Xie, Yu. 1995. "Review of *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies* by Robert Erikson and John H. Goldthorpe." *Sociological Inquiry* 65:114-117

and that Hollywood is dominated by "a shrill, one-sided liberalism" that uses entertainment as "a vehicle for conveying the ideas of a tiny and representative elite" (p. 123).

Indeed, *Risky Business* itself is at its most shrill in discussing political ideology, vacillating between complaint and apology. "Hollywood" is out of touch with "the rest of the country" (p. 11), and will "give millions to Third World Marxists, but not a penny to a senator whose wife had questioned the wholesomeness of rock music" (p. 116); this "eccentric politics" (p. 112), however, is due to the "psychological truth" of feeling "abused and exploited" (p. 97). Here, again, taking more seriously the complex wealth of writing on the politics of entertainment—from the Frankfurt School onward—might have given depth and provocation to the analysis. With the rudimentary liberal-conservative frame, complexity is sacrificed: We are told that most artists in Hollywood are liberal because they live in frustrating conditions that cause them to "adopt the perspective of social outsiders," because they are economically insecure, like "one-crop farmers, fishermen, miners, lumbermen," and because there are more Jews and homosexuals in the industry (pp. 97-99). Liberalism is as much analyzed as pathologized. Not surprisingly: Put the "paranoia" claim together with the strong evidence of liberal ideology, and you get liberalism as psychological malady. Wherever one falls on the ideological spectrum, such a discussion of entertainment and politics is unlikely to satisfy.

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The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies, by Robert Erikson and John H. Goldthorpe. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 429 pages. Paper, $19.95.

The Constant Flux is an ambitious undertaking that combines data, theory, and methods into a single volume. Not only should it be on the must-read list of students studying comparative social mobility, who are already familiar with Erikson and Goldthorpe's earlier work, but it has much to offer the general audience, especially sociologists with a macro-comparative perspective. Just as social stratification research in the past three decades has been instrumental in setting new methodological standards for sociology as a whole, comparative mobility research has taken a leading role in advancing methods for comparative research. *The Constant Flux* is an important addition to this already rich literature on comparative mobility.

The Constant Flux represents the culmination of Erikson and Goldthorpe's latest research efforts within the Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations (CASMIN) Project. A unique feature of the study is that data from the following nine European nations were carefully coded to ensure comparability on a common class schema: England, France, West Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Poland, Scotland, and Sweden. Although enough variation in economic development, political system, and culture is apparent among these nine core nations, the authors were not satisfied and also analyzed data from Czechoslovakia, Italy, the Netherlands, United States, and Japan. In contrast to many similar studies on the same subject, the book seriously considers the social mobility of women, intergenerational as well as marital, assessing whether the incorporation of women may challenge the conventional wisdom about social mobility that has been generated from studies of men.

In the book, Erikson and Goldthorpe essentially ask the question whether social mobility patterns vary across nations, over time, over the life course, and between men and women. Lacking true time-series data, they performed cohort analyses as an approximation for trend analyses, under the reasonable assumption that class position is a more or less fixed attribute. Erikson and Goldthorpe's answer to the question is by and large negative: Mobility patterns vary little among industrialized nations, and to the extent that they do, the variation is not always consistent with what might be expected from theoretical considerations or macro variables. Thus, the authors conclude that their study lends partial support to Featherman, Jones, and Hauser's (FJH) hypothesis that circulation mobility among industrialized nations varies little and is not sociologically explainable, a conclusion similar to that I reached in my own work (Xie 1992, p. 392).

What is perhaps more surprising, and in a sense more reassuring, is that one statistical tool that helped Erikson and Goldthorpe reach their conclusion, called "the uniform difference model," is just a special case of my "log-multiplicative layer effect model" (Xie 1992), although they used what appears to be a less efficient estimation procedure. Erikson and Goldthorpe clearly see the advantage of constraining cross-table differences with

single-table-specific parameters, as they use this modelling strategy in combination with a saturated origin-destination specification extensively in Chapter 3 and elsewhere in the book. Simply put, they let the typical pattern of the origin-destination association be free and test the variation in the strength of the association across populations or subpopulations. However, they fail to observe that the same modeling strategy can be applied even when the origin-destination association is constrained, as in their "model of core social fluidity," which underlies most of the analysis after Chapter 3. This is unfortunate, as their test of the FJH hypothesis is in my view too lenient, for they only require that the same design matrix for the origin-destination association (or a modified version of it) be applicable to all nations without any constraints on the effects of the design matrix. That is to say, if the same design matrix for the origin-destination association should fit two nations well with parameters in opposite directions, would Erikson and Goldthorpe still claim to have found common "core social fluidity?" Erikson and Goldthorpe's solution to this difficulty is to examine model parameters individually. A much preferred approach is to build some structure for core social fluidity into a log-multiplicative layer effect model as they do in Chapter 3.

With all its strengths, *The Constant Flux* is not to be unchallenged. Readers of *The Constant Flux* are referred to the December 1992 issue of *European Sociological Review*, which is devoted to a critical appraisal of Erikson and Goldthorpe's research in the CASMIN Project. Most notably, Michael Hout and Robert Hauser (1992) argue that Erikson and Goldthorpe's models are deficient because of (a) aggregation of heterogeneous classes, (b) asymmetric parameterization of association parameters, and (c) suppression of hierarchical effects through the use of social distance models instead of linear-by-linear models, which are favored by Hout and Hauser, among many other scholars in the field.

We look forward to more publications that will come out of the CASMIN Project, for Erikson and Goldthorpe in this book are too committed to their class schema and choose to ignore a variety of important processes. For example, educational attainment and models incorporating educational attainment (such as that of Peter Blau and O. D. Duncan) are not considered in the study (although educational inequality is used as a contextual variable in the concluding chapter). This may stem from the authors' limited concern with the FJH hypothesis, but this narrow focus prevents them from adequately addressing the larger issue. After all, what has been said about mobility and industrialism is not just that industrialism may facilitate net fluidity but also, more specifically, that industrialism may enhance the importance of education for social status, that is, universalism.

Past works by Hout (1988) and Kazuo Yamaguchi (1983) suggest that incorporating education into mobility research might be a fruitful way to further our understanding of cross-national variation in social mobility processes.

ENDNOTE

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Social Theory and Social Policy: Essays in Honor of James S. Coleman, edited by Aage B. Sørensen and Seymour Spilerman. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993, 272 pages. Cloth, $59.95.

In their introduction to this *festschrift* to James S. Coleman, the editors invoke an analogy to generations and families in discussing the relationships between Coleman and his teachers (especially Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld) and between Coleman and his students (which include many of the contributors to the volume). The enduring fruitfulness and relevance of Coleman's work clearly indicates that the issues he raises continue to engage the energy and activity of yet another generation of sociologists, those of us who are students of Coleman as well as of Coleman's students.