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Climbing up a Steeper Staircase:
Intergenerational Social Mobility across Birth Cohorts in Argentina (2003-2010)¹

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Introduction

“The great potential of society’s human resources can be more fully exploited in a fluid class structure with a high degree of mobility than in a rigid social system. Class lines that restrict mobility and prevent men born into the lower classes strata from even discovering that their capacities might be constitute a far more serious waste of human talent than the often deplored lower birth rates of the higher strata.”
(Blau and Duncan, 1967: 461)

“The role of the state underscores the point that social mobility reflects a nation’s political economy...politics and public policy shape the opportunity structure.”
(Hout, 2006:133)

During the middle decades of the 20th century, Argentina distinguished itself from other Latin American countries by its earlier economic modernization, its wide and open middle classes, and by its strong trade unions, which granted relative high salaries and welfare benefits to the working class. Since the end of the 20th century, Argentina has not been considered a paradigm of either steady economic development or high opportunities of social upward mobility. Most interpretations, both lay and expert, complain about the model of development implemented by the end of the last century. There are many studies which address the impact of market oriented policies on the labor market (e.g., the expansion of precarious work, the increase in poverty and income inequality); however, there have been few empirical studies that analyze changes in the degree of openness in class structure.

The general aim of this paper is to discuss possible links between intergenerational social mobility and models of economic development in Argentina since 1970 and extending into the first decade of the 21st century. To explore this we will analyze trends of intergenerational social mobility across birth cohorts and focus on how occupational change, the evolution of inequality,

and transformations in the role of the state in shaping equality of conditions and opportunities through public policy have affected these trends.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, Argentina transitioned from a semi-closed economic development strategy based on industrial import substitution with strong state intervention to a neoliberal model based on economic liberalization, privatization of public assets, de-regulation of markets and the growth of the service sector. Throughout this period, there was an increase in income inequality, a persistent decline in the net wage of workers, a considerable concentration of wealth in the elite and upper middle classes, as well as a rapid expansion of precarious labor and unemployment rates in the working and lower middle classes (Torrado, 2007; Salvia and Chavez Molina, 2007; Beccaria, 2002).

In addition, many post World War II equity social policies were changed mainly through a drastic reduction in public funding. A direct consequence was the deterioration in the quality of the public education and wealth systems which affected mainly the lower classes. These transformations produced unprecedented economic inequalities in a society that had distinguished itself from other Latin American countries through the significant influence of its middle class and a protected working class that, to a large extent, was close to the former in its material conditions and considered itself part of the middle classes (Torre, 2010; Svampa, 2005).

The relatively high integration of the Argentinean Class Structure had been consolidated during the first and second Peronist Governments (1946-1955). Strong active protection of internal market and redistributive income policies as well as laws encouraging high rates of unionization favored the middle segments of society. On the one hand, industrialization generated skilled manual occupations as well as new qualified jobs in the public administration

and private companies leading to remarkable intergenerational social mobility.² On the other hand, the extension of social rights and welfare policies consolidated a stable working class (Germani, 1963; Torrado, 1992).

Although, there were some nuclei of marginality associated with unequal regional development and with unassimilated urban migration, the lower classes in Argentina were composed mostly to integrate urban working classes. The high expectations of upward mobility of working class families were supported by actual experiences. Gino Germani's classic study of intergenerational mobility (1963), using data from the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires in the early 1960s, showed that almost 45% of persons whose parents were blue-collar workers moved up to middle and upper middle classes mainly through three channels: administrative jobs, professional employment, and small business capital. Moreover, half of all workers whose parents were unskilled workers—a high proportion with farm origins—achieved skilled worker status in manufacture industries or were skilled manual self-employed within the same period.

Similar to Torche's (2005) description of Chile, Argentina is a middle-income developing country that has undergone significant economic change in the last quarter of the 20th century. Although the late seventies represented a turning point for industrialization, it was in the nineties that the real change in the economic model occurred through three main processes: a) the privatization of public assets and enterprises; b) market oriented policies such as the deregulation of foreign trade; and c) corporatization and financialization of the economy with strong foreign presence. The economy grew most years between 1990 and 2000. However, the negative consequences were the deepening of the income distribution gap, increasing

² In spite of the expansion and consolidation of the middle classes during Peron's first and second government (1946-1952; 1952-1955), high proportions of them were (are) socio-political and socio-cultural opposed to Peronism, understood as a heterogeneous wide national-populist movement (Adamovsky, 2009).

unemployment, and a rapid expansion of precarious labor that affected mostly the lower income and less-skilled stratus (Beccaria, 2002). The unemployment rates were higher for those entering the labor market for the first time and adult household supporters close to retirement age (Sautu, 1998).

The present study contributes to the line of research oriented to understanding how institutional change affects social stratification (Hout and Gerber, 2004; Hout, 2006). The hypothesis is that market oriented transformation contributed to the deterioration of the lower classes' material conditions and introduced more competitive mechanisms to achieve the highest status occupations, resulting in increased inequality of opportunities of social mobility among classes. The case of Argentina may be instructive when compared with other societies in the region and with other continents where market transformation was developed because of its past of relatively high integration and quite openness of the social stratification system.

The surveys on which this study is based were carried out from 2003 and 2010 and include data on individuals who experienced the reform period and the crisis. During the first decade of the 21st century, there has been some return to distributive and protectionist policies in Argentina. These policies have expanded manufacturing industries related to the local consumer market in a context of high rates of growth of the economic product based on a primary export orientation. These economic changes had a favorable impact on the labor market by diminishing the rate of unemployment, decreasing income inequality and stimulating the growth of net wages. Nevertheless, since intergenerational mobility is a long run process affected by many factors (such as level of education of the birth cohorts, the returns to education, the conditions of transmission of resources between generations) we cannot yet deeply examine the impact of these changes on the pattern of social mobility.

The link between economic change and social mobility is a central topic in sociology. Recent studies of industrial societies show that change in opportunities for mobility almost always goes from less to more open, even though inequality has increased in most of these countries over the last 30 years (Gerber and Hout, 2004; Hout and Di Pietre, 2006; Breen, 2004). This paper introduces Argentina to this kind of analysis to explore how and to what degree inequality of opportunities for social mobility have changed in the last four decades. Particularly, the study focuses on the relative odds of upward mobility of persons from working class origins before and after the working class material conditions were transformed regressively by a mix of drastic market reforms, policies of stabilization and crisis.

These are the empirical questions that guide our research: What is the extent of inequality of opportunities in Argentinean class structure and how has it changed over time? If there have been changes in the degree of openness in class structure, which macro-social factors could have affected opportunities between class positions? Has the growth in the living conditions gap between significant fractions of the working class and upper middle classes affected mobility opportunities? Has the growth of employment in qualified service activities made it easier for upward mobility for working class families' offspring? Which channels of upward mobility from lower class origins have increased over the last four decades, and alternately, which class barriers have been reinforced making more difficult occupational attainment for sons and daughters of working class backgrounds?

To explore these issues, I carry out the following analytic strategy: First, I describe the occupational change in the last four decades while pointing out how structural opportunities both opened and closed in response to different models of economic development? Second, I compare absolute rates of social mobility in Argentina with other Latin American and European countries

to get an intuitive idea of how open (or closed) the Argentinean class structure is. Third, I introduce a temporal perspective analyzing trends of mobility rates across birth cohorts. This analysis has three steps: 1) I describe trends in absolute rates of social mobility across birth cohorts, to observe whether the structural change impacted positively or not the odds of those with working class origins to move up to professional and managerial positions, which are certainly considered belonging to the upper middle or middle classes. 2) I examine to what extent social mobility depended on structural mobility and exchange mobility for each birth cohort. 3) I analyze changes in social fluidity over time, with a focus on the opportunities of upward mobility from working class origins. Also known as “relative mobility”, social fluidity represents the degree of equality of opportunity in society (as well as its level of openness). Finally, I present a summary of the findings, the conclusions and reflections of the case of Argentina in the study of the links between economic change, political economy and social mobility.

Economic Development Stages and Social Stratification in Argentina

Argentina was in a position somewhat like that of the United States from 1870-1930, a land of “milk and honey” that drew large waves of European immigrants attracted by the open agriculture frontier combined with a prosperous economy in the main cities. Following Lipset and Bendix’s (1963, 1959) hypothesis, Germani (1963, 1966) considered that, similar to the United States, the absence of an aristocracy with a feudal heritage in Argentina, or to be more precise in Argentina’s most economically developed area (Pampa Húmeda) which also includes Uruguay), contributes to the idea of a higher open society.

Analyzing census data from 1869 to 1947, Germani (1963) showed how the cumulative impact of European immigration, economic growth and occupational change contributed to large

rates of upward mobility from the lower classes (agricultural workers, modest farmers and unskilled manual workers) to the lower middle and middle classes. But unlike the United States where most of European immigrants inserted themselves into the lower ranks of the occupational hierarchy, in Argentina, due to the small size of the population in the Pampa Húmeda, the first waves of European immigrants experienced a more rapidly upward mobility into the middle classes, especially through self-employment: small entrepreneurs in industry, services, and agriculture and urban craftsmen with modest capital (Sautu, 1969). Others, of course, enlarged the expanding working class in the port city which flourished and provided an abundance of job opportunities in industry and services. A high proportion of their sons then moved up to the salaried middle classes through educational credentials. The relative low birth rates of the white collar class also opened up additional opportunities for upward mobility (Germani, 1963).

The rapid modernization of social stratification, mainly in the central economic area of Argentina, was historically situated between the last two decades of the 19th century and the first three decades of the 20th under the so-called agro-exporting economic development (Sautu, 1969). The World Crisis of 1929 (that reached Argentina in 1930) was a blow to this economic model, which due to Balance of Payment restrictions had to be adapted to the developing countries' new economic conditions. By the end of that decade, an import substitution model of development began to be implemented. The Second World War, then, also acted as natural protection to the expansion of local manufacturing industries

Whereas Europe immigrants ceased to arrive in massive numbers to urban centers, internal migrants from rural areas contributed to the expansion of the manufacturing industry's labor force. The internal migrants raised in poorer environments had inferior qualifications to those of urban natives (in this case of Buenos Aires, Rosario, Córdoba and Mendoza). As the

newcomers filled lower occupations in the hierarchy, natives were enabled to move to higher positions (Lipset and Bendix, 1963, 1959; Germani, 1963; Blau and Duncan, 1967). The urbanization and tertiarization induced by the import-substitute industrialization (ISI) economic model continued to supply much opportunity for upward social mobility (Germani, 1963; Torrado, 1992).

Although, Germani (1963) did not analyze the level of equality of opportunities for social mobility as well as most of his contemporaries,³ it is plausible to think that Argentina was from the last decades of 19th century to the middle of the 20th a quite open society, especially for European descendents. A high proportion of them experienced hierarchical barriers that were lower in Argentina than in their places of origin and took advantage of opportunities for economic advancement. Similar to the United States, in Argentina there flourished an “egalitarian feeling” among white European immigrants, rooted in the value that the social stratification hierarchy reflected more status achievements than ascriptive features. It seemed that Argentinean society opened large opportunities for workers with low status backgrounds to achieve better life conditions and that at the beginning of their trajectories there was nothing unreachable (Torre, 2010). The higher upward social mobility of European immigrants was also rooted in public policies that attracted and favored them and discriminated natives from Argentina with indigenous ascendance. This discrimination operated as well as subtle manners and practices in everyday life (Adamovsky, 2009).

The strong active protection of local produce and the income policies favored the development of consumer manufacturing industries until the late fifties and, subsequently, contributed to the production of plastic products, metal mechanic, and electronic durable

³ Germani (1963) was aware of this issue and estimated what had been the extent of social mobility by considering fixed proportions of exchange mobility and adding it to the structural mobility.

consumer goods. In both stages of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) manufacturing industries were highly dependent on the currency availability generated by the agricultural sector.

The turning point for ISI was initiated in the late seventies by a strong dictatorship which liberalized foreign trade catalyzing a process of deindustrialization. Complementing this policy, it also repressed grassroots political protest movements, murdering activists and disappearing their bodies. During the eighties, there were some attempts to recreate the ISI but they failed and the state became submerged in sequential periods of stagnation and crisis. It was in the nineties that the real change in the economic model took place through the adoption of markedly market reforms.

The market oriented transformation developed by the Convertibility Plan included, in addition to the structural reforms described above, fixing the nominal exchange-rate to the US dollar. This rule forced the country to equal the productiveness of one of the most developed economies in the world. In summary, the consequences were a jump in imports of consumer-goods, the destruction of a high proportion of small and middle-sized firms, a hike in unemployment and poverty-rates, a decline of wages and widespread precarious labor. During the neoliberal reforms Argentina, unlike Chile, experienced two deep economic crises, first in 1994 and then again in 2001-2. The latter one, especially, impacted negatively on social stratification.

The phenomenon of the impoverishment of the middle classes became part of Argentinean society. Since the late seventies, in dissimilar contexts and with different degrees of intensity, continuous impoverishment processes affected distinct groups of the population: whereas in the 1980s, wage-dependent workers were the most affected, in the 1990s it was the

turn of the unemployed (Di Virgilio and Kessler, 2010: 202-203). As a result, the class structure became more polarized.

Theoretical Aspects

Structural mobility and social fluidity

There are two key concepts in the study of social mobility: a) structural mobility, and b) social fluidity (which refers to net association between class positions). At the heart of social mobility research efforts have been made to distinguish the social mobility produced by changes in the occupational structure and demographic patterns that force flows between origins and destinations to the social mobility that is related to more permeability among class barriers. This challenge has been studied empirically in the last four decades⁴ by two types of measures: a) absolute rates, and b) relative mobility (Featherman, Jones and Hauser, 1975; Hout, 1983; Goldthorpe and Erikson, 1992; Breen, 2004).

The analysis of absolute rates focuses on a description of flows between class positions. This analysis does not control the effect of variations in the origins and destinations distributions, thus, contents either mobility forced by structural changes or mobility induces by less net association between class origins and destinations.

Featherman et. al (1975) pointed out that mobility rate changes expressed “phenotypical aspects” of class structure and are related to pathways of economic development and demographical factors that vary substantially between countries. Structural mobility creates opportunities in some class destinations and limits other destinations for all workers, regardless of their class origins. As Mike Hout (1989: 2) explains: if... “New positions mean opportunity.

⁴ First studies addressed this issue by calculating from the mobility table descriptive rates of exchange and structural mobility. Structural mobility was measured by the force mobility caused by shifts in the marginals distributions; exchange mobility by the difference between the total mobility and the structural.

The sociologist asks, ‘Opportunity for whom?’” This key issue is analyzed by social fluidity which refers to “the relative chances between people of different class origins of being found in one destination class rather than another” (Breen, 2004: 4). It expresses the degree of equality of opportunities in class structures.

The liberal theory of modernization argued that industrialization induces a greater openness in society and it will be a common trend for countries that follow the pathway of industrialization. The first generation of studies on social mobility tested this assumption empirically by describing inflow and outflow percentages. In the middle of the 20th century, Lipset and Zetterberg (1963, 1959) suggested that the pattern of social mobility tends to become similar in Western industrial societies, in contrast to prevailing assumptions that the United States as “a new nation” would be more open for upward mobility. A second assumption—though not analyzed by Lipset and Zetterberg—was that upward mobility rates would be higher in industrial societies than in non-industrial societies.

Regarding trends in social mobility over time, the general idea guiding studies undertaken in the 50’s and 60’s was that industrialization induces openness in societies by changing the shape of the occupational structure. Germani extended to Argentina this interpretation during the decades of massive European immigration (1880-1930) and manufacture industrial expansion (1940-1960). However, these first studies recognized that absolute rates of social mobility are influenced by marginal distributions and thus by structural mobility, so they do not allow for comparisons of changes in the permeability of class structure. A society could be quite open because of a profound change in the size of class positions (reduction in the bottom of stratification and growth of spaces in the middle classes), but it does not say anything about the relative chances of mobility between people from different class origins.

Featherman, Jones and Hauser (1975) replaced Lipset and Zetterberg's hypothesis, suggesting that it could be sustained not in its "phenotypical aspects" but in its "genotypical" patterns. That is, what remains stable over time in industrial societies with market economy and nuclear families are the chances of people from different class origins being found in one destination class rather than another.

In *The Constant Flux*, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) carry out an extensive comparative study of social mobility in European societies and the United States, Australia and Japan. Their study supported the claim that patterns of social fluidity tend to show little variation between countries and over time. Both the FJH hypothesis and Goldthorpe and Erikson point out that there is no systematic change over time in social fluidity, but there is divergence in absolute mobility rates associated with changes in occupational structure, pathway of economic development, historical and cultural characteristic between countries and within them over time.

Most of these studies agree that the pattern of mobility in a context of a class structure tends to be similar across countries because each position defined by class relations has distinctive propensities for mobility occurring between them. Each class position represents a frame of relative economic and cultural resources (such as money, goods, means of production, values, aspirations, social ties) available to be transmitted among generations and relative barriers that face individual access to different class positions. The unequal distribution of resources is so rooted in capitalist class structure that it leads to a general and persistent level of inequality of opportunities over time and across countries.

In spite of the similarity in the pattern of mobility, countries can differ in the degree of inequality in social stratification: "Some countries have relatively open class structures and/or hierarchies that are readily breached by upwardly mobile persons from less privileged origins;

other societies are relatively closed to intergenerational mobility. These are differences of degree but not kind” (Hout and Di Pietre, 2006).

Social fluidity in temporal perspective

A society experiences a process of openness when the occupational positions become distributed with higher levels of equality among classes. On the contrary, a closed process means that class destinations depend more on class origins and thus, people from lower class origins have fewer chances to reach higher positions. In this sense, closure implies an increase in the gap between classes’ opportunities (Hout, 1989).

Contrasting the liberal hypothesis with an increase in social fluidity, Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) found evidence of considerable stability in relative rates. These temporal comparisons were based on birth cohorts (in fact “age groups”) taken from a single sample per country. In their words, “the liberal theory would here appear to fail because the logic of industrialism has not in fact generated the changes within process of social selection which were expected of it, and through which a steady increase in fluidity and openness would be expected” (1992: 104). Moreover, this was particularly interesting because their analysis of mobility tables of the 1970s covered the golden age of capitalism after World War II, during which economic growth as well as the expansion of welfare policies had a greater impact on lower rates of unemployment and income inequality than in previous époques. Furthermore, it was a period of political upheavals, revolutions and movements of population across redrawn national frontiers.

Following most of the sociological problems developed in *The Constant Flux* and using the CASMIN Project class schema, Breen’s compilation of *Social Mobility in Europe* (2004) collected empirical articles trying to identify divergences or convergences in absolute and

relative rates among countries and shifts in changes over time. This collective research project has advanced further comparing mobility patterns and trends with surveys from 1970 to 2000. One of its major methodological advances is that data from different decades within each country have allowed scholars to distinguish the effects of birth cohorts and period in mobility opportunities. Most of the studies in the compilation have found a general trend of increasing social fluidity.

Can political interventions strengthen or weaken class barriers?

To the extent that most of the countries that have exhibited higher levels of social fluidity have been state-socialist or social democratic, Breen and Luijkx (2004: 401) suggest that direct political interventions oriented to equality in condition between class positions can weaken class origins effects. Some of these policies could uphold income redistribution and, especially, improve the quality of public schools.

As stated by the authors of the project *Inequality by Design*: “Greater opportunity would bring this country closer to fulfilling the American dream. Securing this kind of opportunity depends, in turn, on our social choices. Policies that simply promote equal opportunity may not be sufficient to provide full opportunity (...); greater inequality of outcomes necessarily decreases both opportunity and equality of opportunity” (Fischer et. al., 1996: 215-216).

Strong and long-run state interventions in education, which both equalize access and improve the quality of public schools, can mitigate the effect of class barriers. Nevertheless, it should be complemented with policies oriented to “equality of results” (such as income redistribution policies, educational programs to support the offspring of those from lower class origins, health care for poor children, or income supplements for poor working families). On the

contrary, we suspect--although there is not clear evidence on it--that growth in the level of income inequality can affect negatively social fluidity.

Following Hout (1988) one of the main variables that could affect opportunities of social fluidity is educational composition of the labor force. He observed for the United States that increasing prevalence of college graduates in the labor force contributed to the decline in the overall level of inequality in opportunity. This occurred because the relationship between class origins and destinations is nil among college graduates. It is a case in which state intervention improved opportunities for persons of lower class backgrounds: “By expanding low-cost higher educational facilities, the governments of many US states gave working-class youth the opportunity of a lifetime. They got the chance to earn credentials that their parents had no been able to try for, then they found that the returns on that degree exceeded their expectations” (Hout, 2006: 127).

This occurs in meritocratic labor markets, but as Vallet (2004) pointed out in his research on France, while more and more people attain higher levels of education, the power of high degrees on weakened origin-destination association might be reduced, offsetting the compositional effect.

Inequalities of Conditions and Inequalities of Opportunities in Argentina

We hypothesize that the crisis in the job market and corrosion of working class welfare conditions related the market transition in Argentina during the 1990s might increase the effect of class backgrounds as a determinant of life chances. It is plausible to think that in a context of high rates of unemployment and expansion of precarious work, there was a “tightening up” of

the mobility regime in Argentina, using Michael Hout and Gerber's expression referring to changes in occupational mobility in Russia after the fall of the Communist Regime.

The crisis in the labor market that followed the opening of the external trade market, the liberalization of prices, and the privatization of public service companies during the 1990s, might have altered the recruitment of the labor force. The entrance of the country to globalization (high technology and large scale global companies) catalyzed more competition in the labor market. Later generations of persons from working class backgrounds were raised when their parents did not have any more stable job trajectories and the wages of one or two parents were not enough to reach a minimum standard of welfare. Suddenly, this new generation of working class families' offspring was forced to compete (with workers from privileged class origins) in worse conditions for new jobs that demand higher qualifications. Furthermore, during crisis employers implement more selective procedures to hire personnel.

Research on Intergenerational Social Mobility in Argentina and other Latin America Countries

Social stratification and mobility survey-based research have had a limited development in Argentina. Previous studies based on representative random samples of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area were carried out in 1960-1, 1969, 1984 and 1995. This tradition of empirical research started with Gino Germani in the late fifties and early sixties. His pioneering studies suggested that the patterns of social mobility in Buenos Aires are similar to those of industrialized societies thanks to the process of industrialization that were experienced in the area of the Pampa Húmeda (Germani, 1963). Subsequent studies based on log-linear models have provided further evidence of the similarity between Buenos Aires' social mobility regime and industrialized societies (Jorrat, 1987, 1997).

Jorrat (2000) found a slight trend of less long distance upward mobility from working class origins (manual stratus) to non-manual either higher and lower stratus in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires between 1960 and 1995. Taking this study as a point of departure, Dalle (2010) compares mobility patterns between 1960 and 2005. The analytical strategy was based on log-linear models and compared the relative chances to access to middle and higher middle class stratus according to class origins. The observed patterns show a gradual reduction in the degree of openness that characterized the Buenos Aires social stratification regime during the mid-twentieth century. In that society, long distance upward mobility from the working class to the high middle class was more likely.

Indeed, the study has found a high rate of upward mobility from the working class to the technical and routine occupations, in the context of their diminishing status and economic returns as well as an increment of rigidity for long distance upward mobility to professionals, managers and owners of capital positions. The analysis suggested that the growth in short-distance occupational exchange within the middle classes could generate a process of relative closure for those coming from manual occupations (Dalle, 2011).

The empirical study of social mobility has grown in Latin America during the last decade, focusing on the analysis of the effects of the economic transition from Import Substitution Industrialization to a neoliberal model based on economic liberalization and privatization of public assets. The results indicate that in opposition to Europe where there has been a trend of openness in the class structure, in most of the Latin American societies there has been persistent inequality of opportunities or closure in class structure. In Chile intergenerational fluidity has maintained constant although high rates of inequality (Torche, 2005). Boado (2008) also showed that intergenerational fluidity has remained stable in Uruguay in a context of fewer but

increasing levels of inequality in the 1990s. There is indication of increasing rigidity in Monterrey, México (Solis, 2007) and in urban México (Cortés y Latapí, 2005) where neoliberal reforms were deep. Espinoza, Barozet and Méndez (2013) have also found evidence of increasing rigidities in Chile between 2001 and 2009. In contrast, in a context of rapid late industrialization, two mechanisms account for growing fluidity in Brazil: the decline in the “economic returns to schooling” and the weakening of the direct influence of class origins on class destination, net of education (Torche and Costa-Ribeiro, 2010).

The recent studies developed by Raúl Jorrot (2010, 2011) in Argentina suggest the idea of persisting inequality in occupational mobility and a slight increase in educational fluidity due to the expansion of higher education. These studies are sources of inspiration to continue studying how and in what degree structural transformations have affected class mobility patterns.

Data and Methodological Strategy

Data sources include six National Social Mobility Surveys – 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007 and 2010 – directed by Raúl Jorrot at the Gino Germani Institute, University of Buenos Aires. Each sample was carried out by a multi-stage probabilistic sampling design with randomness in each stage. It is a representative sample of the adult population in Argentina above 18 years old at the beginning of the 21st century, but not necessarily householders.

The total sample size after joining the surveys is 10,510. Excluding individuals outside the age range of 25 to 64 years, which is conventionally used in comparative mobility research, and cases with missing data in both class origin and destinations, the usable sample size is 6,112.

Rates of mobility and three ways log-lineal models have been used using traditional mobility tables. Each analysis has been done by sex. The models to explore are constant fluidity

(Goldthorpe and Erikson, 1992), Uniform Differences (Goldthorpe and Erikson 1992; Xie, 1992), and the log-multiplicative regression-type model (Hout and Goodman, 1998).

Due to the lack of national surveys before the 21st century, we have conducted an analysis based on birth cohorts, assuming that each group has been exposed to similar education opportunities and has inserted itself into the labor market as well as reached maturity in the same model of economic development. We assume that each social and economic stage contributes to shaping the degree of class inequalities over life chances for each birth cohort.

Interpretations of the results are drawn on the basis of bibliographical and historical data. This includes reflections of how changes in models of economic development and public policies have influenced class inequalities and how they could –therefore- modify the degree of fluidity or closure among class' positions.

The Class Schema

This study uses a class perspective to capture trends in social mobility. Herein, I have used a version of Erikson-Goldthorpe schema that – we think – is more suitable to the contemporary Argentine labor market. It is based on the 11 class categories used in the CASMIN Project but aggregated in a different seventh class's schema.

The Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992: 37) class schema differentiates positions in terms of the “*employment relations*.” It is organized around four distinctions that shape the material conditions, working conditions and status associated with different occupations: 1.) the position occupied in production relations (owner-proprietors either employers or self employed workers and employees); 2.) among hired employees, the difference between salaried service employment and labor contract workers (salaried instead of wage earning); 3.) among wage-

earning workers, the non-manual/manual division; and 4.) among manual workers, agricultural versus all others (sector distinction).

The seven classes included in our schema are: I. Managers, High Professionals and Proprietors (with more than 10 employees); II. Lower Professionals, Higher Grade Technicians, Lower Managers; III. Routine Non-manual Workers; IV. Small Proprietors and Petit Bourgeoisie; V. Skilled Manual Workers; VI. Unskilled Manual Workers; VII. Farmers and Farm Workers.

The commonly used Erikson-Goldthorpe schema collapses professionals, managers and proprietors of capital into a single service class. This practical decision eclipses difference in class positions resources between managers, employers and professionals. Professionals have high educational credentials and develop specific tasks that require high expertise; managers exercise authority delegated by employers, generally in corporations and public sector organizations, and capital proprietors have the power to buy labor force and control workers in their businesses (Wright, 1997).

In this version of the seven class schema, I divided the two fractions of the service class in order to observe differences between men and women in their opportunities to reach the highest class position. It also allows us to better explore the differences in the influence of some class barriers based on either authority/ownership of capital or expertise credentials. Even though, the first service class is composed not only of managers and capital proprietors but also of high professionals, most of them have in fact some degree of authority. Our aim was to highlight trends of upward mobility from lower classes (working classes—either skilled or

⁵ This version of Erikson and Goldthorpe's schema is similar to the one used by Mike Hout and Gerber (2004) in the analysis of changes in intergenerational occupational mobility in Russia before and after the fall of the Communist regime.

unskilled, and farm workers—either small farmers or agricultural laborers) to different fractions of middle classes.

The second important difference with Erikson and Goldthorpe's seven class schema is that I merged the small farmers and agricultural laborers because their material conditions are in fact very similar.

In spite of these differences in our seven class schema, the researchers who want to replicate this study can reconstruct our version by combining in the same way we did the eleven class categories. Finally, the decision to work with categories of a conventional schema used in social mobility studies was based on its potentialities for comparative purposes.

The seven class schema that we developed is a methodological tool to capture differences of life chances based on the place occupied in the labor market. These positions require a certain quality and amount of economic resources from workers such as capital, expertise, managerial skills, crafts, etc. These positions contribute to define opportunities in life job careers, rewards and material conditions; additionally, they imply the sources of advantages and disadvantages that are passed on to offspring. Classes contribute to defining frame of opportunities to new generations in a family not only by the intergenerational direct transmission of economic resources but also through the transmission of abilities, skills, horizons of expectations, social ties and dispositions (Bourdieu, 2006 [1979]; Sautu, 2011; Dalle, 2011).

This version of the E&G class schema has more hierarchical features than the classical one in terms of their socio-economic status which led us to understand some flows from one class position to another better as upward and downward movements as well as changes in class relations.

Structural Change and its Impact on Flows of Social Mobility (1970-2010)

Having described the impacts of economic shifts on the Argentinean labor market and society over the last four decades, we explore its impact on occupational mobility. Did the process of economic change open structural opportunities for upward mobility from lower class origins?

Table 1 shows class origins and class distributions by gender. On average, taking into account the mean age of the sample, we are comparing the class distribution of fathers in 1980 to the class distributions of the population between 25 and 65 years old in 2007.⁶ The changes in occupational structure constitute the framework of social mobility opportunities. Changes in the size of the different class positions reflect changes in the demand of occupational services, related to technological and educational advances and also the trajectory of economic development in each country.

⁶ Blau and Duncan (1967) warned that the occupational distribution of fathers is not an actual distribution of men existing at any earlier period. In spite of this, the origins and destinations of class distributions shows an intuitive idea of structural change and its directionality over time.

Table 1: Class origins and class destination distributions by sex (in %) (Persons between 25 & 65 years old, Argentina, 2003-2010)

EGP Class categories	Men		Women	
	Class origins	Class destinations	Class origins	Class destinations
I. Middle proprietors, managers and high professionals	7	9	7	8
II. Lower professionals and Technicians	5	10	5	17
III. Routine Non manual employees	6	9	8	20
IV. Petty bourgeoisie	14	16	14	11
V. Skilled manual workers	24	23	23	9
VI. Unskilled manual workers	24	25	24	34
VII. Farmers and agricultural workers	20	7	19	2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	3066	3066	3045	3045

Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires

We can observe in Table 1 that around 20% of men and women originated from the class of farmers and agricultural laborers. This percentage is not high compared with other Latin American countries and it is in the average of some countries in Europe such as Italy, France and Spain in the 1990s (as described in Breen's compilation, *Social Mobility in Europe*). This is because Argentina experimented in an earlier modernization period and a rapid urbanization occurred in the first decades of 20th century.

In the last quarter of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, there has been an upgrading movement in the occupational structure. From origins to destinations the service class has grown from around 12% to 24%, especially the lower fraction which tripled in size. Table 1 shows that more men than women occupy the higher fraction of the service class

which involves authority and higher levels of expertise (9% to 8%); but the proportion of women are over-represented in lower professional and technical occupations (17% to 10%).

From origins to destinations, the routine non-manual class has grown for both sexes, but this growth is explained largely by the progressive insertion of women in the labor force.

For men, the distributions of origins and destinations show that the petit bourgeoisie, the skilled working class and the unskilled working class have remained almost constant in their sizes. There has been a small increment in the proportion of the petit bourgeoisie (from 14% to 16%) and unskilled manual workers (24% to 25%) as well as a small decrease in the proportion of the skilled fraction of the urban working class (24% to 23%).

Compared with their fathers' class positions, women's class distributions reflect either an important reduction in the size of the skilled working class (23% to 9%) or a large increase in the proportion of the unskilled working class (24% to 34%). The patterns give us an idea about the gender segregation in the class structure. Men are inserted more in occupations which involve higher levels of authority as well as in skilled manual jobs, whereas women are found in non-manual activities (Administration, Education, Health and Welfare systems) as well as in unskilled manual jobs which have more precarious conditions and fewer wages. Since the distribution of class positions varies considerably between sexes, influenced by gender segregation mechanisms, the comparison with their fathers' class positions generates greater structural mobility among women.

As a general trend, class origins and destinations distributions show the expansion of service occupations, both skilled (managers, professionals and technicians) and unskilled (routine white collar employees and manual workers in personal services). On the one hand, this has meant an increase in opportunities for upper-middle and middle classes, but also a transfer of

labor force from skilled manufacturing positions to unskilled jobs in commerce and personnel services.

These changes in class structure have been related to transformations in the model of economic development from an economy based on manufacture industrialization oriented to the internal market to, first, a neoliberal model based on open market mechanisms (1976-1983; 1990-2001), and, more recently, a neo-development model based on the expansion of exportations of primary products as well as the increase in manufactory industry (2003-2012). It also has to be considered that these shifts have occurred in a context of persistent incremental increases in women's participation in the labor force since the 1970s.

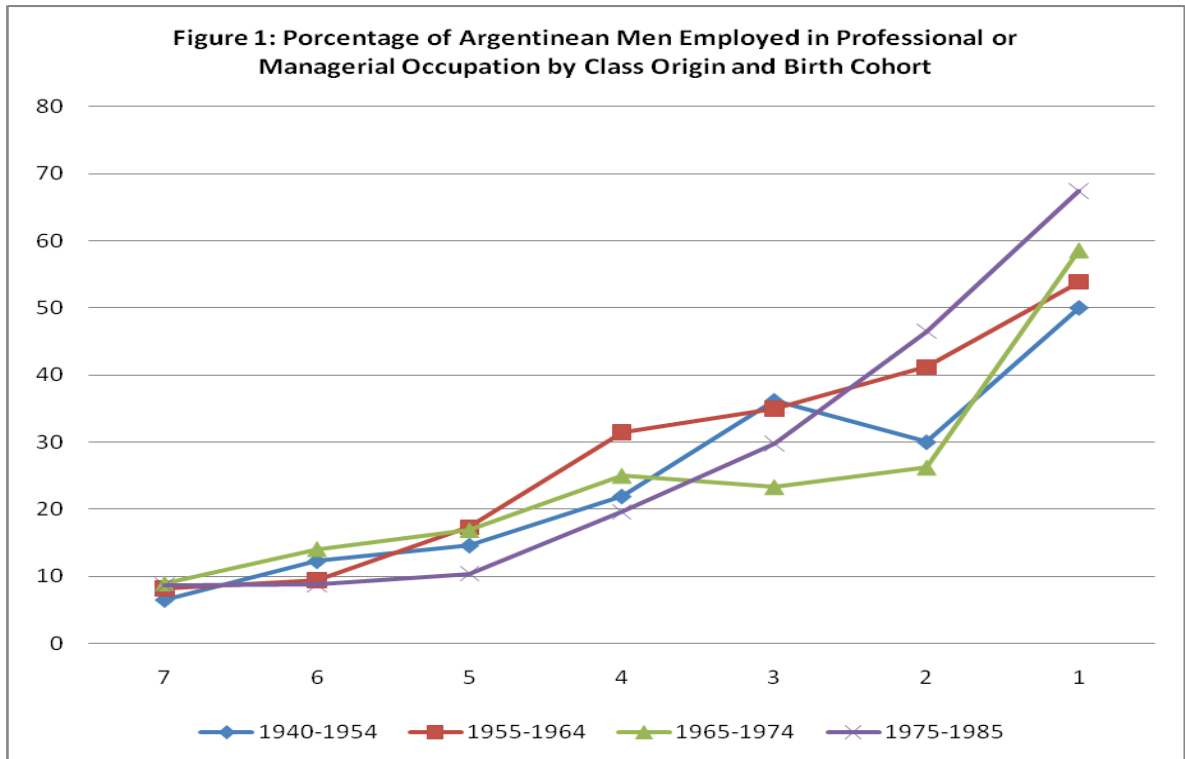
Is Argentina's class structure open (*in fact*) in comparison with other societies? Tables 6 and 7 of the appendix allow us to compare rates of total upward vertical mobility. We can observe that, thanks to the expansion of high-skill service occupations, Argentina is (*in fact*) a quite open society in comparative terms for upward mobility from working class origins to the middle classes.

Among men, Argentina exhibits the highest levels of upward mobility from working class origins to the upper middle class (managers, professionals and technicians). Moreover, this last class position has a very heterogeneous recruitment and almost 40% come from the working class including the agricultural workers. Among women, we have found that Argentina has had slightly lower rates of upward mobility from working class origins to the upper middle class than Europe and Italy and considerably lower than Brazil. Nevertheless, since the rates of upward mobility for women are as high as they are for men, the class structure is, in fact, quite open also for them.

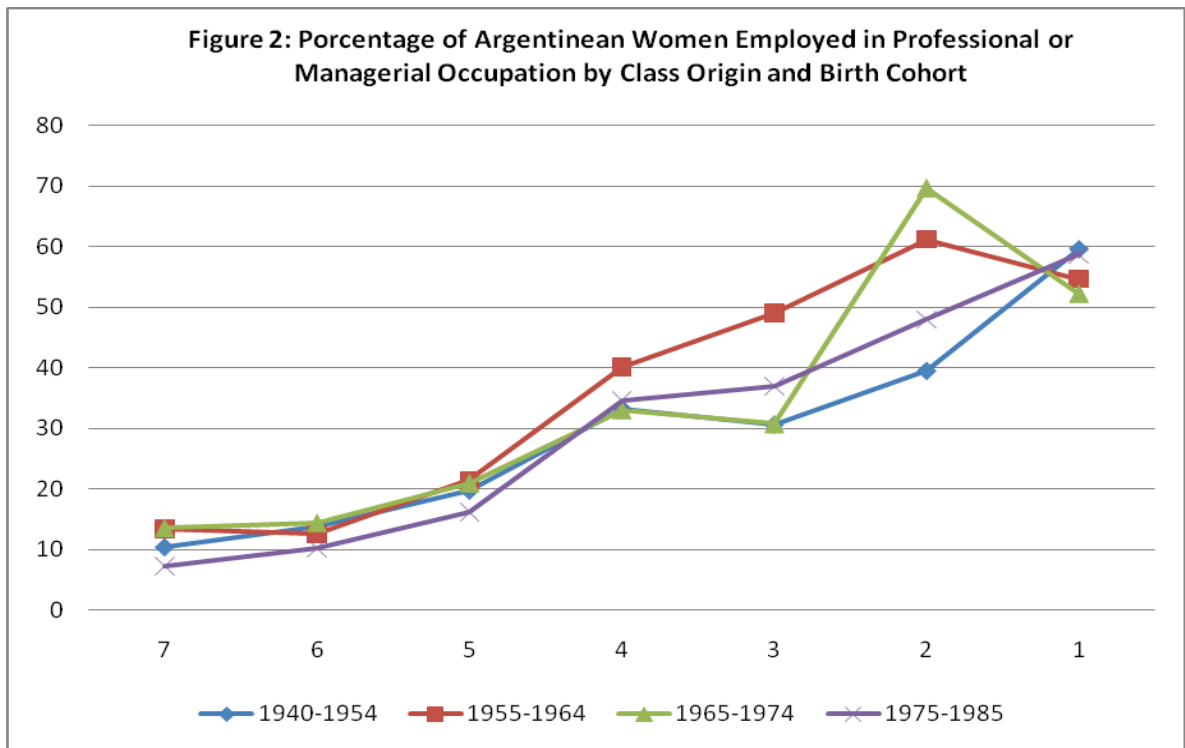
To examine whether structural change positively impacted the odds of persons of working classes origins, I calculate the outflows to Classes I and II (composed by managers and professionals) by class origins and birth cohorts (see Figures 1 and 2). The outflow rates reflect both the structural mobility and the level of association between origins and destinations –an index of the degree of inequalities in the mobility regime.

As we can see in Figures 1 and 2, higher proportions of men and women who came from Class I and II reach managerial and professional positions. At the same time, lower proportions (ranging from 6 to 21%) of men and women with working class origins have achieved managerial or occupational status in their current occupation.

The cohort's analysis shows that in younger birth cohorts of both men and women, the long distance upward mobility from working class origins has decreased (Figures 1 and 2). The only exception in this trend is the outflow rate of farm workers' sons which has remained constant or slightly increased over time. It is important to remark that the decrease in long distance mobility has happened in a context of an expansion—as we saw above—of high-skill service occupations, and also the growth of higher educational levels (University and Technical degrees).



Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (, Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires



Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys, Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires

On the other hand, the upper middle classes exhibit higher levels of intergenerational inheritance over time, although more markedly among men than women. Note that for men the slope of the younger birth cohort appears to be steeper than the others from Class III origin. This is evidence that probably the association between origins and destinations has strengthened in younger generations of men.

Among women the trend of inheritance in upper middle classes is not so clear. In the last cohort the rate of inheritance from Class I is as high as in the first cohort but superior as the middle cohorts. The rate of inheritance from Class II increased considerably from the first to the second and third birth cohorts and then decreased in the last cohort but the rate is still higher than the rate for the first cohort.

Structural and Exchange Mobility Across Birth Cohorts

Sociologists have inquired about the size of middle and upper class positions in relation to economic change in order to understand the direction of structural mobility in a particular society. When middle and upper classes expand, they open spaces for people from lower class origins to move up, and when they reduce their size, they constrain mobility into them. This topic was central in Latin American sociology in the late fifties and sixties under the question: Can the strategies of economic development followed by Latin American countries open certain opportunities of upward mobility to lower classes and contribute to stabilizing the democracy? (Filgueira, 2007).

In the previous section, we have seen that the marginal distributions of the mobility tables are heterogeneous. Structural mobility arises from this heterogeneity. It is impossible for all the

cases in a mobility table to be in the diagonal of class inherence unless the distributions of origins and destinations are equal. Structural mobility affects all origins uniformly.

Hout, Duncan and Sobel (1986) defined structural mobility as an effect that operates “uniformly” on all origin categories and exchange mobility as that part of the mobility process that results from equal flows between pairs of cells (i,j) and (j,i) of the mobility table. In the absence of structural mobility, exchange mobility would be represented by the parameters of the symmetry model. The concept of structural mobility is linked to marginal heterogeneity when the association is symmetrical.

Anchored on these theoretical definitions, Hout Duncan and Sobel (1986: 361) modeled structural mobility “as a factor that raises or lowers the odds on a given destination, subject to the constraint that the odds, regardless of origin, are changed by the same proportion factor.” Origins do not matter because structural mobility affects all origins equally. Exchange mobility, on the other hand, is origin specific; it implies particular combinations of origins and destinations. They quantify it as a product of symmetric marginal parameters and the odds of moving relative to staying in the origin category.

If the expected marginals are heterogeneous, a strict exchange process cannot exist. The asymmetric γ parameters reflect structural mobility if and only if the lack of symmetry is due to heterogeneous marginal effects. Under QS, the marginal shift between origins and destinations is represented by the alpha parameters⁷, they determine the all unreciprocated between all class origins and destinations categories if the QS model holds. The alpha parameters apply for all class origins uniformly.

⁷ When QS symmetry does not fit the data, alpha parameters do not reflect structural mobility; marginal heterogeneity is due not only with the changes in the size of classes of origin and destinations but also to specific interactions.

To what extent have structural and exchange mobility changed across birth cohorts in Argentina? Which birth cohorts have experienced more structural opportunities for upward mobility in general and specifically for persons of working class backgrounds? How have changes across birth cohorts structured channels of upward mobility from working classes origins? Is the structural mobility to middle classes similar for men and women? To answer these empirical questions, I apply the QS model across birth cohorts by sex (Tables 8 and 9 in the appendix).

The ratios in the lower triangle of each table indicate the relative excess of upward mobility over downward mobility between cells (i, j) and (j, i) . Ratios less than one indicate an excess of downward structural mobility, whereas ratios larger than one mean an excess of upward structural mobility. The results show the following patterns:

- i. Women have had, in general, more structural mobility than men.
- ii. Higher upward structural mobility than downward mobility, except for the large flow of daughters of skilled workers who have moved down to unskilled manual jobs and the daughters of Class I who go massively to low professional, technical and routine non-manual jobs.
- iii. The strongest force in the data favors upward mobility from farm and urban working classes to upper middle and middle classes, more markedly among women.
- iv. Among both men and women, the upward structural mobility from farm origins to the upper middle and middle classes has been decreasing across birth cohorts.
- v. Among both sexes, structural long distance upward mobility from urban working class origins to professional and technical positions has been increasing.

vi. Among both sexes, distance upward mobility from urban working class origins to the routine non-manual class has been increasing, especially among women.

The ratios in the triangle above the diagonal reflect the exchange mobility. This mobility diminishes as distance between classes' increases. The strongest associations are seen in the extreme which reflect low levels of long distance mobility; but there is considerable exchange in the cells close to the diagonal which reflect short distance mobility. Among men, there is a slight trend of less exchange mobility between working classes and upper middle and middle classes over time, the decrease are more markedly in the last cohort. Turning to women, there has been constant (or slightly less) exchange mobility between upper/middle classes and unskilled manual and farm workers but a significantly higher exchange between skilled urban working classes and upper middle/middle classes. In sum, Argentina is a case of considerable structural upward mobility perdurable over time which has become *slightly* more rigid in the last decades for long distance mobility.

Change in Social Openness over Time?

Some opportunities, persistent or more inequalities

Vallet described very clearly one of the challenges of the study of social fluidity over time. He asked, "Do the trends in the absolute mobility rates result entirely from changes in the origin and destination class distributions (and thus are due to structural mobility) or do they *also* express change in the underlying mobility regime, that is to say in the general level and/or structure of the association between origins and destinations?" (2004: 128). Did the economic change affect the degree of equality of opportunities between classes? To answer these questions,

I contrast constant fluidity, Unidiff and Regression Type Model to the male and female mobility tables.

To explore further links between mobility and models of economic development in Argentina, I examine the change in social fluidity over time. Specifically, I test whether fluidity has changed across four birth cohorts who entered the labor market during different economic periods of development. They also experienced different educational opportunities due to different rates of expansion of higher education since the 1960s. Figure 3 of the appendix illustrates briefly the main economic and social circumstances to what these birth cohorts were exposed.

We presume that changes across birth on rates of relative mobility could give us an intuitive idea of how and to what extent the degree of openness in class structure has changed among the following stages: 1.) the last part of the industrialization and redistributive period (1965-1976), 2.) the first market reforms and de-industrialization (1976-1983) period, 3.) the stagnation crisis during the eighties (1983-1989), and 4.) the deeper market transformations including privatizations of public service companies and the high increment in the participation of foreign capital in the industrial bourgeoisie (1990-2001).

Many authors warned about the limitation of cohort analysis for its inability to distinguish between life cycle (age), period, and cohort of change (Breen and Jonsson, 2003; Breen, 2004). This approach is affected by possible life cycle differences. However, under the assumption that there is little career mobility after persons reach occupational maturity, it is possible to minimize the life cycle effect by including only individuals who have reached (or are close to reaching) occupational maturity. Moreover, I select people not older than 65 years old to avoid mortality selective by class origin or class trajectories. In spite of these practical decisions to

minimize life cycle effects, older birth cohorts are farther away than younger ones from their class backgrounds and probably less associated with them.

In strict terms, even though we assume that different economic and social stages affect opportunities of social mobility, we cannot test it directly with our data. The analysis cannot distinguish between cohort and period interpretations of change.

Table 2 presents the parameter estimates for the model of conditional independence (model 1), the "constant social fluidity" model (model 2), the UNIDIFF model (model 3) and regression type model (model 4). For both men and women, I began the analysis by fitting the conditional independence model, which express that there has been perfect mobility across birth cohorts. It is commonly taken as a baseline model and represents a society where privileges and advantages are not transmitted from one generation to another and this characteristic remains constant over time. The independence model, as always in this kind of studies study which examines intergenerational transmission of inequalities, does not fit the data well. The key of the analysis is to contrast the constant fluidity model, the UNIDIFF and regression type model.

Table 2: Goodness of Fit Statistics for Mobility Models across Cohorts, Argentina 2003-2010

Men 25 to 65 years old						
Model	L ²	df	BIC	ID	Assoc. Explained	p-value
Independency	962,6	144	-192,8	20,7%		0,000
Constant Fluidity	131,9	108	-734,6	7,0%	86,3%	0,058
Unidiff	121,4	105	-716,6	7,0%	87,4%	0,081
Regression Type model	78,7	70	-482,9	4,9%	91,8%	0,222

Testing which model fits better the data

	X ²	df	p-value
Dif. Constant Fluidity & Unidiff	10,5	3	0,02
Dif. Constant Fluidity & GH Model	53,2	38	0,05
Dif. Unidiff & GH Model	42,7	35	0,17

UNIDIFF Parameters

Birth cohorts:

1940-1954: 1,000

1955-1964: 1,196

1965-1974: 1,231

1975-1985: 1,290

Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires

The constant social fluidity model (CnSF), which describes a temporal persistent inequality in the opportunities of mobility across cohorts, improved considerably to describe a trend in the Argentinean mobility regime. This model fits well in terms of conventional statistical tests (L square and the p-value) and on the basis of the BIC statistic. It misclassifies 7% of the

total sample and explains 86.3% of the association in relation with the baseline model which is the perfect mobility across cohorts.

I then fit the UNIDIFF model, in which the association between class origins and destinations takes the same pattern but the strength of this association could vary across the four birth cohorts. The model estimates three supplementary parameters in order to capture a general trend of variation in the strength of the origin-destination association over time. A traditional statistical contrast (using chi square) between the UNIDIFF and the constant fluidity model shows that the three parameters used by the former captures a significant association in data. Moreover, according to the p-value and the association explained (87.4%), UNIDIFF is preferable to the CnSF.

The estimated parameters of the model rise from 1.000 for the first cohort to 1.290 in the latest one. They reveal a progressive increase in rigidity in the class structure over time by about 30%; for men, in the most recent cohorts, destinations depended more on origins than they did in older cohorts. Class barriers may be rising (although data are also consistent with age effect – origins are more important to early career than late career).

Finally, I fit the Goodman and Hout model to explore if there have been not only changes in the strength of association between origins and destinations, but also to identify variations in the pattern of fluidity in class structure across birth cohorts. The model fits the data better than the others in terms of the L square and the p-value. It misclassifies less than 5% of the data and exhibits a considerable improvement in the association explained in relation to the perfect mobility model. However, this model is less parsimonious than the others and the BIC statistic suggests considering the former models. A comparison of models 4 and 2 indicates that the regression type model is better than CnSDF model but not than the UNIDIFF model.

When we observe the log odds ratios using the expected frequencies of Goodman and Hout's model, it is possible to identify interesting results and hypothesize about changes in the openness of class structure and *the pattern* of class mobility. Figure 4 in the appendix shows that there is more fluidity between adjacent classes for the latest cohort, particularly between working classes. There has been more fluid exchange between the farm class fraction and the unskilled working class; the unskilled and skilled working class; and between the skilled working class and the petit bourgeoisie. The patterns of social fluidity between middle and upper middle classes have remained almost constant across the birth cohorts.

On the other hand, the analyses of the long distance mobility between working classes and the two fractions of the service class show that there is less fluidity among the last birth cohorts (Figure 5 in the appendix). This pattern suggests a progressive decrease of opportunities for long distance upward mobility for sons with lower classes backgrounds as well as long downward mobility from the highest service class.

Turning to women, Table 3 shows that constant fluidity makes a considerable improvement fitting the data from independence model. It fits data quite well in terms of conventional statistical tests (L2 and the p-value) and on the basis of the BIC statistic. It misclassifies 6.7% of the total sample and explains 82% of the association in comparison with that of perfect mobility across cohorts. In this case, the UNIDIFF model does not reach a better fitness; its parameters are not statistically significant.

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Statistics for Mobility Models across Cohorts, Argentina 2003-2010

Women 25 to 65 years old						
Model	L ²	df	BIC	ID	Assoc. Explained	p-value
Independency	745,3	144	-409,1	18,9%		0,000
Constant Fluidity	133,9	108	-731,8	6,7%	82,0	0,046
Unidiff	128,9	105	-712,8	6,3%	82,7	0,056
Regression Type model	67,1	70	-494,1	5,0%	91,0	0,578

Testing which model fits the data better

	L ²	df	p-value
Dif. Constant Fluidity & Unidiff	5,0	3	0,172
Dif. Constant Fluidity & GH Model	66,8	38	0,003
Dif. Unidiff & GH Model	61,8	35	0,003

Birth Cohorts parameters:

1940-1954: 1,000

1955-1964: 1,307

1965-1974: 1,091

1975-1985: 1,092

Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires

These results suggest no change in origin-destination association. Although, differences between younger and older women reflect changing structural opportunities, it seems that class barriers have not weakened over time.

Goodman and Hout's model attains better levels of fitness suggesting that for women both the strength of origin and destination association and the mobility regimes have varied across cohorts. Unless this last model reaches a better level of fitness following the L square value, the p-value and the association explained is less parsimonious. According to BIC, we will prefer the constant fluidity model but we will consider an interpretation of the regression type

model's parameters, to hypothesize whether there have been changes over time and what its directionality has been.

The parameters in Figures 6 and 7 (see appendix) suggest that for women, the overall strength of association seems to increase in the last cohorts with stronger barriers for long distance mobility between unskilled working class and upper service class as well as more rigidity in the fluidity between adjacent classes. It seems that exchanges between lower classes and the higher class fractions have become more difficult, with the exception of the skilled working class and Class I which has become significantly more fluid in younger cohorts.

To sum up, it is worthy to comment that for both sexes, the values of the UNIDIFF parameters show evidence that the first cohort has the lower level of strength in the association and, thus, is more independent from their class origin for occupational achievement. Persons who were born during the World War II years and especially in the immediate postwar period went into the labor market at a time of steady economic growth, lower rates of unemployment and less income inequalities. They also experienced during their youth “the sixties,” which was a liberal environment for the universities and higher education, particularly at the University of Buenos Aires before the Coup d' état in 1966. Turning to consider their class origin, they grew up when the working and middle classes had good material conditions (higher wages, stable occupational careers and access to better education and health public services) and a shorter income inequality gap between them in comparison with future decades.

The Gap between the Working Class and Middle Class

Regarding the process of the growth in income inequality in Argentina during the deep market transformation period and the regressive changes in the material and welfare conditions

of various occupational groups of the lower middle classes and the working class, in this section we aim to examine its effect on equality of mobility opportunities between middle classes and working classes. We saw above that economic transformation in the last three decades has increased occupational vacancies in the upper middle and middle classes. Have the occupational opportunities in the higher classes become distributed more openly or restricted on the basis of class origins? Has the gap in occupational opportunities between the middle classes and working class widened or reduced over time?

The distinction between manual and non-manual forms of work has permeated the debate about class formation and the process of social stratification in classical studies of social mobility. The salience of this boundary has been questioned because of the socio-economic status and prestige of skilled manual workers, and the routine non-manual employees are not very different. Nonetheless, most discussions assume that the non-manual and manual distinction embodies the boundary between the middle and the working class in advanced societies (Hout, 1989).

In Argentina, the prestige and socio-economic status of the two fractions of the working class are closer than between the skilled working class and the lower white collar stratum (Jorrat, 2008). Adding evidence to the importance of the manual/non-manual class boundary, Dalle (2011) showed that once persons of working class origins cross the manual/non-manual frontier, it is much easier to reach the upper middle class fractions which involve higher levels of expertise, authority or capital. Further analyses confirm this pattern and uncover a trend of incremental strengthening of this boundary across birth cohorts (Sautu and Dalle, 2011; Benza, 2011, all these studies referred to the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area).

To test further the hypothesis of a decrease in long range mobility between working classes (including farm workers) and the two fractions of the service class in younger cohorts, I have estimated the relative chances of reaching Class I and II from different class origins by applying a multiple logistic regression⁸ with a binary dependent variable⁹. Following Cortés and Latapí (2007), I analyzed the opportunities to attain managerial and professional positions as an index of genuine upward mobility. The occupations in Classes I and II have in fact the highest levels of income, years of education, social prestige and, thus, are also “more desirable.” Therefore, the dependent variable of the logistic model has these two categories: a) Classes I and II: which involve higher levels of expertise, authority or capital; b) Other Classes: occupations without these economic resources. The model is multivariate, I also include the level of education of the respondent to examine whether class origin influences access to the “modern service class” when we control for educational attainment.

⁸ These kind of models based on the calculations of the odds ratios control the structural mobility generated by shifts on the marginal distributions of origin and destination (Treiman, 2009).

⁹ Herein, I use a 6th class schema merging classes I and I in both origins and destinations distributions.

Table 4: Effects of class origins and levels of education on the opportunities to reach Class 1. Multivariate Logistic model for each birth cohort (Men 25-65, Argentina 2003-10).

Birth cohort	1940-1954	1955-1964	1965-1974	1975-1985
Class origin				
Managers, Professionals & Proprietors	1,2	2,9***	1,0	5,0*
Routine non manual employees	1,6	1,5	0,7	2,4**
Petit Bourgeoisie	0,7	2,1	0,7	1,2
Skilled manual workers	1,0	1,8	0,8	0,8
Unskilled manual workers	.....	.....	.....	.....
Levels of education				
Technical or University degree	43,5*	111,1*	66,7*	62,5*
High school	5,1*	18,7*	6,0*	7,1*
Less than high school	.....	.....	.....	.....
N	798	719	815	721

* p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.10 (indicates significance at each level)

Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, UBA.

Beginning with men (Table 4), we observe that educational attainment, particularly the achievement of a technical or university degree is an important component to genuine upward mobility to (or inherence of) managerial and professional positions. However, in the second cohort, and more markedly in the last cohort, the sons of working class fathers have had fewer chances compared with sons of the privileged class to attain the highest class position. In these two birth cohorts, a privileged class origin still contributes to passing advantages from one generation to another after controlling for educational attainment. In the last cohort, sons of manual workers also have had fewer relative chances to attain managerial and professional positions compared with sons of routine non-manual class origin. It seems that the gap in the

structure of opportunities between the working class and middle class has slightly increased for the last cohort.

Table 5: Effects of class origins and levels of education on the access to Class 1 of women. Multivariate Logistic model for each birth cohort (Women 25-65, Argentina 2003-10)

Birth cohort	1940-1954	1955-1964	1965-1974	1975-1985
Class origin				
Managers, Professionals and Proprietors	1,6	3,2*	2,4*	2,7*
Routine non manual employees	0,8	1,6	1,3	3,0*
Petit Bourgeoisie	1,1	1,6	1,2	1,6
Skilled manual workers	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,0
Unskilled manual workers	.....	.....	.....	.....
Levels of education				
Technical or University degree	142,9*	166,6*	71,4*	142,8*
High school	10,6*	13,3*	10,6*	6,5*
Less than high school	.....	.....	.....	.....
N	779	760	874	617

* p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.10 (indicates significance at each level)

Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, UBA.

Turning to women (Table 5), in the second, third and fourth birth cohort, those with the most privileged class origin still have advantages to achieved inheritance of the highest class position after controlling for education. This means that some women who have not earned technical and university degrees but were born in upper middle class families have had greater opportunities than daughters of working class families who achieved higher educational degrees.

As is the case with men, it seems that daughters of manual workers have moved over time farther away from the upper middle class. This pattern suggests a process of closure of the

managerial and professional classes which has aided in their aim to transmit its economic resources to exclude men and women of lower origins.

Finally, it is worth noting that the effect of educational achievement for reaching the modern service class, is greater for women than for men. Women have to reach higher levels of education to move up in the class structure; nevertheless, highest degrees do not get rid of the privileges enjoyed by the privileged class.

Conclusions and Final Reflections

This paper engaged with the debate concerning the impact of economic change on and the role of the state in social stratification. First, we reconstructed theoretically the argument that social mobility depends on either occupational change (structural mobility) or the level of association between origins and destinations, and changes in both of them.

In the context of the present debate about whether political interventions or changes in the social environment can strengthen or weaken class barriers, we illustrated why Argentina is an interesting case of analysis. During the market oriented reforms and globalization process (such as the emergence of high tech large global companies), Argentina transitioned from a relatively highly integrated class structure to a more polarized one with unprecedented levels of inequality. In this context, many public policies oriented to equality of opportunities deteriorated mainly through a drastic reduction in public funding and the state's redistributive and regulatory policies that favored market-competitive mechanisms.

Four issues were addressed in the analysis: 1.) the type of structural mobility for men and women and its impacts on absolute rates of upward mobility from working class origins, 2.) an exploration of how open (or closed) is in fact Argentinean class structure in a comparative

perspective, 3.) the extent to which social fluidity has changed over time, 4.) the extent to which opportunities of upward mobility for persons of working class origins have changed.

The analysis showed that for men and women occupational change has opened structural opportunities to upward mobility. The destination class structure distribution contains more desirable occupations than does the one of origins. Structural mobility also increased the proportion of unskilled manual occupations due to the process of de-industrialization between 1976 and 2001. Some gender differences in mobility rates were observed. Women have had slightly either more upward mobility or downward mobility than men. The rate of mobility into the service class in general is higher for women than men; nevertheless, the rate of upward mobility into the modern service class from working class origins (including farm workers) is higher for men.

In comparison with other countries in Latin America and Europe, the rates of upward mobility from working class origins to the middle classes are high. It was shown that thanks to the expansion of high-skill service occupations, Argentina is (in fact) a quite open society. The fit of the QS model across cohorts shows that there has been perdurable structural upward mobility over time but class structure seems to become *slightly* more rigid in the last four decades for long distance mobility.

Who appropriates the occupational opportunities available in the middle and upper middle classes? Birth cohort analysis of outflow rates to Classes I and II shows that men and women in the younger birth cohort of working class origins have had less long distance upward mobility. The outflow rates also show greater short-distance mobility to technical and routine non-manual salaried occupations. In spite of the openness of vacancies in middle and upper middle classes, it seems that younger offspring of the working classes have reached fewer of the

highest positions in terms of socio-economic status and prestige than in previous birth cohort. On the contrary, the upper middle and middle classes have increased their inheritance of privilege positions.

The examination of trends on social fluidity led to the conclusion that the growth of structural occupational opportunities in professional and managerial positions does not change class barriers. The strength of the OD association has increased progressively in younger men's birth cohorts while remaining constant in women's. Results show a general trend of persistent inequality in class mobility over time, and if change has happened, it has been in the direction of a decrease in social fluidity. In spite of the dramatic growth in women's participation in the labor force and also their considerable increase in attaining professional and technical positions, their occupational attainment has depended on their class origins at similar levels.

This study could be interpreted as a key case for demonstrating that public policy is decisive for effecting change in openness or equality in opportunity. First of all, in the last quarter of the 20th century, since the crisis of the model of Import Substitute Industrialization, Argentina has not found a strategy to achieve steady economic development, perhaps with the exception of the recent process started in 2003 characterized by redistributive and protectionist policies to grow the internal market. From 1976 to 2001, Argentina went through four big crises (1982, 1989, 1994 and 2001-2) which generated regressive consequences in the labor market. The neoliberal reforms also caused de-industrialization and did not replace it with another labor demand intense activity. Despite economic growth during most of the 1990s, class barriers remained intact or increased.

Since the crisis of 2001-2, Argentina has been implementing a model that favors exporting agricultural products and industrialization that is oriented to the internal market by

protectionist policies. The reorientation in the model of socio-economic development and the intense cycle of economic growth between 2003 and 2013 together have reversed some of the regressive changes in the class structure during the neoliberal period. Due to reindustrialization and expansion of the internal market, the salaried fractions of the middle classes and the skilled working class have been increasing since 2003. Simultaneously, these classes have been improving their relative position in the class structure supported by the strength of labor unions. These changes occur in a context of still high levels of income inequality and still a large portion of the lower classes being inserted into the informal labor market (Dalle, 2012; Palomino and Dalle, 2012). Even though, economic growth and the reorientation of the role of the state have generated structural spaces for upward mobility (especially in the middle of the class structure), we do not know yet with certainty its impact on the strength of class barriers on social stratification. If the data analyzed in this paper reflect the effect of the present model of economic development and the structural changes, it seems that the recent policies have not weakened class barriers.

To the extent, that these changes in the economic model of development are oriented to socio-economic integration; it is possible to expect that have a favorable impact on equality of opportunities. But as it is well known, change in the level of openness is a long-run process that involves persistent and durable policies oriented to reform class inequality.

Turning again to the results, if we consider the *pattern* and not only the trends of social fluidity (considering the results of the regression type model) a hypothesis could be drafted. The results of the model show: 1.) an increment of adjacent fluidity between classes in the bottom half of the class structure, and, 2.) less long-distance mobility between working classes (including farm workers) and upper middle classes. Considering both trends together; it is

plausible to conjecture that there are still opportunities to move up from the lower classes on the staircase of class structure, but through shorter jumps.

Further analysis focusing on the relative opportunities of persons with working class backgrounds to attain professional and managerial positions provides evidence of a slight widening in the gap between upper middle classes and the working class in opportunities for upward mobility. It seems that sons and daughters of working class families are climbing a steeper stairway because class barriers in the upper middle classes have increased.

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Appendix

Table 6: Descriptive aspects of Men's Intergenerational Social Mobility of Argentina in comparison with others Latin American countries and Europe in the 1990' (%)

Mobility Absolute Rates (Men)	EUROPE MEAN 90's	ARGENTINA (2003-2010)	CHILE (2001)	MÉXICO (2006)
Total Mobility	67,7	66,8	71,6	66,8
Total Immobility	32,3	33,2	28,4	33,2
Vertical Upward Mobility (VUM)	33,4	28,8	31,1	22,3
Vertical Downward Mobility (VDM)	16,2	18,1	19,4	21,6
Ratio of MVA/MVD	2,1	1,6	1,6	1,0
Mobility to the Service Class (in general)	17,3	13,1	13,5	10,1
Mobility to the Service Class from the Working Class	8,9	11,7	6,2	3,6
Service Class Recruitment in the Working Class	33,1	36,9	40,1	
N (Men, 25-64 years old)		3,029	2,612	5,902

Sources: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires.

Table 7: Descriptive aspects of Women's Intergenerational Social Mobility of Argentina in comparison with Brazil, Italy and Europe in the 1990' (%)

Mobility Absolute Rates (Women)	EUROPE MEAN 90's	ARGENTINA (2003-2010)	Brazil (1996)	Italy (1997)
Total Immobility	27,4	29,0	31,8	25,9
Total Mobility	72,6	71,0	68,2	74,1
Vertical Upward Mobility (VUM)	32,2	30,4	28,6	34,6
Vertical Downward Mobility (VDM)	15,2	20,7	8,7	19,1
Ratio of MVA/MVD	2,1	1,5	3,3	1,8
Mobility to the Service Class (in general)	19,4	17,6	14,9	21,9
Mobility to Classes I and II from the Working Class	9,6	8,6	12,2	9,4
Service Class Recruitment in the Working Class	31,5	34,8	57,3	32,0
N (Women, 25-64 years old)		3,048	26,333	1,750

Sources: Source: Social Stratification and Mobility 's Surveys (IISP), Gino Germani Research Institute, University of Buenos Aires.

Table 8: Structural and Exchange Parameters of Intergenerational Social Mobility in Argentina of Men by Birth Cohort

1940-1954							
alpha hat j	1,98	2,44	1,20	1,32	1,05	0,91	0,14
Beta hat j	0,63	0,28	0,45	1,14	1,65	1,90	3,56
δ hat (above diagonal) and ?/? (below diagonal)							
1		0,73	0,46	0,50	0,27	0,18	0,08
2	0,81		1,16	0,63	0,52	0,47	0,11
3	1,65	2,03		0,62	0,51	0,53	0,26
4	1,50	1,85	0,91		0,45	0,38	0,24
5	1,89	2,33	1,14	1,26		0,61	0,41
6	2,17	2,68	1,32	1,45	1,15		0,37
7	14,67	18,10	8,90	9,80	7,78	6,77	
1954-1964							
alpha hat j	2,03	2,74	1,49	1,28	0,67	0,97	0,15
Beta hat j	0,62	0,39	0,43	1,04	1,91	1,57	3,03
δ hat (above diagonal) and ?/? (below diagonal)							
1		0,52	0,70	0,62	0,20	0,06	0,05
2	0,74		0,63	0,56	0,30	0,29	0,14
3	1,36	1,84		0,46	0,46	0,31	0,19
4	1,59	2,14	1,17		0,42	0,37	0,19
5	3,05	4,12	2,24	1,92		0,66	0,37
6	2,08	2,82	1,53	1,31	0,68		0,54
7	13,91	18,78	10,22	8,77	4,56	6,67	
1965-1974							
alpha hat j	1,56	1,65	1,52	1,45	0,82	0,79	0,27
Beta hat j	0,68	0,41	0,63	0,86	1,61	1,93	2,13
δ hat (above diagonal) and ?/? (below diagonal)							
1		0,65	0,35	0,23	0,27	0,14	0,08
2	0,94		0,63	0,87	0,64	0,37	0,23
3	1,02	1,09		0,35	0,45	0,16	0,13
4	1,08	1,14	1,05		0,48	0,33	0,10
5	1,89	2,01	1,85	1,75		0,57	0,26
6	1,99	2,11	1,94	1,84	1,05		0,28
7	5,76	6,10	5,62	5,33	3,04	2,90	
1975-1985							
alpha hat j	1,30	2,61	2,07	0,80	0,83	0,77	0,28
Beta hat j	0,61	0,49	0,45	1,08	1,60	2,05	2,12
δ hat (above diagonal) and ?/? (below diagonal)							
1		0,73	0,38	0,39	0,20	0,11	0,01
2	0,50		0,79	0,31	0,20	0,21	0,11
3	0,63	1,26		0,56	0,48	0,43	0,12
4	1,63	3,28	2,59		0,66	0,37	0,23
5	1,57	3,15	2,50	0,96		0,80	0,25
6	1,69	3,39	2,69	1,04	1,08		0,31
7	4,58	9,21	7,29	2,81	2,92	2,72	

Table 9: Structural and Exchange Parameters of Intergenerational Social Mobility in Argentina for Women by birth Cohorts

1940-1954							
alpha hat j	1,82	4,09	3,02	1,21	0,76	1,32	0,04
Beta hat j	0,66	0,38	0,63	0,70	1,50	1,82	3,31
δ hat (above diagonal) and $\tilde{\alpha}/\tilde{\sigma}$ (below diagonal)							
1		1,27	0,38	1,04	0,23	0,23	0,10
2	0,44		0,76	1,21	0,55	0,37	0,20
3	0,60	1,36		0,93	0,70	0,46	0,22
4	1,50	3,37	2,48		0,91	0,78	0,76
5	2,39	5,36	3,96	1,59		0,86	0,45
6	1,38	3,11	2,29	0,92	0,58		0,73
7	49,82	112,00	82,64	33,26	20,88	36,05	
1954-1964							
alpha hat j	2,93	6,87	4,02	1,46	0,35	1,18	0,02
Beta hat j	0,48	0,26	0,24	0,30	1,25	1,26	3,91
δ hat (above diagonal) and $\tilde{\alpha}/\tilde{\sigma}$ (below diagonal)							
1		0,67	0,74	1,38	0,19	0,16	0,02
2	0,43		0,86	0,73	0,25	0,18	0,05
3	0,73	1,71		1,86	0,76	0,43	0,06
4	2,00	4,70	2,75		0,84	0,92	0,20
5	8,37	19,63	11,50	4,18		0,50	0,17
6	2,49	5,83	3,42	1,24	0,30		0,25
7	142,39	333,89	195,55	71,05	17,00	57,23	
1965-1974							
alpha hat j	1,77	6,39	3,79	0,86	0,30	1,39	0,07
Beta hat j	0,74	0,37	0,49	1,00	1,98	1,89	2,01
δ hat (above diagonal) and $\tilde{\alpha}/\tilde{\sigma}$ (below diagonal)							
1		0,54	0,45	0,55	0,14	0,09	0,09
2	0,28		0,56	0,59	0,40	0,28	0,14
3	0,47	1,69		0,76	0,69	0,59	0,28
4	2,06	7,44	4,41		0,41	0,56	0,41
5	5,96	21,46	12,72	2,89		0,73	0,34
6	1,28	4,60	2,73	0,62	0,21		0,64
7	27,17	97,89	58,01	13,16	4,56	21,27	
1975-1985							
alpha hat j	1,35	7,47	4,63	0,45	0,33	1,43	0,10
Beta hat j	0,76	0,30	0,54	1,28	1,72	2,20	1,69
δ hat (above diagonal) and $\tilde{\alpha}/\tilde{\sigma}$ (below diagonal)							
1		0,77	0,41	0,69	0,42	0,08	0,07
2	0,18		1,00	0,65	0,77	0,27	0,07
3	0,29	1,61		0,60	0,71	0,59	0,65
4	2,99	16,58	10,27		0,85	0,54	0,28
5	4,12	22,80	14,13	1,38		0,73	0,46
6	0,94	5,23	3,24	0,32	0,23		0,51
7	13,23	73,26	45,40	4,42	3,21	14,00	

Figure 3: Birth Cohorts and Socio-historical Experiences

Birth Cohort	Enter into labor market / High Education	Class origin compared
1940-1954	<p><i>Late 1950s and 1960s</i></p> <p>Industrial expansion</p> <p>Gold decade of National Universities</p>	<p><i>1956-1970</i></p> <p>Industrial expansion</p> <p>Low rates of unemployment and welfare,</p> <p>Relative high wages and welfare benefits for the working classes</p>
1955-1964	<p><i>1970s and first 1980s</i></p> <p>ISI crisis</p> <p>Authoritarianism, restrictions in University</p>	<p><i>1971-1980</i></p> <p>ISI crisis</p> <p>Inflation, decrease in the net wages of the working class.</p>
1965-1974	<p><i>1980s and early 1990s</i></p> <p>Economic Stagnation, less opportunities</p> <p>Openness in the Universities</p>	<p><i>1981 and 1990</i></p> <p>Economic Stagnation</p> <p>Inflation, decrease in the net wages of the working classes and increase of poverty.</p>
1975-1985	<p><i>1990s and early 2000s</i></p> <p>Neo-liberal model, new opportunities but higher inequality and unemployment</p> <p>Expansion of Tertiary education</p>	<p><i>Unempl</i></p> <p>Unemployment especially in lower classes</p>

Figure 4: Log-odds ratios of adjacent classes' (Men Short term fluidity)

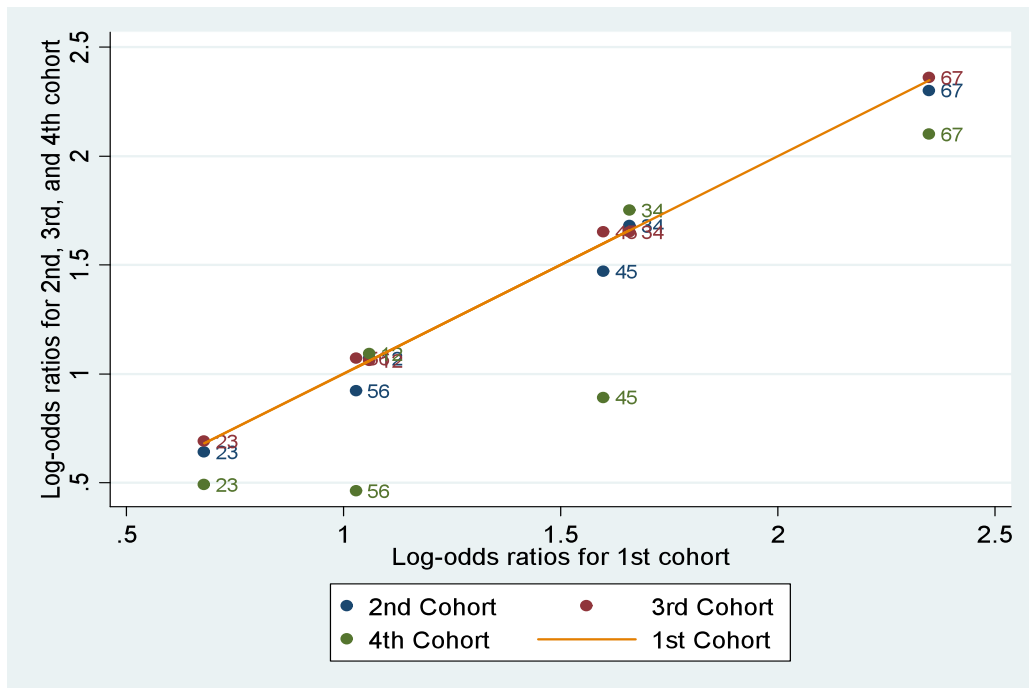


Figure 5: Log-odds ratios of between working classes and middle classes (Men Long term fluidity)

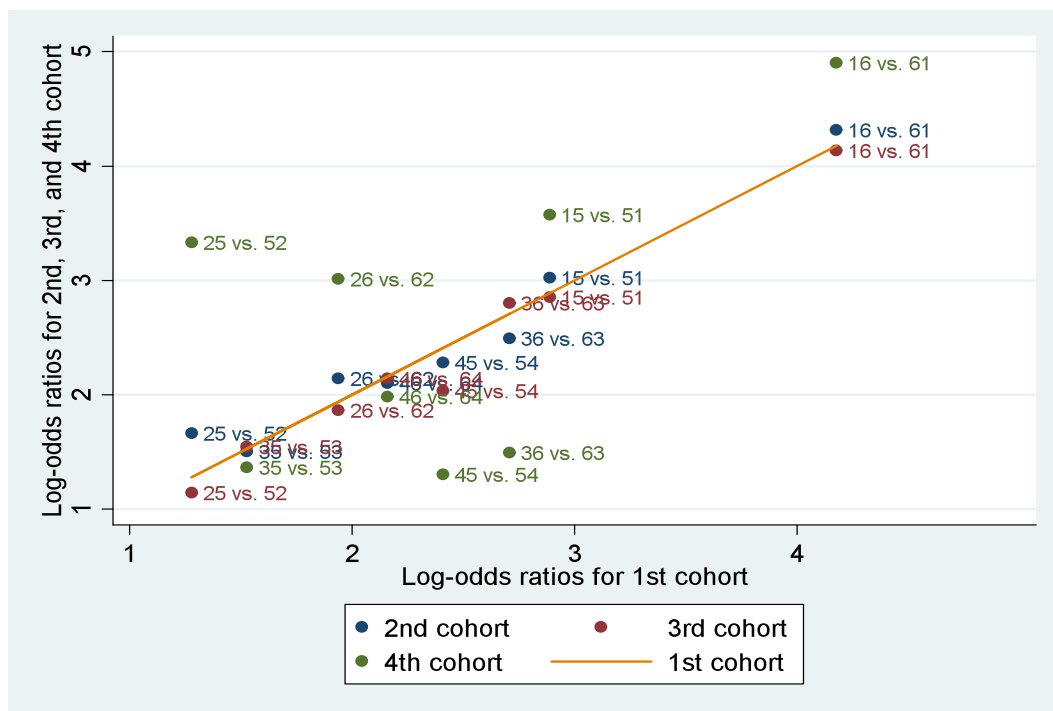


Figure 6: Log-odds ratios of adjacent classes' (Women Short term fluidity)

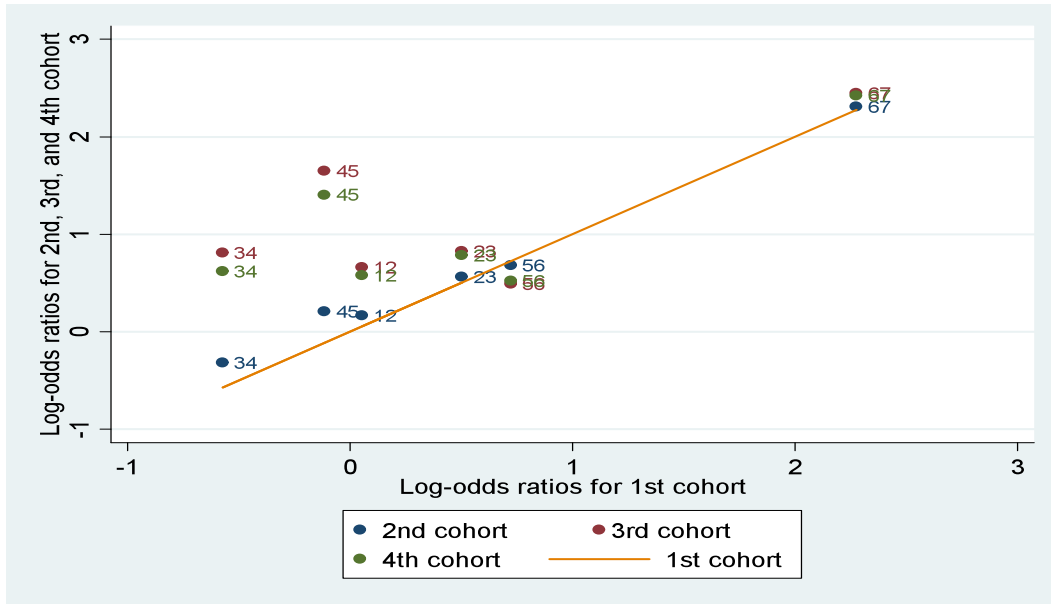


Figure 7: Log-odds ratios of between working classes and middle classes (Women Long term fluidity)

