

## **Abstracts Social Stratification Research Seminar 2010**

**Date: June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**Number of Abstracts: 9**

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## **What can social class analysis contribute to the explanation of increasing income and earnings inequality?**

Michael R. Smith (McGill University) and Robert M. Blackburn (University of Cambridge)

Within sociology, social class dominates the analysis of inequality. It is normally operationalized with one or another scale of occupations. In several countries over the last thirty or so years there has been a rise in the inequality of income and earnings. This rise has been the subject of considerable political and policy debate. In response to this debate, in this paper we address these questions: Can social class analysis contribute to the understanding of the rises in income and earnings inequality? And, if so, how? We review the evidence on the changes in earnings and income inequality with particular reference, but not exclusively, to the UK, Canada, and the US. We focus on a number of aspects of the rise in income and earnings inequality including the location within the distribution of shifts in income and earning shares, the relation between income/earnings inequality and consumption inequality, the role of income and earnings instability in generating rising income inequality, and the relation between income and occupational mobility. We discuss the extent to which class analysis might contribute to our understanding of these observations and compare class explanations with the standard interpretations of increasing income and earnings inequality - skill-biased technological change and globalization.

## **A dynamic theory of ethnic penalty: Finite mixture hidden Markov models with measurement error applied to UK panel labour force surveys**

Gindo Tampubolon (Institute for Social Change University of Manchester)

The dynamic theory of ethnic penalty conceives new temporal relations to understand how ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in the labour market. New concepts capturing these relations include duration discrimination, quality-quantity trade offs, precarious engagement, and adaptive preference. Some of these concepts have been around but the dynamic theory of ethnic penalty put them in a coherent context. This study focuses on defining and systematically measuring for the first time precarious engagement by examining employment status of the UK panel of labour force over a period of five quarters. Precarious engagement is defined and measured by a finite mixture of hidden Markov transition paths of employment status when such status are liable to subjective error.

The model distinguishes the transition paths of ethnic minorities from those of the majorities on account of the uncovered degree of precariousness. Those going through such paths of precarious engagement with the labour market may be entirely prevented to accumulate significant human capital on the job. The apparently objective lower human capital of ethnic minorities may partly be a consequence of a more precarious transition in the labour market.

## **Changing Inequalities in Britain**

Robert M. Blackburn (University of Cambridge)

The paper will examine the history of inequality in Britain from the end of the C19. While looking back a little to the C19 to set the background, it examines changes in the labour market from 1900 as they affected the nature of employment. Stratification, age, gender, family size and the type of work are all relevant. More recently ethnicity has become important but I will have little time to deal with ethnicity.

## **Social Stratification and Attitudes to Education in Contemporary Britain: A Multivariate analyses of the British Youth Panel**

Professor Vernon Gayle (University of Stirling)

Dr Damon Berridge (University of Lancaster)

Dr David Stott (University of Lancaster)

There is a longstanding interest in young people's attitudes and aspirations in sociological research. We are substantively interested in young people's attitudes to school and education and how they are socially stratified. The British Youth Panel (BYP) is a special dataset that comprises young people who live in households surveyed in the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The BYP is a standard rotating panel, the child enters the sample at age 11 and is surveyed annually until they enter the BHPS adult survey at age 16. The BYP contains a short battery of attitudinal measures that survey the young person's attitude to education and school life. We investigate these attitudinal measures and model both individual and household characteristics and parental information. We estimate bivariate (i.e. two outcomes) ordinal response models random effects models to investigate pairs of related attitudes. This approach is methodologically innovative because these models are not currently available in standard statistical analysis software. Through this modelling approach we are able to investigate more complex interrelated patterns of social stratification. We exploit the panel element of data to explore both individual and group level attitudinal change over time.

## **The effects of modernization on intergenerational mobility in Hungary between 1850 and 1950. Comparing municipalities and periods before and during industrialization**

Zoltán Lippényi (ICS/Sociology, Utrecht University)

An important question in social mobility research is whether intergenerational mobility increases with modernization. This question has primarily been studied using contemporary social surveys in a cross-country comparative method. Although this research is impressive, there are also theoretical and methodological problems connected to this method. From these studies little is known about changes in intergenerational mobility in the periods before and during industrialization which are theoretically interesting eras for changes in social mobility. The influence of local contexts such as regions and municipalities on social mobility is often neglected, although there were large differences in modernization between sub-country units. Explanatory analyses of the influence of autonomous modernization processes on mobility are also scarce. This paper presents a design for intergenerational mobility research which addresses these drawbacks. The paper compares several municipalities within a single country, Hungary, from the beginning of industrialization and institutional modernization, and explains the variation in social fluidity across municipalities and over time using municipal-level indicators of development in economy, education, transport, and communication. Preliminary results are presented based on Hungarian data between 1850 and 1950. The dataset is part of a larger data gathering project collecting individual-level intergenerational occupational mobility information from church marriage registers. The multinomial logistic regression model used by Ganzeboom and Hendrikx (1998) is applied to incorporate macro-level covariates into the mobility analysis.

## **Total family impact on status attainment - Sources of sibling (dis)similarity**

Antonie Knigge, Ineke Maas & Marco van Leeuwen (Utrecht University)

In this paper we examine whether sibling models are a valid tool for assessing trends in the total impact that families have on the status attainment of their children. Sibling models are based on the simplifying assumption that siblings do not benefit systematically different from the resources of their parents. We argue that such systematic dissimilarity between siblings does exist, especially in historical contexts (for example because of unequal inheritance practices). Our main argument is that, as this systematic dissimilarity may differ between regions and/or over time, it may confound the trends in the total family impact on status attainment. To empirically assess the significance of this problem, we use as our main source the high quality database Genlias, which contains information from 632.912 linked Dutch marriage acts stretching the 1842-1922 period. Although (preliminary) multilevel analyses show differences in systematic status dissimilarity between siblings, they are often in opposite direction as expected. If these results are valid, we would still have to conclude that we cannot use siblings models directly as a measure for total family impact. However, before concluding this, we should first establish that the results are not driven by other factors, such as non-random missing values or the method of analyses.

## **Sociological classifications and simulation models of social inequality**

Paul Lambert, Mark Birkin, Guy Warner

Simulation models can be used to project over time in order to estimate emergent social-structural patterns. The NeISS project (National e-Infrastructure for Social Simulation, [www.neiss.org.uk](http://www.neiss.org.uk)) is a UK initiative in supporting the construction, estimation and interpretation of social simulation models applied to a variety of scenarios. In this paper, I will present results from one of the exemplar projects within NeISS, an analysis of 'ageing and inequality', which is designed to model the development of social inequality over time in response to trends in major socio-demographic and socio-economic changes (such as the aging population, changing family formation patterns, changing patterns in educational provision, and changing occupational/industrial opportunity structures). Social inequality indicators used include measures of income inequality, occupational inequality, and social mobility. The data is initially parameterised around annual transition patterns in contemporary Britain, though it should in principle be generalisable to other data scenarios. A unique contribution of the NeISS project is its capacity to support multiple replications of simulations using different underlying measurement instruments of the same concepts – in this paper, we explore the impact of different approaches to measuring occupational circumstances, educational attainment and ethnicity in the context of the simulation model.

## **Social Stratification and Cognitive Ability: An assessment of the influence of childhood IQ and family background on Occupational position across the lifespan**

Roxanne Connelly PhD Student University of Stirling

Numerous studies have illustrated the correlation between childhood ability test scores and both origin and destination social position (Nettle, 2003; Saunders, 1995, 1996; Thienpoint & Verleye, 2003). The debate concerning what these ability tests truly indicate and therefore what they say about “meritocratic” processes of social stratification is ongoing. Empirical testing of how traditional social and economic variables interact with cognitive measures, and the dynamic relations of these variables throughout the life course is the main aim of this paper. The National Child Development Study (1958) and British Cohort Study (1970) are utilised to consider intra-generational social mobility, and also to compare these two generations. This paper builds upon previous research on this topic by exploiting the longitudinal nature of these data, mixed effects models were estimated on CAMSIS scores at each adult follow-up. The research is guided by the hypothesis that the influence of childhood ability should increase across the life course, in line with theory suggesting that employers will reward demonstrated ability as the career progresses, and that choices and actions will become increasingly determined by ability as one moves away from the influence of family and the home (Farber & Gibbons, 1996; Warren, 2001). No significant interaction is found between childhood ability and time, the effect of ability is therefore considered to remain constant. Confirming previous findings the analyses indicate that education exerts the greatest influence on social position, the moderating effects of which provide the focus for further research on the influential role of childhood ability and social origin on outcomes throughout the life course. Furthermore, comparing the two surveys the effect of ability appears to have decreased for the younger cohort, suggesting that education and in particular the vast expansion of the education system across the 20<sup>th</sup> century may have influenced the extent to which ability determines occupational achievement.

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**SOCIAL DISTANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OR DIFFERENT INDICATORS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRATIFICATION?**

**Paper to be contributed to Social Stratification Research Seminar “Social Stratification and Historical Developments”, Utrecht University, September 9-19 2010**

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Using a large international database with occupations of spouses coded in detailed ISCO-88 (ISSP 2002-2007) we develop an international relational social distance scale of occupational status (ICAM) according to the Camsis methodology (Prandy & Lambert 2003). We compare its performance in representing intergenerational occupational reproduction and occupational homogamy to the updated International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status (ISEI) (Ganzeboom 2010) on data from the European Social Survey, Round 1-4. Using simultaneous equation models we confront the possibility that social distance and socio-economic status constitute two separated but correlated dimensions of occupational status, with a model in which the two are imperfect indicators of a single underlying construct. We also consider the construction of a new international occupational status index, that takes into account the relational and achievement aspect of occupational status at the same time. Provisional results show that ICAM is highly correlated with ISEI (.90); in fact, in our structural equation models, we find ICAM and ISEI to be equally good indicators of occupational status (measurement loadings of .94 vs .95). Therefore we find no evidence for the social stratification space to be bi-dimensional: our evidence shows that these two measures – built on very different assumptions and relying on different criteria – point at a single underlying hierarchy.

Ganzeboom H.B.G. (2010), *Tools for deriving status measures from ISKO-88*, <http://home.fsw.vu.nl/hbg.ganzeboom/isko88/index.htm>

Prandy, K. & Lambert, P.S. (2003) *Marriage, social distance and the social space: an alternative derivation and validation of the Cambridge scale*. *Sociology* (37): 397:411.