International Symposium

November 6th and 7th, 2008 at the Center for the Advancement of Working Women (CAWW)

Fertility and Social Stratification
Germany and Japan
in Comparison

Thursday, November 6th, 2008
Section 1: Social Class, Social Reproduction and Fertility

“Links between Natural and Social Reproduction in Germany”

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Links between natural and social reproduction in Germany

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Social inequality

• Specific structures of social inequality in particular societies

• Distribution of advantage and disadvantage and their development over time. Different dimensions, levels and forms of inequality

• Special case: Social stratification, i.e. the hierarchical arrangement of social classes or strata within a society

• Degree of inequality (e.g., income dispersion)
Income inequality, 1986 - 2006

GSOEP data on weighted net household income; 1986: West Germany only
Grabka/Frick 2008: 103

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Social stratification

• **A macro-level perspective:**
  • Degree of inequality (e.g., income dispersion)
  • Distribution of social collectivities and their reproduction over time

• **A micro-level perspective:**
  • Individual mobility / chances
  • Social mobility as the movements of individuals among positions of the social structure
  • *Intra*-generational vs. *inter*-generational mobility
  • *Absolute* vs. *relative* mobility (‘social fluidity’)
Social stratification / Sources of inequality

- Labor market
- Education
- Marriage / Social homogamy
- Fertility

- Importance of demographic processes for dynamic analysis of stratification
- Natural reproduction as the necessary basis of social reproduction -> Overall timing/speed of reproduction
- Social differentiation / (Mutual) relationships!
Fertility in Germany

- Fluctuations ("baby boom" etc.)
- Long-term decline in overall fertility
- Changes in women's ages when giving birth
Dotted line: TFR = Total fertility rate (period), smoothed curve
Statistisches Bundesamt (2005)
Fertility, by mother's birth cohort

Dotted line: median age at first birth (smoothed line).
Statistisches Bundesamt (1999), German Life History Study; own calculations

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2008
Social differences in fertility

- Education-related differences in *level* (no. of children)

- Education-related differences in *timing*

- Interaction with historical trends (e.g., rapid educational expansion)
Social homogamy

• Decline in (particular) intentional links between education and marriage
• But: Changing opportunity structures in favor of educational homogamy:
  - Macro level (similar ‘marginal’ educational distributions)
  - Micro level (role of particular institutions; increasing homogeneity along educational careers)

• Changing preferences?
Social homogamy

Wirth 2000: 141; 6 cat. according to CASMIN
(Data Microcensus 1993)

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Education

• Educational expansion since 1950s...

• General school education, higher education, and also vocational training

• Especially for females
Educational expansion

Data: Microcensus 2000 (West Germany), own calculations

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Differential access to education

• Selection and self-selection

• In particular: Persistent relevance of social origin: economic and cultural restrictions

• 1960s/1970s: declining (opportunity) costs, better regional supply; then stagnating
Relative chances of (higher-level) educational attainment, by high/low origin

Reported are relative chances of attaining this particular level of education vs. not attaining it by educational background (odds ratio). Educational background: Parents’ education (Upper secondary education vs. below)
Data: West German Life History Study, own calculations

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Towards an integrative approach

• Inter-generational social mobility:

• Conventional research: Start from children’s generation:
  • "Where do they come from?"
  • E.g, compare educational attainment by social/educational background (i.e., parents’ education)

• Individual educational ‘chances’ of the children
  (-> cf. focus on individual life chances, individual rights…)
• But as an analytical measure of mobility: Conditional on existence and no. of children
Inter-generational social/educational reproduction

- Start from *parents’ generation* (particular parental cohorts)
- "Where do they go?"

- Look not only at conditional chances of education, but also at population process (cf. Mackenroth 1953; Mare & Maralani 2006 etc.)
- (Historical) timing!

- Micro level approach:
- *Partial processes* of inter-generational reproduction:
Demographic and social reproduction

Life course 1

$\text{Time}$

$t_1$ $t_2$
Demographic and social reproduction

Life course 1

---------------------------------------------

Life course 2

\[ t_1 \quad | \quad t_2 \]

Time
Demographic and social reproduction

Life course 1 (first generation)
Social status X

Life course 2 (first generation)
Social status Y

Life course 3 (second generation)
Social status Z

Time
Partial processes of inter-generational educational reproduction

(1) Selective union formation

(2) Selective fertility, conditional on (1)

(3) Selective educational and status attainment, conditional on (1) and (2)

=> Full cycle of inter-generational social reproduction
Empirical analysis

- Total effect of social reproduction as a result of partial processes
- Precise historical developments?

1. **Estimate** partial processes (West Germany, 1945+) separately (on the basis of various data sources and estimation models)

2. **Combine** these results (by micro simulation)

3. Look at some counterfactual scenarios to assess relative importance of the partial processes
Data and Modelling

- Combination of data from official records (e.g., fertility rates) and survey data
- Reproduction data on women only
- Combination of numerical data and parameter estimation
- Historical description -> No modelling of trade-offs between the dimensions
Proportion of internal group reproduction over time: descendants of the 1930 birth cohort
Historical trends

• Look at the social reproduction not only of one birth cohort

• But: Compare rates of social reproduction across (the descendants of) various birth cohorts

• Look at pairs of generations (mothers and daughters)
Proportion of group reproduction by mother’s birth cohort
Some counterfactuals

• Assess relative contribution of partial processes

• In particular: demographic processes

• ‘Switch off these processes and compare results with empirical trends

• Ceteris paribus - assumption...
Counterfactuals (1): No social homogamy/Marriage at random

- Medium
- High
- Low
- Medium - cf.
- High - cf.
- Low - cf.
Counterfactuals (2): Equal fertility
Summary

• Historical trends:

  Patterns of inter-generational educational inequality/social fluidity relatively stable

• But: here selected dimensions /groups ...
Conclusions

• Empirically:
Importance of different processes in social reproduction, including demographic processes

• Conceptually:
- Close links between areas of demography and stratification research
- Pay attention to units of analysis in social mobility research: mobility chances of individuals vs. couples; men vs. women; etc.

• Theoretically:
Relationships between specific institutions and a variety of social mechanisms