

Social Stratification Research – 4 generations

- Social stratification research (SSR) or social mobility research (SMR) has been established after 2WW
- The aim was to map and compare social structures of advanced societies
- SSR research is primary comparative and relational
 - why?
- Nowadays we can distinguished 4 generations in SSR
- Generations are delimited by
 - research problems
 - methods of data collection
 - measurement procedures/ technics
 - results
 - time periods (but with overlaps)
- SSR is primarily quantitative

Social mobility – key concept of SSR

- Sorokin's book *Social Mobility* has been printed in 1927
- first using of the concept of social mobility
- macro concept for social groups or higher aggregates
- it is not about individuals
- social stratification is not social mobility
- social mobility define the openness of social stratification
- different social mobility lifts

Social mobility

- Social mobility is the movement of people up or down the stratification system.
- Class systems allow for more movement than slave or caste systems.
- **Intragenerational and intergenerational** social mobility.
- While class systems do allow for **social mobility**, opportunities are not evenly distributed across social groups.
- Social origin class/actual social class position have a significant impact on many aspects of life, including education, occupation, place of residence, marriage partner, and more

Social mobility - politicians

- “I want to see social mobility rising once again,” said prime minister [Tony Blair in 2004](#)
- “We can unleash the biggest wave of social mobility since the second world war,” said prime minister [Gordon Brown in 2010](#).
- “I want to see a [more socially mobile Britain](#),” said David Cameron in 2013.
- “I want Britain to be the world’s great meritocracy,” said [Theresa May in 2016](#).

First generation of SSR (I)

- 1950 – 1960 time period
- Research committee for social stratification and inequality (RC28) has been established under ISA
- comparative research of social mobility
- the aim is to map the openness of social structures
- research question: how strong is OD connection?
- simple social class categories (usually 3 categories)
- simple statistical technics, proportions
 - OD mobility (contingency) tables
 - demonstration, percent, outflow, inflow percent
 - structural vs net mobility, defined in theoretical level, problems with identification in empirical analysis

First generation of SSR (II)

- key tested assumption: LZ hypothesis (Lipset, Zetterberg, 1956)
„...the overall pattern of social mobility appears to be much the same in the industrial societies of various Western countries.“
- LZ hypothesis has been a reaction to the prevailing assumption that in US we can find more intergenerational mobility than in other western industrialized countries
- LZ hypothesis has not been rejected
- In all nations the same level of social mobility
- LZ hypothesis says there is no linear relationship between industrialization and social mobility
- The industrialization means the rise of social mobility
- But only under certain level
- After that higher industrialization does not mean higher social mobility

First generation of SSR (III)

- Important research questions in first generation:
- Association between social mobility and economic development?
- Association between social mobility and political stability?
- Association between social mobility and political behaviour?
- Association between social mobility and fertility
- Extent of assortative mating by social origin and education?
- What is effect of education in social mobility proces?

Second generation of SSR (I)

- 1960 – 1970 time period
- change from comparative social mobility research to status attainment process in a society
- turn to the continuous variables, SEI scores for occupations
- the aim is to map the social determinants of occupational status
- reformulation of research question
- no connection OD (first generation)
- but how O influences D directly and also indirectly via other variables, especially via E
- introduction of path models in sociology
- result: status attainment model or „social mobility piggy“

Second generation of SSR (II)

- representatives are Petr Blau, Otis Dudley Duncan: *American Occupational Structure* (1967)
- no difference between inter- and intra-generational mobility
- only one social mobility between O and D but O is starting position, no characteristic of parents
- tested assumption: industrialization promotes achievement and reduces ascription, the importance of E increases in time
- results: Yes - the effect of E is stronger in time and influences D with higher intensity in time, *American society becomes meritocratic society*
- robust results but without comparative potency
- no social class divisions in this approach
- original concept of social mobility disappeared

Third generation of SSR (I)

- SEI or later ISEI has not theoretical justification, it is result of empirical analysis (c.f. Ganzeboom construction of ISEI)
- SEI or ISEI means reduction of occupation into contextual variables that are income and education
- third generation means comeback to social classes and original concept of social mobility but with proper statistical technics
- 1970 – 1980 time period
- EGP social class scheme, later ESeC (ESeG)
- division between structural and net mobility – wrong distinction
- replace these concept by absolute and relative mobility
- absolute mobility indicated by percent
- relative mobility indicated by odds ratios (OR), log-linear models

Third generation of SSR (II)

- key tested assumption: FJH hypothesis (Featherman, Jones, Hauser, 1975), the same hypothesis like LZ hypothesis, but in relative terms

„...there exists a cross-national similarity of social mobility rates at the level of underlying relative mobility chances, such that in all societies having a nuclear family system and market economy, the mobility pattern will be ‘basically the same.’“

- key test/book: Robert Erikson, John Goldthorpe: *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Society* (1992)
- test of LTI vs FJH: opening vs no change
- results support FJH hypothesis: no change/ but difference among countries

Fourth generation of SSR (I)

- from 1990 up to now
- the fourth generation is defined by turn to substantive questions in SSR
- no statistical development any more
- statistical measures are very sophisticated in contemporary SSR
- connection of research questions and explanations of the second generation and statistical measures of the third generation
- substantive research question
- key O-E-D triangle
- O-E: social stratification in education
- E-D: from education to labour market positions
- O-D: social mobility research
- key question: *the effect of ascription in life results*