Class Transformation, Qualification Inflation and the Persistence of Class: Trends in Social Fluidity in the Republic of Ireland 1973 to 1994

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Introduction

One of the central themes of social mobility research to date has been the validity of the 'industrialization thesis' as propounded by Lipset & Bendix (1959) and Blau & Duncan (1967). This held that economically advanced societies would share a high level of social mobility because this was necessary for these types of societies to function. Such uniformly high rates of mobility would come about they argued, first because these societies spawned a large number of higher managerial and professional positions, but also because these positions would be filled on the basis of meritocratic and 'universalistic' principles rather than social position and family connections. The former directs attention to changes in absolute mobility rates while the latter leads to a focus on relative rates. Yet, although numerous tests of this thesis have presented contrary evidence, almost all have used data from countries that have already reached industrial maturity. It could be argued that these data do not permit a full test of the industrialization thesis since they do not allow us to compare mobility patterns in the same country before and after the 'great transformation' (Polanyi 1957). A possible exception to this are studies on the Republic of Ireland[1] which underwent Industrialisation particularly rapidly and comparatively recently since transition was still underway in the early 1970s. However, even these studies have examined possible changes in social fluidity between cohorts, or within individual careers and have not compared fluidity between data sets collected at different points in time using individuals who would have experienced different structural conditions.

In this paper we use data collected at two points in time, one from the early 1970s and one from the mid 1990s to examine the relationship between social class origins, destination class at interview and the role that education plays in mediating this relationship. In the early 1970s, Ireland was still very much in transition from agricultural to industrial society (Whelan, Breen, & Whelan 1992), whereas in the mid-1990s, arguably Ireland has progressed further toward 'post-industrial' society than many other European nations (O'Connell 1999). The aim of this paper is to

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[1] Whelan, Breen, & Whelan 1992; Breen & Whelan 1992; Halpin 1992; Breen & Whelan 1993; Breen & Whelan 1996; Breen 1998; Breen & Whelan 1999; Whelan 1999.

examine and explain the consequences of these developments in Ireland in terms of social mobility and the role of education in this.

Rather than simply describing the nature of social fluidity and the role of education within the two time periods, we attempt to explain patterns of fluidity using the theoretical perspective described by Goldthorpe *et al* (1980: 99). This posits three factors that are held to structure social fluidity: the relative desirability of different class destinations, the resources available to individuals within each class to help them gain access to more desirable destinations and the barriers to movement between classes. Following Breen and Whelan (1992) we specify an Irish model of mobility based on these processes termed the 'Agriculture, Hierarchy and Property' (AHP) model and using fitted dummy variables (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1987) we test the usefulness of this model in explaining the observed patterns of associations. It would be preferable to be able to examine the patterning of both men and women's mobility, but unfortunately the data for the 1970s refer to men and their partners. Since female participation in the early 1970s was very low, this means that there are insufficient data to examine women's mobility in this survey. Instead, we examine the similarities and differences between men and women's mobility in the mid-1990s and attempt to explain these within the remit of the AHP model and particular historical developments.

In the next section of this paper we discuss the nature of Irish industrialisation and the expectations that we can draw from this for the structure of social mobility and fluidity. We then move on to a brief examination of the expectations we would have from the application of the liberal theory of industrialisation. In this third section we go on to examine the data and variables used in this paper before turning to a descriptive analysis of the structure of social mobility in Ireland in the two periods in the fourth section. In the fifth section we move on to describe our approach in modelling the data and the specification of the AHP model of Irish social fluidity with which we seek to explain these patterns. The sixth and last analysis section examines examines the class mobility of women in Ireland before the seventh section discusses the findings of the models and their implications both for the development of Irish society and macro-sociological theory.

1. Ireland and Industrialisation

The Irish case of industrialisation has been discussed at length in a number of publications thus we will not reiterate here the details of this transformation. However, it is useful to stress the speed and degree of this change and the effect that it had on Irish society from the beginning of the 1960s on. The founding of the state in 1922 separated the industrial North-East of the country from the largely agricultural 32 counties in the south and there was little subsequent industrial development until the 1960s inspite of government attempts to stimulate domestic industry through protectionist policies. Even as late as 1961, two thirds of Irish exports were agricultural, mainly to Britain and this was reflected in the proportion of males in agricultural work at 44%. Increases in social mobility associated with economic development are primarily an outcome of structural effects. Goldthorpe (1985:558-559) makes the distinction between 'shift' and 'compositional' effects and notes that there is no evidence that the former will steadily increase with economic development or that their importance is closely correlated with prevailing rates of economic growth. Our attention will therefore be on the changing structural context within which mobility occurs rather than economic growth *per se*. Table 1 shows that professionals, managers and administrators made up only 8% of the labour force in 1961, whilst skilled or unskilled manual workers only made up around 23%.

Agriculture itself was based on small, usually family run farming enterprises with the consequence that 46% of the labour force derived their living from property. This had particular implications for social mobility since '…life chances centred on the prospects of inheriting the family business and the accompanying house and household goods. Realistically, education or training could secure a livelihood within Ireland for only a minority of those aspiring to the workforce' (O'Connell & Rottman 1992: 69). Even up until the early 1970s this meant that inheritance was a particularly strong feature of Irish society.

After 1961, social and economic change occurred rapidly with profound effects on Irish society. Between 1961 and 1990, the proportion of males in agriculture as a percentage of the total labour force fell from 44% to 21% whilst the proportion of

managers, professionals and administrators grew from 8% to over 19%. Similarly, the skilled manual workforce grew from 12 to 20% by 1981, although this declined to 17% by 1990 as recession hit the Irish economy in the mid-1980s. In terms of social mobility, these developments had two main effects.

Table 1: Males at work by Class Categories 1951-1990

	1951 %	*1961* %	*1971* %	*1981* %	*1990* %
Employers and Self-Employed					
Agricultural	38.2	36.1	27.5	19.2	16.4
Non-Agriculture	8.1	7.8	8.3	9.7	13.1
Employees					
(i) Upper Middle-Class	5.3	7.6	10.9	16.0	19.2
(ii) Lower Middle-Class	13.8	15.6	18.0	20.3	21.9
(iii) Skilled Manual	10.1	12.0	16.5	20.3	16.8
(iv) Semi-Skilled Manual					
(a) Agricultural	10.6	8.4	5.2	3.2	2.8
(b) Non-Agricultural	13.9	12.5	13.6	11.2	9.9
Total at Work	100	100	100	100	100
Total Unemployed	3.7	5.7	6.6	10.1	15.5

Source: Breen and Whelan (1990; Table 3.2) and O'Connell (1999; Table 1)

First of all, the importance of inheritance as a way of acquiring social position in Ireland declined after the 1960s such that whereas 50% of men aged 15-19 in the 1920s who did not emigrate could depend upon family employment leading to inheritance, this figure had dropped to less than 15% in the 1970s (Breen *et al.* 1990:56). Second, educational qualifications grew in importance as a determinant of social class position. In 1967, free secondary education was introduced and this increased the take up of education such that the proportion in full-time education up to leaving certificate (age 17-18) rose from 14% in 1964 to 40% in 1985 and around 75% by the early 90s. With increasing industrialisation, educational credentials became an important selection criterion in employer recruitment decisions (Breen *et al* 1990: 139), a process made possible by the high level of 'standardisation' (Allmendinger 1989) in the Irish educational system after 1967.

As others have pointed out, the consequences of these developments provide a useful test of the liberal theory of industrialisation since the recent nature of these developments means that we can examine mobility regimes in the earlier and later periods. The theory would imply that class origins should become less important as a

determinant of social class destination and moreover, education should become increasingly important to the process of allocating individuals to positions as ascription gives way to achievement in the selection of those best suited to positions. This liberal theory has been strongly criticised by many (Goldthorpe *et al* 1980; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) and been shown to gain little support from those data that have been used to test it internationally. However, most of this data refer to the 1970s when most of these countries would already have been mature industrial economies for over 70 years, thus they may not offer the best test. In the Irish case however, recent and swift industrialisation means that we can perform a more thorough test of the theory.

2. The Data and Variables

Two data sets from different period in Ireland are used in this paper, one from the 1970s and one from the mid-1990s. The data from the 1970s come from the 1973 'Survey of the Determinants of Occupational Status and Mobility' carried out both in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, although only the data from the Republic are used here. Using the electoral register as the sampling frame, the survey sought to interview a random sample of 2500 individual men aged between 18 and 65 on their work histories and related subjects. Of the initial 2876 men contacted, 2269 were interviewed, which after weighting for regional non-response yielded a representative sample of men between the age of 18 and 65.

The data from the 1990s come from the Living in Ireland Survey 1994 (LIS). Both the 1973 and 1994 data were collected by the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin. The LIS survey is a nationally representative survey of Irish households and individuals, which forms the first wave of a panel survey. Using a national sampling frame, the 1994 wave achieved a household interview sample of 4048, which was 63% of the valid contacted addresses. A total of 14583 persons were members of these 4048 households, 10411 of which were eligible for interview and 9905 of whom completed the full interview questionnaire (964 on a proxy basis). Unlike the 1973 survey, the LIS survey interviewed a sample of both men and women (4922 men and 4983 women) about a large number of topics including their occupational position and

social background.

In the majority of this paper, we seek to compare mobility patterns in the two periods and thus confine the sample used to men aged between 20 and 64 at the time of interview. However, later in the paper men and women are compared using data from 1994. Both the social class variables and education variables are coded using the classifications employed in the CASMIN study (Erikson *et al* 1979). Thus the origin and destination class variables are seven category groupings of the original eleven classes in the following manner:

I+II	Service class
IIIa+IIIb	Routine non-manual class
IVa+IVb	Petty bourgeoisie
IVc	Smallholders
V+VI	Skilled manual workers, lower grade technicians and supervisors
VIIa	Non-skilled workers not in agriculture
VIIb	Agricultural labourers

Education in the CASMIN schema (König *et al* 1988) distinguishes between eight categories according to level and to some degree the type of schooling involved. In the Irish context however, we have chosen to disregard some of the distinctions that are meaningless in the Irish context and thus collapse the eight categories into a four-fold classification. Thus categories 1a, 1b and 1c (inadequate, completed and basic vocational elementary education) are combined into a primary or incomplete secondary category. It makes no sense in the Irish context to separate those leaving the junior cycle early and those leaving without qualifications. Similarly, 1c (elementary education plus vocational training) does not exist in the Irish school system. Lower and intermediate secondary education (CASMIN 2a and 2b) are combined to form a single lower secondary category since 2a (general intermediate plus specific vocational training) does not exist in Ireland. The closest approximation to this is apprenticeship training that usually follows completion of general intermediate education. Apprenticeships are almost exclusively taken by men and the numbers involved are small and have been declining. Category 2c is retained as a higher secondary category and higher and lower level third level education (3a and 3b) are combined to make a single tertiary education category. Irish educational

qualifications fit into this four-fold typology in the following manner:

CASMIN Category	Irish Education Level or Qualification[2]
Primary or less (1a, 1b and 1c)	Primary Certificate, or no qualifications
Lower Secondary (2a and 2b)	Group or Intermediate Certificate
Higher Secondary (2c)	Leaving Certificate or equivalent
Tertiary (3a and 3b)	Any post second level qualification at sub-degree, primary or higher degree level

3. Some Descriptive Analyses

Having introduced the data and variables to be used, we can now proceed to some descriptive analyses of the pattern of social mobility in Ireland in 1973 and 1994. As the discussion of development in Ireland in the first section made clear, we should expect that there have been large changes in the distribution of classes simply through the transformation of the occupational structure away from agriculture and toward industry. This is shown in table 2 where the proportions described as smallholders declines form 20% in 1973 to 9% in 1994, a process mirrored in the decline of agricultural labourers from 7 to 3%.

However, as the section also made clear, Ireland never developed the heavy industries or large factory system common to the 'golden period' of industrialisation in other countries and in many respects moved from an agricultural society into a post-industrial one (or perhaps this should be termed late-industrial) without the intervening period.

This process was encouraged by the restructuring that occurred among protected Irish industries in the 1980s as they were exposed to international competition in a global recession.

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[2] The 1973 Survey of the *Determinants of Occupational Status and Mobility* used a collapsed qualificational schema which we interpreted in the following manner: no education up to incomplete primary was coded as 'primary or less' in the CASMIN schema, incomplete secondary as 'lower secondary', complete secondary as 'higher secondary' and incomplete tertiary and above as 'tertiary'.

Table 2: Distribution of CASMIN Origin and Destination Social Classes 1973 and 1994

	1973		1994	
	Origins	*Dest.*	*Origins*	*Dest.*
Service (I+II)	5.9%	12.9%	9.4%	19.0%
Routine Non-Manual (IIIa+IIIb)	4.4%	8.3%	9.4%	15.7%
Self-Employed with or without Employeess (IVa)	10.3%	8.2%	7.3%	4.3%
Small-Holders (IVc)	37.5%	20.0%	23.4%	9.1%
Tech/Supervisory and Skilled Manual (V+VI)	14.0%	19.4%	22.1%	29.0%
Semi-Skilled and Unskilled (VIIa)	20.8%	24.1%	25.5%	20.0%
Agricultural (VIIb)	7.2%	7.2%	3.0%	2.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

This meant that unskilled manual workers actually formed a smaller proportion of employees in 1994 than they did in 1973 as shown by table 2. At the same time it is clear from table 2 that the service and routine non-manual classes and technical and skilled manual classes were increasing in size in 1973, a process that accelerated between the two surveys. As the industrial base expanded, service class occupations increased in number from 13% of destinations in 1973 to 19% in 1994, a process mirrored in the expansion of technical and skilled manual employees from 19% to 29%.

Table 3: Index of Dissimilarity for Origin and Destination Classes in 1973 and 1994

ID of Origin and Dest. In 73	ID of Origin and Dest. In 94	ID of Origins in '73 and '94	ID of Dest. in '73 and '94
19.6	22.8	22.3	23.1

If we examine these changing proportions as indexes of dissimilarity in table 3, we can see the increasing differential between origins and destinations in the increase in the index from 20 to 23% between 1973 and 1994. Moreover, the ID for both origins and destinations between the two surveys are 22 and 23% respectively.

These large changes in economic and occupational structure would inevitably have profound effects on the patterning of social mobility in two particular ways. First of all, we would expect to see a great deal more overall mobility as the occupational structure changes. Secondly, the constriction of agriculture and the expansion of

skilled and white-collar occupations must initiate an increase in absolute mobility away from smallholder, agricultural labourer and unskilled locations to skilled and white-collar locations. We can begin to see whether this did indeed happen in table 4, which shows the social backgrounds of those entering specific class locations in 1973 and 1994.

Although if we look across the 'diagonal' cells in table 4 there is still a great deal of self-recruitment in each class except for the petty-bourgeoisie and agricultural classes, there is still growing heterogeneity across the class structure. Almost double the proportion from routine non-manual classes (IIIa and IIIb) are entering the service class in 1994 compared to 1973, a pattern replicated, but to a lesser extent among those from skilled and unskilled manual origins.

Table 4: Comparative Inflow Rates: Percentage in Selected Classes from Different Class Origins – 1973 and 1994

	I+II		IIIa+IIIb		IVa+IVb		IVc		V+VI		VIIa		VIIb	
	73	94	73	94	73	94	73	94	73	94	73	94	73	94
I+II	24.5	25.8	10.3	13.2	4.0	3.7	0.7	1.1	4.3	5.0	2.1	3.5	0.0	2.2
IIIa+IIIb	8.1	14.9	12.6	15.0	3.4	6.6	0.5	1.4	5.1	8.6	3.5	6.1	0.7	2.2
IVa+Ivb	16.8	9.7	9.8	8.5	34.1	27.2	1.2	1.4	7.5	5.8	10.9	4.6	2.0	5.6
Ivc	21.2	16.1	19.0	12.6	28.4	25.0	92.5	88.7	14.7	15.4	23.6	17.1	55.6	47.8
V+VI	15.0	18.3	16.1	24.2	8.0	10.3	0.5	1.4	31.6	31.8	15.6	23.1	0.7	11.1
VIIa	12.5	14.4	26.4	24.8	13.6	22.1	2.6	5.7	31.9	29.7	32.9	41.6	17.6	15.6
VIIb	1.8	0.7	5.7	1.6	8.5	5.1	2.1	0.4	4.8	3.7	11.3	4.0	23.5	15.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

This opening up also occurs strongly among routine non-manual workers who are drawn far less from the smallholder and petty-bourgeoisie classes and more from the skilled manual and service classes in 1994 compared to 1973. The petty-bourgeoisie undergo something of a transformation in the period between the surveys as self-recruitment falls and there are increasing inflows from skilled manual and routine white-collar locations, but particularly from unskilled manual locations. This is almost certainly due to the growth in own account workers in the 1980s, the bulk of who would be skilled manual workers from skilled and unskilled manual origins. Among those entering the technical and skilled manual class we see very little change between the surveys, but the skilled manual origins play a more important role in recruitment into the unskilled manual class (from 16 to 23%) whereas recruitment into this class from class VIIb (agricultural labourers) declines. The extent of change in

inflows can be seen more clearly in table 5 which gives dissimilarity indexes for inflow proportions in 1973 and 1994.

Table 5: Dissimilarity Index of Inflow Rates – 1973 and 1994

I+II	IIIa+IIIb	IVa+IVb	IVc	V+VI	VIIa	VIIb
13.4	13.4	14.0	5.5	5.0	20.1	17.7

The changing structure of recruitment into the unskilled manual class leads to a large ID in table 5 as self-recruitment increases and recruitment from agricultural class VIIb declines. On the other hand, relatively unchanging patterns of recruitment into the skilled manual and smallholder classes leads to IDs of 5 and 5.5 respectively.

The question is, did such large changes in absolute mobility lead to changing patterns of social fluidity in terms of the equalisation of chances for respondents from different class backgrounds to enter other locations?

Table 6:Absolute Class Mobility Levels in the Republic of Ireland 1973 and 1994

	1973	1994
Mobile	58.8	65.6
Mobile into the Service Class (I+II)	9.6	14.1
Mobile into the Service Class from the Working Class (V,VI,VII)	3.7	6.3
Mobile into the Non-Skilled Working Class (VII)	16.2	11.7
Number of Cases on the Diagonal as a percentage of the maximum possible	51.5	43.8

Table 6 shows the levels of absolute mobility in the two periods. It is clear from the first and last rows of table 6 that overall mobility did indeed increase in the period between the two surveys with the proportion of son's not entering their father's class position rising from 59% in 1973 to 66% in 1994. It is also clear that their was a strong inward flow from all class locations into the 'service' class in this period with the proportion increasing from 10% to 14% whilst the unskilled manual class experienced declining inward mobility with the proportion mobile into this location shrinking from 16% to 12%. The final row shows the number immobile as a percentage of the maximum possible; this again shows a trend towards greater mobility between 1973 and 1994 with the percentage from 51.5 per cent to 43.8 per cent suggesting some additional movement over and above that required by structural

change.

Having discussed the nature of Irish industrialisation and described the main consequences of this for changes in social mobility in the state between 1973 and 1994, we now move onto a more analytical framework. Descriptive statistics can give us a simplified view of the nature of overall change in the mobility regime, but they cannot assess the changing structure of social fluidity or the impact of educational changes in the period. To do this we must employ statistical models of association. We do this in the next section by developing a model of these mobility processes from previous work by Goldthorpe et al (1980) and Breen and Whelan (1992).

4. Modelling Trends in Social Fluidity Over Time

4.1 Overall Models

As Breen and Whelan (1992: 131-132) observe, in examining trends in social mobility over time we would ideally begin by modelling social fluidity in terms of a number of independent variables that we believe account for social fluidity. Variation over time in social fluidity would then be attributable to two things: first variation in the strength of the effect of these variables across time; and secondly temporal differences in the distribution of these variables. Conditional on the correctness of our hypotheses about the specific factors determining social fluidity, this approach would shift the explanatory focus away from social fluidity *per se* towards such variations in distribution and strength. In this paper we are constrained from implementing such an approach not only by the absence of data for the earlier period in Ireland but also because we wish to develop models that facilitate cross-national comparison on the basis of existing data.

We proceed therefore in stages. In the first stage we model the class origin-destination relation in terms of very general models that allow us to test the liberal theory of industrialism thesis that industrialism is associated with a weakening of the origin destination association. At the second stage we develop a theoretically informed model of the mobility process drawing on Goldthorpe's (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1987;

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Goldthorpe 1987) model that incorporates the relative desirability of different class destinations, the economic, social and cultural resources associated with different class origins and barriers to social mobility. This model is a non-measured variable version of the Agriculture, Hierarchy and Property (AHP) model previously applied by Breen and Whelan (1992) to Irish data. Finally in later sections we will attempt to provide further insight into the changing nature of social mobility in the Republic of Ireland by examining the manner in which education mediates between origin and destination.

In Table 7 we start the first stage of our analysis by fitting model A the independence or perfect mobility which allows for variation in the distributions of origins and destinations across time but posits no association between origin and destinations. This model which serves as a reference point for more plausible models returns a G^2 of 2,411.4 for 72 degrees of freedom.

Table 7: Results of Fitting the CnSF and UNIDIFF Models to Seven-Class Intergenerational Tables for 1973 and 1994

I Models	G^2	d.f	P.-value	rG^2	Δ
A. Ind. {OT}{DT}	2,411.4	72	0.000		26..29
B. CnSF {OT}{DT}{OD}	54.50	36	0.025	97.7	3.24
C. Unidiff	47.48	35	0.076	98.0	2.97
II. Unidiff parameters	1973			1994	
	0.00			-0.129	
Asymptotic standard error				0.052	

Model B, the Constant Social fluidity Model (CnSF) allows for variation over time in levels of absolute mobility but constrains relative mobility to be constant over time. This model misclassifies only 3.3% of all cases and reduces the G^2 value of the independence model by 97.7%. However the G^2 value of 54.5 with 36 degrees of freedom just fails to provide a satisfactory fit by conventional statistical standards. We proceed therefore to test whether the strength of the origin-destination relationship has changed over time, as the liberal theory of industrialism would suggest.

To address this issue we employ Model C a log-multiplicative layer effect model – the so-called 'unidiff' model'. This model posits that the pattern of association is the

same over time, but it allows for the strength of this association to differ by a uniform amount, so allowing for more or less marked inequality in social fluidity across time. (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992; Xie 1992). That is, let a_{ijk} represent the log-linear association parameters between origins (I=1,….,I) and destinations (j=1,…..,J) in each of k=1,,…..,K) tables. Then the unidiff model specifies:

$$\alpha_{ijk} = \alpha_{ij}\beta_k$$

where a_{ij} is a set of baseline origin-destination parameters common to all k; and ß is a parameter whose value is specific to each k and whose effect is to raise or lower the association parameter compared with their baseline values. This model uses one degree of freedom more than the CnSF model and yields a deviance figure of 47.48 with 35 degrees of freedom thus providing a satisfactory fit to the data. The degree of improvement in fit over the CnSF model, with a reduction in the deviance level of the independence model of 98.0% and an improvement in the proportion of case misclassified to 2.97, is marginal suggesting a very modest deviation from the pattern of no change. The unidiff coefficients have been normalised by setting the value for 1973 to zero. A unidiff coefficient less than zero serves to reduce the size of the origin-destination association relative to the baseline values, and conversely for a coefficient greater than zero. The observed value of –0.129 (s.e. =0.52) suggests a modest trend towards increased social fluidity between 1973 and 1994.

5. Models of the Underlying Mobility Process: The AHP Model

The models we have applied up to this point involve very general hypotheses about trends in the nature of the origin-destination mobility process but do not specify substantive hypotheses relating to the underlying determinants of the mobility process. In this section we proceed to examine change over time employing such a model. In developing such a model 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 class

origin which help them gain access to more desirable destinations; and barriers to movement between classes. Typically we think of resources as 'economic, cultural and social resources' (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1987:64) while barriers to mobility would include the necessity to own the means of production and educational and other qualifications needed for entry to the occupations that comprises a class grouping.

Ideally we would like to have measures of the above variables available to us. In the absence of such measures we proceed to operationalise the model, in a manner similar to Erikson and Goldthorpe (1987a&b), through the use of dummy variables. Our model, however, differs in certain respects from theirs and since it is based on an attempt to simulate the earlier Breen and Whelan (1992) model which we refer to as the AHP model. The model includes the following elements.

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

Hierarchy: H1, H2, H3: These terms are intended to capture the effect of generalised resources, desirability and barriers conceptualised in a hierarchical fashion and Reflecting the extent of movement up or down the class hierarchy. We distinguish four levels of hierarchy

    (i)   I+II
    (ii)   III
    (iii)   IVa+b+c, V/VI
    (iv)   VIIa+b

H1 captures movements involving one step across this hierarchy; H2 indicates the additional effect of a two step movement and H3 the further effect of a three-step shift. The coefficients are thus cumulative.

Property: PB: This term captures the tendency for movement between the farming and petty bourgeois classes.

SLP: the term for movement between petty bourgeois origins and the service class.[3] Together the terms PB and SLP capture the pattern of movement within the classes that own the means of production.

Inheritance: INH1, INH2, INH3, INH4, INH5: A very specific resource for mobility is indicated by the tendency for class inheritance where origin in a given class improves ones relative chances of remaining in that class even when we control for other factors in the model. The reasons for this are diverse but include such things as direct inheritance of the means of production, family tradition and access to social networks. The five inheritance parameters constitute a set of cumulative terms that capture these effects. INH1 is the term for all cells on the main diagonal. IN2 reflects the departure of immobility in the non-skilled manual class from the overall level, INH3 to INH5 capture successively the additional effects required to capture immobility in the skilled manual class, the petty bourgeoisie and farming.

Affinity Terms: OAF1: In order to provide a satisfactory fit to the data it turns out to be necessary to add, in Erikson and Goldthorpe's terminology, a positive affinity term to capture the two-way flow between the petit-bourgeoisie and agricultural workers. The necessity for this term is likely to reflect the fact that class VIIb is frequently a transient destination and, on the other hand, the fact that the absence of employment opportunities in rural areas is likely to encourage entry into self-employment.

We can write this model as:

$$LogF_{ij} = \lambda^O + \lambda^D + \lambda^{AGB} + \lambda^{PB} + \lambda^{SLP} + \sum_{i=1}^{3} \lambda^{Hi} + \sum_{i=1}^{5} \lambda^{INHi} + \lambda^{OAF1}$$

Where Fij is the expected value in the ijth cell of the table.

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[3] In the earlier version of the model movement from IVc to I+II was also included in this term

Table 8: Mobility Variance with the AHP Model

| I Model Fits | | | | |
Model	G^2	d.f.	$\varDelta$	P
A. No Mobility Differences {F}{S}{T}{AHP+OAF1}	505.28	72	12.18	.000
B. Absolute Mobility Differences {F*T}{ S*T}{ AHP+ OAF1}	94.82	60	4.19	.003
C. Absolute and Relative Mobility Differences {F*T}{S*T} {AHP +OAF1 + IN5*T+ IN6*T}	75.31	58	3.03	.063
Total Mobility Variance	429.97			
II. Partitioning of mobility Variance				
Absolute Mobility Variance %	95.5%			
Relative Mobility Variance %	4.5%			

In Table 8 employing the following the procedure outlined by (Breen 1985) we proceed to partition the mobility variance over time. Model A which is a model of no mobility differences over time returns a deviance value of 505.28 with 72 degrees of freedom and misclassifies 12.18% of cases. Model B that allows for absolute mobility differences produces a value of 94.82 with 60 degrees of freedom and misclassifies 4.09% of cases. Finally Model C which allows for absolute and relative mobility variation results in a deviance value of 75.31 with 58 degrees of freedom, provides a satisfactory fit and misclassification of only 3.03% of cases.[4] The total mobility variance (Model A – Model C) is 429.97. Variation over time in levels of absolute mobility accounts for 95.5% of this variance and differences in patterns of social fluidity for the remaining 4.5%.

In Table 9 we set out the parameter estimates for Model C. This model allows absolute mobility and the inheritance parameters for skilled manual and non-skilled manual work to vary across time. The reference category for the inheritance parameters is the white-collar classes and agricultural workers. In 1973 non-skilled manual workers showed a significantly lower tendency towards inheritance while the opposite was true for skilled manual workers.

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[4] The corresponding models without the affinity term return the following deviance levels 516 with 72d.f., 104.8 with 61 d.f. and 86.6 with 59d.f.

Table 9: Results of Applying the AHP Model to Seven Class Intergenerational Mobility Tables for the Republic of Ireland in 1973 and 1974
Parameter Estimates

Parameter	Estimate	s.e
INH1	0.221	0.111
INH2	-0.743	0.145
INH3	1.522	0.192
INH4	0.991	0.170
INH5	0.443	0.232
H1	-0.141	0.069
H2	-0.516	0.054
H3	-1.037	0.098
SLP	0.641	0.133
AGB	-2.023	0.158
PB	0.955	0.122
OAF1	0.704	0.198
INH3*T	-0.894	0.212
INH2*T	0.397	0.156

By 1994 these differences, although still observable, had been significantly reduced. All of the other effects were constant across time. A clear gradient of hierarchy effects was evident with an increasing gap between levels as one moves from one step to three step movements. The PB, SLP and AGB terms effects are all highly significant and consistent with theoretical expectations.

Our findings therefore suggest very modest changes over time and are not consistently in the direction of greater social fluidity. The vast proportion of the mobility variance over time is accounted for by variations in absolute mobility. A reduction in the level of immobility for the skilled manual class is counterbalanced by an increase in immobility for the non-skilled manual class. In light of the modest improvement offered by the unidiff model over the CnSF model and the failure to observe a clear trend towards greater openness with the AHP model, it would appear (through an examination of the gross effects of class origin), that the broad pattern of class advantage has been maintained over time.

6. The Relationship between Class Origin and Educational Categories

In order to proceed to an analysis of the indirect effects of class origin, at this point we extend our analysis by introducing education as an intervening variable. The class

origin-educational category is modelled using a row effects model. We rank our four levels of education from 1, for primary education, to 4, for third level education and class origins are entered in interaction with the education variable. This allows us to measure generalised effects relating to each specific class origin and the desirability of educational destinations. The row effect specifies that the log odds on a higher status destination, relative to the next lower status destination, changes by a fixed amount for each shift of origins regardless of the pair of destinations being compared. (Breen 1984; Goodman 1979; Hout 1981).

For an I x J table:

$$Fij = \alpha\beta_i\,\lambda_j\delta_i^{j-1}$$

where δ varies according to rows but the distance of one column category from the next remains the same within row. Model B in Table 10 fits a homogenous row effects model to the class origins-educational qualifications-time table. The model fails to provide a satisfactory fit giving a G^2 of 134.91 with 30 degrees of freedom. Model C, which allows row effects to vary across time, gives a significantly better fit with a G^2 of 97.81 for 24 degrees of freedom but is still a good deal away from being a satisfactory fit. A further significant improvement is achieved by including two affinity terms. The first adjusts for the fact that the heterogeneous row effects model underestimates the flow from the skilled manual class to incomplete secondary education. A plausible explanation from this is that we do not distinguish between apprenticeship type qualifications and others. The second affinity term compensates for the tendency for the earlier model to overestimate the flow from the service class to third level education. Neither of these affinity terms interacts with time and therefore they do not affect our analysis of changing effects of class origin. Model D, while not fitting the data, with a G^2 of 54.7 for 22 degrees of freedom, accounts for 95.9% of the independence model deviance and misclassifies only 2.84% of all cases. Further analysis suggests that an improvement of fit would be achieved at the cost of a considerable loss of parsimony. We will return to this issue at a later stage

Table 10: Results of Fitting a Row Effects model to the Class-Origins-Education Tables for 1973 and 1994

I: Model Fits					
	G^2	d.f.	Δ	RG^2	P
A. Independence	1,019.60	36			0.000
B. Homogenous Row Effects	134.91	30	5.18	86.7	0.000
C. Heterogenous Row Effects	97.81	24	4.05	90.41	0.000
D. Heterogenous Row Effects + EAF1 + EAF2	54.70	22	2.84	95.9	0.000
II: Parameter Estimates					
	1973			1994 Interactions	
	Estimate	s.e		Estimate	s.e
Row Scores					
I+II	0.00			0.00	
III	-0.566	0.156		-0.735	0.197
IVa+b	-0.873	0.135		-0.465	0.182
Ivc	-1.605	0.126		-0.143	0.171
V/VI	-1.049	0.133		-0.587	0.177
VIIa	-1.570	0.134		-0.451	0.178
VIIb	-2.262	0.203		-0.249	0.268
EAF1	0.554	0.133			
EAF2	-0.999	0.207			

Panel II of Table 10 shows the parameter estimates for Model D. The row effect model allow us to rank origin classes relative to each other in terms of the odds of attaining a higher rather than a lower educational destination. The reference category against which all others are compared is the service class and this is scored zero. For 1973 the scores form a hierarchy consistent with our expectations. The routine non-manual class lies closest to the service class, followed by the petty bourgeoisie and the skilled manual class; the non-skilled manual class and the farming class are located close to each other with the latter having a slight advantage and agricultural workers enjoying a particularly disadvantaged position. The picture is a very familiar one from previous Irish work with a clear hierarchy complicated by the agricultural/non-agricultural divisions. The position of the latter classes is entirely consistent with evidence from other sources.

Over time the change that is observed is of a very straightforward kind. The service class and the agricultural classes make significant gains across all other classes but particularly the routine-non-manual class. Thus in a period of rapid education those at the peak of the hierarchy have improved their relative position. In the agricultural sector change has involved not just a contraction of the sector but a substantial increase in average farm size and changes in production methods. An upgrading of

qualifications would therefore have been desirable not only for those leaving agriculture but also for those who remained immobile. The changes once again are not ones that are open to interpretation in terms of any general reduction in the scale of class advantage.

7. Educational Categories and Class Destination

In Table 11 we model the trend in educational category-class destination by means of a columns effect model. The educational categories are scored as before from 1 to 4 and the destination classes are entered as a set of dummy variables in interaction with the education variable.

The reference category is once again the service class and is scored zero. This allows us to measure generalised effects relating to each specific class destination and the resources associated with educational origins. The column effects model specifies that the impact of a higher status origin, relative to the next lower status origin, changes by a fixed amount for each shift of destination regardless of the pair of origins being compared. The scores thus reflect the relative importance of superior educational qualifications in competition for access to one rather than another destination class.

for each case δ varying according to column, but the distance of one row from the next remaining the same.

Model B in Table 11 is a homogenous column effect model which results in a G^2 of 214.73 for 30 degrees of freedom. Allowing the column effects to vary across time produces a significant improvement with a model G^2 of 173.85 for 24 degrees of freedom leading to a reduction in the independence model deviance of 92.4%. The relatively poor fit of this model arises for two rather distinct reasons. The first, as captured in the DAF1 term, is that at both points of time the flow from incomplete secondary to skilled manual work is underestimated.

Table 11: Results of Fitting a Column Effects Model to the Education-Class Destination Tables for 1973 and 1994

I: Model Fits

	G^2	d.f.		RG^2	P
A.Independence	2293.2	36	24.07		
B. Homogenous Column Effects	214.73	30	7.10	90.6	0.000
C. Heterogenous Column Effects	173.85	24	5.92	92.4	0.000
D. Heterogenous Column Effects + DAF1 to DAF3	36.21	20	1.82	98.4	0.015

II: Parameter Estimates

	1973		1994 Interactions	
	Estimate	s.e	Estimate	s.e
Column Scores				
I+II	0.000		0.000	
III	-0.923	0.124	0.092	0.150
IVa+b	-1.499	0.141	0.195	0.193
Ivc	-2.434	0.149	0.405	0.181
V/VI	-1.694	0.131	0..250	0.156
VIIa	-2.195	0.135	0.313	0.161
VIIb	-2.740	0.218	1.182	0.257
DAF1	0.712	0.102		
DAF2	0.577	0.219		
DAF2*T	-1.518	0.255		
DAF3	0.503	0.128		

For an I x J table:

$$Fij = \alpha\beta_i\,\lambda_j\delta_j^{i-1}$$

This would again seem likely to reflect the role of vocational type qualifications. The second factor is the operation of a process of qualification inflation over time. Thus our model underestimates the flow from both types of secondary education to the service class in 1973 but overestimates these flows to a significantly greater extent in 1994. When we allow for these effects by the use of affinity terms we obtain a G^2 of 36.21 with 20 degrees of freedom which accounts for 98.4% of the deviance of the independence model, misclassifies only 1.82% of cases and comes close to fitting the data.

The theme of qualification inflation is again to the fore when we consider the pattern of column scores. In 1973 we see the emergence of a familiar class hierarchy with the

now familiar sectoral complication. The service class is followed in turn by the routine non-manual class, the petty bourgeoisie, skilled manual, non-skilled and agricultural workers. In 1974 a set of interactions are observed that involve a narrowing of the gap between the white collar and petit bourgeois classes and all others. Within these classes the change is most dramatic for agricultural workers. Thus both the affinity and column term interactions point to the weakening relationship between education and class destination.

8. The Joint Effects of Class Origins and Education

We now turn to the extent to which the relationship between class origins and class destination is mediated via the effects of educational level. We begin by examining the manner in which class origin and educational level combine to influence class destination. Model A in table 12 allows for all three way interactions except O*E*D. Thus it hypothesises that the link between educational credentials and destination class is the same across all origin classes. This model produces a G^2 of 284.1 with 216 degrees of freedom.

Adding the O*E*D term in Model B. brings an improvement to a deviance value of 135.21 for 108 degrees of freedom and comes close to fitting the data. The modest improvement is bought at the cost decreasing parsimony. In light of this, we attempt to assess whether the models of educational and class origin effects that we have developed prove adequate when used to model their partial effects.

Table 12 : Model Fits for Origin-Education-Destinations Tables for 1973 and 1994
Model Fits

	G^2	d.f.	Δ	P
A. All three way effects except O*E*D	284.10	216	5.99	0.001
B. All three way effects	135.21	108	3.37	0.039
C. Substitute education models for O*E*T + E*D*T	357.11	258	6.88	0.000
D. Substitute AHP + OAF1 for O*D*T	377.71	274	7.11	
E. Education Models + AHP + OAF1	454.90	315	7.90	0.000

In model C our origin-education and education destination models are substituted for

the three way interactions F*E*T + E*S*T. This results in a G^2 of 357.11 with 258 degrees of freedom. Compared with model A, this involves an increase in the deviance of 73.01 for 42 degrees of freedom that, although statistically significant, is of a very modest order. The next model substitutes the AHP and the affinity term OAF1 for FST and gives a G^2 of 377.1 for 274 degrees of freedom. This involves an increase in G^2 of 93.6 for 58 degrees of freedom that is again significant but modest. Finally, in Model D we substitute all three theoretical models for the set of three way effects contained in Model A. The outcome is a G^2 of 454.90 with 315 degrees of freedom constituting an increase in the deviance level of 170.8 for a gain of 109 degrees of freedom.

At this stage we turn to a comparison of the gross and partial effect of class origin and education. In Table 13 we set out the net education to destination parameters that can be compared with the gross parameters set out in Table 12. The column parameters for 1973 are almost identical in both cases. For the column by time interaction parameters, a slight reduction for the coefficient for farmers is observed but otherwise the pattern is remarkably similar. A similar conclusion holds for the affinity terms. Thus, as we would expect, controlling for origin class effects has virtually no impact on the education parameters.

In Table 14 we look at the partial parameters for class origins while controlling for education. Here we do find significant differences between the gross and partial coefficients.

The model misclassifies 7.9% of cases compared to 5.9% for model A. Overall then our theoretical models perform very well.

These differences are broadly in line with our expectations. The coefficients relating to barriers to entry to agriculture and the movement between the petty bourgeoisie and farming classes where there is no reason to expect education to play a mediating role, remain largely unchanged.

Table 13: Partial Education-Destination Parameters for the Origin-Education-Destination Model

Parameters		
	Estimate	*s.e*
Column Scores		
I+II	0.00	
III	-0.829	0.123
IVa+b	-1.432	0.143
Ivc	-2.311	0.160
V/VI	-1.554	0.131
VIIa	-2.035	0.137
VIIb	-2.457	0.222
DAF1	0.589	0.080
DAF2	0.697	0.141
DAF3	0.479	0.129
Column Scores*T		
III	0.077	0.149
IVa+b	0.178	0.185
Ivc	0.279	0.193
V/VI	0.250	0.155
VIIa	0.318	0.163
VIIb	1.059	0.263
DAF1*T	-1.555	0.253

With the exception of the diagonal parameter, and the additional effect for farming, a modest reduction in the size of the inheritance parameters is observed. However, in large part, such inheritance effects operate independently of educational level.

The parameters that are affected by controlling for education are those relating to hierarchy and the SLP terms which capture the additional advantage enjoyed by those from the petty bourgeoisie in gaining access to the service class. The partial coefficient for the H1 term relating to one step movements becomes insignificant while those for H2 and H3 that reflect two and three step movements and the SLP term are almost halved. Each of these terms, however, remains statistically significant.

Thus while hierarchical class movement is significantly mediated by education there are clearly other factors operating that have almost equal importance. Overall, while our results confirm the important role of education, the most striking finding is the extent to which processes of class mobility, and not only those linked to property ownership, operate independently of education.

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Table 14: Partial Origin Destination Parameters for the Origin-Education-Destination Model

Parameters		
	Estimate	*s.e*
INH1	0.238	0.115
INH2	-0.597	0.154
INH3	1.256	0.199
INH4	1.266	0.187
INH5	0.4644	0.240
H1	-0.025	0.070
H2	-0.236	0.059
H3	-0.458	0.104
SLP	0.297	0.153
AGB	-1.843	0.158
PB	1.002	0.144
OAF1	0.602	0.219
INH3*T	-0.832	0.229
INH2*T	0.408	0.164

9.The Class Mobility of Women in the Republic of Ireland

The 1973 survey of social mobility in the Republic of Ireland only contains data on the wives of the male respondents. Given the low participation rates of married women at this time, this means that we would have an insufficient number (and an unrepresentative sample) of cases for analysis in the 1973 data. However, changes in women's labour force participation rates since the early 1970s mean that there is no justification for the total neglect of women's class mobility. As McRae (1990:122) notes, the initial impetus for the challenge to the conventional approach to class analysis arose as a result of the marked increase in the labour force participation of women. In 1971 27.2% of women were economically active, but by 1985 this had risen to 36.5%. However, these figures conceal conflicting trends relating later entry to the labour market for young women and dramatic increases in the labour force participation of married women. In 1971 7.5% of married women were active in the labour force but this had risen to 34.2% by 1995 (O'Conner & Shortall 1999: 288). The increase in female participation has been almost entirely concentrated among women located in upper middle-class positions. The percentage of women at work who were in such positions rose from 16.5% in 1971 to 28.3% in 1991. Women, however, are largely concentrated in the lower middle class where one in two are still found. The major decline has been observed in agriculture.

The changes in women's participation levels suggests that models of social mobility that might have been appropriate in the early 1970's may have become increasingly misleading. The Irish case also provides a better testing ground for the impact of female participation than the overall levels of participation might suggest because the levels of part-time work are significantly below the European average. Thus while in 1993 part-time employment in Great Britain constituted 45% of female employment the corresponding figure in the Republic of Ireland was 19% (O'Connor and Shortall, 1999:291). In examining women's mobility we will not address the thorny issue of the appropriate unit of analysis. Instead we will content ourselves with comparing the occupational mobility of women in the labour force with that of men. We begin by examining the extent to which men and women differ in their distribution across origin and destination classes.

Because women are significantly less likely than men to be found in the property owning or skilled manual classes they are more likely to experience mobility. Using an alternative seven-class schema where lower routine non-manual employees are combined with unskilled manual workers, the respective figures are 75% and 66%. Structural difference leads to a looser association between origin and destination for women in the sense that they experience greater upward and downward mobility. The remaining question is whether, underlying such differences in absolute mobility, there are also differences in relative mobility that reflect gender bases variations in class-related inequality of opportunity.

Table 15: Results of Fitting the CnSF and UNIDIFF and AHP Models to Seven-Class Intergenerational Tables for Women in the Republic of Ireland in 1994

Model	G^2	d.f	P.-value	rG^2	Δ
A. Ind. {OS}{DS}	1358.0	72	0.000		20.66
B. CnSF {OS}{DS}{OD}	41.21	36		97.0	3.09
C. UNIDIFF	35.89	35	0.000	97.4	3.01
D. Homogenous AHP + OAF1	105.47	60	0.000	92.2	4.76
E.Homogenous AHP + OAF1) + SAF1	73.91	59	0.092	94.6	3.76

Has the neglect of female mobility, as Hayes & Miller (1993) suggest "effectively

distorted understanding of the central processes of social mobility"? In order to test this hypothesis in Table 15 we apply Model B. the constant social fluidity model, which allows for absolute differences but assumes a uniform underlying pattern of association, to the joint data set for men and women. This produces a G^2 of 41.21 with 36 degrees of freedom that provides a satisfactory fit by conventional statistical standards. This model accounts for 97% of the independence model deviance and misclassifies only 3.09% of cases. Differences in origins, but more particularly destinations are clearly the crucial factor leading to gender differences in mobility patterns. However, we continue to explore the nature of any residual differences in social fluidity patterns by applying two further models. Model C is the unidiff model that assumes that the pattern of association is the same for men and women but allows the strength of this association to vary by a uniform amount. This produces a G^2 of 35.89 with 35 degrees of freedom. This constitutes a statistically significant improvement on the CnSF model although the improvement is of a marginal nature with the model accounting for 97.4% of the independence model deviance and misclassifying 3.01% of cases. The unidiff coefficient of −0.199 (s.e. =.085) indicates that the strength of the origin destination association is weaker for women. Finally we apply our theoretically informed AHP model to the male-female mobility table. Model D, which allows for no variation in the operation of the model by gender, gives a G^2 of 105.47 with 60 degrees of freedom and fails to fit the data. However, as the application of model E shows, in order to produce a satisfactory fit all that is required is the addition of further affinity term. This term SAF1 allows for which has a coefficient of 0.90 (s.e.=0.158) allows for the fact that the density of the flow from farming origins to the service class is significantly stronger for women than for men. This outcome is entirely consistent with previous evidence of the differential education strategies pursued by farmers for sons and daughters. This model produces a G^2 of 73.91 with 59 degrees of freedom.

The weight of our analysis suggests that patterns of social fluidity appear to be 'gender blind'. Explanations of differences in male and female mobility processes and their development over time will require a concentration on patterns of absolute social mobility and the processes that generate sex segregation in employment. As Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992:253) note, it appears that that such explanations will need to be

ones that are for the most part developed independently of class analysis.

Conclusions

In this paper we have documented the transformation of the Irish class structure and educational system between the 1970s and the 1990s and the consequences of such change for patterns of mobility and the mediating role of education. The findings of the study are summarised below.

- The Irish class structure, which had exhibited an extraordinary stability up to the 1960s, experienced a rapid transformation during this period. The change, although taking a particularly accelerated form, was of a form similar to that observed earlier in more economically advanced countries. Agricultural classes experienced a significant contraction while unskilled manual work also declined. On the other hand the upper and lower middle classes expanded considerably.

- The consequences of these changes in terms of class composition were that the service class particularly, but also the routine non–manual class, became significantly more heterogeneous. This is not due to any reduction in inheritance tendencies but arises from a significant reduction in the density of the inflow from the petty bourgeoisie and farming origins. For the petty bourgeoisie on the other hand we do observe a significant reduction in the degree of inheritance and in recruitment from the farming classes and a correspondingly increased inflow from the non-skilled manual class. While increased heterogeneity is the predominant pattern, the opposite is the case with the non-skilled manual class, which becomes largely recruited from the manual class. Thus between 1973 and 1994, we can see the demise of the traditional small proprietor in the changing composition of social classes. In most cases the decreased importance of these propertied classes results in greater heterogeneity, but at the bottom it leads to the emergence of a self-recruiting bloc that more closely resembles the "mature" working class of countries who had industrialised in the last century or in the early 20th Century.

- In addition to its impact on class composition, economic change also led to significantly increased levels of mobility. Such mobility is largely of an upward nature. With mobility into the service class increasing by from 10 to 14% of the total sample. Furthermore, long-range mobility from the manual classes to the

service class increased from 4 to 6%. On the other hand, downward mobility into the non-skilled working class declined from 16 to 12%.

- While absolute flows showed significant change over time, social fluidity patterns were almost entirely unchanged with less than 5% of the mobility variance being attributable to differences in relative mobility.

- The largely unchanged origin-destination relationship was brought about by countervailing changes in the origin-education and education destinations. In the former case the service class and the agricultural classes saw an improvement in their relative situation. This was, however accompanied by a weakening of the relationship between education and class origins that appears to reflect a process of qualification inflation.

- At both points in time education mediates a significant part of the effect of hierarchy, and to a lesser extent that of inheritance. However, the partial effect of such variables remains significant. Furthermore, other effects associated with the propertied classes are largely independent of education.

- The underlying pattern of social fluidity for women in 1994 was not significantly different from their male counterparts.

While change in the Irish class structure has significant consequences in terms of levels of absolute mobility and patterns of class formation there is no evidence of a move towards the replacement of particularistic principles relating to social position and family with meritocratic and 'universalistic' principles. Instead our results are consistent with earlier findings based on 1987 data and focusing on first occupation (Breen and Whelan, 1993; 1998). Educational qualifications are increasingly important prerequisites of specific occupational positions. This is true not just for white collar or skilled manual employees but also for the agricultural categories that traditionally had distinctively low levels of education. The contraction of agriculture has been associated with an increase in average farm size and new production methods requiring higher levels of education. Notwithstanding such structural effects there is no evidence that education has become more salient as a reproductive mechanism. As variation in the distribution of individuals across educational categories has declined over time, the returns to education, in terms of class position achieved, has been reduced. This is true for both the gross and partial effects of

education. Thus as Boudon (1974) observed, the rational decisions of individuals to acquire more education has an unforeseen effect at the aggregate level. Such 'qualification inflation' may partly explain why the prediction of the liberal theory of industrialism of the increasing importance of achievement over ascription has not occurred. However, the prediction may also have failed because the liberal theorists failed to grasp the importance and persistence of a set of factors that are largely independent of education. These include factors such as the type of property effects that we have included in our model, but also those associated with hierarchical position in the class structure. Our findings on the restricted role of education mirror Breen's (1998) finding that class differences in employment status in the Republic of Ireland are only weakly mediated by education with the cumulative impact of other channels of class influence being significantly greater. These findings suggest that we need to take the advantages associated with property in advanced economies more seriously. They also point, as earlier work has noted, to the need to develop our understanding of the advantages associated with class hierarchy other than those conferred by educational capital., such as the advantages stemming from social networks and social or communication skills

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