

1<sup>st</sup> term seminar 2022-23

## Classics and currents of social stratification research

### CCSS

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Seminar room 2 (BF156)

Register [online](#)

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This seminar aims to discuss core theories, concepts and studies in the field of social stratification and mobility, and studies how classical ideas are still (or are not) relevant in contemporary social scientific research. We will read and discuss both classical and contemporary works, and investigate the continuity and change in research problems across (mostly) the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. We will furthermore posit the field of social stratification and mobility in the broader literature on inequalities in contemporary societies. Besides the stratification literature, we will also reach out to adjacent fields on inequality, in particular political philosophy, economics, and political science.

#### Participation:

Participants are expected to read the core readings of every week, and come well-prepared to class. Should you be interested to read more about the topic of the week, there are some suggestions under “Additional readings”. If you want to get suggestions for further reading on related topics, let me know and we can find a way to help you find your way.

Participants write a short reflection note each week (see below for instructions). These can be uploaded on the Mycourses website of the EUI <https://mycourses.eui.eu/d2l/home/12363>, not later than Wednesday morning 9am on the day before the seminar. We use these notes as input for the discussions we can have on the readings. Researchers are also asked to give one presentation during the course (instructions below).

**Weekly reflection note:**

Please write a short note of max 300 words to highlight issues you'd want to discuss in class, and/or additional research questions you think about in relation to the readings. We start in the first week, to be handed in on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Presentation:**

Please prepare, in couples, a presentation of around 10 minutes, with the aim to bring the outside world into the classroom. Preferably related to the readings of that week, but you can make the case for choosing connection to another week's readings, researchers connect scholarly work to issues discussed in broader society. This could, for instance, refer to reports of NGO's or governments, news items, websites, whichever you please.

**COURSE OUTLINE:****1. Introduction. Key concepts and theories of stratification research  
6 October 2022*****Core readings:***

*Discusses various research questions on social class, and highlights different approaches to social class:*

Wright, Erik Olin. 2005. "Conclusion: If 'Class' Is the Answer, What Is the Question?" Pp. 180–92 in *Approaches to class analysis*, edited by E. O. Wright. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Review article of the main questions and findings of social mobility research:*

Breen, Richard, and Jan O. Jonsson. 2005. "Inequality of Opportunity in Comparative Perspective: Recent Research on Educational Attainment and Social Mobility." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31(1):223–43. doi: [10.1146/annurev.soc.31.041304.122232](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.31.041304.122232).

*A classic on social class mobility, and a (critical) discussion of the functionalist liberal theory of industrialism (a.k.a. modernization theory):*

Erikson, Robert, and John H. Goldthorpe. 1992. *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (chapter 1: pp. 1-27).

*A classic on conflict theory as an alternative to functionalist theory of stratification:*

Collins, Randall. 1971. "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification." *American Sociological Review* 36(6):1002–19. doi: [10.2307/2093761](https://doi.org/10.2307/2093761).

***Additional readings:***

*Max Weber on social class, status and party.*

Weber, Max. [1922]1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*. Univ of California Press. (Vol. 2, the section on Class, Status, Party, pp. 926-939).

*Paper makes the case for occupations as micro-classes:*

Weeden, Kim A., and David B. Grusky. 2005. "The Case for a New Class Map." *American Journal of Sociology* 111(1):141–212. doi: [10.1086/ajs.2005.111.issue-1](https://doi.org/10.1086/ajs.2005.111.issue-1).

*This classic presents the status attainment model:*

Blau, P. M., and O. D. Duncan. 1967. *The American Occupational Structure*. New York ; London: Wiley. (part of chapter 5: pp. 163-177).

*A policy-oriented report by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound):*

Eurofound. 2017. *Social Mobility in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

*A Worldbank working paper with social mobility estimates from around the world:*

van der Weide, Roy, Christoph Lakner, Daniel Gerszon Mahler, Ambar Narayan, and Rakesh Ramasubbaiah. 2021. *Intergenerational Mobility around the World. Working Paper*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi: [10.1596/1813-9450-9707](https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-9707).

*A study on long-term trends in social mobility mostly in 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century, interpreting from modernization theory:*

Maas, Ineke, and Marco H. D. van Leeuwen. 2016. "Toward Open Societies? Trends in Male Intergenerational Class Mobility in European Countries during Industrialization." *American Journal of Sociology* 122(3):838–85. doi: [10.1086/689815](https://doi.org/10.1086/689815).

**2. Education in the social mobility process**

**13 October 2022**

***Core readings:***

*Chapter of volume that presents state of the art "OED-triangle" class analysis:*

Breen, Richard, and Walter Müller. 2020. *Education and Intergenerational Social Mobility in Europe and the United States*. Stanford University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-19).

*Book that presents the Direct Effect of Social Origin (DESO):*

Bernardi, Fabrizio, and Gabriele Ballarino. 2016. *Education, Occupation and Social Origin: A Comparative Analysis of the Transmission of Socio-Economic Inequalities*. Edward Elgar Publishing. (chapter 1).

*Article that explains the relevance of effects and compositions:*

Bloome, Deirdre, Shauna Dyer, and Xiang Zhou. 2018. "Educational Inequality, Educational Expansion, and Intergenerational Income Persistence in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 83(6):1215–53. doi: [10.1177/0003122418809374](https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122418809374).

*Article that advances on the claim that direct effect of social origin declines with more education (and instead increases again at the highest [post-graduate] level):*

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

***Additional readings:***

*Article that develops a method to study compositional and effects changes:*

Breen, Richard. 2010. "Educational Expansion and Social Mobility in the 20th Century." *Social Forces* 89(2):365–88. doi: [10.1353/sof.2010.0076](https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2010.0076).

**3. Mechanisms to explain educational inequality**

**20 October 2022**

***Core readings:***

*Study that builds upon social capital literature with a specific focus on the mechanism of asking help:*

Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2014. "Coached for the Classroom. Parents' Cultural Transmission and Children's Reproduction of Educational Inequalities." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):1015–37. doi: [10.1177/0003122414546931](https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414546931).

*Paper that presents relative risk aversion theory:*

Breen, Richard, and John H. Goldthorpe. 1997. "Explaining Educational Differentials: Towards a Formal Rational Action Theory." *Rationality & Society* 9:275–305.

*Paper that presents compensatory advantage mechanism:*

Bernardi, Fabrizio. 2014. "Compensatory Advantage as a Mechanism of Educational Inequality: A Regression Discontinuity Based on Month of Birth." *Sociology of Education* 87(2):74–88. doi: [10.1177/0038040714524258](https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040714524258).

*Sociologists engaging with gene-environment interactions, genetic nurturing and other gene-related processes:*

Isungset, Martin A., Dalton Conley, Henrik D. Zachrisson, Eivind Ystrom, Alexandra Havdahl, Pål R. Njølstad, and Torkild Hovde Lyngstad. 2022. "Social and Genetic Associations with Educational Performance in a Scandinavian Welfare State." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119(25):e2201869119. doi: [10.1073/pnas.2201869119](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2201869119).

***Additional readings:***

*Article that dissects cultural reproduction theory across the school career:*  
Jaeger, Mads Meier, and Richard Breen. 2016. "A Dynamic Model of Cultural Reproduction." *American Journal of Sociology* 121(4):1079–1115. doi: [10.1086/684012](https://doi.org/10.1086/684012).

*Review article on cultural reproduction theory:*  
Jæger, Mads Meier. 2022. "Cultural Capital and Educational Inequality: An Assessment of the State of the Art." Pp. 121–34 in *Handbook of Sociological Science: Contributions to Rigorous Sociology*, edited by K. Gerxhani, N. D. De Graaf, and W. Raub. Edward Elgar Publishing. ([available online](#)).

*One of the Compensatory Advantage papers on school careers:*  
Bernardi, Fabrizio, and Moris Triventi. 2018. "Compensatory Advantage in Educational Transitions: Trivial or Substantial? A Simulated Scenario Analysis." *Acta Sociologica* 0001699318780950. doi: [10.1177/0001699318780950](https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699318780950).

*Study that compares two well-known mechanisms:*  
Van De Werfhorst, Herman G., and Saskia Hofstede. 2007. "Cultural Capital or Relative Risk Aversion? Two Mechanisms for Educational Inequality Compared." *The British Journal of Sociology* 58(3):391–415. doi: [10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00157.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00157.x).

**!27 October there is no seminar!**

**4. The meritocratic society  
3 November 2022**

***Core readings:***

*A moral perspective relevant for a social scientist working on inequalities to know about:*

Anderson, Elizabeth. 2007. "Fair Opportunity in Education: A Democratic Equality Perspective." *Ethics* 117(4):595–622. doi: [10.1086/518806](https://doi.org/10.1086/518806).

*Recent best-seller offering a critical perspective on the meritocratic society:*  
Sandel, Michael J. 2020. *The Tyranny of Merit. What's Become of the Common Good?* Allan Lane. (chapter 6: the Sorting Machine).

*Chapter on the implications of various social processes for the validity of the meritocracy:*

Solga, Heike. 2015. "The Social Investment State and the Myth of Meritocracy." Pp. 199–211 in *Combating Inequality: The Global North and South*, edited by A. Gallas, H. J. Herr, and C. Scherrer. London: Routledge.

*Recent defender of the meritocratic society:*

Wooldridge, Adrian. 2021. *The Aristocracy of Talent. How Meritocracy Made the Modern World*. Allan Lane. (chapter: conclusion (pp. 367-400)).

***Additional readings:***

*Recent empirical study connecting meritocracy to fairness of inequality:*

Batruch, Anatolia, Jolanda Jetten, Herman Van de Werfhorst, Céline Darnon, and Fabrizio Butera. 2022. "Belief in School Meritocracy and the Legitimization of Social and Income Inequality." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 19485506221111016. doi: [10.1177/19485506221111017](https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506221111017).

**5. Gender and Stratification**  
**10 November 2022**

***Core readings:***

*Review paper on women's position in labour markets*

Charles, Maria. 2011. "A World of Difference: International Trends in Women's Economic Status." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37:355–71.

*Factorial survey experiment on explaining the gender wage gap:*

Auspurg, Katrin, Thomas Hinz, and Carsten Sauer. 2017. "Why Should Women Get Less? Evidence on the Gender Pay Gap from Multifactorial Survey Experiments." *American Sociological Review* 82(1):179–210. doi: [10.1177/0003122416683393](https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416683393).

*Life course events: Motherhood penalty as an example:*

Gangl, Markus, and Andrea Ziefle. 2009. "Motherhood, Labor Force Behavior, and Women's Careers: An Empirical Assessment of the Wage Penalty for Motherhood in Britain, Germany, and the United States." *Demography* 46(2):341–69. doi: [10.1353/dem.0.0056](https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0056).

*A description of stalled trends towards gender equality:*

England, Paula, Andrew Levine, and Emma Mishel. 2020. "Progress toward Gender Equality in the United States Has Slowed or Stalled." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117(13):6990–97. doi: [10.1073/pnas.1918891117](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1918891117).

***Additional readings:***

*A "(somewhat) recent classic" on the motherhood penalty with fixed-effects design:*

Budig, Michelle J., and Paula England. 2001. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." *American Sociological Review* 66(2):204–25. doi: [10.2307/2657415](https://doi.org/10.2307/2657415).

*Paper using sequence analysis to associate whole life course patterns to other variables:*

Aisenbrey, Silke, and Anette Fasang. 2017. "The Interplay of Work and Family Trajectories over the Life Course: Germany and the United States in Comparison." *American Journal of Sociology* 122(5):1448–84. doi: [10.1086/691128](https://doi.org/10.1086/691128).

## 6. Race/ethnicity and stratification 17 November 2022

### **Core readings:**

*A study using various methods to study racial/ethnic inequality in hiring practices:*  
Kang, Sonia K., Katherine A. DeCelles, András Tilcsik, and Sora Jun. 2016. "Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 61(3):469–502. doi: [10.1177/0001839216639577](https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839216639577).

Review paper on migration-related inequalities in Europe and the US:  
Drouhot, Lucas G., and Victor Nee. 2019. "Assimilation and the Second Generation in Europe and America: Blending and Segregating Social Dynamics Between Immigrants and Natives." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45(1):177–99. doi: [10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041335](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041335).

*Empirical study of labour market integration of migrants in Europe:*  
Gorodzeisky, Anastasia, and Moshe Semyonov. 2017. "Labor Force Participation, Unemployment and Occupational Attainment among Immigrants in West European Countries." *PLOS ONE* 12(5):e0176856. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0176856](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0176856).

*Empirical study on selectivity of migration:*  
Ichou, Mathieu. 2014. "Who They Were There: Immigrants' Educational Selectivity and Their Children's Educational Attainment." *European Sociological Review* 30(6):750–65. doi: [10.1093/esr/jcu071](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcu071).

### **Additional readings:**

*A paper studying selectivity of migration and its relationship to inequalities in children's education:*  
Van de Werfhorst, Herman G., and Anthony Heath. 2018. "Selectivity of Migration and the Educational Disadvantages of Second-Generation Immigrants in Ten Host Societies." *European Journal of Population* 1–32. doi: [10.1007/s10680-018-9484-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-018-9484-2).

*Meta-analysis of discrimination field experiments:*  
Quillian, Lincoln, Anthony Heath, Devah Pager, Arnfinn Midtbøen, Fenella Fleischmann, and Ole Hexel. 2019. "Do Some Countries Discriminate More than Others? Evidence from 97 Field Experiments of Racial Discrimination in Hiring." *Sociological Science* 6:467–96. doi: [10.15195/v6.a18](https://doi.org/10.15195/v6.a18).

## **7. Comparative research on inequality and social stratification** **24 November 2022**

### ***Core readings:***

*Study that addresses the Great Gatsby Curve: does social mobility increase with less economic inequality?*

Hertel, Florian R., and Olaf Groh-Samberg. 2019. "The Relation between Inequality and Intergenerational Class Mobility in 39 Countries." *American Sociological Review* 84(6):1099–1133. doi: [10.1177/0003122419885094](https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419885094).

*Economics paper that compares intergenerational mobility in education, income and social class, for a number of countries:*

Blanden, Jo. 2013. "Cross-Country Rankings in Intergenerational Mobility: A Comparison of Approaches from Economics and Sociology." *Journal of Economic Surveys* 27(1):38–73. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-6419.2011.00690.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6419.2011.00690.x).

*Paper on contextual effects on inequalities in education in the Global South:*

Huisman, Janine, and Jeroen Smits. 2009. "Effects of Household- and District-Level Factors on Primary School Enrollment in 30 Developing Countries." *World Development* 37(1):179–93. doi: [10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.01.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.01.007).

### ***Additional readings:***

*Follow-up on the 'three generations of stratification research' paper that presents comparative research as one development in the field:*

Treiman, Donald J., and Harry B. G. Ganzeboom. 2000. "The Fourth Generation of Comparative Stratification Research." Pp. 123–50 in *The International Handbook of Sociology*, edited by S. R. Quah and Sales, Arnaud. London: SAGE.

*Important perspective to bridge context with microlevel mechanisms:*

Barone, Carlo. 2019. "Towards an Education-Based Meritocracy?" *ISA E-Symposium for Sociology*.

## **8. Four institutional approaches to social stratification** **1 December 2022**

### ***Core readings:***

*Paper on the emergence of institutional variation:*

Hall, Peter A. and Kathleen Thelen. 2009. "Institutional Change in Varieties of Capitalism." *Socio-Economic Review* 7(1):7–34.

*Paper on the effects of institutional variation:*

Terrin, Éder, and Moris Triventi. 2022. "The Effect of School Tracking on Student Achievement and Inequality: A Meta-Analysis." *Review of Educational Research* 00346543221100850. doi: [10.3102/00346543221100850](https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543221100850).

*Paper on the emergence of institutional similarities:*



Schofer, Evan and John W. Meyer. 2005. "The Worldwide Expansion of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century." *American Sociological Review* 70(6):898–920.

*Paper on the similarities in inequality patterns:*

Bukodi, Erzsébet, Robert Erikson, and John H. Goldthorpe. 2014. "The Effects of Social Origins and Cognitive Ability on Educational Attainment Evidence from Britain and Sweden." *Acta Sociologica* 57(4):293–310.

***Additional readings:***

Van de Werfhorst, Herman G., and Jonathan J. B. Mijs. 2010. "Achievement Inequality and the Institutional Structure of Educational Systems: A Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:407–28.

## **9. The politics of inequality** **8 December 2022**

***Core readings:***

*Political science study on the relationship between economic factors and attitudes towards immigration:*

Dancygier, Rafaela M., and Michael J. Donnelly. 2013. "Sectoral Economies, Economic Contexts, and Attitudes toward Immigration." *The Journal of Politics* 75(1):17–35.

*Two well-known scholars on the politics of inequality:*

Kenworthy, Lane, and Jonas Pontusson. 2005. "Rising Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution in Affluent Countries." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(3):449–71. doi: [10.1017/S1537592705050292](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592705050292).

*Comparative paper on the top-down and bottom-up reasonings of class voting:*

Jansen, Giedo, Geoffrey Evans, and Nan Dirk de Graaf. 2013. "Class Voting and Left–Right Party Positions: A Comparative Study of 15 Western Democracies, 1960–2005." *Social Science Research* 42(2):376–400. doi: [10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.09.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.09.007).

*Political economy of skill formation:*

Busemeyer, Marius R., and Julian L. Garrizmann. 2017. "Academic, Vocational or General? An Analysis of Public Opinion towards Education Policies with Evidence from a New Comparative Survey." *Journal of European Social Policy* 27(4):373–86. doi: [10.1177/0958928717728713](https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928717728713).

## **10. Cumulative (dis)advantage** **15 December 2022**

**Core readings:**

*Review article on cumulative advantage and its mechanisms:*

DiPrete, Thomas A., and Gregory M. Eirich. 2006. "Cumulative Advantage as a Mechanism for Inequality: A Review of Theoretical and Empirical Developments." *Annual Review of Sociology* 32:271–97. doi: [10.2307/29737740](https://doi.org/10.2307/29737740).

*Cumulative advantage within the domain of science:*

Bol, Thijs, Mathijs de Vaan, and Arnout van de Rijt. 2018. "The Matthew Effect in Science Funding." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(19):4887–90. doi: [10.1073/pnas.1719557115](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1719557115).

*Cumulative advantage over domains:*

Willson, Andrea E., Kim M. Shuey, and Jr. Glen H. Elder. 2007. "Cumulative Advantage Processes as Mechanisms of Inequality in Life Course Health." *American Journal of Sociology* 112(6):1886–1924. doi: [10.1086/512712](https://doi.org/10.1086/512712).

**Additional readings:**

*Classic on Matthew Effects in science:*

Merton, Robert K. 1968. "The Matthew Effect in Science." *Science* 159(3810):56–63. doi: [10.1126/science.159.3810.56](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.159.3810.56).