The rise of income and the demise of class and social status? A systematic review of measures of socio-economic position in stratification research

Carlo Barone[1], Florian R. Hertel[2] and Oscar Smallenbroek[13]

1. Science Po, LIEPP. 27, rue Saint-Guillaume, 75337, Cedex 07, Paris, France
2. Universität Hamburg, Fakultät Wirtschafts- Und Sozialwissenschaften
   Fachbereich Sozialökonomie
   Soziologie
   Welckerstr. 8, D-20354 Hamburg, Germany
3. Corresponding Author

Sociologists and economists have long recognized that in modern societies individuals' socioeconomic position (SEP) is fundamental to understanding social inequalities, social attitudes and political interests (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Evans 1999; Corak 2004, 2013; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). However, these two disciplines have traditionally conceptualized and measured SEP differently (e.g., with regard to intergenerational mobility Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Corak 2004, 2013; Breen and Müller 2020). Income is key to economic studies, while sociologists rely extensively on occupation-based approaches, and they have long debated the pros and cons of different measures of occupational position, such as social class, socio-economic indexes and prestige scales (Torche 2014; DiPrete 2020).

A recent special issue on 'Occupation, stratification and inequality' of this journal has reopened the debate about the appropriate level of analysis in stratification research. While some authors in this special issue flatly reject the utility of occupational class analysis for the understanding of social mobility and favour the economic approach (Sakamoto and Wang 2020), other authors suggest that class can serve as a reliable proxy of earnings trajectories in the absence of life course earnings data (Goldthorpe and McKnight 2004; Kim et al 2018; Westhoff et al. 2021; Yaish and Kraus 2020), and yet others invite sociologists to move beyond occupational measures stressing the importance of workplaces and jobs as significant stratification contexts (Avent-Holt, Hällsten and Cort 2020). In this research note, we do not directly contribute to this discussion on how SEP *should* be conceptualized and measured but complement it with an analysis of the factual practices in current stratification research. This note, hence, adds to normative and theoretical perspectives with an insight into how stratification scholars actually measure SEP in current research practice and how research practice has evolved over the past two decades. While this

issue may seem an innocent matter of individual choice and data availability, it can quickly become a matter of great consequence. How empirical researchers conceive of SEP is essential for building a shared image of social stratification, which disseminates to wider public debates. Hence, how we measure social position is closely intertwined with what we understand as social position. Measures of SEP differ in at least three crucial respects.

First, SEP measures involve different aspects of the stratification order (Mood 2017). For example, income and wealth refer to differences in economic resources, socio-economic indexes incorporate indicators of cultural resources such as education, prestige scales relate to differences in the subjective evaluation of occupational social standing, while class analysis focuses on occupational assets (Lambert, Tan, Prandy et al. 2008; Lambert and Bihagen 2014). Hence, most economic research on labor market inequalities narrowly focuses on material aspects, while sociologists often take a broader view incorporating employment relations as well as cultural and symbolic resources.

Second, measures are implicitly or explicitly part of a stratification theory and therefore measurement choice is related to alternative causal explanations of social inequalities. For instance, economists tend to interpret income differentials as a result of individual-level differences in productivity brought about through market mechanisms, while class analysis privileges structural explanations relating to control over power resources attached to different occupations, thus casting the occupational structure as the backbone of the stratification system (Wright 2015). Consequently, the sociological focus on occupation-based measures reflects the shared view that occupations are a major determinant of the life chances of individuals (Tilly 1998).

Third, measurement choices influence the data needed, the statistical methods applied and the research questions raised. For instance, socio-economic indexes are associated with structural equation modeling in status attainment research, where mobility occurs on a unidimensional ranking of occupations (Blau and Duncan 1967; Warren and Hauser 1997; Warren, Sheridan and Hauser 2002). In contrast, class analysis applies log-linear models and conceptualizes intergenerational inequalities in terms of mobility across classes, ranked on multiple dimensions (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Torche 2014). In turn, the use of log-linear models and other categorical data techniques allows modeling inequalities in absolute and relative mobility, thus opening the door for new research questions that status attainment models could not deal with (Goodman 1965; Goodman 1969). Lastly, studies on income mobility use a simple methodological approach, linear OLS regression to estimate intergenerational elasticity of income, but require measures of lifetime income that are more difficult to acquire than the occupational codes that the class and socioeconomic index literatures are based on (Sakamoto and Wang 2020).

While this example illustrates how SEP measures can complement each other, using a large number of measures may also result in fragmentation. For instance, we can find a large variety of measures within class analysis in sociology (Wright 2009). Marxist class schemes (Wright 1979; Wright 1985; Wright 1997) were traditionally positioned against Weberian approaches (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Breen 2005) and both defied gradational measures as incapable of detecting the relevant stratification cleavages (Grusky and Rompaey 1992; Hauser and Logan 1992; Rytina 1992). However, these macro-level class approaches were the target of harsh criticism in recent years, inspiring new social class measures. Micro-class (Grusky and Sørensen 1998; Weeden and Grusky 2012) and horizontally differentiated meso-level class approaches

(Hertel 2016; Oesch 2006) inspired as much controversy (Erikson, Goldthorpe and Hällsten 2012) as did the description of the British population in terms of a Bourdieusian class scheme (Savage et al. 2013; Mills 2014). In stark contrast to these animated debates, class schemes accounting for changes in the occupational structure of post-industrial societies popped up relatively unnoticed (Esping-Andersen 1993; Güveli and Graaf 2007).

One can interpret this multitude of measures as an impediment to cumulative progress in stratification research (Erikson et al. 2012), or take it as a positive instance of methodological pluralism where different measures are more or less apt to treat different research questions (Wright 2015). Whatever position one takes, it is important to know how these theoretical and methodological debates inspire research practices and whether research practices have evolved over time. In this research note, we present a systematic review of how articles in top-cited sociology journals measure SEP in empirical research. To this end, we coded the choice of SEP measures in quantitative research articles published between 2015 and 2019 in nine leading sociology journals.

The systematic review presented in this research note focuses on three aims. Our first goal is to assess the relative weight of three main stratification approaches currently used in sociological research: class, income and status. Moreover, by coding the research areas of the selected articles, we can analyze whether preferences for a given approach vary across fields of empirical inquiry. Our second purpose is to assess which specific measures dominate within the class approach. Our third objective is to compare contemporary research practices with those in articles published in the same journals between 1995 and 1999. The rest of this research note is organized as follows. In section 2, we present the procedures used to select the sample of articles under study and the

coding schemes applied to these data. Section 3 reports the results of the analyses for the most recent period, while section 4 presents the trend analysis, and section 5 concludes with some remarks on the implications of these findings for sociological research.

1. SEARCH METHOD, SAMPLE SELECTION AND CODING SCHEME

Our sample of articles is drawn from the top-cited sociology journals publishing a substantive number of articles that use social stratification measures. We considered the 5-year impact factor of sociology journals reported in the Journal Citation Report (Clarivate 2020). This is a high-quality source used by the American Sociological Association and by other national sociological associations to assess journal rankings. Next, among the 15 top-cited journals, we selected those publishing a significant share of articles with a focus on social class, SES, income, status or prestige. For this purpose, we used the search algorithm described below and counted the total hits of research articles for each of these 15 journals. We could thus consider whether a journal frequently *publishes* research using SEP measures. Adopting a 30% cutoff, we selected the following seven journals: American Sociological Review (ASR), American Journal of Sociology (AJS), Sociology of Education (SoE), European Sociological Review (ESR), Gender & Society (GS), Journal of Health and Social Behavior (JHSB), and the Journal of Marriage and Family (JMF).[1] While this is

[1] We excluded top-cited journals that publish methodological research (e.g., Sociological Methods and Research), qualitative studies (e.g., Qualitative Research), or that focus on domains where SEP measures are seldom used (e.g., Population and Development Review, Annals of Tourism Research, Information Communication & Society, Cornell Hospitality Quarterly). Furthermore, we excluded the Annual Review of Sociology (ARS) because they publish review articles and the Socio-economic Review (SER) because it predominantly focuses on higher-level units of analysis such as firms and institutions instead of micro-level social stratification. While the 30% cut-off may seem arbitrary, it effectively excludes high-impact journals that are not associated with stratification research like the Annals of Tourism Research or Cornell Hospitality Quarterly and, hence, less interesting for our review of measuring practices. If we were to raise the bar excluding all journals that publish less than 40% of articles using SEP measures, we would have studied ASR, SoE, JHSB and JMF only. Selecting based on a journal's impact factor was clearly more consequential for our

clearly a non-representative sample of all sociology journals, it involves the most visible and influential journals publishing quantitative social stratification research and comprises journals covering a broad variety of domains with a variety of analytical perspectives.

As a robustness check, we also sampled articles from two more journals, namely Social Forces (SF) and Research in Social Stratification and Mobility (RSSM). The latter is the official journal of the RC 28 on Social Stratification and Mobility of the International Sociological Association and the former has a longstanding tradition of publishing highly visible research on social inequalities. While both journals do not warrant selection based on their impact factor (RSSM: 43rd and SF: 23rd rank respectively) alone both are generally regarded as important publishing venues for stratification research.

1.1 Search Method and Sample Selection

Within these journals, we selected articles using measures of SEP as their main independent or dependent variable, thus screening out articles where these measures were only used as control variables. Consequently, our sample of articles consists of all studies where social stratification variables are central in terms of the research questions. We searched for relevant articles published between 2015 and 2019, and then, for the trend analysis, we compared them with a corresponding pool of articles published 20 years earlier (1995-1999) by the same journals. Figure 1 describes the screening process starting with the 1512 articles published by the seven journals

analysis sample's composition. While there are no additional journals that sufficed the adopted 30% cut-off among the top-19 journals, we would have had to include another 22 journals (excluding SER and ARS) if we abandoned impact factor as a selection criterion. While practically impossible to screen and code, these additional journals have a median impact factor rank of 56.5 for the 2015-19 period.

in 2015-2019. We standardized the search method by using the web of science (WoS) advanced search tool and applying the following algorithm to each journal:

(SO= (Journal Title) AND ALL=(occupation OR class OR income OR status OR prestige)) AND LANGUAGE: (English) AND DOCUMENT TYPES: (Article) Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, ESCI Timespan=2015-2019

The ALL=() condition searches in the title, abstract, author keywords, keywords plus, research area, web of science category and topic. Using this procedure, we selected 628 articles (1995-1999: 355). As a robustness check of the algorithms' results, we additionally downloaded all articles published in the relevant period using the search engine[2] of the publishers' website of each journal (or JSTOR when the publisher website no longer hosted the relevant articles). We found that the WoS returned most articles of interest, the only exception being a significant number of articles using income that were incorporated in the dataset[3].

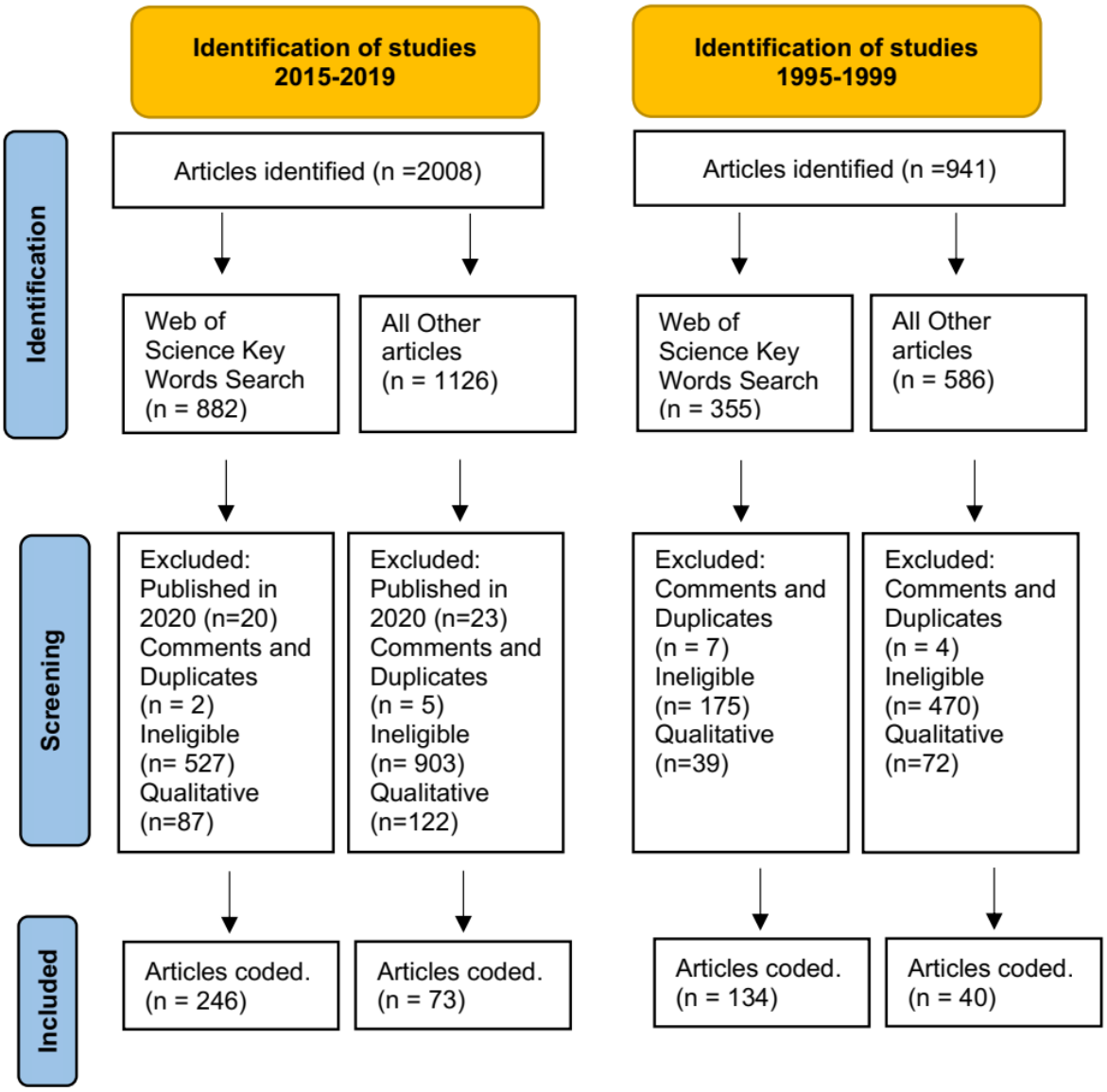
Next, we selected only quantitative research articles using a SEP measure as their main predictor or outcome variable. We identified such approaches based on titles, abstracts and, in ambiguous cases, by consulting the full text. We thus excluded 465 (222 for 1995-1999) articles, mainly because their research questions did not involve any SEP measure ('ineligible' articles in figure 1)

[2] Sage covers ASR, JHSB, SG and SoE. Wiley-Blackwell covers JMF. University of Chicago Press covers AJS. Oxford University Press covers SF and ESR. The publisher websites all allow searching within the journal to restrict the time span. For the 2015-2019 articles, some publisher websites also returned online first articles that were later given an Issues number in 2020. These were excluded from the analysis.

[3] Based upon a special algorithm that is unique to *Clarivate Analytics* databases, KeyWords Plus enhances the power of cited reference searching by searching for all the articles that have cited references in common, while not necessarily appearing in the title or abstract of the article itself. This is a major advantage in terms of coverage of the relevant articles. However, sociological articles using income cover a much broader variety of topics than articles using social class, SES or prestige measures. As a result, the citation approach of KeyWords Plus is less effective for income.

or because they were based on qualitative research (*see* foonote 2). After screening, we totalled 163 (134) articles. Following the same procedure, the robustness check led to the addition of 44 (40) more articles (*see* footnote 4). Hence, we coded, in the end, a total of 381 articles for these seven leading sociology journals, 207 for the period 2015-2019 and 174 articles for 1995-1999.[4]

[4] In the 2015-2019 period, we found 122 articles published by RSSM, 57 of which passed initial screening. The robustness check returned 56 more articles of which 19 passed the screening, resulting in a total of 76 articles coded. In the same period, the keyword search returned 132 articles published by SF and the robustness check added an additional 186. Twenty-six articles from the keyword search and 10 articles from the robustness check passed the screening, totalling in 36 articles coded.



Eligible articles account for 4% to 14% of articles in 2015-2019 across most journals, but their share is higher for ASR (18%), ESR (21%) and particularly for RSSM (43%). While RSSM specializes in stratification research, ASR and ESR are two generalist journals displaying a marked orientation to publish social stratification research consistently across the two periods. We refer below to these three journals as 'stratification-oriented journals' and consider whether their patterns deviate from the overall patterns.

The complete list of selected articles is available in the online supplementary file Appendix 1. Since we regard these articles as the universe of relevant studies published by these journals and our claims relate only to stratification research in these top-cited journals, applying inferential statistical analysis (e.g., significance testing) seems unwarranted. Table 1 in Appendix 2 reports the distribution of the selected articles across journals and periods, showing that ASR and ESR contribute a larger share of articles than the other journals.

1.1.1 SEP measures

Next, we coded the stratification variables used in the selected pool of articles. We initially organized these measures into four broad clusters: income and wealth measures, social class schemes, socio-economic indexes and prestige scales. However, given the limited number of articles based on prestige scales, these were merged with socio-economic index measures into the aggregate category of social status measures (Hauser and Warren 1997; Warren, Sheridan and Hauser 1998; Ganzeboom and Treiman 2003,). For the same reason, we did not differentiate between wealth and income measures as the former are still too seldom used to be independently counted. Furthermore, we did not differentiate between income and wage measures, as this distinction is highly domain-specific. Articles using occupational classifications that do not fit into any of these four clusters, typically some raw or crude classification, such as the one-digit version of ISCO-08 or some dichotomy (managers vs. all other occupations) were assigned to a residual 'other' category. In the figures below, the frequencies and percentages correspond to the percentage of articles using a SEP measure (Income, SES/Prestige, Class, Other). One article can

therefore contribute to multiple categories by including, for example, both class and prestige[5]. Multiple uses of the same type of SEP measure (e.g. wages and wealth) are not counted.

1.1.2 Class measures

Within the class approach, we further differentiated the following class schemes: neo-marxist class schemes (Wodtke 2015, Wodtke 2016, Wodtke 2017, Wright 1978, Wright 1979, Wright 1997), neo-weberian EGP-like schemes (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Rose and Harrison Breen 2005; 2010), the HIS (historical class scheme) (Maas and Leeuwen 2016), the micro-class scheme (Grusky and Galescu 2005), and the Featherman-Hauser scheme (Featherman and Hauser 1978). EGP-like schemes include EGP (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Goldthorpe 2007b), its update known as ESeC (Rose and Harrison 2010) and its British adaptation NS-SEC (Rose, Pevalin and O`Reilly 2005), which have the same theoretical underpinnings, comprise virtually identical categories and are built based on the same occupational information.[6] Other existing schemes such as Oesch's (2006) and Esping-Andersen's (1993) were never used in the selected pool of articles. It may be noted as well that, despite the enormous influence of Bourdieu's work in sociological research, our dataset of quantitative research work in leading sociology journals did not include any article using either Bourdieu's (1984) scheme or any derivation or adaptation of this scheme, possibly because class

[5] 39 articles used a measure of income and at least one other SEP while 204 exclusively used income measures. 26 articles used a measure of class and at least one other SEP. 56 articles exclusively used class. 23 articles used measures of SES/Prestige and at least one other SEP while 55 articles exclusively used SES/Prestige.

[6] Moreover, researchers sometimes cannot build the standard version of EGP, for instance because national data do not always contain all the relevant information. Hence, some national adaptations of EGP exist that were coded into the EGP-like category if all the following conditions were met: i) the author explicitly presents the national scheme as an adaption of EGP; ii) the class categories are similar to EGP or ESEC; iii) the national adaptation is built using similar procedures as EGP, namely routines relying on employment status and occupational codes. For instance, if the authors of an article declared a generic similarity with EGP but then used information on social networks, cultural capital or economic activity sector, the article was not counted as EGP-like and assigned instead to the category 'other'.

operationalization in the tradition of Bourdieu is very demanding in terms of data input and no standardized procedure to create this type of schemes exists (Savage et al. 2013; Savage et al. 2014).

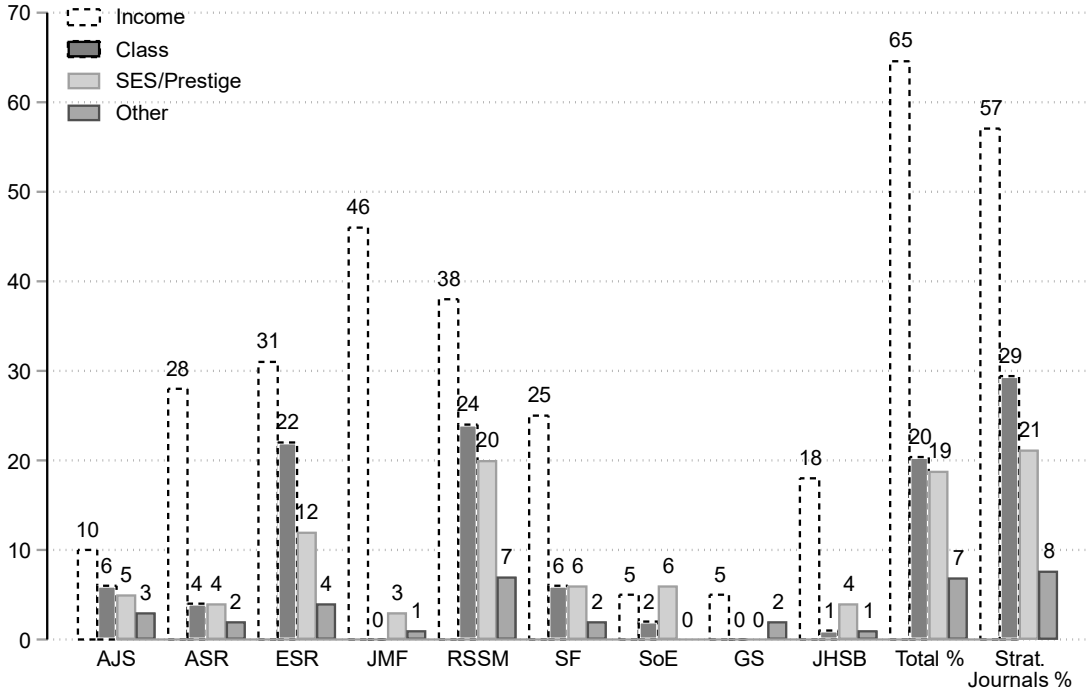
1.1.3 Research areas

We also coded the main research area of selected articles into nine mutually exclusive categories based on their main dependent, independent and mediator or moderator variables. The first four areas refer to labor market inequalities and comprise a general category (research on cross-national or cohort variations in wealth, poverty, income inequality, unemployment, job instability) plus three areas with studies referring specifically to labor market inequalities according to gender, according to ethnicity, race and migration and, finally, according to family background (i.e., social mobility). A fifth category refers to educational inequalities (e.g., in achievement, attainment, dropout). In educational and social mobility research areas, SEP measures are most typically used as family background variables rather than referring to the current position of respondents. Finally, we have a sixth category for subjective and objective well-being (physical and mental health, subjective well-being), a seventh category for family dynamics and demography (e.g., household labor, family instability) and a final residual category (e.g., political attitudes or methodological articles).

2. RESULTS

2.1 The Dominance of Income in Stratification Research

Figure 2: Frequency of use of stratification measures in top-cited journal (2015-2019)



Note: Absolute frequencies for the specified journals and relative frequencies (%) for total and stratification journals only.

Figure 2 breaks down the distribution of measures of SEP within each journal for the period 2015-2019. The white bars representing the frequency of income measures are the highest ones for each journal. Overall, 206 articles out of a total of 319 (65%) relied on income measures, social class schemes were used in 20% of the articles, SES indices in 15% whereas researchers applied prestige scales only in 4% of the articles and 7% used other types of occupation-based measures[7]. The share of articles based on income measures is 69% when excluding RSSM and SF in the total and 57% when focusing on the three journals (ASR, ESR and RSSM) that publish more social stratification research. Hence, the dominance of the income approach in leading sociology journals is undisputed.

Differences between journals are large. In ASR, JMF and JHSB at least four out of five articles used income measures, whereas only half did so in the AJS and ESR. Instead, the class approach was more popular in the latter journals (29% and 37% of the respective articles). In SoE the share of income measures is even lower (42%), in favor of social status (SES or prestige) scales accounting for half of its articles. The patterns for RSSM closely replicate those for ESR, while SF replicates almost perfectly the overall distribution of SEP measures and may thus be described as the 'average' journal in this regard.

This substantial variability between journals could indicate the existence of different research traditions in social stratification studies operating via different reviewer pools, editorial decision-making or other institutional factors. Class analysis is more popular in the European flagship

[7] These percentages do not sum up to 100 because a few articles (9%) used multiple measurement approaches.

journal (ESR) and in RSSM, while social status measures based on SES or prestige are more rooted in American sociology (ASR, JMF and SoE). However, an alternative explanation is possible: the selective application of stratification measures might result from the specific research fields, which are differently represented across the selected journals. In the next section we explore the prevalence of SEP measures across research domains.

2.2 Is the Dominance of Income Measures Domain-Specific?

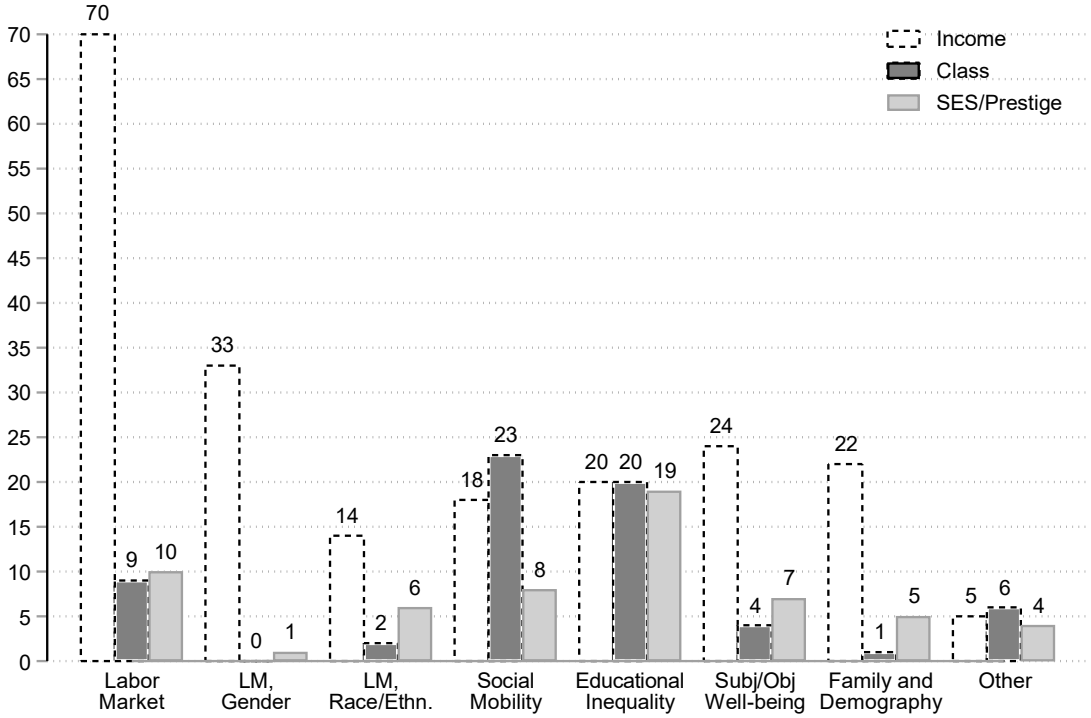
Figure 3 below indicates that there are clear cut differences between research areas regarding preferences for particular measures of SEP. The most important finding is that the share of income-based measures accounts for only one-third of the articles (34-37%) analyzing educational inequalities and social mobility.[8] Conversely, articles using social class schemes account for 47% of social mobility studies and 34% of educational research, and in the latter domain, the social status approach covers another 32% of the articles.

Hence, occupation-based measures dominate in intergenerational research where SEP measures typically refer to family background. The most straightforward explanation for this difference is that income is more difficult to implement in retrospective designs used in intergenerational research. Beside this methodological argument, it is equally possible that intergenerational inequalities particularly in educational attainment are only partly driven by economic resources

[8] This finding depends to some degree on the selection of journals. If we only study journals with the highest impact factor and exclude Social Forces and RSSM articles, research on education and social mobility based on income measures accounts for 44-45% of the hits.

and more directly affected by preference formation, knowledge of the education system, parenting strategies, social capital and other occupation-based or socio-cultural mechanisms (Mayer 1997; Lareau 2011 [2003], Lareau 2015,).

Figure 3: Frequency of use of stratification measures in top-cited journal by research area (2015-2019)



This pattern sheds light on several differences between journals. Indeed, intergenerational research is virtually absent in JMF, JHSB and GS, where income is clearly the dominant approach to differentiate socio-economic positions. And again, these results can be explained by turning to substantive arguments. Studying inequality within families, for instance, presupposes variation between partners. Class analysis, however, insisted for long on the family being the unit of analysis (Goldthorpe 1983; Goldthorpe 1984; Beller 2009,), which might have reduced the appeal of class measures for family and gender research. Gender inequalities are another research area where a focus on monetary aspects can often be particularly fruitful: the gender wage gap continues to be relevant even when women and men are equally represented in white-collar or upper-class positions. Furthermore, the problems associated with consistently identifying an underclass (Katz 1993; Katz 2013) render class analysis of little help when it comes to understanding the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable households, where unemployment, employment instability and income volatility are high. Occupation-based measures offer little information about their actual living conditions and social problems.

Research on education and social mobility is particularly frequent in ESR (22 articles out of 59) and in SoE (10 out of 12), where income measures have lower weight in favor of class analysis in ESR and of social status measures in SoE – possibly indicating different national traditions when it comes to occupation-based measures (see table 6 in appendix 2). Yet intergenerational research on education and social mobility has a similarly low share (about one third) of the ASR and AJS articles, but income measures are much more common in the former than in the latter. In the period under observation, ASR published a larger number of articles on labor market and gender

inequalities, where income measures are largely used. At any rate, the difference between ASR and AJS should not be overemphasized, considering the low number of articles in AJS.

These results thus provide some qualifications to the conclusion that monetary approaches to stratification research are dominant in leading sociology journals. At the same time, Figure 3 also shows that income measures currently compete with occupation-based measures even in mobility research (18 articles using the former vs. 23 based on social class or status measures), a research field that has historically been dominated by the latter. As household panels that collect prospective income information mature, the problems associated with retrospective measures in intergenerational income mobility studies diminish (Pfeffer, Fomby and Insolera 2020; Turek, Kalmijn and Leopold 2021). Moreover, we know from Figure 2 that 125 out of 319 articles use class or social status measures, and Figure 3 indicates that 70 of these 125 studies analyze social mobility and educational inequalities. This means that outside these research fields occupation-based approaches are rather marginal nowadays. In the next section, we explore whether the measurement of SEP has evolved over the past two decades.

2.3 Comparing 2015-2019 with 1995-1999

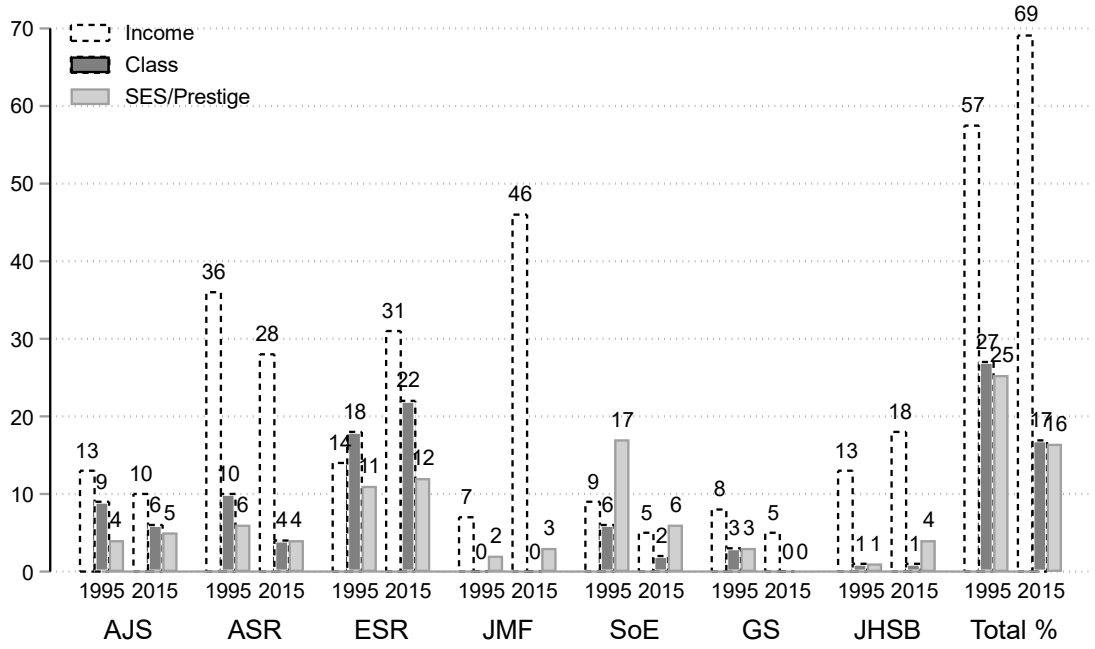
In this section, we review the SEP measures used in the same journals from 1995-1999, focussing only on the seven top-cited journals since RSSM volumes are only digitally available since 2003. We can thus assess trends in SEP measurement practice over two decades. We are limiting the analysis to two five-years windows for practical reasons, as screening and coding the relevant articles is very time-consuming. Covering for all journals for the whole 25-year period seemed

therefore ineffective and unfeasible.[9] The choice of comparing the current situation with the mid-1990s has a twofold motivation. Against the backdrop of collapsing socialist systems and the demise of academic marxism, the early 1990s experienced a strong revival of the 'death of class' hypothesis linked to several highly visible contributions that challenged the relevance of class analysis for stratification research (Beck 1993; Pakulski 1993; Clark and Lipset 1991). At the same time, comparative stratification research flourished over the 1990s (Shavit and Blossfeld 1991; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Esping-Andersen 1990; Ganzeboom Luijkx and Treiman 1989; Allmendiger 1989) and, as a side product, contributed two new SEP measures: first, the EGP class schema that gained substantial attention due to its center stage application in the CASMIN project; second, the international socio-economic index of social status developed by Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman (1992). These orthogonal developments render the mid-1990s a particularly interesting reference period to compare recent developments in measuring SEP.

Figure 4 confirms the main patterns already documented for the more recent period: stratification research was dominated by income measures, with SoE and ESR being the sole exceptions, the former publishing more articles using status and the latter applying class approaches. Hence, the results displayed in the previous section seem to reflect some structural patterns rather than conjuncture.

[9] We have read nearly 3000 journal titles and abstracts, screening them for inclusion. We then coded the SEP measures of 493 articles, which is a time-consuming process that took several weeks of full-time work. Using the web of science, we found 8511 additional articles in the relevant journals when considering only the years 2000 to 2014: with the average 13% coding rate that we have for the period 2015-2019, we could expect to open, read and code SEP measures from 1106 additional articles.

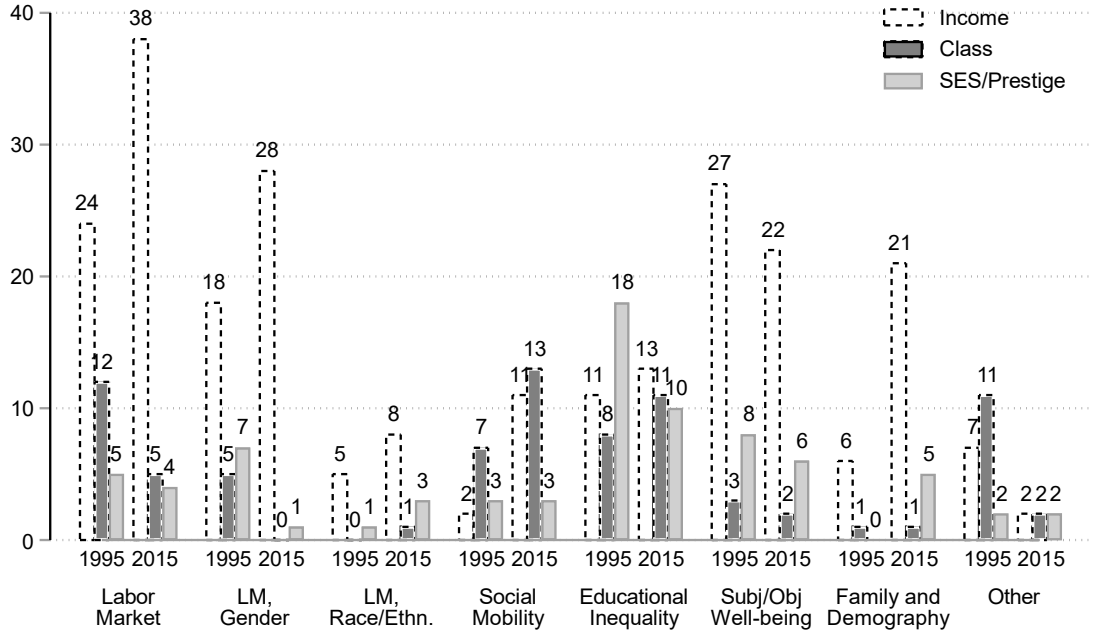
Figure 4: Frequency of use of stratification measures in top-cited journals in 1995-1999 compared to 2015-2019.



At the same time, the period comparison displays some interesting trends. We see from figure 4 that the overall share of income-based studies has increased from 57% to 69% in the last two decades. Class analysis has lost ground between the two periods, shifting from 27% to 17% of the total number of articles, and the same goes for social status measures (from 25% to 17%). SoE nowadays publishes one-tenth more articles using income measures and one-tenth less using social status measures; JHSB displays a similarly sized decline of the latter. Even in class analysis stronghold, stratification research has diversified: the share of articles using class-based measures in ESR has declined from more than half to about one third. In JMF, where income has come to achieve a quasi-monopoly, this has mainly come at the expense of social status measures: they

represented almost one fourth of social stratification studies published by this journal in 1995-1999.

Figure 5: Frequency of use of stratification measures across research areas journals in 1995-1999 compared to 2015-2019.



A similar picture emerges when examining period trends within research areas (Figure 5). While class measures lost ground in almost all areas of stratification research, they remained the most frequently used – although increasingly contested – approach in mobility research and alongside income measures expanded its grasp in educational attainment research (Appendix 2).

The trend comparison hence yields a generalised increase in income measures even though this increase did not develop uniformly across journals nor research areas. And while income is vastly dominant, occupation-based measures survive in stratification research committed to intergenerational inequality. Hidden behind income's dominance are the diverse methodological choices and their trends over time associated with class analysis that are, as we have seen, of

particular interest for social mobility and educational attainment researchers, as discussed in the next section.

2.4 From a Multiverse to a Universe: The Paradigmatic Shift of Class Analysis to EGP

Table 1 restricts the focus to class analysis and presents the most often used class schemes in the two periods. In 1995-1999, EGP accounted for less than half (47%) of the social class articles, with Wright classes being the only significant competitor (11%) and a large variety of other class-based schemes (47%). ESEC, NS-SEC, Hisclass and the micro-class approach did not exist in this earlier period. In 2015-2019, the share of EGP-like schemes (thus including ESEC and NS-SEC) has risen to 74% of the class-based studies, while Marxist class schemes have virtually disappeared from top-cited journal's stratification research and the category 'other' has halved. Between 2015 and 2019, only two articles out of 35 used the microclasses.

Hence, the recourse to a variety of class schemes has substantially declined and the employment relationship (EGP) approach to class analysis has achieved a paradigmatic status. However, it is clear that EGP is more frequently used in ESR than in ASR and AJS[10]. Overall, the growing number of proposals to 'reform' class analysis in recent years has paradoxically been accompanied by a growing convergence of empirical research toward EGP-like schemes.

Table 1 here

[10] In complementary analyses we also find that EGP is dominant in RSSM and marginally used in SF.

3. CONCLUSION

In this research note, we have mapped current SEP measurement practices of significant parts of the stratification community and contrasted them to a specifically interesting comparison point in the recent past. Because authors' rarely ever explicitly state why they decide to apply a specific SEP measurement, it is hard to infer from the practices alone the reasons for differences across fields of scientific enquiries or changes over time.[11] With this *caveat* in mind, we can formulate some explanations for the growing success of income measures.

Income measures present several important advantages: they (1) are an important determinant of life chances, (2) constitute the most intuitive indicator of SEP easing the popularization of research results, (3) offer detailed information based on continuous variables, and (4) are often available in datasets. Income measures, however, also have important limitations such as: (1) missing or biased information, particularly at the top and at the bottom of the income distribution, (2) year-to-year fluctuations, and (3) reliability issues when collected retrospectively or imputed via parental occupation (Andrews and Leigh 2009, Haider and Solon 2006). More fundamentally, income measures (4) privilege explanations for inequality that concentrate only on the monetary dimension of social inequality. Therefore, income measures are blind to individuals' specific location within the occupational structure, conflict, social closure and socialization-based

[11] Before interpreting change over time in terms of conscious decision-making, one would have to actually distinguish change due to trends in author measurement preferences from compositional change in the group of authors. Arguably, a apradigmatic shift would occur when both apply, i.e. if the authors change their measurement preferences over time and cohort replacement results in consecutive author cohorts differential measureing practices.

explanations, related political interests and cultural attitudes (Mayer 1997; Wright 2015; Guhin, McCrory Calarco and Miller-Idriss 2021).

Social class schemes and social status measures are less prone to these limitations (Houseworth and Fisher 2020). Class positions are largely stable over time after occupational maturity, display high construct and criterion validity and face less serious problems of missing or biased information (Groh-Samberg and Hertel 2011; Smallenbroek, Hertel and Barone 2021). Similarly, social status measures display more life course stability and lower measurement issues than income measures (Mazumder and Acosta 2014; Bloome and Furey 2020). Moreover, it is well-documented (but lately also contested) that social class and social status hierarchies are highly stable across countries and cohorts (Hout and DiPrete 2006; Avent-Holt, Hällsten and Cort 2020). At the same time, occupational studies may fail to discern important empirical trends of rising economic inequality and their measures may be perceived as too static in an era of increased labor market volatility (Sakamoto and Wang 2020). Hence, a pluralistic view on how to best measure SEP may be justified because income, social class, and social status measure distinct dimensions of social inequality and have different advantages and disadvantages from a methodological perspective.

Nevertheless, our systematic review indicates first and foremost that income measures are largely dominant in top-cited sociology journals publishing a significant share of social stratification research. In 2015-2019, income measures covered two-thirds of the selected articles, and their share was about four times higher than the share of social class and social status measures. Moreover, the time comparison points to a moderate but universal increase in research using income to measure SEP. Intergenerational research on education and social mobility is possibly

the last bastion of occupation-based measures. Still, income measures are also increasingly common in these fields, and occupation-based approaches are not unchallenged (Sakamoto and Wang 2020). The erosion of social status measures may not be very surprising. After all, SES indices are based on the average levels of income and education of incumbents of different occupations and thus display high correlations with income measures; both approaches involve continuous measures allowing similar modeling approaches. While SES measures are less prone to measurement error and can be calculated ex-post for data collected centuries ago, they miss the substantial individual-level variability of income within occupations. Whether recent advances regarding status measures that exploit those particular advantages will spur once again their usage is yet to be seen (Song and Xie 2020, Song et al. 2020).

Second, the analyses by research area suggest that class and status may survive in the field of intergenerational inequality, where family background is related to offspring's educational or occupational attainment. Income measures, on the contrary, dominate gender, family and race inequality studies as well as research focusing on poverty and other labor market outcomes. Interestingly, popular sociological theories causally explaining intergenerational attainment explicitly resort to class but not income differences (Breen and Goldthorpe 1997; Goldthorpe 2007a; Barone, Barg and Ichou 2021). Moreover, mobility scholars argue that intergenerational effects resulting from social class are not reducible to those stemming from family income differences, even if earnings are the outcome measures (Mood 2017).

Our third conclusion is that EGP-like schemes are largely dominant and have increasingly gained a paradigmatic status within class analysis, accounting for 74% of class approaches to SEP in 2015-2019 up from 47% only 20 years earlier. While several alternative classifications have been

proposed, none has managed to challenge the monopoly of EGP and its successors. Indeed, our results show that classification diversity declined substantially between the two periods because neo-Marxist schemes disappeared and the category 'other' halved. Moreover, the increasing dominance of EGP is visible regardless of research area and journal. While this is good news for the proponents of the neo-Weberian approach, we would reiterate that income measures largely crowd out EGP-like schemes in leading sociology journals.

How can the dominance of EGP-like schemes be explained? The influential work of Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) relating to the CASMIN project and more generally to social mobility research has certainly contributed to popularize this approach (Penissat and Rowell 2015). Moreover, with the rise of omnibus surveys (e.g., the GSS), international survey programmes (e.g., ESS, ISSP, EVS) and the harmonization of occupational measurements (Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman 1992; Ganzeboom and Treiman 2003), EGP-like classes have become the most easily available schemes either provided by the data-producing institutions (e.g., SOEP) or available through widely shared algorithms based on few available occupational indicators (Ganzeboom and Treiman 2013; Jann 2019; Mitnik and Cumberworth 2021). At the same time, potential competitors like Wright or Esping-Andersen classes are neither readily available nor easy to construct based on standard occupational variables (though not impossible as demonstrated, e.g., by Lambert and Bihagen 2014). In the case of microclasses, where codes and necessary data are widely available, the 80+ categories can become a severe obstacle when applied to the usual survey samples as well as for the purpose of interpreting outcome variation (Goldthorpe 2007c: 146).

While feasibility may explain the expanding popularity of EGP-like measures within class analysis, their relative dominance may also be one of the reasons for the decline of (aggregated) class

analysis. The distinctive feature of class schemes over vertical rankings based on income or social status is that the former incorporate categorical differences of sociological relevance. If and whether class analysis survives therefore depends, in our view, on whether it can account for the growing horizontal divides associated with occupational upgrading or growing female labor force participation (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Oesch 2006, Hertel 2017). These horizontal divides are important for post-industrial society's social mobility (Güveli and de Graaf, 2007; Hertel 2017) and crucial for understanding voting behavoir and preferences (Oesch 2006) but, at the same time, they are largely ignored in EGP-like schemes. Assuming the increasing use of large-N data sets and the production and dissemination of algorithms to easily construct several of the more recent schemes, class analysis may take this conjecture as the starting point for further research to inform interested analysts about the strength and weaknesses of single approaches.

The decline in usage of occupational measures relative to income may also result from a change in the relevance of different research domains in sociology. Sociological research in the 21st century has increasingly attended to gender, race, ethnicity, inter and intra-household inequalities and variance decompositions where differences in class attainment present methodological barriers. Income provides more inter-individual variance, is easier to work with and interpret when it comes to differences in economic life chances and resources. Our results show that occupational measures are used much less in research areas focusing on gender, race, ethnicity or family inequalities while also showing that family and demography stratification research is growing as a share of articles from 1995 (4%) to 2015 period (14%). Here too horizontally differentiated class schema may contribute additional insights as horizontal differences also pick up on employment stability of income and attitudes that may be related to the processes under study.

If alternative class schemes measure the same underlying processes, selecting one schema (and sticking to it) may be the logical path. In that case, the paradigmatic status of EGP may represent a commendable research strategy fostering incremental knowledge growth, reproducibility and transparency. If, however, class schemes' utility depends on the outcome choice and introducing more horizontal distinctions is relevant for several outcomes of sociological significance (see for instance, Weeden and Grusky 2012 or Smallenbroek, Hertel, Barone 2021), a one-size fits all approach to class analysis is bound to produce blind spots and further curtail its value for stratification research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allmendinger, Jutta. 1989. 'Educational Systems and Labor Market Outcomes'. *European Sociological Review* 5(3):231–50.

Andrews, Dan and Andrew Leigh. 2009. "More Inequality, Less Social Mobility." *Applied Economics Letters* 16(15):1489-92. doi: 10.1080/13504850701720197.

Avent-Holt, Dustin, Martin Hällsten and David Cort. 2020. "Occupational Status and Organizations: Variation in Occupational Hierarchies across Swedish Workplaces." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 70:100423. doi: 10.1016/j.rssm.2019.100423.

Barone, Carlo, Katherin Barg and Mathieu Ichou. 2021. "Relative Risk Aversion Models: How Plausible Are Their Assumptions?". *Rationality and Society* 33(2):143-75. doi: 10.1177/1043463121994087.

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk society: Towards a new modernity.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Beller, Emily. 2009. "Bringing Intergenerational Social Mobility Research into the Twenty-First Century: Why Mothers Matter." *American Sociological Review* 74(4):507-28. doi: 10.1177/000312240907400401.

Blau, Peter Michael and Otis Dudley Duncan. 1967. *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley.

Bloome, Deirdre and Jane Furey. 2020. "Lifetime Inequality: Income and Occupational Differences and Dynamics in the Us." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 70:100470. doi: 10.1016/j.rssm.2019.100470.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Breen, Richard and John H. Goldthorpe. 1997. "Explaining Educational Differentials: Towards a Formal Rational Action Theory." *Rationality and Society* 9(3):275-305. doi: 10.1177/104346397009003002.

Breen, Richard and Walter Müller, eds. 2020. *Education and Intergenerational Social Mobility in Europe and the United States*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Retrieved 2020/10/30 (http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=30634).

Breen, Richard. 2005. "Foundations of a Neo-Weberian Class Analysis." Pp. 31-51 in *Approaches to Class Analysis*, edited by E. O. Wright. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, Terry Nichols and Martin Seymoure Lipset. 1991. "Are social classes dying?" *International Sociology* 6(4):397-410. DOI: 10.1177/026858091006004002.

Corak, Miles Raymond, ed. 2004. *Generational Income Mobility in North America and Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (http://www.gbv.de/dms/bsz/toc/bsz10432158xinh.pdf).

Corak, Miles Raymond. 2013. "Income Inequality, Equality of Opportunity, and Intergenerational Mobility." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27(3):79-102. doi: 10.2307/41955546.

DiPrete, Thomas A. 2020. "The Impact of Inequality on Intergenerational Mobility." *Annual Review of Sociology* 46(1):379-98. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054814.

Erikson, Robert and John H. Goldthorpe. 1992. *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Erikson, Robert, and John H. Goldthorpe. 1992. *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies*. Oxford [England] : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press.

Erikson, Robert, John H. Goldthorpe and Martin Hällsten. 2012. "No Way Back up from Ratcheting Down? A Critique of the 'Microclass' Approach to the Analysis of Social Mobility." *Acta Sociologica* 55(3):211-29. doi: 10.1177/0001699312447633.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1993. Changing Classes: Stratification and Mobility in Post-Industrial Societies. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
Evans, Geoffrey, ed. 1999. The End of Class Politics? Class Voting in Comparative Context. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Featherman, David L. and Robert Mason Hauser. 1978. *Opportunity and Change*. New York: Academic Press.
Ganzeboom, H. B. G., R. Luijkx, and D. J. Treiman. 1989. 'Intergenerational Class Mobility in Comparative Perspective'. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 8:3–84.
Ganzeboom, Harry B G and Donald J Treiman. 2013. "International Stratification and Mobility File: Conversion Tools." edited by D. o. S. R. Methodology. Amsterdam.
Ganzeboom, Harry B G, Paul M De Graaf and Donald J Treiman. 1992. "A Standard International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status." *Social Science Research* 21(1):1-56.
Ganzeboom, Harry B. G. and Donald J. Treiman. 2003. "Three Internationally Standardised Measures for Comparative Research on Occupational Status." Pp. 159-93 in *Advances in Cross-National Comparison: A European Working Book for Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables*, edited by J. H. P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik and C. Wolf. Boston, MA: Springer US.
Goldthorpe, John H. 1983. "Women and Class Analysis: In Defence of the Conventional View." *Sociology* 17(4):465-88. doi: 10.1177/0038038583017004001.
Goldthorpe, John H. 1984. "Women and Class Analysis: A Reply to the Replies." *Sociology* 18(4):491-99. doi: 10.2307/42852978.
Goldthorpe, John H. 2007a. "Outline of a Theory of Social Mobility." Pp. 154-85 in *On Sociology. Volume One: Critique and Program*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
Goldthorpe, John H. 2007b. "Social Class and the Differentiation of Employment Contracts." Pp. 101-24 in *On Sociology: Volume Two: Illustration and Retrospect*, edited by J. H. Goldthorpe. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Goldthorpe, John H. 2007c. "Class Analysis.New Versions and their problems." Pp. 125-53 in *On Sociology: Volume Two: Illustration and Retrospect*, edited by J. H. Goldthorpe. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Goodman, Leo A. 1965. "On the Statistical Analysis of Mobility Tables." *American Journal of Sociology* 70(5):564-85. doi: 10.2307/2774977.
Goodman, Leo A. 1969. "How to Ransack Social Mobility Tables and Other Kinds of Cross-Classification Tables." *American Journal of Sociology* 75(1):1-40. doi: 10.2307/2775611.
Groh-Samberg, Olaf and Florian R. Hertel. 2011. "Laufbahnklassen. Zur Empirischen Umsetzung Eines Dynamisierten Klassenbegriffs Mithilfe Von Sequenzanalysen." *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 21(1):115-45. doi: 10.1007/s11609-011-0145-0.
Grusky, David B. and Gabriela Galescu. 2005. "Foundations of a Neo-Durkheimian Class Analysis." in *Approaches to Class Analysis*, edited by E. O. Wright. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Grusky, David B. and Jesper B. Sørensen. 1998. "Can Class Analysis Be Salvaged?". *American Journal of Sociology* 103(5):1187-234. doi: 10.1086/231351.
Grusky, David B. and Stephen E. Van Rompaey. 1992. "The Vertical Scaling of Occupations: Some Cautionary Comments and Reflections." *American Journal of Sociology* 97(6):1712-28. doi: 10.2307/2781554.
Guhin, Jeffrey, Jessica McCrory Calarco and Cynthia Miller-Idriss. 2021. "Whatever Happened to Socialization?". *Annual Review of Sociology*. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-090320-103012.
Güveli, Ayse and Nan Dirk De Graaf. 2007. "Career Class (Im)Mobility of the Social-Cultural Specialists and the Technocrats in the Netherlands." *European Sociological Review* 23(2):185-201. doi: 10.2307/4137362.

Haider, Steven and Gary Solon. 2006. "Life-Cycle Variation in the Association between Current and Lifetime Earnings." *American Economic Review* 96(4):1308-20. doi: 10.1257/aer.96.4.1308.

Hauser, Robert M. and John Allen Logan. 1992. "How Not to Measure Intergenerational Occupational Persistence." *American Journal of Sociology* 97(6):1689-711. doi: 10.2307/2781553.

Hauser, Robert M. and John Robert Warren. 1997. "Socioeconomic Indexes for Occupations: A Review, Update, and Critique." Pp. 177-298 in *Sociological Methodology*, edited by A. E. Raftery. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Hertel, Florian R. 2016. Social Mobility in the 20th Century: Class Mobility and Occupational Change in the United States and Germany. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Houseworth, Christina and Jonathan Fisher. 2020. "Measurement Error in Occupation and the Impact on Intergenerational Mobility." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 70:100469. doi: 10.1016/j.rssm.2019.100469.

Hout, Michael and Thomas A. DiPrete. 2006. "What We Have Learned: Rc28's Contributions to Knowledge About Social Stratification." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 24(1):1-20. doi: 10.1016/j.rssm.2005.10.001.

Jann, Ben. 2019. "Iscogen: Stata Module to Translate Isco Codes." edited by S. S. C. S458665. Boston: Boston College Department of Economics.

Katz, Michael B. 1993. *The "Underclass" Debate : Views from History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Katz, Michael B. 2013. The Undeserving Poor : America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kitschelt, H., and P. Rehm. 2014. 'Occupations as a Site of Political Preference Formation'. *Comparative Political Studies* 47(12):1670–1706. doi: 10.1177/0010414013516066.

Lambert, Paul S. and Erik Bihagen. 2014. "Using Occupation-Based Social Classifications." *Work, Employment and Society* 28(3):481-94. doi: 10.1177/0950017013519845.

Lambert, Paul S., Koon Leai Larry Tan, Kenneth Prandy, Vernon Gayle and Manfred Max Bergman. 2008. "The Importance of Specificity in Occupation-Based Social Classifications." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 28(5/6):179-92. doi: 10.1108/01443330810881231.

Lareau, Annette. 2011 [2003]. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lareau, Annette. 2015. "Cultural Knowledge and Social Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 80(1):1-27. doi: 10.1177/0003122414565814.

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.

Mayer, Susan E. 1997. *What Money Can't Buy: Family Income and Children's Life Chances*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Mazumder, Bhashkar and Miguel Acosta. 2014. "Using Occupation to Measure Intergenerational Mobility." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 657(1):174-93. doi: 10.1177/0002716214552056.

Mills, Colin. 2014. "The Great British Class Fiasco: A Comment on Savage et al." *Sociology* 48(3):437-44. doi: 10.1177/0038038513519880.

Mitnik, Pablo A. and Erin Cumberworth. 2021. "Measuring Social Class with Changing Occupational Classifications: Reliability, Competing Measurement Strategies, and the 1970–1980 U.S. Classification Divide." *Sociological Methods & Research* 50(1):265-309. doi: 10.1177/0049124118769084.

Mood, Carina. 2017. "More Than Money: Social Class, Income, and the Intergenerational Persistence of Advantage." *Sociological Science* 4:263-87.

Oesch, Daniel. 2006. *Redrawing the Class Map. Stratification and Institutions in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pakulski, Jan. 1993. 'Mass Social Movements and Social Class'. *International Sociology* 8(2):131–58. doi: 10.1177/0268580993008002001.

Penissat, Etienne and Jay Rowell. 2015. "The Creation of a European Socio-economic Classification: Limits of Expert-driven Statistical Integration." *Journal of European Integration* 37(2):281-297. doi:10.1080/07036337.2014.990140

Perry-Jenkins, Maureen, and Naomi Gerstel. 2020. 'Work and Family in the Second Decade of the 21st Century'. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(1):420–53. doi: 10.1111/jomf.12636.

Pfeffer, Fabian T., Paula Fomby and Noura Insolera. 2020. "The Longitudinal Revolution: Sociological Research at the 50-Year Milestone of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 46(1):83-108. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054821.

Rose, David and Eric Harrison. 2010. *Social Classs in Europe*. London: Routledge.

Rose, David, David J. Pevalin and Karen O`Reilly. 2005. *The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification: Origins, Development and Use*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rytina, Steven. 1992. "Scaling the Intergenerational Continuity of Occupation: Is Occupational Inheritance Ascriptive after All?". *American Journal of Sociology* 97(6):1658-88. doi: 10.2307/2781552.

Sakamoto, Arthur and Sharron Xuanren Wang. 2020. "The Declining Significance of Occupation in Research on Intergenerational Mobility." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 70:100521. doi: 10.1016/j.rssm.2020.100521.

Savage, Mike, Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Mark Taylor, Yaojun Li, Johs. Hjellbrekke, Brigitte Le Roux, Sam Friedman and Andrew Miles. 2013. "A New Model of Social Class: Findings from the Bbc's Great British Class Survey Experiment." *Sociology*. doi: 10.1177/0038038513481128.

Savage, Mike, Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Sam Friedman, Daniel Laurison, Andrew Miles, Helene Snee and Mark Taylor. 2014. "On Social Class, Anno 2014." *Sociology* 49(6):1011-30. doi: 10.1177/0038038514536635.

Shavit, Yossi, and Hans-Peter Blossfeld, eds. 1993. *Persistent Inequality: Changing Educational Attainment in Thirteen Countries*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.

Smallenbroek, Oscar, Forian R. Hertel and Carlo Barone. 2021. "Measuring Class Hierarchies in Postindustrial Societies: A Criterion and Construct Validation of EGP and ESEC across 31 Countries.". SocArXiv.

Song, Xi, and Yu Xie. 2020. "Occupation-Based Socioeconomic Index with Percentile Ranks." *University of Pennsylvania Population Center Working Paper (PSC/PARC)*, 2020-59.

Song, Xi, Massey, Catherine G., Rolf, Karen A., Ferrie, Joseph P., Rothbaum, Jonathan L., & Xie, Yu. 2020. "Long-term decline in intergenerational mobility in the United States since the 1850s." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 117(1):251–258. doi:10.1073/pnas.1905094116

Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Torche, Florencia. 2014. "Analyses of Intergenerational Mobility: An Interdisciplinary Review." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 657(1):37-62. doi: 10.1177/0002716214547476.

Turek, Konrad, Matthijs Kalmijn and Thomas Leopold. 2021. "The Comparative Panel File: Harmonized Household Panel Surveys from Seven Countries." *European Sociological Review* 37(3):505-23. doi: 10.1093/esr/jcab006.

Warren, John Robert and Robert M. Hauser. 1997. "Social Stratification across Three Generations: New Evidence from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study". *American Sociological Review* 62(4):561-72. doi: 10.2307/2657426.

Warren, John Robert, Jennifer T. Sheridan and Robert M. Hauser. 1998. "Choosing a Measure of Occupational Standing: How Useful Are Composite Measures in Analyses of Gender Inequality in Occupational Attainment?". *Sociological Methods & Research* 27(1):3-76. doi: 10.1177/0049124198027001001.

Warren, John Robert, Jennifer T. Sheridan and Robert M. Hauser. 2002. "Occupational Stratification across the Life Course: Evidence from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study". *American Sociological Review* 67(3):432-55. doi: 10.2307/3088965.

Weeden, Kim A. and David B. Grusky. 2012. "The Three Worlds of Inequality." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(6):1723-85. doi: 10.1086/665035.

Wilkinson, Richard G. and Kate Pickett. 2009. *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. New York: Allen Lane.

Wodtke, Geoffrey T. 2015. "Continuity and Change in the American Class Structure: Workplace Ownership and Authority Relations from 1972 to 2010." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 42.

Wodtke, Geoffrey T. 2016. "Social Class and Income Inequality in the United States: Ownership, Authority, and Personal Income Distribution from 1980 to 2010." *American Journal of Sociology* 121(5):1375-415. doi: 10.1086/684273.

Wodtke, Geoffrey T. 2017. "Social Relations, Technical Divisions, and Class Stratification in the United States: An Empirical Test of the Death and Decomposition of Class Hypotheses." *Social Forces* 95(4):1479-508. doi: 10.1093/sf/sox012.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1978. *Class, Crisis, and the State*. London: Verso.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1979. *Class Structure and Income Determination*. New York: Academic Press.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1985. *Classes*. London: Verso.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1997. *Class Counts. Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wright, Erik Olin. 2009. "Understanding Class." New Left Review 60:107-16.

Wright, Erik Olin. 2015. Understanding Class. London: Verso.

Appendix 2

Table 1: Number of Articles Coded in Top Cited Sociology Journals in 1995-1999 and 2015-2019

	Coded			Identified			Coded Articles as % of Identified		
Journal	1995	2015	Total	1995	2015	Total	1995	2015	Total
AJS	27	21	48	171	171	342	0.16	0.12	0.14
ASR	48	35	83	252	198	450	0.19	0.18	0.18
ESR	33	59	92	86	278	364	0.38	0.21	0.25
JMF	9	50	59	52	433	485	0.17	0.12	0.12
SoE	28	12	40	92	93	185	0.30	0.13	0.22
GS	13	7	20	159	179	338	0.08	0.04	0.06
JHSB	16	23	39	129	160	289	0.12	0.14	0.13
RSSM	-	76	76	-	178	178	-	0.43	0.43
SF	-	36	36	-	318	318	-	0.12	0.14
Total	174	319	493	941	2008	2949	0.18	0.17	0.19

Table 2: Stratification measure used by journal in frequency and percentage of total (2015-2019)

Journal		Income	Class	SES	Prestige	Occupation	Total
AJS	%	48%	29%	19%	5%	14%	100%
		10	6	4	1	3	21
ASR	%	80%	11%	9%	3%	6%	100%
		28	4	3	1	2	35
ESR	%	53%	37%	15%	8%	7%	100%
		31	22	9	5	4	59
JMF	%	92%	0%	6%	0%	2%	100%
		46	0	3	0	1	50
RSSM	%	50%	32%	20%	7%	9%	100%
		38	24	15	5	7	76
SF	%	69%	17%	11%	6%	6%	100%
		25	6	4	2	2	36
SoE	%	42%	17%	50%	0%	0%	100%
		5	2	6	0	0	12
GS	%	71%	0%	0%	0%	29%	100%
		5	0	0	0	2	7
JHSB	%	78%	4%	17%	0%	4%	100%
		18	1	4	0	1	23
Total	%	65%	20%	15%	4%	7%	100%
		206	65	48	14	22	319

Table 3: Stratification measure used by Research Area in frequency and percentage of total (2015-2019)

	Statistics	Income	Class	SES/Prestige	Other	Total
Labor Market	%	79%	10%	11%	10%	
	N	70	9	10	9	89
Labor Market, gender	%	85%	0%	3%	15%	
	N	33	0	1	6	39
Labor Market, race/ethnicity	%	61%	9%	30%	13%	
	N	14	2	7	3	23
Mobility	%	40%	40%	38%	0%	
	N	20	20	19	0	50
Education	%	41%	52%	18%	0%	
	N	18	23	8	0	44
Subjective/ Objective	%	69%	11%	20%	3%	
Well-being	N	24	4	7	1	35
Family relations and	%	76%	3%	17%	7%	
Demography	N	22	1	5	2	29
Other	%	50%	60%	50%	10%	
	N	5	6	5	1	10
Total	%	65%	20%	19%	7%	
	N	206	65	62	22	319

Table 4: Stratification measure used by journal in frequency and percentage of total (1995-1999)

Journal		Income	Class	SES	Prestige	Occupation	Total
AJS	%	48%	33%	11%	4%	19%	100%
	N	13	9	3	1	5	27
ASR	%	75%	21%	8%	4%	10%	100%
	N	36	10	4	2	5	48
ESR	%	42%	55%	21%	12%	3%	100%
	N	14	18	7	4	1	33
JMF	%	78%	0%	22%	0%	0%	100%
	N	7	0	2	0	0	9
SoE	%	32%	21%	57%	4%	4%	100%
	N	9	6	16	1	1	28
GS	%	62%	23%	23%	0%	23%	100%
	N	8	3	3	0	3	13
JHSB	%	81%	6%	0%	6%	19%	100%
	N	13	1	0	1	3	16
Total	%	57%	27%	20%	5%	10%	100%
	N	100	47	35	9	18	174

Table 5: Stratification measure used by journal in frequency and percentage of total (2015-2019)

Journal		Income	Class	SES	Prestige	Occupation	Total
AJS	%	48%	29%	19%	5%	14%	100%
	N	10	6	4	1	3	21
ASR	%	80%	11%	9%	3%	6%	100%
	N	28	4	3	1	2	35
ESR	%	53%	37%	15%	8%	7%	100%
	N	31	22	9	5	4	59
JMF	%	92%	0%	6%	0%	2%	100%
	N	46	0	3	0	1	50
RSSM	%	50%	32%	20%	7%	9%	100%
	N	38	24	15	5	7	76
SF	%	69%	17%	11%	6%	6%	100%
	N	25	6	4	2	2	36
SoE	%	42%	17%	50%	0%	0%	100%
	N	5	2	6	0	0	12
GS	%	71%	0%	0%	0%	29%	100%
	N	5	0	0	0	2	7
JHSB	%	78%	4%	17%	0%	4%	100%
	N	18	1	4	0	1	23
Total	%	65%	20%	15%	4%	7%	100%
	N	206	65	48	14	22	319

Table 6: Number of Articles by Research Area and Journal in 2015-2019

Research Area	AJS	ASR	ESR	JMF	SoE	GS	JHSB	RSSM	SF	Total
Labor Market	3	12	17	13	0	0	1	27	16	89
Labor Market Gender	5	4	9	6	1	7	0	5	2	39
Labor Market Race/Ethn."	5	2	3	2	1	0	0	5	5	23
Mobility	6	6	12	0	1	0	0	13	6	44
Education	2	5	10	3	9	0	0	20	1	50
Subj/Obj Well-being	0	3	3	4	0	0	20	5	0	35
Demography and Family Relations	0	1	3	22	0	0	2	0	1	29
Other	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	5	10
Total	21	35	59	50	12	7	23	76	36	319

Table 7: Number of articles in top 15 cited sociology Journals published in Research Areas

Research Area	1995	2015	Total
Labor Market	37	46	83
LM, Gender	29	32	61
LM, Race/Ethnicity/Migration	7	13	20
Social Mobility	8	25	33
Educational Inequality	32	29	61
Subj/Obj Well-being	37	30	67
Family and Demography	7	28	35
Total	174	207	381

Table 8: Percentage of Articles using Income (Top-%) and Class (Bottom-%) Measures within Research Areas by Period in Top 15 Cited Sociology Journals

Research Area	1995	2015
Labor Market	65%	83%
	32%	11%
LM Gender	62%	88%
	17%	0%
LM Race/Ethn.	71%	62%
	0%	8%
Social Mobility	25%	44%
	88%	52%
Educational Inequality	34%	45%
	25%	38%
Subj/Obj Well-being	73%	73%
	8%	7%
Family and Demography	86%	75%
	14%	4%
Other	41%	50%
	65%	50%
Total	57%	69%
	27%	17%

Table 1: Number of artciles using marxist, EGP and other types of class scheme by journal and period

	1995-1999				2015-2019			
	EGP	Marxist	Other	Total	EGP-like	Marxist	Other	Total
AJS	5	0	4	9	3	1	3	6
ASR	0	2	8	10	1	0	3	4
ESR	13	1	5	18	19	0	3	22
SoE	4	0	2	6	2	0	0	2
GS	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0
JHSB	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
Total	22	5	21	47	26	1	9	35
	47%	11%	45%	100%	74%	3%	23%	100%
RSSM					18	1	6	24
SF					4	1	1	6

Note: EGP-like includes EGP, ESEC, NS-SEC, HisClass.[12]

[12] The marxist scheme include Wright in 1995 articles and in 2015-2019 Wodtke (2016). There is one article using Wright (Marxist) and EGP in ESR 1999. There is one RSSM article in 2015 using both Hisclass and an "other" scheme. There is one AJS article in 2016 using both Wodtke (Marxist) and an "other" class scheme. The category 'other' includes also three articles introducing the distinction between managerial and professional occupations that is ignored in EGP-like schemes.