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Explaining the Irish Pattern of Social Fluidity: The Role of the Political

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Introduction

THE EMPIRICAL FOCUS of this paper is the pattern of intergenerational social mobility in the Republic of Ireland as revealed through data collected in 1987, and the degree to which this has changed in comparison with results obtained from an earlier mobility survey undertaken in 1973. The conceptual starting point of the paper, however, is a concern to examine the broader question of the relationship between politics and social mobility using, as evidence, the Irish data.

It is clear that political decisions in areas concerned with economic policy and development can influence social mobility. In Ireland, for example, since the 1950s the state has been active in shaping the structure of job opportunities (Breen *et al.*, 1990). In some cases—as in, say, the subsidising of small farmers—the impact of policy on mobility patterns may be readily identifiable, but in other areas, such as public sector job creation or expenditure on training, an assessment will raise complex questions related to the probable outcomes that would have arisen in the absence of such interventions (Breen, 1991a). Overall, then, we are in broad agreement with the view expressed by Goldthorpe (1990: 417) that, while the effects of such structural change on mobility levels and patterns are substantial, it seems unlikely that a useful sociological theory of occupational change or class structural change can be advanced. As a consequence

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> . . . class analysis must take a given structural context as its starting point and concentrate on the elucidation of the processes occurring within that context, mobility included. (Goldthorpe, 1990: 412).

In assessing the impact of politics on social mobility we therefore focus attention not on overall or 'absolute', rates of social mobility but, rather, on relative rates (or 'social fluidity'). The primary determinants of absolute rates are structural changes in a nation's occupational distribution over time. In mobility tables such shifts are reflected, albeit in a complex way and confounded with other effects, in the differences between the origin (fathers') and destination (sons') marginal distributions. Social fluidity, on the other hand, captures the degree of openness in intergenerational mobility net of structural effects as they are embodied in the marginal distributions of the mobility table. In other words, by concentrating on social fluidity we can then assess the degree to which relative mobility chances and the level of inequality of mobility opportunities are a reflection of the ideology of a country's political regime and the policies pursued by governments, possibly over long periods of time. As is by now well known, the appropriate measure of such relative chances is the odds ratio. The odds in question are the odds of being in one destination class rather than another, conditional on the sizes of those destination classes and a given class origin. An odds ratio is thus the ratio of two such odds, each of which is taken relative to a different class origin.[1]

The best known argument concerning politics and social fluidity is that of Featherman, Jones and Hauser (1975), the so-called FJH hypothesis. This states that 'rates of social fluidity are basically the same in industrial societies with a market economy (and) a nuclear family system' (Erikson, 1990: 3). The FJH hypothesis posits a similarity independent of politics. Studies such as those of Treiman (1970) reach a similar conclusion. These results are in contrast with the work of a number of earlier authors (such as Glass, 1954) who believed that politics and specific policy programmes could increase social mobility (Erikson, 1990).

Research undertaken in the late 1970s and 1980s has been equivocal on the relationship between politics and social fluidity. While many studies have shown that the FJH hypothesis does not hold when subjected to strict test (see Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portacarero, 1982; Breen and Whelan,

[1] For example, a typical odds-ratio would measure the chances of a man born in the skilled manual class remaining in that class rather than moving to the agricultural labourer class, relative to the chances of a man born into the agricultural labourer class moving into the skilled manual class rather than remaining in the agricultural labourer class. Thus social fluidity is seen in terms of competition among men of different origins for particular destinations.

1985, among others), and that there are interesting and important cross-national deviations from a common pattern of social fluidity, there is little evidence regarding the causes of these deviations. In one study which specifically addressed this issue, Grusky and Hauser (1984) found that measures of inequality and social democracy did not explain such deviations.[2] In their work on the CASMIN data-set, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1987b: 162) have reformulated the FJH thesis to allow for the possibility of the political helping to shape social fluidity:

> . . . a basic similarity will be found in patterns of social fluidity . . . across all nations with market economies and nuclear family systems where no sustained attempts have been made to use the power of the modern state apparatus in order to modify the processes, or the outcomes of the processes, through which class inequalities are intergenerationally reproduced.

The phrase 'sustained attempts' directs attention, in particular, to the impact of periods of socialist transformation in eastern European societies and long-term social-democratic ascendancy in Sweden. Erikson and Goldthorpe's perspective, however, is clearly compatible with the notion of a continuum of levels of purposive action, implemented by the State through political decisions which affect

1 inequality of condition and, in particular, inequality of income;
2 the intergenerational transmission of wealth and the magnitude of the advantages associated with property;
3 equality of educational opportunity.

Our approach to the question of the link between politics and social mobility draws directly on these sorts of consideration. Ideally our empirical approach would be as follows. Given data on a set of countries (or the same country at different times), we begin by modelling social fluidity in terms of a number of independent variables which we believe account for social fluidity in all industrialised nations. The cross-national variation in such fluidity would then be attributable to two things: first, variation in the strength of effect of these independent variables; and, secondly, cross-national differences in the distribution of these variables. These variables would, following our earlier discussion, measure such

[2] However, there are reasons to view this result with caution. Grusky and Hauser analysed mobility in 16 countries in the form of a set of 16 three category classifications—white collar, blue collar and agriculture. Such a crude classification obscures potential differences in class —as opposed to sectoral—mobility. Furthermore, their explanatory variables—such as social democracy and inequality—are, at the same time, crude approximations to what they sought to measure while probably being too general in themselves (even if they had been measured without error) to capture important political dimensions of difference between the countries in the study.

things as educational qualifications and the ownership of property and wealth—factors which are, actually or potentially, open to modification by government action. Conditional on the correctness of our hypotheses about the specific factors determining social fluidity, this approach would shift the explanatory focus of cross-national analyses away from social fluidity *per se* towards variations in the distribution and relative strength of effect of the determinants of mobility and the causes of these.

Needless to say, in this paper we are constrained from implementing such an ambitious approach by the unavailability of the necessary data. Our data comprise mobility tables for Ireland in 1973 and 1987. Together with the 1987 mobility data we also have a good deal of other information concerning the respondents to the survey and their origins. We therefore begin by fitting a model, which accounts for mobility in Ireland in 1987 in terms of a number of independent variables, to the mobility table deriving from the 7-class version of the class schema set out in the paper by Whelan, Breen and Whelan above. We then proceed to extend the analysis to the 14-class schema. Mobility in Ireland in 1973 (for which we do not have appropriate measured independent variables) is then compared with that in 1987 employing the 7-class schema. The purpose of this comparison is to assess whether such changes as we observe can be explained in terms of the changes we know to have taken place over the period in the independent variables we identify as important in accounting for social fluidity in 1987.

Theoretical Models of Social Fluidity

In this paper we take as our basic theoretical model that outlined by Goldthorpe (1980: 99). Under this model the pattern of social fluidity is considered to be shaped by three factors. These are the relative desirability of different class destinations; the resources available to individuals within each origin class which help them gain access to more desirable destination classes; and barriers to movement between classes. Typically we think of resources as 'economic, cultural and social resources' (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1987a: 64), while barriers to mobility would include the necessity to own the means of production, educational and other qualifications needed for entry to the occupations that comprise a class grouping and so forth.

The approach to modelling social fluidity outlined in the previous paragraph has been operationalised previously by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1987a, b). Since our approach differs from theirs in some important respects, we first describe their model before going on to outline our own.

In their 'core model of social fluidity' (henceforth CoSF), Erikson and Goldthorpe employ four types of effects to explain the observed pattern of relative mobility rates: 'hierarchy effects' with three levels distinguished; 'inheritance effects' distinguishing between an overall effect, an effect for those classes containing employers or self-employed, and an effect for farmers; a 'sector effect' capturing movement into and out of agriculture; and 'affinity effects' which are intended to 'capture additional effects on mobility which derive from particular linkages or discontinuities between classes' (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1987a: 67). The first such affinity term relates to the movement between the service class and that of agricultural workers and is intended to allow for factors which make exchanges between such classes particularly improbable. The second affinity term covers instances where a higher propensity for immobility is attributed than would otherwise be the case.

All these effects are modelled as dummy variables. Thus there is no immediate relationship, in the CoSF model, between social fluidity and factors which might be considered to influence social fluidity. In our model, by contrast, we seek, so far as possible, to explain social fluidity in terms of measured independent variables. We are able to do this for our 1987 data, though not for our 1973 data. In our 1987 data we have measures relating to destination and origin classes. We identify the former with the desirability of class destinations and the barriers to mobility into such destinations, and we identify the latter with resources for mobility.

Turning first to destination classes, here we have four possible measures. These are

Y1: gross mean household income in each destination class;
Y2: mean score in each destination class on a 20-item consumption scale;
Y3: mean percentage of men in each destination class permanently unable to work due to illness or unemployed at the survey date;
Y4: mean percentage of men in each destination having more than primary education.

Y1, Y2, and Y3 plausibly represent different aspects of the desirability of destinations, while Y4 is a measure of the barriers to class entry due to educational requirements.

Turning to our origin class measures, we use two measures:

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

Both X1 and X2 can be viewed as measures of resources for mobility.

As yet we have said nothing about ownership of the means of production: this is clearly both a resource for mobility among men of farming, petty bourgeois and proprietorial origins, as well as a barrier to entry among those from the remaining class origins. We operationalise these by using two further measures:

P1: the proportion of fathers in each origin class who are self-employed;
P2: the proportion of men in each destination class who are self-employed.

A very specific resource for mobility is demonstrated by the tendency for class inheritance. For all classes, an origin in a given class is a resource which improves one's chances of remaining in that class relative to the chances of men born in other classes entering that class. The reasons for this are diverse but they include such things as direct inheritance of the means of production, family tradition and access to social networks. To capture this we fit a single parameter to the cells on the main diagonal of the mobility table.

Within the model we include two further parameters which capture the special position of the agricultural sector. The first of these is a single parameter for farm inheritance over and above the general level of inheritance. The second captures the barrier to mobility into the agricultural sector. Note that this is a unidimensional barrier: it does not apply to movement out of agriculture. Indeed, we believe that to model a two-way barrier (into and out of agriculture) with the same parameter is likely to prove very misleading.

Finally, although we sought to capture the effects of ownership of the means of production as both a resource and a barrier, we find that we require one additional parameter to capture the propensity of men of petty bourgeois and farm origins to move into the higher professional, administrative and managerial and large proprietor class.

We have, then, five variables which score our table's destinations and a further three scoring the origins. We could enter these into the model as terms formed by multiplying each origin score by each destination score, to give terms such as Y1X1, Y1X2, Y2X1, and so on. This would yield 15 terms, each using a single degree of freedom, and, indeed, we have fitted such a model. Such a model would tell us, for example, how each of the possible combinations of different desirability/barriers and resources measures influences social fluidity. The model we discuss here, however, is rather more parsimonious. What we want is a model in which some overall measure of desirability/barriers and some generalised resource measure are used to shape the pattern of social fluidity. To arrive at such

measures we simply took the first principal component of the origin scores, X1 and X2, as a measure of generalised resources (labelled X), and the first principal component of the destination scores Y1, Y2, Y3 and Y4, to yield a measure of desirability and barriers (labelled Y). We excluded from the principal components analysis the more specific measures of resources and barriers associated with ownership of the means of production. These measures—P1 and P2—were multiplied together to form the variable P12 which captures the level of ownership of the means of production in each origin/destination combination.

Our final model thus includes, apart from the origin and destination main effects, the following variables:

Agriculture: AGB: the term reflecting the barrier to movement into agricultural destinations from non-agricultural origins.

Hierarchy: XY: which captures the effect of generalised resources, desirability and barriers, conceptualised in a hierarchical fashion. Note that this term models the effects of desirability and barriers as varying according to the resources for mobility enjoyed by the different origin classes, and similarly, the effect of resources varies according to the level of desirability/barriers of each destination class.

Property: P12: a measure of ownership of the means of production in each origin/destination combination;

SLP: the term for movement between petty bourgeois or farm origins and the higher professional, administrative and managerial class. Together the P12 and SLP terms capture the pattern of movement within the classes which own the means of production;

Inheritance: INH1: the term for overall class inheritance; and INH3: the term for farm inheritance, measured as additional to the level of overall class inheritance.

We can write this model as

$$\log F_{ij} = \lambda + \lambda^{F} + \lambda^{S} + \lambda^{SLP} + \lambda^{INH1} + \lambda^{INH3} + \lambda^{AGB} + \alpha(XY) + \beta(P12) \quad (1)$$

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

Results

We fitted this model to the 7×7 1987 Irish mobility table and also to a 14×14 mobility table. The definition of the classes in each of these is set out in Table 1 of the preceding paper by Whelan, Breen and Whelan.

Table 1. Results of applying model (1) to the Irish mobility data for 1987 classified according to the 7-class version of the class schema.

A. Goodness of fit

	G^2	df	rG^2
Independence model	1112.9	36	—
Model (1)	40.19	30	96.0

B. Principal component scores

		Rows	Columns
(I+II)	Professional, administrative and managerial (service class)	1.73	1.71
(III)	Routine non-manual	0.42	0.43
(IVa+b)	Petty bourgeoisie	0.39	0.73
(IVc)	Farmers	−0.24	−0.47
(V/VI)	Technicians, supervisors of manual workers and skilled manual	0.10	−0.17
(VIIa)	Non-skilled manual	−0.37	−1.05
(VIIb)	Agricultural workers	−0.75	−1.10

C. Parameter estimates

estimate	s.e.	parameter
0.2586	0.0633	INH1(2)
1.344	0.3361	INH3(2)
−1.796	0.2335	AGB(2)
0.7602	0.1327	SLP(2)
1.259	0.1719	β
0.6058	0.0494	α

Table 1 contains the results of applying model (1) to the 7×7 1987 Irish mobility table. Panel A shows the goodness of fit relative to the independence model. Our model reduces the G^2 for this latter model by 96 per cent. By conventional criteria the model (1) provides a good fit to the data (the 5 per cent critical value for G^2 with 30 df being 45.5).

In panel B we show the two principal component scores for origins (resources) and destinations (desirability/barriers). The higher the principal component score the greater the resources for mobility (in the case of the row scores) or the greater the desirability of specific classes and the barriers associated with access to them (in the case of the column scores).

Panel C shows the parameter estimates for the six terms that shape odds ratios under the model.

We also fitted the model to the disaggregated 14-class table for 1987. The only adjustment we made was to add one extra parameter which captured mobility between the three farming classes (IVc(i), IVc(ii) and IVc(iii)). We refer to this as model (1a). For the 14×14 table, Table 2 shows that the independence model yields a G^2 of 1543.0 with 169 df,

Table 2. Results of applying model (1a) to the Irish mobility data for 1987 classified according to the 14-class version of the class schema.

A. Goodness of fit

	deviance	df	rG^2
Independence model	1543.0	169	—
Model (1a)	247.79	162	84.0

B. Principal component scores

		Rows	Columns
(I)	Higher-grade professionals, administrators and office managers in large industrial establishments	2.20	2.01
(II)	Lower-grade professionals, administrators and official higher-grade technicians; managers in small industrial establishments: supervisors of non-manual employees	1.48	1.53
(IIIa)	Routine non-manual employees in administration and commerce	1.22	1.15
(IIIb)	Sales personnel; other rank-and-file service workers	−0.06	−0.04
(IVa)	Small proprietors, artisans, etc., with employees	0.73	0.97
(IVb)	Small proprietors, artisans, etc., without employees	0.07	0.54
(V)	Lower-grade technicians; supervisors of manual workers	0.31	0.61
(VI)	Skilled manual workers	0.04	−0.49
(VIIai)	Semi-skilled manual workers (not in agriculture)	−0.06	−0.40
(VIIaii)	Unskilled manual workers not in agriculture	−0.57	−1.88
(VIIb)	Agricultural and other workers in primary production	−0.74	−1.10
(IVci)	Farmers; < 50 acres	−0.55	−0.99
(IVcii)	Farmers; 50–99 acres	0.07	−0.43
(IVciii)	Farmers; 100+ acres	0.09	0.41

C. Parameter estimates

estimate	s.e.	parameter
0.3451	0.0640	INH1 (2)
2.204	0.3553	INH3 (2)
0.9578	0.3692	INH4 (2)
−1.736	0.2332	AGB (2)
0.7013	0.1314	SLP (2)
1.220	0.1670	β
0.6212	0.0411	α

while our model has a G^2 of 247.79 with 162 df. Although this falls marginally short of reaching the usual criterion for fitting the data (the critical value of G^2 for 162 df is approximately 198), the model nevertheless provides a remarkably good fit to the data, reducing the G^2 by 84 per cent of its value under the independence model, while using up only seven degrees

of freedom.[3] Such a high level of fit to such a disaggregated table is very unusual and is evidence, we believe, of the validity and explanatory power of our model.

Table 2 also shows the principal component scores and the parameter estimates for model (1a). If we compare the parameter estimates for this model with those displayed in Table 1 their stability, over the two tables, is very striking. The overall inheritance parameter, the parameter for the agricultural entry barrier (which is negative as we should expect), the parameter for movement between property owning classes, and the β and α parameters, are remarkably similar when estimated using either the 7×7 or 14×14 table. In all cases the parameter estimates have the sign and magnitude that we should expect.

The principal component scores in Table 2 show the value of moving to the highly disaggregated 14-class categorisation. The dichotomisation of class III into routine non-manual and rank and file service workers shows that the latter class is much more poorly placed than the former in terms of resources (where it ranks about equal with semi-skilled manual workers) and in terms of desirability/barriers. The distinction between semi-skilled and unskilled workers is important in terms of their resources and desirability, although it is in the latter case that the difference is most extreme with the unskilled class having the lowest score by a wide margin. Furthermore, when we distinguish between these categories it becomes apparent there is relatively little difference between the semi-skilled and skilled manual classes, but there is a considerable difference between them, on the one hand, and the unskilled workers and agricultural workers, on the other. These latter classes display the lowest level of resources.

Generalising the Model

The model we have presented was developed as an attempt to operationalise the basic theoretical approach which sees social fluidity as determined by resources, desirability and barriers to mobility. However, it is possible also to use the model to provide a simple account of the factors shaping social fluidity. The model suggests that social fluidity is shaped by three basic things: first, the barrier that exists to entry into the agricultural sector; second, a hierarchical, or vertical dimension, captured by the ordering of rows and columns (and corresponding to hierarchical measures

[3] A model which fitted this data at the 5 per cent level would reduce the independence G^2 by 88 per cent or more.

of resources, desirability and barriers); and thirdly, the pattern of mobility flows related to the ownership of the means of production. We refer to this as the Agriculture, Hierarchy and Property (AHP) model. We believe that such a model can yield a parsimonious and theoretically meaningful account of the observed pattern of social fluidity in modern industrial societies (Breen and Whelan, 1991).

How could we test this assertion? Given that data were available for other countries we could test models such as those reported on in Tables 1 and 2. Furthermore, one important advantage of such a model would be that, by fitting separate independent variables (rather than principal component scores) we could provide an account of the various dimensions of social fluidity. However, the lack of appropriate independent variables for other countries (and, more particularly, for the Irish 1973 data) precludes any such ambitious undertakings. Instead, we ask whether a model that includes only agriculture, hierarchy and property effects can give an adequate account of Irish social fluidity in both 1973 and 1987. To do this we develop a model that includes the barrier to movement into the agricultural sector from outside, a hierarchical effect, and a set of parameters that seek to model social fluidity among the owners of the means of production. In other words, we can proxy the AHP model. For our hierarchical effect we turn to Goodman's Row and Column Effects Model II (RC2) (see Goodman, 1979; Breen, 1984a; Breen and Whelan, 1985). This model provides a scoring of rows and columns so as to maximise the association between the row and column variables conditional upon other effects in the model. We also fit a single parameter, INH1, to the main diagonal of the table to reflect class inheritance. For our property effects we use a dummy variable, INH2, for inheritance among the petty bourgeoisie, and a variable for inheritance among farmers, INH3, together with a single parameter, P, applied to cells representing movement between any pair of the property owning classes (i.e., cells I+II, IVa+b; I+II, IVc; IVa+b, I+II; IVa+b, IVc; IVc, I+II; IVc, IVa+b in the 7×7 table). Finally we add the parameter AGB for the barrier to movement into agriculture.

We write this model as:

$$\log F_{ij} = \lambda + \lambda^{F} + {}^{S} + \lambda^{P} + \lambda^{AGB} + \sum_{i=1}^{3} \lambda^{INHi} + \gamma u_i v_j \qquad (2)$$

where γ is the parameter measuring association between the estimated row and column scores, u_i and v_j.

It is important to be clear on the role, within the model, of our very general specification of the hierarchical effect in terms of the RC2 model.

Clearly, since this model scales the rows and columns so as to maximise the association between them then, if the AHP model fails to fit the data, it is most unlikely that a model which used known scores for rows and columns in the construction of the hierarchical effect (as in model (1)) would provide an adequate account of mobility. Conversely, if the AHP model fits the data it leaves open the possibility that exogenous measured variables may also give rise to row and column rankings which, when combined as one or more hierarchical terms, would form part of a model that would also fit the data.[4]

In fitting this model we began by asking how well it compares with the more detailed model when applied to the 1987 Irish data. Detailed results of fitting the AHP model to the 7×7 and 14×14 tables are available from the authors. In summary, however, for the 7×7 table the AHP model returns a G^2 of 31.57 with 20 df thus fitting the data using conventional criteria. This compares with a G^2 of 95.48 with 28 df for Erikson and Goldthorpe's (1987a, b) core model of social fluidity (CoSF).

Our model also provides sensible parameter estimates. It yields a rank ordering of rows and columns very similar to that shown in panel B of Table 1. The other parameter estimates show a positive overall inheritance effect, with significantly higher inheritance among the petty bourgeoisie and among farmers. There is a substantial barrier to movement into agriculture and a substantial tendency for movement among origin and destination classes which own the means of production.

For the 14×14 table, the AHP model returns a G^2 of 228.95 with 137 df. Again the parameter estimates are very similar to those of Table 2.

Ireland 1973 and 1987

Our next step was to fit the AHP model, to the 1973 Irish data, with results as shown in Table 3. Initially, we discovered that the pattern of class inheritance was somewhat different than in 1987. First, the level of class inheritance among skilled manual workers was such as to require the addition of another parameter, INH5, to account for this. Secondly, as panel C of Table 3 shows, when this parameter was included, together with INH2 and INH3, the overall inheritance parameter, INH1, became insignificant. Thus, all class inheritance in the 1973 Irish data is confined to the petty bourgeois, farm and skilled manual classes.

[4] Our belief that this would be so derives not least from the fact that, if we had measured variables scoring rows and columns we could enter 11 such pairwise effects (e.g., X1Y1; X1Y2; and so on, as described earlier) without exceeding the degrees of freedom used by the RC2 specification.

Table 3. Results of applying the AHP model to the Irish mobility data for 1973 classified according to the 7-class version of the class schema.

A. Goodness of fit

	G^2	df	rG^2
Independence model	1181.2	36	—
CoSF model	66.9	28	94.3
AHP model (2a)	32.4	19	97.2

B. Estimated row and column scores

		Rows	Columns
(I+II)	Professional, administrative and managerial (service class)	2.0593	1.6612
(III)	Routine non-manual	0.5918	0.6210
(IVa+b)	Petty bourgeoisie	−0.1863	−0.1595
(IVc)	Farmers	−0.7675	0.1655
(V/VI)	Technicians, supervisors of manual workers and skilled manual	0.1670	0.0389
(VIIa)	Non-skilled manual	−0.8326	−0.4245
(VIIb)	Agricultural workers	−1.0316	−1.9027

C. Parameter estimates

estimate	s.e.	parameter
−0.1717	0.1116	INH1(2)
2.087	0.2578	INH2(2)
2.582	0.2542	INH3(2)
1.133	0.1927	INH5(2)
−1.935	0.2049	AGB(2)
0.9965	0.1352	P(2)
0.6205	0.05473	γ

The model adjusted to include this extra parameter—which we call model (2a)—marginally fails to fit the data (though it does fit if we drop the non-significant parameter INH1). It is nevertheless a substantial improvement on the CoSF model.

If we use the CoSF model to compare the changes in the Irish mobility regime between 1973 and 1987 we are faced with a problem. A model which constrains all the social fluidity parameters to be constant across the two data sets provides as adequate a fit to the data as does a model which allows all these parameters to take different values in each table.[5] But the latter fails, by a long way, to fit the data. Aggregating the G^2s from the CoSF model applied to the 1973 and 1987 tables gives a G^2 of 162.3 with 56 df. Clearly, if the nature of Irish social fluidity has changed between

[5] The difference between the two models has G^2 of 5.6 with 8 df.

the dates of the two inquiries any such changes lie outside the scope of what is captured by the CoSF model.

In order to determine what these changes might have been we use the AHP model to carry out a formal analysis of the change in the Irish mobility regime between 1973 and 1987 following the logic set out by Breen (1985). As we noted earlier, we use the RC2 formulation to proxy hierarchical measures of resources, desirability and barriers. The γ coefficient and scoring of the origins and destinations under the RC2 specification are estimated so as to maximise the (conditional) association between the two. Since γ, u_i and v_j are not separately identified, a change of parameterisation of say, u_i and v_j will affect γ. Had we exogenous measures, the model would yield parameter estimates based on the maximisation of the conditional association between origins and destinations given the scorings of these two. In the latter case we could speak of the effect, on social fluidity, of specific measures of resources, desirability and barriers. In the former case we cannot. Rather, we must interpret our results by posing two questions. First we ask: given the estimated hierarchical orderings of origins and destinations, what do the results imply about social or political processes? We then ask: are these implications plausible?

The results of this analysis are given in Table 4. We begin by fitting a common (homogenous) model, that is, model (2a) to the two Irish mobility tables, with the addition of only one parameter to allow for the different sample sizes of the two inquiries. We label this the Common Mobility Model (line 1 of Table 4). The reason for fitting such a model is that, conditional on model (2a) being true of both tables, we can relax successive homogeneity constraints to determine the relative contribution of different factors to an account of the changes in Irish mobility. The common model clearly falls a long way short of fitting the data. At the other extreme, if we fit model (2a) to each table separately (a completely heterogeneous model), this returns a total G^2 value of 63.98 with 38 df. This is model (3a) which allows all mobility effects to differ between 1973 and 1987 and is shown in line 3 of Table 4. What we want to explain in our comparative analysis, however, is the difference in the G^2 values of these two models —the common model of line 1 and the completely heterogeneous model of line 3. This difference has a value of 249.72 and is associated with 29 df, as shown in panel B of Table 4. We term it the total mobility difference G^2.

Our next step is to allow the origin and destination effects—but not the interaction effects which shape odds ratios—to vary between the two tables. This model is labelled 2b, and has G^2 of 97.48 with 55 df, as shown on line 2 of Table 4. The difference between this model and the common

Table 4. Accounting for changes in social mobility in Ireland 1973–87 in terms of the AHP model: results for the 7-class version of the class schema.

A. Goodness of fit of models	G^2	df
1. Common mobility model (2a) (homogeneous, allowing for differences only in sample size)	313.7	67
2. Heterogeneous absolute mobility, common social fluidity (2b)	97.48	55
3. Heterogeneous absolute mobility and social fluidity with agriculture, hierarchy, property and inheritance parameters being allowed to vary (3a)	63.98	38
4. Heterogeneous absolute mobility and social fluidity with the parameters for INH1 and INH5 being allowed to vary while all other fluidity parameters are held constant (3b)	86.52	53
B. Decomposition of deviance		
Total mobility difference (2a–3a)	249.72	29
Absolute mobility difference (2a–2b)	216.22	12
Social fluidity difference (2b–3a)	33.50	17

C. Row and column scores (model 3b)

Rows	Columns
2.027	1.832
0.590	0.825
0.069	−0.157
−0.762	−0.193
−0.029	−0.023
−0.662	−0.760
−1.233	−1.523

D. Parameter estimates

Common

estimate	s.e.	parameter
1.795	0.1834	INH2(2)
2.551	0.1958	INH3(2)
1.001	0.0881	P(2)
−1.749	0.1535	AGB(2)
0.4995	0.0298	γ

Heterogeneous

1973		1987		
estimate	s.e.	estimate	s.e.	parameter
−0.0387	0.0894	0.1784	0.0808	INH1(2)
0.9237	0.1770	0.2007	0.1499	INH5(2)

mobility model gives a G^2 of 216.22 using 12 df (shown on the second line of panel B in Table 4). Since the model shown on line 2 of panel A retains homogenous odds ratios, this additional G^2 value is attributable to structural mobility—defined to mean the effect of a change in only the

marginal distributions of the table. This model is not far short of reproducing the data, and accounts for 87 per cent of the mobility difference G^2. In other words, a model which says that all the difference between the 1973 and 1987 mobility tables is caused by changes in the origin and destination effects, and is in no way due to a change in social fluidity, very nearly fits.

That it does not suggests that there has been some change in social fluidity. Indeed, the third line of panel B of Table 4 shows that this is associated with a G^2 of 33.50 which represents 13 per cent of the total mobility difference G^2 value. The question then is, how, and where, has this come about? In our model there are four sets of effects which influence social fluidity. These are the estimated row and column scores and their associated parameter, γ; the four inheritance effects; the agricultural barrier; and the term for mobility within the property owning classes. We find that, of these, a model which allows only two of the four inheritance effects to vary between the two tables fits almost as well as a model which allows all four sets of effects to vary. This model (3b) (shown on line 4 of Table 4) returns a G^2 of 86.52 with 53 df. In Panel D of Table 4 we show the estimates of those parameters which shape social fluidity.

The first set of parameter estimates relate to those which are constant over time, namely, the row and column association parameters (the scorings are also constant and are shown in panel C), the agricultural barrier parameter, the parameter, P, reflecting internal mobility among the classes which own means of production, and the inheritance parameters for the petty bourgeoisie and for farmers. Below that we give the 1973 and 1987 values of the parameters which change over time.

The only source of change between the two surveys is in the inheritance of class position. The distinctively high levels of class inheritance among the skilled manual class disappear between 1973 and 1987, but the overall level of class inheritance increases somewhat. These parameter changes reflect, to some extent, changes in the likelihood of movement out of the class of origin, though they are, of course, partial effects which are not independent of the other effects in the model. In the 1973 data, 42 per cent of cases are found in the diagonal cells, compared with 37 per cent in 1987. A more useful measure, which takes account of the change in origin and destination distributions, is the number of cases on the diagonal expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible number. This is shown in Figure 1.[6] This yields a value of 51 per cent in 1973, 46 per cent in 1987.

[6] Let n_{ij} be the number in the ij th cell, n_{i+} the total in the ith row and n_{+j} the total in the jth column. The measure reported in the text is then

$$100n_{ii}/\min(n_{i+};\ n_{+i})$$

summed over all i.

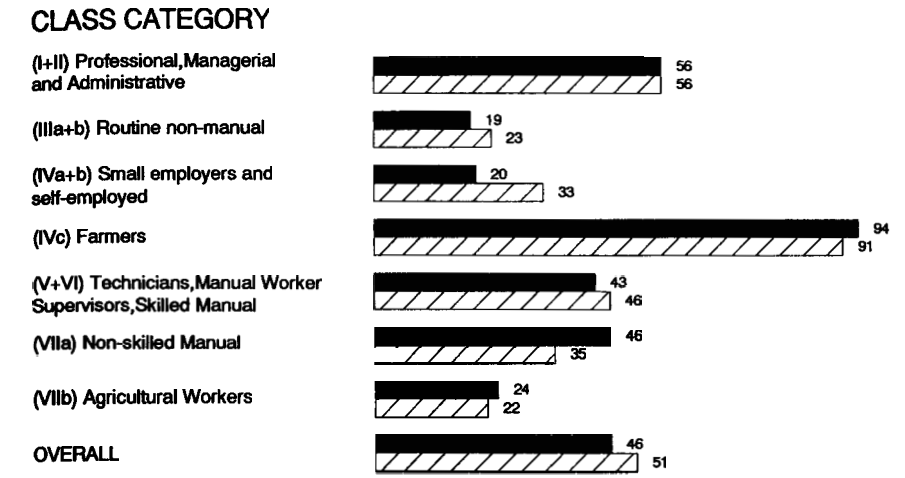

Figure 1. Number of cases on main diagonal as percentage of the maximum possible, Ireland, 1973 (▨) and 1987 (■). 7-category classification.

These figures suggest that the overall level of class inheritance has been most influenced by structural changes and that, controlling for these, the fall in the likelihood of class inheritance is a less important feature than the change in its distribution. Figure 1 shows that immobility has fallen to any appreciable extent only among the petty bourgeoisie, and indeed has risen among the semi-skilled and unskilled manual classes. There has been virtually no change elsewhere. It is important to note, furthermore, that two of the inheritance parameters shown in Table 4—relating to the petty bourgeoisie and farmers—do not change significantly between the two inquiries. This indicates that, relative to levels of class inheritance in other classes, these two classes have maintained their level of class inheritance.

Conclusions

Theoretical and methodological

In this paper we have sought to operationalise the resources/desirability/barriers model of social mobility using, as far as possible, measured independent variables. We discussed how such variables might be introduced into mobility table analyses and we successfully applied the model to the 1987 Irish mobility data, using both a seven and a fourteen class classification.

This led us to formulate a more general mobility model which has three basic components. These are

1 a barrier to mobility into agriculture;
2 hierarchical effects;
3 property effects.

We suggested that a model based on these three components would give a good account of mobility in modern industrialised societies.

There is a long standing dichotomy between 'class-based' approaches to studying social stratification and those approaches, which, following Blau and Duncan (1967), assume a continuum of positions in society ranked in terms of status or prestige (see also Kelley, 1990). We concur with Goldthorpe's conclusion that, when individuals are thought of as distributed across sets of positions that are defined relationally, important types of mobility are detected which cannot be adequately characterised in terms of movement along a vertical dimension. Despite this, there is no reason why a class perspective is incompatible with an emphasis on the importance of hierarchy as one crucial dimension of the mobility space. Erikson and Goldthorpe (1987a, 1987b) characterise hierarchical effects in terms of a couple of discrete steps. Indeed for Ireland, where one of their hierarchical effects proves to be insignificant, this reduces to one step. Hout's (1989: 153) analysis employing a prestige measure leads him to conclude that Erikson and Goldthorpe understate the importance of hierarchy in Ireland. It is possible to view continuous and discontinuous models of mobility simply as alternative descriptions of the same reality. We believe, however, that the AHP approach demonstrates that it is possible to incorporate, in one model, both continuous hierarchical and discontinuous non-hierarchical effects both of which are conceptualised in terms of class rather than of, say, status. Furthermore, if we are to move towards incorporating, into mobility analyses, independent measured variables as characteristics of classes, it is difficult to see how we can avoid hierarchical rankings.

A crucial illustration of the superiority of the AHP model over the Erikson and Goldthorpe CoSF model is that whereas the former provides a means of describing the distinctive Irish social mobility regime in terms of general theoretical dimensions, the CoSF model does not. Rather, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1987b: 154–55, 160) find it necessary to explain the departures of the Irish data from the expectations generated by their core model in terms of idiosyncrasies.

A final feature of our modelling is that it is very parsimonious. Model (1a), for example, when applied to the 14×14 category table, accounts for virtually all of the G^2 under the independence model with only seven

degrees of freedom. All the models we use either fit the data or could be made to do so with the addition or subtraction of one or two parameters.

We believe that, in cross-national or inter-temporal comparisons it is important to develop models which fit, or very nearly fit, the data, using conventional criteria. The reason for this is that, given such models, comparison will be rendered relatively straightforward by seeing how far, and which, parameters of the model can subsequently be constrained to be cross-nationally equal (Breen, 1987: 76–77).

The alternative is to employ a model which does not fit the data and examine the residuals to determine how the mobility regime differs between countries or inquiries. The difficulties with this are twofold. First, the residual from such a model will include both systematic effects that were omitted from the model and sampling and other error. The model itself cannot disentangle these. Second, as our discussion of the CoSF model applied to the Irish data for 1973 and 1987 illustrated, if the dimensions of difference between two or more mobility tables lie outside the fitted model, then the model is of no utility in telling us how—and, more importantly, why—the tables differ.

Changes in Irish social mobility 1973 to 1987

Changes in the Irish mobility regime between 1973 and 1987 were quite modest. Eighty seven per cent of the change in mobility was attributable to change in the pattern of absolute mobility. There was, as a result, a high level of constancy in social fluidity. The lack of significant change in the row and column scores is consistent with a stable situation relating to inequality in resources and attractiveness/barriers and in the association between them. Changes in the pattern of social fluidity, as indicated by our results, were confined to class inheritance: the overall inheritance parameters for classes other than farmers and the petty bourgeoisie tended to become more equal, though there was no evidence that the relative advantage enjoyed by these latter two classes in passing on the ownership of the means of production was in any way diminished.

If we are to look for explanations of why the period 1973–87 should show so little change we must begin by recognising that the full working through of any policy-induced changes, in terms of their impact on origins and destinations, might well take another twenty years. Yet there is a variety of policy effects which can plausibly be hypothesised. A detailed examination of the relationship between changes in income, inequality and taxation will form a central objective of our future work. It is, though,

perhaps worthwhile pointing here to a couple of specific conclusions and one of a more general methodological kind.

Our failure to observe any change in the γ coefficient in our models between 1973 and 1987 provides strong evidence for the validity of our earlier conclusions (based on rather more limited evidence) that the transformation of the Irish educational system has had very little impact on the level of social fluidity in the society (Whelan and Whelan, 1984; Breen *et al.*, 1990).

Some policies it seems, though, have had an impact. In particular the retention of advantage by the petty bourgeoisie and farmers is consistent with our understanding of the impact of policy in the area of taxation and redistribution.[7] Over the period in question there was a relatively marked decline in the revenue shares from tax on property, inheritance tax and Corporation income tax. Property tax declined through a series of electoral promises that led ultimately to the removal in 1978 of all taxes on domestic dwellings. The career of capital taxation was even more dramatic. Until 1973 estate duties were the only form of capital taxation in Ireland. After 1973 a series of reforms were attempted as part of the agreement that led to the formation of the Fine Gael/Labour Coalition Government of 1973–77. Capital Acquisition Tax (1974) and an ill-fated Wealth Tax (1975) were introduced to replace the old estate duties, and a Capital Gains Tax was directed at profits from speculative activities. The central aim of these changes was to introduce greater equity into the tax system.

In practice, these reforms were so structured that they failed to secure this objective. Such was the opposition to the proposal for a Wealth Tax that the package finally implemented was ineffectual. Other forms of capital taxation were neutralised by generous exemptions, provisions for indexation with inflation and tapering relief. The total contribution of capital taxation to government revenue fell precipitously, even before Fianna Fáil removed the Wealth Tax in 1978. The old estate duties had been more than three times as effective as a revenue source than the taxes that replaced them were in 1985. Ireland's distinctive tax profile is very much a product of state policy. Tax revenue from capital or corporate income was limited in the pursuit of economic expansion and more recently justified as a basis for job creation (Breen *et al.*, 1990: ch. 4).

Rottman and Reidy's (1988) analysis of the impact of taxation and transfers between 1973 and 1980 showed that farmers enjoyed a unique relationship with the cash transfer system. Regardless of their income levels, all farm categories received substantially more in cash transfers than

[7] See Hannan and Commins (this volume) for a more detailed discussion of the advantages enjoyed by farmers.

their households paid in taxation. Once direct transfers and taxes were taken into account, non-agricultural proprietors were, on average, worse off in 1980 if they belonged to the 'large proprietor' category and better off, quite significantly so, if they were 'small proprietors'. In contrast, all categories of employees, except unskilled manual workers, were worse off. The tax advantages conferred by property ownership is most starkly illustrated by the fact that in 1980 large proprietors and unskilled manual workers shared a common effective tax rate of 16 per cent. Cash transfers were allocated among classes on a progressive basis but taxes were only weakly progressive. In practice, this had two main effects. First, for employees state actions left income differences based on the market largely unaltered. Second, state policies generally acted to improve the relative financial situation of families earning their income mainly through family property.

The most general conclusion which we wish to draw from our analysis follows from the fact that the distinctiveness of the Irish social mobility regime can be described in terms of general dimensions derived from an explicit theory of the mobility process. As a consequence of this, it should be possible in principle to provide a genuinely macro-sociological explanation of the Irish case. However, as we move away from 'single number' approaches to describing mobility regimes, it becomes clear that comparative analysis which relies on crude overall measures of inequality, education or political systems has little to offer. Thus, any comprehensive assessment of the impact of politics in Ireland would need to take into account that in areas such as education the state's role is often indirect, with the state acting as financier and paymaster but with private institutions making key decisions on how the money will be used. The Irish experience, where progressivity in personal income tax and in cash transfers produced little impact on the pattern of inequalities because of other features of the structure of taxation, demonstrates the need to go beyond the issue of expenditure and consider control, financing and distribution of benefits. Expenditure can then be viewed as part of a set of state interventions capable of altering life chances. Here, it would appear that we can draw useful lessons from the literature relating to political influences on the welfare state which points to the limitations of simple measures of policy outcomes and the complexities involved in assessing the impact of political partisanship and the structure of party systems (Shalev, 1983; Myles, 1984).

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Appendix: Some Mobility Models Explained

1. Quasi-perfect mobility (QPM)

The independence or perfect mobility (PM) model says that all odds ratios are equal to one: in other words, in the competition for any destination class, being born into any particular origin class is no more advantageous than is being born into any other. The QPM model modifies this slightly to say that being born into a given class confers an advantage in competition for entry into that class but not in the competition for entry into any other class.

2. Levels models

A levels model allocates all cells in a mobility table into k mutually exhaustive and disjoint sets (i.e., each cell is allocated to one and only one level) by means of a set of dummy variables. The result is that odds ratios formed from cells drawn from the same level will be equal to one, while odds ratios formed from cells drawn from one or more levels will not. The model thus posits equality of competition for pairs of origins and destinations at the same level and inequality of competition for pairs of origins and destinations drawn from different levels.

3. Models which score rows and columns

In the uniform association (UA) model the odds ratios can be written in terms of scores applied to the rows and columns of a table. Let x(i) be the score for the ith origin class, y(j) the score for the jth destination class. Then any odds ratio depends upon the distance apart, in terms of their x and y scores, of the cells involved, weighted by a parameter (call it β) which measures the strength of the association between x and y. In the RC2 model not only is β estimated but so are the x(i) and y(j) so as to maximise the association between the scored origins and destinations. In such models origin classes which have high scores have the highest relative chance of entering highly scored destinations. Equally, low scoring origins have a higher relative chance of entering low scoring destinations. Thus the scores derived from models like RC2 lend themselves to interpretation in terms of an origin hierarchy of relative advantage in access to destinations which themselves are scored in terms of relative exclusivity in drawing their inflow disproportionately from more advantaged origins.

4. Erikson and Goldthorpe's Core Model of Social Fluidity (CoSF)

This is a variant of the levels model in which cells of the table are allocated to mutually exhaustive but not necessarily disjoint levels. Erikson and Goldthorpe develop the CoSF model as a set of overlapping levels models. Unlike the original levels models, each of Erikson and Goldthorpe's levels is meant to reflect the operation of a specific set of influences on social fluidity. So, three of their levels attempt to capture hierarchical mobility processes, others seek to model inheritance effects, and so forth. Each levels model is fitted using a single dummy variable. Odds ratios under this model depend upon the set of levels into which the cells in question fall.

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