

# BEHIND THE BLACK BOX: THE ROLE OF INTRAGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY ON INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY

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

## 1. Theoretical background

Often in social mobility research, the role of intragenerational social mobility on intergenerational social mobility tends to be neglected, mainly because some scholars assume that from the age of 30 onwards the social position attained by people is likely to remain rather stable. Yet, not only the boundary of this so called *assumption of occupational maturity* is increasingly called into question, but also studying the role of individual's trajectory should provide useful information as regards to the understanding of the intergenerational social mobility outcome in several respects. In particular, issues of the **timing, the ordering and the duration** of certain states in an individual's trajectory are likely to be important in determining the intergenerational social mobility outcome, as implicit social norm are related to them. In this respect, these aforementioned issues are likely to **differ between men and women**, as male dominated jobs offer higher advancement opportunities, in contrast to female dominated ones. Furthermore, comparing women's occupation with their father's occupation introduces *de facto* a sex-segregation bias resulting in women being more likely to be downwardly mobile than men. Therefore, to get a proper understanding of the mobility process **other family members' influence** should be taken into account (cf. the linked lives principle).

## 2. Operationalization

I undertake a **sequence analysis on educational, professional and inactivity trajectories**. In particular, to analyze professional trajectories in a much refined way, I apply the **Oesch class schema** to my data. This schema has the advantage of not only drawing vertical divisions within the social structure, but also horizontal ones, based on the concept of *work logic*. In total, four work logics based on differences in the relationship to organizational power and the kind of work task performed are identified (cf. point 3). This enables me to **disentangle the black box of the middle class and to account for the specificity of female labor force**, unlike the classical EGP class schema. For salaried workers, it is expected that upward mobility should be more pronounced within the organizational work logic than other ones, as top occupations in this work-logic depend less on expertise than the two others. In contrast, mobility into the *interpersonal service logic* should be more female dominated, as this work logic is female dominated. Furthermore, I expect that mobility between work logics should be rather limited.

The analysis is undertaken using the Swiss Household Panel **retrospective data** collected in 2001/2002 (N = 1482 valid cases) on people's trajectory from the age of 15 to the age of 55 who were aged between 35 and 65 years old at the time of the survey. **Mobility outcome was calculated a priori** from the cross tabulation between respondent's and his/her father's social position coded into three categories, namely higher salariat, lower salariat and skilled/routine worker. In the end, **9 subsamples of sequences based on the mobility status variable** were computed, allowing us to **distinguish between three types of each upward mobility, immobility and downward mobility**.

Recap: Social origin measured at 15 y.o. --- Destination in 2002 aged 35 to 64 y.o. Trajectory from 15 to 55 y.o. Mobility outcome = tabulation | & ---

## 3. States of sequences

### Education states:

1. Compulsory education / secondary without maturity
2. Secondary vocational education
3. Secondary general education
4. Tertiary vocational education
5. Tertiary general education

### Higher salariat work states:

6. Traditional bourgeoisie (independent work logic)
7. Technical experts (technical work logic)
8. Higher-grade managers (organizational work logic)
9. Socio-cultural professionals (interpersonal service work logic)

### Lower salariat work states:

10. Petite bourgeoisie (independent work logic)
11. Technicians (technical work logic)
12. Associate managers (organizational work logic)
13. Socio-cultural semi-professionals (interpers service work logic)

### Skilled / routine work states:

14. Production workers (technical work logic)
15. Office clerks (organizational work logic)
16. Service workers (interpersonal service work logic)

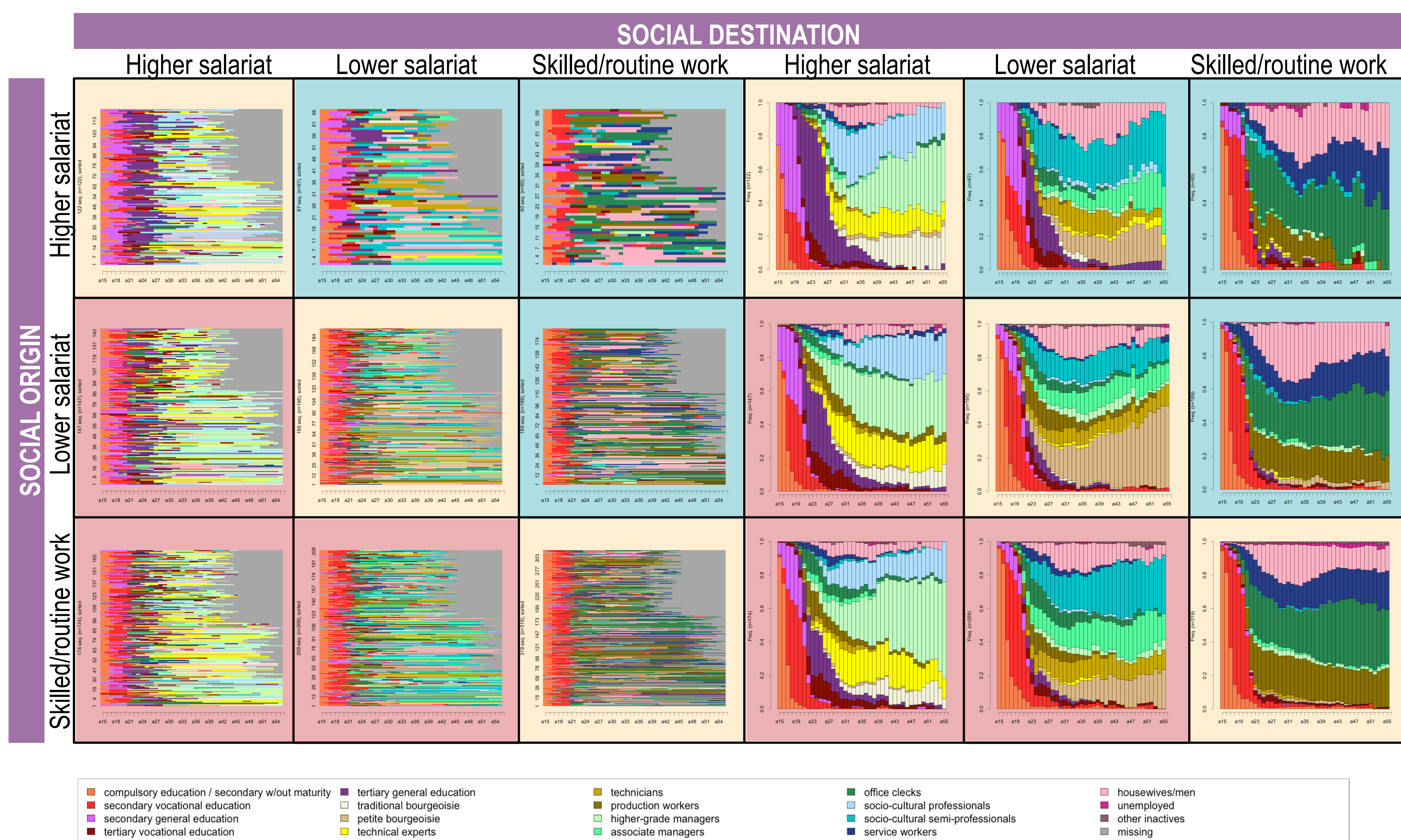
### Inactive states:

17. Housewives/men
18. Unemployed
19. Other inactive

## 4. A priori sequence analysis of mobility table

### 4.a. Trajectories plots

### 4.b. State distribution plots



### 4.c. Testing the impact of « linked lives » with logistic regressions

	Reproduction within the higher salariat	Downward mobility from higher to lower salariat	Downward mobility from higher salariat to skilled / routine workers	Upward mobility from lower to higher salariat	Reproduction within the lower salariat	Downward mobility from lower salariat to skilled / routine workers	Upward mobility from skilled / routine workers to higher salariat	Upward mobility from lower to higher salariat	Reproduction within skilled / routine workers
<b>Sex</b>									
Female	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Male	2.04**	0.41**	0.49*	3.19***	1.25	0.46***	2.45***	0.68*	0.63**
<b>Mother education</b>									
Primary compulsory	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Secondary vocational	2.08**	2.81**	1.59	1.25	1.32	0.68*	0.98	0.73.	0.70*
Secondary general	8.98***	9.78***	1.97	0.96	1.24	0.55	0.51	0.25*	0.05**
Tertiary vocational	3.46.	10.76***	0.00	1.97	2.83.	0.33	0.42	0.30	0.18
Tertiary general	14.41***	12.41***	3.63.	2.34	0.00	0.39	0.00	0.18.	0.00
<b>Number of children</b>									
No children	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
One child	2.49**	1.07	0.21*	0.71	0.81	0.94	0.81	1.45	1.21
Two children	3.28**	0.61	0.68	0.61.	0.73	0.99	0.80	1.16	1.37
Three or more children	2.34*	0.83	0.44.	0.68	1.47	1.24	0.70	0.97	1.04
<b>Spouse education</b>									
No partner	2.10	1.32	2.35	1.60	0.86	0.94	1.10	0.74	0.72
Primary compulsory	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Secondary general	2.30	1.61	1.84	1.97	0.77	0.55	1.85	0.96	0.46*
Secondary vocational	1.40	1.11	3.54	1.12	0.85	0.96	1.64	0.66	0.80
Tertiary general	2.81.	1.77	3.15	3.13**	0.95	0.29*	2.22.	0.66	0.30**
Tertiary vocational	1.82	1.57	2.93	1.72	1.22	0.94	1.11	0.67	0.52*

## 5. Discussion

From those upwardly mobile within the higher salariat, I first of all observe interestingly little difference between those from a lower salariat background and those from a skilled/routine worker background. As compared to the immobile within the higher salariat, those from a lower social background who reached a social position in this class spent less time in secondary and tertiary *general* education. However, they invested more time in *vocational* education, particularly at the tertiary level in comparison with other mobility outcomes. Their occupational trajectory is characterized by short spells early in the career process in subaltern positions, and by the predominance of the attainment of higher-grade managers positions. This latter observation corroborate the idea that the organizational work logic offers more mobility opportunities. Logistic regression coefficients indicate that both higher salariat immobile and upwardly mobile movers are more likely to be male and to have a spouse with tertiary general education. Yet, this latter observation could be a consequence rather than a cause of such trajectories. In contrast, while mother's education seems to matter importantly for the immobile within the higher salariat, it does not for those upwardly mobile in this class.

Female are more likely than male to make either an upward or a downward move in the lower salariat, mainly through the attainment of a socio-cultural semi-professional position. In that, this particular class seems the most fluid. However, differences exist according to the background class. Those from a higher salariat background spent more time in *general* education and *at home* than those from a lower social background. It is noteworthy that *petite bourgeoisie* positions dominate in the immobile within the lower salariat.

Female are also more likely to have a mobility outcome within the skilled/routine workers class than men. While we observed little differences between men upwardly mobile within the higher salariat according to their social background, in contrast social background seems to matter more here. Indeed, women from a higher salariat background experience much less employment spells within the production worker positions, than those from a lower salariat background and even less than those from a skilled/routine background. Nonetheless, regardless of social background, they all experience a rather important period of time *at home*.

These preliminary results are interesting ones as regards to gender differences in terms of upward and downward social mobility trajectories. Future research should look more into detail about intragenerational social mobility dynamics. In this respect, which method should be applied? Could we gain from the construction of a typology *a posteriori* instead of an *a priori* one, as applied here? Would latent analysis or optimal matching technic provide interesting insights? What about the issue of costs and distance matrix? On this latter aspect, should standard criteria be applied or rather a personalized matrix based on social distance between social classes?

## 6. CONTACT

Julie.falcon@unil.ch, University of Lausanne, Life course and Inequality Research Centre