SOCIAL MOBILITY THROUGH MARRIAGE AND CAREERS:

ACHIEVEMENT OVER THE LIFE COURSE

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relative chances men and women have for advancement in the social hierarchy through occupational activity and through marriage. Two data sets are analyzed: a longitudinal study of individuals who were 1957 Wisconsin high school graduates and a national cross-sectional sample of men and their wives. We find that, after taking into account gender-based occupational segregation and women’s intermittent labor force activity, men and women have similar opportunities for social advancement.
I. INTRODUCTION

For many Americans, one's income, occupation, and education often serve as important marks of achievement. We use these and similar markers in placing ourselves and others in a set of social roles that help identify "who" a person is, how he or she can be expected to behave, and how others should behave toward the person. Of course, these are only superficial personal characteristics, yet they frequently are the only type of information we know about casual acquaintances. Interestingly, these markers sometimes provide enough information to warrant judgments about the relative worth or social standing of persons.

For example, studies of jury deliberations consistently show that foremen tend to be selected from among persons with professional jobs (vs. blue-collar ones), a college education (vs. high school), or from higher economic strata. And, when Americans are asked to rank their friends and neighbors with regard to their standing in the community, these rankings typically correspond with educational, occupational, and economic characteristics.

To the sociologist, such behaviors by juries and community residents are reflections of the stratification system in American society. This system includes the social positions, like jobs, and the social rewards or statuses that are accorded to the positions. These statuses include prestige, influence, deference, income, and other "rewards" that recognize the social value of the position and that create hierarchies of inequality across persons who occupy these positions.
According to this sociological perspective, an individual's achievement is indicated through the positions he or she occupies, and has occupied, in the stratification system. Achievement in this sociological sense is structured by the sequence of social positions--sometimes called roles--through which an individual passes from birth to death. Thus, achievement is a life-long trajectory of role sequences and status attainments in the stratification system.

An important feature of this view of achievement over the lifespan is that it is an outcome that reflects more than an individual's motivations, aspirations, or values to succeed or get ahead. For example, as social arrangements and institutions change from decade to decade, the sequences and sets of social roles that pattern life courses through the stratification system are altered. Consequently, an individual's opportunities for achievement also vary, motivation notwithstanding. (For an extended treatment of the relationship between continuity and change in achievement across the life course and changes in societal patterns of stratification, see Featherman, 1980.)

This chapter compares the achievements of American men and women through their careers in the economy. We shall stress the importance of the life-span sociological perspective in explaining the relative achievements of the sexes. In this connection, the notion of the "socioeconomic life cycle" (Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan, 1972) is useful, and it is diagrammed in Figure 1.

(FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE)
The socioeconomic life cycle calls attention to achievement as a life-long, intergenerational process. That is, achievement in the economy through occupational careers is related to scholastic achievements in childhood and youth. In turn, both attainments in school (e.g. grades, degrees, length of attendance) and in the world of work (e.g. occupational advances, earnings) are linked to social background—i.e., to parental socioeconomic achievements through their schooling, occupations, and incomes. Thus, the socioeconomic life cycle calls attention to the dynamic course of achievement from birth to death. It defines a developmental process that mirrors the institutional linkages between the home, school, and economy. These institutions provide the socio-historical context—the "macrosystem" of the stratification system—that is part of an individual's environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

This life-span approach will enable us to conclude that the role sequences through which men and women pass in their socioeconomic life cycles are at the core of sex differences in contemporaneous achievements.

Simultaneously, our life-span analysis of occupational achievement is a study of social mobility—of movement within the stratification system from one generation to the next and within the career of an individual, from one job to the next. This larger interest in the social mobility patterns of men and women leads us also to consider mobility that occurs through marriage. The economic fortunes of a household are a function of the occupations and earnings of its several members. Similarly, the socioeconomic status and prestige others accord to a household reflect the achievements of its individual members (Rossi, Sampson, and Bose, 1974; Alves and Rossi, 1978). One's worldly achievements also can accumulate vicariously, through the attainments of one's
spouse. In this manner marriage can serve as a supplementary or substitute channel of social mobility, particularly if the opportunities for achievement through one's own occupational career are limited.

Review of Existing Research

Sociologists who have studied the social mobility patterns of American men and women often have used the concept of the socioeconomic life cycle as the framework for a multivariate statistical analysis of the process of achievement. Commonly referred to as "status attainment research" (Sewell, Haller, and Portes, 1969), these statistical models attempt to explain the well-documented association between individuals' socioeconomic background (e.g., their parents' socioeconomic statuses) and their current achievements such as educational level, occupational status, and earnings. Factors intervening in the relationship between socioeconomic origins and current achievements include early scholastic performance (e.g., grades and test scores), encouragements for post-secondary education from significant others (e.g., parents, teachers, peers), personal aspirations, and educational attainment, as an indicator of qualification or certification for jobs. Differences in earnings among individuals are partially a function of these explanatory variables, and of occupational status, number of years in the labor force, and full or part-time work status. Status attainment models provide a description of the intergenerational process of achievement. By making comparisons of status attainment models obtained from men and women sociologists attempt to describe how the sexes attain unequal socioeconomic positions.
Such comparisons have shown that men and women have nearly equal educational attainments—years of school completed. In the general population, males are more likely than females to drop out of school, but of those who graduate and go on to college, women traditionally have not taken advanced degrees as frequently as men. These differentials however, seem to be disappearing. Sewell and Shah (1968), and Alexander and Eckland (1974) found only minor differences for young men and women in the sociological process whereby educational levels are achieved. Men's attainments (i.e., years completed) were more strongly related to academic performance (e.g., grades in courses) than were women's, whereas for the latter, socioeconomic background was more influential. Women's closer ties to family background indicate that they have less freedom to attain higher (or lower) educational levels than men. Interestingly, if women who achieve higher high school grades were able to convert those grades into additional years of higher education at the same rate as their male counterparts, they would ultimately complete more post-secondary education than men (Carter, 1972).

At a midpoint in the socioeconomic life cycle, men hold jobs at slightly higher socioeconomic levels than women. This contrasts with the first full-time jobs attained after schooling is completed, when women's average occupational status exceeds men's (Carter, 1972; Treiman and Terrell, 1975; Featherman and Hauser, 1976; and McClendon, 1976). Women's work histories do not conform to conventional notions of "careers," since they typically remain in the same types of occupations at roughly the same socioeconomic levels across the life cycle. In contrast, men experience considerable upward career mobility from their first jobs (Sewell, Hauser, and Wolf, 1979). Additionally, women continue to rely more upon their
educational attainments than upon previous occupational experience for entry into successive jobs. Aside from these important gender differences in the occupation-based achievement process, the general pattern of attainment and mobility is similar for men and women.

Despite some similarity between the genders in the processes of educational and occupational achievement, the differences in their earnings are substantial (Suter and Miller, 1973; Featherman and Hauser, 1976). The conversion of educational attainments and occupational status into earnings is far more efficient for men than women, with the effect that a woman must stay in school longer and obtain a better job than her male counterpart in order to earn the same income. Women's full-time earnings have remained at about 60 percent of men's for the last 25 years. In 1977, for example, the median earnings of year-round, fully employed men was $14,626; for women, $8,618. This gap varies with occupation. Among computer specialists, for example, women earn 80 percent of the male median income for fulltime, year-round employment; among salaried managers in manufacturing industries, however, women earn 54 percent of the male median (U.S. Department of Labor, 1979).

How might this discrepancy in the economic achievements of men and women be reconciled with the apparent similarity in the processes that account for their educational and occupational attainments? The answer is that the similarity in occupational attainment is partially misleading. The scales used to index occupational socioeconomic status (Duncan, 1961; Siegel, 1971) do not reveal the extensive segregation of women into different jobs from men. At any socioeconomic level on these scales, the jobs held by men permit them to earn substantially higher incomes and to exercise greater occupational authority and autonomy (McLaughlin, 1978; Wolf and Fliqstein, 1979a). Also, status attainment models are applied only to those persons
currently in the labor force and do not account for about half of all women
who at any time are not employed or looking for work. This omission has to
do with the "selectivity" or "censoring" of the female labor supply: Women
who do not find jobs compatible with their schooling and other talents may
remain out of the labor force, potentially increasing the similarity of
women's and men's occupational attainment processes. Fligstein and Wolf
(1978), however, have shown such "censoring" to be a minor factor in the
occupational attainment differences between men and women.

Given the possible importance of differential employment patterns of
men and women as an explanation of their unequal earnings and socio-economic
achievements, it is important to understand the extent and basis of gender-
segregated occupations. Gender-segregation in employment patterns restricts
the range of occupational achievement for women, who remain concentrated in
semi-professional, lower white-collar occupations (Grimm and Stearn, 1974).
In 1979, 70 percent of all women would have had to have changed occupations
for their proportion in each job to be equal to their proportion in the labor
force as a whole (Williams, 1979). Furthermore, within broad occupational
categories, (e.g., white-collar) men have higher status jobs than women
(Grimm and Stearn, 1974; Tyree and Treas, 1974). Although more women have
paid employment now than ever before in this century, the growth of female-
typed occupations has absorbed most of this increase so that the degree of
gender-segregation across occupations has not been reduced (Oppenheimer, 1970).

There are two hypotheses, but very little evidence, about the causes of
gender-based occupational segregation. The first hypothesis is that of
"employee tastes": Women enter a limited set of occupations because they
find them attractive for their task content or working conditions. Bose (1973)
notes that women enter jobs that resemble their work at home. Female occupations are characterized by high rates of exit and reentry (Wolf and Fligstein 1979b). Wolf and Rosenfeld (1978) suggest that women attempting to coordinate familial and occupational roles try to avoid being penalized for intermittent labor force activity by entering occupations that are not part of career lines and have entry qualifications more closely related to formal training than to experience. This conclusion is supported by Sewell, et al. (1980).

The second hypothesis about the cause of occupational segregation is that of "employer tastes": Women enter those occupations that employers open to them. Several authors have suggested that because employers believe women in general to be less qualified for particular occupations or less committed to the labor force, they channel women into a special labor market sector that is characterized by a lack of career lines and low levels of economic reward (Beck, Horan, and Tolbert II, 1978; Hodson, 1978; Rosenfeld, 1979). Bergman (1974) states that, because women are crowded into a few occupations, the female labor supply is inflated and their wages are lower. There has been no assessment of these alternative explanations of the gender-segregation in employment patterns.

Not all research on occupational achievements of the genders has used the status attainment, multivariate-modeling approach. An alternative is the analysis of occupational mobility tables. A mobility table is a cross-classification that displays flows of individuals between origin occupations and destination occupations. Origin occupations are listed conventionally in the rows of the table, and destination occupations, in the columns.
Examples may be seen in Table 1, in which the rows show categories of parental occupation (origin) and the columns show categories of their sons’ and daughters’ current occupations (destination). (The top, table OUTFLOWS, shows the percent of individuals from each parental occupation category who fall in the destination or current occupation category; the bottom table INFLOWS, shows the percent of individuals in each current occupation category who came from each origin or parental occupation category.) This type of table represents intergenerational mobility—changes between the occupations of parents and their children. If the rows of a mobility table represent individuals’ first jobs, and the columns, their current occupations, then the table summarizes career or intragenerational mobility across the adult lifespan.

Based on this approach, studies using different samples and different levels of detail in the classification of occupations have found only limited gender differences in intergenerational mobility (DeJong, Brawer, and Robin, 1973; Tyree and Treas, 1974; Chase, 1975; Hauser, Featherman, and Hogan, 1975; Stevens, 1977; Rosenfeld, 1979). However, when Rosenfeld and Sørensen (1977) compared men’s and women’s intragenerational, or career, mobility; they found that women were less likely than men to be mobile from their early career jobs. That is, they were more likely than men to remain at the same occupational level. This finding corroborates the conclusion of Sewell, et al. (1980), which was based on the status attainment approach.

The same tabular approach to achievement has been used to study social mobility through marriage—marital mobility. (Two examples of marital mobility appear in Tables 4 and 5. Rows are categories of fathers’ occupations; columns are categories of either spouses’ occupations (i.e., wives'
occupation, in the case of men's marital mobility; husbands' occupation, in the case of women's marital mobility. OUTFLOWS and INFLOWS are computed as explained for Table 1.) A number of studies have compared marital mobility with mobility via employment in occupations. These comparisons have focused on the relative ease of achievement through two avenues of social mobility. In particular, some studies have compared men's intergenerational occupational mobility with women's marital mobility (where fathers' occupations are the origin and spouses' occupations are the destinations). For example, Glenn, Ross, and Tully (1974) found that men's occupational mobility patterns were different for the various categories of origin; by contrast, women's marital mobility patterns were rather uniform regardless of their point of origination. Glenn, et al. concluded that the social class boundaries that apparently affect men's mobility through work did not affect the marital mobility of women. Chase (1975) demonstrated that women experienced more mobility through marriage than men did through occupational mobility. He emphasized, however, that the differences between men's and women's mobility processes were small.

Tyree and Treas (1974) also found small differences, although the contrast between women's and men's occupational mobility was greater. Of course, women's occupational mobility tends to reflect the fact of gender segregation of occupations. This feature of the economy "forces" more women to be mobile from their fathers' occupations (as a point of reference for social origins) than is the case for men. This helps to account for the larger sex difference in the comparison of occupational mobility processes. (By contrast, in comparing men's occupational mobility with women's marital mobility, the lesser influence of sex segregation of occupations in the marital mobility of women tends to render it less different than women's
occupational mobility. Further, there is an artifactual similarity between men's occupational mobility and women's marital mobility. This arises for two reasons: Men's and women's fathers hold very similar occupations. And, the distribution of husbands' occupations that define the destinations of women in the marital mobility process is nearly identical to the destinations of men in the occupational mobility process, except that some occupations have fewer men who are married.)

Because women have the option of not marrying if they cannot make "acceptable" matches, it has been argued that women may experience more upward social mobility through marriage than men do through occupational activity (Rubin, 1968; Glenn, et al., 1974). (An unanalyzed issue is whether men defer marriage until they can contract a union that maximizes their achievement opportunities through this avenue.) Contrary to earlier findings, Chase (1975) reports that downward mobility through marriage is more prevalent for women. Tracing the mobility of women from their fathers' occupations at the time the women were in high school to the status of their husbands' first jobs, Chase finds more downward than upward movement. These findings are reconcilable, since the fathers would have had an opportunity to be mobile in their careers while the new husbands would be at the beginnings of theirs. This raises an important methodological point: Origin and destination occupations must be measured at equivalent points in the life cycle in order to avoid confounding career mobility differentials with the amount of upward marital mobility.

Men also experience marital mobility, but the sociological literature on this subject is sparse. Chase (1975) simply states that men and women can
experience both occupational and marital mobility. Wilensky (1966) recognizes that there are multiple ladders to social mobility and hypothesizes that intergenerational "occupational sliders" (the downwardly mobile) may try to compensate for their losses through upward marital mobility. Oppenheimer (1977) suggests that women's occupations reflect in the prestige attributed (by others) to their husbands and that there appears to be a tendency for employed spouses to have occupations at quite similar social levels (in terms of the prestige levels of their jobs). Women whose potential occupations are not very different in prestige from their husbands' may enter the labor force more frequently than women whose occupational prospects are either at a much higher prestige level or would be much lower than their husbands'.

Analysis of Social Mobility through Marriage and Occupation.

As our discussion makes apparent, much remains to be learned about social mobility through marriage and occupation. The increasing degree of women's labor force participation makes the constant monitoring of their occupational mobility patterns desirable. And, men's marital mobility opportunities have not been examined. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to such analyses. Our concern is twofold: determining the degree of equality of achievement between men and women in each of these mobility processes, and describing the relationship between occupational and marital mobility opportunities for each sex.

It is reasonable to expect patterns of opportunity for social mobility through marriage to differ from those through occupational activity in two ways. First, there should be more mobility through marriage than through occupational activity for both men and women. The mechanisms that result in individuals' retaining their occupational origins are probably stronger than those that
result in individuals' entering the occupations of their fathers-in-law. These mechanisms include, for example, specific vocational socialization, inheritance of family businesses, and job opportunities stemming from introductions to parental colleagues. Second, we would expect occupational and marital mobility patterns to differ because of gender-based occupational segregation, which limits women's opportunities for occupational mobility and therefore their husbands' opportunities for marital mobility.

The efforts of individuals to maximize their positions in the stratification hierarchy through marital and occupational activity may result in congruence between spouses' achievements. Blau and Duncan (1967) found a positive association between the occupational achievements of spouses. Simkus (1978) found that this congruency arises as a joint result of the association between socioeconomic background and occupational attainment and because men and women marry others who live near them in socio-economically segregated neighborhoods or attend the same, socio-economically homogeneous schools. The congruency between spouses' occupations may limit individuals' social mobility opportunities.

Oppenheimer (1977) has discussed the social norms that may limit a wife's labor market activity. She speculated that in the family's effort to maximize its social standing, the wife will work if the family's socioeconomic position will be maintained or enhanced through the job she takes. On the other hand, she will not work if her occupation is either much higher or much lower than her husband's. Since men typically have strong attachments to the labor force, they may opt to defer marriage until an attractive or congruent match can be made, rather than to limit their labor market activity to
maintain status congruency within the family.

Aside from normative pressures toward status congruence, the amount of opportunity for achievement will be limited by the degree of similarity between the two social mobility processes. There should be a positive association between occupational and marital mobility patterns, since both are a part of the same class or stratification system. If the opportunity structures presented through marriage and through occupational activity are similar, we may say that they are redundant or substitutable. That is, individuals will encounter the same patterns of opportunity through both activities. A comparison of these two social mobility processes will provide information about the degree of rigidity—the lack of opportunity—in the class structure of American society (Giddens, 1975).

Wilensky (1966), however, suggests that there could be a reciprocal relationship between occupational and marital mobility processes. His "consololation prize" theory of social mobility suggests that failure in one type of mobility may be compensated for through another type. For example, if an individual's occupational attainments are less than his or her parents', then lifestyle expectations may not be met. Consequently, the individual may try to compensate for this loss through marriage. If these social mobility processes are complementary, or represent alternatives, the social class system will be more open—there will be more opportunity—than if they are redundant.

Sample and Method

Our analysis of the occupational mobility patterns of men and women rests on a sample of 9,000 persons who were interviewed as high school seniors in 1957 and again in 1975 when they were approximately 37 years old. The marital
mobility analysis examines a national sample of 30,000 men and their wives. These latter data were collected in conjunction with the March 1973 Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census. Occupational origins were measured by the occupation of the head of the household when the respondent was about sixteen years old. This variable measures the socioeconomic environment of the home when individuals were developing their occupational aspirations and making decisions about continuing their educations. The head of the household was usually the individual's father. Own occupation and spouse's occupation were the current occupation or the latest occupation held within a five-year period if the individual was currently unemployed. By using current or latest occupation, we were able to assess the occupational mobility of more women and the marital mobility of more men since at any one time about half of all women are not in the labor force.

This analysis also differs from published analyses in that the occupational classification contains more categories and more female-typed categories. This classification contains 17 categories and was developed to make explicit the degree of gender-segregation in the labor force. The major occupational groups used by the U.S. Census as the basis of this categorization have been further differentiated by the gender-segregated nature of occupations in specific categories. Although the classification of Hauser, et al. (1975) also contained 17 categories, theirs had little specific gender differentiation. Although the statistical technique used in this analysis does not require the categories to be ordered, a socioeconomic hierarchy underlies the occupational classification. That is, individuals in categories at the "bottom" of this classification have less social prestige, less education, and lower earnings than individuals in categories at the "top".
For some analytical purposes we have assigned these 17 categories to six occupational strata. The categories are divided into strata as follows:
the upper nonmanual stratum contains salaried and self-employed professionals, salaried medical workers, teachers, managers, and nonretail sales workers; the lower nonmanual stratum contains proprietors, clerks, and retail sales workers; the upper manual stratum contains crafts workers; the lower manual stratum contains service workers, manufacturing and nonmanufacturing operatives, garment operatives, and laborers; the farm stratum contains all farm workers; and the sixth stratum and 17th category consists of all those individuals who have not been in the labor force within the preceding five years.

We have noted that a stratification system may be gauged in terms of its degree of opportunity for social advancement. However, not all movement away from occupational origins represents such opportunity. Some mobility occurs as a consequence of technological change. That is, the occupational positions available in a society are not identical at two points in time. Therefore, to adequately judge the openness of a stratification system it is necessary to separate this "forced" mobility from the rest, sometimes called "free" mobility. This analysis differs from many previous studies in that its statistical method, loglinear analysis, separates more completely "forced mobility" from "free mobility," which more accurately represents the amount of opportunity available. This method will be discussed in greater detail below.

Our analysis of occupational and marital mobility begins with a comparison of gross mobility patterns, without separating the two types of
mobility. We then compare men's and women's chances for moving from their origins and chances for moving upward. Finally, after taking forced mobility into account, we examine gender differences in patterns of free mobility. As each type of mobility measure is initially encountered, we will present a rather detailed discussion of its interpretation. Subsequently we will emphasize the interpretation of statistical results rather than pursue a detailed examination of the mobility tables.

**Occupational Mobility**

The flow of individuals between occupational strata represents movement through the social hierarchy as a result of both free and forced occupational mobility. These mobility flows are presented in Table 1. The outflows, or row percentages, describe the current occupation distributions for each of the origin strata, whereas the inflows, or column percentages, consist of the origin distributions for each of the current occupation strata. The rows of outflow Totals represent men's and women's current occupation distributions, and the columns of inflow Totals are their origin distributions.

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Table 1 about here

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A comparison of the outflow and inflow Totals indicates that even though men and women have similar origins, their current occupation distributions are very dissimilar. That so few women are in the craft occupations of the upper manual stratum highlights the differential employment patterns of the genders. Approximately half of the women have been out of the labor force for at least five years, thereby limiting their access to the social rewards associated with occupational positions. For men, the
absence of labor market activity usually indicates temporary or unfortunate circumstances; for women, it is an ordinary part of the life course organization as family formation balances with the need or desire to work.

Changes in the labor market structure between individuals' origins and their current occupations can be assessed by comparing the outflow totals with the inflow totals for each gender. The processes of urbanization and industrial change are reflected by the fact that there are fewer men and women currently in farming occupations than had farming origins. Considerable upward mobility is implied by the greater numbers of individuals currently in nonmanual occupations. More men than women entered the upper nonmanual stratum whereas more women entered the lower nonmanual stratum. Not unexpectedly, men were less mobile from their origins than women, who experienced not only forced mobility as a result of changes in labor market structure over time but also forced mobility from their origins (usually father's occupation) because of gender-based occupational segregation.

As suggested by the totals, the body of the outflow percentages indicate that men and women from similar occupational origins enter different current occupations. The inflow percentages, however, show that within any occupational stratum individuals have similar occupational backgrounds. Thus, men and women are not differentially recruited into their current occupations on the basis of their origins.

The mobility flows imply that as groups both men and women experienced upward intergenerational occupational mobility. Table 2 presents gender differences in the amount and direction of occupational mobility. These percentages were calculated from the disaggregated table involving all 17 occupational categories. Mobility is classified as upward or downward on
the basis of the underlying socioeconomic hierarchy. The "Same" column presents the percentage of individuals who were occupationally immobile. Interstratum mobility indicates movement across at least one occupational stratum boundary, and intrastratum mobility includes only mobility that occurs within a stratum. For example, mobility from a craft origin to a current occupation of clerical worker would be classified as interstratum mobility (from upper manual to lower nonmanual), but moving from a retail sales origin to a current occupation of clerical worker would be counted as intrastratum mobility (from one lower nonmanual occupation to another). These mobility percentages do not separate free mobility from forced mobility.

Table 2 about here

Men were more likely than women to remain in their occupational origins or to move up from them. They were three times more likely than women to experience intergenerational occupational immobility: One man in 6 remained in his occupational origin compared with one woman in 17. Over 60 percent of all men moved up from their occupational origins; only 44 percent of women did so. In fact, when "not in the labor force" is included as the lowest ranking category, women were slightly more likely to experience downward mobility than upward. The vast majority of all movement for both genders was interstratum, but a higher proportion of women's mobility was across stratum lines.

The percentage of individuals experiencing downward mobility is highly influenced by the number who are out of the labor force, since that category is at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Mobility ex-
periences were more similar among individuals in the labor force than among the sample as a whole. Men and women in the labor force experienced nearly equal rates of upward mobility: about 60 percent move up. However, women in the labor force remained one-third as likely as men to be immobile and experienced twice the amount of downward mobility. Therefore, at a mid-point in the life cycles women were less likely than men to retain their origin statuses and were more likely to be downwardly mobile, whether or not they were in the labor force.

Both the description of mobility flows and the discussion of the amount of mobility experienced by men and women have addressed the issue of gender equality in occupational achievements. However, since these measures are influenced by forced mobility resulting from technological change and from gender-segregation in the labor market, we have not yet spoken solely to the issue of gender differences in opportunity for social advancement through occupational activity. To do so we must eliminate the effects of technological change and gender-segregation on individuals’ mobility chances. These effects are removed from the observed mobility flows by a technique known as loglinear analysis. Through this technique we can also develop models of the mobility association and outline differences in the free mobility opportunities of men and women (Bishop, Feinberg, and Holland, 1975).

A Technical Note: Loglinear Analysis. Loglinear analysis is a statistical technique for comparing observed cell frequencies (particular origin-current occupation combinations) in the mobility table with a set of expected frequencies. The expected cell frequencies are estimated as
a function of a series of parameters derived from a model that describes the association in the table. These parameters are based on the odds of an individual being in a particular cell in the mobility table, relative to the odds of being in all other cells. The object of the analysis is to find the model, with the fewest parameters, which adequately explain the association. This is accomplished through an evaluation of the significance of the likelihood ratio test statistic, $G^2$, which tests for departures of observed from expected cell frequencies. In this manner, loglinear analysis is similar to the more familiar chi-square statistic. In fact, for large samples $G^2$ is distributed as chi-square. The interpretation of this test statistic is analogous to unexplained variance in regression analysis in that the $G^2$'s indicate the degree of association in the mobility table which is not explained by the model. $G^2$'s with probability levels (p) greater than .05 indicate models whose expected frequencies are not significantly different from the observed frequencies. By comparing $G^2$ statistics between alternative models we test for an improvement in the explanation of the association in the mobility table. Additionally, the table can be divided into different mobility patterns, such as occupational immobility or interstratum mobility. The contribution of each of these patterns to the total mobility association is assessed through a comparison of loglinear models.

Gender Differences in Intergenerational Occupational Mobility. The loglinear analysis of gender differences in intergenerational occupational mobility is presented in Table 3. A small constant (.01) has been added to each cell to facilitate the estimation of parameters. This fraction
adds 5.78 cases to the total and accounts for the fractional sample sizes presented. The notation for the variables in the model descriptions are: origin occupation (F), current or last occupation (O), and gender (G).

Model 1 (FOG), representing the independent effects of the variables, postulates that there is no association between origin and current occupations or between gender and either origin or current occupation. These theoretical assumptions are known to be unlikely on the basis of previous research: Origin and current occupations are related, and the occupational distributions of men and women do differ. Thus, it is not surprising that the probability level associated with $G^2$ of this hypothetical model indicates that it does not provide a good description of the association in this mobility table. The only purpose in estimating Model 1 with its simplistic assumptions is to establish a baseline or reference point, under the assumptions of statistical independence. Subsequent and more plausible models will attempt to account for the association left unexplained by the baseline model ($G^2=6388.93$ in Table 3 Panel A).

A two-letter term in the model description represents the interaction, or association, between two variables. For example, the mobility interaction, FO, is the association between occupational origins and current occupation. Models 2 through 4 include combinations of two two-way interactions, and Model 5 includes all three two-way interactions. We may assess the amount of association due to each two-way interaction (net of the effects of the other interactions) by comparing a model containing all three. The difference between their $G^2$'s is the amount of association in the table due to the omitted interaction. The comparisons of models estimating the
association due to each two-way interaction (net of the effects of the
other interactions) by comparing a model containing only two of the two-
way interactions with the model containing all three. The difference
between their $G^2$'s is the amount of association in the table due to the
omitted interaction. The comparisons of models estimating the association
due to each of the omitted interactions are presented at the bottom of
Panel A in Table 3.

Table 3 about here

Model 2 (FG OG) postulates that gender-segregation, or differences
in current occupation distributions, and gender differences in origin oc-
cupation distributions, account for the pattern of association found in
the mobility table. This model also does not provide an adequate descrip-
tion of the association in the table; the probability of the $G^2$ indicates
that the expected cell frequencies differ significantly from the observed.
The delta column, containing the index of dissimilarity, indicates that
the expected cell frequencies under Model 2 differ from the observed
values by 13 percent. Comparing Model 2 with Model 5 demonstrates that
the association between occupational origins and current occupation is a
significant omission; it accounts for a significant part of the association
in the table.

Model 3 (FG FG) posits gender differences in origin distributions and
an association between occupational origins and current occupation. This
model does not provide an adequate explanation of the association in the
table, misclassifying almost one-third of the cases. The comparison of
Model 3 to Model 5 indicates that the omitted interaction, gender differences in current occupation, accounts for two-thirds of the association in the table and is a significant omission from an adequate description of that association. The large size of this interaction is expected, since the occupational classification was constructed to emphasize the gender-segregation in the occupational distributions.

Model 4 (FO OG) generates expected cell frequencies under the hypothesis that there are gender differences in the current occupation distributions but that the association between occupational origins and current occupations is the same for both sexes. This model misclassifies less than 5 percent of the cases and provides a marginally significant description of the association in the table. By comparing Model 4 with Model 5 we find that the omitted interaction, the association between gender and occupational origins, does not contribute significantly to the explanation of the mobility association. Therefore, there are only trivial differences in men's and women's occupational origins. This result coincides both with previous research and with the mobility flows examined above.

Model 5 (FO FG OG) contains all possible two-way interactions, hypothesizing that the association in the table is due to gender differences in current and origin occupation distributions and to the association between origin and current occupations. It provides approximately the same quality of explanation of the association in the table as Model 4. Because the interaction of gender and occupational origins did not add significantly to the explanation of the association, Model 4 provides the most parsimonious explanation of men's and women's mobility patterns—viz., that these patterns arise as a result of gender-segregation in current occupations and
because of an association between occupational origins and attainments.

The 5 percent of the association in the table unaccounted for by either Model 4 or Model 5 is due to the three-way interaction, FOG, which represents gender differences in free mobility patterns. Although this small difference is marginally significant, the large sample gives our statistical tests the power to detect what may be substantively trivial differences.

The next section of this loglinear analysis partitions the mobility table into distinct types of mobility patterns, e.g., occupational immobility. This partitioning not only outlines the pattern of the mobility association but also may enable us to account for the small gender difference in free mobility patterns. The association is partitioned by eliminating from analysis selected portions of the table representing a mobility type. The comparison of all individuals to the subset that experienced a particular type of mobility indicates whether the omitted mobility pattern is a significant part of the total mobility association.

Individuals in the labor force may have a different relationship to their occupational origins from those who are occupationally inactive. As noted above, individuals currently in the labor force have different probabilities of upward mobility from those of all individuals, whether or not they are currently in the labor force. That women have higher rates of occupational inactivity than men could be the source of the difference in occupational mobility patterns between the genders. The hierarchical decomposition in Table 3 that compares Model A5, the full matrix of all individuals, with Model B1, just those in the labor force, indicates that
all individuals are not significantly different from those in the labor force. Consequently, differential rates of labor force inactivity by men and women do not account for a significant portion of the mobility association, and they do not produce the small gender difference in mobility patterns.

Occupational immobility is a theoretically important component of the opportunity for advancement, and men and women differ in their gross rates of immobility. The comparison of the subsample of those who were mobile with all individuals, Model A5 vs. Model C1, implies that occupational immobility is a significant part of the mobility association. Additionally, Model C1 provides a good explanation of the association in the table. Thus, men's and women's opportunities for social advancement through occupational mobility are very similar, differing only in that men are somewhat more likely to retain their occupational origins.

**Occupational Mobility Components**

Intergenerational mobility to current occupation consists of two components which correspond to parts of the socioeconomic lifecycle: mobility from origins to first job, or labor market entry; and mobility from first job to current occupation, or the occupational career. An examination of these components will lead to a better understanding of intergenerational mobility patterns and, thereby, of the structure of opportunities for occupational attainment. We will be interested especially in the development of differences in men's and women's occupation distributions and in their rates of immobility.

The following discussion of mobility components will concentrate on the conclusions to be drawn from a set of analyses that parallel those
outlined in detail above. The illustrative character of the preceding section, which introduced the various mobility measures, will be replaced by a focus on substantive issues. (Because of this focus, the analytical tables will not be presented here; they are available to the interested reader upon request.)

The segregation of men and women into different occupations is apparent in the distributions of their first jobs and is constant over the course of the career. Early in the socioeconomic life cycle over half of all women were in the lower nonmanual stratum. By a midpoint in their careers about half of all women became occupationally inactive—leaving the labor force in equal percentages from all first job strata. Both men and women moved up from their occupational origins at labor market entry, but over the course of their careers three-quarters of the men retained their first jobs or moved up from them, whereas three-quarters of the women retained the first jobs or moved down. In fact, half of the women in the labor force at a midpoint in their life cycles were still in the occupations they entered at the beginning of their careers. These figures reflect both forced and free mobility in the socioeconomic hierarchy. The tendency to retain one's occupational origins or first jobs is an important part of the structure of free mobility opportunities for both men and women, although there are small differences between the genders in rates of immobility both at labor market entry and in career mobility.

Summary. Were it not for gender-segregation in the labor market, men and women would experience nearly identical patterns of occupational mobility. As women from every origin stratum combine family roles with careers, they are more likely than men to spend a part of their lives out
of the paid labor force, limiting their access to the social reward system. Gender-segregation, resulting from either the employers' or employees' tastes, reduces the chances that women in the labor force will experience the immobility and upward mobility that men enjoy. Gender-based occupational segregation and labor market inactivity are important factors differentiating women's and men's labor market experiences at all stages of the socioeconomic life cycle.

Marital Mobility

We examine now the structure of opportunity for achievement through a second channel of social mobility--through marital mobility, or movement through the social hierarchy from occupational origins to spouse's current occupation. By marrying, one may gain access to the social reward structure via the reflected occupational attainment's of one's spouse. We have chosen to discuss mobility to the spouse's current occupation, rather than occupation at marriage, in order to promote comparability in the career mobility content of the measures of origin and spouse's occupations. Analyses not presented here indicate that the amount of upward mobility varies according to the measure of the spouse's occupation used, but the structure of free marital mobility opportunities does not. Men's and women's marital mobility flows, Tables 4 and 5, may be compared usefully with the occupational mobility flows presented in Table 1. The data examined in this analysis are from a 1973 national sample of men in the civilian labor force. Only those men who were in their first marriages, between the ages of 25 and 64, and married to women in the same age range were selected for analysis. Data also were available for the wives of these men.
The marital mobility flows, which include both free and forced mobility, resemble the occupational flows in the growth of the nonmanual strata and the decline of the farm sector. There are fewer husbands or wives currently in farming occupations and more in nonmanual occupations than there are individuals with those origins. Marital mobility flows mirror occupational mobility flows in that men's mobility opportunities are attenuated by the segregation of women (wives) into a restricted occupational range. The occupational attainments of men's spouses are less similar to the men's origins than the occupational attainments of women's spouses are to the women's origins. Approximately half of the men from each origin stratum are married to women who have been out of the labor force for more than five years and thus do not provide these men with reflected occupational status or occupationally linked economic rewards. Women, however, move into the upper nonmanual and upper manual strata more frequently through marriage than they do through their own occupational activity. Therefore, gender-segregation restricts the range of men's attainments through marriage and expands women's range relative to their own occupational attainments.

Women are less likely to be socially mobile through marriage than are men. Fifteen percent of women are immobile, whereas about five percent of
women remain in their origin category. Women who experience marital mobility are twice as likely to move upward (60 percent) as downward. Men's marital mobility rates are greatly affected by the number of wives out of the labor force; about 60 percent of all men experienced downward mobility. However, among men whose wives were occupationally active, 70 percent had upward marital mobility. Therefore, individuals whose spouses are in the labor force are very likely to experience upward social mobility through marriage as a result of technological change, gender-segregation in the labor market, and free opportunities for marital mobility.

In fact, the mobility that occurs as a consequence of the different current occupation distributions of husbands and wives is a considerable part of the total amount of mobility. There is no difference in the free mobility patterns of men and women. After taking forced mobility into account, mobility for either gender is no more likely to be upward than downward. Unlike occupational mobility patterns, the association between occupational origins and spouse's occupation is rather diffuse. Neither immobility nor labor force inactivity contributes significantly to the pattern of marital mobility. As anticipated, it is easier to retain one's occupational origins—and the social status associated with it—through one's own occupational activity than through marriage.

Men's and women's opportunities for achievement through marriage differ only as a consequence of gender-segregation in the labor market, which restricts the occupational attainments of wives. As women co-ordinate family formation and occupational careers, intermittent labor force activity limits their husbands' access to the social reward system. Independent of these factors, there is no gender difference in opportunities
for vicarious achievement through the occupational attainments of spouses. Contrasting with Chase's (1975) conclusion that women experience net downward marital mobility to the husband's first job, we find no evidence that individuals whose spouses are in the labor force experience a net status loss by a mid-point in the socioeconomic life cycle. Indeed, most of these individuals experienced upward marital mobility. Women's chances for upward social mobility are higher through marriage than they are through their own occupational activity. While there is no difference between the genders in free mobility opportunities through marriage, these opportunities are not structured similarly to those that characterize occupational mobility. It is more likely that an individual will be able to retain his or her origin status through occupational activity than through marriage.

The Association Between Occupational and Marital Mobility Processes

We are particularly interested in two issues concerning the association between occupational and marital mobility: first, the limits placed upon occupational mobility by the level of a spouse's occupation (and the limits placed upon marital mobility by level of one's own occupational attainment); and second, the degree of similarity in the structure of opportunities for social mobility through marital and occupational activity. Because the complex timing of occupational and marital decisions is not included in this analysis, we will restrict the following discussion to noncausal statements about the association between these two mobility processes. We will be able to make only inferences about the existence of normative limits or the use of marital and occupational activity as compensating social mobility mechanisms. We will, however, be able to speak directly to the issue of gender differences in opportunity provided by
occupational and marital mobility processes. We examine these issues through an analysis of a sample of individuals in their first marriages who were Wisconsin high school seniors in 1957.

An association between the type of occupational mobility and the level of a spouse's occupation would indicate that the pattern of occupational mobility varied with the occupation of the spouse, implying limits on occupational mobility patterns. To examine this question we have recoded the mobility association into five types: upward across stratum lines, upward within stratum lines, immobile, downward within stratum lines, and downward across stratum lines.

The loglinear analysis of gender differences in the relationship between type of occupational mobility and a spouse's occupational level provides support for an extension of Oppenheimer's (1977) thesis: Congruence between spouses' occupations provides a limit on an individual's occupational mobility opportunities. More concretely, there is a significant association between the type of occupational mobility and the level of a spouse's occupation. Individuals married to spouses in the nonmanual strata are more likely to experience upward occupational mobility than those married to spouses in manual and farm strata. This pattern of mobility would support the convergence of spouses' occupational levels. There is in this association a trivially significant gender difference produced by occupational inactivity; it accounts for only 1 percent of the association in the table.
An alternative analysis of mobility limits examines the association between occupational origins, own current occupation, and spouse's occupation. This analysis indicates that there is no interaction between occupational mobility and the level of a spouse's occupation once one takes into account patterns of occupational mobility, patterns of marital mobility, and the association between spouses' occupations. Therefore, the association between occupational mobility opportunities and the level of a spouse's occupation is brought about solely by the association between spouses' occupations.

A parallel analysis of the relationship between the type of marital mobility and the level of one's own current occupation indicates that upward marital mobility is more likely for individuals who are currently employed in the nonmanual strata than for individuals who are currently in manual and farm occupations. There is no interaction between occupational origin, spouse's occupation, and one's own current occupation once one takes into account the association between spouses' occupations, occupational mobility, and marital mobility. Thus, marital mobility opportunities differ according to the level of one's own occupational attainments as a result of the association between spouses' occupations.

Summary. These analyses have lead to the implication that occupational and marital mobility opportunities are related to and may be limited by the positive association between the spouses' occupational attainments. This association arises through the process
of assortative mating (individuals tend to marry those with similar backgrounds who they meet in socioeconomically segregated settings, eg. school contexts) and because occupational attainments are positively related to socioeconomic background and educational attainment.

Alternative mobility pathways. The degree to which occupational and marital mobility processes provide alternative pathways to social mobility indicates the amount of opportunity for social advancement in a society. If social classes or occupational strata organize the opportunities for occupational mobility differently than those for marital mobility, then individuals will have multiple chances for retaining or improving upon their occupational origins through these two processes. For example, we have seen that it is more likely that individuals will retain their occupational origins through their own occupational activity than through marriage. If there are differences in the ease with which stratum lines are crossed, economically-oriented individuals could distribute their energies between occupational and marital activities so as to maximize their social achievements. If the stratum lines are similar, individuals would have less opportunity, fewer behavioral alternatives, to recoup losses or improve upon contemporary attainments. An analysis of the relationship between the type of occupational mobility and the type of marital mobility and of the gender difference in that relationship follows.

There is evidence that individuals use occupational and marital mobility processes as alternative or complementary pathways to
social advancement: A considerable fraction of the sample experienced downward mobility through one process and upward mobility through the other. However, there was more support for identical or overlapping mobility patterns, as indicated by a tendency toward congruence between the types of occupational and marital mobility experienced by the individual.

There was a trivial (1 percent of the association; table not shown), but statistically significant, gender difference in the association between social mobility processes. There was less overlap among men than women, and among those in the labor force. Additionally, there was some indication that men move up more frequently through occupational activity than through marriage and that women move up more frequently through marriage than through occupational activity. These differences are probably related to gender-based occupational segregation and labor market inactivity, among women, although it was not possible to test that hypothesis here.

Although some evidence suggests that individuals could use occupational and marital mobility as compensatory pathways to social mobility, there is greater support for the similarity of those opportunities. The ease with which individuals are mobile between strata varies little across processes, although the similarity is not absolute. The stratification system, under which both types of social mobility occur, presents only slightly less opportunity for social advancement, combined across mobility processes, for women and for those not in the labor force.
Summary

This paper has examined the degree of gender-based inequality in two avenues of socioeconomic achievement—occupational mobility and marital mobility. The free mobility patterns of these processes indicate that men and women have roughly equal opportunity for social advancement. However, occupational segregation by gender attenuates the range of occupations held by women, and results in different mobility experiences for men and women. As a result, women's occupational and men's marital mobility patterns are modified so that these individuals experience less immobility and more interstratum mobility than they would otherwise. Similarly, the fact that at any time about half of all married women are out of the labor force, as they emphasize different adult roles, limits the access that these women (and vicariously, their spouses) have to social rewards.

To a certain extent, individuals may use occupational and marital mobility processes as alternative methods for gaining social status. There is, however, a large degree of redundancy in the opportunity structures presented by these social mobility processes. This redundancy means that an individual will have approximately equal chances for upward mobility through marital or occupational activities and that one process can only be used to a limited extent to compensate for a status loss through the other. There is very little difference between the genders in the degree to which these processes represent alternatives for status acquisition.
Our findings underscore the importance of a life-course approach to the study of men's and women's achievements in economic roles and their social mobility through occupational careers and marriage. It is the episodic (rather than continuous) labor force participation of women, their temporary withdrawal from paid employment as they undertake unpaid roles as homemakers and child-care providers, that mitigate against achievements that compare equally to men's. But aside from these dissimilar role trajectories that differentiate the life courses of men and women, the structural segregation of women into a restricted range of occupations further limits their relative achievements.

In closing we note the absence of statistically large and substantively significant sex interactions in mobility patterns and achievement, once the impact of sex-segregated occupational opportunities is taken into account. That is, men and women would achieve equally were it not for sociological features of the economy (e.g. discrimination). By implication, it is not the ways that girls are reared—their values, attitudes, aspirations or motivations in connection with careers and nuptiality—or their biology that govern their mobility chances and socioeconomic achievements vis-a-vis their brothers and husbands. While these factors are associated with the distinctive features of female life cycles, they are less important overall as a basis for the different achievements of the sexes than the (unspecified in our data) set of factors that limits entry of a woman into any and all occupations for which she is qualified.
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