Developing New National Data on Social Mobility: A Workshop Summary

ISBN
978-0-309-29598-7

68 pages
6 x 9
PAPERBACK (2013)

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DEVELOPING NEW NATIONAL DATA ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

A WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Amy Smith, *Rapporteur*

Committee on Population

Committee on National Statistics

Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES PRESS
Washington, D.C.
www.nap.edu

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES PRESS 500 Fifth Street, NW Washington, DC 20001

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This study was supported by the National Science Foundation Award SES-1244655 to the National Academy of Sciences. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the rapporteur and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations or agencies that provided support for the project.

International Standard Book Number-13: 978-0-309-29598-7
International Standard Book Number-10: 0-309-29598-X

Additional copies of this report are available from the National Academies Press, 500 Fifth Street, NW, Keck 360, Washington, DC 20001; (800) 624-6242 or (202) 334-3313; http://www.nap.edu.

Printed in the United States of America

Suggested citation: National Research Council. (2013). *Developing New National Data on Social Mobility: A Workshop Summary.* Amy Smith, Rapporteur. Committee on Population and Committee on National Statistics, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

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Acknowledgments

This report summarizes the proceedings of a workshop convened in June 2013 to consider options for a design for a new national survey on social mobility. The workshop was sponsored by the National Science Foundation and convened by the Committee on Population (CPOP) and the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) in the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) of the National Research Council (NRC).

The workshop was organized by a steering committee composed of expert social, behavioral, and economic scientists who study trends and issues in social mobility of the population. The steering committee provided invaluable guidance during the course of developing the workshop, in the process of securing expert presentations, and in facilitating the conduct of the workshop. Although the steering committee members played a central role in designing and conducting the workshop, they did not actively participate in writing this summary.

The presentations to the workshop meeting provided the basis for a lively and instructional discussion by the participants. We appreciate the contributions of Robert Hauser, executive director of the NRC's DBASSE, Henry Brady, David Grusky, Michael Hout, Robert Mare, Bhash Mazumder, Chandra Muller, Timothy Smeeding, Matthew Snipp, Laura Tach, Florencia Torche, Steve Trejo, and Rob Warren.

The steering committee acknowledges the excellent work of the staff of the NRC for support in developing and organizing the workshop and this report. The study director was Thomas J. Plewes, who serves

as director of CPOP. Constance F. Citro, director of CNSTAT, assisted in organizing the steering committee and setting the agenda for the study. The associate study director was Natalie Nielsen of the Board on Science Education. They provided valuable assistance to the steering committee in organizing the meetings. The steering committee was assisted by Danielle Johnson, on the staff of CPOP, who made arrangements for the steering committee's planning meeting and this workshop, as well as playing a major role in preparation of this summary. Amy Smith ably served as rapporteur for the workshop.

This summary was reviewed in draft form by individuals chosen for their diverse perspectives and technical expertise, in accordance with procedures approved by the Report Review Committee of the NRC. The purpose of this independent review is to provide candid and critical comments that assist the institution in making its report as sound as possible, and to ensure that the report meets institutional standards for objectivity, evidence, and responsiveness to the study charge. The review comments and draft manuscript remain confidential to protect the integrity of the deliberative process.

The panel thanks the following individuals for their review of this report: Thomas A. DiPrete, Department of Sociology, Columbia University; Samuel R. Lucas, Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley; Chandra L. Muller, Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin; and Timothy M. Smeeding, Institute for Research on Poverty and Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Although the reviewers listed above have provided many constructive comments and suggestions, they were not asked to endorse the conclusions or recommendations, nor did they see the final draft of the report before its release. The review of this report was overseen by Barbara Boyle Torrey. Appointed by the NRC, she was responsible for making certain that the independent examination of this report was carried out in accordance with institutional procedures and that all review comments were carefully considered. Responsibility for the final content of the report rests entirely with the rapporteur and the NRC.

David Grusky and C. Matthew Snipp
Cochairs
Steering Committee for a Workshop on
Developing a New National Survey on Social
Mobility

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Introduction

The study of trends in income inequality has flourished in recent decades, enabled by a rich and growing variety of data sources providing trend information on populations and individuals with significant detail on characteristics, income, education, occupation, and other such measures. On the contrary, the study of trends in social mobility—defined as "intergenerational mobility" or the association between (1) the social standing of an individual's family of origin (when the individual is growing up), and (2) the social standing of that same individual when she or he is an adult— has languished largely because the data necessary to assess whether it is being realized are lacking.

The study of mobility matters because it speaks to issues of class formation, equal opportunity, and lifetime inequality. For mobility scholars oriented toward issues of class formation, the presumption has long been that high levels of social mobility, manifested both within and across generations, hamper the formation of social classes. That is, insofar as individuals judge that their lives will likely be lived out in their class of origin, they will come to identify with that class and even act (e.g., vote, protest, strike) on its behalf. The correspondingly rigid boundaries between classes further allow distinctive class cultures and lifestyles to develop and harden.

In recent years, the interest in social mobility has been sparked by a growing interest in equality of opportunity—examining the extent to which children born into different families have different life chances and outcomes. It is important to understand such barriers to mobility because

of the long-standing and, to some extent, distinctively American commitment to free and open competition in the labor market. The main question is whether the United States is indeed living up to this commitment. The commitment to equal opportunity is one of the most cherished national objectives. Consistent and comprehensive data are necessary to monitor the strength of that commitment at regular intervals.

The purpose of this workshop was to plan a new national survey that will provide the first definitive evidence on recent and long-term trends in social mobility. In order to facilitate the design of a new data collection and analysis source, the workshop had the objectives of coming to an understanding of the substantial advances in the methods and statistics for modeling mobility, in survey methodology and population-based survey experiments, in opportunities to merge administrative and survey data, and in the techniques of measuring race, class, education, and income. The workshop also focused on documenting the state of understanding of the mechanisms through which inequality has been generated in the past four decades.

In the absence of a survey designed and dedicated to the collection of information to assess the status of social mobility, a wide variety of data sources designed for other purposes have been pressed into service in order to illuminate the state of social mobility and its trends. The workshop reviewed each of the various sources that could be exploited for the purpose of securing trend measurements. The options considered in the workshop included conventional suggestions, such as to enhance the Panel Study of Income Dynamics with a much larger sample size or perhaps to bolster the General Social Survey (GSS) or Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) in various ways. The SIPP, for example, might regularly include an intergenerational module, while the GSS could include a ramped-up measure of parental income and other family origin variables that meet standard criteria. Another option would be to design and deploy a stand-alone survey through a university-based survey research organization, such as the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, or via a privately held survey organization, such as Westat Corporation.

The workshop was presented information that enabled an evaluation of these options on using such criteria as cost, quality of data, availability of relevant variables, and the likelihood of becoming a viable source of ongoing trend data. Fielding new surveys or scaling up existing ones would incur high costs when compared to the alternative of leveraging existing large federal surveys operated by the Census Bureau. Thus, the ongoing Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey emerge as prime candidates. Here, too, workshop participants had the task of presenting information that would permit comparing

these two options and documenting the main considerations in choosing between them.

Finally, the workshop aimed to consider the best possible ways to link administrative and other records to the survey data that participants would propose to collect. There are several possibilities for linking administrative records, including (1) securing parental income reports from earlier decennial Census data by ascertaining, within the context of the proposed survey, the name and address of the parents (at the time the respondent was growing up); (2) securing parental earnings or income reports from archived Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or Social Security records by ascertaining the requisite parental identifying information (within the proposed survey); (3) linking to IRS or Social Security records for the purpose of securing income or earnings reports for the respondents; and (4) drawing on administrative educational records (i.e., tests, grades, college attended, major) for the respondents.

The National Research Council appointed a steering committee of experts in the study of social mobility that was charged with:

> organizing an open workshop on the key decision points associated with launching a new national level survey of social mobility. The workshop will bring together scientific experts from a variety of social and behavioral disciplines to consider various aspects of a major new national survey, including identifying relevant new theoretical perspectives and technical issues that have implications for modeling, measurement, and data collection. A variety of invited presentations will explore various aspects of survey design, statistical power, instrument choice, variable choice, and analytical approach. The information contained in these presentations, together with the general discussion at the workshop, will be captured and will form the basis of an individually authored summary of the event that will be prepared by a designated rapporteur. Following the preparation of the workshop summary, a smaller group of experts will be convened to digest the key themes that emerged from the workshop and identify the way forward.

The steering committee was mindful that the issues associated with the study of social mobility are complex and, over the years, have often been seen as intractable largely because of a dearth of relevant data. It was not possible to discuss all aspects of social mobility and its measurement in a one-day workshop, so the steering committee identified a set of key topics and invited experts to prepare background papers on these topics. The presentations at the workshop meeting were designed to shed light on various aspects of considering and developing a new survey of social mobility. Robert Hauser, executive director of the National Research Council's Division of Behavioral and Social Science and Education, briefed the workshop on the evolution of research interest in the

topic of social mobility and the interest of the sponsor, the National Science Foundation, in the topic. An overview of the state of social mobility research was presented by Michael Hout, who stated that understanding social mobility calls for understanding of the circumstances of birth and upbringing, as well as parents' attributes. He submitted that any survey of social mobility would need to capture this information. Following these overview presentations, David Grusky, Timothy Smeeding, and Matthew Snipp discussed how social mobility has changed over time and postulated reasons for these changes.

A discussion of the various ways in which social mobility is modeled and measured was presented by Florencia Torche. This presentation was buttressed by an extensive discussion and evaluation of data sources for measuring mobility, both survey-based and using administrative data, presented by Rob Warren.

Six presentations on various topics to be considered in any measures of social mobility rounded out the workshop. Henry Brady, Robert Mare, Bhash Mazumder, Chandra Muller, Laura Tach, and Steve Trejo focused on measures of political participation, social networks, labor market, education, family composition, and immigration, respectively. A spirited discussion of the lessons learned from these presentations and the way ahead for developing a data collection program to support an understanding of social mobility trends and impact completed the workshop.

Following the workshop, the steering committee was reconvened to weigh the discussion, identify additional areas in which research and pretesting may be needed, and begin the task of developing a proposal for a national mobility survey. Immediate next steps include publication of the background papers prepared for the workshop. Ultimately, any decisions on the next steps will be reached in close discussion with a wide variety of key actors such as the Census Bureau Director and possible funders of the new data collection.

2

Studying Social Mobility

More than 40 years have passed since the last large-scale survey of social mobility in the United States. Much has changed since then. Demographics, social institutions, economic contexts, and political priorities have shifted considerably, even as research methods and resources have also changed. The prospect of a new study of social mobility merits careful consideration of design, measures, methods, sources, and objectives.

FRAMING THE ISSUES

Michael Hout of the University of California, Berkeley, offered an initial framing of the relevant issues in his presentation, "Social Mobility: What We Know So Far." Hout juxtaposed a popular, conventional, but often misleading understanding of social mobility with a more precise definition of the key elements of this phenomenon. He then explored some further aspects of the process.

Defining Social Mobility

Hout characterized popular notions of social mobility by quoting a lyric from a 1980s song by the popular singer Billy Joel: "Each child had a pretty good shot/to get at least as much as their old man got." While a comparison is made with the "old man," the lyric puts the focus on the individual, on discrete opportunities and achievements rather than con-

tinuity and connections with the previous generation and also suggests that mobility is always upward. As Hout observed, that understanding of social mobility was "cultural trope enough that it made the Top Ten in 1980." This conventional perspective, however, is misleading for looking at actual trends in social mobility. This way of understanding social mobility invites confusion and indeed, according to Hout, presents "the wrong object to study."

By contrast, Hout defined social mobility as "the degree to which success in life is contingent on circumstances of birth and upbringing, or the persistence of advantage across generations." Social origins may privilege and propel or constrain and diminish the destination position of an individual. The continuity and transmission of socioeconomic stratification across generations is the correct object to study. This encompasses both the patterns and strength of the association between the socioeconomic standing of an individual's family of origin and of that same individual as an adult.

In exploring the implications of this framing for the study of social mobility, Hout chose a few points for emphasis. First, he noted, it shifts the relevant question away from "who moves up and who moves down?" Rather than tracking the changing status of individuals, the effort is to track the transmission of status and the transfer of resources from one generation to the next. According to Hout, this leads to "a quantitative question regarding the degree to which success in life depends on the circumstances of birth and recasts parents' attributes as attributes of the research subject."

In a further point of emphasis, Hout underscored that not all mobility is upward. In the popular imagination, Hout noted, mobility tends to be equated with progress; however, "no mobility table ever had an empty triangle showing no downward mobility." As Hout pointed out, "Mobility is symmetrical in the absence of growth and immigration." Instances of downward mobility, he explained, "actually offset upward moves unless there has been substantial growth and/or immigration into the population," so long as each origin category is the same size as each destination category.

Many Dimensions of Intergenerational Transmission

Hout examined a few other misleading aspects of the common understanding of social mobility. The current popular focus is almost entirely on income as both the marker of social standing and the driver of social mobility. Yet social standing and social mobility have many different dimensions. Hout emphasized that circumstances of birth and upbringing, or more generally, "social origins," bring together many different

factors. Hout offered a preliminary list of factors that, "in combination, can produce a characterization of social origins":

- economic resources, including family income and wealth;
- employment status and quality of employment of family members;
- genetic endowment;
- cultural endowment, particularly parents' educations;
- family location: neighborhood, urbanity, state, nation;
- family structure, including relationships (with parents, siblings, grandparents, extended kin or non-kin networks) and stability (under circumstances of separation, divorce, cohabitation, single parenting);
- family heritage: race, ethnicity, ancestry, nativity, citizenship; and
- timing (birth cohort).

Hout acknowledged that the list was provisional, noting, "Some items on this list are going to be on everybody's list, other items will be stricken by some." Nonetheless, he affirmed, "It certainly is incumbent on any team that is trying to do a contemporary mobility study to try and get as many of these into the study as possible."

Varying Degrees of Intergenerational Transmission

In addition to multiple dimensions, intergenerational transmission of social standing can occur at varying rates and extents along these different dimensions and in changing circumstances and contexts. That is, Hout explained, "social origins constrain success to varying degrees." Education, for example, may dampen the impact of origins. In general, origin effects decrease as education decreases. However, as later discussion explored, this may be truer of college education than was formerly the case, and less true of high school education. Changing circumstances and contexts shift the impact of different factors. Hout noted "the famous increase in economic inequalities" as well as the decreasing variation in parents' educations and number of siblings as factors that affect how social origins are characterized and how their impact changes over time.

Looking over the range of dimensions of social origins, Hout remarked, "the variance in some of these is increasing; in some it is decreasing." This led Hout to his final observation that "any simple bivariate mobility table-based estimate is going to be subject to substantial excluded variable bias. If the variances in things and the weights on things are shifting in different ways over time, then we are just going to introduce even more confusion by not being complete in the degree to which we try and catalog and measure all of these things in the study."

SOCIAL MOBILITY AS A CURRENT CONCERN

Several factors compel a new study of social mobility in the United States. In part, the issue has risen to public prominence. Matthew Snipp of Stanford University reflected on this in his presentation, "The End of the American Dream?: Why Social Mobility May Have Changed in the 21st Century," prepared with the collaboration of David Grusky, also of Stanford University, and Timothy Smeeding of the University of Wisconsin–Madison. To Snipp, one impetus for the present inquiry is the now-widespread question of "whether or not the American dream is still intact in the way that it was for previous generations." Snipp remarked on the prevalence of "handwringing and worrying" about the demise of the American dream of individual upward mobility in a range of contexts, from media talk shows to electoral campaign speeches.

Popular and Political Attention to Social Mobility

Snipp identified a distinct shift in popular and political discourse. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, he observed, the elimination of poverty was a central focus of popular discussion, political speeches, and policy debates. At that time, "this country was very, very preoccupied with the question of poverty and what to do about poor people in this country and the elimination of poverty." This concern has shifted. He stated, "The last round of public policy debates within the presidential campaign, you didn't hear about poverty. Nobody was worrying about poverty and poor people in America. The concern and anxiety was really focused on the middle class." Indeed, in Snipp's view, "worrying about the middle class became something of a national obsession." Yet, whether the conversation has occurred in the media, public policy think tanks, or government, he observed, "most of this conversation was a data-free conversation" but that ongoing popular and political attention to issues of social mobility calls for better data to inform the conversation.

Economic and Social Changes as Reasons to Revisit Mobility

Renewed attention to social mobility is also compelled by a number of significant economic and social changes, Snipp asserted. Chief among these is the immense increase in household income inequality and the possible consequent reduced opportunities for social mobility. Snipp cited the concern expressed by Alan Krueger, former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, regarding the negative cross-national correlations between income inequality and social mobility (the so-called Great Gatsby Curve). Currently, according to Snipp, there is no definitive answer to what he termed a "chicken or egg" question of whether a "lack of occupa-

tional mobility begets income inequality or is income inequality begetting diminished opportunities in the labor market."

Fluidity in a great variety of social structures and institutions may also be influencing current patterns of social mobility. Snipp presented an array of changes possibly relevant to social mobility. These include changes in family structure, education, labor markets, and immigration. Regarding families and their multiple and changing forms, Snipp noted, "It is an open question whether or not those kids have the same opportunity that the kids growing up in two-parent families, where both parents are married."

Likewise, it is difficult to establish the implications for social mobility of changes in education, such as the emergence of new types of training institutions, charter schools, and online certifications. Further, Snipp noted the "striking differentials in returns to education" as the professional managerial class acquires ever greater returns to advanced degrees.

Changes have also proliferated in the labor market. As examples, he pointed to the demise of labor unions, the increase of female labor force participation, increasingly erratic and delayed labor force entry of young men, and the mass incarceration of African American men. Of this last, Snipp observed, "Incarceration also might have some impacts on mobility in ways that we might not think about. On the one hand, for people who become incarcerated, particularly African Americans, incarceration is an experience that follows you for a lifetime, even once you are released. It produces a profound disadvantage in the labor market. At the same time, by siphoning off large numbers of people who probably would have been immobile in the first place, you may be in fact increasing mobility by taking those individuals out of the labor market." The issue cannot be properly explored without data, he posited.

Segmentation in the labor market also has an impact on social mobility, as advantages are concentrated for those in professional and managerial occupations. Snipp noted that the advantages that those in such occupations are able to confer on their children "are much greater than people in lower classes and lower paid occupations. These advantages come in lots of different ways. In addition to education, there may be the business of childcare, preschools, and other kinds of experiences, access to elite colleges, and a variety of other things, paying for student loans for children so that they don't start a career in debt." Thus, over generations, advantages may become concentrated at the top and disadvantages concentrated at the bottom.

Snipp saw a parallel in residential income segregation, as "people who are well-off and can live in good neighborhoods with access to good schools and libraries and parks and other kinds of amenities are in a position to confer the benefits of the amenities provided, to pass those

advantages on to their children." In this as well, Snipp observed, "You see this growing bifurcation between the top and the bottom."

Immigration is another area of great change with implications for social mobility. Snipp commented on "a spectacular rise in the number of persons coming to this country" and the "consequent realignment of the nation's racial and ethnic composition." An increase in interracial marriages, "especially interracial marriage involving Hispanics and non-Hispanics," may also be relevant to social mobility, in Snipp's view, as it may lower "past barriers to mobility for interracial families."

Snipp also dwelt on cultural forces and their impact on social mobility. In the current mood of concern about the loss of the American dream, Snipp suggested, "people begin to worry about passing on the benefits and material wealth that they have acquired over their lifetime." They therefore undertake a variety of investments—"private schooling, tutors, music lessons, afterschool sports, extracurricular activities, travel, a whole range of things that people can do for their children to sort of enrich their background and experience and provide them a leg up into the world once they have entered the job market or even before when they start for their schooling." Snipp offered evidence of the disparities in time spent on various kinds of literacy activities with children. Relatively advantaged parents spend more time with their children and read more to them, which "has been shown to have an impact on how well kids do when they first enter school." Yet again, "these differential investments by middle and upper middle class families benefit their children even very early on in their lives."

Snipp acknowledged that his presentation had moved through a great many factors swiftly. Many of these topics were explored in much greater depth in subsequent presentations in the workshop. Snipp's point, like Hout's, was to emphasize the range of dimensions and factors that can affect social mobility. He also underscored not only the range, but also the variability of impact, as "all of these things have implications for either rigidification or fluidity in the mobility regime." Finally, and most emphatically, Snipp lamented, "We really haven't had much in the way of real data that would allow us to address these questions."

FORERUNNERS IN THE STUDY OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The last thorough examination of social mobility, undertaken before the many economic and social changes that Snipp reviewed, occurred several decades ago. Robert M. Hauser, executive director of the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education at the National Research Council, was able to provide a firsthand account of that earlier work in his presentation. Hauser discussed the two very large surveys of social

mobility conducted in the United States. The first, the 1962 Occupational Changes in a Generation (OCG), was directed by Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan and resulted in their publication *The American Occupational Structure* (1967). The second, the 1973 OCG, was directed by David L. Featherman and Hauser, resulting in their publication *Opportunity and Change* (1978).

Hauser described both endeavors as fairly large sample surveys with substantial statistical power. In 1962, the sample size was slightly more than 20,000; in 1973, the sample size was 33,600. Both surveys had limitations. They were conducted only once and were relatively restricted in content. Nonetheless, Hauser recognized, both of these were "bigger than can be conducted with the resources available now."

Since these two surveys, Hauser continued, some measurements of social mobility have been undertaken. These include NORC's General Social Survey, the 1986-1988 Survey of Income and Program Participation Supplements, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, and Social Security Administration earnings files. Hauser also noted that there is some possibility of getting limited measurements from the records of the Internal Revenue Service.

In considering the possibility of either another large-scale survey or surveys, comparable to the OCG, or a collection of efforts "to do a good job of measuring social mobility in the United States," Hauser emphasized the value of a truly broad-based study. Referring to the myriad social changes highlighted in the background papers and discussed throughout the workshop, Hauser noted "the need for [a broad-based study] is greater because things have gotten so much more complicated." Hauser returned to this point later in the workshop, as he encouraged participants to keep the focus wide, and not accord exclusive or excessive attention to income and wealth. He asked participants to reflect on "how misplaced the war on poverty was because it was just about money." Indeed, in Hauser's view, "So much social policy has been just about money. That is not all there is to life. It is really important that we keep that in mind."

In a final point, Hauser also advocated recurrent attention to the issue and "regular monitoring of intergenerational social mobility in the United States." This might be less frequent than other measurements, but nonetheless on a cycle that is "sufficiently regular so that the public at large and people in positions to make policy would know what the heck is going on."

3

Measurement Issues and Challenges

Many changes have occurred since the last survey of social mobility more than 40 years ago. These include profound changes in social institutions. Workshop presentations explored changes in family structures, education, and labor markets, giving further attention to the implications of these changes for developing accurate measures to be used in a new study of social mobility. U.S. demographics have also shifted markedly, due in part to immigration. Nuanced measures will be required to capture the experience of immigrants and their descendants. Patterns of political affiliation and participation may also be relevant to a new study of social mobility.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

One of the key institutional changes that have occurred since the last major survey of social mobility is in family structure. Individuals are situated within families of origin that transfer resources from one generation to the next, conferring advantages and disadvantages. Yet the simple category "family of origin" has become a markedly fluid and complex construct, comprising a shifting cast of characters, including cohabiting unmarried partners, non-resident parents, blended and step-families, grandparents, as well as extended kin and quasi-kin networks. Complex and changing family structures are also manifested at different rates across the socioeconomic strata.

Complex and Fluid Family Structures

What are the implications of these changes for measuring social mobility? This question received attention throughout the entire workshop and was the explicit focus of an in-depth presentation, "Social Mobility in an Era of Family Instability and Complexity," by Laura Tach of the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University.

Tach began by making the case for the imperative of updating the means to identify and measure family members. Survey questions based on an expected norm of a stable and continuous nuclear family with married parents would have generated some minor measurement problems and misclassifications in the mid-20th century. Today, they would result in major measurement errors and data distortions. Tach elaborated with evidence regarding new patterns of non-marital cohabitation, multiparous fertility, fluid unions, blended families, and other familial structures.

Non-marital cohabitation and fertility have increased markedly in the United States in the past 50 years. In 1960, about 5 percent of children were born outside of marriage. In 2009, about 40 percent of children were born outside of marriage. The massive overall increase masks another very important feature of this particular shift. While some other changes in family structure are more evenly distributed across the socioeconomic spectrum, non-marital fertility is sharply stratified by socioeconomic status. Almost all the increase in non-marital fertility is in the lower part of the socioeconomic distribution.

Tach immediately clarified that non-marital fertility and non-marital relationships are not the same thing as single parenting or parenting outside the context of romantic relationships. Rather, many parents, though unmarried, are nonetheless cohabiting. Tach cited findings of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, which follows a birth cohort of children born in urban areas in the late 1990s. That study found that while a substantial number of children were born outside of marriage, more than half of them were born to parents who were cohabiting. Children and both parents were living together all or most of the time. Further, another third of children were born to parents who, although not married or living together, were nonetheless in ongoing romantic relationships with each other. Thus, Tach explained, only one in five children born outside of marriage could be considered children of a "single" mother—that is, someone who is parenting alone, outside of the context of a romantic relationship. The other four of the five non-marital children were born to unmarried parents who were in romantic relationships.

While these findings are from an urban birth cohort in the late 1990s, Tach confirmed that they are similar to nationally representative statistics from the National Survey of Family Growth and other surveys that indicate that about half of non-marital births are occurring to cohabiting

couples. Indeed, the rise in births to cohabiting couples accounts for almost all of the increase in non-marital childbearing that has happened in recent decades. National-level estimates from the 1990s also indicated that 40 percent of all children will live in a cohabiting household by age 16. This figure includes births to cohabiting couples, as well as children of divorced and never-married parents who enter cohabiting relationships. These figures, Tach noted, could well be higher now.

Fluidity is a significant feature of cohabiting relationships. According to data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, of all the non-marital cohabiting relationships that resulted in the birth of a child, 40 percent of those relationships have ended by the child's first birthday, and 61 percent have ended by the child's fifth birthday. By comparison, the same dataset indicates that 20 percent of formal marital unions have ended by the child's fifth birthday. As Tach encapsulated these findings, "There is a lot of change going on pretty rapidly."

Nationally representative data again mirror this evidence. By the time children reach age 15, 75 percent of children born to cohabiting parents experience the dissolution of their parents' relationship while one-third of children born to married parents experience their parents' divorce. Dissolution of the parents' relationship, Tach observed, "is clearly a common experience for many groups and it is a modal experience for certain subgroups of the population as well."

Family structures are changing in other ways. Serial partnerships have become more common. After the dissolution of a cohabiting relationship or a divorce, parents will quickly repartner. Children often stay with mothers when relationships or unions come to an end. New partners then enter the household—either a formally married stepfather or what is called a "social father" in a non-marital relationship with the mother. Data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study indicate that among unmarried parents who end their relationship, 70 percent are involved in at least one new relationship by the child's fifth birthday. About one-third of parents are becoming involved in multiple new relationships, as each new relationship is also unstable. More than half of these new relationships involve cohabitation. Thus, Tach reflected, by the child's fifth birthday, the child experiences multiple adults moving in and out of the household.

National samples confirm these trends. Reviewing the nationally representative data, Tach noted that more than half of divorced women remarry within 5 years, and three-quarters do so within 10 years. As a result, 30 percent of all children spend time in a marital or non-marital step-family by age 18. Repartnering is thus not just an issue in the lower socioeconomic strata or non-marital relationships. Repartnering occurs relatively quickly and at high rates across different types of relationships.

Complexity of family structure has yet further aspects. New partners may bring their children from prior relationships into the household or family system as step-siblings. Remarriages and new non-marital partnerships may also produce new children who are half-siblings of the child of a previous union. In data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, 60 percent of children have a half-sibling (that is, another child to whom they are related by one parent but not both parents) by the time they reach age 5. A quarter have three or more half-siblings, either living in the same household or elsewhere. Tach suggested, "You can think of this as the modern day Brady Bunch. But while the Brady Bunch was a rare novelty, this experience is actually the modal experience for these fragile families."

Tach reviewed nationally representative data on the same topic. Data from the National Longitudinal Surveys indicate that by midlife, 20 percent of women have had children with more than one partner. Another 2011 survey of a nationally representative sample found that 30 percent of adults reported having a step- or half-sibling. "Clearly," Tach observed, "this is no longer a minor measurement issue, but something that is affecting a large portion of the population."

Tach also briefly reviewed some other diverse family forms. The number of three-generational and custodial-grandparent households is increasing. The prevalence at a point in time (not over the course of childhood) of children living with their grandparents is as high if not higher than the prevalence of children at a point in time living in a cohabiting household. The number of children with gay and lesbian parents has also increased, although estimates vary from 500,000 to 2 million children.

Implications for Measuring Families

All of these various changes in family structure have profound implications for the study of social mobility. Despite myriad and shifting residential and biological ties, families remain a key unit of socialization and the locus of intergenerational transfers of resources. Tach suggested that the instability and complexity of contemporary families may require new ways to identify family members, measure their class positions, and study how they transmit resources to the next generation.

Tach reviewed the many ways that standard questions in earlier surveys might miss or misidentify members of contemporary families. For example, regarding cohabiting unmarried parents, Tach observed, "If you think about how these couples would be captured in our traditional mobility studies, they would either be excluded if the analysis was based on the marital status of the parents, or they would be pulled together with married parents if it was based on a child's biological relationship." An

accurate picture of mobility, however, will require distinguishing between married parents, cohabiting parents, single parents, and step-parents.

Tach immediately acknowledged that this "is a very complicated task"—both because some of the relevant constructs are difficult to measure and because of the noted fluidity of many households. As an example, Tach contrasted the challenges of identifying step-children and half-siblings. Step-children may be identified by asking about step-parents. Half-siblings, however, are far more difficult to identify in household surveys because they are living in the same household with both of their biological parents and therefore appear like children in stable intact two-parent families. For a new social mobility survey, Tach asserted, "Thinking about how to measure and identify these half-siblings is really important."

More nuanced questions are also necessary for gathering accurate data on gay and lesbian households. Questions about same-sex couples will yield data for families where both parents are living in the same household as the child, but miss gay and lesbian single parents. Questions will also need to identify bisexual and transgender parents. This "may be a small fraction of the population if you are asking children about their parents, but it is going to be a much larger fraction of the population if you are looking at a reference generation, often called Generation 0 or G0, and asking questions about their children. It is going to only grow in magnitude obviously given the social changes under way."

For the study of social mobility, new survey questions are also crucial for identifying the correct class positions of families of origin and destination and considering how families—in whatever form—transmit class-specific resources to the next generation. As Tach traced new complex structures in families, she also considered some of the complex ways economic and cultural resources flow through or away from households.

Tach shared findings from the few mobility studies that have differentiated between resident and non-resident parents. Key among these is that intergenerational correlations between children and non-resident parents are greater than zero, "but they are also weaker than they are for the resident parents and their children." As intergenerational associations between children and non-resident parents are greater than zero, then failure to include non-resident or unmarried parents in measures of social class position will bias both individual- and family-based measures of social mobility. Further, the finding presents a core puzzle of identifying "the underlying mobility process that is generating these weaker correlations. Can we get any more nuanced beyond that out of a new round of survey or data collection?"

If intergenerational transmission of resources is contingent on parent-child contact and interaction, then new family structures could have many

ramifications for social mobility. Tach noted that the investments cohabiting parents make in their children and households may differ from those made by married parents in ways that matter for mobility. For example, cohabiting fathers may provide less instrumental and social support to mothers, exercise weaker parenting control, or engage less in income pooling. Data indicate that teens report less attachment to cohabiting biological parents than to married biological parents.

To explore these issues in a new study of social mobility, Tach suggested several kinds of information to gather. One is the length of time that children have been living apart from their non-resident parent, as well as the timing of the separation. If a child is apart from a parent from early childhood onward, or if the separation does not occur until the child's teen years, does this have an impact on the strength of intergenerational transfers and correlations?

Another relevant line of inquiry is the nature and extent of involvement between the child and non-resident parent. Tach noted the "great heterogeneity in the intensity and type of contact and involvement that non-resident parents have with their children." In pursuing this, Tach surmised, "Of course, I think adults will not be able to retrospectively recount their father's economic and child support payments or things like that, but they will probably be able to answer questions about how often they saw their non-resident parents at a particular point in time."

Direct studies of intergenerational correlations between children and step-parents are lacking, but as with cohabiting unmarried parents, it is possible that those correlations might be weaker or different in some way for step-parents compared to married biological parents in intact families. Tach referred to data indicating that investments of resources, time, and money are very different for step-parents than they are for biological parents. For the study of social mobility, she explained, it would be imperative to have information on how long a child spent in a step-family and also on the level of investment or intensity of involvement of step-parents.

For blended families, Tach raised similar questions. Children in blended families may have access to different economic and cultural resources than their half- and step-siblings, despite living in the same household, because of their different biological, step-, and non-resident parents. Resources may flow across households differently, as parents in blended families may be sending resources to ex-partners and children in other households. The quality of parenting of biological children in blended families may also be affected by parents' relations with previous partners, non-resident children, or step-children.

Tach provided a summary of what she termed as essential tasks for a new survey that could properly measure contemporary families and

fully consider the intergenerational correlations that are key to the study of social mobility:

- Cohabiting parents: identify presence and class position; distinguish from married parents and single parents.
- Non-resident parents: identify presence and class position; determine duration of non-residence; indicate level of involvement with children.
- Step-parents: identify presence and class position; determine duration of step-family; indicate level of involvement with children.
- Blended families: identify based on half-siblings or parent's other children.
- Other families: identify presence and class position of grandparents; sex of partners/parents and perhaps sexual orientation.

In concluding, Tach drew attention to a valuable resource. The National Center for Family Marriage Research has created question crosswalks for all of the large national household surveys. They have compiled information on how each survey measures cohabitation, marital status, household rosters, union instability, and other indicators, and generated crosswalks between them. Tach affirmed that this "is a really good resource for getting existing survey measures." Nonetheless, "none of these surveys do a very good job about asking about these issues for those respondents' parents."

Multigenerational Networks

Robert Mare of the University of California, Los Angeles, explored some related themes in his presentation, "Measuring Social Networks Beyond the Immediate Family." Mare chose first to highlight a point that he noted he has been making for several years in this context. In Mare's view, any inquiry into social mobility should approach "the relevant family forms as a subject of research itself rather than assuming always that we know whose characteristics it is that we should be correlating or associating." Thus, rather than a plea to include specific kin forms in the investigation of social mobility, Mare made a plea that "we scratch our heads as we go into any particular study," and consider that the unit of analysis in mobility studies may be created by processes related to mobility itself. Mare acknowledged, "I am just trying to be a little disquieting about focusing narrowly."

Mare then directed attention to several aspects of multigenerational families and the role of grandparents in intergenerational transfers. Mare criticized the "customary two-generation scope," suggesting it may be a

legacy of mobility studies in the 20th century but is inappropriate to current contexts. With increased longevity, grandparents are living longer and may remain relevant actors in the intergenerational transmission of resources. Mare noted that an increasing proportion of children at age 10 have all their grandparents alive, and these grandparents are "a potential supply of help in raising children."

The overall picture of longevity, however, provides no information on the social stratification of grandparents. As Mare mused, "Some of us have grandparents with a lot of resources that can help us. Some of us have a lot of grandparents, and well—they are nice, but they cannot really do much for us." If grandparents remain relevant to the transmission of resources, and if they themselves command very different resources, then this has implications for patterns of social mobility.

Mare also encouraged a perspective on families "as entities that exist over more than two generations," and further attention to how advantages and disadvantages accumulate across multiple generations. He considered the possibility of deep and enduring legacies that remote ancestors may impart. As examples, Mare speculated on the impact of having a remote ancestor who went to Yale, or won a lottery, or was sold into slavery, or made a decision to immigrate, or failed to make that decision. Any of these, Mare suggested, would have "profound multigenerational consequences," well beyond the immediate next generation. "Remote ancestral privilege"—or hardship—cannot be investigated in a mobility survey, yet Mare emphasized that "just identifying kin, measuring their characteristics and putting those in a regression equation does not fully capture what I mean by multigenerational effect."

Demography is a further concern of Mare. Although social mobility depends on the intergenerational transmission of advantages and disadvantages, it also depends on basic demographic reproduction. Mare said he is curious about the connections between mobility and demographic effects. These may include differential fertility across socioeconomic strata, patterns of childlessness over time, trends in "whether, when, and whom we marry and where we live as a result of migration," and a variety of other demographic trends.

Mare's perspectives lead him to several considerations regarding the study of social mobility. One is the importance of gathering information on grandparents, if only to enable better interpretation of data. As Mare noted, "When we try to assess the effects of one kin member's characteristics on another or when we try to study transfers or exchanges, the problematic thing is who is not in the data that are complicating our interpretations of the relationships that we have observed involving the people who are in the data."

Another issue for Mare is the potential value of developing mobility

models that address more than two generations, to facilitate capturing enduring legacies. Perhaps, Mare suggested, the combined associations across three generations will prove stronger than two-generation associations, helping to explain the persistence of social inequality.

EDUCATION

Education has also been changing in many ways over the past half century, including the types of institutions that provide it, the proliferating pathways that people follow to acquire it, and its value and impact on social mobility. These were some of the issues addressed by Chandra Muller of the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, in her presentation, "Measuring Education, Skill, and Personality."

Increasing Heterogeneity

Overall, increasing heterogeneity in educational experiences requires nuanced measurement of education as both an outcome of and an ingredient to social mobility. Types of educational institutions are increasingly varied. They include a plethora of licensure and certification programs, adult educational programs in correctional facilities, online courses and degree-granting programs, as well as charter schools and home schooling. Postsecondary institutions have diversified, ranging, she explained, from "a small liberal arts college or research university versus a community college that focuses in certain kinds of vocational areas."

Conventional schools, still the most common setting for educational activities, are themselves vastly different in terms of quality, curricula, resources, cost, populations served, faculty and other professional staff, student achievement, and organization and policies. Significant disparities may exist within any school, offering "very different opportunities to learn." Muller noted the reintroduction of student tracking. In course sequences that unfold over time, students are set on a path toward college or toward less skilled occupations. As Muller described it, "Once you are on a trajectory, it is not difficult to move down, but it is difficult to catch up and move up." Course content and curricula may also vary markedly and warrant measurement, as "differences in curriculum exposure can be something that lasts over the lifetime and are clearly linked to future earnings and future well-being more generally." Data on actual curricular exposure can be relatively difficult or costly to obtain, but, Muller noted, "if you want to understand the intergenerational transmission of advantages, then understanding the kinds of courses kids get into could be a very important mechanism."

Another issue in education that compelled Muller's attention is the

rise of non-normative pathways of educational attainment. These have implications both for the extent of students' educational attainment and for the feasibility of measuring that attainment. Muller highlighted the increasing number of students enrolled in postsecondary education, yet the lack of a concomitant increase in the number actually completing degrees. Individuals who tend not to graduate also tend to exhibit what she termed "funky enrollment patterns, unstable enrollment patterns, part-time to full-time, backward movement from four-year to two-year enrollments. Enrollment patterns could be something that is quite telling about potential mechanisms and also will give you some information about parents supporting kids." Disrupted or unstable pathways of educational attainment could indicate "risk factors or problems, sometimes with paying for college, maybe other factors."

Other characteristics of students who enroll in postsecondary institutions but do not complete a degree are that they are disproportionately non-white and from lower socioeconomic strata. Conventional indicators of educational attainment, such as degree completion, will not satisfactorily convey their educational experiences in ways that are useful for the study of social mobility.

Available Data Sources

Muller identified many possible sources of useful data on educational experiences over the life course. High school and postsecondary transcripts are valuable, often detailed sources of information about courses enrolled in, credits attempted, credits earned, courses completed or withdrawn from, and grades earned. Transcripts tend to be fairly accurate, are held indefinitely, and are rich with information not only about an individual student's academic experience, but also about school context.

Among other data sources Muller discussed are the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics and Office for Civil Rights, which also have data collections useful for considering school contexts and quality. The American Council on Education keeps records on general educational development tests, although it is important to bear in mind that different states have different thresholds for a passing score. The National Student Clearinghouse tracks degrees earned at a large portion of colleges and universities. Muller has not found a comparable central data source addressing the certificates and professional licenses that people obtain by passing professional tests or attending specialized school and training programs. Such information, she noted, "is fragmented across the different licensees, sometimes in states, sometimes in local areas, sometimes nationally, but for a specific occupation. That is problematic if you are trying to be comprehensive." A systematic

collection of data is also lacking for instruction that occurs in correctional facilities. The U.S. Department of Education reports that about one-third of adult education is occurring in correctional facilities, but "there is essentially no data collected on that. They really do not know how to do that," according to Muller. All of these sources are complemented by self-reports and administrative data.

In concluding, Muller underscored the "increasing variability in educational experiences, particularly at the postsecondary level." That heterogeneity requires insightful measurement, particularly for revealing experiences, patterns, and trends relevant to the study of social mobility. Muller also affirmed that "it is really worth thinking about using the vast data that we have in hand to start thinking about measuring some of the nuanced differences beyond degrees of attainment and years of schooling."

LABOR MARKETS

Significant changes in labor markets are highly relevant to the study of social mobility and raise substantive issues about measurement including not only how but also when measurements are made across the life course. Bhash Mazumder of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago addressed these issues in his presentation, "Implications of Labor Market Complexities on Measuring Social Mobility."

Labor Market Trends and Measurement Challenges

Mazumder began by identifying some fundamental changes in the economy and labor markets that could affect measures of social mobility. These include technological change, globalization, and outsourcing. All of these have exacerbated instability in employment, occupation, and earnings, resulting in "greater turbulence over the life course." In an ever-changing economic environment, Mazumder suggested, standard measures of labor market involvement may not be adequate for "credible research on intergenerational mobility."

Trends of concern to those interested in studying social mobility include income mobility and occupational mobility. Advances have been made in measuring intergenerational income mobility. While earlier studies used a single year of income for each generation, more recent studies average several years of income to better capture lifetime status or "permanent income." Measuring income at several points in the life cycle can minimize bias. For example, adult children who will eventually have higher permanent incomes may have steeper earnings profiles and systematically lower income when younger. These issues are not resolved by

simple age controls. Longer time averages of parents' income and adult children's income have suggested stronger correlations across generations. Mazumder noted that consumption patterns might provide a better indicator of status than income; however, data on income are more readily available.

Occupational status is another labor market outcome that may be an indicator of intergenerational mobility. As with measurements of income, the timing and frequency of measurements of occupational status is significant. Some individuals will have many occupations across a career, and there may not be an optimal age for sampling, given the more volatile labor market. Mazumder noted evidence of the rise in occupation switching, as data show a substantial increase in the rate at which workers change occupations when they switch jobs. Mazumder also discussed the so-called polarization of jobs. In this pronounced labor market trend, occupations involving routinized skills that are relatively easy to replace through technology or outsourcing have declined substantially over time at an accelerating pace. These jobs tend to be in the middle of the occupational income distribution.

In addition to occupation switching and job polarization, Mazumder highlighted mass incarceration as a third significant trend affecting labor markets. Incarceration rates, particularly of African American men, have reached such levels as to influence measures of mobility based solely on those who are active in the labor market. In 2008, for example, more than a third of African American males lacking a high school diploma and between the ages of 20 and 34 were incarcerated, compared to just more than 10 percent in 1980. For this same group, their rates of incarceration were higher than their rate of employment. This situation underscores possible pitfalls of focusing on occupation measures as indicators of mobility for subgroups of whom many individuals will not be employed.

A fourth labor market trend that may have implications for measuring mobility is the declining labor force participation of younger workers as they delay labor market entry. Employment for high school–age youth has fallen nearly 20 percentage points over the last 25 years. Some of this decline can be attributed to rising education. The polarization of the adult labor market is also a factor, causing more adults to take jobs previously held by younger workers. This pattern may be particularly significant for research using first jobs as a measure. It underscores the importance of creating measures of intergenerational mobility with respect to joblessness.

Data Sources and Solutions

For meeting these various measurement challenges, Mazumder suggested several possible solutions, including administrative data, retro-

spective data, and new statistical methods. Administrative data are essential for measuring income mobility, particularly for measuring income over long enough time spans and over key portions of the life cycle. Data from the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration (SSA) might suffice for income mobility measures, although statistical adjustments would be necessary for real-time analysis. Administrative data might not suffice for studying occupational mobility, although records from unemployment insurance matched with data from firms could be helpful.

Retrospective data from asking more detailed retrospective questions to develop thorough labor market histories could be another important source in the study of mobility. Interviewers might use resumes or prior tax returns to help facilitate respondents' recollections. Questions might address occupation upon initial labor market entry, at age 40, and at retirement.

New statistical methods will also advance the study of social mobility. Analogues for the statistical methods used for income mobility adjustments could potentially be applied to measures of occupation. Creative strategies—for example, the use of surnames as a grouping estimator to infer intergenerational persistence—have enabled researchers to gather more information from datasets. Detailed identifiers (such as exact names, date and location of birth, Social Security number) preserve the possibility of future linkages and creative approaches, so long as confidentiality can be ensured. Matched datasets have also been crucial to mobility research. Mazumder offered the example of Sweden, where linkages among population registers, health registers, crime registers, military registers, and earnings registers have facilitated the study of mobility. For the United States, Mazumder has used linkages between Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and SSA earnings data, both to estimate intergenerational earnings elasticities and to correct for problems with administrative data.

IMMIGRATION

The historically important role of immigration in U.S. demographic growth has increased substantially in recent years. Immigrant flows have intensified and changed, with a larger share of new immigrants coming from developing countries and arriving with very low levels of schooling, English proficiency, and other skills. The U.S. context for those who are immigrants has shifted as well, including a labor market characterized by steep earnings inequality, with greater rewards to the education and skills that most immigrants lack. All these changes are subsequent to the last major survey of social mobility and require study.

Stephen J. Trejo of the Department of Economics at the University

of Texas at Austin explored many issues of immigration in his presentation, "Assessing the Socioeconomic Mobility and Integration of U.S. Immigrants and Their Descendants." For the most part, Trejo observed, the same data and methods of analysis that are useful for studying social mobility in the native population are also useful for studying mobility in immigrants. Nonetheless, measuring mobility among the immigrant population and their descendants presents some unique challenges.

Intragenerational Mobility: First Generation

Trejo first addressed the social mobility of the immigrants themselves. This includes tracing their assimilation and integration in the United States and comparing their outcomes with their own, siblings', or peers' experience in the country of origin. Relevant outcomes include income, earnings, employment, occupational attainment, education, and language proficiency. Suitable timeframes for measuring include just after the immigrant arrives and then at intervals over the course of the post-arrival life.

Regarding intragenerational mobility, Trejo declared, "We know a lot about this. We have actually pretty good data." Data sources well-suited for studying the U.S. experiences of immigrants include the Current Population Survey (CPS), American Community Survey (ACS), and SIPP. These surveys provide information on immigrants' country of origin, time of arrival in the United States, and, to some extent via either synthetic cohorts or longitudinal data, ultimate outcomes. These datasets can also be matched with administrative data, such as SSA earnings records, to examine immigrant integration. Trejo noted that more information would be helpful, particularly further detail about initial and ongoing immigration status, refugee status, and legal status. This is especially so because much immigration to the United States is undocumented, and legal status may impact assimilation and integration. Thus, while much is known about immigrants' intragenerational mobility, Trejo concluded that "there are ways we could improve on the data we currently collect in the CPS or the ACS."

Intergenerational Mobility: The Second Generation

Trejo then turned to issues of intergenerational mobility, from the first to the second generation, or from immigrants themselves to their children. Historically, much of the mobility achieved by immigrant families has occurred across rather than within generations. Earlier waves of unskilled migrants in the late 19th century and early 20th century enjoyed substantial progress, enabling their descendants to join the economic mainstream within two or three generations. Trejo noted the considerable skepticism

regarding whether this pattern of assimilation and adaptation will operate similarly for more recent immigrants and their descendants.

Trejo first paused to comment on the relative difficulty of using the term "generation" for this population, as tidy distinctions can be blurred by interethnic and cross-generational unions as well as selective attrition of ethnic self-identification. As an example of the difficulty, Trejo posed a hypothetical marriage between a Mexican and a Salvadoran. Is their child a second-generation Mexican or a second-generation Salvadoran? Similarly, what if a new Mexican immigrant marries a second-generation Mexican? Selective ethnic attrition complicates the picture further, as self-identification is subjective and the "ethnic leakage" differs across different subgroups.

Trejo observed that, given these challenges to even identifying the second generation, much less measuring their mobility; it would be useful to have better data. He recommended the increased collection of information that will allow more precise identification of the descendants of immigrants, such as the countries of birth not only of the respondent, but also of that individual's parents and grandparents.

Trejo then focused on whether the second and even third generations are catching up with the native population. According to Trejo, "It is hard to say with the data that we have now. It is hard to measure that precisely." He turned to available data on educational attainment, as educational attainment is a key determinant of economic success, health, and life opportunities.

Those data indicate that by the second generation, most contemporary immigrant groups meet or exceed the U.S. average educational attainment. As Trejo described the pattern, "They have caught up." The notable exception to this pattern is several Hispanic groups: Central Americans (although not Cubans or South Americans), Dominicans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans. What are the sources of the pattern? Trejo noted that first-generation immigrants from these countries tend to have particularly low levels of education, so "it is not surprising that their kids have not completely caught up by the second generation." Perhaps these groups will catch up in the third generation—but studying that would require data on the third generation, which involves other challenges.

Third Generation: Selective Ethnic Attrition

Identifying third-generation immigrants generally involves studying people born in the United States, with both parents born in the United States but who self-identify as being Asian, Hispanic, or whatever subgroup is being examined. In this endeavor, however, Trejos noted, "It turns out we are missing people. And if we are missing people in large

numbers and if the people we are missing have different education levels or different outcomes than the people we are not missing, then that causes problems." Trejo suggested that this problem of selective and distorting gaps in data on third-generation immigrants is much like the selective and distorting gaps in data on African Americans, due to mass incarceration.

Trejo explored further the problems that arise from depending on subjective responses regarding ethnic identity. He shared data that Hispanic self-identification drops significantly from the first- to third-generation immigrants. Without the microdata to assess the ancestry of respondents, it is difficult to determine precisely how much ethnic attrition has occurred, or whether it is selective. Trejo noted that intermarriage is probably a fundamental source of ethnic attrition. For example, individuals with Hispanic ancestry from both parents are almost assured of identifying as Hispanic, while among individuals with Hispanic ancestry from just one parent, only 20 percent identify as Hispanic.

The selectivity of ethnic attrition is also important to study. To illustrate, Trejo shared data on educational attainment of second-generation adults by ethnic identification. For people with a parent born in India and who self-identify as Asian, the average educational attainment is an impressive 16.7 years of schooling. For people with a parent born in India who do not self-identify as Asian, the average educational attainment is a far lower 15.2 years of schooling. For studying mobility, Trejo affirmed, "That matters. It pulls down the overall average."

The distortions of selective ethnic attrition are even greater in the third generation and with increasing intermarriage. Interestingly, Trejo noted, "The selection process works differently for Hispanics than for Asians." Among Hispanics, higher educated and higher earning individuals are apt to intermarry. It is their children who cease to self-identify as Hispanic. Thus, Trejo noted, "It is their kids that are missing. In some sense, we are understating the attainment of the third generation for Hispanics because we are missing some of the kids from the advantaged families." Among Asians, the pattern appears to be the opposite, as "it is the higher educated families that are able to transmit their ethnicity or their ethnic identification to their kids." Difficulties in identifying the third generation, particularly in the face of selective ethnic attrition, may generate measurement biases that vary across national origin groups in direction as well as magnitude and distort inferences about mobility of immigrants' descendants.

For meeting these challenges, Trejo suggested gathering more information to objectively identify the third generation by asking about the birth countries of grandparents. Oversampling of Hispanics is also advisable, as this is a particularly important group for understanding the long-term mobility of immigrant populations.

POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION AND PARTICIPATION

Henry Brady of the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, was lead author on a paper prepared for the workshop that drew heavily on joint work with Kay Schlozman and Sidney Verba. Brady gave the workshop presentation, "Political Reproduction from Generation to Generation," based on that paper, advocating that intergenerational patterns in political participation and party identification be included in the study of social mobility.

The question raised is whether and how intergenerational transfers of economic resources and social capital help to reproduce and perpetuate unequal patterns of political authority. Brady began by observing that many forms of political participation are stratified by socioeconomic standing. This includes giving campaign donations, attending campaign meetings, and doing campaign work. Offering data on political input from 1990, Brady observed that while the top quintile contributes 70 percent of campaign donations, conducts 30 percent of campaign hours worked, and casts 26 percent of votes, the lowest quintile contributes less than 1 percent of campaign donations, conducts 11 percent of campaign hours worked, and casts 14 percent of votes. "This just proves," Brady observed, "we have inequality in the political realm." Furthermore, presenting data back to 1960, Brady affirmed that stratification of political participation has remained persistent.

Brady suggested that political authority "should be measured by party involvement, political participation, civic engagement, and things like that." He further argued that authority is an important dimension of stratification because socioeconomic rigidities "might persist partly because there are governmental structures in place which fail to ameliorate them. They fail to ameliorate them because political participation is highly stratified and therefore the folks who would benefit from amelioration are not participating in politics. And the folks who benefit from the status quo are participating in politics. That may be part of the problem."

Brady acknowledged that political authority may be distinctive because it deals with public goods, rather than such private goods as income, occupation, prestige, and education. It nonetheless merits attention within the study of mobility. In Brady's view, the intergenerational transmission of party identification and levels of political participation has been studied almost exclusively from a cultural perspective. According to Brady, "It is time we put that behind us and look at different ways of thinking about this problem."

Brady identified two different dimensions worthy of study: content of political identification (designated by identification as Democrat, Independent, or Republican; or liberal or conservative) and intensity of political participation (measured by hours worked in a campaign, amount of

money donated, and frequency of voting). Both the direction of party identification and the intensity of political participation are relevant to Brady, as "it turns out it is the interaction of those two things that really have an impact on politics."

For measuring intensity of political participation and civic engagement, Brady proposed four areas of inquiry: attitudes toward parties, the exercise of political voice via various acts, engagement in civil society, and possessing political social networks—that is, as Brady described it, "having the ability to influence politics because you have a social network that will get you to somebody important."

Brady shared questions that have been used in surveys conducted by the American National Election Studies and in CPS supplements addressing these areas of inquiry. Questions regarding the exercise of political voice addressed voting, campaign work and contributions, serving on local boards, and protesting or demonstrating. Questions regarding civic engagement concerned volunteer activities and participation in organizations, such as school and community groups, neighborhood watch groups, civic organizations (such as American Legion or Lions Club), sports clubs, or religious organizations. Questions regarding political social networks inquired about personal acquaintance with various office holders and media actors.

Brady then noted findings that party identification remains highly stable across a lifetime, as do levels of political participation. Significant evidence also exists for intergenerational transmission of party identification and levels of political participation, although the exact size of the correlation and the degree to which it is mediated by socioeconomic status is unclear. For studying the intergenerational transmission of political identification and levels of participation, and how that transmission might strengthen patterns of unequal political authority, Brady said he would like further data on parents' political identification and participation, as well as family and peer influences.

4

Implications for a New Study

In addition to broad perspectives on the concept of social mobility and a focused consideration of an array of measurement issues, the workshop also gave attention to possible data sources and the design of a new survey. These topics were the subject of both detailed presentations and general discussion.

DATA SOURCES

Possible data sources for a new study of social mobility include follow-ups of existing surveys, linkages to administrative records, and a new stand-alone survey. The different instruments have different strengths and weaknesses and also might be used in combination. John Robert Warren of the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota reviewed many options in his presentation, "Potential Data Sources for a New Study of Social Mobility in the United States." Warren began provocatively by presuming that "the implicit sentiment in the room is that we need to do a completely new data collection. My prior is that that would be the last option. It is the most expensive and in many ways least practical. If we can avoid it, it would be nice to avoid."

To weigh the different possible data sources for a new study of social mobility, Warren first elaborated eight parameters by which to evaluate existing and potential surveys. He then reviewed nine smaller surveys, two large surveys, linkages to administrative records, and the possibility of a new stand-alone survey, assessing costs and benefits along the param-

eters. In closing, he considered several possible ways forward, sparking further discussion of data sources.

Parameters for Evaluating Data Sources

Before considering the advantages and disadvantages of each data source, Warren first elaborated the eight parameters he used in reaching his assessments.

(1) *Population coverage and definition.* Warren's first parameter was population coverage. In particular, it would be important to include the incarcerated and other institutionalized populations who are generally omitted in surveys. Warren acknowledged that this lacuna "may or may not be a problem with respect to biasing estimates and social mobility, but it is certainly something that is stratified by social and economic characteristics." With the tremendous increase in incarceration rates, this has also changed over time, particularly since the 1962 and 1973 Occupational Changes in a Generation (OCG) Surveys.

Regarding definition of the population to be studied, Warren considered whether samples of different generations would be representative. In studying how social origins affect people's adult outcomes, a cross-section of American adults could be designated Generation 0 (G0). This sample would be representative. Observations would be made of the attributes of their parents, in Generation-1 (G-1). People included in G-1 would not be a representative cross-section of Americans, as those with several surviving children would be overrepresented, while those without children or whose children did not survive would be underrepresented. Observations would also be made of the offspring of G0, designated Generation +1 (G+1). These individuals would also not be a representative cross-section of Americans. Specifically, immigrants would be excluded. If the goal of a new study of mobility is to determine "how the distribution of social and economic position changes across generations more broadly," then proper samples of both the parent and offspring generations would be required.

(2) *Sample size.* Regarding sample size for a study of social mobility, Warren argued that it should be large enough to support separate analyses of social and demographic subgroups. This might include analysis by nativity, ethnicity, or geographical location. Sufficiently large samples of smaller population subgroups might be obtained by strategic oversampling or by use of large-scale administrative data.

(3) *Topical coverage.* Warren quickly reviewed a series of topics to be covered in a survey of social mobility. These began with the core topics of education, occupation, and income for parents and children. Race, gender, ethnicity, and immigration history would also be relevant. His

list continued with family structure, health, incarceration experiences, neighborhood characteristics, school quality, voting behavior, and a host of possible mediating factors.

(4) *Temporal issues.* As it has been several decades since the last major study of mobility, and because there have been such profound social, demographic, and economic changes since then, it is essential that a new study capture characteristics of the contemporary United States, Warren suggested. He also said it would be valuable to study more than one birth cohort so as to make valid comparisons over time.

(5) *Spatial issues.* Another parameter on which to evaluate existing or potential survey instruments is their inclusion of spatial issues. Understanding the impact of place on mobility would entail attention to neighborhoods, states, and other geographic aggregations, urban, rural, and suburban. Previous work has considered the ways in which rural or farm residence, life in segregated neighborhoods in central cities, and residence in particular geographic regions of the country have shaped opportunity structures within and across generations. The design of a new study of mobility should permit such geographic comparisons. Spatial data would also facilitate cross-national comparisons.

(6) *Sustainability.* Declaring "I don't want to come back here in 10 or 20 years and do this all over again," Warren proposed that "it would be ideal if whatever we decide to do is the first iteration of an ongoing process of monitoring social mobility in the United States."

(7) *Financial expense.* In order to address relative financial costs, Warren laid out several options. Other than a new stand-alone data collection effort, options include supplements to ongoing data collection efforts or utilizing administrative record data. These latter approaches would compromise control over specification of study population, design of sample, execution of fieldwork, focus, and breadth of measures. As Warren observed, "Some trade-off is always involved."

Warren considered the trade-offs among these different options along three dimensions. For financial cost, "the most expensive option is to collect new data, and the least expensive option is administrative record data, with supplementing existing surveys in the middle." Regarding sample size, a new survey would probably study a much smaller sample, administrative record data would have the largest sample size, and supplementing existing surveys is again in the middle. Regarding topical coverage, a new survey might be quite restricted due to costs, and administrative data includes a very narrow range of topics. On this dimension, supplementing existing surveys might yield the greatest gain. Assessing the cost of the data requires looking at these multiple dimensions simultaneously, and "each of these kinds of options has different pluses and minuses."

(8) *Privacy and data access.* Warren's final parameter addressed respondents' privacy and researchers' access. Again, the issues differ across the different kinds of data sources reviewed. "In general," Warren summarized, "the more sensitive the data we collect, the greater the risk to the subjects, and thus the greater restrictions on its use. If we have data that are perfect in every respect, but it takes each of us three years to get permission to analyze it, and only a small number of people can ever analyze it, that is not every useful."

Warren then used these eight parameters to evaluate nine existing smaller-scale surveys, two larger surveys, linkages with administrative record data, and prospectively a new stand-alone survey.

Nine Existing Smaller-Scale Surveys

Nine existing surveys might conceivably become the basis of a new study of social mobility. Warren qualified that these surveys are deemed "small" only as compared to the much larger sample sizes of such instruments as the Current Population Survey (CPS) or the American Community Survey (ACS). The nine existing smaller-scale surveys are

1. General Social Survey (GSS),
2. Health and Retirement Study (HRS),
3. High School and Beyond,
4. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health,
5. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979,
6. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997,
7. Panel Study of Income Dynamics,
8. Project Talent, and
9. Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).

"The real question," as Warren framed it, "is whether it would be worth basing a new study of social mobility on an extension of one of these smaller-scale surveys." To consider this question, Warren utilized the eight parameters.

With respect to population and definition, GSS, SIPP, and HRS are samples of household-based adults, and thus exclude institutionalized adults. All nine surveys are representative only of a cross-section of Americans in G0. People in G-1 are not observed at all if they have no surviving children, and are overrepresented if they have multiple surviving children. Immigrants are not included in G+1. Addressing sample size, Warren noted that none of the surveys are large enough to permit detailed subgroup analysis.

For topical coverage, all of the surveys include observations of education, occupation, and income, although not for all three generations. To varying degrees, they include information about other social and economic circumstances. Turning to temporal concerns, Warren noted that any new study would ideally include people from a wide range of birth cohorts, including very recent ones. In this regard, the GSS and planned 2014 SIPP panel are most promising. All nine of the surveys include geographical information but generally permit access to that information only through restricted data use agreements. To varying degrees, they facilitate cross-national comparisons.

In assessing sustainability, Warren asserted that only two of the existing surveys, GSS and SIPP, are suitable targets of opportunity. They are likely to continue to include new cross-sections of Americans born across multiple birth cohorts and could perhaps become vehicles to monitor social mobility in the United States into the future. Warren acknowledged that the financial expense is difficult to gauge but considered it safe to assume that adding topical modules on existing ongoing surveys (SIPP, GSS) would be far less expensive than fielding large new data collection efforts. On the last parameter of privacy and data access, Warren confirmed that data from each of these nine surveys are generally freely available, except for the detailed geographical information available only through restricted use data agreements.

Warren's "bottom line" regarding the nine existing smaller-scale surveys is that GSS and SIPP would be the best candidates to serve as the basis for a new study of social and economic mobility. Nonetheless, the topical content of both is limited, neither includes institutionalized people, and neither allows for research on how distributions of social and economic resources are reproduced or transformed across generations by demographic processes.

Two Larger-Scale Surveys

Warren then turned his attention to existing larger-scale surveys—the CPS and ACS—to consider whether they might be data sources for a new study of social mobility.

The CPS was the basis for the earlier OCG I and II Surveys. Could the CPS serve this purpose once again? Warren proposed two different designs that might enable the CPS to be used for a new study. One, which he termed OCG III, would field a follow-on survey after the CPS and have a sample size of about 65,000. The other option, a February Supplement to the CPS, would be a new topical supplement as part of the CPS's rotation of topical supplements and would have a sample size of about 140,000.

With reference to the eight parameters identified, Warren considered

these designs. He made some distinctions between the two. For example, OCG III would probably have greater flexibility for expanding topical coverage than the February Supplement. Overall, Warren found several benefits to using either of these designs. In his assessment, either would produce new data resources for studying contemporary mobility patterns. As CPS is an ongoing effort, either design could be implemented just once or repeatedly, going forward. On a per respondent basis, either design would also probably be less expensive than collecting new data in a stand-alone survey. Warren further presumed that an initiative connected to a federal survey would probably generate higher response rates than a stand-alone survey conducted by another entity, while acknowledging this was an empirical question.

Either of the CPS designs would also have shortcomings. Their topical content would be limited compared to what might be included in a new survey. Both would continue to exclude institutionalized people. Finally, neither would allow for research on how distributions of social and economic resources are reproduced or transformed across generations by demographic processes.

The other large-scale existing survey that Warren considered as the basis for a new study of social mobility is ACS. Using this instrument would involve conducting a separate post-ACS follow-up interview with a sample of ACS respondents, following the precedent of the National Survey of College Graduates but asking questions related to mobility rather than education. The ACS could also be linked to administrative data records.

With reference to the eight parameters, Warren noted that although population coverage rates in the ACS are not perfect, the survey does include institutionalized people. Because the ACS is so large, the follow-up would be of a subsample and selective oversampling of particular groups of interest would be feasible. The topical content of ACS is already broad for generation G0; the subsequent survey could expand the list of topics and gather parallel information for G-1 and G+1. The design would provide data on a contemporary cross-section of Americans. Currently, publicly available ACS data include information on respondents' state, metropolitan area, and urban, rural, or suburban residence; more detailed data are made available for restricted use.

Considering sustainability, Warren noted the ACS will continue into the foreseeable future, and the follow-up design might be repeated more than once. Because the follow-up design would benefit from pre-existing ACS sampling and fieldwork operations, per respondent cost would be lower than in a new stand-alone survey. The large ACS sample would also allow for efficient subsampling. Once steps are taken to prevent disclosure, ACS data are routinely made available to the public. Warren

further noted that, because of its affiliation with a federal government agency, the follow-up design might elicit a higher response rate than a new stand-alone survey.

Warren's "bottom line" is that a follow-up survey to the ACS would produce new data on contemporary mobility patterns, at lower cost than a new stand-alone survey. However, the content would be limited compared to what might be covered in a new stand-alone survey, and would still not allow for research on how distributions of social and economic resources are reproduced or transformed across generations by demographic processes.

Administrative Record Data

Warren then considered the value of linkages to administrative record data, such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Social Security Administration (SSA), the National Death Index, the National Student Clearing House, and similar sources. Warren began by sharing his "bias" that such data could be useful as a supplement to, but would never be a substitute for, a full stand-alone study of social mobility. That said, he nonetheless gave consideration to a hypothetical that he referred to as "the Warren/Grodsky Scheme," which would link 1990 U.S. Census records to ACS records for a particular birth cohort, particularly the cohort born between 1974 and 1981 who lived in the United States in 1990.

Warren proceeded to evaluate this prospect along the eight parameters, generating a final summation of its strengths and weaknesses. In his view, a linked 1990 Census-ACS design would produce rich data on contemporary mobility patterns for one cohort. It would comprise a richer set of measures than the alternatives, include institutionalized people, have a large sample, and be relatively inexpensive. However, he noted, the topical content would be limited in comparison to a new survey. Because of privacy concerns, restrictions on using the data would be so high as to make analysis very difficult or perhaps impossible. Finally, he said, "it is not clear that one could ever get permission to do it."

New Stand-Alone Survey

The last option Warren considered is a stand-alone survey, a new data collection operation that would make possible an updated assessment of rates and patterns of social mobility in the United States. The new data could potentially be linked to a range of administrative data from the SSA, IRS, Census Bureau, as well as such records as school transcripts. Multiple modes would be utilized in fielding the survey.

As Warren considered the eight parameters for this option, he offered

several observations. The sample could be representative of a cross-section of people in G0, G-1, and G+1. People in institutions could be included (although cost might limit coverage). The survey would ask about people in G0, their parents' generation, and their children's generation, and perhaps also information about their siblings, spouses, and spouse's parents and cousins. Although the sample size would be more modest than that of CPS and ACS, strategic oversampling would be possible. A comprehensive range of topics could be covered, including about factors hypothesized to serve as mechanisms in the process of status attainment. The survey would generate a representative cross-section of people in the United States and could collect substantial geographic details. It could be designed to be replicated, rather than a unique undertaking. The costs of the endeavor would undoubtedly be high. With the exception of linkages to administrative records, it should not raise privacy concerns that would result in restricted access to the data.

How does this option compare to the others? Warren said he sees many benefits. These include the wide range of measures, and even the possibility of exploring hypothetical mechanisms of status attainment. Linkages to administrative data are also valuable, as that would validate and enrich the new data. Further, the possibility of employing strategic sampling designs would expand the type of analyses that could be performed on the data. Warren also noted that, from the outset, the survey could be designed so as to facilitate comparative work over time and across countries.

The option also presents a number of shortcomings, chief among which is cost. On a per respondent basis, a stand-alone survey is certainly the most expensive way to pursue a new study of social mobility. The costs would result in trade-offs in sample size and content coverage. In Warren's view, "The cost would have real implications for how sophisticated and complicated and rich the data would be." He also presumed that response rates to such a survey would probably be lower than for a follow-up connected to an ongoing federal survey.

Possible Next Steps

Having evaluated these different data sources along the eight parameters and weighed their costs and benefits, Warren said he was left with a clear conclusion: "There is no perfect solution." Nonetheless, for pursuing a new study of social mobility, Warren proceeded to identify five "especially promising options" which, he noted, were not mutually exclusive. Warren also shared some of his preferences regarding these options, leading to further discussion.

1. GSS: Investment in the GSS could be continued. This might include improved occupation coding, more detailed information on occupations, better measures of income and wealth of G0, and better measures of the attributes of parent generations. Warren proposed, "Perhaps it is time to field a new topical module like the 1994 GSS topical module on social mobility."
2. SIPP: Relevant content could be added to the new SIPP panel. This would include social and economic attributes of a respondent's parents but would require improving measures relative to the 1986 and 1988 SIPP Module. Warren suggested, "I think this is worth at least thinking about."
3. CPS: The CPS could be supplemented via either the OCG III or the February Supplement, as discussed above.
4. ACS: Surveys could supplement or link the ACS. Follow-up surveys and linkages of the ACS to administrative data records are discussed above.
5. Collect new data: A new stand-alone survey, despite its many virtues, would probably be so costly as to limit both topical coverage and size and complexity of sample.

In Warren's judgment, the best choices among these five options would be to continue to invest in the GSS and to supplement or link the ACS. He expressed particular support for the latter option. Workshop discussion ensued regarding the reliability of data from the CPS as compared to the ACS. One participant pointed out that the GSS is an individual rather than a household survey, which makes it less suited to the purpose of a new social mobility study. The tremendous value of administrative data was also emphasized, particularly for capturing intergenerational correlations. Warren concurred and noted that, among existing surveys, "the ACS would be the easiest to link to IRS or Social Security records because the data are collected in a way that allows for this." In response to a question about data accessibility, Warren clarified that, in contrast to linking two federally mandated data sources, a follow-up survey of people already in the ACS "does not raise disclosure issues."

DATA GATHERING

Any new data-gathering effort on social mobility will face a number of design issues involving selection of competing measures, timeframes, units of analysis, and overarching goals. Florencia Torche of New York University engaged these issues in her presentation, "How Social Mobility Is Modeled and Measured." Torche began by confirming that social mobility "captures the strength and pattern of association between the socioeconomic standing of parents and their adult children." She said she

would cover the following questions: How and when is that association best measured? What are some implications of different measurements? What is the appropriate unit of analysis? How would data-gathering efforts differ depending on whether the goal of the study is to describe or to explain mobility?

Measures and Their Implications

Socioeconomic standing is captured by different measures, including social class, occupational status, annual earnings, hourly wage, and total family income. Before exploring these measures, Torche affirmed, "The strength and the pattern of association and the way we measure depend on the measure of socioeconomic standing used. This is not irrelevant because the findings vary depending on the measure of socioeconomic standing and the measure of association."

Torche reviewed some standard measures of socioeconomic standing with attention to their reliability and validity. Occupation-based measures of socioeconomic standing include social class and occupational status. Social class is captured by variables, such as job title, employment status, supervisory status, number of supervised workers, firm size, and industry. According to Torche, retrospective report of parental information by adult children is considered reliable. The relevant variable for occupational status is job title; retrospective report of parental information by adult children is also considered reliable. Another approach to assessing socioeconomic standing utilizes economic measures. These include individual earnings, hourly wages, and total family income (with due attention to defining the family unit). For these, retrospective report by adult children is inadequate. Other more reliable routes to information on parental economic standing include panel surveys and merging of datasets.

Occupation-based measures of mobility and economic measures of mobility may yield different conclusions. The discrepancies become particularly evident in country rankings. While the United States consistently ranks as the least mobile of advanced countries in terms of economic mobility as measured by earnings or income, it exhibits considerably more fluidity in terms of class mobility as measured by occupation. "The discrepancy," Torche observed, "to some extent is expected. We are not measuring the same thing. Occupation is not the same as income or earnings." The different indicators measure different aspects of well-being although, Torche noted, the implicit assumption is that they are capturing the same latent concept. Yet, she acknowledged, "to the extent that they capture different phenomena, we have not agreed on what these phenomena are."

Other discrepancies may be introduced by the timing at which measures are undertaken. For occupation, a single point-in-time measure may be sufficient or perhaps two time-point measures. This is insufficient for capturing permanent well-being when measuring earnings, income, and wage.

Generally, measures of both parents' and children's economic standing are sought at around age 40, in order to minimize age-related errors in the variables and lifecycle bias. Additional retrospective measures of parental earnings and income are problematic, as retrospective reports of these indicators by adult children are not reliable. To Torche, "This causes the first conundrum. Do we want to do something retrospective and just drop economic measures of well-being, or do we want to collect very high-quality measures of parental economic weight? The data requirements are different. The costs are different. If economic mobility will be addressed in an optimal manner, that means we need to collect parental economic information." Torche mentioned alternative methodological strategies for meeting the challenge, including the two-sample instrumental variable, synthetic parental cohorts, direct-merging of datasets, and panel surveys.

The chosen unit of analysis also has implications for data collection. Torche observed that "from a class perspective, we tend to claim that the family is the unit of stratification, but because of data constraints, we have mostly measured the class position by the main head of household, although that is starting to change." The unit of analysis needs reconsideration. Torche suggested reviewing whether the relevant unit of analysis should be the individual, and attributes of individuals aggregated, or whether more thought should be given to "family-level variables."

While declaring that she lacked an answer to that question, Torche did offer some observations about data collection in this regard. She affirmed the need to measure the individual socioeconomic attributes of each member of the household in both generations—"admittedly a very tall data requirement." She said it is also imperative to collect detailed information about family structure and change over time that involves generations. Torche foresees, at the least, the need for a clear family roster in both generations. As an aside, Torche proposed measuring sibling correlations as another route to studying "the extent to which factors associated with social origins, not only parental standing, shape how well you do in life."

Describing, Explaining, and Monitoring Mobility

Torche acknowledged the plethora of measures that are relevant to the study of mobility as possible "mediators" of that process. These may be helpful in explaining the mechanisms of mobility. However, Torche cautioned, when a great many indirect effects are added to structural

equation models, they do not necessarily capture the causal effects of interest. "That is the way it is," Torche lamented, although analysts may be "very quick to move to the language of causation." While the "attempt to understand mechanisms in mobility is certainly extremely important," Torche questioned whether it is wise "to keep adding mediators to tell a story that cannot be anything close to causal."

Perhaps, she proposed, it is better to stick to a clear task of describing, rather than explaining, the phenomenon of social mobility. That is, it might be "better to spend energy measuring less and just humbly staying at the bivariate level but measuring it well." Acknowledging that the optimal would be to pursue both goals of describing and explaining mobility, Torche nonetheless recognized necessary trade-offs between the two goals in terms of data gathering. Choices need to made regarding "what and how often and how to ask a question." Furthermore, "the data requirements are very different in terms of variable need and sample size and even representativeness of sample." Decisions on data gathering will be different depending on the goal pursued.

Torche also considered the possibility of monitoring mobility as the goal of a new study. This would put resources toward tracking the mobility of subgroups of interest, such as particular minority groups or immigrants. The data requirements for this task would again be distinct from those of either explanation or overall description. Torche noted that standard approaches to capture mobility across the population fail to capture distinctions across subgroups with respect to the entire distribution.

The theme of description and explanation as different possible goals of a new study of social mobility sparked further discussion among participants at the close of the workshop. Chandra Muller cautioned against a too-ambitious study aimed at explaining mobility, noting, "In my experience in putting together studies, starting big initially is often grounds for not succeeding in the long run." She proposed starting small, "piggybacking" on existing studies to "eke out" whatever was possible, and then addressing new topics incrementally.

Sean Reardon similarly expressed support for "doing one thing really well and that is being able to describe the trends in social mobility over time in some simple way." Reardon acknowledged that while he would like to have explanations and mechanisms, straightforward description, with "some secondary kind of nuanced description" of subpopulations, might be the better way to proceed. Reardon thought it reasonable to presume that "lots of people will think about ways to use the data to help test some explanatory theories," but that it would be unwise "to build a design to test some subset of possible explanatory theories partially and maybe not do a great job of doing the straight-up stylized facts descrip-

tive stuff that is at the core." Reardon concluded, "I want to make sure we keep our eye on that ball."

Robert Mare cast doubt on this approach because, he said, simple description may not be so simple when the object to be described is itself complex and changing. Mare reminded the workshop of the many changes in social institutions that had been discussed, and the lack of clarity over even the proper unit of analysis. To Mare, "It all depends on what we think mobility is," and "if we are not measuring this over appropriate units, then we do not have anything."

Michael Hout recalled that the first point of emphasis of his presentation was that social mobility is in many ways the wrong object of study and that the focus should instead be on the transmission of social circumstances across generations—that is, "are people today doing better or worse than their families when they were growing up?" Making any progress on that question requires truly wrestling with "What do we mean by family and what do we mean by worse?"

Appendix A

Workshop Agenda

Workshop on Developing a New National Survey on Social Mobility

June 10, 2013
The National Academies
Keck Center, Room 201
500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

9:00 a.m. **Welcome and Meeting Objectives** ***(breakfast available at 8:30 a.m.)***
David Grusky and *Matthew Snipp, Cochairs*

9:15 a.m. **Evolution of This Project**
Robert Hauser, Executive Director, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

9:30 a.m. **What Is Known About Social Mobility?**
Michael Hout, University of California, Berkeley

10:00 a.m. **Panel: The End of the American Dream?: Why Social Mobility May Have Changed in the 21st Century**
David Grusky, Stanford University
Matthew Snipp, Stanford University
Timothy Smeeding, University of Wisconsin–Madison

10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:45 a.m. **How Social Mobility Is Modeled and Measured**
Florencia Torche, New York University

11:15 a.m. **Evaluation of Data Sources**
Rob Warren, University of Minnesota

12:00 p.m. **Questions/Discussion**

12:15 p.m. **Working Lunch** Keck Cafeteria 3rd Floor Atrium

1:15 p.m. **Discussion of Specific Topics to Be Considered in a New Survey**

Education, Skill, and Personality
Chandra Muller, University of Texas at Austin

Labor Market Complexities
Bhash Mazumder, Federal Reserve Board of Chicago

Immigrant Issues
Steve Trejo, University of Texas at Austin

Family and Demographic Changes
Laura Tach, Cornell University

Measuring Social Networks Beyond the Immediate Family
Robert Mare, University of California, Los Angeles

Political and Civic Participation
Henry Brady, University of California, Berkeley

3:00 p.m. **Break**

3:15 p.m. **Open Discussion: Next Steps in Measuring Social Mobility**
David Grusky and *Matthew Snipp, Cochairs*

5:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

Appendix B

Participants

Megan Andrew, University of Notre Dame
Henry Brady, University of California, Berkeley
Diana Elliott, The Pew Charitable Trusts
David Grusky, Stanford University
Robert Hauser, National Research Council
Howard Hogan, U.S. Census Bureau
Harry Holzer, Georgetown University
Michael Hout, New York University
David Johnson, U.S. Census Bureau
Thomas Kecskemethy, American Academy of Political and Social Science
Robert Mare, University of California, Los Angeles
Bhash Mazumder, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Sara McLanahan, Princeton University
Chandra Muller, University of Texas at Austin
Thomas Nardone, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Natalie Nielsen, National Research Council
Fabian Pfeffer, University of Michigan
Thomas Plewes, National Research Council
Robert Putnam, Harvard University
Sean Reardon, Stanford University
Esha Sinha, National Research Council
Timothy Smeeding, University of Wisconsin–Madison
C. Matthew Snipp, Stanford University
Laura Tach, Cornell University
William Thompson, U.S. Office of Management and Budget

Florencia Torche, New York University
Steve Trejo, University of Texas at Austin
Rob Warren, University of Minnesota
James Wilson, Russell Sage Foundation
Tia Zeno, U.S. Office of Management and Budget

Appendix C

Biographical Sketches of Steering Committee Members and Presenters

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

David B. Grusky (*Cochair*) is professor of sociology at Stanford University, director of the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, founder and coeditor of *Pathways Magazine*, and coeditor of the Stanford University Press Social Inequality Series. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, recipient of the 2004 Max Weber Award, founder of the Cornell University Center for the Study of Inequality, and a former Presidential Young Investigator. His recent books include *Occupy the Future* (2012), *The New Gilded Age* (2012), *The Great Recession* (2011), *The Inequality Reader* (2011), *The Inequality Puzzle* (2010), *Social Stratification* (2008), *Poverty and Inequality* (2006), *Mobility and Inequality* (2006), *Occupational Ghettos* (2004), *The Declining Significance of Gender?* (2006), and *Classic Readings in Race, Class, and Gender* (2006). He holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

C. Matthew Snipp (*Cochair*) is the Burnet C. and Mildred Finley Wohlford professor of humanities and sciences in the Department of Sociology at Stanford University. He is also the director for the Institute for Research in the Social Science's Secure Data Center and formerly directed Stanford's Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity. Before moving to Stanford in 1996, he was a professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He has been a research fellow at the U.S. Bureau of the Census and a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. He has published three books and more than 70 articles

and book chapters on demography, economic development, poverty, and unemployment. His current research and writing deals with the methodology of racial measurement, changes in the social and economic well-being of American ethnic minorities, and American Indian education. For nearly 10 years, he served as an appointed member of the Census Bureau's Racial and Ethnic Advisory Committee. He also has been involved with several advisory working groups evaluating the 2000 census and three National Academy of Sciences panels focused on the 2010 and 2020 censuses. He has served as a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics, as well as an elected member of the Council of the Inter-University Consortium of Political and Social Research. He is currently serving on the National Institute of Child Health and Development's Population Science Subcommittee. Snipp holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Henry E. Brady is dean of the Goldman School of Public Policy and Class of 1941 Monroe Deutsch professor of political science and public policy at the University of California, Berkeley. He has written on electoral politics and political participation, social welfare policy, political polling, and statistical methodology, and has worked for the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and other organizations in Washington, DC. He has previously served as president of the American Political Science Association, president of the Political Methodology Society of the American Political Science Association, and director of the University of California's Survey Research Center. He is coauthor of *Letting the People Decide: Dynamics of a Canadian Election* (1992), *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (1995), *Expensive Children in Poor Families: The Intersection of Childhood Disability and Welfare* (2000), and *Counting All the Votes: The Performance of Voting Technology in the United States* (2001). He is coeditor of *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (2004), *Capturing Campaign Effects* (2006), and the *Handbook of Political Methodology* (2008). Brady has also authored numerous articles on political participation, political methodology, the dynamics of public opinion, and other topics. He was elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003 and fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2006. He received his Ph.D. in economics and political science from MIT in 1980.

Michael Hout is the Natalie Cohen professor of sociology and demography at the University of California, Berkeley. He teaches courses on inequality, data analysis, and population. In his research, he uses demographic methods to study social change in inequality, religion, and politics. Publications that exemplify this approach include, with Claude

Fischer, *Century of Difference* (2006); with Andrew Greeley, *The Truth About Conservative Christians* (2006); "How Class Works: Subjective Aspects of Class Since the 1970s" in *Social Class: How Does It Work?,* edited by Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley (2008); "The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change" (*American Journal of Sociology,* September 2001); and "How 4 Million Irish Immigrants Came to Be 40 Million Irish Americans" (with Josh Goldstein, *American Sociological Review,* April 1994). Other previous books are *Following in Father's Footsteps: Social Mobility in Ireland* (1989) and, with five Berkeley colleagues, *Inequality by Design* (1996). His honors include election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1997, National Academy of Sciences in 2003, and American Philosophical Society in 2006. He currently chairs the Demography Department, the Graduate Group in Sociology and Demography, and the Berkeley Population Center. Before moving to Berkeley in 1985, he taught at the University of Arizona. He holds a Ph.D. from Indiana University in sociology.

Robert D. Mare is a distinguished professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he has been a member of the faculty since 1998. At UCLA, he served as the founding director of the California Center for Population Research from 1998 to 2003. For 20 years prior to that, he was on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His areas of research expertise include social stratification, demography, and quantitative research methods with a focus on the connection between demographic processes and social inequality. He has conducted studies on inequality in educational opportunities, social mobility, youth unemployment, socioeconomic differences in mortality, residential segregation by income and race, residential mobility, marriage markets, family structure and poverty, migration, and statistical methods. Mare has been a Guggenheim fellow, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and a winner of the American Sociological Association Methodology Section's Paul F. Lazarsfeld Award. He has been a visiting professor at Tel Aviv University, visiting senior social scientist at RAND, visiting fellow at New College, Oxford, and former editor of *Demography*. In 2010, he was president of the Population Association of America. From 2006 to 2010, he was president of the Research Committee on Social Stratification of the International Sociological Association. In 2010, he was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the National Academy of Sciences. He has a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Michigan.

Sara S. McLanahan is the William S. Tod professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University. She is the founding director of the Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing and a prin-

cipal investigator of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. She is editor-in-chief of the *Future of Children*. Her research interests include family demography, poverty and inequality, and social policy. She has written five books, including *Fathers Under Fire* (1998), *Social Policies for Children* (1996), *Growing Up with a Single Parent* (1994), *Child Support and Child Wellbeing* (1994), and *Single Mothers and Their Children: A New American Dilemma* (1986), and more than 100 scholarly articles. McLanahan is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. She is a past-president of the Population Association of America and has served on the boards of the American Sociological Association, Population Association of America, and the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council's Board on Children, Youth, and Families. She currently serves on the boards of the William T. Grant Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation. She has a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Texas at Austin.
University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Sean Reardon is professor of education and (by courtesy) sociology at Stanford University. He specializes in research on the effects of educational policy on educational and social inequality; on the causes, patterns, trends, and consequences of social and educational inequality; and in applied statistical methods for educational research. His primary research examines the relative contribution of family, school, and neighborhood environments to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic inequality (including measurement of segregation and achievement gaps), and methods of causal inference in educational and social science research. He teaches graduate courses in applied statistical methods, with a particular emphasis on the application of experimental and quasi-experimental methods to the investigation of issues of educational policy and practice. He has been a recipient of a William T. Grant Foundation Scholar Award, a Carnegie Scholar Award, and a National Academy of Education Postdoctoral Fellowship. He received his doctorate in education from Harvard University.

Timothy M. (Tim) Smeeding is the arts and sciences distinguished professor of public affairs and economics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and director of the Institute for Research on Poverty. Recent publications include *From Parents to Children*, coedited with John Ermisch and Markus Jantti (2012); *The American Welfare State: Laggard or Leader?* with Irv Garfinkel and Lee Rainwater (2010); and *Persistence, Privilege, and Parenting: The Comparative Study of Intergenerational Mobility*, with Robert Erikson and Markus Jantti (2011). His recent work has been on national and cross-national studies of mobility across generations, inequality of income consumption and wealth, and the measurement of poverty in

a national and cross-national context. He advises several national and international research projects on intergenerational mobility, economic inequality, and public policy. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the

PRESENTERS

Bhashkar "Bhash" Mazumder is a senior economist in the Economic Research Department and executive director of the Chicago Census Research Data Center at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. As a member of the microeconomic team, Mazumder conducts research in labor economics, education, and health. His recent research has focused on the long-term effects of poor health early in life. Mazumder previously worked at the Conference Board in New York and oversaw the transfer of the leading economic indicators from the U.S. Commerce Department to The Conference Board. Mazumder received a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Chandra L. Muller is professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin. Her current research is on how family, community, education policy, and health behaviors shape education and the transition to adulthood. In particular, she focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) preparation and careers. Of primary interest is the diversity in experiences and disparities according to gender, race and ethnicity, and social class, as well as disability, immigration, or language minority status. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago.

Laura Tach is assistant professor of policy analysis and management and a sociologist who studies how social policies intersect with demographic and economic changes in American society. Prior to joining the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University, she was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation postdoctoral scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. Her current research examines how social policies affect urban poverty and family life. She received her Ph.D. in sociology and social policy at Harvard University.

Florencia Torche is associate professor of sociology at New York University (NYU), faculty affiliate at the Steinhardt School of Education, and research affiliate at InSPIRES, NYU School of Medicine. Her scholarship examines inequality dynamics—how inequality persists over the life course and across generations. She has studied inequality of educational opportunity, intergenerational mobility, wealth disparities, assortative mating, and the early emergence of disadvantage. Much of her research uses an international comparative perspective. She has conducted several

surveys, including the first national surveys of social mobility in Chile and in Mexico. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Columbia University.

Stephen Trejo is associate professor of economics and associate director of the Population Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. His research focuses on public policy issues, including overtime pay regulation, the labor market experiences of immigrants, and obstacles to the economic progress of minority groups. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago.

John Robert Warren is professor of sociology and director of the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota. His recent work investigates the impact of state-mandated high school exit examinations on high school dropout rates, student academic achievement, and post-secondary labor market outcomes. In other work, he is investigating the degree to which associations between socioeconomic status and health can be attributed to the characteristics and conditions of paid employment. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1998.

COMMITTEE ON POPULATION

The Committee on Population was established by the National Research Council in 1983 to bring the knowledge and methods of the population sciences to bear on major issues of science and public policy. The committee's mission is to provide unbiased, credible advice to public and private sector based on the most reliable population research. These include studies of the size, territorial distribution, and composition of population, changes therein, and the components of such changes, which include fertility, mortality, migration, and social mobility, and, also, of the social, economic, psychological, and biological determinants and consequences of those states and changes. Committee activities include research syntheses, agenda setting, convening, and communication. The committee also fosters communication between policy makers and researchers in multiple disciplines and policy makers in different countries.

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL STATISTICS

The Committee on National Statistics was established in 1972 at the National Academies to improve the statistical methods and information on which public policy decisions are based. The committee carries out studies, workshops, and other activities to foster better measures and fuller understanding of the economy, the environment, public health, crime, education, immigration, poverty, welfare, and other public policy issues. It also evaluates ongoing statistical programs and tracks the statistical policy and coordinating activities of the federal government, serving a unique role at the intersection of statistics and public policy. The committee's work is supported by a consortium of federal agencies through a National Science Foundation grant.