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Introduction

Advancing the Sociology of Spatial Inequality

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GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, reflects a portrait of national affluence, with a median household income of over $52,000 per year and a poverty rate of an even 5 percent. Several hours due south, residents of Meigs County realize a median household income half that of Geauga's population and confront a poverty rate four times as high. These statistics are evidence of the vast differences in material resources and life chances for residents of the two areas, ranging from the likelihood of obtaining a college education to differences in wages for the same degree and from availability of health care to quality of general public services. Geauga County is comprised of wealthy bedroom communities for the Cleveland metropolitan area; Meigs is in the heart of Appalachian Ohio, a region of legendary persistent deprivation. Yet the two counties are part of the same state, subject to the same legal and administrative system. Differences between these two counties and the regions in which they are embedded are discussed in one of the chapters in this volume. These differences reflect the very real significance of geography in shaping opportunity structures and the complex ways that social and spatial organization interact to construct enduring inequalities.

Inequality—the study of who gets what and why—has been at the heart of sociology since its inception. However, this simple formula fails to acknowledge that *where* is also a fundamental component of resource distribution. Barring a

handful of traditions, sociologists too often discount the role of space in inequality. In this volume, we revise sociology's core question to ask *who gets what where?*

The studies in this book stand apart from most research on social inequality due to their sustained attention to space. *Where* becomes the focus of articles addressing theory, research, and policy. Spatial inequality is increasingly used by sociologists to describe this body of work (Lobao 2004; Tickamyer 2000). The study of spatial inequality attends to stratification across a range of territories and their populations. This book is among the first to address spatial inequality as a thematically distinct body of work that spans sociological research traditions.

The first set of chapters takes stock of sociology's conceptual treatment of space and inequality, denoting its missing links. The second set provides examples, at different geographic scales, of spatial approaches to topics including welfare reform, health and mortality, poverty, community service provision, and migration. Each of these chapters provides a theoretical rationale for taking a spatial approach, methodological tools to accomplish this task, and empirical analyses demonstrating the importance of spatial research on inequality. The final set of chapters reflects on sociologists' efforts to build a more coherent field of spatial inequality and outlines an agenda for future action.

SPATIALIZING THE STUDY OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Sociology has long been concerned with inequality and with the spatial settings in which social life occurs. But these two concerns evolved rather separately through independent subfields, bridged today in limited ways. Even when analysts attend to the intersection of inequality and space, differences in scale fragment our understanding. Literatures on spatial inequality are most developed at the scale of the city and nation-state or global system. In emphasizing their respective territories of focus, these literatures tend to reinforce differences among others. They sometimes leave the impression that different territories are distinct species of social settings, whose principles of understanding are unconnected. Further, certain geographic scales, such as those involving regional, rural, or other subnational territory, remain neglected or relegated to the backwaters of the discipline, while others are privileged through extensive exploration.

The contributors to this volume believe that fragmentation in research on spatial inequality is detrimental, but we do *not* believe this fragmentation is inevitable. In an era of globalization and regional reconfiguration, it is important to self-consciously situate social processes in spatial context. This volume is directed to understanding how social inequality is influenced by space, especially at and across spatial scales and in places bypassed by much conventional literature.

Sociology's interest in inequality, the differential allocation of valued resources across social groups, traditionally focuses on class, race, gender, and other forms of social stratification. The discipline's core grounding in stratification sets it apart from other social sciences, such as economics, political science, and geography. However, until the 1980s, sociologists studying inequality in advanced nations neglected and, to some degree, resisted consideration of geographic territory as a base of stratification (Soja 1989). More recently, interest in space and place has blossomed, along with a new generation of theory, methods, and substantive work addressing territorial sources and outcomes of inequality.

Thus, a broad movement to spatialize sociology is underway, witnessed by recent reviews assessing progress toward this goal (Gans 2002; Gieryn 2000; Lobao 1993, 2004; Tickamyer 2000). This book showcases work that contributes to this effort.

The study of spatial inequality bridges sociology's pervasive interest in social inequality with a concern for uneven development. It examines how and why markers of stratification, such as economic well-being and access to resources as well as other inequalities related to race/ethnicity, class, gender, age, and other statuses, vary and intersect across territories. The territories of interest are wide ranging and beyond sociology's familiar focus on nations and urban areas: they include regions within a nation, states, counties, labor markets, and other locales. The study of spatial inequality thus entails the investigation of stratification across places at a variety of spatial scales. By spatial scales, we mean the geographic levels at which social processes work themselves out, are conceptualized, and are studied. Beyond recognizing variation in a descriptive sense, the goal is to identify how and why spatial context contributes to inequality. This literature recognizes both the importance of where actors are located in geographic space and how geographic entities themselves are molded by and mold stratification.

By breaking from sociology's past limited treatment of space, this recent generation of research opens up new topics for theory, empirical investigation, and public policy. Increasingly, sociologists view geographic space alongside race, class, gender, age, and sexuality as an important source of differential access to resources and opportunities in the United States. The wide disparities in power and privilege across the nation indicate that the spatial components of inequality must be scrutinized along with sociology's more familiar social statuses.

This collection of articles is aimed at advancing sociology's ongoing spatialization project. It addresses gray areas in this project—topical and conceptual issues that remain less developed or have ambiguous meaning and history in the discipline. In doing so, the volume seeks to make visible a new generation of work on inequality across a variety of scales and places.

(Re)Searching Gray Areas, Seeking the Missing Middle, and Studying Inequality at Various Scales

Despite sociology's spatial turn, well-established literatures on inequality are found mainly at two opposite scales, the global system of nation-states and the city or local area. Large literatures theorize the development of nation-states and cities, denote their salient conceptual attributes, and systematically attend to questions about power and privilege. While numerous unresolved methodological and conceptual issues remain, these too are typically discussed in large literatures.

Insofar as the sociological imagination has been drawn largely to cities and nation-states, we are left with disciplinary gaps: a large swathe of places, people, and substantive topics are left out of systematic investigation because they do not fall into the usual categories by which sociologists carve up space. One objective of this collection is to fill in gray areas that have received limited scrutiny, particularly those not centrally captured in established traditions. The theoretical importance of this effort is examined by Lobao and Hooks in chapter 2, which focuses on sociology's missing middle: the subnational scale, the territory beyond the reach of the city but below the level of the nation-state. Other pieces, including those by McLaughlin et al., Saenz et al., and Tickamyer et al., follow suit to bring in new literatures and conceptual frameworks to understand subnational inequalities. This focus on an intermediate scale is useful for exploring recent forms of inequality and for extending previously aspatial or underspatialized theories to ground-level, territorial settings.

In moving beyond established traditions and particularly to the subnational scale, researchers often use place-units less familiar to sociologists, for they fall outside the customary limits of the city. This raises questions about how such places are to be conceptualized and treated empirically. Contributors to this volume also reflect upon these issues, as they present comparative analyses of states, regions, counties, labor markets, and other areas. Chapters by McLaughlin et al., Saenz et al., and Tickamyer et al. each use counties as places of study, but in very different ways, as reflected in their methods of analysis and the meanings they assign to these units. The chapter by Irwin centers on methodological and conceptual issues involved in studying spatial processes across a range of places at different spatial scales.

Other gray areas arise as researchers work outside established spatial inequality traditions. One involves how to bring space into underspatialized literatures and subfields. The chapter by Leicht and Jenkins, for example, outlines the importance of extending political sociology spatially in order to address theoretical and substantive gaps. Another gray area involves less visible bodies of work. The chapter by Lobao and Hooks, for example, discusses rural and environmental sociology that generate a great deal of empirical

work on subnational inequality but without wide incorporation into stratification literatures outside these fields.

Even where the more familiar urban scale is site of attention, as in chapters by Cotter et al. and by Oakley and Logan, the authors demonstrate gray areas in studying spatial inequality. Conceptual and measurement issues in multilevel and intra-urban processes are tackled, respectively, in these chapters.

Taken together, the articles in this collection introduce a way of looking at inequality across space different from sociology's conventional traditions. Studies of sociological subfields demonstrate that spatial traditions are largely segmented from inequality traditions and that spatial traditions are segmented by their geographic territory of interest (Daipha 2001; Ennis 1992). By contrast, contributors to this volume share a view, outlined below as well as in the two concluding chapters, of the similarities among approaches that study inequality at different scales. These similarities include the recognition that analysts are addressing essentially common questions about stratification across scales, building from critically oriented theory, and using comparative methodological approaches. At the same time, within sociology the topic of spatial inequality itself remains unevenly developed. Included in this volume are both articles falling outside the realm of established literatures as well as others providing novel extensions of sociological traditions. In exposing the gray areas in theory and research and in calling for recognition of commonalities among approaches, the articles aim to collectively advance sociology's spatialization project.

A New Generation of Research on Spatial Inequality: Commonalities across Literatures

The new generation of spatial inequality research is characterized by a blooming of work beyond the established urban and national/cross-national traditions. Sociologists seeking to bring space into the study of inequality outside these traditions tend to follow two different paths. One starts from a spatially oriented subfield, such as demography, human ecology, or rural sociology, then brings in questions about inequality. The other starts from underspatialized literatures concerned with power and inequality (such as stratification, political sociology, and economic sociology), then brings in questions about space. Since the scale of focus is not fixed a priori, both approaches have generated much empirical work at a variety of scales. They have contributed to a new generation of work that is critical and theoretically informed as well as spatially comparative. Much of this work is directed to the subnational scale. Studies that examine both space and inequality have increased rapidly over the past decade, producing a wealth of different insights into theory, methods, and the topic of inequality, but they remain fragmented by subfield and by approach. Nevertheless, as we argue, these seemingly disparate studies can

be seen as giving rise to a new research tradition on stratification across space. By bringing in more fluid ways of addressing spatial inequality, this new generation of work advances sociology's spatialization project in general, beyond the city and nation-state. This advancement has numerous advantages for the discipline. For sociological theory, aspatially framed or national generalizations about development and socioeconomic well-being may be challenged, rejected, or revised to take into account the inherent diversity within a variety of spatial settings. For methodology, spatial analysis brings innovative ways of conceptualizing research questions and analyzing data. Addressing the causes and consequences of inequalities at and across a range of scales also opens up new opportunities for public sociological intervention and policy engagement.

In brief, this new generation of research shares the following characteristics, elaborated more fully below in this and later chapters.

- Its foremost concern involves research questions about how and why socially valued resources are differentially allocated across space.
- This literature stresses flows and processes over analytic strategies that emphasize the sui generis nature of cities, communities, or any other geographic unit.
- Its method of argumentation is critical and theoretically informed. Theory is enlisted for a number of purposes, such as interrogating and extending underspatialized frameworks to demonstrate the manner in which they work out on the ground across actual territorial units. Theoretical efforts are also directed toward examining the spatial dimensions of social constructs, such as the state, civic society, and industrial structure, and how these relate to inequality. In turn, actors such as capital, labor, the state, and civic society—the staples of critical theories of stratification—figure prominently in the literatures introduced to analyze spatial inequality.
- The empirical approach is comparative across places. Research may be qualitative or quantitative, but interest in charting differences among many territorial units necessarily lends itself more to quantitative work or to systematic selection and analysis of qualitative comparative case studies.

This volume grew out of discussions among the editors and contributors, who have longstanding interest in how geographic territory is related to different forms of inequality. Since a spatial perspective is not explicitly a part of a number of stratification-related literatures, we found ourselves working at the margins of different research traditions, wholly captured by none. Innovations are said to come into disciplines from the margins, where outside approaches are introduced into established perspectives (Dogan and Pahre 1990). Because our research was not captured by sociology's established subfields, we found ourselves in a continual quandary. We had to rehash the

same issues in publishing our work, such as justifying why the research questions we address are worthwhile. Why is it important to bridge the study of inequality with the study of space? Why should sociologists care about inequality and power relationships at the subnational scale across regions and localities? Another set of issues involved methodology. Reviewers were often unfamiliar with or even suspicious of the use of counties, states, regions, or other nonurban units of analysis. Those who were familiar often were inconsistent about how these units should be handled in research designs and statistical models. Finally, most contributors to this volume are motivated by social justice issues, recognizing the need for progressive policy and public sociological outreach. Making a wider arena of sociologists, policymakers, and the public aware of these issues is hampered, however, when research is not visible in a coherent body of work.

Recognizing the need to move research on spatial inequality forward, the American Sociological Association and National Science Foundation provided a Fund for Advancement of the Discipline Award to convene a workshop with the goals of promoting dialogue, critical reflection, and development of an edited book. This volume is the result of that effort. Each contributor has been charged with self-consciously reflecting on theory and method to show how taking a spatial approach makes a difference to a specific substantive question about inequality.

Our focus is inequality across geographic areas within the United States. Contributors approach this topic largely by examining material resources and life chances, their structural determinants, and the ways in which inequality relationships are mediated by spatial processes. Of course, sociologists examine inequality at other scales, ranging from the more micro-levels of the body and household to the macro-, cross-national level. They address spatial inequality from other approaches, such as by focusing on individuals' daily lived experiences and by analyzing discourses about social power and exclusion (Lobao 1994; Tickamyer 2000). And they examine forms of inequality beyond those related to economic well-being, health status, service allocation, government devolution, public welfare provision, and others addressed here. A single volume cannot cover all the previous topics; we make no effort to do so. Rather, this volume takes steps toward systematically articulating conceptual issues, research approaches, and methodologies to address general territorial inequalities within nations. Individually and collectively, the contributions to this volume show the difference a spatial approach makes in conceptualizing research questions across distinct substantive areas, address comparative geographic methods, and discuss how spatial approaches illuminate key public policy issues.

Sociology, of course, is not the only social science to grapple with the issues discussed here. Geography, political science, and economics devote independent attention to the uneven distribution of resources across space

and have literatures concerned with regions or subnational territory. This volume emphasizes sociology's distinct approach. That is, it starts from sociology as a discipline, takes its longstanding questions of inequality as primary, and questions the difference a spatial approach makes. Various chapters are informed by geography and other social sciences (and several authors have formal affiliations or training in these disciplines). We also take stock of sociology's approach from outside the discipline, providing a view of our project from the lens of geographers. Nevertheless, our interest is to look within sociology at how a spatial approach enriches the discipline and to make visible existing efforts that connect the study of inequality with spatial concerns.

SPACES AND PLACES

To explain the contemporary terrain of spatial inequality, it is useful to bring in the fundamental concepts of space and place. Space is the more abstract concept insofar as it is "everywhere," while place, as a particular spatial setting, is located "somewhere" (Taylor 1999:10). Geography has voluminous literatures centering on conceptualization of space (for reviews, see Gregory 1994; Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994) and place (for reviews, see Agnew 1987; Entrikin 1991; Hudson 2001). By contrast, sociologists have rather recently begun explicitly exploring the ontology of both concepts. Reviews of sociologists' treatment of space are found in Friedland and Boden (1994), Lobao (1996), and Tickamyer (2000); and for reviews of place, see Falk (2004), Gieryn (2000), Lobao (1994), and Orum and Chen (2003). Studying space and place remains fraught with complexity and debate. As we take up this task, sociologists have much to learn from geographers' well-worn ground.

In sociology, discourse about space and place sometimes considers them as fixed, binary concepts, in opposition to one another. This is particularly seen where place is narrowed to symbolic meaning and emotional attachment that a social actor has for a specific location, as in place authenticity or "sense of place." By contrast, if space is defined to mean an abstract and dehumanized environment, it becomes of less interest than place (Gieryn 2000). The view from geography varies. Rather than clear differences between the two concepts, geographers see tension and overlap (Domosh and Seager 2001; Massey 1994; Rose 1993; Taylor 1999). Places may be conceptualized as sites of materially based social relationships as opposed to sites of community identity and culture (Agnew 1989; Massey 1994). Space may be brought in to theorize social relationships at a variety of spatial scales (Massey 1994; Taylor 1999) or simply introduced to account for externalities associated with distance. Thus, rather than treating space or place as singular concepts, it is more appropriate to talk about the kinds of spaces and places conceptualized by social scientists.

Neither space nor place is a stand-alone concept. Their meaning and significance depends on the research question at hand and the theoretical perspectives informing it. In the discussion below, we consider space a concept that can be introduced to illuminate research questions about inequality in new and different ways. Bringing in space requires attention to the scale or geographic levels at which social processes occur. How space is used to inform theory and research and at which spatial scales, in turn, is linked to conceptualizations of place.

Bringing Space into Research on Inequality

Space, like its counterpart time, is a concept that can be explicitly used to explore research questions. It tends to be treated in three ways in inequality research. Most frequently, space is not explicitly addressed or is a taken-for-granted empirical backdrop of where a study was conducted. Deductive modes of theorizing and interest in generalizing across populations tend to lead researchers to downplay the role of space in inequality processes.

A second way of treating space is as a concept producing "noise" in social relationships, an interference to be bracketed out or incorporated in some controlled way. Distance is a concept introduced to tap space in this way. For example, poverty, educational attainments, demographic characteristics, and economic structure tend to cluster at similar levels around neighboring units. Since this clustering can interfere with primary relationships of interest, analysts often use measures or methodologies that incorporate distance between spatial units.

Space is also studied as an object of interest in its own right and is brought in to address questions about inequality in different ways. As we noted, a few subfields, notably urban sociology and cross-national/development sociology, have established traditions in framing inequality questions in terms of geographic space. But most others require reframing and going beyond conventional literatures to bridge the study of space and the study of inequality. In general, sociology's major subfields such as general stratification, economic sociology, and political sociology give central attention to power and inequality but comparatively little to space. Alternatively, subfields such as demography and rural sociology, while having strong spatial roots, historically have given less central attention to power and inequality.

In contrast to sociology's limited, fragmented approach, geographers use space to understand discipline-wide research questions and extend these questions across spatial scales (Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994; Tuan 1977). Some geographers argue for theorizing social relationships in space as a "power-geometry," "a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity, and co-operation" (Massey 1994:265). Power-geometries may be studied at any scale, from the household to the global system, as well

as across scales (Allen 2003; Hudson 2001; Massey 1994). For sociology, this highlights the importance of studying stratification processes beyond conventional settings. It suggests that the topic of spatial inequality itself can be understood as a power-geometry across spatial scales.

Once space is brought in, how does it become part of the explanation for inequality? The answer, of course, varies by the research question analysts ask, but some overall strategies can be noted. One is to recognize that space intersects with primary social statuses in complex ways (McCall 2001). Class, gender, and race/ethnic differences exist not only in how populations are distributed across space, but also in how space is used and experienced by different social groups. For example, gender differences in the use of space are illustrated by home-to-work movement patterns of women, which vary from those of men (Domosh and Seager 2001). Second, space is seen as channeling inequality processes, sometimes constraining, sometimes amplifying their effects (Clegg 1989; Swanstrom et al. 2002). For example, much work establishes that the likelihood of an education in improving an individual's earnings is spatially variant: in rural areas, returns to investment in a college degree tend to be lower than in urban areas. Third, there is recognition that space itself is created through inequality processes. Social relationships are space forming (Soja 1989). Rounds of struggle and negotiation between actors, such as capitalists, labor, the state, and citizens, create spatially varied social structures, built environments, and uneven regional development (Hooks 1994; Hooks and Smith 2004). Pockets of poverty, such as in Appalachia and the rural south, are outcomes of these territorial stratification processes. Finally, spatial and inequality processes can be treated as causally intertwined. Forces such as industrial restructuring and state-society shifts such as recent welfare reform have a spatial dynamic inherent to them: to understand how they operate and how they affect inequality requires considering their embeddedness in spatial settings.

No matter how space is incorporated into the study of inequality, the task is inherently complex and messy. Because space is "one of the axes along which we experience and conceptualize the world," it has a taken-for-granted quality that makes it difficult to define and study with precision (Massey 1994:251).

Place in Society, Society in Place

To understand spatial inequality, it is useful to distinguish two ideal types of conceptual traditions on place. A longstanding tradition is to start with a place (or places) of intrinsic interest, such as a nation-state, city, region, or local community. The purpose is to illuminate the distinct character of this place and potentially generalize outward to other settings. In sociology, the sine qua non concept of place itself is often equated with the discernible "places" studied in this manner (Gieryn 2000). Examples of this tradition are

found across sociological subfields and theoretical perspectives. Older variants of this tradition often drew from human ecology. They were concerned with cataloging characteristics that highlighted place distinctiveness and less so with studying structural inequalities. Sociology's human ecology school addressed the development of the city, cities in the central place system, and the south as a distinct region (Odum and Moore 1938). In a similar fashion, long-standing community perspectives emphasize the study of particular places, especially attending to the processes by which local identification with places is created and maintained. More recently, Marxian political economy, other critical theories, and postmodern approaches employ specific cities and regions as touchstones for illuminating capitalism. Social constructionist approaches (Gieryn 2000) that stress place identity and hearken back to earlier community frameworks also are applied to study particular places. Other analysts blend frameworks incorporating political-economic forces, culture, and key historical events to explain how places become differentiated from one another (Molotch et al. 2000).

Pursuing research questions through the lens of specific places can be described as the *place-in-society* tradition. That is, research centers on the distinct character of a place (in comparison to other places) in a society and in light of social theory. Theoretical perspectives aimed at understanding the distinct qualities of places are varied, as shown above. Some emphasize local identification with a place, while others, such as political economy perspectives, see any local identification as problematic and contested. Although starting out with place specificity, analysts are typically interested in generalizing upward, to say something about how a given place illuminates broader theory or societal processes. In this volume, the chapter by Tickamyer et al., which focuses on Appalachia, exemplifies aspects of this approach.

A second tradition, the *society-in-place* approach (Agnew 1989:11), tackles place from the opposite angle: it starts at the societal level and then moves to the level of specific places. Analysts are less interested in the intrinsic quality of a given place and more interested in how social processes work out across them. For example, analysts may theorize how causal forces generating inequality, such as economic restructuring and dismantling of the welfare state, are manifest across places. This tradition of analyzing place has roots in Marxian geography (Hudson 2001; Harvey 1996; Massey 1994; Peck 1996), critical regional science and planning (Glasmeier 2002; Markusen 2001; Harrison 1994), and the British locality studies of the 1980s to early 1990s (see Massey 1994). According to Massey (1994:5), this tradition challenges "some influential conceptualizations of place . . . [that attempt] to fix the meaning of particular places, to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities, and to claim them for one's own."

From the society-in-place tradition, places are "particular moments" of intersecting social relations (Massey 1994:120). Thinking about place in this

way "reveals a complex and unbounded lattice of articulations . . . of power and inequality" (Hudson 2001:257). This view of places corresponds with conceptualizing social relationships across space as a power-geometry (Massey 1994). As the focus on a particular place is diluted, it follows that territorial boundaries are more mutable. "Boundaries may be needed for the purposes of certain types of studies but are not needed for the conceptualization of place itself" (Massey 1994:155). At the same time, analysts recognize places are different from one another—indeed, that is a reason for studying how general social processes work out across them. Places have their own unique structured coherence (Harvey 1989) or social relationships that "come together contingently in specific space-time combinations" (Hudson 2001:261–62). From the society-in-place tradition, the social relationships of primary interest center on production and reproduction, or relationships between actors, such as capital and labor or state and citizens. Nonmaterial forces, such as culture, circumscribe these relationships. The unique combination of these social forces "together in one place may produce effects which would not happen otherwise" (Massey 1994:156).

In sum, from the society-in-place tradition, broader social processes are first emphasized, with places grounding their study. Places have meaning. They require conceptualization. But this conceptualization should be based on the social processes of interest, not taken for granted or based on a priori criteria and narrow definitions like shared social identity. This tradition also assigns no particular priority to studying cities, the nation-state, community, or other territorial unit. Rather, a variety of bounded or unbounded territories relevant to the research question at hand may be studied. In short, this approach sees place in an array of conceptualized territories. The quantitative studies by Cotter et al., McLaughlin et al., and Saenz et al. featured in this volume adopt the society-in-place tradition.

How places are conceptualized affects research design. Those working from the place-in-society tradition tend to focus on a limited number of territorial units and collect richly detailed data about them. Case studies and comparative qualitative designs are often used. The society-in-place approach, by contrast, is more place extensive, lending itself to a larger number of cases and quantitative analysis. In either case, qualitative or quantitative analyses are not precluded. Further, insofar as both traditions represent ideal types, researchers may blend the two. For example, Oakley and Logan largely adopt the society-in-place tradition, as their primary interest is examining community service distribution across places, in this case, neighborhoods. Because their study is situated in New York City, they are able to draw from its distinct history of service provision to shed light on these distributional patterns.

Both the place-in-society and society-in-place traditions are valuable. In sociology, however, discourse about the concept of place largely focuses on

the former, making it the more recognized approach to studying—as well as defining—places (see Gieryn 2000). Explicit, detailed articulation of processes creating inequality is also largely confined to the first, as in the large literatures on the development of cities and nation-states. The second tradition, which starts with some question about inequality, then explores it across places variously conceptualized, particularly characterizes the research on subnational inequality.

These two traditions provide overlapping insights that inform each other. To understand inequality across places, recognition of place distinctiveness and a range of place attributes must be a touchstone. At the same time, limiting the study of inequality to a set of special places can be problematic. It not only circumscribes the study of spatial inequality itself but also the ability to compare the experiences of different places, including those at other spatial scales.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW: THE EMERGENCE OF CURRENT WORK ON SPATIAL INEQUALITY

The study of stratification developed with indifferent if not hostile reaction to consideration of space. The classical theorists themselves placed greater emphasis on time and history over space and geography (Soja 1989). Marx's and Weber's central concern, the subsumption of precapitalist societies to capitalist market relations, directed attention toward temporal dimensions of social change and anticipated leveling of geographic differences. Later Marxist-oriented, radical frameworks saw spatial forces like regionalism and nationalism as barriers to a united proletariat (Soja 1989). Place-based inequalities and potentially progressive influences of spatial identities and forces were discounted. Similarly, a spatial research agenda conflicted with sociology's more pervasive, liberal social reformist tradition that included functionalist sociology (Soja 1989). From this view, spatial differences were becoming part of a bygone era because modernization and its benefits were expected to advance across entire populations. Finally, throughout the last century, intellectual priority was given to grand theory (Storper and Walker 1989). The intrinsic specificity of spatial settings muddled grand theory and deductive research agendas that assumed generalizations applied everywhere (Lobao 1993).

Sociology has undergone a remarkable shift over the past few decades. A number of changes have resulted in a blooming of interest in space beyond traditional spatial subfields and at the same time transformed these subfields by making them more sensitive to structural inequalities. Here we denote changes giving rise to the new generation of work on spatial inequality, particularly at the subnational scale.

First, in the 1980s, the top-down, structural orientation of stratification theories was revised to acknowledge a greater role of human agency in creating

social structure (Giddens 1981; Bourdieu 1989). This approach necessitated the examination of ordinary social interaction occurring in spatial settings such as the community and household. The concept of human agency also implied that political struggle against inequality was not to be found only in the factory (or at other points of production) but also at the point of consumption or in the community, as evidenced in new social movements. For example, the environmental movement and political actions revolving around NIMBY ("not in my back yard") issues represent attempts to protect places that matter to people.

Second, sociologists moved from a restricted focus on class stratification to the study of social inequality more generally. In the 1980s, they began to devote increased attention to the extra-economic bases of inequality, with a focus on race/ethnicity, gender, and the role of the state. In the 1990s, sexuality and the intersection of race/class/gender and other statuses became important topics. Interest in inequality across space, including subnational territory, is in part a function of expanding the substantive scope of stratification research.

Third, sociology as a whole has witnessed a long-term movement away from deductive theory or covering laws applicable regardless of time and place, and a movement toward historical as well as spatial contextualization. Relationships are increasingly seen as contingent upon time and place. The importance of a spatial approach for informing, challenging, and transforming existing theory is explicitly being recognized. For example, a number of studies now center on questioning whether abstract, macro-level theories are supported on the ground, across subnational territories (Baller and Richardson 2002; Grant and Wallace 1994; Lobao and Hooks 2003; Lobao et al. 1999; Tolbert et al. 1998).

Fourth, theoretical and methodological literatures from human geography and regional science have diffused into sociology. From the 1980s onward, sociologists increasingly drew from them to explore how space structures class relationships and, in turn, variations in socioeconomic well-being (Lobao 1990; Soja 1989). A number of conceptual points from these literatures guided subsequent work on spatial inequality. First, by the 1980s, economic and political geographers had demonstrated the compatibility of critical, neo-Marxian theory with spatial issues (Agnew 1987; Harvey 1989; Storper and Walker 1989). In doing so, geographers explained the role of space in shaping class relations. Observing the movement of capital, firms, and jobs on a global scale, they saw space as less constraining for economic activity than in the past and as a key factor in the search for profits (Massey 1984; Storper and Walker 1989). Business relocation or threats of relocation were central for capital to remain competitive and for management to suppress class struggle. Second, geographers (Massey 1984; Smith 1984) and regional scientists (Markusen 1987) outlined broader principles of uneven

development. They argued that capitalists respond to the configuration of social forces at various spatial scales, continually seeking out new opportunities for profit that generate unbalanced growth across geographic areas. These insights opened up the topic of uneven development at the subnational scale to sociological scrutiny. Finally, geographers became intensely interested in the transition from Fordism to a post-Fordist economy. While most attention was to production shifts, some work also considered how poverty and other social inequalities varied regionally in different epochs of capitalism (Dunford and Perrons 1994; Peck 1996, 2001). This literature has served as a theoretical guide for sociologists interested in why the economic conditions of states and localities vary in different historical periods (Grant and Wallace 1994; Lobao and Hooks 2003; Lobao et al. 1999).

Methodological contributions of geography and regional science also spread to sociology. Sociologists periodically addressed analytical approaches to areal data (Duncan et al. 1961), but linkages with other disciplines brought in a newer wave of methodologies. As they tested hypotheses about spatial relationships (Land and Deane 1992; Tolnay et al. 1996), they increasingly drew on spatial analytical methods, such as spatial regression (Anselin 1988). More recently, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has come into greater use, particularly for descriptive purposes. Still at present, these methodologies are not a staple of most sociologists' research toolkit.

Besides cross-fertilization with other disciplines, interest in spatial inequality also came from sociologists' independent observations that space figured into a series of profound changes in U.S. society from the 1980s onward. Observing the restructuring of regions, communities, and livelihoods, sociologists sought to understand the growing inequalities created. Long-term regional changes were noted such as the decline of the northern manufacturing belt and rise of the sunbelt (Falk and Lyson 1988) and the ongoing restructuring of rural America (Falk et al. 2003). New pockets of prosperity such as California's Silicon Valley were observed (Saxenian 1994). To understand how people and communities coped with economic restructuring, sociologists also turned to the household (Nelson and Smith 1999; Falk 2004; Falk et al. 2003). Research on plant closings (Perrucci et al. 1988) and its rural counterpart, the farm crisis of 1980s (Lasley et al. 1995), addressed the intersection of community and household well-being. Sociologists also observed massive restructuring at the global level (McMichael 2000). They recognized that global changes in industries and trading patterns filter downward (and sometime back upward) to communities producing specific goods for global markets (Gereffi 1994; Anderson 2000). Fortunes of communities ebb and flow with these global changes. Sociologists also recognized that collective desires to protect communities could create progressive responses to change. In response to restructuring, new social movements often sprang from local or regionally based identities, organizations, and networks (Buechler 1995; Castells 1983).

As a result of all of these changes, sociologists working in traditional, spatially oriented subfields of urban sociology, rural sociology, and demography became more critical in their approach, while those working in critically oriented subfields such as stratification and economic sociology became more spatial in theirs. Demography, urban sociology, and rural sociology largely developed from human ecology, a theoretical orientation that devoted little attention to the issues of power and inequality (Walton 1993). By the 1980s, critical traditions from political economy and feminist theory infused urban sociology (Walton 1993) and, to some degree, rural sociology (Lobao 1996; Tickamyer 1996). More recently, a critical demography has emerged (Horton 1999). While this critical theoretical affinity links all three subfields to a much greater degree than previously, limited dialogue remains between them. Separate professional organizations—the ASA section on Urban and Community Sociology, the Rural Sociological Society, and the Population Association of America—reflect the broader segmentation of literatures. Of these three subfields, urban sociology has produced the largest, most coherent body of work on spatial inequality, an advancement discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Meanwhile, by the 1980s, sociologists taking a critical approach to the role of work in inequality allocation became concerned with how relationships varied across labor markets. A large literature on labor markets that contextualized relationships between work and inequality developed, engaging those concerned with general social inequalities as well as economic sociologists (Singelmann and Deseran 1993). For other subfields concerned with power and inequality, such as political sociology, interest in spatial processes is growing, as discussed in the chapter by Leicht and Jenkins.

Shifts in sociological subfields have fostered research on spatial inequality by creating a community of scholars from diverse backgrounds who share a critical theoretical orientation and common methodological approaches. While they may situate their research question within a traditional specialty area, studying spatial inequality, especially at subnational levels invariably ushers in research issues beyond their respective specialties. Thus, the topic itself is creating greater cross-fertilization of literatures and subfields. This volume provides an example of how authors reflect and build upon literatures in stratification, economic sociology, and political sociology, as well as draw from spatial traditions of urban sociology, rural sociology, and demography.

In sum, a new flourishing of research addressing spatial inequality beyond traditional subfields and outside the confines of the urban and national scales has occurred. This is resulting in a real paradigmatic shift in how sociologists conceptualize inequality. The growing body of work on inequalities at the subnational scale, not fully routinized or captured by classification systems within sociology, is part of this broader shift. As sociologists increasingly integrate spatial thinking into their research, new lines of inquiry will emerge. To

advance sociology's spatialization project, this volume brings together recent work that articulates the development of a more broad-based spatial agenda within sociology.

CONTENTS AND SCOPE OF THIS VOLUME

As we noted, this volume grew out of research and discussions exchanged at a workshop on spatial inequality sponsored by the American Sociological Association and National Science Foundation's Fund for Advancement of the Discipline. Participants were invited to craft papers that illustrated their distinct approaches to the topic. Authors were asked to consider three basic sets of issues:

1. Why is taking a spatial approach to your research topic important? How does it differ from approaches traditionally used to study your topic?
2. From a theoretical standpoint, how does drawing upon space illuminate your research question and inform your broader area of specialization within sociology?
3. And for empirical chapters (Part II), how do you use space in terms of research design? Why is the place unit you have chosen significant to your research question? What types of spatial methodology are useful to answer your research question?

We selected papers that illuminate different aspects of the spatialization of sociology. The collection showcases the current generation of work applying spatial perspectives to the study of inequality, work that extends spatiality into the heart of the discipline. Taken together, the articles address processes creating inequalities in society and space and, reciprocally, the outcomes of these inequalities. They treat gray areas in sociology's spatialization project, including giving particular scrutiny to the subnational scale. Collectively, they reveal the gaps left when space is ignored and the enhanced ability to theorize, analyze, and address policy and social justice issues when it is not.

The volume is divided into three sections. Part I centers on conceptual and methodological issues applicable to the general study of spatial inequality. Part II brings together empirical pieces that use different methodological and conceptual approaches to bridge the study of space with the study of inequality. Part III completes the project with an assessment of the overall effort and an inventory of future research needs and initiatives.

Part I begins with a chapter on subnational perspectives. Two editors of this volume, Linda Lobao and Greg Hooks, argue for the importance of studying sociology's "missing middle"—the spatial scale between nation and city. Privileging the national and urban scales has led to a gap in our understanding

of structures and processes across people and places situated in substantial territory. Yet the subnational scale provides opportunities for spatializing theory and a window onto some of the nation's worst inequalities. This scale is also important for studying new forms of inequality arising from devolution and other changes in state and society. Research on subnational inequality is fragmented but coalescing into a more coherent body of work. Lobao and Hooks supply a systematic examination of subnational research, focusing on the different conceptual approaches studies can take and their overall contributions as well as shortcomings.

The broad overview of subnational perspectives is followed by a critical discussion by Kevin Leicht and Craig Jenkins of similar issues applied to political sociology. They argue for the need to explicitly integrate space into a peculiarly underspatialized subfield, an ironic omission since political sociology assumes territorial bases for political action and institutions. Additionally, they address varieties of political action that are subnationally based, illustrating with a discussion of their own research on state-level economic development programs. They contribute to the book's conceptual attention to spatial scales, considering how political processes are territorially embedded and how they diffuse across places at different scales. Their chapter provides a framework for filling the gap created by past failures to adequately theorize and research political action below the levels of the national state.

The final chapter in this section links conceptual and methodological aspects of spatial analyses. Mike Irwin outlines the conceptual and empirical origins of commonly used territorial units and how these units can be applied to study inequality across spatial scales. He illustrates his discussion with census units, such as tracts, blocks, zip code areas, and counties. He demonstrates the impact of decisions about using different place units on data reflecting three dimensions of inequality—race, wealth, and occupational status—then shows how resulting relationships vary at different scales. His article addresses two thorny issues in spatial inequality research. One is how differences in place-unit choice may influence the degree of inequality observed. The other is the issue of spatial autocorrelation, the potential for spatial clustering among units that affects inferences drawn from statistical models. This chapter clarifies why spatial analysis matters and provides examples of how to interpret this type of analysis.

Part II showcases the recent generation of work on spatial inequality with a series of empirical studies. These chapters illustrate different treatments of place, comparative methodologies, and conceptual approaches blending the study of space with the study of inequality. The first chapter in this section begins the scrutiny of different spatial perspectives by illustrating the "place-in-society" approach, with a comparative case study using qualitative data and methods. The next four studies all use quantitative methods and move closer to a "society-in-place" approach to spatial inequality. That is where their sim-

ilarities end, however. They differ in the specific units, spatial scales, methods, types of analyses, and dimensions of inequality, providing a broad sample of the different varieties of quantitative spatial analyses that may be employed. Each chapter illustrates a different methodological approach. Showcased are: qualitative comparative research; quantitative models using places as units of analysis; multilevel models featuring individual and place effects; and analysis using places whose boundaries are constructed through GIS.

The studies featured in Part II also illustrate different ways of bridging the study of inequality and the study of space to address substantive topics. Some authors are interested in bringing in space to address topics germane to general inequality research, economic sociology, and political sociology. Others extend traditional spatially-oriented literatures, such as those in demography and rural sociology, through more detailed scrutiny of income and ethnic inequalities. For other authors, the more developed urban inequality literature becomes the starting point.

This section is headed by Ann Tickamyer, one of the editors, and her colleagues. They use a spatial lens to study welfare reform, a topic of considerable interest to inequality researchers, political sociologists, policymakers, and advocates for the poor. Their article moves in the direction of a place-in-society approach with qualitative methods. Tickamyer et al. use intensive research on selected Ohio counties to study the impacts of welfare reform and broader governmental devolution. In many ways their analysis represents a version of a multilevel approach as well as analysis of regional differences with local communities embedded in two different definitions of region— rural/urban and Appalachian/non-Appalachian. The results show that welfare reform has different implications for localities in Appalachia than those outside this region. The results also reveal urban-rural differences. The outcomes are both shaped by preexisting inequalities organized spatially and, in turn, are complicit in maintaining and reconstructing spatial difference. The authors argue that there are profound public policy implications due to the reorganization of the spatial scale of welfare.

Diane McLaughlin and her colleagues continue this section by bringing demographic and inequality literatures together to address determinants of mortality across the United States. The authors explore mechanisms by which income inequality is linked to mortality by introducing sets of local conditions expected to mediate the effects of income inequality. These conditions include unique local attributes such as social cohesion and environmental risks as well as more commonly employed social structural and health variables. Although previous studies rooted in ecological models demonstrate a relationship between income inequality and mortality at different levels of analysis, this research moves beyond past work to explicitly incorporate and test spatial models. Their county-level analysis, spanning urban and rural areas, is a prime example of a subnational approach to spatial inequality.

David Cotter, Joan Hermsen, and Reeve Vanneman are interested in extending the study of poverty spatially. They select metropolitan areas as places of study which they employ in a multilevel research design. Substantively, the authors use metro-area characteristics to show how variation in economic prosperity and inequality is associated with the risk of poverty for families, with particular attention given to the mediating effects of labor supply and family structure. Methodologically, this study provides a classic example of multilevel quantitative modeling that delineates how geographic context affects individuals' life chances. Conceptually, the study exemplifies a structural approach, as it focuses on economic conditions of places and their relationship to family poverty, while simultaneously maintaining a sensitivity to race and gender inequalities.

The three previous chapters use existing place units to explore spatial dimensions of inequality. The next two papers provide intriguing examples of more flexible approaches to studying space, including emphasis on movement and flows and the ways these empirically yield different categories of places. Saenz and his colleagues bridge literatures on migration and ethnic inequality, extending both topics in the process. They examine Mexican-American migration from its core or "homeland" location in the American Southwest into peripheral and frontier regions, places of more incipient Mexican American growth throughout the United States. These flows are conditioned by push and pull factors operating differently in regions. Inequality and discrimination drive Mexican-Americans to seek new opportunities and resources, while human capital and social capital, including kin and community ties, direct this traffic to either peripheral or frontier regions. The authors provide novel contributions through their construction of places based on flow patterns and also by addressing territorial bases of social capital that underpin ethnic migration.

Oakley and Logan build from the spatial inequality tradition in urban sociology to assess the allocation and patterning of community services in New York City. Like Saenz et al., they put forth a flexible definition of place units, in this case using spatial analytic tools. They begin with census tracts to empirically construct neighborhood clusters based on income, then use them to investigate patterns of inequitable service delivery. This study, with its quantitative spatial analysis across neighborhoods, typifies a society-in-place approach. However, the authors' intrinsic interest in the case of New York City adds elements of a place-in-society approach. The study presents a unique analysis of inequality in urban service delivery and a model for using existing units to construct new spatial boundaries based on geographic patterns of inequality. It also yields findings that challenge prevailing views of service provision found in urban research: community services tend to be similarly allocated across neighborhoods despite socioeconomic and racial composition. To explain these findings, the authors draw from New York City's unique history with regard to zoning policies.

Part III concludes with an assessment of the spatialization project outlined in this volume, first from the lens of geography. We invited Vincent Del Casino and John Paul Jones, the latter a recent editor of the discipline's flagship journal, *The Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, to comment on the overall effort to integrate the social and the spatial. They see the studies straddling two metatheoretical camps in human geography, "socially-relevant spatial science" and "critical realism." From the spatial science approach, research questions are explored largely through variable-based models, drawing from determinants reflecting local, regional, national and other characteristics. The spatial science approach is a dominant tradition in geography, from which GIS and other spatial analytical methods emerged. Some of this work casts a critical theoretical eye and raises prospects for social transformation. Critical realism argues for viewing social and spatial processes as intertwined: social relations, actors, and institutions operate in tandem with space. Outcomes of social processes are contingent on place settings. For example, macro-level processes such as industrial restructuring work out differently across places due to their unique contextual attributes. Both geographical approaches are applied across spatial scales, but each takes a different view of scale itself. While research from these two camps is used to explore many topics in geography, the authors note the usefulness of blending both traditions to study inequality and for drawing from sociology, which has a deeper inequality tradition. In turn, sociologists stand much to gain from engagement with these traditions that study relationships and processes across scales.

In the final chapter, the editors conclude with a broad-based call for advancing the study of spatial inequality. This chapter summarizes lessons drawn from the volume and other ongoing work, and outlines an extensive agenda for future research. It is our hope that this collection will provide some of the foundational building blocks for moving the project of spatializing sociology forward.

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