

# 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
  - versus the intergenerational transmission of advantages (social/cultural reproduction)
- 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/voting behavior?
- Association between social mobility and fertility
- Extent of assortative mating by social origin and education?
- What is effect of education in social mobility process?

# 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
- How much is social mobility? (first generation)
- Now: 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 „change“ 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 than O and influences D with higher intensity, *American society is meritocratic society*
- Change in time by birth cohort comparison and no clear trend
- robust results but without comparative potency
- no social class divisions in this approach
- original concept of social mobility disappeared

# THE PROCESS OF STRATIFICATION

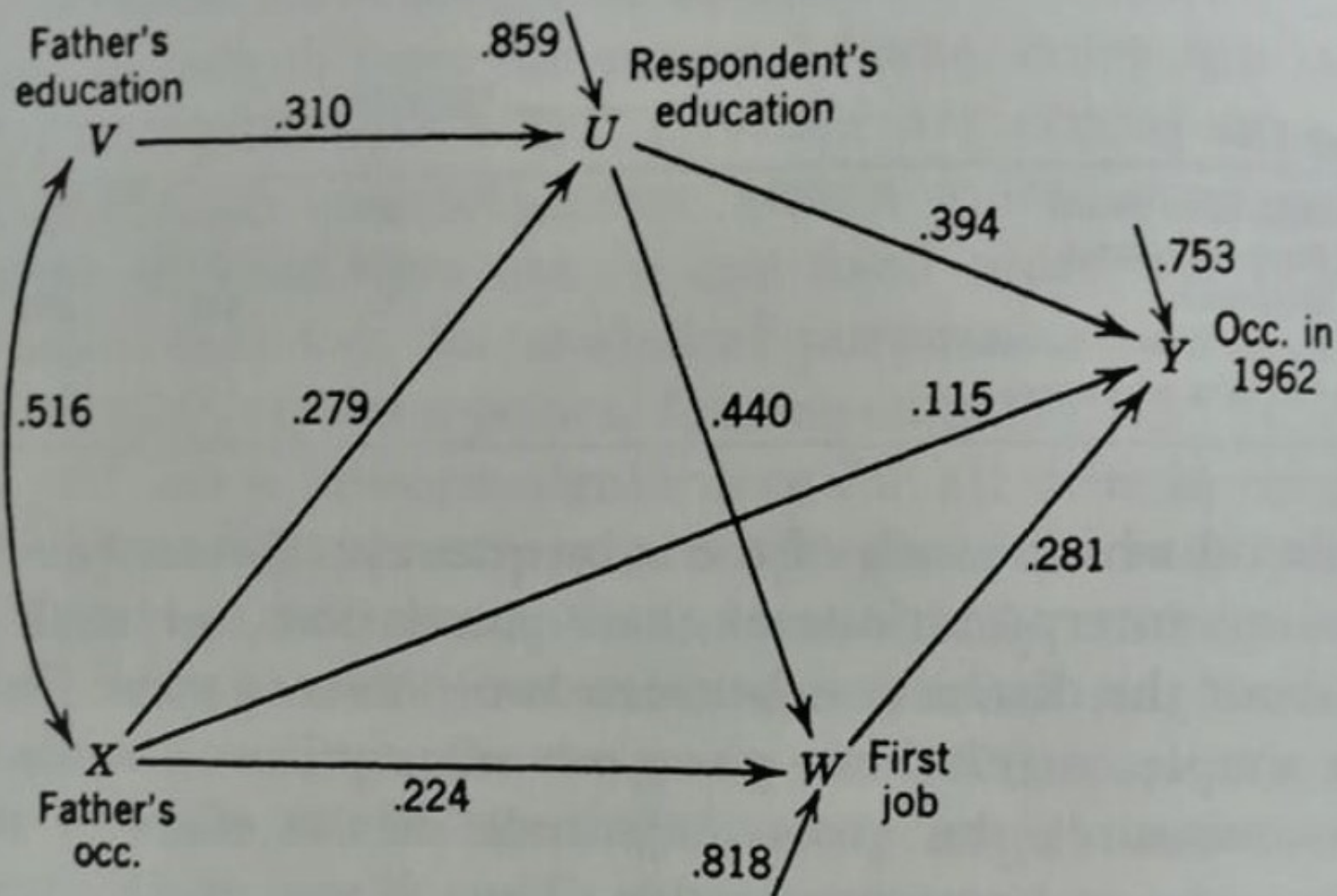


Figure 5.1. Path coefficients in basic model of the process of stratification.

# 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*

# References

- <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Social-Mobility-in-the-EU-Eurofound/d5ffb26505120f981e1f3f3bc25420a1ba24b2d4>
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266209078\\_Demographic\\_Standards\\_for\\_Surveys\\_and\\_Polls\\_in\\_Germany\\_and\\_Poland\\_National\\_and\\_European\\_Dimension/figures?lo=1&utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=organic](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266209078_Demographic_Standards_for_Surveys_and_Polls_in_Germany_and_Poland_National_and_European_Dimension/figures?lo=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic)
- <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/ranked-the-social-mobility-of-82-countries/>