

Temporal trends in intergenerational social mobility in Switzerland

A cohort study of men and women born between 1912 and 1974

Julie Falcon, University of Lausanne (Dir. Prof. Dominique Joye)

1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on analyzing whether the influence of social origin on life chances has changed over time in Switzerland, as to date little research has been carried out on this issue in this country. Furthermore, this study is interested in questioning social mobility measurement, through a comparison of the ESeC class schema (which has the same theoretical foundations as EGP) with an alternative one, namely the Oesch schema.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Q1: Has social mobility increased over time in Switzerland?
Q2: Has it fluctuated according to the economic context?
Q3: Have social mobility chances changed differently between men and women?
Q4: Does an alternative social class schema reveal different outcomes, in terms of trends, gender differences, etc.?

3. DATA

The data entails a collection of twelve Swiss national population sample surveys with detailed occupation codes gathered between 1975 and 2009: Attitudes politiques en Suisse, 1975; ISSP, 1987; Les Suisses et leur société, 1991; SHP, 1999 & 2004 (second sample); ESS, 2002, 2004, 2006 & 2008; MOSAiCH, 2005, 2007 & 2009.

4. POPULATION

The sample contains both Swiss citizens and foreign residents in Switzerland, aged between 35 & 64 years old at the time of the survey. Respondents' years of birth ranged from 1912 to 1974.

The sample was divided in 8 birth cohorts with approximately five years between each : 1912 – 1935, 1936 – 1940, 1941 – 1945, 1946 – 1950, 1951 – 1955, 1956 – 1960, 1961 – 1965, and 1966 – 1974.

5. COMPARING TWO CLASS SCHEMA

5.a. ESeC

1. Higher salariat;
2. Lower salariat;
3. Intermediate employee;
4. Small employers / self-employed;
5. Lower white-collar;
6. Skilled manual;
7. Semi-/un-skilled.

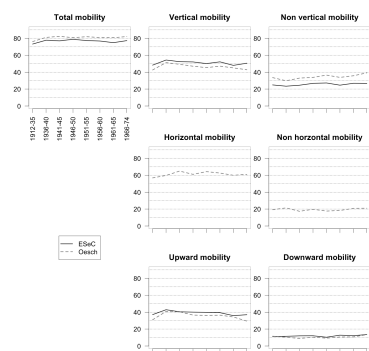
5.b. Oesch

Independent work logic	Technical work logic	Organizational work logic	Interpersonal work logic
1. Large employers	5. Technical experts	10. Higher-grade managers	14. Socio-cultural professionals
2. Self-employed professional	6. Technicians	11. Associate managers	15. Social-cultural semi-professionals
3. Petite bourgeoisie w/ employees	7. Skilled crafts	12. Skilled office	16. Skilled service
4. Petite bourgeoisie w/out employees	8. Routine operatives	13. Routine office	17. Routine service
	9. Routine agriculture		

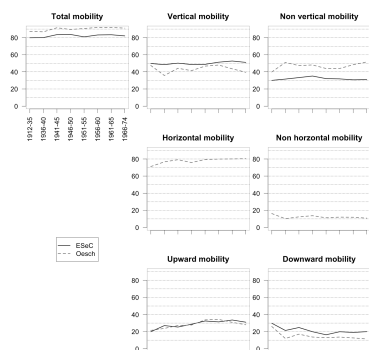
While ESeC (in line with EGP) is rooted in the manual / non manual divide that characterizes industrial societies, Oesch's schema by introducing horizontal distinctions within the social structure, was conceptualized to answer to the phenomenon of tertiarization, feminization and welfare statism. In this respect, it reflects more adequately post-industrial societies.

6. ABSOLUTE TRENDS

6.a. Men



6.b. Women

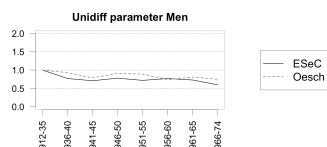


* Outcomes for Oesch in full version (17)

7. RELATIVE TRENDS

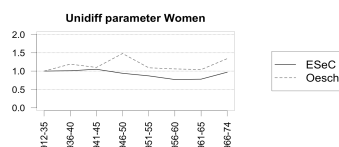
7.a. Men

	Model	L2	Df	%L2	DI	BIC
ESeC <i>N</i> =7882	Indep.	1599.9	288	-	17	-984.1
	CnSF	464.0	252	71	8.4	-1797.0
	Unidiff	454.6	245	71.6	8.3	-1743.6
Oesch <i>N</i> =7574	Indep.	1942.4	392	-	18.6	-1559.2
	CnSF	609.5	343	68.6	8.8	-2454.4
	Unidiff	599.8	336	69.1	8.7	-2401.5



7.b. Women

	Model	L2	Df	%L2	DI	BIC
ESeC N=5438	Indep.	800.2	288	-	13.5	-1676.9
	CnSF	335.1	252	58.1	7.8	-1832.5
	Unidiff	330.0	245	58.8	7.8	-1777.3
Oesch N=5006	Indep.	904.2	392	-	15.4	-2435.0
	CnSF	414.4	343	54.2	8.8	-2507.4
	Unidiff	406.9	336	55.0	8.8	-2455.3



* Outcomes for Oesch in collapsed version (8)

8. DISCUSSION

Q1: Has social mobility increased over time in Switzerland?

Both measures of absolute and relative social mobility support the trend of no change (i.e., the constant flux thesis). In fact, not only do the rates of absolute social mobility remain steady over time, but the log-linear model estimates also clearly favor the model of constant social fluidity. Therefore, it seems that in Switzerland, neither upward directed changes in the social structure nor the overall expansion of the educational system resulted in a substantial reduction in the inequality of opportunity.

Q2: Has it fluctuated according to the economic context?

Too little evidence was found regarding the impact of economic variations on social mobility. The slight decrease in upward mobility and slight increase in downward mobility observed for younger men are not substantial enough to reach the conclusion that Switzerland's economic context generated significant effects.

Q3: Have social mobility chances changed differently between men and women?

Globally, the greatest changes occurred among women. Women from recent birth-cohorts indeed enjoyed greater upward social mobility and lower downward social mobility than women of older birth-cohorts, resulting in an increasing convergence with men's situation in terms of absolute social mobility chances. Yet, in relative terms, changes that this study has observed have not been substantial enough to suggest that inequality of opportunity in Switzerland decreased.

Q4: Does an alternative class schema reveal different outcomes?

Overall, similar outcomes are observed between the ESeC and the Oesch class schemas in both absolute and relative terms. Nonetheless, the Oesch class schema reveals gender specific characteristics. Horizontal mobility (i.e. between work logics) is much higher among women than men, while reproduction within work logics is higher for men. Furthermore, although the CnSF model provides a better fit over the Unidiff, the Unidiff parameter with the Oesch schema points to different variations than ESeC. Therefore, future research inspecting more thoroughly the differences between both schema is on the agenda.

9. REFERENCES

- Bergman, Manfred Max, Dominique Joye, and Beat Fux. 2002. *Social Change, Mobility and Inequality in Switzerland in the 1990s*. Swiss Journal of Sociology 28(2): 281–295.
Breen, R. 2004. *Social Mobility in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Breen, R., et al. J. O. Jonsson. 2005. *Inequality of opportunity in comparative perspective: Recent research on educational attainment and social mobility*. Annual Review of Sociology 223–243.
Erikson, R., et al. J. H. Goldthorpe. 1992. *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies*. Oxford University Press, USA.
Güveli, A., R. Luitpold, et H. B. G. Glasbeek. 2011. *Patterns of Intergenerational Mobility of the Old and New Middle Classes in a Post-Industrial Society, Netherlands 1970-2006*. Social Science Research.
Güveli, A., A. Need, et N. D. De Graaf. 2007. *The Rise of "New" Social Classes within the Service Class in The Netherlands*. Acta Sociologica 50:129–146.
Jonsson, J. O., D. S. Grusky, M. Di Carlo, R. Pollak, et M. C. Brinton. 2009. *Microclass Mobility: Social Reproduction in Four Countries*. American Journal of Sociology 114:977–1036.
Joye, Dominique, Manfred Max Bergman, and Paul Lambert. 2003. *Intergenerational Educational and Social Mobility in Switzerland*. Swiss Journal of Sociology 29(2): 283–291.
Levy, René, Dominique Joye, Olivier Guye, and Vincent Kaufmann. 1997a. *Tous Égaux? De la Stratification aux Représentations*. Zurich: Seismo.
Oesch, D. 2006. *Rethinking the class map: stratification and institutions in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Rose, David, et Eric Harrison. 2009. *Social Class in Europe: An introduction to the European Socio-economic Classification*. 1er éd. Routledge.

10. CONTACT

Julie.falcon@unil.ch

University of Lausanne

Life course and Inequality Research Centre

Unil
UNIL | Université de Lausanne