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Introduction

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Behind this book lies a dream, which we have shared for many years: a dream of a renewed study of social mobility rising to grapple with the astonishing diversity and complexity of its fundamental theme. We are convinced that such a renewal must depend upon a broadening of methodological and theoretical perspectives. The closely linked case studies which we present here are demonstrations of the richness of insights which new approaches to social mobility can bring.

Social mobility processes are integral to the very metabolism and core regulation of societies, both to their continuity and change over time. It is through such processes that basic social structures of class, status, and situs (branches of industry) are reproduced or transformed, emerge or disappear; that societies themselves move forward, consolidate or splinter, that institutions and enterprises recruit, that families launch their children, that individuals imagine and seek personal fulfilment in their lives. These processes are complex because they operate within unstable frameworks, and because they are intrinsically reflexive. All these levels interact between each other and none of them are constant. The incessant thrust of technological and economic change continually creates new types of work and opportunity in some places, while wiping out entire industries and ways of life in others. Just as marriages break and firms go bankrupt, so whole political societies may be recast or split through revolutions, wars, or the dissolution of empires. Individuals swim in waters now benign, now turbulent. Some may flourish in an inherited family niche, while others will starve in the same way. Against those who succeed or fail through transmission, we need to set those who choose to migrate in search of a better life, those who move to escape an economic trap, or those driven to adapt

by the turmoil of revolution, fleeing from persecution or war, and death.

Change originates not only from above, but equally from below, through the initiatives of masses of people. Through having fewer children or more, or through moving, voting with their feet, they can transform the structures of social space or demography.[1] At any given moment the range of possibilities for a given social group, or family, or individual, are limited: shaped negatively by restrictions such as lack of economic or cultural resources but also by group prejudice and privilege, positively by the opportunities provided by the local and national economy, access to education, means of travel and social imagination. Most people take the structure they see as given and circulate within it, filling a space; but a sufficient minority contribute to the momentum of change by either creating new spaces within the old structures, or moving. The changing roles of women and men, the world-wide currents of emigration and immigration, are all witnesses to the widely dispersed human drive towards a better life. And in the development of this drive, the engine of social change and individual fulfilment—or disappointment—the primary location of generation and transmission lies within families, which provide the social and emotional launch pads for individual take-off.[2]

At all social levels—from politics and economics to local and family relationships—social competition and rivalry intertwine with mutuality and obligation. And because all these levels interlock and interact and yet are propelled by their own semi-independent logic, the outcomes must always be uncertain. Equally important, the strategies which succeed in a particular historical time and social context cannot be assured to work in another. Individuals, families, and organizations struggle after ways of surviving or succeeding in social worlds which are always evolving: to create limited spheres of order in the perpetual shadow of turbulence or even chaos. This fundamental instability of the human social universe means that laws of social mobility would themselves be timebound illusions. The understandings which we can reach of the social meanings and experiences of mobility, and the complexity of processes which underlie it, cannot pretend to universality: their validity depends upon how clearly they reflect their historical moment.

THE CLASSICS OF SOCIOLOGY

If we look back to the classic texts of the founding fathers of sociology, it is immediately evident that within the broad canvasses which they drew, most of them saw the characterization of social mobility processes, whether of individuals or whole groups in competition, as crucial to understanding the evolution of societies.

Thus when de Tocqueville depicted early 19th-century American society, he highlighted its lack of an aristocratic tradition on the European model, and how its heavy emphasis on equality of opportunity and equity in reward made for a special dynamism, by allowing its most energetic citizens to win prosperity unchecked by entrenched privileges. For him individualism and the aspiration to upward mobility were at the centre of the American cultural model, which he rightly perceived as different from the European ones. In the same spirit, when de Tocqueville compared the fates of England and France at the end of the 18th century, he pointed to the openness of the English aristocracy, so that successful commoners could readily be co-opted to its ranks through ennoblement, thus greatly reducing the chances of social revolution, in contrast to the rigidity of the French aristocracy which prepared the ground for the French revolution.[3] For Pareto too the relative openness of the upper classes was a central issue. He devoted his main book to the battling for social power between élites and counter-élites, and concluded that a core process in European societies was the 'circulation of elites'.[4]

The same theme fascinated Sorokin, whose magnificently ambitious *Social Mobility* is the last and most explicitly titled of these classic texts. It centres on the recurrent competition between social groups, but again especially between élites and counter-élites. Sorokin draws up his interpretations through examining a remarkably wide range of historical cases, from the skill of India's Brahmins in holding on to their power through centuries to the less lucky fates of some of the European aristocracies, including that of Russia, whose catastrophic demise and fall he himself witnessed in 1917.[5]

Durkheim, whose social theory was dominated by a conservative sense of the need for social order and integration, tended to view social mobility as a disruptive rather than an adaptive process.[6]

Subsequently Parsons similarly focused on the social mechanisms of systemic integration, continuity and stability rather than change, and he also showed too little sense of the historical dimension. On the other hand, in terms of understanding the connections between different social levels, and especially the importance of the institution of the family, his contribution was important and far-sighted.[7]

The opposite view was of course taken by Marx, who saw social conflict as the principal dynamic of change. Yet when re-examined more closely, his perspective has more in common with the other founding sociologists than might be first assumed. For if there is a vital thread connecting these earlier classic pieces of sociological thinking, it is certainly not simply social mobility in the narrower sense of individual movement which the term is widely taken to imply today. The issue can be better characterized as the continual process of 'generalised social competition' through which individuals, families, and social groups all fight for their share of resources and their spot in the sun. For instance the proletarian revolution for which Marx called would have resulted in a clear and dramatic process of collective social mobility, upwards for the proletariat, downwards for the bourgeoisie: and it is the anticipation of such fates that fuelled the dynamic of class struggle—especially the constant struggle of the capitalist class against the formation of the proletariat into a class for itself.[8]

Seen in this way, Marx's thinking confronts many of the same issues. For instance he was well aware of the openness of American society, and indeed foresaw the possibility that through a combination of continuing immigration, followed by upward mobility often through small independent enterprise, the American working class, even if swelling in numbers, might fail to consolidate into a class on European lines, because too few families stayed in it for long enough. A working class with such a fluidity was inimical to solidarity.[9]

Driven by close observation to a reluctant admiration of the English bourgeoisie's entrepreneurial spirit and the French bourgeoisie's political courage, Marx found much less to admire in the German middle ranks which he found wanting in both economic initiative and political audacity. Weber, however, was much less pessimistic about them. His *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is a brilliant case study of how cultural values contributed crucially to the historic upward mobility of Calvinists and other Protestant groups as economically successful entrepreneurs. Weber also shared with Simmel—in his *Philosophy of Money*—an understanding of the emergence of a modern urban society reshaped by markets, creating a free-for-all space in which individuals, bringing initially drastically unequal sets of resources and thus of life chances, nevertheless competed for goods and money, for social recognition and political power. Both Weber and Simmel sought to identify the games and rules of this generalized competition, whose outcome was and still is the sharply differentiated life trajectories which mark out mobility.[10]

Social mobility processes in the broader sense were thus a concern in one way or another of all the founding fathers of sociology. Most of them also showed a clear understanding of the importance of specific historical contexts. It is true that too many of them tried to push their interpretations into social equivalents of natural laws. But above all, for us their strength is the breadth and diversity of perspective within which they situated their discussions of social competition and mobility: and in this they exemplify the broader spirit in which social mobility can still be studied.

THE SURVEY PARADIGM

Whereas the early classics of sociology set the social-historical processes of social mobility and social dynamics at the heart of their thinking, today social mobility research has become a highly specialized and technical field. Over the last forty years it has been entirely reshaped by the adoption and development of the survey as its almost exclusive method. Increasingly, as its methodological sophistication has intensified, social mobility research has narrowed its interests to hypotheses which a survey can test, at the price of cutting itself off from the observation of other dimensions of mobility processes and from the development of sociological and historical thinking as a whole.

The attraction of the survey for the study of social mobility is obvious. It is indeed an excellent tool for describing statistically the relative sizes of human flows between social classes or strata. The patterns of these intergenerational flows show the enormous impact of economic development (structural mobility) and the relatively low level of downward mobility flows. These patterns can

also be tested against an ideal society of equal opportunity, to provide a mathematical measure of social justice.[11] They can also be compared across nations, as Goldthorpe and Erikson have done with great mastery in *The Constant Flux*.[12] It is also possible to test, across large numbers of individual cases, whether for example a mother's or father's occupation or education or a son's own education or first job are likely, *on average*, to weigh more or less in the son's main occupation.[13] Quantitative description and testing clearly has a crucial role in social mobility research.

The problems start when the survey, instead of being conceived as one way of looking at the flows of men and women in social space, comes to be regarded as the *only* scientific approach to the study of social mobility processes. For the technical requirements of the survey tend to dictate substantive choices and narrow down the range of observed phenomena—as for example in the repeated focus on men rather than women. There is far more to social mobility processes than is ever likely to catch the unaided survey eye, as we believe this book demonstrates. Indeed at their narrowest, statistical studies of social mobility resemble the observation of a carnival through a keyhole.

To some extent the limitations of the survey perspective are ascribable to a narrowness of theoretical perspective, for stratification has been the only major theoretical field with which mobility research normally interacts. But our belief is that the difficulty lies with the intrinsic logic of the method itself as much as with its theoretical orientation. Certainly, as Mike Savage argues in Chapter 10, the survey method can and should be modified in important respects; and there are very few aspects of human life which are absolutely out of range of the survey. But the survey method is best used to do what it can do most efficiently, rather than in aiming at reducing other methods, with different strengths, to its own ways of seeing. It is condemned to remain blind to core aspects of the very processes which it aims to investigate; which is why the approach of case study—which, conversely, also has its own built-in limits—is vital for the full development of the field.

The strength of the survey method derives from its ability to describe social phenomena in terms of numbers, and to generalize its empirical findings to the whole population which it investigates through the technique of the representative sample of individuals. From this sample each interviewee must answer to the same basic list of closed questions. The built-in limitations which ensue are characteristic weaknesses of the survey method: the obverse side of these same strengths.[14]

One basic corollary of analysing through numbers is that argument and description become dominated by the language of variables, and give little space to matters which cannot be adequately conveyed through that language. Thus life stories show the centrality of subjective perceptions and evaluations in shaping the life choices. They are redolent with descriptions of feeling and experience of relationships with significant others, with interpretations of turning-points, with influences which were rejected rather than followed, with dreams of lives that might have been. They also reveal the crucial importance of local contexts, local structures of opportunities, and local games of competition. The essential point is not whether or not some of these matters are quantifiable, but that they are much more clearly expressed in words. The language of words is infinitely vaster, richer, and more capable of subtler, particular variation; while the attraction of mathematics is precisely in its simplifying abstraction. The strength of one cannot be reduced to the strength of the other: they flourish best in their own ways, distinct but complementary.

Another weakness of the survey approach to social mobility research derives from the unit of observation: the randomly-chosen individual, whom the analysis tends to treat as an isolate. Yet individuals are embedded within family, occupational, and local contexts, and mobility is as much a matter of family praxis as individual agency, for it is families which produce and rear individuals with specific characteristics and social skills, endowing them with their original moral and psychic energy and with economic, cultural, and relational resources. Equally, as Schumpeter once remarked, social—as opposed to occupational—status is primarily carried by families rather than by individuals.[15]

It would of course be possible for surveys to base their samples on households or—as in our own Anglo-French research[16]—on the core kin of families. This has the immediate advantage of restoring women to full view, not only as workers but as sisters, spouses, mothers, aunts, and grandmothers shaping and influencing the lives of their kin. But in order fully to grasp the processes and relationships underlying the pathways of the individual members of each kinship group, it becomes necessary to build up an in-depth case

history of each family: and this runs in direct contradiction with the survey's basic requirement to standardize the data.

On top of this, social mobility surveys are founded not only on individuals, but on individuals expected to have occupations, because occupations are readily classified numerically. Until very recently this meant men only: a severe limitation which we discuss at length in Chapter 2. But defining an individual's status by occupation alone has other equally serious consequences. It focuses the study on the lifetime career at work, which has been a predominantly male view of mobility, even if possibly less so today. And in terms of occupations alone, the social mobility survey is bound to find the positions of the self-employed, the unemployed, the housewife, and the retired, difficult to grasp. There is an additional difficulty with élites, that their numbers are impractically small to study as part of a general survey: although clearly the extent to which they are open or closed is crucial to understanding social mobility in any society. At the other end of the spectrum, because of falling interview response rates it is in any case increasingly difficult to register the poorest, whose lives have fallen apart, and the trajectories of those who die early are inevitably missing. So too are those of emigrants from the society; while immigrants can again often be only very crudely categorized in terms of origin. Effectively the demands of the random sample predicate as the basic unit of analysis a type of long-term employed man who, with the spread of unemployment and part-time casual work, seems increasingly a symbol of a passing historical era.[17]

In most social mobility research the complexity of social mobility patterns are also smothered over by focusing on the single comparison between father's main occupation in the past and son's occupation at the present. Both the time period and definition of the father's occupation are open to doubt, and it must also be uncertain whether the son has reached his main occupation, or will move upward or downward in the future. Work histories, by contrast, not only show that the patterns of movement are indeed more elaborate, but provide the material from which mobility processes can be analysed. Yet although this criticism has been recognized by the leading mobility survey researchers, the collection and analysis of sets of (standardized) work histories is only beginning.[18] Besides, as we shall see below in the example of Nicole-Drancourt's research,

it seems that the necessity to standardize work histories prevents the identification of their contrasted inner logics.

This unconscious pressure from the technical requirements of the sample to focus on an ideal type of mobility through long-term employment is further reinforced by the strait-jacket which the need for standardization imposes on the interview itself. The questions must be predetermined, so that there is no space for unexpected variety; and they have to be designed to apply as far as possible to every interviewee. Thus typically the same closed questions will be posed to an unskilled worker and a businessman, to a farmer, a civil servant, or a manager in private enterprise—to mention only male cases. Yet these different occupations do not share life chances or careers with the same kinds of logic: the path of a dependent employee on the secondary labour market is not shaped in the same way as that of the self-employed on the stepping-stones to economic accumulation; the manager in private enterprise does not advance through the same criteria as the civil servant in local or national government. The one feature which they all have in common is some initial educational achievement, which is readily measurable, and which influences their starting-place in the labour market: and hence the focus of surveys on education. But this in itself is hardly enough to explain the transition from education into work, and certainly not to grasp the other processes shaping achievement within given occupations. If we look, for example, at small business owners, we could hardly explain the chances of their success, survival, or failure through their earlier educational qualifications. We would need to know much more specifically what counts in their own world, especially if they are immigrants.

These dangers are made worse by the way in which the conversion of the words spoken in the questionnaire's interview into quantifiable formulae suppresses the interviewee's attempts at describing the complexities of her/his situation. While in-depth life historians have wrestled with the problems of the limitations, malleability, and subjectivity of memory which full interview texts present, social mobility researchers have swept such problems under the carpet.[19] In fact, even in terms of occupational level there are striking differences between contemporary statistics based on interviews with employees and employers for the same industries, with employees reporting much higher levels of skills.[20] When the

time dimension inherent in memory of earlier occupations is added, it is clear that social mobility data are likely to incorporate their own degree of idealization: yet there has been scant recognition of this issue.

If memory is one of the unseen ghosts haunting the social mobility table, history itself is another. Each survey operates from a given moment in time, and life chances differ greatly in the same place in different times: as Tamara Hareven's study of a New England mill town, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, so vividly demonstrates.[21] There is a sense too in which the survey is premissed on an unmentioned history of nation-wide cultural homogenization through the penetration of markets right through the geographical space, internal migrations, mass education, mass consumption, and mass culture.[22] It is even possible to infer from the rigid applications of the same measures between countries with sharply different cultures and economies that the essentials of this historic homogenization are now assumed to be world-wide. But global marketization has certainly not created world-wide social homogeneity: indeed, in terms of living standards alone, it seems on the contrary to work towards exaggerating difference. In the real world, even nearby communities—as we shall see from our Tuscan examples in Chapter 6—can have very different mobility patterns. Helmut Kaeble concluded from his comparative study of social mobility in Europe and America that 'the variety between American cities is so extensive that no consistent American pattern emerges', and the variety in Europe was almost as striking.[23] If father–son occupational relationships can be shown to have similar statistical patterns in France and the former Soviet Union, it does not mean that the same processes underlie the figures. And if the tables for, say, Britain and Japan turn out to be closely similar, we would be a good deal wiser to assume that the tables are missing something vital rather than concluding that the processes of mobility in the two societies are essentially identical.

The technical logic of the survey, in short, randomizes and standardizes at a heavy cost, pressing the mobility researcher to wrest individuals from their family and their local context, to pass over their own descriptions, interpretations, and explanations of their experience and actions, to suppress problems of memory and subjectivity, to minimize the effects of spatial social difference and movement, to focus on occupation as the sum of social status, and

to further marginalize those on the margins of the economy. In so doing, it distances itself from issues which are potentially of prime interest for sociological analysis. To point to these built-in limitations does not mean at all that survey research is basically flawed: it is obviously the very best tool to achieve statistical description; but it cannot do everything.

There are indeed imaginable projects which the survey method alone could not possibly study fully. If, for example, we wanted to examine the Jews driven to the holocaust extermination camps in terms of mobility, we could only interview the small minority who survived; and in understanding what they did after the camps, how they migrated and found their feet in new societies, and the kinds of energy which they transmitted to their children, we would need to hear their harrowing experiences, know of their continuing nightmares, sense the ambivalence of their need to transmit and the complex quality of relationships in survivor families. All this would be intrinsic to the mobility processes of the group. It could only be grasped by listening acutely to words.

The repertoire of methods of observations must be enlarged so as to enable sociologists to observe all kinds of relevant processes, and not only those that a survey can record.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The alternative approaches presented in this book depend on the use of case studies of families or communities. We have tested them extensively over the years and we believe they possess considerable potentialities for the renewal of research on social mobility processes.

The case study approach can be applied to a wide range of 'objects': we include here one chapter which compares three different local communities, another one studying the mobility of migrants, and a third on dreams of careers which never happened; others would have been possible, focusing, for example, on institutions actively shaping destinies, what Sorokin referred to as 'testing, selecting, and distributing agencies'. Above all, however, we have here case studies of families in a transgenerational perspective. (By 'families' we do not, of course, mean the narrow nuclear family, but cross-generational kin networks of any shape linked by

descent or marriage.) This is because we see a family's relationships and inner dynamics as crucial in orienting the lives of its members; it mediates the impact on individuals of social class, schools and education, housing, migration, and labour markets, and therefore also provides an especially effective viewing-point for observing their interaction. Working with family histories, we have indeed often realized how the distance between micro and macro social phenomena is much shorter than was usually thought until the gap began to be narrowed by Giddens's effort to incorporate the self and intimacy as elements in social structures.[24]

While the case study approach enables us readily to encompass underlying processes and the particularity of contexts which the survey discards from its field of observation, such an intensive approach cannot at the same time claim to statistical representativity. The road to generalization will therefore be a different one, although—especially if we bear in mind how few of the earlier classics used statistics—not necessarily less fruitful. Against the well-entrenched dogmas of the scientistic paradigm, let us simply recall that in the natural sciences the principal means for establishing causality is the controlled experiment, rather than the survey based on a representative sample. The experiment is one of the key instruments of psychology too, but it is (fortunately) impracticable for other social scientists. In some ways the comparative case histories used in both economics and sociology have often been seen as substituting for the lack of controlled experiment. Besides, in contrast to most scientific experimentation, the objects of investigation can themselves speak about why they behave as they do. As Weber had well understood, the subjective dimension of the socio-historical world, which underlies not only perceptions and representations but also agency, needs to be seized and utilized. While we cannot expect ordinary men and women to offer us full-blown sociological explanations of their behaviour, they are also certainly not cultural dopes—and indeed the poorer they are the shrewder they need to become to survive at all. We see their interpretations as vital first steps to our own: first- and second-order hermeneutics respectively. They are the best short cut towards grasping the local rules of the games of generalized competition.

The primary goal of the case study approach is not to prove, but to make sense of the phenomena by proposing interpretations.

Case studies undoubtedly allow us to develop rich hypotheses about mobility processes; thus they are in harmony both with the classics of sociology, and with its contemporary 'interpretive turn'.[25]

Interpretations are not mere speculations; they must be grounded in observations. But, as any historian knows well, any interpretation will include wider hypotheses that cannot be directly tested; rather it is by confronting various interpretations about one and the same set of socio-historical phenomena that the best interpretations stand out, and that the others get discarded.

Our approach in constructing case histories is to collect life stories. For us the crucial features of the life-story method are that the interviews are in-depth, no more than semi-structured, allowing informants full room to convey their own experience and views; and that the analysis is based on the interview text. It is important to distinguish this method from that of the life-history or event-history questionnaire which has been used in some recent surveys. While this is certainly an interesting development which opens up new possibilities for mutually complementary work, the two types of interview are not substitutable.

In this volume we use life stories as evidence of facts (situations, contexts, conducts) along with perceptions and evaluations. Since the mid-1970s, the 'life-story approach' has developed fast in many countries, most notably France, England, Germany, and Italy. The bibliographies of review papers now comprise hundreds of references. Within this whole literature one can discover two main orientations. The first approach, particularly strong in Germany, focuses primarily on the subjective meanings that a particular person gives to her/his past and present life; it is almost a form of social psychology. The second, which is the approach used by most of the researchers in this volume, takes interviewees as informants about the various contexts which shaped their life: thus they are used as sources to reveal what happened to the interviewee, how and why it happened, what he/she felt about it, and how he/she reacted to it or 'proacted' to realize his/her projects. This orientation thus aims at gathering both factual and interpretative information, in the same way that ethnographers learn about a micro-culture by asking their informants not only to explain but also to describe it as factually as possible.

This second orientation has proved its validity and its ability to

generalize, provided enough testimonies are collected and confronted, provided also that 'negative cases' potentially disproving the researcher's emerging interpretation have been actively searched for. When new testimonies merely confirm such interpretations, through recurrence of descriptions of the same situations, actions, relationships, and processes, it may be taken that the point of saturation has been reached, thus validating the interpretation. It is through such a process that, for instance, the hidden mechanisms and dynamics that make for the survival of the artisanal bakery in France have been discovered: eighty life stories with bakery workers, bakers and bakers' wives were enough to grasp the inner logics of a branch of industry which employs 200,000 persons.[26]

Let us take another example, which concerns entry into the labour markets. The great difficulties that young people, especially those with low credentials, have to find stable jobs in a context of high unemployment and underemployment have generated in France as elsewhere a flow of statistical studies, transversal at first and later on longitudinal, designed so as to map up the occupational careers of individuals. But these studies remain unable to explain what distinguishes those young men and women that prove able to stay employed and those who fail to do so: neither the structural approaches, which focus on the characteristics of labour markets (supply of jobs), nor the strategic ones, which focus on the objective characteristics of young people (credentials, previous job history) succeed in identifying causal processes which could explain the observed patterns. Survey data analysis failed to discover discriminating background variables to explain why some of these young people could find jobs and stay employed—usually through high turnover—most of the time, while others experienced long periods of unemployment.

Aware of this failure, the sociologist Nicole-Drancourt has designed a research project through which, in the French provincial town of Chalon-sur-Saône, the occupational trajectories of 115 young people aged 30, who had all left the school system with low credentials more than ten years earlier, were first recorded with life-history questionnaires, and a subsample of 52 were then reinterviewed at length.[27] The resulting in-depth life stories led to the identification of a specific logic, generated through the interactions of local job opportunities, gender, the differing habitus of

young people, and their varying paces of maturation into adulthood.

Four distinct groups stand out. First, a strong minority of the young women are eager to work as soon as they leave school, and neither early pregnancies nor initially poor jobs seem able to deter them from looking for employment. They tend to choose male partners with lower levels of credentials and skills, who will therefore be unable to force them to stay at home after childbirth—practically all these women had become mothers by the age of 20. They move from one job to another, get training on the job, learn the rules of the place, and eventually, thanks to their eagerness to work and flexibility, end up in stable occupations.

Second, the larger group of women mess up their entry to the labour market for a variety of reasons: school failures, early maternities, failed love affairs, and/or identity problems. For a while they become unemployed housewives; but this helps them to gain maturity, and to develop strategies to go back to the labour market. At age 30, they are all employed, but in precarious and less convenient jobs (shifts, night-time, week-ends).

Among young men, the dichotomy is between those who are eager to work no matter what, and those who are looking for the proper job. The former use all their network links to move from one job to another, exploring the planet of work until they find the right place to land. The latter usually have utopian aspirations; when confronted with the realities of poor work they show very little psychic resilience and may prefer to stop working for weeks, months, or even years, indulging in sports, music, or whatever. Paternity does not seem to help them feel more reponsible. Their quest for identity lasts for years and may lead them into marginality and exclusion; more often however, a slow process of maturation and adjustment of aspirations to actual opportunities eventually leads them to reject their previous amateurism and stabilize their life course in their late twenties.

Thus besides gender, which reflects the existing gender division of labour, it is the relation to work and to the self that seems discriminating; and the latter appears connected to the experiences of early socialization.

One of the most striking conclusions of this research is that what statisticians, economists, and sociologists alike would define as objective resources (human capital, opportunities offered by local

labour markets) and constraints (financial and moral obligations to make a living) are so much mediated by the *perceptions* young people have of them that they remain ineffective and almost unreal as such. Situations which would appear highly similar to the outsider are perceived very differently by various young people, depending on their relation to work and to themselves.

In terms of quantification, fifty-two young people from a provincial French town do not seem to count for much. But their stories tell much more of the connections between different spheres of their lives than the bare statistics could possibly convey. They generate interpretations which would be worth following in say Bavaria, Sicily, the English Midlands, or Detroit, as well as other regions of France itself, helping to elucidate the effects of different national institutional arrangements and local contexts. The two methods, surveys and case studies, could then move forward in mutual support.

We can indeed be even more precise about the respective virtues of the two kinds of life-history instruments, the life-history questionnaire and the life story, for there have been projects using them both. In a national French study of how people overcome crises such as unemployment, divorce, accidents, or deaths within their families, event-history questionnaires including some open-ended questions were used with the whole sample, and a sub-sample of thirty was reinterviewed with in-depth life-story interviews. Comparing the two forms of evidence, the researchers concluded that the in-depth interviews were both more subjective and more 'objective' (or rather, more factually informative) than the answers to the questionnaires; and indeed, that the subjective–objective dichotomy was itself highly misleading.[28] With the questionnaires it was possible to glimpse informants trying to give fragments of explanation in the small space allowed by the open-ended questions. But when given a full chance to explain particular events in their lives in the in-depth interviews, the same respondents were able to develop much more coherent descriptions of the context of the event, the complexities of their situation arising from constraints and from previous commitments, the influence of their relationships with others, their perception of alternative courses and their hopes at that time, and the reasons why they chose one course rather than another. They thus not only explained the meaning which the event had for them, but provided the missing contextual information for why they reacted to it as they did. Such

descriptions cannot pretend to encompass all the relevant causal factors, if only because not all could be visible to the subject: but they are indeed more informative and accurate precisely because they allow much more space for the expression of the interviewee's subjectivity. Statistics can rely on the virtue of the representative sample; but only case studies allow us to reach in-depth, to descriptions of complex situations and conducts, and beyond that to the level of social processes underlying them.

Life stories bring home the complexity of the sequences of cause and effect in human lives. In choosing particular courses of action, structural constraints such as economic needs interact with value orientations, moral obligations, self-determined goals, and the individual's own perception of the situation and choices ahead. The actor's subjectivity, and the subjectivity of others in close relationship, are part of the objective situation, and in a crisis may pull in the opposite direction to more material factors. While some of these factors are relatively stable, others, such as accident or illness, while logically explicable in themselves, impinge on individual lives in an unpredictably random way, above all in terms of precise timing. Chance indeed must be part of even a fully determined world as soon as independent tracks of causation cross each other. A whole life may be reshaped by a minor illness at a crucial turning-point, or by an unexpected encounter leading to a job offer. Thus the more closely one examines the sequence of events in a life, the further one is forced to move away from the linear causalities on which quantitative data analysis is grounded.

We may illustrate the point from the family story which we analyse in Chapter 3. In a small French town at the turn of the century a young man from a peasant background has set up his own bakery, which becomes his life project. He has four sons. The first two learn the trade with him, and it is assumed than when the father eventually retires one will take over the bakery. The two younger sons have been kept longer at school and move on to become bank clerks. But then the First World War strikes. One after the other, all three older sons are drafted to the army. By 1918 two have been killed, and the third has returned home as a broken man. The father then asks the fourth son to abandon his promising and enjoyable job in the bank and to join him in the baker's shop. The son has little choice: he is faced not only with the economic needs of his family, but also with a special moral obligation, because he was spared the horrors of war, to show as much courage as his

brothers. Reluctantly he joins his father to become in his turn a baker.

The causes here are multiple, and they show not only how a macro-event such as a world war can realign life courses at a micro-level, but also the centrality of moral commitments in shaping action; and beyond this, how a local system with its own self-regulating logic—here a family business, and under an authoritarian leadership—can sustain its own goals with an obstinacy against the odds, capturing the life energy of the remaining and unwilling son for itself.

This is a single story, but in terms of the nature of causality its implications are general, and replicated in many others in this volume. Years of working with life histories and family case studies have made such complex tangles of causality and self-determination familiar to us, leaving us increasingly dissatisfied with the simpler notions of causality which underlie much empirical sociology. On the one hand, the model of a social world moved by determinate laws, inspired by Newtonian physics, scarcely acknowledges the role of living, self-determined actors; while on the other the more biological Parsonian concept of such actors, whether individuals, families, or institutions, as self-regulating systems, underrates the contradictions and conflict within them and between them. Neither view could incorporate the unpredictability of history, of change over time, and its radical undermining of the social structures themselves. Some of the more recent developments in scientific thinking, such as Prigojine's chaos theory in thermo-dynamics and the open systems approach in biology, for us resonate much more closely with the open-ended world of unstable equilibrium which we discover in our case studies.[29] We sense in these theories—although this is not the place to pursue such a point—a potentially fruitful new language for the discussion of causation in sociology. But we are in no doubt that case studies, while always particular, at the same time expose very clearly the general nature of causality in the intricate interweaving of processes in mobility itself.

CASE HISTORIES OF FAMILIES

More specifically, however, given the emphasis in so many of the detailed studies in the chapters which follow, more does need to be

said here on family and intergenerational transmission. Survey research on social mobility has typically treated families as black boxes, whose inputs are a handful of variables such as father's occupation, and whose output is the occupation of the 'only child' pinpointed by the random sample. Case studies of families allow us to open those black boxes and to see what takes place inside. We can at last look at their strategic efforts, the roles played by women and men, and by different generations, in the transmission of skills and resources, ambitions and dreams, and compare such efforts at transmission in various social milieux. We can explore the relationship between early socialization and adult occupational success or failure.[30] We can track down why there might be sharp differences between the fate of different siblings; or whether it is mothers, fathers, or their interaction, whose influence is strongest in creating the family's microclimate. By relating families to their social and local contexts, which are bound to be highly differentiated by class and other macrostructural variables, we can begin to discern what kinds of games families are forced to play, and what are the unwritten rules of such games.

To make sense of such concrete observations, a rich conceptual toolbox is essential; and conversely, concrete observations seem one of the best ways to enrich it further. We have found the set of concepts developed so far by Bourdieu to deal with the process of 'reproduction' to be quite useful; in particular the distinction he proposes between three main kinds of family assets or 'capital' as he calls them: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital.[31] Concrete case studies allow us to discover still other kinds of 'capital', to understand better how all these resources are actually put to use, and in which conditions family strategies succeed or fail. For such resources are not the kind of things which can be passed on by a single act; transmissions themselves are long processes which include the preparation or 'production' of the potential receiver as well.

Indeed we conceive of families as units of production of their members' energies, or as one of us[32] has termed it in his earlier work, of 'anthroponomic production'. Anthroponomic production, which for instance transforms infants into social adults, is very specific, and as every mother or teacher knows, demands great effort. Producing people implies both nurturing their physical growth and shaping their cultural and psychic energy. Its instru-

ments are not only material resources such as housing and income, but also, for example, language, local environment, and parental time and effort in caring for children, socializing and instructing them, and developing their specific abilities and character. Because the material and cultural resources which parents have at their disposal depend heavily on class and other structural features as well as on particular family traditions, we have always to conceive 'the family' as in a plural form: families.

In the anthroponomic perspective an essential point is that families are differentiated not only by the extent of economic, cultural, relational, and other resources which are available, but also in the degree to which they exploit them. A relatively poor family may concentrate its resources on promoting the educational advancement of a selected child, while on the other hand a more favoured family may throw greater resources into immediate consumption. Each family is to an extent a particular open system, organized around its own values and priorities as well as its different material, cultural, relational, moral, and psychic resources. Hence, as mobility statistics indeed show, given levels of parental 'capital input' do not translate neatly and mechanically into given outcomes. Transmission is a subtle process which operates over a long period. As will be shown in some of the following chapters, parents cannot hand down social status to their children: they can provide them with some resources, which the children may or may not appropriate for themselves and put to effective use.

In understanding this variation a crucial role is played by the emotional and moral bonds which much more powerfully than mere instrumentality hold families together. Such bonds are always an element in family transactions, and often overwhelmingly: for example when resources are pooled to cushion a member who has collapsed or to care for a handicapped child or ageing parent. Such actions are primarily determined not by 'rational choice' or interest in a purely instrumental sense, but by the framework of moral norms, emotional bonds, and the reasons of the heart. This is an essential dimension of intergenerational relationships and transmission which has so far remained absent from the literature, including Bourdieu's extensive writings on the various forms of capital, which retain a model of man as governed by self-interest.

An interesting new perspective on this, resulting in interpretations which tally closely with our own, has very recently been

developed by Bloch and Buisson from Mauss's famous anthropological study of the gift and the obligations which follow from it.[33] They suggest that familial solidarity hinges on the intergenerational gift, the feeling of recognition and dignity as a human being that giving activates in the receiver, and the moral debt and urge to return that this feeling activates. All of us are given life by our parents, so that the process starts universally; but only some of us accept it as a gift. It is those who do so, often—but not always—because they have been sufficiently wrapped in love, who later feel the need to give back to their own children, grandchildren, and significant others the unlimited caring which they received in childhood. The nature of the gift, of parental loving and caring and recognition, helps to explain why at the extremes some adults struggle forward as ego-centred semi-isolates, while others immerse themselves in altruistic commitment to the intergenerational family network. We should add, as Thompson has shown in his comparisons between Scottish fishing districts, that different forms of parental caring and recognition can infuse whole cultures and help to shape economics at communal level too.[34]

In our own interpretation of emotional bonds, however, the theoretical perspective which has provided the most fertile ground has been the family systems approach developed in the practice of family therapy, which sees the family as an interlocking structure of intergenerational emotional relationships, each dependent on the other, so that changes in one part imply changes in another. We explain it more fully when discussing intergenerational transmission in Chapter 2. It has been particularly helpful in highlighting for us the importance of not only parental models, but also from grandparents, aunts and uncles; of the influence of rivalries between siblings; and of the extraordinary power of family 'scripts' in influencing destinies down the generations.[35]

FOLLOWING PATHWAYS

We bring together in this book a set of case studies which not only share common assumptions but also have a linked origin in a series of research projects over a long period, in which all but one of the authors have been in different ways involved.

Not all the authors of the chapters which follow share our own

theoretical perspectives. They are, however, united not only in exemplifying a qualitative approach to social mobility, but through an exchange of mutual influences in research over a long period. Daniel Bertaux, Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, and Paul Thompson were developing the life-story and oral-history methods when they met in the mid-1970s, and subsequently worked together in 1985–8 on the Anglo-French 'Families and Social Mobility' project which is described in Chapter 2. They are together responsible for half of this book. Chapters 3 and 5 also come directly from the 'Families and Social Mobility' project. In addition, Brian Elliott's project on Scottish migrants in Canada was inspired by it. Then in the early 1990s both Thompson and Bertaux responded to the new opportunities for in-depth research in linked work on transgenerational social mobility in Russian families. But while Thompson again used life-story interviews in a project with Ray Pahl,[36] Bertaux went on to develop case histories of whole families as a method for investigating social mobility, and is currently using this in research on 'One century of social mobility in Russia': of which Chapter 8 is an outcome. Rudolf Andorka's parallel chapter on Hungary is based on exactly the same method. Lastly, two other chapters derive from earlier research by Paul Thompson. His comparative study of Scottish fishing communities was the starting-point for Giovanni Contini's investigation of three Tuscan communes; while David Vincent's chapter on shadow occupations is based on a reanalysis of the national sample of oral-history interviews on 'Family Life and Work before 1918' collected by Thompson in the early 1970s.

The final chapter by Mike Savage, a methodological reflection specially commissioned for this volume, is thus the only one not arising from this group of projects. All the other chapters are directly based on research using in-depth interviews. However, it should be noticed that they also vary methodologically. Thus while all the other projects use life-story interviews concluding in the present, Thompson's early interviews for the 'Family Life and Work before 1918' project were conceived as 'oral-history' interviews, so that the narratives (although not the information on occupations) were cut short in 1918: which now seems regrettable. This project also stands out in being based on a substantial national quota sample of 444 interviews.[37] The hundred families interviewed for the 'Families and Social Mobility' project were chosen on a random sample base, thus again combining the strengths of both

qualitative and quantitative approaches, but here the unit was the family found through the middle generation informant, with an older and younger generation member of the same family also interviewed wherever possible. Subsequently, but without random sample bases, this multigenerational family approach was used by Elliott in Canada, and by Pahl and Thompson in Russia; and it has also been applied very fruitfully by Chamberlain to study West Indian families on both sides of the Atlantic.[38] With this approach, the units of information are one full interview only for each generation, although this interview will include systematic information on other members of the family. With the case histories of families used by Bertaux in Russia and Andorka in Hungary the unit becomes a family tree, entered here through a member of the younger generation, stretching back to the grandparents and including siblings, aunts, uncles. The aim is to sketch, by interviewing whoever seems most informative, not only each informant's own life story, but the destinies of all their close kin: a task which generally women informants seem to accomplish much better than men. The points of entry—young women or men—have been chosen from available random samples to ensure diversity.[39]

In terms of themes, the chapters can be conceived in pairs. Chapters 2 and 3 are both concerned with intergenerational transmission and with the roles of women in mobility. In Chapter 2, using the whole British 'Families and Social Mobility' sample, Paul Thompson explores the differences between the smoother life careers of men and the broken trajectories of women, especially through the impact of marriage. He shows how, when the full family pattern is examined, intergenerational occupational transmission can be found in four-fifths of the families, and in more than half these transmissions run over three or more generations. Moreover the transmission of women's occupations proves important not only for women but also for men. More broadly, both men and women typically find alternative occupational and personal models in their families, and their choices, as also their decisions to follow or reject parental example, are likely to be based on emotional as well as social factors. In general, however, this British sample suggests that the strength of family ties is more likely to inhibit than to encourage occupational upward mobility. The social risers come typically from small, or even broken families; and often they are migrants.

In Chapter 3 Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame ana-
lyse a single case of intergenerational transmission from the French
sample: a family from central France with a male lineage of five
generations of entrepreneurial activity, beginning as millers, mov-
ing to bakery, then to a seed and fertilizer business, with the in-
formant (a member of the fourth generation) to the sale of cattle
fodder, and finally with his son to an estate agency. Close examina-
tion of the resources passed on by one generation to the next reveal
that besides the family's slowly and painfully accumulated eco-
nomic resources, the inheritance of a local network of peasant
families as clients played a crucial role.

This case also brings home the importance of marriage. A good
working partner was essential for the survival of such small busi-
nesses. But equally interesting is the effect of the marriage of the
informant himself to a socially superior wife, which in this instance
leads to the effective social absorption of her husband and his
children into her family: the most effective upward step taken by
any of these generations.

With the next two chapters we look at some of the different kinds
of desire which underlie social mobility. In Chapter 4 David
Vincent looks at the 'shadow careers', the hopes of other occupa-
tions, expressed by British men and women born at the turn of this
century. He emphasizes the modesty and practical realism of most
people's unfulfilled dreams. It is striking, however, that this poverty
of aspiration was still more marked among women than among
men. In examining the constraints which prevented the realization
of occupational dreams he finds economic need an important factor
especially in larger families. But it appears that parents were gen-
erally a confining and conservative influence, and especially for
girls. Even when new career opportunities for women were avail-
able, parents might refuse to allow their daughters to take them up.
For such girls, the past lay like a dead hand on their prospects.
The long-lasting presence of such unfulfilled dreams even in
later life is indeed striking: as a limb which has been severed still
induces suffering, they remain integral to the personality. It is
also very likely—although Vincent was unable to check this—that
these unfulfilled dreams were projected onto the next generation,
determining the professional orientation of at least one of the
children.

In Chapter 5, Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame and Paul Thompson ex-
plore the symbolic and practical importance of housing in mobility
in Britain and France. For many families, their house was the
crucial symbol of their social standing, often over generations.
Indeed maintaining the family home could become an objective in
itself, even to the point of economic disadvantage. For others the
house could be a demonstration of upward social mobility, even if
they had remained at the same occupational level. Some used
house-moving as a deliberate step-ty-step strategy for upward
movement, both in terms of investment and social status. This
again proved often to be a transgenerational ambition. By contrast,
yet other families suffer from a rootless lack of attachment to
houses and places, or from the divisions and moves to inferior
homes which follow the break-up of marriages. This chapter also
touches particularly on the role of housing for the upper classes in
both countries: not only the ancestral country house or château, but
also the town house, and the role of second homes in sustaining
large extended family networks.

Thereafter we look further afield. In Chapters 6 and 7 we see two
aspects of the importance of place: in staying put, and in moving.
Giovanni Contini examines three Tuscan communes, a tannery
town, a knifemaking town, and a mining village. Buoyed by the
fashion for leather clothes and the highly flexible nature of its
integrated network of small firms, the tannery town still thrives.
The artisanal production of knives, by contrast, has been unable to
ward off industrial competition, leaving young people with their
best option as migration to the city periphery factories nearby. In
the third commune, once a strongly integrated mining community,
the closure of the mine has left the young of this isolated mountain
village workless and hopeless. Thus both in the past and the
present, each commune created sharply different structures of op-
portunities for its inhabitants. In the first, they had the chance of
upward mobility locally; in the second, by commuting or short
distance migration; but in the third they had no local chances at all.
This comparative study of three places within the same Italian
region vividly demonstrates the extraordinary heterogeneity of lo-
cal structures of opportunity, which surely ought to be investigated
by sociologists, yet are averaged out and thus invisible through
national surveys.

With Brian Elliott's Chapter 7 we follow a group of Scottish
migrants from Britain to western Canada. He examines the differ-
ent kinds of social resources which they brought with them, from
advice on immigration and immediate housing on arrival by kin, to

job recruitment through less direct connections, and the part played by ethnic Scottishness as a social asset. He again shows strikingly how mobility strategies are often transgenerational. He also emphasizes the importance of distinguishing the role of women from men. Women were more likely than men to bring readily transferable occupational skills, such as in nursing or secretarial work. Equally strikingly, they tended to have more effective social capital, above all because they were likely to have maintained bigger kinship networks.

The next two chapters are on Eastern Europe, and both concern the impact of political revolutions. It is paradoxical that—with the exception of Sorokin—social mobility scholars have paid little attention to the impact of revolutions on social mobility flows. Yet they are fascinating, not only because they are often brief phases of exceptionally rapid mobility, both up and down, but also because they lay bare the former arrangements for intergenerational transmission of desirable status—arrangements destined to remain as veiled as possible from public scrutiny.

In Chapter 9 Rudolf Andorka shows how in Hungary after 1945 most families were more affected through the industrial and educational changes brought by the new regime than by its politics. Upward mobility through the political system was not as common as one might have expected. Certainly some families were very badly hit for political reasons, their members suffering strong demotion, and even death or exile, earlier from the Nazis and then under the Communist regime. But if they survived this traumatic phase, in the long run they were likely to recover their social position.

In Russia, on the other hand, as Daniel Bertaux shows, the former upper and upper middle classes suffered for a much longer period after the February and October 1917 revolutions. The older generation, deprived of their financial resources and usually their homes, were reduced to the level of mere survival, fearing and frequently experiencing imprisonment, deportation, and death. In general it was uncommon for such families to recover their social position before the grandchildren's generation. The women fared somewhat better than the men, as they were considered as less dangerous and neglected. Some married into the new order. And most were able to pass on to their children some of their moral values and high culture, even though the children were at first

barred from higher education and forced instead into factory work. Most of the men's lives were more decisively destroyed; but a few of them too did eventually succeed, in part through using opportunities for 'worker' education, but most crucially through joining the Communist Party, in reinserting themselves in the upper ranks of the new social structure. They threw themselves idealistically into its work, and rose through their drive and intelligence to leadership. But in order to do so they had to learn the rules of an entirely different game of social competition: the game of politics.

Lastly, as a complement to this Introduction, in Chapter 10 Mike Savage considers some of the limitations of the survey method in mobility research, and argues for its combination with qualitative approaches. He applies to social mobility an argument for methodological flexibility which has won authoritative backing in other fields of sociological research.[40] It is in this spirit that we offer this book, in the hope that it will inspire other sociologists towards the richly revealing and highly significant findings that a broader-based approach to social mobility will enable.

NOTES

1. Paul Thompson, 'Life Histories and the Analysis of Social Change', in Daniel Bertaux (ed.), *Biography and Society* (London, 1982), 289–306.
2. Daniel Bertaux, *Destins personnels et structure de classe* (Paris, 1977).
3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J. P. Mayer (New York, 1969) (first published in French 1835); *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (New York, 1955) (first published 1856).
4. Vilfredo Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of the Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology* (Totona, 1968) (first published in Italian 1901).
5. Pitrim Sorokin, *Social Mobility* (New York, 1927).
6. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. G. Simpson (New York, 1933) (first published in French 1893).
7. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York, 1937).
8. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production (Das Kapital)*, trans. S. Moore and E. Aveling (London, 1887) (first published in German from 1867); *The Class Struggles in France, 1848–1850*, trans. H. Kuhn (New York, 1924).
9. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. M. Nikolaus (London, 1973) (written 1857–8).

10. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London, 1930) (first published in German 1904–5); *Economy and Society, an Outline of Interpretative Sociology* (New York, 1968); Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, trans. T. Bottomore and D. Frisby (Boston, 1982) (first published in German 1900).

11. Daniel Bertaux, 'Sur l'analyse des tables de mobilité sociale', *Revue française de sociologie*, X–4 (1969), 448–90; 'Nouvelles perspectives sur la mobilité sociale en France', *Quality and Quantity*, V–7 (1971), 87–129; *Destins personnels*; Rudolph Andorka, 'Mobilité sociale, développement économique et transformations socio-professionnelles de la population active en Hongrie. Vue d'ensemble 1930–1970', *Revue française de sociologie*, vol. 13, suppl. (1972), 607–29; John H. Goldthorpe *et al.*, *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Britain* (New York, 1980).

12. John Goldthorpe and Robert Erikson, *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1992), xvi–429.

13. Peter Blau and Otis D. Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure* (New York, 1967). Leonard Broom and F. Lancaster Jones, *Opportunity and Attainment in Australia* (Stanford, Calif., 1977). David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, *Opportunity and Change* (New York, 1978).

14. Daniel Bertaux, 'From Methodological Monopoly to Pluralism in the Sociology of Social Mobility', in Shirley Dex (ed.), *Life and Work History Analyses: Qualitative and Quantitative Developments* (The Sociological Review Monograph Series, 37; Routledge, London/New York, 1991), 73–92.

15. Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (Oxford, 1981).

16. See Chapter 2, note 7, for a description of this research and its sample.

17. Ray Pahl, *Divisions of Labour* (Oxford, 1984); *After Success:* Fin-de-Siècle *Anxiety and Identity* (Cambridge, 1995).

18. A. B. Sørensen, 'Theory and Methodology in Social Stratification', in U. Himmelstrand (ed.), *Sociology: From Crisis to Science?* (London, 1986). Hans-Peter Blossfeld, Alfred Hamerle, and Karl-Ulrich Mayer, *Event-History Analysis: Statistical Theory and Application* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1988). Karl-Ulrich Mayer and Nancy B. Tuma (eds), *Event-History Analysis in Life Course Research* (Madison, 1990).

19. Elliott G. Mishler, *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986); Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford, 1988); Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By* (London, 1990).

20. Paul Thompson, 'Playing at Being Skilled Men: Factory Culture and Pride in Work Skills among Coventry Car Workers', *Social History*, 13 (1988), 45–69.

21. Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time* (Cambridge, 1982); Helmut Kaeble, *Social Mobility in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Europe and America in Comparative Perspective* (Leamington, 1985); 'Eras of Social Mobility', 119–35.

22. Daniel Bertaux, 'Mobilité sociale: l'alternative', *Sociologie et sociétés*, numéro spécial *La construction des données* (Montréal, 1993), XXV, 2, 211–22; 'Families and Social Mobility: The European Experience', *Innovation*, 7 (1) (1994), 89–104.

23. Kaeble, *Social Mobility in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 'Eras of Social Mobiity', 119–35.

24. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, Calif., 1991),

25. On the case study approach, see Jacques Hamel (ed.), 'The Case Method in Sociology/La méthode de cas en sociologie', *Current Sociology*, 40 (1992). The 'case study' is, roughly speaking, another name—perhaps a more accurate one—for referring to what has been often called 'qualitative research'. Good textbook introductions to 'qualitative research' are: Anselm Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (Cambridge, 1987); or David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction* (London, 1993). The first focuses on Strauss and Glaser's 'grounded theory' approach, while the latter covers and actually synthetizes the growing body of methodological discussions around 'qualitative methods'. Neither of them however says much about working with either life stories or family histories, which seem particularly well adapted to a case study approach to social mobility processes, as we hope this volume demonstrates. On the use of life stories for sociological research, one may refer to Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford, 1978 and 1988); Daniel Bertaux (ed.), *Biography and Society* (London, 1981); Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life: An Introduction to the Problems and Literature of a Humanistic Method* (London, 1983); Norman Denzin, *Interpretive Biography* (London, 1989); Gabriele Rosenthal, 'Reconstruction of Life Stories', *The Narrative Study of Lives*, 1 (1993).

Given that the main mental block inhibiting the development of the case study approach lies in the issue of generalization, the on-going discussions about the micro–macro link are also relevant: see Jeffrey Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Neil Smelser (eds.) *The Micro–Macro Link* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987); Randall Collins, 'The Romanticism of Agency/Structure versus the Analysis of Micro/Macro', *Current Sociology*, 40 (1) (1992), 77–98.

See also Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (London, 1976) and *Central Problems in Social Theory* (London, 1979), for a conception of

sociology that, while not focusing on methods as such, implicitly restores the case study approach to full legitimacy.

26. Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, 'Artisanal Bakery in France: How it Lives and Why it Survives', in Frank Bechhofer and Brian Elliott (eds), *The Petite Bourgeoisie: Comparative Studies of the Uneasy Stratum* (London, 1981); Daniel Bertaux, 'Life Stories in the Baker's Trade', in Daniel Bertaux (ed.), *Biography and Society* (London, 1981).

27. Chantal Nicole-Drancourt, 'Mesurer l'insertion professionnelle', *Revue Française de Sociologie*, XXXV-1 (1994), 37–68; Chantal Nicole-Drancourt and Laurence Roulleau–Berger, *L'Insertion des jeunes en France* (Paris, 1995).

28. Françoise Battagliola, Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, Michelle Ferrand, and Françoise Imbert, *Dire sa vie* (Centre de Sociologie Urbaine; Paris, 1991).

29. Ilya Prigojine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (London, 1984); Edgar Morin, *La Vie de la vie* (Paris, 1980) and *The Nature of Nature* (New York, 1992).

30. Paul Thompson, *Living the Fishing* (London, 1983); 'The Family and Child-Rearing as Forces for Economic Change: Towards Fresh Approaches', *Sociology* 18 (1985), 515–29.

31. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984); *La Noblesse d'Etat: grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris, 1989).

32. Daniel Bertaux, *Destins personnels*; and 'The Anthroponomic Revolution: First Sketch of a Worldwide Process', *The Annals of the International Institute of Sociology*, IV (1994), 177–92.

33. Françoise Bloch and Monique Buisson, 'La Circulation du don', *Communications*, 59 (1994), 55–72.

34. Thompson, *Living the Fishing*.

35. A. Bentovim, G. Gorell Barnes, and A. Cooklin (eds), *Family Therapy: Complementary Frameworks of Theory and Practice* (London, 1982); Karl Menninger, *Love against Hate* (New York, 1958); G. Spark, 'Grandparents and Intergenerational Family Process', *Family Process*, 13 (1974), 225; 'The Power of Family Myths', John Bying-Hall interviewed by Paul Thompson, in Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By* (London, 1990), 216–24; Paul Thompson, 'Family Myth, Models and Denials in the Shaping of Individual Life Paths', in Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson (eds), *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths, and Memories* (International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, 2; Oxford, 1993), 13–38.

36. Ray Pahl and Paul Thompson, 'Meanings, Myths and Mystification: The Social Construction of Life Stories in Russia', in C. M. Hann (ed.), *When History Accelerates: Essays on Rapid Social Change, Complexity, and Creativity* (London, 1994), 145–77.

37. Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (London, 1975 and 1992); *The Voice of the Past*.

38. Mary Chamberlain, 'Family and Identity: Barbadian Migrants to Britain', in Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes (eds), *Migration and Identity* (International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, 3; Oxford, 1994), 119–36.

39. Daniel Bertaux, 'Familles et mobilité sociale. La méthode des généalogies sociales comparées', in Nunes de Almeida *et al.* (eds), *Familles et contextes sociaux. Les espaces et les temps de la diversité* (Lisbon, 1992), 297–317; 'Social Genealogies Commented and Compared: An Instrument for Studying Social Mobility Processes in the Longue Durée', special issue, Marco Diani (ed.), 'The Biographical Method', *Current Sociology*, 43 (2) (1995), 70–88.

40. See Julia Brannen, Martyn Hammersley, and Alan Bryman, in Julia Brannen (ed.), *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research* (Aldershot, 1992).