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## CONTEXTUAL EFFECTS OF CLASS MOBILITY ON VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN 16 WESTERN COUNTRIES: 1956-1990

by

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**Résumé - Les effets de contexte produits par la mobilité sociale sur le vote dans 16 pays occidentaux: 1956-1990.** L'auteur teste plusieurs hypothèses sur les effets de contexte produits par la mobilité sociale sur le vote de membres de classes intergénérationnellement stables. Ces hypothèses concernent les effets de niveau des entrées et des sorties d'une classe sociale spécifiée (pour un pays et une année donnés). Ces hypothèses sont testées par une analyse multi-niveau concernant des données sur 20.169 répondants issus de 113 enquêtes faites dans 16 pays démocratiques industrialisés pendant la période 1956-1990. En dépit de ces efforts, les analyses montrent aucun effet de contexte significatif, soit au niveau des entrées, soit au niveau des sorties intergénérationnelles de mobilité sociale dans un pays, sur le comportement de vote des personnes intergénérationnellement immobiles. Dans la discussion, l'auteur présente des explications possibles pour ces résultats négatifs. **Analyse multi-niveau, Comportement de vote, Mobilité sociale, Effets de contexte.**

**Abstract.** The author tests several hypotheses about the contextual effects of class mobility on the voting behaviour of intergenerationally stable class members. These hypotheses pertain to the effects of levels of outflow from and inflow mobility to a specific social class (in a certain nation and a specific year). The hypotheses are tested by multi-level modelling, and analyzing data on 20,619 respondents from 113 surveys held in sixteen industrialized democratic countries in the period 1956-1990. Despite these efforts, the analyses show no significant contextual effect of either the level of intergenerational inflow or the level of outflow social mobility in a country on the voting behaviour of intergenerationally immobile persons. In the discussion section possible explanations for these negative results are discussed. **Multilevel Analyse, Voting Behaviour, Social Mobility, Context Effects.**

### INTRODUCTION

In almost all democracies, socio-economic class is a prime determinant of voting behaviour. Persons in the lower classes have a higher chance of voting for a left-wing political party than persons in the higher classes (Alford 1963; Heath *et al.* 1985, 1995; Nieuwbeerta 1996).

However, to understand fully the relationship between class position and voting behaviour one has to take into account that socio-

economic classes in the advanced industrial societies are far from homogeneous and static. In all Western countries people move up and down the social ladder with respect to their father. Occupational groupings or class in modern society, therefore, may be envisaged as comprising two different elements: one a more or less permanent "core", i.e. the intergenerational immobile, the other made up of mobile individuals of relatively recent membership, i.e. the intergenerationally mobile - those who climbed up or down the social ladder with regard to their parents. Processes of social mobility, therefore, may help to explain "class-deviant" behaviour within a country (Abramson, 1972) or, since patterns of absolute intergenerational class mobility differ between countries and periods (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992), to explain cross-national or over-time variations in levels of class voting (De Graaf & Ultee 1990; Nieuwbeerta 1995).

When examining the relationship between intergenerational class mobility and individual voting behaviour, most researchers have adopted the micro-sociological perspective, i.e. they have investigated the effects of individual mobility on the voting behaviour of intergenerationally mobile persons (see for example: Barber 1970; Weakliem 1992; Nieuwbeerta & De Graaf 1993; De Graaf *et al.* 1995). A series of studies stretching from the first to the third generation of research on stratification and politics (Nieuwbeerta 1995), however, suggests that intergenerational class mobility may also influence people's voting behaviour in a more indirect way, i.e. people may change their voting behaviour because they perceive intergenerational class mobility in their environment (Lipset 1960; Blau & Duncan 1967; Abramson & Books 1971; Thorburn 1979; Goldthorpe 1986). It are these "contextual effects" of class mobility that we focus on in this paper.

Although, of course, such contextual effects can be assumed to affect the voting behaviour of both the intergenerationally mobile and the immobile, we restrict our investigations to the immobile class members. We do this, because for the immobile the contextual effects can be expected to be stronger than for the mobile. The contexts of mobile have changed over their life course and consequently they were subject to conflicting contextual effects. However, for immobile class members contextual effect are easier to detect. In this paper we thus address the question: *What are the contextual effects of intergenerational class mobility in a country on the voting behaviour of intergenerationally immobile persons?*

Addressing this questions, we build on hypotheses and results of many earlier studies, but aim to make progress in various ways. So far, many scholars have formulated theories and hypotheses about the effects of social mobility in people's context on their political

preferences (for example: Thorburn, 1979; Abramson & Books, 1971), but only few empirical research has been done to test whether such effects of contextual social mobility could be detected. Furthermore, the research on this topic that has been done, deals with only a small number of contexts and inadequate techniques (e.g. Thorburn 1979). In this paper we aim to make progress by analyzing a dataset containing information of individuals in many different contexts, i.e. in seven distinguished social classes in sixteen countries and several years over the period 1956-1990. Furthermore, we use multi-level models which are especially designed to investigate contextual effects.

## HYPOTHESES

Many scholars of the various generations of research on stratification and politics have formulated theories and hypotheses about the contextual effects of class mobility on voting behaviour (for example: Blau & Duncan 1967: 440; Abramson & Books 1971; Thorburn 1979; De Graaf & Ultee 1987). Building on this earlier research into the contextual effects of class mobility, we formulate hypotheses about the effects of two characteristics of mobility patterns on the voting behaviour of immobile class members. These characteristics are the *level of outflow mobility* from a specific class and the *level of inflow mobility* to a specific class.

To hypothesize on the effects of levels of outflow and inflow mobility in a certain class on the voting behaviour of the members of that class, we use the instrumental and expressive theories of individual voting behaviour (see also: Heath *et al.* 1985: 9; De Graaf *et al.* 1995: 999). According to the instrumental theory, voting behaviour is rational and self-interested: people vote according to their interests and therefore vote for the party whose policies will bring them the greatest utility now or in the future. In the expressive theory, voting is seen as a social act rather than an instrumental one. People associate with each other, and these associations are thought to provide an arena in which voting behaviour may be influenced. In general, such associations are made with people from the same class position, but sometimes - for example due to class mobility - they are not.

An hypothesis concerning the effects of the level of inflow mobility to a class on the voting behaviour of the stable members of that class, can best be deduced from the expressive theory. Because people in general associate with people occupying the same class position (Goldthorpe 1986), people's alignments to a certain party are usually stimulated by the influences of their class co-members, and all

influences being in the same direction. However, when classes are heterogeneous - due to the inflow of intergenerationally mobile people - we would expect the existing mobile class members to be influenced by the different voting behaviour of those entering the class. This is especially the case when the influx of newcomers with different political attitudes and behaviours is large (see also Lipset 1960).

The impact of newcomers may be expected to depend not only on the amount of inflow to a class, but also on the political character of that inflow. The more left-wing the voting behaviour of newly arrived class members, the more will the voting behaviour of the stable class members be left-wing. Thus, the effects of inflow mobility on the voting behaviour of immobile class members can be assumed to be dependent on two factors: the absolute level of inflow mobility to a class, and the political character of this inflow. Therefore, the following inflow mobility hypothesis can be formulated: The higher the level of left-wing inflow mobility to a class, the more likely it is that the immobile members of that class will vote for a left-wing political party.

The effects of the *level of outflow mobility* from a class on the individual voting behaviour of immobile members of that class, can be deduced from the instrumental theory. We might expect that people are influenced by seeing others move out of their class. If people see many co-class members leaving their class, they can be expected to anticipate the possibility of mobility for themselves. Consequently, they might adjust their voting behaviour in line with possible future interests. It is through this mechanism that the level of outflow mobility from a class can be expected to have an effect on the voting behaviour of immobile members of that class.

Again, it should be noted that the effects of outflow mobility on the voting behaviour of immobile class members depend upon two factors. The first is the absolute level of outflow mobility, i.e. the percentage of class members leaving the class of their father. The higher the amount of outflow mobility from a class, the greater the likelihood that immobile class members will change their voting behaviour. The second factor, the political character of the outflow mobility - i.e. the interests and typical voting behaviour of the classes where the mobile flow to - can also be assumed to have an impact on the voting behaviour of those who are "left behind". The more left-wing the interests of those moving out become, the more those who stay in their class will anticipate these new interests and consequently vote in a more left-wing way. Summarizing these arguments leads us to the following outflow mobility hypothesis: *The higher the level of left-wing outflow mobility from a class, the more*

*likely it is that the immobile members of that class will vote for a left-wing political party.*

The implications of this hypothesis can best be illustrated by an example. For instance, immobile unskilled manual workers in a society with a high level of outflow from their class, might anticipate their own possible mobility. Because, by definition, those moving out go to classes with less left-wing interests, the immobile unskilled manual workers may adopt a less left-wing political party preference than they would have adopted in a society with little outflow from their class. This hypothesis is directly in line with Blau and Duncan's argument that "men who see little opportunity for improvement in their own economic status or, at least, that of their children, have greater inducements than those anticipating advancements in status to organize a union, to raise wages or to vote for a party that advocates higher taxes for the wealthy" (1967: 440).

However, the effect of the amount of outflow mobility from the unskilled manual class does not give sufficient information about the direction and the extent to which the immobile class members are influenced by level of outflow mobility. This depends on the classes to which the mobile members go. For example, in a country where most people from the unskilled manual class go to the skilled manual class (with its similar interests and voting behaviour), the voting behaviour of the immobile members of the unskilled manual class will hardly be affected by the level of outflow from their class. Conversely, in a country where most of those leaving the unskilled manual class go to the service class (which has less to gain from a more egalitarian society and displays, in general, a substantially less left-wing voting pattern), it is likely that the voting behaviour of the immobile members of the unskilled manual class will change substantially. Similarly, for members of the other social classes it can be hypothesized that the more they see their class members fall down the social ladder, the more they will anticipate their own downward mobility, and thus vote in a more left-wing way.

Before testing the formulated hypotheses, we should first note a conflicting argumentation that has also been suggested in the literature. Goldthorpe (1986: 342), for example, suggested such an hypothesis on the basis of social-psychological arguments. He argued that the more men of working class origins make their way into the service class, the more it would seem reasonable to suppose that a large majority of those who remain within the working class will "have a recognition of apparent 'openness'". Consequently, among those who - so to speak - were "left behind", some degree of discontentment or frustration might develop. Then, under the assumption that dissatisfaction and frustration for manual class

members lead to a more left-wing voting behaviour, it can be expected that those who stay behind vote more left-wing than they would have done in a situation where only a limited number of people were upwardly mobile from their class. However, Goldthorpe himself has already suggested that such a response would not be widespread due to the fact that for those who fail to achieve upward mobility, there still remain many alternatives that can serve to prevent any widespread sense of grievance. When testing our hypotheses this argumentation has to be kept in mind.

## DATA AND OPERATIONALIZATIONS

While questions at the individual-level in principle can be addressed using a single dataset from a single country and year, in the case of contextual questions, the higher the number of contexts the better. For this reason, we employ a data file containing individual-level data from sixteen OECD countries, seven classes and many years over the period 1956-1990. The countries involved are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Because of our research questions, we restrict the analyses to intergenerationally immobile male members of the classes aged eighteen years or older, leaving us with a total of 20,619 respondents. By analyzing data on so many contexts and so many individuals we aim to give hypotheses on the contextual effects of class mobility a higher chance of corroboration in empirical tests, than has been the case in earlier studies. More information on the data file used is given in Appendix A.

To measure respondent's class position, we utilized the seven class version of a class scheme originally introduced by Goldthorpe for the Oxford Mobility Inquiry (Goldthorpe *et al.* 1978) and later elaborated by Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Portocarrero (1979) and Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992). In this scheme, for brevity's sake called EGP class scheme, individuals are categorized into a class based on their sector, self-employment status, and supervisory status. The EGP class scheme has been useful in comparative studies of intergenerational class mobility (Ganzeboom *et al.* 1989; Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992), and in studies examining the relationship between social class and voting behaviour (Heath *et al.* 1985, Evans *et al.* 1991; Nieuwbeerta 1995). Furthermore, this scheme is applied in analyses of the effects of individual class mobility on voting behaviour in single countries (Nieuwbeerta & De Graaf 1993; Clifford & Heath 1993) as well as in international comparative studies (De Graaf *et al.* 1995; Nieuwbeerta 1995).

The seven class version of the EGP class scheme distinguishes between the class categories given in Table 1. Respondents were coded into the EGP classes on the basis of data on their occupation, self-employment and supervisory status. Two steps were involved. First, the original occupation codes were recoded into the International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO) codes (ILO 1969). Second, these ISCO codes were translated into EGP-scores through the Ganzeboom, Luijkx and Treiman (1989) recoding scheme.

To measure voting behaviour of class members, it would be preferable to have data on the actual voting behaviour of respondents during specific elections in the surveys. However, because voting is confidential in democratic countries, we have to rely on indirect measures of voting behaviour. In the surveys employed various such indirect measures are used as indicators for respondent's voting behaviour. In some surveys respondents were asked to name the political party they would vote for if there were a national election tomorrow. In other surveys respondents were asked to name the party they voted for at the most recent national election. In yet others respondents were asked which political party they preferred or identified with. The limitations introduced by such different measures of voting behaviour must be fully appreciated. However, various analyses using only surveys containing "voting behaviour" measures, and several analyses using only surveys containing "political preference" measures, did not result in different outcomes. Thus, we are confident that using these different measures of voting behaviour in the analyses does not cause major problems. Indeed, we know of no study showing that the relationship between class and political preference is fundamentally different from that between class and respondent's voting behaviour.

In order to produce a classification of parties voted for that would allow cross-country comparison, we followed Bartolini & Mair (1990) and Franklin and his colleagues (1992), and dichotomized the political parties into left-wing on the one side and right-wing on the other. In deciding whether a specific party should be included in the left-wing block, we followed the criteria given by Bartolini & Mair (1990: 42-43), and defined "all those socialist parties which are members of the Socialist International and of all those communist parties which were once members of the Communist Third International" as left-wing parties. Since according to these criteria hardly any left-wing voters would exist in the United States, for that country an exception to the criteria was made, and the Democratic Party was defined as left-wing party.

## MODELLING CONTEXTUAL EFFECTS OF CLASS MOBILITY

The main thrust of our contextual hypotheses is that the voting behaviour of individual stable members of a particular class in a certain country for a given year, can be explained by the inflow and outflow mobility in that class, country and year. Therefore, when testing the hypotheses we have to take account of the layered structure of our data, i.e. individuals are surveyed within years and within classes and countries. An appropriate way to test our hypotheses is to use a multi-level model containing three different levels: (1) an individual-level; (2) a year-level and (3) a class/country-level.

When modelling these effects two remarks are in order. First, the effects of inflow and outflow mobility depend both on the amount of inflow and outflow mobility and on the political character of that inflow and outflow. However, the amount of inflow and outflow mobility *per se*, do not give an indication of the direction in which the immobile class members will change their voting behaviour, i.e. whether they will become more right-wing or more left-wing. Therefore, in our models we take this into account by including interaction effects of the level of inflow and outflow mobility and the political character of that inflow and outflow.

A second consideration when testing the contextual effects of class mobility on the individual voting behaviour of intergenerationally immobile class members, is that their voting behaviour is not solely affected by differences in rates of inflow and outflow mobility, but are more determined by their material circumstances and interests. We take this into account in our modelling by allowing each class within each nation to have its own "natural" level of left-wing preferences. In this way we can test whether rates of outflow and inflow mobility can account for variations around this natural level.

Therefore, to test the hypotheses concerning the effects of levels of inflow and outflow mobility in a society on individual voting behaviour we use multi-level models that take these considerations into account. We use three models: one that tests the inflow mobility hypothesis, one that tests the outflow mobility hypothesis, and one that tests both these hypotheses simultaneously. In all three models, at the individual-level we estimate the voting behaviour of individual immobile class members as follows:

$$\log\left(\frac{\hat{\theta}^* \text{Left}_{idjk}}{1 - \hat{\theta}^* \text{Left}_{idjk}}\right) = \beta_{0djk} + \gamma_{idjk}$$

(1)

In this individual-level equation, the dependent variable is the log-odds for the immobile members (i) of each class (d) to vote for a left-wing political party rather than a right-wing party in each year (j) and country (k). The intercept in the individual-level equation,  $\beta_{0djk}$ , represents the mean log-odds of voting left-wing rather right-wing for stable class members in each of the distinguished classes and countries in each year. This intercept (which can vary from year to year, from class to class, and from nation to nation), serves as the dependent variable in the year-level equation.

To test the inflow mobility hypothesis we then use a model (Model A) in which the year-level equation is specified as follows:

$$\beta_{0djk} = \beta_{0d0k} + \beta_{1000} (\text{Inflow}_{djk} * \text{In-weight}_{dk}) + y_{0djk} \quad (2)$$

Similarly, to test the outflow mobility hypothesis we apply a model (Model B) with the following year-level equation:

$$\beta_{0djk} = \beta_{0d0k} + \beta_{2000} (\text{Outflow}_{djk} * \text{Out-weight}_{dk}) + y_{0djk} \quad (3)$$

In addition, to test the inflow and outflow hypotheses simultaneously, a third model (Model C) will be applied, whereby the year-level equation reads as follows:

$$\beta_{0djk} = \beta_{0d0k} + \beta_{1000} (\text{Inflow}_{djk} * \text{In-weight}_{dk}) + \beta_{2000} (\text{Outflow}_{djk} * \text{Out-weight}_{dk}) + y_{0djk} \quad (4)$$

In these equations the variable  $\text{Inflow}_{djk}$  represents the proportion of class d in year j and country k who were intergenerationally mobile (that is, who came from non-d origins). The variable  $\text{Outflow}_{djk}$  represents the proportion of class d in year j and country k who were intergenerationally mobile (that is, who went to non-d destinations). The variables  $\text{In-weight}_{dk}$  and  $\text{Out-weight}_{dk}$  stand for

the weight factors that take into account the political character of the outflow mobility to and inflow mobility from a class in a country.

In all three models, the combined explanatory variables are centred around their grand mean in each class and each nation. Therefore,  $\beta_{0d0k}$  represents the natural left-wing voting behaviour in the different classes in each country. To allow this natural level to vary from class to class and from nation to nation,  $\beta_{0d0k}$  is treated as random at the class/country-level:

$$\beta_{0d0k} = \beta_{0000} + U_{0d0k} \quad (5)$$

To calculate the political character of the inflow and outflow mobility,  $\text{In-weight}_{dk}$  and  $\text{Out-weight}_{dk}$ , we use the average voting behaviour of the stable members of the origin classes in our dataset (cf. De Graaf *et al.* 1995). These weights must be kept constant over-time, since allowing them to vary each year could introduce circularity into the model. This is because in some years, quite independent of levels of mobility, there may be across-the-board increases in left-wing voting behaviour affecting the mobile and the stable alike. Weights which were allowed to vary each year might thus be correlated with the yearly variations in the dependent variable.

A numerical example may make clearer the procedure for calculating the political character of the inflow and outflow mobility. In calculating the political character of the inflow mobility to the service class in Britain in 1964, we first take the actual proportions of the service class in Britain in 1964 who moved from the other six classes. Of these, 20 per cent originated in the unskilled manual class. This figure is then weighted by 0.61 (the proportion of the stable members of the unskilled manual class who had a left-wing voting behaviour in Britain in the combined British dataset). Similarly, the 4 per cent who were mobile from the agricultural worker class is weighted by 0.41. The weighted inflow to the service class in Britain in 1964 thus becomes  $(20*61 + 28*61 + 4*41 + 7*33 + 11*11 + 4*8)/100$ , or 34.8. The calculation of the left-wing inflow mobility for other classes and countries proceeds in an analogous manner. In calculating the left-wing outflow mobility we follow the same procedure, except that here we weight by the proportion and the voting behaviour of the destination classes.

## RESULTS: TESTS OF CONTEXTUAL HYPOTHESES

We now test the formulated contextual hypotheses. The first hypothesis, the outflow mobility hypothesis states that the more "left-wing outflow" from a class there is, the more likely it is that stable members of that class will vote for a left-wing political party. The second hypothesis, the inflow mobility hypothesis, implies that the more left-wing inflow mobility to a class there is, the more likely it is that stable members of that class will vote left-wing.

We test these hypotheses in four different ways. To begin with we test the hypotheses for all classes simultaneously. Next, we test them for each class separately. Subsequently we test the hypotheses focusing on the effects of "pure" inflow and outflow mobility, i.e. not controlling for the political character of the inflow and the outflow mobility. Fourth, we test the hypotheses examining the effects of "extreme" inflow and outflow mobility on the voting behaviour of the immobile members of two classes that have very distinct interests, the unskilled manual class and the service class.

### Tests: All Classes Simultaneously

To test the hypotheses for all classes simultaneously, the three multi-level models are fitted on 20,619 respondents within 599 years within 107 country/class combinations. Model A tests the inflow mobility hypothesis, by including the interaction effect  $\text{Inflow} \times \text{In-weight}$  as a contextual explanatory variable. The outflow mobility hypothesis is tested by fitting Model B, which includes the interaction effect  $\text{Outflow} \times \text{Out-weight}$ . In Model C the  $\text{Inflow} \times \text{In-weight}$  and the  $\text{Outflow} \times \text{Out-weight}$  variables are included simultaneously. When the hypotheses hold, we expect the parameter estimates for these variables to be positive and significantly different from zero. The parameter estimates for the three fitted multi-level models are presented in Table 2.

The estimates of the parameters in the multi-level analysis in Models A and C, indicating the effect of left-wing inflow mobility are 0.004 and 0.005 respectively. These estimates are in the expected direction but clearly not statistically significant. We therefore can not accept the hypothesis that the more left-wing inflow mobility there is to a class, the more likely it is that immobile members will have a left-wing voting behaviour.

In Models B and C estimates of the effects of left-wing outflow mobility take the values -0.001 and -0.002 respectively. These are

not in the expected direction, but are also not statistically significant. Therefore, we can not accept the outflow mobility hypothesis that the more left-wing outflow mobility there is from a class, the more likely it is that immobile members of that class will have a left-wing voting behaviour.

### Tests: Per Class

It might be, however, that while we must reject the inflow and outflow hypotheses for all classes simultaneously, they nevertheless hold for stable members of some particular classes. For this reason we fit our models for the stable members of each specific class separately. To test our hypotheses for each class separately, multi-level models are fitted, each analyzing only those respondents who currently are members of a specific class. As in the test for all classes simultaneously, we fit three models: Model A including the interaction effect  $\text{Inflow} \times \text{In-weight}$ , Model B including the interaction effect  $\text{Outflow} \times \text{Out-weight}$ , and Model C including both these variables. Again, if the hypotheses hold, significant positive parameter estimates are to be expected. In Table 3 only the pertinent parameter estimates of the fitted multi-level models are presented. All the other coefficients - the intercept and the random coefficients - are not reported.

The results of these tests are largely negative. The figures in Table 3 indicate that none of the estimated parameters are statistically significant. Furthermore, ten out of the twenty-eight estimated parameters have a negative value, i.e. these effects are in the unexpected direction. This means that even when testing the hypotheses for all classes separately, both the inflow and outflow hypotheses have to be rejected.

### Tests: Effects of "Pure" Inflow and Outflow Mobility

Before drawing conclusions with respect to the inflow and outflow hypotheses, an extra test is in order. It might be argued that the inclusion of interaction effects between the amount of inflow and outflow mobility and the political character of that mobility obscures the main effect of the level of inflow and outflow mobility. Therefore, as a check we do our analyses including only the pure mobility level variables in models A, B and C. This results in models D, E and F, where the  $\text{In-weight}$  and  $\text{Out-weight}$  variables are left out.

When making predictions about the effect of the pure levels of inflow and outflow on the voting behaviour of immobile members of specific classes, assumptions must be made about the political character of that inflow and outflow. For some classes it is easy to come up with predictions, because the assumptions are straightforward. For example, it can be assumed that all people who move out of the skilled and unskilled manual classes go to classes with more right-wing interests and political culture than are found among the stable members of the manual classes. Thus, for members of the unskilled and skilled manual classes, it can be expected that the more outflow from their class there is, the more right-wing they will be. Furthermore, it can be assumed that those who move into the manual classes also have more right-wing voting behaviour than the stable members of these classes. Therefore, it can be expected that the more inflow mobility there is to the manual classes, the less likely the immobile members of these classes will be to vote for a left-wing party.

In addition, for members of the farming and petty bourgeoisie classes it can be assumed that most outflow goes to more left-wing classes, while most inflow comes from more left-wing classes. In this way it can be predicted that the more inflow mobility to these classes, the more likely members of these classes are to vote left-wing. For the other classes - the service class, the routine non-manual class and the agricultural labourers - making predictions about the effects of the amount of inflow and outflow mobility is less straightforward. The political character of that mobility depends too much on the patterns of intergenerational mobility in a country in a certain year to be able to predict the contextual effects of inflow and outflow mobility for these classes.

To test our predictions about the effects of pure inflow and outflow mobility on the voting behaviour of stable class members, we follow the same procedure as before. For each class separately, three multi-level models are fitted, each analyzing only those respondents who are members of a specific class. Model D includes the Inflow variable, model E the Outflow variable, and model F includes both these variables. In Table 4 the pertinent parameter estimates are presented. Again the results of these tests are negative. None of the estimated parameters representing the effects of levels of inflow and outflow differ significantly from zero. Thus, in none of our analyses so far, did we find a single indication of a contextual effect of inflow and outflow mobility in a country on the voting behaviour of immobile class members. This gives us strong grounds on which to reject both hypotheses outright.

### Tests: Effects of "Extreme" Inflow and Outflow Mobility

Although the results presented above seem convincing, we would like to perform one further analysis. When the scholars of the first generation hinted at the existence of contextual effects of class mobility, they had no detailed class scheme available or even in mind. Their claims about the existence of contextual effects referred mainly to simple ideas of inflow and outflow mobility from the highest to the lowest classes (see for example: Abramson & Books 1971, and Parkin 1971) To do justice to these claims, we therefore do a last test where we focus on the effects of inflow and outflow mobility on the voting behaviour of members of two classes that are "extreme" with respect to their interests, the service class and the unskilled manual class. We carry out separate analyses for both of these classes, and focus on the effects of inflow and outflow mobility from one of these classes to the other. Of course, the idea behind these analyses is that, if contextual effects do exist, these can be expected to be detected most easily when investigating the effects of this "extreme" inflow and outflow mobility.

On the basis of our above formulated hypotheses and earlier studies on this topic, we can expect the level of inflow mobility from the unskilled manual class into the service class to have a significant effect on the voting behaviour of immobile class members of the service class. The more former members of the unskilled manual class enter the service class, the more the stable members of the service class will be influenced by them, and consequently the more they will vote for a left-wing rather than a right-wing political party. Similarly, we expect the level of inflow mobility from the service class into the unskilled manual class to have a substantial impact on the voting behaviour of the stable members of the unskilled manual class. The more service class members move into the manual class, the more the members of that manual class can be expected to vote for a right-wing party.

In addition, we can formulate hypotheses concerning the effects of levels of outflow mobility. If stable members of the service class see many of their class members "fall" to the unskilled manual class, it can be expected that the stable service class members anticipate their own downward mobility and thus become more likely to vote for a left-wing party. Thus, the more outflow mobility from the service class into the unskilled manual class, the more the stable members will vote for a left-wing party. Again, an analogous idea can be applied to the voting behaviour of the stable members of the unskilled manual class. In this case, it can be expected that the more people from the unskilled manual class climb to the service



class, the more those who remain in the unskilled manual class will anticipate their own climb, and the more they will vote right-wing.

To test the hypotheses of "extreme" inflow and outflow mobility, we first do a separate analysis on data from stable members of the service class. We use the same models and data as earlier, but as our explanatory Inflow variable we take of the total number of people currently in the service class the percentage that arrived into the service class from the unskilled manual class. Furthermore, we take the percentage of people who moved into the unskilled manual class, based on the total number of people that were originally members of the service class, as the Outflow variable. Again we fit three models, one including as an explanatory variable only the Inflow variable, a second only the Outflow variable, and a third both variables. The results of fitting these models to our data, however, show statistically insignificant parameter estimates for these explanatory variables. The parameter of the Inflow variable has the value of -0.001 (s.e. 0.014) when it is solely included, and 0.002 (s.e. 0.014) when it is simultaneously included. In addition, the Outflow parameters yield the value -0.012 (s.e. 0.019) and -0.013 (s.e. 0.020), respectively.

A separate analysis, using the same model and data, but now concerning the voting behaviour of the stable members of the unskilled manual class also yields statistically insignificant parameter estimates. As our Inflow variable we take the percentage of the total number of people currently in the skilled manual class, that arrived into the skilled manual class from the service class. As our Outflow variable we take the percentage of people who moved into the service class, based on the total number of people who were originally members of the unskilled manual class. The parameter estimate of the Inflow variable has the value 0.002 (s.e. 0.012) when it is solely included, and -0.002 (s.e. 0.014) when it is simultaneously included. The Outflow parameter estimates yield the values - 0.003 (s.e. 0.024) and 0.011 (s.e. 0.022) respectively.

Thus, also doing these analyses on "extreme" inflow and outflow mobility, we do not find any corroboration of the hypotheses concerning the contextual effects of inflow and outflow class mobility on the voting behaviour of immobile class members.

## CONCLUSIONS

In studies of the first until the third generation of research on stratification and politics many scholars have suggested that intergenerational class mobility has contextual effects on the voting

behaviour of stable class members. However, such arguments have been made without the support of empirical evidence. In this paper we used the literature to formulate two hypotheses about the contextual effects of class mobility on the voting behaviour of intergenerationally immobile class members. These hypotheses pertain to the effects of both inflow mobility and outflow mobility. We aimed to make progress on earlier studies of research on stratification and politics by giving the hypotheses the highest possible chance to be corroborated. First, we tested these hypotheses by analyzing survey data from a very large number of contexts, i.e. data of seven classes from sixteen countries over the period 1956 to 1990. Second, we used multi-level models which are especially designed to investigate contextual effects. Despite these efforts the results were negative. The analyses showed no significant contextual effect of either the level of intergenerational inflow or the level of outflow class mobility in a country on the voting behaviour of intergenerationally immobile persons. These negative results are remarkable when regarding the large number of studies that have suggested the contextual effects of intergenerational class mobility on politics.

An explanation for the negative results might be the number of contexts under investigation in this paper. We realize that, due to the traditional 'small N' problem with contextual analysis, it is difficult to find significant contextual effects of social mobility. To find statistically significant effects of contextual variables, a change of one percent in the amount of mobility has to lead to a rather large change in the percentage of people that have a left-wing voting behaviour. On the other hand, by analyzing data from more than twenty-thousand individuals in seven classes from 16 countries interviewed in several years, we have given the hypotheses on the contextual effects of class mobility a significant higher chance of corroboration in empirical tests, than has been the case in earlier studies. Even more, from a practical point of view it is almost impossible to find data of intergenerationally immobile respondents from more countries and years.

A more substantive explanation for the negative results might be that there is a difference between perceived and actual levels of mobility in a class. The perceived level of mobility may largely be influenced by local examples that do not necessarily represent the national mobility pattern. This is an important issue, since we might expect class members' perceptions of potential mobility to have a larger influence on their political party preferences. Another explanation, linked to the first, might be that perceived mobility chances may not be based upon long range mobility. In our analyses we only investigate inter-class mobility. However, people also change in social positions within classes, for example people change in their

income position. Thus, it might be that if class members think about their chances of becoming upwardly or downwardly mobile, they think more in terms of intra-class mobility than inter-class mobility. If this is the case, even our detailed EGP class is still too crude, because it does not allow us to pick up the contextual effects of intra-class income mobility. Concluding, a rephrasing of the hypotheses in terms of the contextual effects of local short-range mobility on individual voting behaviour, seems worthwhile.

The negative results in this paper have consequences for understanding the political consequences of mobility on the political constellation in a country. In earlier studies, it has been customary to concentrate on the mobile and to suppose that more (upward) mobility in a country leads to a lower level of class voting in that country. Such arguments generally assume composition effects. For example, if more people with manual backgrounds enter the service class, its mean voting behaviour will be more left-wing. However, also contextual effects of social mobility are generally assumed to strengthen a shift to less class voting. For instance, the influences of the mobile members on the immobile were assumed to cause a movement towards the left by immobile members of the non-manual classes, and towards the right by immobile members of the manual classes. However, this paper's findings do not support these assumptions, and imply that contextual effects of class mobility are unlikely to be responsible for variations in levels of class voting across countries and periods.

#### NOTE

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Table 1. Social class scheme: EGP categories

Title	Code	Description
Service class	I,II	Large proprietors; professionals, administrators and managers; higher-grade technicians; supervisors of nonmanual workers.
Routine nonmanual class	III	Routine nonmanual employees in administration and commerce; sales personnel; other rank-and-file service workers.
Petty bourgeoisie	IVa,b	Small proprietors and artisans, with and without employees.
Farmers	IVc	Farmers, smallholders and other self-employed workers in primary production.
Skilled workers	V,VI	Lower-grade technicians; supervisors of manual workers; skilled manual workers.
Nonskilled workers	VIIa	Semi- and unskilled, nonagricultural manual workers.
Agricultural labourers	VIIb	Agricultural and other workers in primary production.

Table 2. Parameter estimates of multi-level models: the effects of inflow and outflow mobility on the left-wing voting behaviour of immobile class members

	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	Parameter	s.e.	Parameter	s.e.	Parameter	s.e.
<u>Fixed effects</u>						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Intercept	-0.458	0.100	-0.457	0.100	-0.458	0.100
<i>Year level</i>						
inflow * in-weight	0.004	0.006	-	-	0.005	0.006
outflow * out-weight	-	-	-0.001	0.007	-0.002	0.007
<u>Variance components</u>						
<i>Individual level</i>						
Intercept	1		1		1	
<i>Year level</i>						
Intercept	0.093	0.015	0.094	0.015	0.093	0.015
<i>Country/class level</i>						
Intercept	0.902	0.143	0.902	0.143	0.902	0.143

Note: The analyses were based on 20,619 individuals within 599 years within 107 country/classes

Table 3. Parameter estimates of multi-level models: effects of inflow and outflow mobility on left-wing voting behaviour of immobile class members, per class

	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	Parameter	s.e.	Parameter	s.e.	Parameter	s.e.
<i>Service class (N = 5910)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	0.017	0.021	-	-	0.017	0.021
outflow * out-weight	-	-	-0.006	0.020	-0.007	0.020
<i>Routine nonmanual (N = 913)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	0.033	0.021	-	-	0.033	0.023
outflow * out-weight	-	-	0.015	0.026	-0.000	0.028
<i>Petty bourgeoisie (N = 1062)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	-0.028	0.018	-	-	-0.029	0.019
outflow * out-weight	-	-	-0.007	0.026	0.003	0.027
<i>Farmers (N = 3098)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	0.017	0.019	-	-	0.018	0.019
outflow * out-weight	-	-	0.010	0.021	0.012	0.020
<i>Skilled manual (N = 6144)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	0.010	0.016	-	-	0.008	0.017
outflow * out-weight	-	-	0.014	0.021	0.012	0.022
<i>Unskilled manual (N = 3099)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	0.003	0.015	-	-	0.011	0.016
outflow * out-weight	-	-	-0.035	0.020	-0.039	0.021
<i>Agricultural labourers (N = 393)</i>						
inflow * in-weight	-0.017	0.020	-	-	0.022	0.020
outflow * out-weight	-	-	0.022	0.029	0.031	0.030

Table 4. Parameter estimates of multi-level models: the effects of levels of "pure" inflow and outflow mobility on the left-wing voting behaviour of immobile class members per class

	Model D		Model E		Model F	
	Parameter	s.e.	Parameter	s.e.	Parameter	s.e.
<i>Service class (N = 5910)</i>						
inflow	0.018	0.011	-	-	0.019	0.012
outflow	-	-	-0.004	0.010	-0.007	0.010
<i>Routine nonmanual (N = 913)</i>						
inflow	0.008	0.013	-	-	0.010	0.025
outflow	-	-	0.003	0.008	-0.002	0.016
<i>Petty bourgeoisie (N = 1062)</i>						
inflow	-0.010	0.009	-	-	0.010	0.010
outflow	-	-	0.004	0.013	-0.001	0.014
<i>Farmers (N = 3098)</i>						
inflow	0.009	0.009	-	-	0.008	0.009
outflow	-	-	0.009	0.011	0.007	0.011
<i>Skilled manual (N = 6144)</i>						
inflow	0.001	0.009	-	-	0.004	0.010
outflow	-	-	-0.008	0.008	-0.009	0.008
<i>Unskilled manual (N = 3099)</i>						
inflow	-0.001	0.008	-	-	0.005	0.009
outflow	-	-	-0.009	0.009	-0.012	0.011
<i>Agricultural labourers (N = 393)</i>						
inflow	0.003	0.006	-	-	0.003	0.008
outflow	-	-	0.007	0.016	0.002	0.023