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The missing link? The relationship between spatial mobility and social mobility*

ABSTRACT

Sociological writing on social mobility has neglected to consider whether upward social mobility is linked to an individual's geographical mobility. This paper argues that there is no *necessary* link, but that in post-war Britain, where much intra-generational social mobility has been linked to workers' being promoted through internal labour markets of bureaucratic organisations this frequently means that these workers have to be re-located to different sites of that organisation. In these circumstances there is a significant – though under-researched – link between social and spatial mobility. I argue that this type of upward social mobility is however becoming less important as public and private sector organisations have retrenched in recent years. Hence the link between social and spatial mobility has declined. I speculate on the implications of this for patterns of class formation and political alignment.

In this paper I will examine the hypothesis that social mobility is linked to geographical mobility, so that those individuals who are best able to move geographically are also most likely to achieve intra-generational social mobility (i.e. within the course of their working life). In itself this seems a perfectly reasonable idea: after all there are many studies which state that promotion depends on workers being prepared to move location (e.g. Crompton and Jones 1984, Prandy *et al.* 1982). It is however rather disarming to realise that these studies nearly always note this in passing and rarely give the issue any sustained analytical attention. This partly reflects the fact that despite the considerable sophistication of social mobility studies they nearly all remain uninterested in spatial issues. Thus the Nuffield Mobility Study reported by Goldthorpe *et al.* (1980) does not consider whether there are any regional or local differences in the pattern of social mobility but simply assumes that a national survey should be the appropriate spatial unit of analysis. The Scottish Mobility Study

reported by Payne (1987a, 1987b) claims to consider the specificity of the Scottish case, but then blithely concludes that the patterns found in Scotland are probably typical of other Western industrial countries. This neglect of the sub-national dimension is more surprising in the light of Payne's arguments that social mobility is closely related to patterns of occupational change. Since we know that occupational change is spatially differentiated within the UK (see e.g. Massey 1984) it seems probable that different patterns of social mobility must be found in different areas, but this issue is not raised, let alone resolved.

In part the neglect of spatial issues by sociologists reflects the fact that geographical literature on spatial mobility has been rather poor. It is well known that spatial mobility is highly socially specific (e.g. Johnston *et al.* 1974) with higher social groups being more mobile, but there has been little sustained attention to the causes and consequences of this. In a similar vein the recent quite dramatic decline in long distance migration has hardly been noted, let alone explained. Most of the possible explanations remain untested hypotheses. Consider, for instance the argument focusing on the growth of female economic activity rates, so increasing the number of dual earner households (e.g. Abercrombie and Urry 1983: 138). In these circumstances, it is argued, it is more difficult for one earner to move in order to take on a job elsewhere since the other earner in the household will lose their job. Now while this may appeal as a commonsense explanation, there are no studies which make any attempt to demonstrate it. In fact two theoretical considerations can instantly be advanced against it: firstly that many of jobs usually done by women are in demand throughout the country (and hence they may be relatively mobile) and secondly that given inequality within the household a man's decision to move for a better job may be given preference over any loss of job or career the woman may suffer.

The reason for the neglect of issues of geographical mobility owes much to the dominance of a perspective whereby mobile capital is contrasted with a largely static workforce (e.g. Urry 1981, Massey 1984, Harvey 1985). Whereas radical geographers have become rather expert in analysing the mobility of capital, the mobility of people is at best seen as theoretically un-interesting, and at worst politically diversionary. Yet in order to subtantiate many of the arguments made about the social implications of the restructuring of contemporary capitalism it is in fact vital to consider the issue of migration. Consider, for instance, Urry's well known argument (1981) that the hyper-mobility of capital tends to lead to 'local social movements' as different social groups within localities ally to bid for footloose investment, so helping to undermine class based politics in the process. This argument would only hold if it were true that all social groups within a locality were equally fixed to it, so that they all needed to ally to encourage investment. In fact, if some social groups

are geographically mobile, then they could move to where the investment is located, so having little need to join a local social movement.[1] Hence the question of the spatial mobility of diverse social groups should lie at the heart of any attempt to critically understand contemporary social processes.

This paper is a preliminary, largely theoretical, attempt to suggest some possible avenues for future research on this issue. I will start by examining the Census to suggest that in the recent past there may well have been an association between social and spatial mobility, since those social groups (mainly in the 'service class') which have been recruited from lower social groups have also been the most geographically mobile. I will then develop theoretical arguments indicating that there is no *necessary* link between spatial and social mobility, but that certain types of social mobility, notably that dependent on bureaucratic careers, does tend to rely on spatial mobility also. Finally, I shall use this to argue that because social mobility is becoming decreasingly based on bureaucratic careers, so the formerly close link between social and spatial mobility is breaking down in modern Britain. I will conclude by suggesting that this will lead to accentuating patterns of spatial inequality in Britain.

Firstly let me clarify how I am defining social mobility. I am primarily referring to intra-generational mobility, that is to say mobility within an individual's working life, rather than mobility between generations, though I have a few remarks to make about this later in the paper. Goldthorpe *et al.* (1980) has shown that this form of mobility is highly significant: less than a third of the respondents from the Nuffield Mobility Study who were in the 'service class' had begun their working lives in the service class. In this paper the sort of mobility which will particularly concern me is that into lower and upper level service class positions. Like Goldthorpe *et al.*, I will not concentrate on mobility within the working class, or into the intermediate classes. Unlike Goldthorpe, *et al.*, however I will consider mobility into the lower service class (i.e. lower professionals, managers and administrators) as separate from mobility into the higher service class (higher level professionals, managers and administrators). This is partly because geographical mobility may be most important when it comes to explaining social mobility from the lower to the upper service class. It also, however, reflects the fact that one major trend seems to have been the down-grading of lower service class jobs (Carter 1985; Child 1986) suggesting that it may be unwise to refer to a homogeneous service class encompassing both these levels.

I do not intend to discuss my precise categorisation of class here, since this has been discussed elsewhere (Savage, Dickens and Fielding 1988; Dickens, Fielding and Savage, 1989). I will simply state that we use the term 'service class' in a loose descriptive way rather than as an

analytical category. In this paper, following Thrift (1988) and Fielding and Savage (1987), the service class will be defined according to OPCS socio-economic groups (SEGS). These permit some inspection of the differences between managerial and professional groups, as well as comparison with non service class groups.

By geographical mobility I refer exclusively to long distance migration, rather than the movement of individuals over short distances in order to change their type of living accommodation. For the purposes of this paper this is taken to be movement between regions of the UK. This is not a perfect definition, since some inter-regional moves may be short distances if the individuals concerned live close to regional boundaries. However, it is the best working definition which enables extensive evidence to be drawn from the Census.

1. PRELIMINARY ASSOCATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL AND SPATIAL MOBILITY

Despite the lack of analytical literature there are some empirical indications which show that there might be some relationship. Fox (1985) for instance, using the Longitudinal Census Data, found that individuals who were spatially mobile were most likely to experience upward occupational mobility in the 1970s. This association also seems apparent from the 1981 Census. Here it is possible to break down migrants by age and socio-economic group (SEG), so assessing whether those groups of individuals who are known to be more socially mobile are also more likely to be migrants. The results are tabulated in Table I. Here the number of men who are inter-regionally mobile are expressed as a percentage of all men in that socio-economic group.

Table I does indeed indicate some interesting points. The most striking is the concentration of high levels of inter-regional mobility amongst SEGs 3 and 5 between the ages of 20 and 24. This probably testifies to the importance of graduates and other professionally qualified people moving to jobs. It is in this age group, where chances of upward mobility are most significantly affected, that the differential between the migration levels of the service and working classes are most apparent. Only 1 per cent of skilled manual workers moved compared with over 10 per cent of professional employees. SEGs 1,3,4 and 5.1 all had double the national rate of inter-regional migrants. There is a somewhat different pattern however in the 25–34 age group. Here apart from the maverick SEG 7 (personal service workers), the most mobile groups are in SEGs 4 and 5, rather than SEG 3. At this age range there are fewer workers leaving institutes of higher education, but instead many workers may be gaining promotion up internal labour markets and their relatively high degree

TABLE I: *Percentage of economically active men in Great Britain, 1981, from each SEG who lived in a different region one year earlier*

SEG	Age 20–4	25–34	35–44
1 Mgl, admin-large	6.0	3.1	1.8
2 Mgl, admin-small	4.2	2.6	1.7
3 Prof, self emp	(13.0)	2.5	1.3
4 Prof, employee	10.0	5.0	2.0
5.1 Ancillary workers	6.0	3.3	1.6
5.2 Non-manual supervisors	(2.7)	1.6	(0.7)
6 Junior non-manual	2.7	2.0	0.9
7 Personal service	5.0	3.6	1.9
8 Manual supervisors	1.8	0.8	0.3
9 Skilled manual	1.0	0.8	0.4
10 Semi-skilled manual	1.3	0.9	0.5
11 Unskilled manual	1.4	0;.9	0.6
12 Other self-emp	1.4	1.2	0.8
All economically active	2.9	2.0	1.1

Notes: agricultural and miscellaneous SEGs excluded. Figures in brackets indicate only a small number of inter regional migrants (20 or less). Figures are for 10% of the population alone. Source 1981 Census 10% migration tables compared with National Report on Economic Activity.

of geographical mobility may reflect this. Only SEG 4 has a rate double the national one.

Finally after the age of 35 spatial mobility tails off considerably. This of course also parallels trends in social mobility where Goldthorpe has noted that occupational maturity is reached at 35 when the bulk of upward mobility is accomplished. Further, in this age group differences between migration rates amongst the different SEGs are less intense. No group has a rate of geographical mobility double the national one.

Hence the Census reveals a pattern of similarity between men's social and spatial mobility. Both reach peaks at similar ages in the life course. The differentials in inter-regional mobility between SEGs also are largest in the younger age groups where upward social mobility is taking place. Hence they are not simply an effect of class position alone, but also appear to be highest at the point of recruitment to these classes.

Table II shows that for most groups of women the figures are very similar to those for men. This indicates that patterns of mobility are associated with the jobs themselves rather than the precise incumbents of them. Yet if there is a relationship between social and spatial mobility it is surprising to see the similar rates of male and female mobility in SEGs 5 and 6. This is because whilst most men in these SEGs will be expecting to move up an internal labour market, many women in the same job descriptions will only be in casualised forms of

employment, in various forms of routine white collar work. This indicates that assumptions that women are less spatially mobile and hence are less likely to gain promotion (e.g. Crompton and Jones 1984) are by no means backed by these figures.

TABLE II: *Percentage of economically active women from each SEG who lived in a different region one year earlier*

SEG	Age 20–4	25–34	35–44
1 Mgl, admin-large	6.0	2.2	0.9
2 Mgl, admin-small	4.8	2.8	1.2
3 Prof, self emp	(7.9)	(4.3)	(2.3)
4 Prof, employee	10.8	6.2	2.3
5.1 Ancillary workers	6.3	3.0	1.0
5.2 Non-manual supervisors	1.9	1.2	(0.4)
6 Junior non-manual	2.2	1.5	0.6
7 Personal service	3.5	1.3	0.4
8 Manual supervisors	(1.3)	(1.5)	(0.2)
9 Skilled manual	1.0	0.8	0.3
10 Semi-skilled manual	1.6	0.8	0.3
11 Unskilled manual	1.6	0.6	0.2
12 Own account	3.5	1.8	1.2
All economically active	3.2	1.8	0.6

Notes: as for Table I.

None the less it seems unlikely that there is any association between female occupational mobility and their spatial mobility. The fact that women are excluded from large sectors of service class work is not due to their patterns of spatial mobility, which tend to be quite similar to men's, but lies instead in the operation of patriarchal structures in the division of labour (e.g. Walby 1986). In the rest of this paper I will therefore focus only on the issue of men's social mobility which seems potentially more related to their patterns of spatial mobility and will not consider the position of women further.[2]

It remains to establish that there is any strong *causal* relationship between men's social and spatial mobility. The fact that there seems to be an association is a much weaker point: the fact that professional workers are more mobile than manual workers may simply indicate that they have a cosmopolitan culture and enjoy travelling, rather than that it forms an essential part of their career progress. There is however an unpublished study which does suggest that there are some important causal links. Cote (1983) carried out secondary analysis on the Nuffield Mobility Study to examine whether geographical mobility may be related to social mobility. While not all migration could be related to social mobility, there did appear to be important links. Both in terms of inter-and intra-generational mobility those who moved were likely to move up the social scale: as Cote summarises 'Upward occupational mobility controlling for class of

origin or class of entry (to work) is associated strongly with propensity to migrate. The greater the migration the greater the upward mobility' (Cote 1983: 2–100).

2. PROCESSES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH SPATIAL MOBILITY

How then might we explain the apparent association between geographical and social mobility? Let us consider the processes by which an individual can become socially mobile. Following Brown (1982) it is possible to distinguish three main ways in which an individual in an advanced capitalist society can be upwardly mobile. Firstly, they can pursue an entrepreneurial strategy, aiming to become a small, and possibly a large employer of labour. Secondly, they may pursue an organisational strategy, attempting to earn promotion through the ranks of large organisations. Finally, they may pursue an occupational strategy, attempting to move to more responsible jobs within their profession. Although I do not want to pursue this argument here each of these strategies could be said to strategies rely on maximising capital assets, those pursuing organisational strategies rely on organisational assets, and those pursuing occupational strategies rely on skill assets.

Now of course these different strategies often overlap. A worker with a particular skill may get accelerated promotion within an organisation, or they may use their skill to set up independently and pursue an entrepreneurial career. None the less it is possible to say that at any one moment in their life course an upwardly mobile individual pursues one or other of these strategies. It is not possible to use them all simultaneously. Some types of upwardly mobile workers will only ever use one strategy: for instance a civil servant will always rely on an organisational strategy. Other workers may make use of different strategies at different times of their life. A systems analyst may first rely on gaining a skill (through a degree course in computing perhaps), then pursue an organisational strategy within a large company where he or she may gain experience and contacts before finally pursuing an entrepreneurial career by setting up an independent consultancy.

My point is that *each of these types of strategy has a different relationship to spatial mobility*. Entrepreneurial strategies usually involve spatial immobility, largely because the process of starting in business normally involves drawing on localised resources: the local bank manager for a loan, certain potential clients who have been cultivated over the years, potential partners or workers whose abilities are known through long acquaintanceship. Since entrepreneurs cannot draw on bureaucratic resources they are forced to use particularistic

ones which are nearly always localised. We do know that employers and the self employed, as a group, are relatively immobile. Brant (1983) shows that they are more immobile than the population as a whole. Johnston *et al.* (1974: 206) show that in the 1960s only a very small proportion (2.4 per cent) of their sample of long distance movers moved to start their own business.

Organisational strategies are more complex, and the sort of spatial mobility involved will of course be dependent on the spatial structure of the organisation concerned. I will distinguish two main types of organisation. The first is the sort with which Massey (1984) and Westaway (1975) have acquainted us with where there is a spatial separation of functions, with Head Office, branch plants, R and D sites and so forth being separately located. Now in these sorts of organisations social mobility is very closely linked with spatial mobility (see also on this Salt 1983). This is because career development normally involves being promoted out to a branch as manager or assistant manager before being brought back to head office if promotion to the upper tier of management is awarded. In these cases entry to lower service class job and upper service class job both involve a spatial move.

One clear example of this[3] is the practices of the Manpower Service Commission which is organised on a tri-partite basis with a Head Office in Sheffield, eight Regional Centres and about six area offices for each region. Here there is well defined spatial separation of functions. Promotion to EO (Executive Officer) level from the more routine CO (Chief Officer) level involves applying for jobs from a national panel in which they can choose location preferences. At this level, which we might define as entry to the lower service class, spatial mobility is important but not absolutely essential since vacancies might crop up at the Regional Office to which the CO is already attached. For promotion to HEO (Higher Executive Officer) however it is necessary to spend two years at Head Office in Sheffield, before being drafted back to one of the senior managerial posts at the Regional Office, and finally if the individual wins promotion to one of the senior jobs for the entire MSC they must return to Sheffield.

Another example of this, for manufacturing, is ICI Paints Division in Slough, Berkshire. Since there are only two factories in this division most managerial trainees will start work in the Slough factory but it is specified in their contract that they will be expected to move and it is not possible to obtain a post above senior plant manager without moving. Normally this involves being put in charge of a small depot, either in the UK, or increasingly likely, abroad. After two years or so promotion back to the Slough Head Office takes place. In order to become a senior manager at least one, and probably two or three moves are needed. Here then entry to the lower service class does not need mobility, but entry to senior management does.

What I am suggesting then is that where the organisation has its functions spatially separated the spatial mobility of aspirants is more or less essential for social mobility. Careers have to be arranged around firstly, routine work in a large site, then more senior management in a small or subsiduary site spatially separate from the others, and finally back to Head Office as a senior manager.

However we should not assume that all organisations do have such a strict separation of functions: indeed the work of Massey and others has probably given an unwarranted prominence to such organisations. Particularly in the public sector, which is a larger employer than private manufacturing industry in Britain, many employing units have a wide range of functions within individual sites. This is true of the National Health Service, local authorities, and in education, most of whose units have a wide specrum of jobs. Even here of course there are some units which are particularly prestigious to work in, such as the London teaching hospitals for doctors or Oxbridge for academics. None the less it is possible to be upwardly mobile without being spatially mobile in these cases.

Hence in these organisations the relationship between spatial and social mobility is less clear, though still, in some cases evident. There is no absolute need to be spatially mobile to get a senior job since it is possible to work through the internal hierarchy of jobs on the one site. On the other hand preference will often be given to candidates who have worked in a variety of institutions, which are deemed to give the candidate greater experience. This practice is particularly strong in the NHS and amongst local authorities. Indeed it seems that Health Service employees are the most spatially mobile of all workers in contemporary Britain (Salt 1985; Savage 1987) partly because of national skill shortages and partly because of the presence of tied housing allows a degree of mobility. In East Berkshire Health Authority there are generally more external appointments than internal appointments for senior jobs (though this is difficult to assess because of the 1982 reorganisation). Most local authorities equally expect to fill senior jobs externally. On the other hand some organisations have a work culture which put less weight on mobility. This appears to be true of the academic labour market, where even during the 1960s expansion the majority of academic staff have only ever worked at one university. One study (Williams *et al.* 1974) showed that the number of academics only ever employed by one university was 60 per cent in 1962 and 58 per cent in 1969.

Let us now turn to our final type of upwardly mobile worker, those relying on an occupational career. These tend to be highly spatially mobile while gaining their qualifications (that is, going to an institute of higher education and on leaving it) but henceforth their spatial mobility is likely to be restricted by the degree of localisation of demand for their skill. Even though some skilled workers may be in

general demand throughout the country – solicitors and accountants for instance – the level of rewards which they command are subject even in these cases to considerable local fluctuation, so that some places become more desirable to work in. This contrasts with those relying on organisational careers where there are rarely spatial differences in salary levels. For professional workers pursuing occupational careers particularly clusters of workers with specific skills tend to form in certain areas. The need to use these skills may cause clients or potential employers to move close by, and as a result further reasons for spatial clustering established. Probably the best example of this type of process is in computing, with the clustering of workers with these skills in the 'sunbelt' area, as Doreen Massey has called it. One report, talking of electronic engineers referred to the fact that

> the South East with its very high concentration of job opportunities . . . was seen by some of the smaller firms as an attraction in offering easy career development for engineers who could move between firms without relocating. (Pearson, Hutt and Walsh 1981: 43)

This spatial fixity on entry to work is accentuated by the fact that many specialist skills are only in demand from a very few employers. One extreme example is ICI Jeallott's Hill, part of the Plant Protection Division, engaged in research on bio-technology, where of the 700 workforce there are 150 Ph.Ds and another 350 graduates. This is the only research laboratory of its sort in the UK, and these workers would have to move to Europe for alternative employment. There is a complex career structure within this ICI division, allowing these researchers to become senior scientists within the one site.

3. CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN SOCIAL-SPATIAL MOBILITY

From the arguments developed above it is clear that in order to assess the nature of the relationship between spatial and social mobility it is necessary to discover which sort of social mobility predominates. In a situation where entrepreneurial strategies for advancement dominate the relationship is weak, but if organisational strategies are most commonly used then a stronger relationship is to be expected. In this section I therefore want to advance some highly speculative arguments about how processes of social mobility have changed in the post-war period in order to throw light on the contemporary character of both social and spatial mobility.

Goldthorpe *et al.* (1980) and Payne (1987a, b) have shown how the expansion of service class jobs especially since the Second World War has allowed major social mobility into high level jobs. For Goldthorpe

et al., these jobs are characteristically bureaucratic jobs in large organisations, notably the state and multinational enterprises. 'The basis of the expanding service class', they write, 'is an essentially bureaucratic one. Bureaucracies . . . tend to establish "career lines" for those who are employed within them' (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1980: 256). Further, until the 1960s, the provision of higher education was highly restricted and prevented the major growth of credentialled workers which would have provided a ready made cadre of service class workers (Goldthorpe *et al.* 1980: 257; Abercrombie and Urry 1983; Lash and Urry 1987; Urry 1986). As a result it seems reasonable to conclude that the dominant form of social mobility through much of the post war period has been through organisational strategies based on progress up an internal labour market of large employers.

There is in fact considerable evidence to substantiate such a claim. The Acton Society Trust (1956), in an extensive survey of British managers in the 1950s found that well over half of them had started out in lower occupations (21 per cent manual, 30 per cent clerical) and had become managers through promotion within one company. In the forty-six largest private companies in Britain thirty-one reported that their managerial posts were entirely or almost entirely filled by internal promotion, and only in five cases were external appointments common. In a survey of manual workers in five firms the majority felt that managerial posts were accessible from the shopfloor. Managers tended to stay with one company: 63 per cent of managers had either spent all their working life with the company or had begun work there before the age of 25.

By the 1960s managers had become slightly less likely to work for one firm only. Even so in both Clement's survey of 1958 and Clark's of 1966 well over half of the managers interviewed had worked for less than three firms (Clark 1966: 84–5; Clements 1958). In Clark's survey nearly 80 per cent had worked for their present employer for over ten years (Clark 1966: 95). The dominance of internal labour markets for promotion is also hinted at by evidence concerning the lack of educational qualifications of managers at this time. Even in the mid 1970s managers in Britain were no more likely to have qualifications than the employed population at large, and the initial jobs carried out by managers were a close reflection of the overall character of the job market (Crockett and Elias 1984). Gill and Lockyer (undated) found that in 1976 42 per cent of production managers started on the shop floor.

Clearly then if my arguments are correct we would expect to find a close correlation between social and spatial mobility throughout the 1950s and 1960s as upwardly mobile managers are posted to different parts of the constituent employer's sites. Unfortunately very few studies probe this. Clark shows that about half his sample of managers

had worked outside the north-west, his survey area, but his sample probably includes a number of small local firms where one would not expect mobility between units. In the public sector 65 per cent had worked outside the north-west (Clark 1966: 88). The hyper-mobility of managerial workers was also revealed by a BIM Study in 1971 which showed that only a third of managers had worked in one region all their lives.

Some more precise evidence on the migration patterns of these workers can be derived from the work of Johnston *et al.* (1974) which remains the best book on geographical mobility in the British literature. Their findings, based on a survey of mobility in Chatham, High Wycombe, Huddersfield and Northampton in the 1960s, show the importance of job related reasons for long distance moves. 49 per cent of migrants moved for job related reasons. Johnston *et al.* are unique however in actually providing evidence on the socio-economic group of migrants before and after moving, which allows us to assess the extent to which mobile workers have moved up the social hierarchy. Altogether of the 50 per cent who moved for job reasons the number in SEGs 1–5 increased from about 55 per cent before moving to about 72 per cent after (Johnston *et al.* 1974: 211). They conclude 'labour migration for job reasons was therefore a very positive agent of spiralism for the middle classes' (Johnston *et al.* 1974: 212).

In short the period of the 1950s and 1960s, marked by the expansion of large scale bureaucracies was one where most people were socially mobile through their pursual of organisational strategies. It is this which underpins the assumption of managerial hyper-mobility so dominant in 1960s sociology in the work of Musgrove (1963), Bell (1968), and the Pahls (1971), and led to the concept of the middle-class cosmopolitan, or spiralist. More recently writers such as Forrest (1987), Forrest and Murie (1985) and Salt (1983, 1985), have resurrected the idea of the spatially mobile core, or managerial worker. In my view however this is misguided, for the most important trend in middle-class mobility is its rapid decline. The middle-class cosmopolitan of the 1960s no longer exists so clearly. Let me substantiate this argument.

The best known general feature of migration is that it has been declining. Between 1971 and 1981 the number of people changing addresses in the previous year fell from 11.8 per cent to 9.6 per cent (Devis 1983). The number of inter-regional migrants has also fallen, from around one million p.a. in the early 1970s to under 900,000 in the later 1970s (Ogilvy 1982). Indications from the Labour Force Survey suggest that the percentage of the economically active who were inter-regionally mobile fell from 1.5 per cent p.a. in 1979 to 1 per cent in 1983, a fall of 50 per cent in four years.

What is also interesting however is the regional patterns of

migration. In the 1960s and the early 1970s one of the most significant aspects of regional mobility was the movement of large numbers of people from the south-east of England to other regions. This of course is compatible with the idea, developed above, of workers being transferred to other regions to gain experience in branches of large organisations. Since 1973 there has, however, been a dramatic decline in the propensity of people to leave the south-east: 300,000 did so in 1973, but only about 230,000 did so in 1978 (Ogilvy 1982) a fall of 20 per cent. Does this indicate a declining reluctance of middle-class individuals to leave the south-east? The 1983 Labour Force Survey indicates that whilst London and the south-east had 36.5 per cent of the non-manual workforce only 27.4 per cent of non-manual out-migrants came from the south-east. Furthermore there is some evidence that this declining mobility has been brought about by a decline of non-manual migration: Hughes and McCormick suggest that between 1973 and 1983 the inter regional migration of male heads of household remained constant while that of non-manual heads fell by over a quarter (Hughes and McCormick 1987). We can probe this point further by examining migration patterns of different socio-economic groups from the 1981 Census and comparing it with earlier periods.

Table III indicates that even in the context of a general decline in mobility, many of the service class SEGs are experiencing rapid decline in their rates of movement. SEGs 1, 2, and 3, and to some extent 5 all show a decline. SEG 4 continues to have proportionately high rates (though of course this still indicates an absolute decline) – an interesting pattern in the light of our earlier arguments since this SEG is most likely to be employed by the state and in bureaucracies. The only SEG with increasing rates is personal service workers, where there has been a quite dramatic increase in mobility. The unemployed also have a high propensity of migration (Devis 1983).

I will argue that these trends indicate two things: firstly, the decline of the dominance of organisational strategies, and the resurgence of entrepreneurial and occupational ones, which have a less clear connection with social mobility. Secondly, changes in the spatial characteristics of organisations and patterns of urban change more generally are tending to weaken the links between organisational strategies and spatial mobility as well. For both these reasons there is now a less clear relationship between social and spatial mobility than existed in the 1960s.

4. THE DECLINE OF ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

Let us first consider the declining relevance of organisational strategies to upward social mobility. There are a number of processes which can be singled out here. Firstly the main growth sectors of

TABLE III: *Mobility of socio-economic groups 1966–81*

SEG	1966 (c)		1971 (c)		1981 (c)	
	% moves (a)	rate (b)	% moves	rate	% moves	rate
1	9.1	+133	6.9	+82	6.9	+25
2	9.8	+58	10.2	+29	10.6	+22
3	1.5	+114	1.5	+66	0.9	=
4	9.2	+136	10.8	+157	10.8	+140
5.1			11.3	+98	10.8	+82
5.2	9.0	+100	0.8	+14	0.8	+38
6	13.4	+6	12.4	+2	9.5	=
7	1.3	+30	1.0	+40	2.6	+136
8	2.8	−22	1.7	−53	1.1	−69
9	16.2	−48	15.5	−49	9.7	−63
10	8.5	−43	7.0	−46	5.8	−57
11	2.9	−64	3.7	−40	2.9	−50
12	3.3	−8	3.1	−33	3.3	−38

Notes: (a) percentage of total inter regional moves made by members of respective SEGs.
(b) index of each group's mobility given its share of the workforce. Each SEGs share of migration is compared with its share of the workforce and the value is expressed as the percentage above (+) or below (−) by which the share of migration exceeds or decreases the share of the workforce.
(c) The 1966 Census gives figures for 'wholly moving families' classified by the occupation of the head of house. The 1971 figures are for economically active men, and the 1981 figures for men over 16. Also the 1981 Census gives figures for migration over one year, whilst the 1966 and 1971 Censuses give figures over five years: the problem here is that over five years it is possible that workers may move out of a region and back again and hence their inter regional mobility will not register: this will tend to deflate the extent of mobility compared with the 1981 Census.

employment for 'service class' personnel are no longer in large bureaucracies, but in small businesses and self-employment in which internal labour markets are necessarily less well developed (this point is developed in detail in Savage, Dickens and Fielding 1988, and by Savage 1987).

The point of course is that small firms are unlikely to have such well developed internal labour markets. Vacancies at upper levels are simply too rare to justify the creation of fixed career lines, and as a result whenever vacancies occur they are normally filled on the external labour market. As a result upward social mobility is more associated with movement on an external labour market using skill based assets wherever possible. Whalley illustrates this point in noting that in an old Midlands engineering firm, part of a major multi-national, 61 per cent of engineers had never worked for another company, and many expected to become managers: in a new, small 'hi tech' company in London, only 5 per cent had never worked for another company, and fewer expected to become managers.

Despite the well established growth of small firms it is still possible to argue that internal labour markets remain important because of the relative growth of managerial hierarchies which continue to allow promotion structures to dominate. Thus the Census of Production notes that in all production enterprises the proportion of clerical, administrative, and technical staff rose from 26.4 per cent of the total in 1972 to 31.3 per cent in 1982. This shift even occurred within small firms: indeed the increase was proportionately faster in enterprises of less than 100 people where the percentage increased from 19.5 per cent to 26.8. In short it might be argued that the number of employed in the sort of work where internal labour markets might exist are not decreasing. Against this argument there is however a second point, that the character of the internal labour market is changing with the undermining of middle management and the insulation of top levels from an internal labour market.

There are conflicting accounts as to whether the internal labour market continues to dominate in corporate hierarchies. Some writers argue that it is becoming more important. These include Atkinson (1984), who has popularised the idea of the 'flexible firm'. He argues that many private sector companies are accentuating their internal labour markets for key personnel who are 'functionally flexible'. The mooted 'Japanization' of British industry may also have similar effects since one of its key principles is the idea of the 'company employee' who works constantly for one firm (but see Dickens 1988 and Dickens and Savage 1988 for a critical discussion of this idea). Gleave and Sellens (1984) imply that internal labour markets are increasing in importance, though they also state that the structure of the internal labour market is under researched and needs further investigation.

On the other hand various writers have argued that the internal labour market is being undermined by the erosion of middle management, partly because information technology can provide top managers with detailed knowledge and procedures without relying on middle managers. Carter (1985) has argued that as a result much middle management in manufacturing has been downgraded in recent years with a loss of autonomy. Child (1986) also argues that much of the impact of new technology will adversely affect middle managers, for instance branch managers of banks who no longer have to exercise discretion in giving credit because of the use of 'credit scoring' devices. Yet while middle management has been undermined top level managerial functions have increased, partly as a result of the internationalisation of many companies' activities needing a more extensive planning, selling and marketing operation. Further, there has been a major expansion of specialist, professional groups working within management but which it is difficult to incorporate into a managerial hierarchy. As a result smooth channels of upward mobility by which workers could be promoted via middle manage-

ment to the highest levels of management are being interrupted, and it is becoming increasingly likely that high level managers start work at a managerial level as trainees (see Savage, Dickens and Fielding 1988).

The rapid growth of trainees is related to the widespread growth of graduate entry managers. Until the late 1960s many British firms did not use graduate entry management on a large scale, especially in production management. The Acton Society Trust survey of the largest manufacturing companies in the 1950s found that only 19 per cent of managers were graduates (see also Gill and Lockyer undated, more generally on Britain's slowness in this regard Urry 1986, Weiner 1981). There were very few for instance in transport, retailing and distribution (Bury 1973). Those manufacturing firms which used them were often sceptical of their value (Greenaway 1973). In the early 1970s however graduates were something of a cheap labour pool for potential managerial labour. In 1965 1.5 per cent of graduates were unemployed (in the December after graduation), compared with an overall unemployment rate of 1.4 per cent. By 1971 the graduate unemployment rate was 7.8 per cent compared with 3.8 per cent nationally (Whybrew 1973). Wage increases for graduate occupations were rising slower than the national average. In this context of a tight labour market for managerial staff – especially at the top of the managerial hierarchy – the introduction of graduate entry schemes seemed to ease employer's problems, and the proportion of graduate managers, especially in smaller enterprises rose in the 1970s. A recent survey of employers found a 16 per cent increase in graduate recruitment between 1974 and 1979 (Parsons and Hutt 1981).

The dominance of graduate entry was confirmed by our Slough research, where virtually all large private sector employers had increased their proportion of graduates in the last fifteen years (Savage 1987). Most large corporations use graduate entry with entrants spending a few years as trainees in managerial positions before experiencing accelerated promotion to the higher ranks of management. It is now likely that this has impacted on the internal labour market by causing a 'dual stream' whereby non-graduate workers may earn promotion but only rarely will it lead to managerial rank, whilst nearly all managerial vacancies will go to the graduate trainees. The internal labour market is therefore segmented along credentialist lines.

There is certainly no doubt that graduates tend to move between firms quite easily. In the 1960s graduate managers were actually less likely to move firms than managers as a whole, perhaps because only a minority of firms wanted to employ them and hence they had to stay loyal. Clark showed that 45 per cent of graduates had only worked for one firm, as opposed to 35 per cent of the sample as a whole (Clark 1966: 89). But by the 1970s the mobility of graduate labour between

firms was well established. As a result firms become more interested in seeking to recruit managerial labour on an external labour market. Of the four Head Offices we interviewed in Slough, only one relied exclusively on internal appointments. Surveys show that in the 1950s only 13 per cent of managers had worked for more than four firms in their lives, but by 1976 this had risen to 37 per cent (BIMF 1978).

In summary we believe that it is decreasingly likely that careers will be based solely on one organisation. Instead there is a growing reliance on occupational strategies and entrepreneurial ones. The growth of small enterprises is a well established trend in Britain which offers an alternative means of social mobility. One recent study of youngsters in different local labour market notes that in buoyant labour market (St Albans) about 8 per cent of 18–24 year olds have been self-employed at some stage already (Ashton and Maguire 1986: 45). Occupational strategies are also becoming more common, reflecting the growth of a skilled group of workers able to be employed by a variety of firms. This is of course especially true in hi-tech fields, where computing workers have become self employed or small employers in the past few years (Morgan and Sayer 1988; Barlow and Savage 1987; Hall *et al.* 1987; Breheney and McQuaid 1985; Savage 1987), or can move between firms with relative ease. In computing labour turnover is reckoned to be about 50 per cent p.a. Similar trends can be found in much 'service class' work in the county – for accountants, lawyers, consultants etc. – our interviews reveal that many employers explicitly stated that they were having problems retaining key staff who would either be poached away or would consider going self employed. Turnover figures indicate that the professional and managerial workforce is now more likely to leave jobs than either manual or white-collar staff: a turnaround from the position in the 1960s when manual workers moved between jobs with considerable rapidity but professional workers tended to remain with one employer. All this testifies to the declining salience of organisational strategies in Berkshire at least.

5. CHANGES IN ORGANISATIONS AND URBAN STRUCTURE

It would be wrong to say that organisational strategies have totally disappeared. In fact it is probably truer to say that they remain important for young adults, but that whereas in the past older workers continued to be reliant upon them today many groups of workers have a wider range of options. Ashton and Maguire (1986) indicate that around three quarters of young workers in white collar work feel they have chances of promotion. What I want to suggest however is that changes in the spatial structure of many organisations are likely to

reduce the amount of spatial mobility needed to advance up internal labour markets.

This is largely due to the growth of branch networks throughout financial services and retailing. In these sectors, both of which have in the past had highly cohesive internal labour markets expansion of branches in the past decade has largely taken the form of infilling: that is establishing a greater density of branches in particular regions. As a result it is easier for promotions to junior managerial level to take place within regions, and indeed the banks now accept that nearly all promotions will be of this type. Many of these workers will not need to move house, and certainly will not need to move inter regionally. A similar situation applies in much public sector service employment where there is a considerable density of establishments within a given region, allowing mobility between enterprises without moving house.

Secondly, however, many of the large multinational manufacturing enterprises have rationalised production to fewer units. Indeed despite Massey's arguments concerning the growing spatial separation of production functions in the current period of restructuring, there is evidence from our interview that several firms are actually rationalising many of their functions to fewer sites (e.g. ICI Paints Division, Nicholas Laboratories, Iveco Trucks). As a result their managerial aspirants will have less need to travel to take up appointments: many will be able to develop their careers with fewer moves. Now it is difficult to assesses typicality here (though Boddy *et al.* 1986 suggest similar trends in Bristol) but the net decline of branch plants in the UK as rationalisation takes place does suggest that the need for managerial hyper mobility may be declining.

Finally, there are important changes in urban structure and the transportation system which allow workers moving jobs between branches of enterprises to stay at one residence and commute. Foremost here has been the accentuation of regional house price differentials since 1981 (Barlow 1986; Forrest 1987). These remained relatively stable throughout the post war period (Hanmett 1984) but the gap between the south-east and the rest of the UK has increased steadily since then. In 1978 average house prices in the south-east were 120 per cent of the UK average, but they rose to 130 per cent by 1984 and have continued to grow since then (Barlow 1986). For workers on internal labour markets this does not present a major problem since most of the differential will be paid for by the company, but workers moving on an external labour market get only limited assistance. As a result many groups of workers will tend to move within housing market areas so that they only move to areas of equivalent house prices, so severely restricting movement into the south-east.

As a result service class workers tend to get locked into particular regional housing markets. Their choice of employment however can

remain wide if the transportation system exists to permit extensive travel to work distances. There has of course been a major growth in people travelling to work by car in recent years: up from 35 per cent in 1971 to 50 per cent in 1981 (Beacham 1985), and long distance commuting has been facilitated by transport improvements. In the south-east the development of the motorway network, especially the M25 has been very important here. Slough BC pointed out that if a worker was well situated near a motorway exit they could have a choice of between twenty and thirty local authorities to work for. As a result the need to move to different jobs was less likely to need a change of location. These changes have encouraged the development of a regional labour market in many fields of employment, where workers pursuing organisational careers will move within a region but rarely outside it. They will either continue living in the same house, or take the opportunity of a job change to trade up their housing in a housing market which is roughly of a similar expense.

CONCLUSIONS

I have established the way in which geographical and social mobility mesh together in different ways in varying circumstances. In this conclusion I will be more speculative and will suggest how these changing patterns may affect social and political conflicts in contemporary Britain. In fact there are a number of possible interpretations of the likely outcomes of the trends I have discussed. Initially the declining mobility of the service class seems to lend support to the arguments of John Urry that local social movements will tend to undermine class based politics as all social groups tend to ally to advance the interests of their locality. Indeed the growing trend for professional people, particularly in the public sector to become active in local politics is reversing a long term trend against middle-class involvement (e.g. Dearlove 1979) and is testimony to a growing middle-class concern for the politics of turf. The growth of the conservation movement especially in the Home Counties is another notable example (Short, Fleming and Witt 1986; Thrift 1988; Barlow and Savage 1986).

Yet it is also possible to find grounds for doubting that any cross-class local alliances will be found. Consider the effects of the declining geographical mobility of the service class intra-generational on social mobility. If in the past upward mobility was largely dependent on workers being prepared to be spatially mobile through organisational careers there would be similar patterns of social mobility throughout the country. This is because any increase in service class jobs in one area will draw on people from outside the area in generally equivalent

proportions if they are all prepared to be spatially mobile. If however mobility amongst this group declines then a higher proportion of the expanding service class jobs will have to be filled locally, and as a result there will be marked regional patterns of social mobility. There is good evidence that in the past the relative growth of managerial jobs in the south-east has been filled by people from a wide variety of origins. BIM (1971) stated that

> there is clearly a trend for managers to 'migrate' to the South East: a high proportion of managers from all areas are now living in this region. (p. 9)

As we have seen there is however a change in the trends at work. Declining spatial mobility of the service class means that new expanding professional jobs in the south-east often have to be filled by local people, ensuring continued high rates of social mobility. Barclays Bank noted this very point. In Berkshire the bank continues to expand, whilst in the depressed regions its employment is static or falling. Since most promotions take place within regions now there is much greater prospect of advance in the south-east than in the north where the internal labour market is 'clogged up'. Further it is easier to get an initial job in Berkshire than in the north. 'A' levels are required for cashiers jobs in the north where 'O' levels are accepted in Berkshire.

A declining mobility of the service class is hence creating great local variations in the potential for social mobility. This point is being confirmed by recent studies. Fox's (1985) work for the 1970s indicates that there is a higher rate of mobility into higher SEGs in the south-east then elsewhere, whilst there was low social mobility in the East Midlands, the West Midlands, Yorkshire/Humberside and especially the north. A recent study (Ashton and Maguire 1986) has also underlined the dramatic local imbalances in social mobility. Basically, middle-class children have a high likelihood of obtaining white-collar work on entry to the labour market everywhere. In expanding areas however this supply is not enough, and considerable numbers of working-class children also gain entry, ensuring high rates of social mobility. Thus in affluent St Albans 45 per cent of upper-working-class children started work as white-collar workers, but in Sunderland only 18 per cent did so.

The point I am trying to establish is that rather than any class alliances forming in the depressed area there may be class tension as the children of the middle class tend to get the few white-collar jobs which are available. Class relations may be more antagonistic in these areas also for reasons discussed by Golthorpe *et al.* They argue that the reason the service class has failed to establish a strong political

presence lies in the fact that it has not yet established demographic fixity since it recruits members from a wide social spectrum. They expected this to change with the onset of economic recession and the growing propensity of the service class to be self-recruited. Yet if my argument is correct we should in fact conclude that in those areas where these jobs are still expanding then there are still likely to be high rates of social mobility. This will continue to prevent any demographic fixity developing amongst the service class. On the other hand in depressed areas there may be a much higher rate of self recruitment by the service class and much greater service class fixity.

This is paradoxical in some respects, for if my argument is correct it indicates that in the so-called 'middle-class' south patterns of service class formation may well be less established than in the 'working-class' north. Yet it may actually help explain one trend in voting designed to raise rather than resolve these issues. None the less, depressed areas. It may be in these places that class identities are strongest established owing to weak social mobility between them, and hence 'class politics' remains more viable.

Finally let us return to the arguments of Urry concerning the rise of local social movements and the erosion of class politics. There is one very important difference between middle and working-class patterns of mobility. Service class careers seem to be increasingly tied to a regional labour and housing market, whilst working-class ones are tied to a local labour market. This difference may well cause differences in the type of politics pursued: fundamental to middle-class struggles will be the need to improve regional infrastructures to enhance travel to work opportunities rather than to provide employment opportunities in any one specific place. This will be associated with out of town housing estates near major road junctions, the development of fast transport networks, and retailing premises and leisure centres easily accessible by car. All of these forms of investment may have little salience for groups of working-class people living close by. Hence social conflict along class lines may well be actually accentuated by the trends I have been discussing.

These concluding remarks suggest that if we consider how patterns of social mobility affect class formation, along the lines suggested by Goldthorpe *et al.*, then the issue of spatial mobility must be considered. Only by considering patterns of spatial mobility can we assess whether the new expanding service class jobs in the south-east of England will tend to be filled by the children of the service class (if they are recruited from the country as a whole), or from a range of social groups, as has been the general pattern since the 1950s (if they tend to be recruited locally). This paper is a preliminary contribution, designed to raise rather than resolve these issues. None the less,

hopefully I have established the need to properly research the interface between social and spatial mobility.

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NOTES

* This paper has arisen out of research with Peter Dickens on employment change in Berkshire. I have also greatly benefitted by discussions with Tony Fielding whose work on labour mobility addresses similar issues. Margaret Dahlstrom has also made valuable comments.

1. Harvey has recently developed a different argument concerning the differences in the spatial mobility of the working class and the bourgeosie as a means of understanding their divergent class practices (Harvey 1987). He does not however demonstrate the scale of these differences.

2. It is hoped to consider the issue of the relationship between women's spatial and social mobility, alongside that of men's, in a forthcoming research project based at the University of Sussex involving Dr A. J. Fielding, Dr P. Dickens and myself.

3. These cases reported have been carried out as part of the research programme on 'Economic Restructuring, Social Change and the Locality', based at Sussex University. Full details of these cases are to be found in Savage *et al.* (1987).

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