Social Stratification Research Seminar 2025

27-28 August 2025, University of Stirling

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS, PAPER ABSTRACTS AND VENUE INFO

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PAPER ABSTRACTS

Orian Brook (University of Stirling)
Understanding earnings of creative graduates in the UK: rip-off University degrees or downwardly mobile men?

This research aims to understand the low incomes of creative graduates, reported in recent analysis of earnings data, which had inspired a " Crackdown on rip-off university degrees" by the previous government. I explore the variations in earnings according to industry destinations, socio-economic background and educational factors.

I use the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes dataset, an administrative dataset which joins school and university data with earnings, including both PAYE and freelance income, according to industry, type and region of employer. Using a cross-classified multilevel model I compared the variance in earnings explained by subject studied, HE institution, individual and employment characteristics. Observing the distribution of earnings, rather than just the mean, and the employment dynamics of movements by graduates between different industries, provided further insight. I then use a MAIHDA approach with a random slope to explore the difference that creative degree makes for earnings according to graduates' personal characteristics and the type of University that they attend.

Maddi Bunker (Univ. Edinburgh)
Contribution of advantageous and adverse childhood critical events to the emergence of the social gradient of mental health: a structural equation modelling approach

We have robust evidence that mental health outcomes are socially stratified, and that social and emotional difficulties are worsening amongst the UK's youngest generation. However, little is known about how this gradient of mental health emerges across the childhood and if significant events during childhood contribute to, or alter, its formation.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) present a leading framework for studying event-exposure in childhood and dominate Scottish youth and family policies. Numerous studies find associative relationships between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and mental health outcomes, but such research is widely critiqued for failing to control for the confounding effects of structural inequalities and for under-theorising the role of positive experiences.

This paper borrows the concept of "critical moments or events" from life transitions research to address some of the research gaps left by the ACEs field and explore the role of nominally positive and negative significant transformations to children's lives.

Using Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) data, I implement a change score (LCS) approach to estimate the impact of nominally adverse and advantageous critical life events on intra-individual change across five dimensions of social and emotional behaviours.

The relative contributions of event effects for explaining inter-individual differences in intra-individual change over time compared to time-invariant markers of inequalities are discussed.

Elif Ceyhan ‡ (Istanbul Medeniyet University)

Revealing Precariat Households in Türkiye in 2023

In this paper, I identify precariat households in Türkiye employing multinomial logistic regression. While doing this, I'll be making use of the socioeconomic household schema that I identified within the scope of an unpublished doctoral thesis (Socioeconomic Household Typologies in Türkiye, Istanbul Medeniyet University). While the groups in the schema constitute the dependent variable, the independent variables will be selected from variables indicating the security grounds of the groups based on the elements that define Guy Standing's concept of Precariat. The analysis will be performed using the TurkStat Income and Living Conditions Survey dataset (2023). Keywords: precariat, household structures, Türkiye.

Jenny Chesters (Univ. Melbourne)

Missing the opportunities to overcome disadvantage: How socio-economic status affects the development and achievement of occupational aspirations

Researchers examining the occupational aspirations of secondary school students typically find that aspirations for occupations requiring high levels of education are associated with family socioeconomic status (SES), regardless of students' academic ability. Cultural and Social Capital theories suggest that students from low SES families are disadvantaged by their parents having less experience in the education system, due to having shorter educational careers, and having less culturally rich social networks. The availability of panel data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) allows for an examination of the development of occupational aspirations and the likelihood that occupational aspirations will be achieved. Analysis of data from the LSAY2015 cohort confirms that after controlling for academic ability at age 15, students from high SES families are more likely to hold aspirations for high status occupations than their peers from low SES families. Furthermore, at age 23, young people from high SES families are more likely than their peers from low SES families to be on track to enter high status occupations.

Vernon Gayle*, Sarah Stopforth and Roxanne Connelly (Univ. Edinburgh [1,3], Univ. York [2])

Examining social inequalities in education using linked social survey and administrative data: Comparing socio-economic proxy measures with social class measures

This study investigates social inequalities in English school qualifications. The analytical focus is outcomes in General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs), which are the standard qualifications that are undertaken by pupils in school year 11 (age 16). This study combines recent survey data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study and administrative educational data from the National Pupil Database. The study models social inequalities in GCSE outcomes and compares sociological social class measures collected by the survey data with socio-economic proxy measures from the administrative data.

The central empirical finding is that there are marked social class inequalities in school GCSE outcomes. Pupils growing up in families in the less advantaged social classes have less favourable school GCSE outcomes. The proxy socio-economic measures from the NPD are indicators of poverty and they have less explanatory power than the sociological social class measures that are collected by the MCS survey. Therefore we conclude that inequalities in GCSE outcomes are not simply the result of poverty or deprivation. We advocate that sociological measures of social class should be used in analyses because they are better at capturing the nuanced nature of social inequalities in school GCSE results.

Steffen Hillmert (Univ. Tuebingen)

Causal diagrams for life-course research: DAG-based visualisations and their practical application

Life-course research faces challenges due to the inherent complexity of its subject already in descriptive respect, and even more so when causal questions are involved. As representations of causal theories, Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs) are useful tools also for stratification and life-course research. In standard form, however, they may not pay sufficient attention to specific life-course aspects. The objective of this paper is to achieve a more effective integration of causal diagrams and descriptive graphical techniques that have been prevalent in practical life-course research for a long time. Systematically enhanced diagrams of causal relationships can be used for theory development and the analysis of existing life-course data, but also for the new conceptualisation of causally oriented studies. The paper illustrates suitable approaches with original and adapted visualisations.

Scot Hunter and Kate O'Hara* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation [1]; Univ. Stirling [2])

How combinations of ethnicity, religion and migrant status connect to labour market outcomes in the UK

Multilevel Analysis of Individual Heterogeneity and Discriminatory Accuracy (MAIHDA) is an emerging multilevel model specification for examining intersectional disadvantage. It has been designed to salve some difficulties of estimating effects for small minority groups in the population, as well as matching better than traditional single-level regression approaches to a theoretical preference to handle social identities as indicators of context, rather than individual attributes. While it is hailed by some as "the new gold standard", others question the logic of the variable operationalisation, and the technical ability of the specification to accurately estimate population effects. This study uses simulated to data to examine the performance of MAIHDA and single-level models in predicting population effects when sample sizes are optimal and sub-optimal.

Sofia Jaime and Harry Ganzeboom* (U. California-Irvine [1];   VU Univ. Amsterdam [2])

From Latin America to Europe: Contrasting Intergenerational Occupational Class Mobility of International Migrants and Their Children with Non-Migrants Back Home

This study integrates the classic Origin-Education-Destination (OED) model (Blau & Duncan, 1967) with the origins-of-migration perspective (Guveli et al., 2017). While traditional mobility studies focus on comparing migrants to native populations (Heath & heung, 2007; Zimmermann, 1995), our approach follows multi-sited studies such as the Mexican Migration Project (Massey, 1987) and the 2,000 Families Project (Guveli et al., 2016), which compare migrants to those left behind. Following the design of Zuccotti et al. (2017), we reconstruct the non-migrant comparison group using secondary survey data from Latin America, allowing for a direct contrast between migrants and those who remained in their countries of origin.

The analysis integrates survey data from the European Social Survey and the European Value Study (2002–2020) for Latin American migrants in Europe and data from the International Stratification and Mobility File (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 2019) for non-migrants in Latin America. To model intergenerational mobility, we use the Hauser-Goodman scaled-association model within a Conditional Multinomial Logistic Regression framework (Dessens et al., 2003). This multivariate approach allows us to differentiate immobile individuals (those remaining in the same occupational class as their parents) from those experiencing mobility. We examine how intergenerational (im)mobility patterns vary by education, age of migration, country of origin, and country of destination.

Saba Aslam Khan[†*], Harry Ganzeboom and Ineke Nagel (VU Amsterdam)

The gender revolution in an Islamic society: Stalled or still unfolding? Cohort dynamics in gender role attitudes in Pakistan from 1945 to 1994

The recent literature on western societies suggests that after the upward increase in egalitarian gender role ideologies [GRI] – often attributed to educational expansion and secularization -- trends in GRI have plateaued. To date, there is little to no evidence from Islamic societies regarding the plateauing of gender role ideologies. Islamic societies are argued to be more conservative due to their strongly rooted religious value systems and a higher degree of religiousness is often argued to strengthen traditional gender norms. In this paper we study how in an Islamic society – Pakistan -- gender role ideologies have developed over cohorts 1945-1994. We then examine to what extent changes in GRI are explained by educational expansion and changes in religiousness. Pakistan is an interesting case due to two contrasting processes in the country. On one hand the process of educational expansion has consistently unfolded over past decades, while on the other hand Pakistan has been exposed to religious revival, particularly during the Islamization (1979-1988) period. Since this era religion became dominant in Pakistan via different state level policies. A comparison is made across cohorts using a pooled cross-section analysis of the World Value Survey (WVS) in which Pakistan has participated four times (1997-2018, N=5400). By comparing cohorts born between 1945-1994, who were in their formative age between 1960 and 2015, we trace how GRI, education and religiousness changed for women and men separately over cohorts and test whether the differences in attitudes have narrowed or widened over cohorts. Viewed across all birth cohorts we find that later-born cohorts are more egalitarian, but this trend has indeed reversed in recent cohorts, after around 1978. We observe a strong mediating effect of education on cohort differences in GRI. Despite religiosity is an equally important determinant of GRI, we find only a minor mediation effect for religiousness. This is so, because the process of educational expansion has unfolded more dramatically than that of secularization. We find strong differences in the process between men and women, with men being much more strongly inspired to conservative gender attitudes by their religiosity than women. While GRI has developed in a non-linear way (first becoming more egalitarian then again non-egalitarian), the non-linearity cannot be attributed to Islamization. Key words: gender-role-attitudes, cohort-replacement, religiosity, education, gender.

Paul Lambert (Univ. Stirling)

A preference for stability as a countervailing force to social stratification?

Dave Griffiths and I (2018) argued that some features of contemporary social stratification structures may reflect people's deep-rooted preferences for stability. For instance, people seem to seek out similar lifestyles, friends and jobs to those which they are already used to, and to staunchly defend stability (in their work, local area, or family), even when it might be to their overt disadvantage. Such behaviour could have implications for the structure of social stratification, although it is hard to think of sociologically relevant indicators of a preference for stability (PfS), nor to identify obvious responses that might follow from relevant evidence.

One possible response could be optimism, however, if the sociological consequences of a PfS worked disproportionately to mitigate rather than exacerbate problematic social inequalities. Abstract theories of social inequality often predict ever-escalating inequalities and divergence in outcomes, and this sometimes puts them at odds with macro-social characterisations of levels of stratification inequality, which don't generally spiral to the same extent. Amongst others, Crompton (2008) speculated that various under-recognised 'countervailing forces' sometimes act to keep the brakes on social stratification inequalities. Crompton used examples of low-level institutional arrangements, such as mechanisms of trade union pressure, that might sometimes work this way. In this discussion I ask whether PfS might sometimes work as another example of a countervailing force.

Empirically, I practice my own Preference for Stability by analysing the same social patterns as I always do. If we explore the difference between different plausible measures of social stratification

circumstances, could the patterns tell us anything about the more typical empirical consequences of PfS? By focussing on the residuals between Social Interaction Distance occupation-based measures of inequality, and alternative occupation-based measures that prioritise differences in economic conditions, there may be some grounds for identifying aggregate circumstances that reflect PfS and might constitute a countervailing force to stratification inequality. Exploratory results seem to confirm the presence of certain occupational choices where those in better economic circumstances eschew greater monetary reward, and other where arrangements of monetary reward could benefit those from less favourable backgrounds - albeit patterns are made complicated by gender segregation in occupations. Nevertheless, simply the presence of this particular cartography of occupational structure might arguably be interpreted as a countervailing pressure on stratification inequality, and if so might bring implications for occupation-related social policy aspirations.

Cinzia Meraviglia[‡] (Univ. Milan)

Femicide in context: The Role of Social Stratification

Femicide, the gender-based killing of women and girls, represents one of the most extreme manifestations of discrimination, according to Lucas' (2008) definition. Data on the phenomenon are scant and, when collected, lack of insights into the socio-demographic profiles of the woman and her murderer.

Leveraging on an unprecedented database of femicides in Italy, assembled from press news, this paper explores for the first time the social stratification dimension of 925 femicide episodes occurred between 2012 and 2020. Popular stereotypes of femicide maintain that it occurs in deprivileged contexts, where people lack of material and cultural means for living a decent life, at any event in the lower part of the social ladder. Is this indeed the case in Italy? Is low social status prevalent among the dyads formed by killed women and their murderers? Is there a social stratification component in femicide? A preliminary answer to the first two questions is negative, while that to the third question is positive. Women's social status spans from low to high, as does that of their murderers, while the relationship between the social status of women and their murderers shows a rather regular pattern, pointing at a relevance of social status for this phenomenon.

Scott Oatley (Univ. Edinburgh)

The forgotten form of stratification: sexual orientation in large social survey research

This paper investigates the role of sexual orientation across key aspects of social differentiation and stratification in British society. With a focus on occupational sorting, income gaps, and income growth curves, this paper follows a burgeoning tradition within British sociology of focusing upon sexual minorities within the UK. Often times sexuality status is ignored altogether – in the past due to a lack of questionnaire design, contemporarily due to increasing levels of security measures for survey research. When sexuality status is investigated it is almost always dichotomised into straight versus non-straight, typically uses couple data rather than individuals, and rarely splits these differences between men and women. This paper uses the special licence UKHLS dataset to investigate male and female homosexual and bisexual differences across a range of occupational and income related measures. The main finding of this paper is that past research that often finds large negative homosexual penalties for men and premiums for women are in fact bisexual gaps and premiums when you separate these sexualities from one another.

*Denotes presenting author; [‡] denotes presenting online via Teams

Additional information

Seminar venues

Room 2B129, Cottrell building, University of Stirling (Wednesday)

Maitland Room, Iris Murdoch Building, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling (Thursday)

Room 3S15, Colin Bell building, University of Stirling (Breaks including basic tea/coffee facilities)

The three venues (2B129, 3S15 and IMB Maitland room) are in adjacent and inter-connected buildings, but around 2-3 minutes to move between. For building entry we recommend the address for the main entrance to the Iris Murdoch building:

> Iris Murdoch Building
> University of Stirling
> Stirling
> FK9 4LA
> > Google Maps link

Street view for the Irish Murdoch and Colin Bell buildings:

Rooms 3S15 and Iris Murdoch building conference suite are respectively on the left and right of this entrance. The seminar venue on day 1, room 2B129 (Cottrell Building), is approximately 200m west of those venues (left, as per this image).

The University of Stirling WayFinder app. is a useful way to find room locations within the University. It can be downloaded as an app or accessed via the general webpages on 'getting around campus'

- https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/getting-here/getting-around-campus/ [general pages]
- https://use.mazemap.com/#v=1&config=stirling&campusid=2058&zlevel=1&center=-3.917266,56.145452&zoom=16.6&search= [direct link to the wayfinder app within in a browser]

Online participation via MS Teams:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ODA2MmRmNjMtZjkxYS00Y2RiLWE4ODEtYWM5OTFmZTY1YmNl%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%224e8d09f7-cc79-4ccb-9149-a4238dd17422%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2248ce5938-9fbb-408c-8796-6c13dbe3c503%22%7d

Meeting ID 378 152 021 141 7, pass Y3Uu3SY3

Travel advice

The University is about a 45-minute walk from Stirling railway station and slightly closer to Bridge of Allan station (reached by most but not all trains from Glasgow and Edinburgh). If travelling in a group from Stirling rail station, a taxi is economical. If driving or walking, note that the Iris Murdoch Building is closer to the Hillfoots Road entrance to campus than the main gate. Parking is subject to a charge and uses 'Ringo'.

For bus travel from Stirling to campus, we recommend the UniLink (Midland Bluebird UL) bus from outside Papa John's on Goosecroft Road: leave Stirling station, cross the road and head to the right for about 50 yards. These should come every half an hour or so. Timetables here. Some other bus routes stop at the campus, information be found on the Traveline Scotland journey planner or app. Bus tickets can be bought as walk-on fares with cash or card. The majority of busses are run by McGills East of Scotland for which an app is available to buy tickets and includes live bus tracker facility (alt. link). An unlimited day ticket for McGill's busses ('Stirling/Clacks') is usually the most economical (£6) unless you qualify for a student discount on the UL service. Note that some buses other than the University Link or Citylink services will arrive at the Hillfoots Road entrance to campus, located just outside the bottom right corner of the image below. A direct coach service from Edinburgh to the campus (Citylink 909) is also available, online booking advised.

The image below illustrates relevant campus buildings and routes. Room 2B129 is on level 2, approximately in the middle of a straight line between the words 'Bus' and 'Colin' in the image below 'C'– or see room guide. The yellow lines indicate the most common pedestrian routes to the Faculty of Social Sciences from the the Bus Hub and Main Entrance areas.
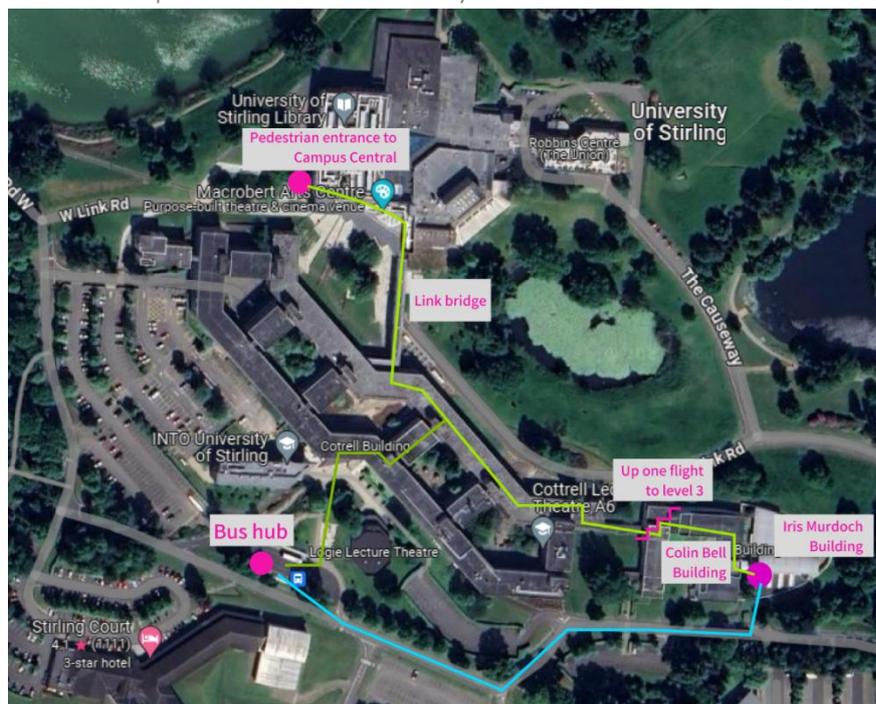
Lunch/breaks

Lunch is left to your own arrangements (comments below).

During breaks, limited facilities for accessing water, instant coffee, tea etc are available in the Faculty of Social Sciences common room, room 3S15 of the Colin Bell building. Alternatively coffee vendors are available in nearby outlets (comments below). Toilets are signposted within corridors.

For food/drinks outlets, we recommend the following catering options for participants.

- Innovation Park café. Closest to the Iris Murdoch building. Exit the IMB and walk due south, cross the road and approach the Scion house' building (car park on left, building wing on right). Enter that building through glass doors, café is located on your right.

- University Atrium venues (Scran/SUP!) (5 mins from Iris Murdoch building). Available for coffees, sandwiches, selected hot foods. From IMB: exit the IMB and enter the Colin Bell building. Follow the corridor to the right for approximately 5 blocks as it goes downstairs and through the Cottrell building. Follow signs for the McRobert café involving leaving the Cottrell building, crossing the 'link bridge' over the Queen's Court square. At the end of the bridge, both outlets should be visible in the atrium area directly in front.

- Atrium mini-supermarket. Includes sandwiches, snacks, self-service coffee machine (even fruit / vegetables). Located adjacent to 'Scran', see above.

- Macrobert café (https://www.macrobertartscentre.org/venue/food--drink). Includes coffee/bar items Located directly below the 'Atrium' area. Follow signs for the Macrobert involving leaving the Cottrell building, crossing the Queen's Court square, the re-entering the building – café-bar should be visible on your left after passing the reception desk.

- Stirling Court Hotel café. Available for coffees and bar food meals. Café/bar is adjacent to the lobby – ask at reception if open. Exit the IMB and walk to the road. Turn right at the road and follow on the right of the road until it passes the bus station on your right. Turn left to cross the road when the path ends; the main entrance to the hotel is immediately in front of you, across the car park.

- Sports centre café (approx. 8 min walk from IMB). Large café area with coffees etc, hot and cold snacks and sandwiches. Exit the IMB and walk to the road. Turn right at the road and follow on the right of the road until it passes the bus station on your right. At this point, continue in the direction of the path walking Westwards along the road for a brief period until a further footpath is available. Follow that path forwards then cross the road at the zebra crossing, turning right at the first opportunity to follow the path through the woods and down the hill with the road on your right. The next building after 300m is the sports centre, the café is through the barriers after turning left entering the centre.

- Wallace Monument visitor café (approx. 8 min walk from IMB). Exit the IMB and turn left to leave the campus. Turn right at T junction, proceed past two roads then turn right onto the main road (B998). Walk westwards, towards the monument, for approx. 400m. The café is located through the Wallace monument car park, bearing left from the main road.