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INTERGENERATIONAL CLASS MOBILITY AND POLITICAL PREFERENCES BETWEEN 1970 AND 1986 IN THE NETHERLANDS

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1 Introduction

It is common knowledge that a person in a low class position has a higher chance of having a left-wing political preference than someone in a high class position. There are several labels for this phenomenon and they differ in accordance with the assumed mechanism behind the relationship between class and political preference. Well-known labels are class-based voting (Lipset, 1960, Parkin, 1981), democratic class struggle (Korpi, 1983), and status polarization (Campbell et al., 1960). In the Netherlands as well, there is a clear relation between someone's socio-economic class position and his/her political preference (Lijphart, 1974).

Despite this knowledge, hardly any Dutch research focusses on this relation. Due to the impact of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960), most explanations used in the past three decades have been psychologically oriented and mainly made use of attitudes and values to explain voting behaviour. According to Van Deth (1986), this has hardly led to any significant improvement. In other countries, a great deal of research has been done on the relation between class position and political preference (e.g. Heath et al., 1985, 1991; Sainsburry, 1990).

Before one decides to drop class as a social phenomenon explaining political preferences in the Netherlands, one has to investigate the explanatory power class actually has. In order to understand the relation between class position and political preference, one has to consider that individuals who belong to a certain class do not form a homogeneous group. Within each class, a distinction can be drawn between those who, compared with their parents, climbed up or down the social ladder (the intergenerationally *mobile*) and those who did not exhibit any such behaviour at all (the intergenerationally *immobile*). Previous research has shown that intergenerational mobility affects the relation between social class and political preference (Lipset, 1960). The implication is that in order to understand the relation between social class and political preference, one also has to take into account the effect of social mobility.

There are numerous empirical studies that investigate the impact of social mobility on voting behaviour (cf. Lipset & Zetterberg, 1956; Lipset & Bendix, 1959; Barber, 1970; Abramson, 1972). However, De Graaf and Ultee (1990) held that none of these studies came up with hypotheses about mobility effects that are accurate enough to be tested properly on the basis of a statistical model. Turner (1992) argued that this field of research is not empirically well developed either. Furthermore the conventional methods of testing for mobility effects have not been adequate (Sobel, 1981).

The general question posed in this article is: what are the effects of intergenerational social mobility on political preference in the Netherlands? To come up with answers to this question, it is important to determine people's class position as well and unequivocally as possible. Since it is quite often difficult to determine what the class position is of women (cf. Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992b; De Graaf and Heath, 1992), including them in the analyses could lead to indistinguishable causes of the mobility effects encountered. For this reason, we decided to restrict our analyses to men only[1].

Before we address our research question, we will devote more attention to the relation between class and political preference.

2 Class and political preference

In order to gain better insight into the consequences of intergenerational class mobility for political preference, we will first discuss two main theories for the explanation of individual voting behaviour.

The first theory is the instrumental theory (Downs, 1957). The basic idea here is that voting behaviour is rational and has an economic purpose. People know which side their bread is buttered on. They can benefit from voting for a party that has political goals nearest to their own economic interests. A political party can be used as an instrument to serve their interests. With these assumptions, we can explain the relation between class position and voting behaviour. People within a certain class are in the same economic and social position and have the same interests. Consequently, people within a certain class will vote for the same party, i.e. the party that serves their interests best.

The second theory, referred to by Heath et al. (1985: 9) as the expressive theory, perceives voting as a social rather than an economic act. The assumption is that one's political attitudes and preferences are influenced by the people one associates with. With this theory as well, it is easy to explain the relation between class position and political preference. In most cases, a person associates with persons with the same class position. They are raised by them, live in the same area, attend the same school and work together as colleagues. Consequently, they will vote as their fellow class members traditionally vote.

These two theories are totally different with respect to their initial assumptions. However, in their predictions on the relation between class and political preference, they are not contradictory, but complementary (Heath 1985: 9). To phrase the complementary nature of these two theories: People can vote for the same party because of their mutual interests *and* because they are influenced by each other. We might add to this that associating with persons from the same class makes people more conscious of their interests and more aware of which party serves their interests best.

3 Mobility and political preference

From the above theories, we can deduce predictions with regard to the effects of intergenerational class mobility on political preference. As we will argue, these theories lead to the same hypotheses.

When people leave their fathers' class and move to another class, they acquire other interests. Their political preference, according to the instrumental theory, changes in the direction of the usual political preference of their class of destination. Furthermore, due to this mobility they also change their social surroundings. They increasingly associate with members of their new attained class. These members, according to the expressive theory, influence the political preference of the new arrivals in their class. They also make it clear what the political interests of the members of this class are and which political party best serves these interests. Therefore, both the instrumental and the expressive theory predict that the political preference of intergenerationally mobile people will change in the direction of the usual norms and values within their class of destination. In other words, the political preference of intergenerationally mobile persons will lie somewhere between what is usual in their class of origin and what is usual in their class of destination.

This latter prediction, however, lacks precision as to whether the political preference of mobile people is closer to what is usual in their class of destination or to what is usual in their class of origin. On the basis of the instrumental theory, one would predict that *the political preference of mobile people will be closer to the usual political preference within their class of destination than within their class of origin.* The obvious explanation is that people's economic interest is with their current class. This is what De Graaf and Ultee (1990) called the **economic hypothesis** and it is our first hypothesis.

Yet, we have to recognize as well that some people only recently arrived in their class of destination and others years ago. It is likely that the longer they are members of their destination class, the more influenced they will be by their class of destination in comparison with their class of origin. They

will also be more aware of what the interests of their destination class are. Our **acculturation hypothesis** therefore states that the longer one is a member of the destination class, the smaller *the relative impact is of the class of origin in comparison with the class of destination.* This hypothesis is in line with Blau's 'pattern of acculturation' (1956). One's attitudes and conceptions slowly adapt to the class of destination.

The acculturation hypothesis is a logical consequence of the instrumental as well as the expressive theory. If someone leaves his father's class, he will obviously acquire different interests. It is rather implausible that this person should immediately be fully aware of what his new interests are, since it takes time to gather information. Furthermore, in cases where people are intergenerationally mobile, it is quite unlikely that they would not have any contact whatsoever with their class of origin. Social networks change slowly. The longer people are a member of their destination class, the more contact they have with members of that class.

An important question is whether the adaptation to a new class requires the same amount of time for all intergenerationally mobile people. Lipset (1960) assumed that upwardly mobile persons adapt more quickly to their destination class than downwardly mobile people. The underlying idea is that people in general prefer to adopt a more prestigious identity, and thus maximize their status. Furthermore, upwardly mobile people tend to associate with members of their new attained class more often than downwardly mobile people do. Therefore, upwardly mobile people are more open to the norms and values of their attained class and acknowledge their new interests more quickly. Consequently, *downwardly mobile people will orient themselves more to their origin class, whereas upwardly mobile people will orient themselves more to their destination class.* We label this hypothesis the **status maximization hypothesis**[2]. Similar statements have been made by Lipset (1960: 240, 267-273), Parkin (1981: 51, 54), and Thorburn (1979). As empirical evidence for it, they presented data from the United States and England. Some researchers, like Butler and Stokes (1969) and Abramson (1972), have challenged these findings. De Graaf & Ultee (1990) similarly failed to find such an effect in the Netherlands.

Aside from the distinction between upwardly and downwardly mobile, a time distinction can be drawn. According to the modernisation theory (Blau & Duncan, 1967), important developments in the stratification process have occurred. Characteristics ascribed by birth have become less important and characteristics achieved by people themselves have become more important. Both these developments are thought to have led to individualisation in modern societies. If these trends indeed occur, then people's class of destination has become more relevant and their class of origin less relevant for the prediction of their political preference. We therefore formulate the

individualization hypothesis. It holds that *adaptation (acculturation) to the class of destination took less time in the 1980's than in the 1970's.*

4 Statistical model and the data

Statistical model

In the hypotheses, we stated that a person's political preference is the result of the usual political preference in his class of destination and in his class of origin, i.e. father's class. If one wants to know the core political preference of a certain class, it is necessary to only consider members of that class who have *not* been influenced by a past membership in another class. If one is interested in the typical political preference of farmers, one should *not* consider the political preference of those who became a farmer a month ago, but concentrate on those who have been farmers for generations (cf. Sorokin, 1959: 509-10). We have to concentrate on the political preference of the immobile, and for a sufficient test of our hypotheses make use of models which use the immobile as a reference group.

Second, we need a model capable of modelling 'mobility effects'. To be able to model our mobility effect hypothesis, i.e. the status maximization hypothesis, we need a model capable of modelling an asymmetrical effect. In our view, Sobel's diagonal mobility models (we prefer to call them diagonal reference models) meet the above two requirements (1981; 1985). These models have been used in comparable analyses by De Graaf & Ultee (1990) and Weakliem (1992).[3]

Data

The data set we use to test our hypotheses is a merged file containing 20,799 respondents. This data set contains 11 separate surveys each held under a representative segment of the Dutch population in the period from 1970 to 1986 (for more information, see the data references). The merged file contains comparable information on occupation, father's occupation and political preference. The large time span of the data, a period of 17 years, makes it possible to investigate changes over time.

Since we are interested in the effect of class mobility on political preferences, it is important to determine social class position as well and unequivocally as possible. As discussed in the introduction, we exclude women and pensioners from our analyses for that reason. We restrict our analyses to working, unemployed and disabled men between the ages of 18 and 65, who have a valid score on all the relevant variables. This restriction reduces the number of cases used in our analyses to 4,969.

Political preference

Our dependent variable, political preference, is measured as follows: people are asked to name the national political party they would vote for if there were a national election tomorrow, or the party they voted for at the most recent national election, or the national political party that currently has their preference[4]. Subsequently, all the political parties are given a score on a left-right scale[5]. In general a more left-wing position on this scale is perceived as a preference for social change in the direction of greater social equality, whereas a right-wing position indicates a preference against such changes (Lipset, 1960: 1135).

In the literature, various procedures are applied to place political parties on a left-right scale. One way is to score political parties with respect to their party manifestos and electoral programs. A second way is to place political parties on the basis of the characteristics of their voters. A third way is to have experts place parties on a left-right scale. A fourth way is to ask voters to place parties on a left-right scale. The strategy for the last procedure is to calculate the average score, which is then used as the position on the left-right scale of that particular party (cf. Van der Eijk and Niemöller, 1983).

In this article, we choose the last option. One advantage of this option is that it pertains to subjective matters. The present-day political party policy does not necessarily adaquately represent the content of its electoral programmes. Furthermore it is known that in general people do not know all the issue positions of a political party. They choose on the basis of a party's image, instead of its electoral programme, policy or a place imputed by experts. An additional advantage of the procedure chosen is that these data are not just available for a single point in time, but for several points in time. So, if (according to potential voters) political parties have changed their position on the left-right scale, this is assimilated in the scale suggested.

Social Class

The respondents' and their fathers' social class are classified according to the EGP-class scheme (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992). We chose this class scheme, because it proved to be useful in intergenerational mobility research (Ganzeboom et al., 1989). The full EGP-class scheme distinguishes 10 classes. To classify respondents into these 10 EGP-classes, information is needed on their occupation, self-employment status and supervision[6]. Because of limitations in the data, i.e. in some surveys detailed information on self-employment and supervision is lacking, we are forced to use a collapsed version of the EGP-schema. In our analyses, we distinguish the following six classes (Roman numerals indicate original EGP-classes):

1 Service class: professionals, administrators and managers; higher-grade technicians; supervisors of non-manual workers (I+II)

2 Routine non-manual workers: routine non-manual employees in administration and commerce; sales personnel; other rank-and-file service workers (III)
3 Petty bourgeoisie: small proprietors and artisans, etc. with and without employees (IVa+IVb)
4 Farmers: farmers and smallholders and other self-employed workers in primary production (IVc)
5 Skilled and non-skilled manual workers: lower-grade technicians; supervisors of manual workers; skilled manual workers; semi- and unskilled manual workers (not in agriculture, etc.) (V+VI+VIIa)
6 Agricultural labourers: agricultural and other workers in primary production (VIIb).

The unemployed and the disabled are classified according to their last occupation.

Period in destination class

In the surveys, no exact information is available on how long respondents have been in their destination class. As a proxy variable, we take the respondents' age. If people change their class, they do so at a relatively early stage of their occupational career. We know that after the age of 35, people seldom change their class position (Goldthorpe, 1980: 69-71). Therefore, we feel confident about taking the respondents' age as an indicator for the length of the period in the class of destination[7]. This variable has codes ranging from 0 (= 18 years old, our youngest respondents) to 47 (= 65 years old, our oldest respondents).

Other variables

Although the impact of social class mobility is our main theoretical concern, we also take into account the impact of other relevant variables. If we hypothesize that people adjust to the norms and values of their group, they are also influenced by people in their group who have the same religion. Our general assumption is that people not only adjust to groups with the same class interest, but also to groups based on religion, groups of the same generation, and groups that live in the same political climate. Therefore we include dummy variables in our models for each of these groups. Church membership is divided into five groups: Catholic, Dutch Reformed Protestant, Calvinist, other denominations and no religion. We also define five age groups: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55 and 56 years and older. Furthermore we control for the political climate in each period by including a dummy for year of interview into our models. In the analyses, respondents who are non-religious, 18-25 years of age and interviewed in the year 1970 are the reference category.

5 Results: Class and political preference

Before testing our hypotheses, we first analyze the consequences of intergenerational mobility on political preference. The mobility table is presented in Table 1. The EGP-classification is a nominal variable. Consequently, it is hard to distinguish between upward and downward mobility. In Table 1, however, we ordered the classes according to their prestige[8]. Using this information, we can conclude that 38.2 per cent of the population is upwardly mobile, 19.6 per cent downwardly mobile, and 42.2 per cent is immobile. These results correspond with the results of Ganzeboom et al. (1987), although they used other surveys[9].

Table 1 Mean left-right placement of respondents by own and father's class (between brackets: number of respondents).

Father's class\ Own Class	Service Class	Routine non-man. workers	Petty Bour-geoisie	Farmers	Manual workers	Agri-cultural workers	Total
Service class	**6.1 (575)**	6.0 (172)	5.9 (26)	5.8 (5)	5.3 (147)	5.8 (4)	5.9 (929)
Rout. non-manual	5.9 (214)	**5.7 (125)**	6.4 (11)	4.4 (3)	5.0 (104)	2.7 (1)	5.6 (458)
Petty bourgeoisie	6.3 (226)	6.0 (125)	**7.0 (146)**	7.6 (11)	5.5 (189)	7.3 (2)	6.2 (699)
Farmers	6.4 (157)	6.6 (66)	7.0 (34)	**7.3 (212)**	6.1 (237)	7.0 (42)	6.7 (748)
Manual workers	5.4 (456)	5.5 (323)	5.8 (61)	5.3 (10)	**4.8 (1021)**	6.4 (19)	5.1 (1890)
Agric. workers	6.0 (44)	5.6 (29)	6.2 (12)	6.8 (10)	5.2 (132)	**6.4 (18)**	5.6 (245)
Total	5.9 (1672)	5.8 (840)	6.6 (290)	7.2 (251)	5.1 (1830)	6.6 (86)	5.7 (4969)

In Table 1, the average political preference is presented for each intergenerational category. We can conclude that class has a clear non-linear relation with political preference. The petty bourgeoisie and farmers are by far the most right-wing.

A closer look at Table 1 demonstrates that intergenerational mobility diminishes the differences in political preference among social classes. For example, the difference between the average political preference of the service class (5.9) and that of all manual workers (5.1) is 0.8. However, if we look at the usual political preference of these groups, i.e. the preference of the intergenerationally immobile, we notice a bigger difference, viz. 1.3 (=6.1-4.8). Similar conclusions can be drawn for the other classes. This shows that intergenerational mobility causes a decrease in the 'democratic class struggle' (Korpi, 1983).

6 Results: Mobility and political preference

To examine whether mobility affects political preference, we again use Table 1. It shows that for twenty of the thirty off-diagonal cells, the mean political preference lies between that of one's father's class and that of one's own class. Almost all the 10 exceptions are farmers and agricultural labourers. It is important to note that these cells do not contain many cases.

To test the formulated hypotheses, we use the diagonal reference models. These models are shown as equations in Table 2. For each equation, we indicate which hypothesis is tested. In the formulas, Y_{ijk} is the value of the dependent variable (political preference) of the k*th* respondent in the ij*th* cell of the mobility table. Subscript j stands for father's class and i for respondent's class. E_{ijk} is an error term with an expected value of 0. There is one parameter μ_{ii} for each diagonal cell, representing the expected mean behaviour of the stable members of each class. Parameters p and (1-p) respectively represent the relative weight for the destination class and for the origin class. COV stands for the co-variates religion, age and year of interview. For further statistical information, we refer to Sobel (1981, 1985).

We first fit baseline model A. In Table 2 we report the fit of this model. If the political preference of the mobile lies -as expected- somewhere between that of the immobile within their own class and that of the immobile within their fathers' class, it should show up in the value of parameter p. This parameter should have a value between 0 and 1.[10] In Table 3, the parameter estimates of this baseline model are given. In column A of this table, p indeed lies between 0 and 1. The weight parameter has the value of 0.592 (s.e. = 0.032). It implies that the relative influence of the fathers' class amounts to 0.408 (= 1-0.592).

The value of parameter p also forms a test of our **economic hypothesis**. This hypothesis states that the political preference of the mobile will be closer to the usual political preference within their class of destination than within their class of origin. According to this hypothesis, the value of weight parameter p should be higher than 0.5. Since this parameter is more than two standard errors higher than 0.5, the economic hypothesis is corroborated.

The next hypothesis we test is the **acculturation hypothesis**. This hypothesis predicts that the longer people are a member of their destination class, the more they have adopted the political preference of that class. To test the acculturation hypothesis, we add an interaction term to the weight parameter using the variable age as indicator for the period of time people have been in their destination class (model B). This model uses an extra parameter (δp) compared with model A. Model B leads to a significantly better fit than our

Table 2 Nested diagonal reference models for the relative influence of respondent's class and *father's class on respondent's political preference, controlled for religion, age and year of* survey (N = 4969).

Model	RMS	df
A. Baseline model $y_{ijk} = p*\mu_{ii} + (1-p)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.21559	24
B. Acculturation model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p*age)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p*age)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20799	25
C. Status maximization model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p1*age + \delta p2*down)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p1*age - \delta p2*down)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20809	26
D. Status maximization model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p1*age + \delta p2*down*age)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p1*age - \delta p2*down*age)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20835	26
E. Status maximization model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p1*age + \delta p2*down + \delta p3*down*age)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p1*age - \delta p2*down - \delta p3*down*age)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20866	27
F. Individualization model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p1*age + \delta p2*1980's)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p1*age - \delta p2*1980's)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20800	26
G. Individualization model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p1*age + \delta p2*1980's*age)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p1*age - \delta p2*1980's*age)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20857	26
H. Individualization model $y_{ijk} = (p + \delta p1*age + \delta p2*1980's + \delta p3*1980's*age)*\mu_{ii} + ((1-p) - \delta p1*age - \delta 2*1980's - \delta p3*1980's*age)*\mu_{jj} + COV + E_{ijk}$	3.20762	27

baseline model A ($-2\ln(L) = 11{,}8$, df= 1)[11]. We therefore prefer model B to model A and corroborate the acculturation hypothesis.

The parameter estimates of model B are presented in Table 3. These estimates give detailed information about the time the acculturation process takes. For the youngest mobile respondents, aged 18, the age variable has the value of zero (age is coded 0 to 47). Parameter p implies that 18-year-old respondents weight their own class by 0.381 (p) and their origin class by 0.641 (1-p). In other words, for young people socialization has a strong impact: the

impact of the class of origin is almost twice as big as the impact of the class of destination. But the acculturation effect considerably changes this picture for the older mobile. Each year older they are, the impact of the class of origin decreases and the impact of the class of destination increases by 0.009 (δp). This implies that after the age of about 30, people's own class becomes more influential compared with their fathers' class. The oldest respondents are 65 (coded as 47). For them, the relative weight of the own class is 0.804 (0.381 + 47*0.009=0.804) and that of their class of origin is 0.196 (0.619 –

Table 3 Parameter estimates (s.e.) of the baseline model (model A) and the acculturation model (model B).

	Model A Baseline model	Model B Acculturation model
Destination weight (p)	0.592 (0.032)	0.381 (0.066)
Effect of age on weight (δp)		0.009 (0.003)
Mean political preference of immobile respondents:		
1. Service class	5.115 (0.120)	5.111 (0.120)
2. Routine non-manual	4.832 (0.135)	4.809 (0.137)
3. Petty Bourgeoisie	5.577 (0.153)	5.531 (0.151)
4. Farmers	5.885 (0.154)	5.828 (0.153)
5. Manual workers	3.875 (0.112)	3.848 (0.112)
6. Agricultural workers	4.842 (0.231)	4.821 (0.232)
Effects of co-variates on political preference:		
Religion:		
No religion	0	0
Catholic	1.543 (0.062)	1.548 (0.062)
Dutch Reformed	1.089 (0.077)	1.090 (0.077)
Calvinist	2.180 (0.094)	2.183 (0.094)
Other religion	1.200 (0.159)	1.201 (0.159)
Age:		
18-15	0	0
26-35	0.031 (0.089)	0.039 (0.089)
36-45	0.295 (0.092)	0.309 (0.092)
46-55	0.261 (0.096)	0.290 (0.096)
56+	0.187 (0.104)	0.239 (0.105)
Year:		
1970	0	0
1971	0.237 (0.126)	0.240 (0.126)
1974	-0.366 (0.126)	-0.358 (0.127)
1976	-0.129 (0.112)	-0.120 (0.112)
1977	-0.199 (0.085)	-0.187 (0.085)
1979	-0.269 (0.137)	-0.268 (0.136)
1981	-0.321 (0.110)	-0.315 (0.110)
1982	0.130 (0.112)	0.136 (0.112)
1985	-0.306 (0.130)	-0.295 (0.130)
1986	-0.154 (0.116)	-0.156 (0.116)

47*0.009=0.196). Yet, even for the oldest respondents, the class of origin still has a significant impact.

We can come up with several explanations for this finding. First of all, this result indicates that although people left their old class a long time ago, they are probably still in contact with some people from that old class and they are still influenced by them. It may also indicate that political socialization during adolescence is so strong that even at a very old age, the influence of the political preference acquired during childhood never vanishes. Another possible explanation of this outcome is that it is incorrect to take age as a proxy for the number of years people have been in their new class. Although most people will have taken their last mobility step at a young age, there are always some persons who became mobile at a relatively late age. However, these numbers are likely to be very small (Goldthorpe, 1980).

The acculturation hypothesis assumes that the acculturation pattern is the same for the upwardly mobile as for the downwardly mobile. One might wonder whether this is a legitimate assumption. For this reason, we formulated the **status maximization hypothesis** in the theoretical section. An initial interpretation of this hypothesis reads that the upwardly mobile who have just arrived in their class of destination *instantly adjust more* than the downwardly mobile who have just arrived in their class of destination. To test this interpretation, we include a dummy labelled 'down' in model C. This dummy takes the value of 1 for the downwardly mobile and the value of 0 for the immobile and the upwardly mobile. A second interpretation of the status maximization hypothesis is that the rate of the acculturation process differs among the upwardly and the downwardly mobile. Since the upwardly mobile gain status, they will *adopt faster* to their class of destination than the downwardly mobile. We can test this second interpretation by adding a second order interaction term between the variables 'down' and 'age'. This is done in model D. A third interpretation is that the first two interpretations are simultaneously valid. This interpretation is expressed in model E.

The models representing the alternative interpretations of the status maximization hypothesis are presented Table 2. The results show that the residual mean square (RMS) of models C, D and E is even larger than of model B. Consequently, we have to reject all the alternative interpretations of the status maximization hypothesis. The conclusion, therefore, is that until this stage of testing, model B still gives the best representation of our data, i.e. the upwardly and the downwardly mobile have the same acculturation pattern.

The next step is to test the **individualization hypothesis.** This hypothesis states that for the mobile the acculturation process, i.e. the adaptation to the political preferences of their destination class, took less time in the 1980's

than in the 1970's. This hypothesis also leaves two distinct interpretations open. The first interpretation is that people who became mobile in the 1980's *instantly adjusted more* to their new class than those in the 1970's. The second interpretation is that the mobile in the 1980's *adjusted more quickly* to their new class than the mobile in the 1970's. It means that the influence of having been in the new class for an extra year was greater in the 1980's than in the 1970's. Obviously, these two interpretations are not mutually exclusive and can be simultaneously valid.

The two interpretations of the individualizing hypothesis are analogous to those of the status maximization hypothesis. To test the interpretations of the individualizing hypothesis, we can therefore use the design of the status maximization models. In these models, we exchange the dummy variable 'down' for a dummy for the '1980's', which takes the value of 0 for the years 1970 till 1980 and the value of 1 for the years 1981 till 1986. These different interpretations are expressed as models F, G and H in Table 2. Model F is analogous to model C, model G to model D and model H to model E.

If, as expected, people adjusted more rapidly to the political preference of their new class in the 1980's, model F, G and H should yield a significantly better fit than model B. However, Table 2 shows that models F and G have an even larger residual mean square than model B. Model H does have a smaller residual mean square, but the difference with model B is not significant ($-2\ln(L) = 0{,}6$; $df = 2$). Therefore, we have to reject the individualizing hypothesis.

Our general conclusion, therefore, is that of all our nested models, the acculturation model B leads to the best fit. In other words, there is a gradual process of acculturation, which is the same for the upwardly and the downwardly mobile.

7 Conclusion and discussion

For almost three decades, indicators of attitudes and value orientations have been used to explain political behaviour and political preferences. As a result, especially within Dutch research, the classical explanation, which takes social class position as its point of departure, more or less disappeared. In this article, we employed 11 national representative data sets, representing the Netherlands in the period 1970-1986[12]. With these data, we have shown that in the Netherlands as well, social class is still to be considered an important predictor. Between the separate classes, there are considerable differences in the mean political preference. Especially if we look at people who are intergenerationally immobile.

In this article, we adressed the following question: What are the effects of

intergenerational social mobility on political preference? To answer this question, we formulated and tested four hypotheses. The economic hypothesis claims that the political preference of the mobile is closer to the usual political preference of their class of destination than of their class of origin. This hypothesis has been corroborated by our analyses. Our acculturation hypothesis is more informative. It states that there is also a process of acculturation. The longer one is a member of a new class, the more one's political preferences coincide with the political preferences of those who have already been in this class for two generations. This idea has been confirmed by our analyses. People who are young and mobile, assuming they recently arrived in their new class, have a political preference nearer to that which is usual in their fathers' class than to the usual political preference of their own class. Only from the age of 30 onwards does one's own class become relatively more influential than one's father's class. Nevertheless, one's father's class -even for the oldest mobile people- does not lose its impact entirely.

One hypothesis we had to reject was the status maximization hypothesis. This hypothesis states that the adaptation process takes less time for the upwardly mobile than for the downwardly mobile. The empirical tests show that the adaptation to a new class is not dissimilar for the upwardly and the downwardly mobile. We also had to reject the individualization hypothesis, which states that the acculturation process took less time in the 1980's than in the 1970's. We found no indication for an increasing effect over time of the destination class.

The main conclusion of this article is that social class still matters. Even for mobile people, the class of orgin has a significant impact on their political preferences. Furthermore, it takes a certain amount of time to adapt to the class of destination. The age at which the class of destination becomes relatively more important than the class of origin is about 30.

The study presented in this article, however, only focused on the Netherlands. In the near future hope to conduct similar analyses using data from other countries as well. An international comparison would make it possible to discover whether there is a similar acculturation proces in other countries. Furthermore, we want to investigate the extent to which differences in the strength of the relation between social class and political preference can be explained by differences in the mobility rates among countries and changes in the mobility rates within countries over time.

Notes

* Both authors are associated with the Department of Sociology at the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. A Dutch version of this article was published in *Mens en*

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1. Since women constitute half the voting population, it is hard to justify this exclusion. In the near future we plan to include women (also housewives). For this purpose, however, we have to apply a different design than the models presented here.
2. We would like to add that this hypothesis is not just the prediction that political preference will be a weighted average between origin and destination. The literature on social mobility and political preference often suggests that political preference is not just a weighted average between class of origin and class of destination, but that due to the 'shock of mobility' (comparable to the often assumed status inconsistency effect), mobility has an extra independent effect. Turner et al. (1992) label this the effect of mobility per se. The literature that elaborates on such mobility hypotheses, however, is rather vague and lacks precision. This can be illustrated by the recent work of Kelley (1992), which states that mobile persons '*may* not be fully at home, nor fully excepted, in either class. This *might* lead to alienation and anomie, and *perhaps* to disenchantment with the social order and support for radical change. *Or* it might lead to extremism of the Left *or* the Right, according to the historical *circumstance*. ..... Thus there are many reasons to think that there is *something* more to social mobility than merely class of origin and present class position, that there is *something* to the experience of *mobility per se*' (1992: 32; the italics are ours). We feel that our status maximization hypothesis is a more specific hypothesis on mobility effects.
3. Applications in other fields of research are Sorenson (1990; 1991), De Graaf (1991) and De Graaf and Heath (1992).
4. Survey questions used (see for exact questions the original codebooks):
   * Which party would you vote for if there were national elections today/tomorrow?
   * Which party did you vote for in the last national elections?
   * Which political national party has your preference?

   In this article we use the phrase 'political preference' for all these measures. At first it seems like a rather wide variety of dependent variables, but they are of course strongly connected. We would like to stress that for the test of our hypotheses, it is not so relevant whether we predict voting behaviour or political preference.
5. The left-right scores are taken from: Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983: 249), Van Deth and Horstman (1989) and the National Election Study 1989 dataset (own calculations).
6. The coding of the respondents into the EGP scheme takes two steps. First the original occupation codes are recoded into the International Standard Classification of Occupation codes (ILO, 1968). Second, these ISCO codes are translated into EGP scores through the Ganzeboom, Luijkx and Treiman (1989) recoding schema.
7. In the Netherlands in May 1992 a new data collection was started under the supervision of W.C. Ultee and H.B.G. Ganzeboom. These data contain occupational career data and will thus enable us to test whether we are correct in assuming that age is an appropriate indicator for the period someone is a member of his class of destination.
8. Prestige according to Sixma & Ultee (1983): Class 1: 69; Class 2: 43; Class 3: 42; Class 4: 35; Class 5:31; Class 6: 27.
9. Although we used more surveys than Ganzeboom et al. (1987), we were not able to use all their surveys, since some of them lack information on church membership and political preference.
10. It is of importance to note that we did not constrain the weight parameter p to lie in the 0-1 interval. The reason for applying an unconstrained model is the possibility that the diagonal reference model does represent the data in an appropriate way. Yet, in all the models presented in this paper, the weight parameters lie in the 0-1 interval. For a methodological comparison between Sobel's diagonal reference model and the mainstream square additive model, see Hendrickx et al. (1993).
11. The comparison between two nested models is done by means of the Likelihood Ratio L ($= (\sigma_f/\sigma_n)^N$), where σ_f is the maximum likelihood estimator of σ_f (= square root of RMS

(Residual Mean Square)) in the more general model, σ_n (= Square Root of RMS) is the maximum likelihood estimator of σ_n in the nested model, and N is the sample size. Because -2ln(L) has an asymptotic CHI^2 (r) distribution, where r is the number of additional independent parameters in the general model, the Likelihood Ratio can be used for comparing the two models (Sobel, 1985: 705).

12. We investigated the influence of possible 'outlier' datasets. The analyses were carried out eleven times, each time leaving out one of the surveys. The parameter estimates turned out to be very robust. All of the eleven analyses produced almost the same results.

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