine what sorts of opportunities are (differentially) available to individuals and the extent and ways in which individuals are able to exploit the opportunities available

to them. Let us first consider the structure of opportunities, which we think of as reflecting macrosocial factors. These are of three kinds: demographic, structural, and organizational-institutional.

Demographic Factors

Changes in birth rates and death rates and changes in the number and social composition of immigrants and emigrants affect the ratio between supply and demand for various kinds of positions. A simple example, close to home, is the impact of changes in the birthrate between the 1930s and 1950s on job prospects for new Ph.D.'s. Those who completed their graduate studies in the 1960s enjoyed favorable job prospects because the birth cohorts of the 1930s (who were the Ph.D. cohorts of the 1960s) were unusually small, while the demand for teaching faculty was expanding rapidly as the baby boom produced larger and larger cohorts of college-aged youths. A decade later the situation was reversed, as the baby boom cohorts began to produce ever larger numbers of Ph.D.'s at a time when the demand for new faculty was weakening because the size of college-entry cohorts was leveling off or even dropping.

As another example, in countries devastated by war there may be large holes in the male age structure, creating special opportunities for the survivors as well as for those in younger cohorts. The destruction of Poland's Jewish population, for instance, must have had a profound effect on the chances for occupational mobility among the remainder of the population given that the Jews, who constituted a large fraction of the population of many Polish cities, were so disproportionately a merchant and professional class (Institute for the Study of Minority Problems 1932; Zielinski 1954; Altshuler 1993). Many other examples of this kind could be cited. But demographic factors of this sort are seldom taken into account in status attainment studies. Although scholars of social mobility have long sought to characterize, in descriptive fashion, the amount of such structurally induced mobility, the models they conventionally deploy can neither distinguish the effects of different types of demographic processes (e.g., differential mortality or fertility) nor readily control for microlevel sources of mobility (Sobel, Hout, and Duncan 1985; Hauser and Grusky 1988).

A welcome exception is the essay by Robert Mare (Chapter 5), which explicitly models the combined roles of differential fertility, differential mortality, and intergenerational educational mobility in generating changes in the distribution of educational attainment among U.S. women during the last half of the twentieth century. Although many scholars have recognized the potential importance of such demographic processes (e.g., Duncan 1966; Vining 1986; Herrnstein and Murray 1994), Mare is one of the first scholars to test these arguments explicitly (see also Preston

and Campbell 1993). In doing so, he introduces a one-sex projection model that is frequently used to understand patterns of population redistribution but that is quite distinct from the micro-oriented models commonly employed in status attainment research. His chapter should serve as a model of the kinds of alternative approaches that can serve to broaden our understanding of stratification processes.

Structural Factors

Closely akin to demographic influences are structural factors that affect the demand for different sorts of labor. Paramount among these are changes in the technology of production and macroeconomic changes that affect the demand for various sorts of goods and services. For example, industrial societies are quite different from peasant societies in their mix of jobs, and hence the rate of industrialization of societies creates differences in mobility chances (Treiman 1970). Economic changes can have a similar impact. Students of status attainment have not yet adequately appreciated that the state of the economy may thus have a profound impact on the opportunities and constraints individuals face. By contrast, scholars of social mobility have long recognized and sought to model structurally induced mobility, yet their analytic approach cannot easily be adapted to structural equation models of the sort that scholars of status attainment conventionally estimate. In the context of the latter models, some researchers have attributed over-time or cross-national variability in the intercept to macrolevel factors of the above-mentioned kind (e.g., Grusky and DiPrete 1990). But such interpretations assume that the model being estimated is adequately specified and that the intercept is therefore not attributable to omitted variables at either the individual or macrostructural level. The specter of omitted-variable bias always haunts nonexperimental research; however, it is especially troubling in the present context, if only because the degrees of freedom with which to adjudicate between competing macrolevel effects are perforce limited in over-time or cross-national designs. If structural effects are to be incorporated convincingly, then an analytic innovation of a sort that we cannot now anticipate is likely to be required.

Organizational and Institutional Factors

We here include the way that different units of society are organized, the norms and rules governing social behavior and interaction within these settings, and the way resources are allocated within and between various units. This is a rather comprehensive definition, encompassing what could alternatively be thought of as aspects of structure; however, the present state of theoretical development makes distinctions among these aspects of institutions somewhat difficult, especially within the

limited space available here. The need to incorporate institutional factors into models of status attainment has been widely recognized and has helped to fuel the development of the "new structuralism" Neil Fligstein and Haldor Byrkjeflot refer to in Chapter 2 of this volume. In our view a comprehensive institutional framework has yet to be developed, but there is surely evidence of much scholarly interest in building one (see, especially, Kerckhoff forthcoming). We suggest that such a framework will need to include at least four institutions: states, educational systems, employment systems, and the family. Although it is useful for analytic purposes to separate these four institutions, they are strongly interrelated, in the sense that institutional arrangements in one sphere will usually affect other spheres as well.

Our concern here with states is restricted to public policies and practices promulgated by governmental agencies at all levels via legislation, administrative fiat, or judicial decisions that affect stratification systems. These are of two principal kinds: tax and income transfer policies and employment policies. Tax policies, which are virtually never considered by students of stratification, affect the degree of inequality in income and wealth and the level of funding available for public programs. It has been well documented that the degree of income inequality in the United States increased during the 1980s, partly as a consequence of Reagan administration policies that made the federal income tax less progressive (Gramlich, Kasten, and Sammartino 1993; Mishel and Bernstein 1994: ch. 2). To cite another example, local financing of schools via property taxes ensures much larger inequalities in per pupil expenditures across communities than would occur with a more centralized redistribution system such as many European countries have adopted (Wise 1967; Kozol 1991). Tax policies may also affect the level of labor force participation. In Ireland, for example, women are discouraged from entering the labor force by a steeply progressive income tax system that adds the income of husband and wife rather than (approximately) averaging them, as is the case in the United States. For middle-class Irish women, the cost of entering the labor force typically exceeds the net income earned, thus creating a strong disincentive for labor force participation (see Esping-Andersen 1993 for related considerations).

Public regulation of employment policies includes pay equity legislation; laws and regulations pertaining to collective bargaining; laws and regulations governing wages, hours, working conditions, and discharge; affirmative action or other legislation designed to minimize gender- or ethnically-based discrimination in hiring and promotion; and policies that explicitly advantage one ethnic or racial group at the expense of others, such as characterized South African employment policies until a few years ago. Although the impact of such governmental policies in the

United States is widely debated (Sowell 1975; Walker and Block 1982; Burstein 1985, 1994; Grusky and DiPrete 1990; Jencks 1992; Uri and Mixon 1992; Graham 1994), there is quite substantial evidence of a reduction over time in occupational segregation by race (Williams and Jaynes 1989) and some evidence of a corresponding reduction in occupational segregation by gender (Jacobs 1989; Reskin 1993).

Of course governmental regulation affects stratification through a number of other avenues as well. Governmental entities control processes of vocational credentialing and occupational licensure, which in turn shape the supply, demand, and market power associated with particular work roles. Laws and regulations regarding public and private pension plans can have a significant impact on labor market outcomes, including rates of turnover, retirement ages, and the life-cycle patterning of earnings. Governments also promulgate industrial policies and regional development policies that can have profound ramifications for the distribution of opportunity and wealth across sectors and regions of the economy. A less obvious but nonetheless important way in which such policies can affect social stratification is by influencing housing markets, which in recent decades have become more heterogeneous within the United States and represent for many individuals their major source of net worth. National, state, and local government policies (e.g., regarding zoning, growth, and tax breaks for employers) and public sector expenditures (e.g., for education, protective services, infrastructure) serve to make housing more scarce and desirable in some locales than others. As a result, individuals or families owning otherwise equivalent housing in disparate housing markets may experience quite different patterns of wealth accumulation over time as their home equity appreciates or depreciates, and governmental policies that encourage relocation of job opportunities from one region to another can promote massive redistribution of wealth not only through the labor market but also through housing markets.

Finally, as Hannan (1988) has noted, the diversity of career trajectories available to individuals within a given line of work depends enormously on the diversity of organizational forms within which that work role can be carried out. Consequently, governmental policies regarding entrepreneurship, self-employment, and industrial competition can influence the number and types of work organizations within a given sphere, thereby shaping the types and range of labor market opportunities available to individuals. For instance, regulations that broaden the definition of a "financial services" organization permit individuals with training in relevant occupations to fashion careers in many different kinds of organizational settings rather than just in a traditional bank or insurance bureaucracy. According to this perspective, governmental programs that promote *organizational* diversity may be an effective way of promoting

labor force diversity; a more heterogeneous population of organizations within a given sphere of activity is presumably capable of offering a more diverse menu of employment opportunities and career paths, thereby broadening the pool of individuals who may be well matched to available jobs.¹

Because of the strong links between educational attainment and occupational qualifications, the provision of education is almost universally regarded as an obligation of government. However, educational systems vary widely in the availability of schools, especially for persons in rural areas; in how selective they are; in the extent to which there are deliberate attempts to create equal opportunity for educational advancement by providing special academic and financial assistance to those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and in the extent to which education is subsidized by the state or financed directly by students or their parents (Archer 1979). Nations also vary enormously in the extent and types of stratification and segmentation among educational institutions and in the tightness of the linkages between specific educational institutions and labor markets. There has recently been increased attention paid to these variations across countries (Shavit and Blossfeld 1993), including a few efforts to document differences across countries in the ways that schools channel students into the labor market (König and Müller 1986; Allmendinger 1989; Rosenbaum and Kariya 1989a, 1989b, 1991; Ishida, Müller, and Ridge 1995). These variations across time and space in the way that education and school systems are organized have obvious implications for stratification and mobility, both within and across generations, but have received too little attention in past research.

The chapter by Fligstein and Byrkjeflot in this volume reminds us that social institutions consist of sets of rules or norms governing social relationships—in their case relationships between employers and employees. They make the important point that the particular rules and norms that come into being within a given sphere of economic activity must be understood as an evolutionary process that depends upon the specific circumstances—in particular the balance of power between contending actors—at the time the institutions were created. Their emphasis on the *institutionalization* of employment systems suggests a resistance to change; consistent with Hannan's (1988) previously cited argument, it may often be the case that a reallocation of opportunities and attainments among social and demographic groups requires the creation of new organizational forms and the death of old ones, given inertial tendencies in firms and employment systems. Again, this is a lesson that needs to be absorbed by researchers in the status attainment tradition.

Chapter 9 by M.D.R. Evans and Karen Mason and Chapter 8 by Carol Heimer document the variability among families with respect to the gen-

dered division of labor and its implications for women's participation in paid employment. The two chapters complement each other nicely. Evans and Mason show that even in late-twentieth-century Australia—a preeminently modern, industrial, secular society—a substantial fraction of both men and women still believe that a woman's place is in the home and that families suffer if women work. Heimer's essay suggests why this might be so: The way that family arrangements are institutionalized in modern industrial society assigns to women family responsibilities that are not easily shifted to others ("fates," in Heimer's terminology). In contrast, men view their responsibilities more in market terms—as opportunities or investments to be treated strategically and modified when superior opportunities or investments become available. If this analysis is joined with Fligstein and Byrkjeflot's arguments about the formation and persistence of institutional arrangements, we can better understand why gender differences in income have been so persistent.

Microsocial Underpinnings of Status Attainment

Most status attainment research to date has focused on the attributes of individuals that lead them to be more or less successful in the attainment of education, good jobs, or high income. Accordingly, we can be relatively brief in considering the microsocial underpinnings of status attainment. It is obvious enough that whatever the opportunities and constraints facing them, some individuals are more successful than others. The simple question is: Why is this so? We think that the advantages (or disadvantages) accruing to individuals may be usefully disaggregated into characteristics of families of origin and characteristics of individual actors. The intergenerational transmission of advantage (or disadvantage) may be seen as a reflection of the extent to which families differentially hold three forms of capital: cultural, material, and social capital. The intragenerational accumulation of advantage (or disadvantage) may be seen as a reflection of the extent to which actors themselves hold those same three forms of capital. Differential accumulation and deployment of these three forms of capital explains how effectively individuals seize the opportunities or overcome the constraints created by macrosocial factors.

"Cultural capital" refers to the stock of information, knowledge, abilities, skills, and motivations held by a family or an individual. The term "cultural capital" is largely synonymous with the term "human capital," widely used by economists and others, except that "cultural capital" is a somewhat broader concept, encompassing all manner of information, knowledge, and the like, not merely that fraction that produces differential income.² In status attainment models, family cultural capital is often

measured, rather crudely, by father's education or parental education. However, the work of Bourdieu (1984) has inspired attempts to measure cultural capital more directly through such indicators as the number of books available in one's childhood household and the frequency with which parents participated in high culture—going to concerts, the ballet, opera, and so on. (This list might be supplemented with such contemporary sources of cultural capital as opportunities to travel and to use computers.)

The hypothesized linkage between cultural capital and status attainment is quite straightforward: Children from families with abundant cultural capital will do better, go further in school (because they start school with a competitive advantage that accumulates over their school careers), and ultimately enter more lucrative occupations. Because they come from families in which the attributes that facilitate school success—literacy and numeracy, abstract reasoning, and oral discussion and argumentation—are valued and practiced, they become proficient at these skills and are motivated to continue to improve them. Bourdieu argues, secondarily, that family participation in high culture is a status signifier that results in favorable consideration by teachers.

The link between education and occupational attainment is obvious and has been well documented, without exception, in all status attainment studies of the United States and other countries. Whether the trappings of education—an educated style—affect occupational chances above and beyond either the cognitive capacities acquired through education or educational credentials is as yet much less clear, since little work has been done on this topic. There is, however, evidence that education enhances income even among those with occupations of similar status (Sewell and Hauser 1975: ch. 6).

"Material capital," as used in this literature, refers to income, wealth, and property. It is unclear to what extent in societies such as the United States family or individual material capital serves as a resource for status attainment rather than simply as an aspect of the status attained, a return on earlier investments in education and careers. Of course children who have a safety net of family resources not only can delay career beginnings to engage in a longer training regimen but can also search for just the right career or take more substantial risks in the hope of larger payoffs. At the same time, schooling in the United States is essentially free up to the tertiary level, and low-cost tertiary education is widely available, thus suggesting that the direct effects of material capital on years of schooling (if not on the *quality* of schooling) may be modest (see Sewell and Hauser 1975 for relevant evidence). In other societies family material capital may be far more important, especially where schooling requires substantial

financial investment. In societies where inheritance or purchase of land or a business is an important avenue of status attainment, family capital will matter far more than it does in the United States, where almost no one inherits a family business or farm.

"Social capital" refers to interpersonal relationships of obligation and influence. Here the claim is that, at least under certain circumstances, individuals may obtain admission to universities, acquire good jobs, secure lucrative contracts, and otherwise profit from their personal connections. The role of social capital has been widely studied, starting with Granovetter's (1974) influential hypothesis regarding the "strength of weak ties." However, the results have generally been somewhat unsatisfactory to date, perhaps because social capital is by its nature quite specific to particular biographical and historical circumstances and therefore cannot be readily measured or understood through such abstract concepts as the number of available contacts or the average power, status, and "strength" of these contacts. More refined studies of social networks within particular work contexts have documented that it is not simply *whom* one knows, but in what capacity, as well as the patterning of relations *among* those whom one knows, that matters for social mobility (Burt 1992; Podolny and Baron 1995). The complex effects of social capital can thus be teased out only by collecting data of a far more subtle sort than labor force survey designs conventionally provide. Moreover, a credible model of influence-wielding through social networks would take into account not only whether the requisite social ties are available to a given individual but also whether there are historical, personal, or organizational reasons for expecting such ties to be activated on particular issues.

Just how micro- and macrolevel factors combine to produce particular labor market outcomes is as yet far from clear, in part because of the difficulty of designing research that explicitly models both sets of factors in a single analysis. Although research methods for estimating simultaneously the impact of macro- and microinfluences are readily available and have been widely applied (e.g., Mason, Wong, and Entwisle 1983; Grusky and DiPrete 1990), all such research is limited by the available number of macrocontexts (firms, countries, etc.) and the consequent difficulty in adjudicating among the effects of highly correlated macrolevel variables. In Chapter 3, for example, Treiman and Lee analyze the attributes of individuals and bring demographic, structural, and institutional factors into the interpretation of the results but not into the analytic design (except insofar as the analysis of a single labor market, the Los Angeles metropolitan area, successfully controls for such factors). Treiman and Lee show that ethnic differences in income are largely attributable to ethnic differences in cultural capital. It is a useful thought exper-

iment to ask how these findings would be modified by an *explicit* attempt to model structural factors, particularly variations in the actual—probably noncompetitive—labor markets available to different ethnic groups.

Directions for Theory and Research

We recognize the pitfalls inherent in enumerating such a long and diverse list of factors that warrant attention in studies of stratification. Whereas stratification researchers might once have held out the goal of constructing a comprehensive model of status attainment (see Featherman 1981), the above comments suggest, if nothing else, that this goal will not be easily achieved and that in the sociological near term no single study is likely to be able to capture even a majority of the possible causal influences we have identified. But we think this conceptual overview is useful in drawing attention to some important limitations in current scholarship and promising directions for the future.

First, the emphasis we have placed on macroinfluences highlights the importance of more comparative and/or historical work that maximizes variation on the relevant demographic, structural, and organizational-institutional influences. Moreover, this kind of work is also likely to sharpen our understanding of the various microinfluences on stratification and inequality, which are themselves likely to vary across macrocontexts (see Baron and Pfeffer 1994). For instance, the most interesting hypotheses about the role of social capital in status attainment concern the institutional arrangements that make social capital more or less important. Those who champion the thesis of universalism and industrialism would posit that in the United States, where jobs increasingly are filled on a bureaucratic basis, social capital is not very important. They suggest that universalism may be an inherent feature of market economies—whoever has the money can buy whatever is for sale—and the norm of universalism may carry over to other realms, such as hiring and promotion. By contrast, particularism may be an endemic feature of command economies, especially economies of scarcity, because in the absence of a market mechanism there is no clear-cut allocation rule (see Stark 1987). The command economies of communist Eastern Europe were widely regarded as bastions of personal influence and the same is true today in China, where to accomplish virtually anything one must exercise one's *guanxi*, that is, one's personal connections (Bian 1994).

It would of course be naive to conclude that informal social ties no longer exert a significant impact on individual advancement within corporations operating in a market context (for relevant evidence, see Burt 1992; Podolny and Baron 1995). In fact, some scholars might argue that the formal pressures for universalism, combined with an increasing

emphasis on teamwork, "corporate culture," and minimizing bureaucracy in the workplace, have in fact made social capital *more* important, rather than less. Only systematic comparisons of network effects across a variety of macro contexts will resolve the debate.

Second, we have emphasized the causal paths *from* a variety of macro and micro influences *to* stratification and inequality, but it is important to emphasize that the causal arrows run in the opposite direction as well. Indeed, given our own training as Reed sociologists, we suspect that most of the contributors to this volume were, like us, attracted to the field of stratification in particular because of an interest in the *consequences* of social differentiation and inequality. We sought to understand how social class and socioeconomic status affect a person's behavior and beliefs, and how, at the societal level, the distribution of labor market outcomes affects other features of social systems, such as collective action and the polity, demography, families, deviance, social conflict, and structural change.

Several chapters in this volume pick up on these themes. William Mason and his colleagues document the powerful demographic consequences of socioeconomic stratification (Chapter 6). William Tudor documents how women's subordinate standing within society and the labor market causes them to be differentially labeled as mentally deficient (Chapter 10). As noted previously, other chapters examine how changes in women's educational and/or labor market positions have shaped gender role attitudes (Chapter 9) and the allocation of time and effort within households (Chapter 8).

These efforts to understand the consequences of stratification and inequality are predicated, of course, on various implicit models of the structure of inequality, which we believe merit more attention in future research. As Jesper Sørensen and David Grusky suggest in Chapter 4, sociologists are typically asked to choose between (1) gradational models of stratification, which map disaggregated occupations onto vertical scales of prestige or socioeconomic status, and (2) categorical models of class, which portray the stratification system in terms of mutually exclusive, highly aggregated, and (possibly) interdependent groups. The presumption, then, is that real class structuration will inevitably be found at highly aggregate levels of analysis, whereas the residue of structuration at lower levels is regarded as less fundamental and hence reducible to mere socioeconomic differentiation.

In contrast, Sørensen and Grusky argue that some detailed occupations (especially crafts and professions) take on the characteristics of sociopolitical communities, becoming the principal loci of "stratification effects," whereas social classes of the traditional aggregate sort appear to be less well formed and subjectively less salient to working men and

women. Emmison and Western (1990), for instance, reported that only 7 percent of all Australians regarded their social class as a "very important" identity, and other commentators (e.g., Saunders 1989) have stressed that open-ended queries about class identification tend to yield numerous confused responses, refusals to answer, and even explicit denials of the very existence of classes (also see G. Evans 1992; M.D.R. Evans 1995). This type of evidence has led some sociologists to conclude that the class system is no longer the primary basis of identity formation (e.g., Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

Interestingly, when Emmison and Western asked respondents to name the single "identity source" they thought was most important, the most frequently cited identity was the old sociological standby of occupation, suggesting that the alternative statuses of gender, ethnicity, or nationality may attract more academic attention than their salience in the subjective domain merits (Emmison and Western 1990: table 3). Not only are detailed occupations the building blocks of macro level labor markets, but they are also important forces for socialization and acculturation at the micro level, which may explain their salience for workers' identities (see Becker and Carper 1956). As Caplow (1954) noted long ago, occupations also often require of their incumbents prolonged study, which can inculcate and enforce explicit codes of behavior, whereas aggregate classes have no comparable influence or authority over secondary patterns of socialization.

This evidence raises the possibility that the contours of collective action in the contemporary economy reflect the boundaries among specific occupations more than membership in the aggregate class categories that are the traditional fare in research on stratification and mobility. Three primary types of collective action can be found at the detailed occupational level: (1) *downward-directed* closure strategies designed to restrict access to occupational positions (e.g., closed union shops, credentialing, etc.); (2) *lateral* competitive struggles between occupational associations over functional niches in the division of labor (see Abbott 1988), and (3) *upward-directed* collective action oriented toward securing occupation-specific benefits (e.g., monopoly protection) from the state and from employers. In short, not only do real working men and women disavow the importance of social class and emphasize the subjective salience of their particular occupations, but there may also be more *prima facie* evidence of occupational roles as bases of collective action than there is for highly aggregated classes or occupational categories (e.g., professionals, manual labor, etc.)³

Of course the relative importance of occupational versus nonoccupational forms of class structuration itself varies considerably over time and space. As Fligstein and Byrkjeflot emphasize in Chapter 2, employment

systems evolve very differently, producing distinctive patterns of social stratification and inequality. In terms of the taxonomy that Fligstein and Byrkjeflot advance, occupational or industrial structuration is especially strong within vocational and professional employment systems, whereas organizational or firm-based structuration is especially strong within systems of managerialism. Kalleberg and Lincoln (1988; see also Lincoln and Kalleberg 1985) similarly have examined how the architecture of inequality varies across contexts, but they focus on differences among countries rather than organizations. Consistent with the argument they develop, their empirical evidence suggests that occupational affiliation is more decisive for objective attainments and subjective identities within America's highly mobile society, whereas Japanese corporatism renders organizational affiliation more salient. The relative salience of occupational versus organizational and institutional identities may vary *within* countries as well as between them. Baron and Pfeffer (1994), for instance, have applied theory from cognitive and social psychology to suggest how and why organizations vary in the classification and valuation of work roles, the matching of persons to those roles, and the extent and consequences of reward differentiation.

This discussion highlights the importance of future research examining the *consequences* of stratification and inequality. Despite some important exceptions (e.g., Lamont and Fournier 1992), there continues to be surprisingly little attention paid to the structural and societal consequences of stratification, inequality, and mobility—that is, how the extent and bases of inequality in the labor market affect firms, families, and other social institutions. Happily, there has been increasing attention paid to some individual-level consequences of stratification and inequality, most notably those pertaining to voting, political behavior, and political attitudes (e.g., Kelley 1992; Weakliem 1993). We might also cite in this context the recent Bourdieu-inspired stream of research on the class-based structuring of lifestyles and consumption practices (e.g., De Graaf 1991; Peterson and Simkus 1992) and the recent resurgence of work on the individual-level effects of social mobility (Sobel 1985; De Graaf, Nieuwebeerta, and Heath 1995).

More work along these lines is likely to prove invaluable in addressing some enduring conceptual and methodological debates to which we referred above. For instance, debates about the extent and bases of class structuration in advanced societies hinge not simply on the magnitude of socioeconomic inequality and how it is structured (e.g., across occupations, social classes, industries, etc.) but also on the extent to which differences in class position (however operationalized) have important social, political, cultural, and cognitive consequences. This requires more studies along the lines of Emmison and Western (1990), comparing the salience of

various categorizations (social class, occupation, firm, demographic groups) for workers' identities, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as analyses of how the relative importance of different category memberships may vary across time and space.

Progress along these lines will require overcoming what has until recently been an almost complete segmentation of the field into those who analyze the determinants of socioeconomic differentiation versus those who seek to understand its contours and determinants. That division of labor is fairly evident, for instance, among the contributions to this volume that focus on sex roles and gender inequality. Morris, for instance, adroitly documents temporal changes in the income differentiation between men and women in the United States, whereas Heimer (in Chapter 8), Tudor (in Chapter 10), and Evans and Mason (in Chapter 9) focus on the implications of differences in men's and women's socioeconomic standing for assumption of responsibility, labeling of mental deficiency, and gender role attitudes (respectively).

These essays raise a theoretical and methodological query that their authors no doubt encountered in John Pock's lectures and debated intensely in his seminars but that continues to pervade social science research—namely, what is the role of norms, attitudes, and cognitions in producing and sustaining social inequality? Are the latter fundamental *causes* of social differentiation and social stratification or merely epiphenomenal *outcomes* of a person's social standing? The rigid division of labor between those who study subjective versus objective facets of inequality impedes progress toward answering this query; those who focus on norms and attitudes can allude to their relevance for material outcomes without being required to demonstrate any impact, while social demographers can document trends in social inequality and invoke changes in norms, institutions, attitudes, and the like as explanatory factors or likely outcomes without feeling compelled to substantiate their claims empirically. We hasten to point out that these are not observations about the particular chapters in this volume, which are unusually creative and attentive to the interaction between social structure and attitudes, but rather on the broader sociological literatures concerned with objective and subjective dimensions of social differentiation and inequality.

Space limitations preclude us from giving this issue the attention it deserves, but we wish to note briefly several promising directions of research seeking to integrate social structure and attitudes in accounting for inequality. The first is exemplified by the provocative chapters by Mare and Heimer, which focus on the role of processes within the family for the reproduction of social hierarchies. We suspect that much of the subtle yet profoundly significant interplay between objective and subjective facets of stratification and inequality occurs within the family. Most

conventional research has treated the connections between the family and the labor market fairly superficially, concentrating solely on how family roles and constraints influence labor supply and how labor market outcomes influence family formation, fecundity, child rearing, and the like. For instance, we know from studies of intergenerational mobility that family structure and the educational and occupational pursuits of parents influence both the labor market aspirations and attainments of their children (Sewell and Hauser 1975; Blake 1989; Biblarz and Raftery 1993) and that marital status and the number and age of one's children influence the careers of men and women differently (Roos 1983; Peterson 1989).

However, recent studies have provided powerful and more subtle evidence of how the family of destination both influences and is shaped by the activities of men and women in the labor market. Consistent with Heimer's argument, studies have documented how labor market inequalities between the sexes create and reinforce inequalities in the division of labor and the balance of power within the household (Bielby and Bielby 1988a, 1988b; 1989; Hochschild 1989; Bielby 1992). Other research has linked stress and mental health within families to the labor market positions of men and women (Kessler, Turner, and House 1989; Wethington and Kessler 1989). And some studies suggest that family dynamics play an important role in shaping the orientations and interests that men and women bring into the labor market. Wharton and Baron (1987), for example, demonstrated that among men working in gender-integrated work settings, the ones most dissatisfied with their jobs had a working wife, suggesting that a traditional division of labor at home made it easier for men to cope with threats to their dominance in the workplace. It is not simply that what one's paycheck can buy depends on how many people are sharing it; it is also that what it means to perform a given job or to work in a given firm depends on roles, experiences, and the division of labor and power within the family. We believe research examining linkages between the labor market and the family in more detail would not only improve our understanding of the interplay between objective and subjective facets of social differentiation but would also help elucidate the macro- and micro-underpinnings of status attainment.

As noted above, we believe another promising route toward those same ends involves applying social network analysis to studies of stratification and inequality. Researchers have documented important effects of social networks on objective and subjective career outcomes, particularly in studies that have focused on specific work roles and organizations rather than on the labor market as a whole (Granovetter 1974; Burt 1992; Podolny and Baron 1995). Other studies have shown that the structure and content of ties within informal social networks play a crucial role in affecting subjective assessments, including evaluations of how successful

one has been and how fairly one has been treated (Dean and Brass 1985; Krackhardt and Porter 1985; Gartrell 1987; Ibarra and Andrews 1993). It therefore seems likely that studies of stratification incorporating information on social networks (including the context, content, and patterning of the social ties comprising the network) could help link the objective and subjective dimensions of attainment and inequality and also provide a bridge between a number of the macro- and micro-forces impinging on attainment that we discussed above.

Conclusion

Pondering and discussing these issues as we drafted this essay has brought the three of us back to our sociological roots and has reminded us that much of what is ultimately interesting and important about studying social stratification has to do with the broad consequences of social differentiation and inequality for individuals and social systems. This is, after all, what attracted us to the discipline of sociology via John Pock in the first place. (And judging from Paul Siegel's personal reminiscence in this volume, we suspect this was also true for most others who studied sociology at Reed under Pock's tutelage.) Accordingly, future research should examine those consequences—both material and symbolic—for individuals, groups, organizations, and social systems, as well as how and why those consequences vary across contexts. Research along these lines will help us better adjudicate among rival accounts emphasizing class, occupation, organization, demographic categories, and other distinctions as the backbone of stratification systems in contemporary societies.

Notes

1. For instance, one might hypothesize that the entry of women into specific industries is positively correlated with the prevalence of women-owned firms and with organizational forms that rely on externalized work arrangements that enable women to balance work and family commitments (see Pfeffer and Baron 1988).

2. For a review and critique of this literature, see Baron and Hannan 1994:1122–4.

3. A weaker variant of the same argument would assert that even if specific occupations do not correspond to agents of collective action or reflect self-conscious identities among incumbents, they nonetheless are proxies for the key outcomes of social stratification, such as working conditions, power or prestige, consumption patterns, and values or attitudes. Such a position is consistent with the implicit, if not explicit, thrust of most stratification research since the 1960s, which regards occupations as the main "connecting link between different institutions and spheres of social life" (Blau and Duncan 1967:6). These "connecting

links" arise through various processes: Functional specialization generates differences in work conditions and in the distribution of power, prestige, and privilege; occupational training, socialization, and association create occupation-based heterogeneity in consumption patterns and attitudes; and the obverse forces of occupational selection produce corresponding variability in the traits and predispositions of occupational incumbents (Treiman 1977:1–24).

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