

PREFACE

In venturing on this second, revised and now two-volume, edition of *On Sociology*, I have been motivated in two main ways. On the one hand, I have been encouraged by the favourable reception of the first edition, as reflected not just in reviews but also in the generous responses of colleagues who have found the book of value in their own work and in their teaching. On the other hand, though, I have become increasingly aware of further issues that I could relevantly take up, in part as a result of various comments on the lines of ‘you said too little about x’ or ‘what then is your position on y’ and in part, too, simply as a result of the progression of arguments and of related research and theory over the years since the first edition appeared.

For their help in making a second edition possible, I am indebted above all to David Grusky for suggesting Stanford University Press as a possible publisher and then to Patricia Katayama of Stanford University Press for her positive and highly constructive response to the idea, even when, at a dark time, I had doubts about it myself. In succession to Patricia, Kate Wahl has been an unfailingly helpful editor during the two-and-a-half years that it took me to complete the work.

In the case of those chapters that appeared in the first edition, I have for the most part engaged in only quite limited editing. I have corrected some errors and more obvious infelicities, made various changes in the interests of terminology consistency, and added references to recent work that seemed to me both relevant and important. The main exception is with chapter 16 in Volume 2, ‘Outline of a Theory of Social Mobility’, which, in order to take account both of developments in research and in my own thinking, has been entirely rewritten and a good deal extended. Throughout the two volumes I have increased the amount of cross-referencing between chapters—in the

hope that, rather than merely irritating readers, this may help persuade them that the essays comprised do in fact have a greater degree of unity than may be immediately apparent.

I noted in the Preface to the first edition that, in contrast to engaging in collaborative research, writing a book such as *On Sociology* is an essentially solitary task in which the need for support and conviviality can be keenly felt. Most of the individuals and institutions that I then thanked for having sustained me in this regard I must thank once again, and with special mention of David Cox, Robert Erikson, and Walter Müller, as friends who can always combine the sharpest of observations with great good humour, and of Liz Martin and her staff in the Nuffield College Library who splendidly maintain its tradition of high-quality service with a smile.

In addition, I am grateful to my colleagues Richard Breen, Tak Wing Chan, Michelle Jackson and Colin Mills for many rewarding discussions, often ranging far beyond the several research projects in which we have of late been engaged; and further to Michelle for her valiant but, alas, often unavailing attempts at improving my IT skills and for dealing womanfully with various disasters that have ensued. Lynn Prince Cooke also greatly lightened my life, through entertaining, bordering on outrageous, lunch-time conversations, not least on the theme of ‘when little men cast long shadows, then surely night is coming’.

Finally, I have to thank my wife, Rhiannon, and all other members of my family for their forbearance over the period in which *On Sociology* again preoccupied me, and especially since this was one in which the vicissitudes of family life were especially marked, as the dedication of the new edition reflects.

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