

Social Mobility in Ireland in the 1990s: Evidence from the 1994 Living in Ireland Survey

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Abstract: In this paper we seek to update findings relating to class mobility outcomes and processes in the Republic of Ireland employing data from the Living in Ireland Survey which was carried out in 1994. We also provide an evaluation of a measured variable model of the mobility process developed on an earlier data set. Our findings confirm that transformation of the class structure has been associated with substantial levels of social mobility. At the same time inequalities of opportunity as reflected in the underlying patterns of social fluidity remain substantial and are constant across cohorts. Gender differences are almost entirely a consequence of occupational segregation and there is no evidence that the underlying processes of class disadvantage operate differently for men and women.

I INTRODUCTION

In this paper we draw on data from the Living in Ireland Survey that was conducted in 1994 to provide an updated picture of social mobility in the Republic of Ireland. Hout (1989) provided a comprehensive analysis of social mobility in the early 1970s in both parts of the island. This picture was updated for the Republic of Ireland drawing on data from the ESRI Survey of Poverty, Income and Usage of State Services conducted in 1987 (Breen and Whelan, 1996). We would not expect dramatic changes in mobility patterns between 1987 and 1994, although the agricultural sector continued to decline and the service sector to increase while at the same time female participation rates climbed sharply (O'Connell, 1999). However, apart from the general desire to have the

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most up-to-date picture possible, there are a number of reasons why we would like to take advantage of the availability of the 1994 data. The Irish case, as Erikson and Jonsson (1996, p. 47) note, provides a particularly appropriate test of the liberal theory of industrialisation that sees occupational replacement becoming more meritocratic over time, in response to the functional necessities of advanced capitalism. This is because, as a consequence of late and rapid industrialisation, recent surveys include cohorts who have experienced the transformation of agrarian society along side those whose formative experiences preceded such change. By 1994, the respondents who are likely to have achieved a level of occupational maturity – those aged thirty or over – will be almost equally divided between these two groups. In addition, all respondents under forty will have had the opportunity to fully avail of free secondary education thus providing a better opportunity than in earlier analysis for the influence of this fundamental change in education policy to emerge .

Another important advantage provided by the availability of the 1994 survey is the opportunity to test models of mobility developed on earlier data. Breen and Whelan (1992; 1994) employing the 1987 data developed a measured variable model of mobility the AHP (agriculture, hierarchy, property) model deriving from a rational action perspective (RAT). This model they argued provided a satisfactory operationalisation of such a theoretically based account of the factors shaping the pattern of social fluidity in Ireland. One of the objectives of this paper is to assess the extent to which this model provides a satisfactory account of social fluidity patterns underlying the 1994 data.

In the analysis that follows we will deal first with male class mobility, focusing in turn on class formation, inequality of opportunity and trends in social fluidity. We will then direct our attention to the mobility of women and the extent to which such mobility suggests that class processes operate in a different way for men and women.

II THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Changes in the class structure provide the context of social mobility. The picture of relative stability in the class structure up to 1960 contrasts with that of rapid change thereafter. However, it is not necessary for us to provide a detailed account of such changes because this task has already been accomplished by O'Connell (1999). He identifies the following set of crucial changes which took place between 1961 and 1991.

- A rapid decline in the number of employers and self-employed individuals deriving their income from self-employment from almost 40 per cent of the total at work to 22 per cent.
- A dramatic growth in middle class positions. The proportion of upper-middle

class employees – including professionals, managers and salaried employees – more than doubled: from just under 10 per cent of total employment to 22 per cent. There was a particularly marked expansion for women in the lower professional category where the percentage rose from 9 to 19 per cent largely due to expansion in health and education.

- The lower-middle class in which women predominate expanded from 12 per cent to almost 17.
- Skilled manual work increased moderately for men from 12 to 17 per cent but fell for women from 6 to 3 per cent.
- There was a steady decline in semi-skilled and unskilled manual work from 19 to 12 per cent. With a particularly sharp drop being observed for men where the fall was from 21 to 13 per cent.
- Unemployment increased dramatically from 5 per cent of the labour force to 15 per cent.
- The removal of at least some of the impediments to women's participation in the labour market meant many of the newly created opportunities were taken by women, contributing to the substantial increase in women's employment over the three decades particularly in the latter half of the period.

These structural changes provide the context of social mobility. This is most obvious in relation to *absolute mobility rates* by which we simply mean the proportion of individuals who are mobile from one class to another. Those originating in classes that are declining will be “pushed” out of such classes while people are “pulled” into such expanding classes. Authors such as Payne (1990) have argued that this process of occupational transformation associated with economic development should be embraced as the central issue in mobility research. However, we share the scepticism expressed by Goldthorpe (1990a) regarding the possibility of providing a theory of class structural change.

My judgement would be that with both occupational and class structures alike, the diversity and moreover the specificity of the factors and the conjunctions of factors that bear on them are such that we must look far more to *historical* accounts of their particular forms, patterns of change and diversity than to theoretical ones. Thus so far as the analysis of mobility is concerned, structural effects though requiring careful description ... will still have to be treated as essentially “exogenous”; class analysis must then take a given structural context as its starting point and concentrate on the elucidation of the processes occurring *within* that context (Goldthorpe, 1990a, p. 417).¹

1. For a development of this position and a critique of Marxist and modernisation theories of changes in occupational structure see Goldthorpe (1990b).

From this perspective *relative mobility rates* by which measure the extent to which the chances of achieving a position in a particular class destination depends on one's origin class seem to be a much more promising sociological *explananda*, with the theoretical task being to show how regularities in such rates are created and sustained.²

In the following sections we will consider both absolute and mobility rates but in line with the foregoing argument the nature of the explanatory accounts offered will differ.³

III DATA, VARIABLES AND ANALYTIC PROCEDURES

The data analysis reported in this paper here are based on the Living in Ireland Survey (LII) that was conducted in 1994. The survey provides a random sample of non-institutional households and of adults within such households. The data has been re-weighted in line with independent population estimates.⁴ Restricting our analysis to those aged between 20-64 gives us 3,093 valid cases for men and 1,487 for women not in full time unpaid home duties.

Current class position is based on information relating to current or previous occupation. In the Republic of Ireland class of origin is based on the principal occupation of "the main breadwinner in the family" when the respondent was growing up. The class schema we employ in this study is that developed by Goldthorpe's (1980/87) project. This schema brings together within class categories positions whose incumbents are typically comparable in terms of their levels and sources of income, their degree of economic security, their chances of economic advancement and their relationship to authority. Underlying the observed differences in conditions of employment is a more basic distinction between self-employed and employees, and between the nature of the employment relationship between different types of employees and their employers. The key feature of this employment relationship is the way in which commitment is obtained from the workforce. Distinguishing between professional and managerial workers or the service class and manual workers, Evans (1992, p. 214) concludes that:

In simple terms one could say that the service class employees are controlled by the "carrot" of long-term benefits and workers by the "stick" of close regulation and the labour contract.

2. Goldthorpe (1998, p. 168) develops this form of argument in the context of a more general consideration of the use of rational action theory (RAT) in sociology.

3. O'Connell (1999) offers a detailed account of recent changes in the class structure.

4. Further details of the sample are provided in Callan *et al.* (1996).

Our analysis will commence with a descriptive account of class formation and inequality of opportunity through an examination of inflow and outflow mobility tables. Drawing on a model of the underlying mobility process that is informed by a rational choice perspective we proceed to provide an analytic account of the forces that shape the observed mobility flows. (Goldthorpe, 1996; 1998). In the next section of the paper we will deal with the class mobility of men, before proceeding to a detailed treatment of gender differences.

IV THE CLASS MOBILITY OF MEN

In the analysis of male mobility that follows we will deal, in turn, with class formation, observed inequalities of opportunity, and the mobility regime or underlying effects that structure such opportunities.

Class Formation

In dealing with issues of class formation we are concerned not so much with the degree of inequality in mobility chances but with the outcome of these chances in terms of class formation. The study of social mobility has most frequently been motivated by a concern with the extent to which the highest social classes are based on self-recruitment. Arguments relating to the existence of a self-perpetuating elite must be settled in terms of the absolute number of upwardly mobile into the class. This is so because not only is a composition of the elite affected by how open a society is, in the sense of relative mobility opportunities, but also by the nature of societal change which determines the size of the elite group.

The relevant data relate to the “inflow” to the elite category from the various origin classes. In Table 1 we present the inflow table for the most widely used seven-class version of the Goldthorpe class schema. A comparison of the origin and destination distributions provides an indication of the kind of structural change that, in large part, shapes observed patterns of mobility. There are almost twice as many respondents found currently in the professional and managerial class as had originated in that class. On the other hand, the number presently in the farming class was only one-third of that found in the corresponding origin class. The routine non-manual class had also increased by over 50 per cent. A change in the balance of the manual class was also observed with unskilled positions being in a majority in the origin distribution and skilled ones in the destination distribution.

Given such structural change a pattern of rigid intergenerational mobility is obviously not possible. The growth of the service class is reflected in the fact that only one-in-four of those presently located there have originated in this class. In other words, three-out-of-four members of the class have been upwardly

Table 1: *Class Composition for Men aged 20-64 in 1994 in the Republic of Ireland (Percentage by Column)*

Class Origins	Current Class						
	Professional and Managerial (I + II)	Routine Non- Manual (III)	Petty Bourgeoisie (IV a+b)	Farmers (IVc)	Skilled Manual (V/VI)	Non-Skilled Manual (VIIa)	Agricultural Workers (VIIb)
Professional and Managerial (I+II)	26.6	12.9	2.8	1.2	5.6	3.0	1.9
Routine Non-Manual (III)	14.7	14.8	5.9	1.6	8.2	5.7	3.1
Petty Bourgeoisie (IV a+b)	9.9	8.8	17.7	1.8	5.6	5.4	7.6
Farmers (IVc)	16.8	14.0	28.7	88.0	14.4	16.5	47.5
Skilled Manual (V/VI)	16.9	23.1	15.7	1.5	33.1	23.6	10.7
Non-skilled Manual (VIIa)	14.4	24.7	23.8	5.3	29.8	41.3	12.6
Agricultural Workers (VIIb)	0.8	1.8	5.4	0.6	3.3	12.1	17.1
Total in Current Class	19.8	15.7	8.3	9.5	25.7	18.0	2.9

mobile into it. Indeed over three-out-of-ten are drawn from the industrial working class, and a further one-in-six come from farming backgrounds. What is striking is the heterogeneity rather than the homogeneity of the professional and managerial class. Of course, the conclusions that one draws regarding the extent of social closure will depend on one's definition of "elite". One-in-five men are located in the service class. That may be thought by some to constitute too large a group to reveal patterns of elite closure. However, the higher professional and managerial group, which is only half as large, displays a relatively similar pattern; the level of self-recruitment reaches just over 30 per cent but almost as many men are recruited from the working class. Proponents of the thesis of closure at the top have failed to acknowledge the consequences for absolute levels of social mobility of the "upgrading" of the class structure; whereby structural change has created room at the top for many born outside the service class. The expansion of the service class ensures that while only one-in-ten men have service class origins, twice as many now find themselves in this class.

Paradoxically, an obsession with social closure at the peak of the class hierarchy has lead to a neglect of the far greater homogeneity of origins, which is evident among the working class. Almost two-out-of-three of this class had their roots there and almost half the remainder are sons of farmers. Thus the classes with the highest risk of deprivation and marginalisation form a substantial self-recruiting block. The buffers against downward mobility are a great deal more impressive than the barriers to upward mobility.

With regard to the remaining classes, the routine non-manual is the most heterogeneous of all. The class origins of its incumbents come close to mirroring those of men overall with the only deviations being an under-representation of farmers and a slight over-representation of the white-collar classes. At the other extreme are farmers with close to nine-out-of-ten being self-recruited. Despite its property owning status, the petty bourgeoisie display a relative modest level of self-recruitment with just over one-in-six being immobile and draws members from across the class spectrum. Farmers and the working class thus represent the two self-reproducing blocks in the class structure of the Republic of Ireland; although the processes underlying and the social consequences of such reproduction are very different in the two cases.

Inequalities of Opportunity

When we focus on inequalities of opportunity or class mobility chances, we must shift our attention from inflow rates to outflow rates. We are now concerned with the probability of men from a given class origin being found in particular destination classes. In Table 2 we show the outflow pattern for 1994 for men in the Republic of Ireland. From this table we can see that 54 per cent of men with professional and managerial origins are currently found in that class while 21

Table 2: *Class Mobility Chances for Men aged 20-64 in 1994 (Percentage by Column)*

Class Origins								
Current Class	Professional and Managerial (I + II)	Routine Non-Manual (III)	Petty Bourgeoisie (IV a+b)	Farmers (IVc)	Skilled Manual (V/VI)	Non-Skilled Manual (VIIa)	Agricultural Workers (VIIb)	Total
Professional and Managerial (I+II)	54.3	31.9	25.7	13.6	15.5	11.5	5.0	19.8
Routine Non-Manual (III)	20.9	25.6	18.2	9.0	16.9	15.7	9.2	15.7
Petty Bourgeoisie (IV a+b)	2.4	5.4	19.3	9.9	6.1	8.0	14.6	8.3
Farmers (IVc)	1.2	1.7	2.2	34.5	0.6	2.1	1.9	9.5
Skilled Manual (V/VI)	15.0	23.21	19.0	15.2	39.6	31.1	27.1	25.7
Non-skilled Manual (VIIa)	5.6	11.2	12.7	12.2	19.8	30.2	26.4	18.0
Agricultural Workers (VIIb)	0.5	1.0	2.9	5.6	1.4	1.4	15.8	2.9
Total in Class Origin	9.7	9.1	7.6	24.3	21.5	24.7	3.1	100.0

per cent had been downwardly mobile into the industrial working class. These figures are almost identical to those observed in 1973 and 1987 and are very close to those found in other industrial societies (Hout, 1989; Whelan, Breen and Whelan, 1992). At the other end of the scale, we find that 13 per cent of the industrial working class had been upwardly mobile into the service class while 61 per cent had been stable over time. Comparison with the CASMIN results suggests the comparatively low figure for long-range upward mobility is the most distinctive feature of the pattern of mobility between the service class and the industrial working class (Breen, Whelan and Whelan, 1992). The chances of being found currently in the service class declines from better than one-in-two for those originating in that class to less than one-in-eight for those with non-skilled manual backgrounds, and finally bottoms out at one-in-twenty for sons of agricultural workers. A hierarchy of advantage exists in which the routine non-manual class and the petty-bourgeoisie have a probability of success close to half that of those with service class origins. They, in turn, enjoy advantages over farmers and the working classes of between two and three-to-one; while the latter hold a similar position of superiority in relation to the sons of agricultural workers. The pattern of disadvantage in relation to recruitment to non-skilled work is somewhat different. Once again the service class is distinguished by a particularly favourable situation with less than 6 per cent of men from such origins being found at the bottom of the class hierarchy. However, on this occasion those from farming backgrounds resemble the routine-non-manual and petty bourgeois classes rather than the manual ones. Men originating in each of these classes have, approximately, a one-in-eight chance of being found in the unskilled manual class. On this occasion manual workers are more clearly distinguished from others, and there is a much sharper differentiation within this group. One-in-five men from a skilled manual background have been downwardly mobile into this class while three-out-of-ten from the non-skilled manual have remained in the class.

The strongest tendency towards "inheritance" of class is found in the service class. Next in order are skilled manual workers, farmers and the unskilled manual class; where the figures range between 30 and 40 per cent respectively of the origin group. Agricultural workers display the lowest level of self-recruitment; followed by the petty bourgeois and routine non-manual classes; the respective figures being one-in-six, one-in-four and one-in-five. The other feature of the mobility pattern that is apparent on inspection of the table is the white-collar/blue-collar divide. Thus, while those from service class backgrounds are slightly more likely than those from the non-skilled manual class to be found in routine-non-manual positions, the former are twice as likely to be in skilled manual work.

Modelling the Mobility Regime

In order to deal more systematically with inequalities of opportunity it is necessary to develop a precise definition of relative mobility. To do so we introduce the notions of disparity and odds ratios. A useful indicator of the advantage enjoyed by those from service class origins over those with non-skilled manual backgrounds in access to the service class is provided by dividing 54.3 (the percentage of the service class who originate in that class) by 11.5 (the percentage of men with non-skilled manual origins currently in the service class). This yields a *disparity ratio* of 4.72 reflecting the extent of the advantage enjoyed by those from service class backgrounds in the competition for entry to this class. Similarly, an index of the degree disadvantage experienced by the non-skilled manual class, in comparison with the service class, in the struggle to avoid membership of the latter class is given by the disparity ratio $30.2/5.6$ i.e. 5.39. Multiplying these disparity ratios gives us an *odds ratio* of 25.4 which provides an index of the advantage enjoyed by those of service class origins over the non-skilled manual class in the competition to gain access to the former class and avoid entry to the latter. An odds ratio can be calculated for every pair of origin and destination categories. The notion of odds is familiar to everyone with an interest in gambling; rather than saying that the probability of one team winning is 0.2, we say that the odds are 4:1 against the team winning. The set of odds ratios associated with a mobility table can be seen as reflecting the outcome of a series of competitions between individuals from different class backgrounds for available destinations. The closer the value of the odds ratio is to unity the more equal or “perfect” is the particular competition to which it refers. Odds ratios can be interpreted as expressing the pattern of association between origins and destinations *net* of the marginal distributions. In other words, they measure how strongly class origins influence destinations independently of any change in the size distribution of classes, and hence provide a measure of how “open” a given class structure is. So two mobility tables could have quite different origin and destination distributions and still display the same pattern of relative mobility rates or as Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992, p. 56) express it, the same pattern of social fluidity.⁵ The extent of social fluidity is taken as an indicator of

5. Recently the use of odds ratios to summarise patterns of inequality has been criticised on the grounds that the standard being set is too stringent. Ringen (1997, p. 142) argues that if the structure of the class system improves while the pattern of association remains the same then the degree of inequality in distributional outcome should decline. This he suggests can be more adequately captured by indices such as a modified Gini coefficient. However, despite arguments to the contrary by authors such as Payne (1990) and Saunders (1990) mainstream mobility analysis has always acknowledged the extent of absolute mobility associated with “upgrading” of the class structure and the sociological significance of such mobility. Furthermore, concentration on the set of disparity ratios relating to access to classes at the peak of the hierarchy will produce conclusions relating to declining inequality of opportunity not dissimilar to those proffered by Ringen. However, the odds ratio measure also

“openness” in a particular society. While not all inequality in outcomes of access to desirable class positions arises out of inequality of opportunity, research suggests that a substantial part of it does (Marshall and Swift, 1993, 1996; Breen and Goldthorpe, 1999).

In attempting to explain the observed patterns of social fluidity we adopt a rational action perspective. This approach views actors as utilising resources in order to make choices between differentially preferred alternatives each of which carries a cost (Breen and Rottman, 1995, p. 3). Even where the term “rational action” is not explicitly employed, this perspective may be found to underlie a particular explanatory model. This is the case for Goldthorpe’s (1980/87, p. 99) model of social fluidity which incorporates the relative desirability of different class destinations, the economic, social and cultural resources associated with different class origins and barriers to mobility.

In pursuing this approach we seek, as far as possible, to explain social fluidity in terms of measured independent variables. This contrasts with models such as Erikson and Goldthorpe’s (1987, a & b) “core model of social fluidity” (CoSF) where all effects are modelled by dummy variables and there is no immediate relationship between social fluidity and the factors which might be considered to influence it.⁶ Critics of the *post hoc* nature of inferences about the process of mobility competition have ignored the development of the measured variable strategy. Mobility studies have also been criticised for the assumption that everyone participates equally in the competition and that all agree on which positions are the attractive ones (Ringén, 1997; Saunders, 1990). These criticisms have tended to ignore the extent to which the ability of models such as the CoSF to account for the observed data actually involves a process of hypothesis confirmation. Our approach also makes this process more explicit. Thus, except to the extent that inclusion of specific terms in our model indicates otherwise, we “avoid reference to distinctive class values, norms, ‘forms of consciousness’ or other supposed aspects of class cultures or subcultures” (Goldthorpe, 1996, p. 487).

We therefore seek to construct a model that incorporates the most important aspects of desirability, resources and barriers to mobility. One important element here is the hierarchical ordering of classes, in terms of each of these features.

takes into account the disparity ratios dealing with the risk of being located in the lower of the pair of social classes involved in the comparison. Here, the trend has generally been in the direction of increased inequality as those from higher social classes become relatively insulated from downward mobility. In circumstances where factors such as high levels of unemployment have contributed to a deterioration in the life-chances of those in lower social classes, there appears to be little sociological or methodological justification in excluding this component from our measures of social fluidity.

6. Earlier versions of measured variable models of mobility include Hout (1984).

But hierarchical differences are only one such element. Other important effects relate to inheritance and sector. Inheritance effects cover all those that increase the likelihood of individuals being found in the class from which they originated. A tendency towards such inheritance, in excess of that which we might expect on the basis of the impact of hierarchical influences, could be expected to arise as a result of the particular attractiveness to individuals of positions within their own class of origin. Alternatively, it could come about as a consequence of opportunities or barriers being of a somewhat different kind for “insiders” and “outsiders”. Over and above this we would expect some degree of immobility as a result of the direct transfer of property. Finally, with regard to sectoral effects, tendencies towards movement within the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors are likely to be stronger than movement between the sectors, even when we allow for the influence of hierarchy and inheritance.

Breen and Whelan (1992; 1994), taking Goldthorpe’s theoretical model as a base, developed a model which was intended to account for the pattern of social fluidity or inequalities in competition which characterise male mobility in the Republic of Ireland. The model which they refer to as the Agriculture Hierarchy and Property Model (AHP) model, involves the following three main dimensions.

- Agriculture: the existence of a barrier to movement into agricultural destinations;
- Hierarchy: the effect of a generalised resources, desirability and barriers, of a hierarchical kind;
- Property: the effects arising from the existence of classes based on ownership of the means of production.

In implementing this approach we attempt to capture the desirability of different class destinations in a single measure Y , this is derived from the average values on four measures drawn from the Living in Ireland Survey 1994 . These are:

- Y1: gross individual income in each destination class;⁷
- Y2: the mean score in each destination class on a 19 point consumption scale;
- Y3: the percentage of men in each destination class unemployed or permanently unable to work due to illness or disability;
- Y4: the percentage of men in each destination having more than primary education.

Two similar measures are available relating to origin classes:

7. In analysing the 1987 survey we used household income.

- X1: the percentage of fathers in each origin class having only primary education;
- X2: the mean score in each origin class on a scale measuring the respondent's perception of his family's relative financial standing when he was growing up.

We obtain a composite measure of the destination class desirability (called Y) the first principal component of Y1, Y2, Y3 and Y4. Similarly, we construct a composite measure of origin class resources (called X) by taking the principal component of X1 and X2. These are multiplied together to form a variable XY that models the effect of generalised resources, desirability and barriers conceptualised in a hierarchical fashion.⁸ The ownership of the means of production is a further resource for mobility while at the same time being a distinctive barrier. This resource/barrier is modelled as the proportion in each origin class who are self-employed or own a business (we call this variable P1) multiplied by the proportion of men in each destination who are self-employed or who own a business (P2). The product of these two variables is entered into the model as P.

In addition to these variables, the model contains three other effects. First we model class inheritance as a single effect, common to all social classes, augmented by an extra inheritance parameter for farmers. This allows for a higher level of self-recruitment for farmers. This parameter is necessary because in practice almost the only way of becoming a farmer is through inheritance – something that is not true to the same extent for the other classes. (We label these terms INH1 and INH3 respectively.) Second a distinction is drawn between agricultural (farmer and farm workers) and non-agricultural classes. A barrier is posited to mobility from the latter into the former though not to movement in the opposite direction. Thus the model assumes it is very unlikely that someone born outside the agricultural classes will move into them, but there are no particular obstacles to men born in the agricultural classes moving outside them. (This term is called AGB.) Finally, a parameter is added which captures a particular advantage that is the increased likelihood for men from farming and the petty bourgeois origins to be found in the service class, net of all other effects in the model. (This is the SLP term.) Together P12 and SLP capture the pattern of movement within the classes that own the means of production.

All three of these additional effects can be seen as representing specific resources (for inheritance or class position or access to the service class) or barriers to (the sectoral division) to mobility. We can then write this model as

8. Note that this term models the effects of desirability and barriers as varying according to the resources for mobility enjoyed by the differing origin classes, and similarly, the effect of resources varies according to the level of desirability/barriers of each destination class.

$$\text{Log } F_{ij} = \lambda + \lambda^F + \lambda^S + \lambda^{\text{INH1}} + \lambda^{\text{INH3}} + \lambda^{\text{AGB}} + \alpha(\text{XY}) + \beta(\text{P12})$$

where F_{ij} is the expected value in the ij th cell of the table, α is the parameter of the association between X and Y and β that between P1 and P2.

In order to test how well this log-linear model fits the observed pattern of mobility we compute the expected frequencies in the cells and compare these with the actual or observed frequencies. The G^2 statistic measures the magnitude of this difference while the degrees of freedom provide an indication of how parsimonious our model is. We would like the G^2 to be as small as possible, or at least not much greater than its degrees of freedom. When the AHP model was fitted to the 1987 mobility data for the Republic of Ireland it gave a G^2 of 40.19 with 30 degrees of freedom and provided a satisfactory fit to the data. For the 1994 LII survey the G^2 was 69.3 and the model does not provide a statistically satisfactory fit; although it does reduce the G^2 associated with the model that assumes destinations are independent of origins by 94 per cent. In order to achieve satisfactory fit it is necessary to add three additional terms to the model. The first (which we label INH2) takes into account greater immobility in the service class than was allowed for in the original model. The second (which we term AF1) captures stronger reciprocal flows between the service class and the routine non-manual class than had been anticipated. Finally, we add a term (labelled AF2) which takes into account stronger than expected flows between the petty bourgeoisie and agricultural workers. This revised model produces a G^2 of 32.2 with 27 degrees of freedom and provides a satisfactory fit. The AF2 term may in part reflect the fact that agricultural work is frequently a transitory state and the limited opportunities to find work as an employee in rural labour markets. The other two parameters are more easily interpreted as reflecting a greater degree of social closure than had been originally allowed for. The advantages enjoyed by the service class in maintaining their privileged position is greater than can be accounted for by our original formulation and the nature of the white-collar/blue-collar divide is more powerful than anticipated.

Full details of the parameters of the model are provided in Table 3. In Panel A we show the two principal component type scores for origins (resources) and destinations (desirability/barriers). The higher the principal component score the greater the resources for mobility (in the case of origin scores) or the greater the desirability of specific classes and the barriers associated with access to them (in the case of destination scores). The results show that the routine non-manual class, and skilled and non-skilled manual classes occupy relatively lower positions in the hierarchy of destinations than origins. The reverse holds for the petty-bourgeoisie and the agricultural classes. Generally the rank orderings are very much as we would expect.

Table 3: *Modelling Relative Mobility for Men Aged 20-64 in 1994 in the Republic of Ireland: Results of Applying the Agriculture, Hierarchy and Property Model*

<i>A Goodness of Fit</i>		<i>G²</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>rG²</i>
	Independence Model AHP	1,160.60	36.00	—
i)	Original Model	69.30	30.00	94.0
Ii)	Final Model	32.20	27.00	97.20
<i>B Principal Component Scores</i>		<i>Origins</i>		<i>Destinations</i>
(I+II)	Professional and Managerial	0.86		1.01
(III)	Routine Non-Manual	0.41		0.16
(IVa+b)	Petty Bourgeoisie	0.11		0.20
(IVc)	Farmers	-0.21		-0.03
(V/VI)	Skilled Manual	0.05		-0.12
(VIIa)	Non-Skilled Manual	-0.29		-0.84
(VIIa)	Agricultural Workers	-0.55		-0.54
<i>C Parameter Estimates</i>		<i>Estimate</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	
INH1	(2)	0.30	0.06	
INH2	(2)	0.89	0.26	
INH3	(2)	0.83	0.28	
AGB	(2)	-1.79	0.21	
SLP	(2)	0.59	0.12	
β		0.85	0.07	
α		1.01	0.25	
AF1		1.05	0.25	
AF2		0.62	0.14	

The individual parameter estimates are all statistically significant. There is a significant tendency for all men to be found in their class of origin ($\text{INH1}=0.31$), but this is particularly pronounced among the service class and farmers as the significant effects of INH2 and INH3 show.⁹ We can give all these parameters an interpretation in terms of partial odds ratios. These are the odds ratios that arise from a particular effect in the model, holding other effects constant. This can be illustrated by taking the inheritance parameters. The advantage enjoyed by those born into a class is captured by the odds of a man born into Class A being found in Class A rather than Class B, divided by the odds of a man born in Class B being found in Class A rather than Class B. This ratio is increased by $\exp(0.31) = 1.36$. In other words, the inequality is 1.36 times greater than it would be, given the other effects in the model, because of the tendency for class inheritance. But if Class A is the service class we must add to INH1 the value of

9. INH2 and INH3 are measured as additional to the overall level of class inheritance.

INH2. In this case the partial odds ratio is 3.13. In the case of farmers it is 3.32. Thus, in both these cases, inequality in access to the class between those who are born into it and those born outside is increased by a factor of over three.

The parameter representing the barrier to entry to the agricultural sector is very large and negative showing that the movement from the non-agricultural to the agricultural sector is much lower than would be expected on the basis of the other components of the model. Here the partial odds is 0.17 showing that men born outside the agricultural sector have, all else being constant, only about one-sixth the chance enjoyed by men born into that sector of being found in the agricultural sector. The parameter representing the advantages for access to the service class among the petty bourgeoisie and farmers is positive suggesting that, when we control for other factors, such men have 1.8 times the odds of being found in the service class of men originating in other classes. The significant effect for the first affinity term shows that men from the routine non-manual class have almost 1.9 times, all else being constant, greater odds of being in the service class rather than any other class than do men from outside this class. For men in the service class the same holds true for the routine non-manual class. Similarly, the value of the second affinity term indicates that men from agricultural worker origins, all else being constant, are 2.8 times more likely to be found in the petty bourgeoisie than men from other classes. This is also true in relation to the reciprocal movement from petty bourgeois origins to agricultural work.

The parameter β tells us how strongly the measure XY influences social fluidity. It is large and positive indicating that differences between classes in their origin scores and/or their destination scores are magnified so as to lead to large inequalities between men of different class origins in the competition for different destinations. These measures constitute a hierarchy of classes in terms of origin and destinations. So, given any pair of destination classes, the greater the difference in the resources score, X, between two origin classes the more unequal will be the competition for one rather than another of the destination classes. Similarly, this inequality will increase the greater is the difference in the Y score between the destination classes in question. Greater resources will make it relatively easier to enter classes with a high desirability/barriers score. The magnitude of this effect is given by the β parameter, finally, α plays a similar role in relation to the measure P. Access to the classes in which the self-employed are found in greater numbers is easier the higher the value of P.

These findings are consistent with earlier research that shows the Republic of Ireland to have class inequalities of opportunity considerably greater than most other countries including. England and Wales.¹⁰ More recent research has

10. See Breen and Whelan (1996, Chapter 4 for a detailed treatment).

shown that mobility chances are more closely tied to class origins in the South than in the North (Breen and Whelan, 1999). The AHP model ties such inequality of opportunity directly to inequality of condition by showing the role which inequalities in origin resources and differences in barriers to entry and attractiveness of destination play in the mobility process.

*The Impact of Emigration*¹¹

The evidence we have presented provides an accurate picture of mobility for those resident in Ireland at the time of the survey. The question remains of whether the pattern of social fluidity has been influenced by emigration. For emigration to affect our conclusions about social fluidity two conditions are required. First, migration should be selective within classes with respect to the factors that influence mobility chances and second, this selective migration must operate differently among people from different class origins. In general, migration *per se* will have no such effect unless it is differentiated in some way with respect not simply to class origins but also to those factors that more directly influence an individual's mobility chances. Consider, for example, a situation in which people from one class origin were substantially more likely to migrate than people from other classes. Of itself this would not have any impact on observed patterns of social fluidity, providing that the migrants from this class were a random sample of everyone who originated in that class. In this case we can conclude that the social fluidity experiences of those who remained in Ireland was what those who emigrated would also have experienced had they not done so. But suppose, instead, that those who migrated from this class were those who were most likely to be downwardly mobile in Ireland because they lacked some particular resource associated with mobility: they might, for example, have particularly low levels of educational attainment. In this case, the migrants would not be a random sample of everyone originating from that class, and so the observed experiences of the non-migrants could not be assumed to be indicative of what would have happened to them had they chosen to remain in Ireland. Rather, had they remained we would have observed less upward mobility from this class than we in fact saw. Suppose now that the class in question was the service class: then observed social fluidity will be rather less than it would have been had there been no emigration. This is because, in the absence of migration, the service class would have contained a larger proportion of people who were likely to be downwardly mobile and so the advantaged position of this class, *vis-à-vis* the others, would be somewhat eroded. Conversely, if the class in question were the skilled manual class, say, then the migration of those with the fewest mobility resources will cause observed social fluidity to be somewhat

11. The discussion below draws on Breen *et al.* (1999, pp. 337-340).

greater than it would be were the migrants to have remained within an Irish mobility regime. However, suppose that these patterns of selective migration were true of all classes: then social fluidity would be unaffected because, in this example, those with the poorest mobility chances would be removed from consideration in all classes.

Breen *et al.* (1999, p. 339) using data from the British General Household Survey (GHS) did find evidence that the relationship between class origins and educational qualification was weaker for emigrants to Britain than for non-migrants. This evidence that the low level of fluidity we have observed may owe something to the effects of selective migration. However, as Breen *et al.* (1999, p. 337) note the evidence relates to only one mobility resource while we know that patterns of social fluidity are not simply a reflection of the differential distribution of educational qualifications.

One might equally well argue that, far from selective migration being the cause of lower social fluidity it was the consequence, in as much as well qualified people from less advantaged classes migrated precisely because they believed that low social fluidity would prevent them securing the returns to their qualifications that they might obtain elsewhere.

In the following section we direct our attention to trends in mobility. For differential mobility to affect our conclusion in this regard it would have to not only fulfil the conditions outlined above but the pattern of differential selectivity would have to vary significantly over time.

Trends in Social Fluidity

In order to test for change over time in fluidity patterns we restrict our analysis to men aged between 30 and 64 years and compare those aged 30 to 44 years with those aged 45 to 64 years. The former will have entered the labour market no earlier than the mid-1960s while the latter will have done so between the mid-1940s and the earlier 1960s. A trend towards increased meritocracy should be reflected in a more open mobility regime for the younger age group. In fact what we test is the alternative hypothesis of no change over cohorts. We do so by allowing marginal effects, and therefore absolute mobility, to vary across cohort while at the same time holding constant the parameters of the AHP model, implying constant relative mobility. This model of variable absolute mobility but constant relative mobility results in a G^2 of 83.8 with 62 degrees of freedom and leads to a reduction of 91 in the corresponding figure for the independence model. Since the model of constant parameters across time provides a satisfactory fit to the data we can conclude that no evidence exists of a trend over time towards a more open pattern of relative mobility.

V THE CLASS MOBILITY OF WOMEN

The exclusion, until relatively recently, of women from mobility analysis has led to the treatment of gender being identified as the most controversial issue confronting present day class analysis. The neglect of women was in part justified on the grounds that the class mobility of women and men is best understood if the family is given priority over the individual as the unit of class composition. The practice, which was been most frequently adopted, of taking the class of the conjugal family as following from that of its male head was justified on the basis of the assumption that he typically had the fullest commitment to work force participation. The employment relationship of the family member with the “dominant” job was seen to extend beyond the work place in terms of its consequences for “experiences of affluence or hardship, of economic security or insecurity, of prospects of continuing material advance, or of unyielding material constraints” (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992, p. 236). The expectation therefore, was that it would be through his class position that the life chances of the members of the family would be crucially affected.

It is precisely this practice of allocating women to their male partners class positions on which the bulk of feminist criticism has focused. This practice, it was argued has become increasingly indefensible as women’s participation in the labour force has increased. (Abbot and Payne, 1990; Abbot and Sapsford, 1987.) In the ensuing exchanges the merits of allocating class position on the basis of the individual, the joint situation of partners, the family member with the dominant labour market, or the position of the male head, have been intensely debated (Britten and Heath, 1983; Erikson, 1984; Heath and Britten, 1984; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). Elsewhere, we have argued the case, for taking the family as the unit of analysis based on recognition of differences in resources and power among family members. In so doing, we have argued that this need not entail an exclusion of women from mobility analysis. Rather we accept that male and female mobility may not have the same sociological meaning (Breen and Whelan, 1995). Since we do not intend to use current social class as an independent variable in our current analysis, a resolution of this question is less critical than it might otherwise be. In presenting our analysis of women’s mobility, we will, for convenience talk in terms of “class” mobility while continuing to hold the view that the class position of couples should be determined using the family as the unit of analysis.

One simple way of measuring the degree to which men and women differ in their allocation across origin and destination distributions is to calculate the percentage of one sex who would have to be allocated to another class, in order to make the distributions for the two sexes identical. This measure is termed “the index of dissimilarity” or delta. In relation to class origins (Erikson and

Goldthorpe, 1992, p. 243) report values for a number of European countries showing that between 2 and 6 per cent of women would have to “change” class in order to make the male and female distributions identical. The figure of 6 per cent, observed for the Republic of Ireland, is at the upper end of this continuum. Differences in relation to origin are negligible in comparison to those relating to current situation. The results reported by Erikson and Goldthorpe, show that from a quarter to about two-fifths of employed women would have to be reallocated in order to make their distribution the same as that for men. The Irish figure of 34 per cent is again at the high end of the continuum. One factor contributing to the large delta is the fact that just over one-quarter of women are in the service class compared to one-fifth of men.¹² The remaining differences reflect the existence of the marked sex segregation of labour markets that is found in all industrial societies. Apart from the exclusion of women from the property owning classes, the crucial factor is the extremely low number in skilled manual work; with only 8 per cent of women found in this class compared to 26 per cent of men. Correspondingly women are three times as likely to be found in the upper routine non-manual class and have almost two-and-a-half times more chance of being located in lower grade white-collar work and non-skilled manual work.¹³

The outflow pattern for women is shown in Table 4.¹⁴ This can be taken as showing the class mobility of women appears if the “individual” approach to the class allocation of women currently in the labour force is adopted. The results show some marked differences between destination classes occupied by men and women of identical class origins. With the exception of farming origins, women from each class origin have rather similar outflows to the service class.¹⁵ Women from farm origins are two-and-a-half times more likely than their male counterparts to be mobile into the service class. The remaining differences appear to be connected to the overall patterns of gender segregation in the labour market referred to earlier. Women are consistently over-represented in the higher and lower white collar and non-skilled manual classes; while at the same time being under represented among the petty-bourgeoisie, farmers and the skilled manual

12. It is necessary to take account that, since almost four-fifths of women in the service class are found in the lower professional and managerial class compared to just over one-half of men, men are still one-and-a-half times more likely to be found in the upper professional and managerial class.

13. The latter arises almost entirely from the fact that lower-grade white collar work is dominated by women with 30 per cent of them being found there compared with 9 per cent of men.

14. In relation to class composition the only noticeable difference between men and women is that while 17 per cent of service class men come from farming backgrounds this rises to 30 per cent for women.

15. Although immobility in the service class is rather lower for women.

Table 4: *Class Mobility Chances for Women Not in Home Duties Aged 20-64 in 1994 (Percentage by Column*

Class Origin							
Current Class	Professional and Managerial (I + II)	Routine Non-Manual (III)	Petty Bourgeoisie (IV a+b)	Farmers (IVc)	Skilled Manual (V / VI)	Non-Skilled Manual (VIIa)	Agricultural Workers (VIIb)
Professional and Managerial (I + II)	45.0	36.7	29.6	34.7	17.0	13.6	6.4
Routine Non-Manual (III)	25.0	28.3	20.3	17.3	18.1	17.2	5.4
Petty Bourgeoisie (IV a+b)	1.0	2.8	7.0	3.3	0.5	2.1	0.0
Farmers (IVc)	0.0	0.0	1.4	5.4	0.0	0.5	0.0
Skilled Manual (V/VI)	2.7	3.5	3.8	5.4	13.0	11.3	18.8
Non-Skilled Manual (VIIa)	26.0	28.7	37.9	33.4	51.3	55.0	69.5
Agricultural Workers (VIIb)	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0
Total in Class Origin	13.7	7.8	7.7	22.3	19.1	26.8	2.7

class. As a consequence of their exclusion from those class categories in which inheritance has its greatest influence, the mobility stakes are higher for women. In Table 5 we summarise the extent of women's mobility through employment in comparison with men. Women experience greater mobility than men; with 73 per cent of women having moved from their class of origin compared to 64 per cent of men. Women are more likely than men to experience vertical mobility. However, they have rather similar rates of non-vertical mobility. In calculating these figures, we follow Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992, p. 45) in taking the service class and the non-skilled manual class to represent the extremes of the hierarchy while all other class are taken as intermediate. Women have identical upward mobility rates to men, with 29 per cent of each sex experiencing such mobility. However, they experience significantly greater downward mobility with the respective figures being 30 per cent for women and 19 per cent for men. The rate of upward mobility for women in the Republic of Ireland is almost identical to that observed by Erikson and Goldthorpe for the five countries they examined. The level of downward mobility is at the high end of the range they observed; giving women a relatively low rate of upward to downward mobility of 0.96. The corresponding rate for men is 1.53.

Our findings in relation to women's mobility are entirely consistent with recent analysis of the nature and consequences of gender segregation in the labour market.¹⁶ The final question which we address is whether, underlying the observed differences in absolute mobility there are gender differences in relative mobility rates the neglect of which has "effectively distorted the understanding of the central process of social mobility" (Hayes and Miller, 1993, p. 654). The alternative hypothesis is that the sole source of gender variation in mobility chances is a consequence of differences in the structure of men and women's employment opportunities.

In order to test this hypothesis we seek to establish whether it is possible to account for gender differences in mobility simply by allowing for differences in origin and destination classes while assuming that the underlying pattern of social fluidity is the same for both sexes. This pattern of association is usually termed the constant social fluidity model (CnSF). The results set out in Table 6 provide strong support for this hypothesis.¹⁷ The CnSF model has a G^2 of 74.3 with 36 degrees of freedom. It reduces the G^2 for the conditional independence model by 94.7 per cent.¹⁸ In order to achieve a satisfactory fit it is necessary to take one important difference in male-female patterns of social fluidity in account. The CnSF model leads us to overestimate immobility in the routine

16. See O'Connor and Shortall (1999) for a detailed discussion of the bases of gender segregation.

17. See also Breen and Whelan (1995).

18. The conditional independence allows for association between gender and origins and destinations respectively but not for association between origins and destinations.

Table 5: *Total Mobility Rates, Total Vertical (TV), Total Non-Vertical (TNV), Total Upward (TU) and Total Downward (TD) Rates for Men and Women*

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Total Mobility Rates	63.5	72.6
Total Vertical (TV)	48.50	58.9
Total Non Vertical (TNV)	15.0	13.7
TV/TNV	3.2	4.3
Total Upward (TU)	29.4	28.9
Total Downward (TD)	19.1	30.0
TU/TD	1.5	1.0

non-manual class for men. This finding is consistent with the interpretation that such positions are less attractive to men from that background than women. Fixing the value of that cell gives us a G^2 of 50.4 and a reduction in the conditional independence G^2 of 96.5 per cent. The model comes extremely close to fitting the data.¹⁹ The results of our analysis confirm that in the Republic of Ireland inequalities in relative mobility chances are “gender blind” and are independent of the social processes that generate sex segregation in employment. In other words, women’s choices are explicable by the same rational choice processes observed in the case of men but their choices are made within the context of a structure of constraints and opportunities which is radically different to that confronting men.

Table 6: *Results of Fitting the Constant Social Fluidity Model to Women and Men’s Class Mobility*

	G^2	Df	rG^2
Conditional Independence	1,419.6	72.0	—
O*S + D*S			
CnSF Model	74.3	36.0	94.7
O*S D*S O*D			
CnSF Model Plus	42.8	33.0	97.0
Affinity Terms			

19. The critical value of G^2 is 49.8.

VI CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have sought to update our knowledge of social mobility outcomes and processes making use of the 1994 Living in Ireland data set. As we observed, the Irish experience of late industrialisation makes it an interesting test case for the liberal theory of industrialisation which hypothesises a trend towards meritocracy in status attainment.

In terms of absolute mobility our analysis shows that the transformation of the class structure has been associated with substantial levels of mobility. As a consequence, when we examine the mobility patterns of males we find that the service class, rather than constituting a self-perpetuating elite, is drawn from a variety of class backgrounds; with a substantial inflow from the industrial working class. The conclusion holds even when we restrict our attention to the upper professional and managerial group. The routine non-manual and petty bourgeois classes are also characterised by heterogeneity of origins. It is among the industrial working class that we observe the emergence of a self-recruiting block. Buffers against downward mobility are substantially more effective than barriers to upward mobility.

Wide-scale mobility, however, is consistent with the substantial departures from equality of opportunity. We have succeeded in providing an adequate account of the mobility regime in terms of the rational pursuit of more desirable locations, the existence of hierarchical barriers to such access, variation in origin resources and the operation of specific inheritance tendencies and affinities between classes and sectoral barriers. Furthermore, this model is constant across cohorts. The Republic of Ireland provides an excellent example of a situation in which social change does offer substantial opportunities for advancement, as reflected in absolute mobility rates, while the privileged classes respond to such change in a manner that leaves their relative advantages intact. A discussion of the consequences of such inequality of opportunity for class inequality in outcomes is beyond the scope of this paper.²⁰

The class distribution of women in the labour market differs significantly from that of men as a consequence of gender segregation in the labour market. As a result of this they experience more mobility than men do and, in particular, more downward mobility. The exclusion of women from skilled manual work and the property owning classes increases the mobility stakes. Gender differences in mobility processes, however, are almost entirely a consequence of differences in the overall distribution across destinations. There is no evidence that underlying processes of class advantage operate differently for men and women.

20. See Breen and Whelan (1996) chapter 8 and Nolan and Whelan (1999).

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