Intergenerational Mobility in a Context of Socio-institutional Change

The Case of Socialist China

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About the author

Ho-yin Cheung completed a D. Phil. thesis in sociology at the University of Oxford.

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Research on intergenerational mobility has at times been charged with overemphasizing statistical sophistication and glossing over theoretically interesting questions. Studies in this tradition have typically been dominated by the analysis of mobility matrices which are conventionally formulated using survey data recording fathers' occupations and sons' current occupations. There are two leading empirical questions in the research which are of theoretical importance to measuring the societal openness[1] or the social fluidity in advanced industrial societies: whether the strength of association between fathers' and sons' occupations increases or decreases in the course of industrialization, and whether the patterns of association significantly vary across societies. To students of social mobility, the former question pertains to the industrialization thesis and the latter to the Featherman-Jones-Hauser hypothesis. Each of these questions has prompted volumes of controversy about conceptual as well as methodological issues relating to social mobility. Two ideas should be noted if research of this kind is to make further advance. First, criticism is usually levelled at mobility researchers for their "nonstructural" analysis of social mobility, i.e., statistical tests are carried out without considering the structural context in which mobility actually takes place. Secondly, with the availability of suitable data, the scope of analysis can now extend to such societies as state socialist countries, which did not constitute the original focus of cross-national mobility research several decades ago. In view of the above we demonstrate in this paper how the consideration of relevant socio-institutional structures can contribute to our understanding of intergenerational mobility in a state socialist

society — China — whose mobility rate and pattern have recently become available for study (Cheng and Dai 1995). We will establish how those structures possibly reinforce or mediate the influence of political interventions by the Chinese communist government and that of the subsequent institution of market reforms on the Chinese mobility regime. Equally important, our analysis sheds light on one important aspect of socio-institutional transformation in state socialist China.

Intergenerational Mobility in State Socialist Societies

The peculiar character of the stratification system in communist societies was highlighted in some scholarly discussions decades ago (Parkin 1969). Without particularly solid empirical support, they argued that the stratification order in these societies, which was heavily subjected to political regulations of various kinds, differed significantly from that in capitalist societies. They further suggested that the monolithic distribution of resources as directed by communist states could give rise to a new form of stratification order, though the underlying institutional mechanism through which resources were redistributed was not elaborated in detail. Nevertheless, Parkin (1969:361) speculated that "the emergent emphasis on economic rationality *at the second stage of socialist reconstruction* (italics added) ... paved the way to a form of class stratification that had much more in common with that of western capitalism." Taken together, they suggested a periodization of the development of state socialist societies, which underlies much of the later mobility research.

Findings gathered thus far accord in general with the above periodization. A great many studies indicate that whereas social fluidity tended to be higher in the early, or first stage of socialist reconstruction which emphasized realizing egalitarian ideals, it then declined in the second stage, usually labelled as the reform era when market mechanisms have been employed as a means of

coordinating resources distribution and the process of restratification has been under way (see for example, Simkus 1981; Simkus and Andorka 1982). This crude generalization, nevertheless, summarizes the essential features of the mobility patterns in two contrasting periods. There are two possible causes leading to the increase in social fluidity at the early stage of socialist reconstruction.

The first relates to the major change in the occupational structure which occurs in the wake of the establishment of communist regimes. As opposed to the increasing amount of professional positions in advanced industrial societies, the occupational "upgrading" found in state socialist societies was reflected by the expansion of the managerial and professional posts associated with state and party machinery. Such a development could be attributed to the intention of communist governments to monopolize the control over the national economy and to accelerate its industrialization programmes. There is some truth to the claim that the occupational "upgrading" in state socialist societies was closely related to the developmental priority assigned by communist governments to *both* political control, and economic or industrial development. Further, the "upgrading" was accompanied by the growth of a special stratum foreign to advanced industrial societies. The term "New Class," as coined by Djilas (1957), was adopted by Konrad and Szelenyi (1979) to describe the emergence of a group of elites in political and administrative hierarchies who can use the state resources at their disposal. They might have based their power on their official positions or the provision of expert knowledge.

Over and above the transformation of the occupational structure in state socialist societies is the change in the criteria for recruitment in different positions. Primarily as a result of communist ideology, the governments adopted employment policies which made those with blue-collar backgrounds the "privileged," who consequently entered the state bureaucracy as managerial or professional staff (Connor 1979). Those with proprietor or farmowner backgrounds were "destined" to work as manual workers

in industrial enterprises or as state farm peasants under collectivization programmes. Further, children of intellectuals were discriminated against by the state so much so that they were quite likely to take up manual jobs (Simkus 1981).[2] Seen in this light, the pattern of intergenerational mobility in state socialist societies at their early stages of development are largely shaped by the political and egalitarian ideologies pursued by the governments.

However, the mobility pattern at the second stage of socialist reconstruction (or in the reform era) defies coherent generalization. Relevant studies find that state socialist countries in their transition from socialism and before their collapse were generally characterized by decreasing social fluidity (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Wong and Hauser 1992) as governments placed more emphasis on economic and industrial development and less on ideological issues. Yet, it is unclear in what way such a decrease could be related to the diverse patterns of mobility that have been so far reported for the period in question. One reliable observation is that the institution of market reforms together with the expansion of (small) proprietary classes does not necessarily entail an order of stratification similar to that in advanced industrial societies.

Szelenyi (1988) proposed for Hungary the theory of interrupted embourgeoisement that people who took part in private farming most actively in the reform era came from those whose families had had experience in similar activities in the market economy before the arrival of the communist regime. According to his analysis, efforts by the communist government to suppress the private sector could not be maintained permanently. In a slightly different manner, Nee's (1989) initial version of the theory of market transition in the case of socialist China assumed that the people who fared well in agriculture during the reform era were usually direct producers, who were least connected with the state socialist command (or redistributive) economy. His findings can be taken to imply that Chinese peasants were likely to form the pool of recruitment for agricultural entrepreneurs. Although his subsequent analysis (Nee 1996) of a data set from a nationwide

survey in China further reiterated a decline in the significance of positional power based on redistribution in the course of market transition as compared to the gains of producers and entrepreneurs, the implication of this piece of analysis for the pattern of intergenerational mobility in the country has not been worked out.

However, some studies stressed that the dynamism of private sector in a reforming socialist economy was basically injected by cadres (Rona-Tas 1994). Taking advantage of their official positions, the cadres could enjoy a competitive edge over others in obtaining means of production, gaining access to potential markets, gathering valuable information about state policies, cultivating relationships with other incumbents in state bureaucracy, and so forth. All of these work in the cadres' favour to convert their political power into economic benefits. In short, it is inferred that cadres can make use of their advantageous positions to set up and operate companies and, eventually, become successful private entrepreneurs.

An intermediate point of view was suggested by Nee (1991). In his attempt to refine the theory of market transition under partial reforms, Nee (1991) found that successful agricultural entrepreneurs in rural China were usually those who had formerly been cadres and had also acquired substantial work experience in organizing agricultural activities. This finding, partly echoing Rona-Tas' and others' results, is indicative of the fundamental importance of the past or present incumbent positions in state bureaucracy in getting ahead in the market-oriented economy (Bian and Logan 1996). Finally, it is worth noting a recent study of job-shift patterns in socialist China by Zhou, Tuma and Moen (1997), attempting to challenge the above view of the periodization of the development of state socialist societies from top to bottom. They found that the limited variations in the patterns of career mobility from 1949 to 1994 revealed by their analyses tended to suggest a minimal change in the underlying mechanisms of stratification, arguing the case for continuing importance of redistributive institutions in shaping job-shift patterns in the

reform era. Nonetheless, we should be mindful of the fact that their study only covers urban areas of China. As a whole, the problem for mobility researchers is therefore how, in the light of the evidence largely based on *intragenerational mobility*,[3] it is possible to arrive at an overall pattern of *intergenerational mobility* for the period before and during the reform era. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish whether there are any socio-institutional structures that underlie such mobility.

Social and Institutional Structure as a Mobility Context

In addressing the global demise of state socialism, Walder (1994) insisted on the importance of constructing a theory of order before starting with any theory of change. He stated that "there must have been institutional mechanisms that served to maintain order in the old regime... and these institutions must have eroded in ways that we do not yet adequately understand" (Walder 1994:298). The study of intergenerational mobility in state socialist societies to date shows a lack of attention to this issue. Indeed, all of the previous studies work on an implicit assumption that people in state socialist societies before the reform era were socially mobile independently of any structural or institutional constraints. We therefore need to ask: To what extent is any significant change in mobility patterns associated with the variation or weakening of socio-institutional constraints?

Neglecting how the social or institutional structures mediate the mobility process would likely lead to mis-specification of structural parameters for mobility (Breiger 1995; Kerckhoff 1995). One of the most distinctive features of the countries with monopoly state power is the suppression of non-state structures and the erection of formal institutional ones devised to achieve various state goals. An obvious example would be the emphasis placed by the communist government on attaining a high degree of overfull employment (Granick 1987), which, as a result, gave

rise to a number of structural characteristics of the labour force. A few illustrations will suffice. In the former Soviet Union, the context in which workers held their jobs was characterized by the following features, namely, the *de facto* provision of the job right for the vast bulk of the labour force, the partial practice of social and organized recruitment, the over-protection of incompetence on the shop floor etc. (Barber 1986). Paradoxically, workers in the former Soviet Union could enjoy certain freedom of occupational choice as a result. In Poland, former Czechoslovakia or even Hungary, for example, administrative or legal measures were relied upon to enforce the work discipline in view of serious labour shortages, such as, a three-year obligation to work in assigned jobs for graduates (Fallenbuchl 1987).

It would be implausible to argue on the above evidence that similar institutional constraints prevail and generate a uniform pattern of influence on the underlying structure of the mobility process. However, given the ubiquitous socialist state machinery some noteworthy institutional structures should emerge systematically or accidentally. The crux of the issue is therefore to find out those structural features in a particular society and to ascertain their probable impacts on mobility nationally or cross-nationally. Any fruitful study of intergenerational mobility in state socialist societies should therefore begin by identifying the socio-institutional structure that is essential to the transmission or disruption of parental status and resources.[4]

Employment Status, Work Sector System and Intergenerational Mobility in Contemporary China

Socialist China presents an interesting case to illuminate how the socio-institutional structure shapes the pattern of intergenerational mobility. Past attempts at depicting the overall picture of mobility in traditional and imperial China largely relied on historical data, which inevitably limited their theoretical and methodological vigour. Their conclusions could probably be dismissed by

contemporary mobility researchers as relatively insignificant because they drew mainly on the evidence of inflow mobility (Ho 1962; Chow 1966). To the best of our knowledge, conventional mobility matrix analysis with solid theoretical underpinnings has been applied to survey data collected from socialist China in recent years (Cheng and Dai 1995). Similar kinds of studies, which focus on the intergenerational transmission of occupational status (Blau and Ruan 1990; Lin and Bian 1991), only follow the tradition of the work on status attainment.[5] Nevertheless, two of the authors, Lin and Bian, rightfully argue that the institutional structure worthy of consideration in the process of status attainment in China was the work sector in which a person held his or her job. According to their analysis, the question of the intergenerational transmission of social status in China is not so much a matter of occupational inheritance as an inheritance of work sector. The work sector in China as an institutional impediment to or furtherance of social mobility plays an extremely important role in determining people's career opportunities or even life chances.[6]

With the formal establishment of the government in 1949, the Chinese communists set in motion programmes of industrial nationalization and agricultural collectivization respectively in urban and rural areas, similar to the case in other state socialist societies in Eastern Europe. Rapid expansion of the state and collective sectors[7] was effected at the expense of the market economy (Howe 1971): private property was expropriated, and small or large proprietorial business activities were prohibited. In place of the labour market, a job assignment system was instituted to allocate urban youth to work units in several types of work sectors, such as state or collective sectors. That is to say, under the work sector system, most of the urban dwellers were in effect state or collective employees despite the insignificant existence of self-employed, small proprietors or peddlers in cities throughout the communist rule (Solinger 1984). Similarly, the agricultural collectivization turned the vast majority of people in the countryside into state or collective peasants, virtually suppressing proprietorial or entrepreneurial farming activities in China.

More importantly, urban workers were "tucked in" their work units whereby transfer to other units was effectively suppressed, and mobility across various types of work sectors nearly impossible. In this connection, a system of occupational inheritance (*dingti*) was being adopted in urban areas from the 1950s until the mid-1980s, permitting "the transfer of the right of occupation from father to son upon the retirement of the father" (Korzec 1992:18). Furthermore, the population registration system in socialist China, the *hukou*, buttressed the system of work sector by providing a basis for establishing identity and citizenship, thereby serving as an important means to check rural-urban migration and other forms of population movement. Above all, the employment status of people in China was considerably shaped by the socio-institutional structures of the country: those of proprietor or farming-owner origins together with the rest of urban or rural dwellers had to work in state or collective sectors as employees in the communist era, the possibility of moving from one work sector to another being very slim.

There is no gainsaying the fact that urban or rural dwellers in China might have experienced some changes in their employment status across the various periods of communist rule. One of the major sources of such variation could come from internal migration in the country. More accurately, it relates to the effectiveness of the control over population movement which in turn depended on the relative emphasis of the political leadership and the developmental priorities (Eckstein 1977). An example will suffice to illustrate the point. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the functioning of the work sector system was possibly impeded to the extent that urban youth upon their graduation were not completely subject to the allocation by the job assignment system. They were in consequence sent to the countryside to work as peasants or became urban peddlers who were not officially classified as state or collective employees. Nevertheless, it would be presumptuous to infer from the above basis that there was a massive scale of intergenerational mobility taking place across employer/self-employed and employee positions in the state so-

cialist redistributive economy, given the internal migration. As documented by Chan (1994), the communist rule before the reform era was marked by intermittent rural-urban and urban-rural migration whose impacts on intergenerational mobility across positions of different employment status may well be transitory. What actually interests us is the more enduring change in the employment status of people in China since the reform era.

With the coming of market reforms and the partial formalization of private sector since the late 1970s, there is a multitude of kaleidoscopic changes in China which have a great bearing on the operation of the work sector system and intergenerational mobility. To illustrate, the reform of state enterprises provides an impetus for the adoption of hiring and firing procedures, encouraging both managers and employees to view inter-firm and inter-sector transfers more favourably (Davis 1990, 1992a). The burgeoning private sector employment creates numerous gainful job opportunities that attract employees in state or collective work units into the emerging sector to become small proprietors or self-employed entrepreneurs (Ikels 1996). Equally important, the lucrative job vacancies in urban state or collective sectors have "pulled" out of rural areas much of the economically active labour force previously engaging in the agricultural sector (Solinger 1995). Even more noteworthy developments have occurred in the countryside. Together with the formal dismantlement of the basic structure of the rural collective sector — production brigades and communes — rural industrialization and proprietorial farming have grown rapidly and begun to take a distinctive form. Nowadays, the management of rural enterprises is not only in the hands of village or county government (Blecher and Shue 1996), but also in those of private entrepreneurs. To a certain extent, proprietorial farming reflects a very nascent form of agribusiness. It may well be possible that the movement of people from employee positions to self-employed or employer positions has engendered interesting patterns of intra- or even inter-generational mobility which were not so common previously. In short, contrary to the pre-reform period, the most typical development in the reform era is

characterized by the resuscitation of a market-oriented economy (Kraus 1991) where there has been a precipitate rise of entrepreneurs who own financial capital and hire workers for their businesses or agricultural activities, such as private entrepreneurs (*siying qiye*), individual household enterprises (*getihu*), specialized agricultural households (*zhuanyehu*), and so on. But then, what are their family origins? Is there any relationship between their family backgrounds and their present employer or self-employed positions in the economy? How does the expansion of market-oriented economy lead to changes in the pattern of intergenerational mobility? Is it empirically possible to argue that movement across positions of different employment status is a prerequisite to any significant change in the intergenerational mobility in socialist China?

Approach and Hypotheses

This study is concerned with mapping out mobility patterns across class locations rather than locations in occupational or status hierarchies. A major merit of the former — class — approach is its conceptual relevance to our study. Implicit in the class approach to the study of mobility is the assumption that employment status constitutes an important part of the definition of class location. By embodying this assumption, the class-based approach to occupational classification for social mobility can aptly unveil the drastic changes of occupational structure typical of state socialist societies. Put more concretely, the class framework can squarely reveal the socio-economic transformations occurring in socialist China, i.e., the establishment of the state socialist regime which suppressed self-employed or proprietorial economic activities, followed by the subsequent revival of these business activities in the period of market reform.[8]

Three hypotheses are set forth. Our first hypothesis postulates that the level of social fluidity tended to rise when the Chinese communist government adopted affirmative action policies, and

then to decline when such policies were relaxed in the reform era. The thesis also expects differing patterns of intergenerational mobility associated with the rise and the fall, as detailed in the first section. For convenience, it is henceforth labelled as the *thesis of state socialist fluidity*.[9] More elaboration is in order as the variations in the fluidity level or pattern over time are now situated in the Chinese context. At least one crucial epoch in the history of the communist rule merits attention. The Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) has widely been interpreted as exerting an unusual influence on intergenerational mobility: social fluidity was greater during this period compared with that in earlier or later ones (Parish 1984; Blau and Ruan 1990; Davis 1992b). We term this short-lived rise in societal openness as *ideologically-induced social fluidity* since the underlying forces at work were mainly attributable to the political leadership in those days. This will be taken into account when testing the thesis against the Chinese data.

The second hypothesis to be tested is the *thesis of industrialism*, with which students of social mobility are familiar. As socialist China has, since the communist takeover, undergone decades of industrial development, it is worthwhile to examine whether the logic of industrialism can override the impact of deliberate political intervention on intergenerational mobility. The thesis holds that industrial societies may share similar structural features, such as a wholesale occupational "upgrading" and increasingly equal mobility opportunities among individuals of differing social origins. In a methodological sense, it implies a general increase in social fluidity, as indicated by a linear (or even non-linear) decline in the intergenerational association of occupational positions over years. Past research appeared to show a temporal invariance in intergenerational association among industrial societies (Hope 1981; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992); however, more recent studies utilizing sophisticated statistical techniques and comprehensive data sets tend to give some compelling empirical evidence consistent with the thesis (Hout 1988; Ganzeboom, Luijkx and Treiman 1989).

The third hypothesis stems from our observation concerning the intergenerational movement of people in China across positions of different employment status. Our *thesis of socio-institutional change* proposes that changes in people's employment status positions in state socialist societies intermingle with intergenerational mobility so much so that detailed patterns of mobility can only be revealed if such changes are taken into consideration. The thesis is premised on the notion that the structural momentum of mobility in socialist China derives from the socio-institutional structure relevant to the society. It reasons that intergenerational mobility in China does not exist *per se*. Nor can it be studied independently of the socio-institutional context in question. To be precise, the thesis claims that the intergenerational mobility across positions of different employment statuses as partly occasioned by the loosening of the work sector system constitutes the major source of changing fluidity over time in the country. Generally, it expects that the intergenerational class inheritance is much greater for employee than for employer or self-employed positions. Further, the thesis predicts that the fluidity measured in this connection is slightly greater, albeit not necessarily significant, when the Chinese communist government adopted temporary and *ad hoc* policies contradicting the normal operation of the work sector system during the Cultural Revolution. More importantly, the fluidity is the greatest when the entire socio-institutional structure experiences genuine changes, such as those found in the reform era — the gradual dissolution of the work sector system alongside the emerging importance of self-employed, entrepreneurial or proprietorial economic activities in the economy. Because the aforementioned fundamental change in fluidity is basically concerned with the increasing dominance of market mechanisms, it is briefly referred to as *market-driven intergenerational mobility*. This will be taken up when the thesis of socio-institutional change is tested against the Chinese data. Table 1 schematizes the respective expectations of the above three theses.

Table 1   Theoretical Expectations of the Theses of State Socialist
             Fluidity, Industrialism, and Socio-institutional Change

	Levels of social fluidity in the three periods of contemporary history of China		
	Economic recovery	The Cultural Revolution	The reform era
State socialist fluidity*	High	The highest	Low
Industrialism	Continuous rise in fluidity		
Socio-institutional change	Low (with high level of intergenerational inheritance in employee positions)	(insignificant increase)	High (notable and significant increase)

Note: * Refer to text for some characteristic patterns of mobility expected
           by the thesis of state socialist fluidity.

Data, Method and Model

Data

We use data from the Social Structure in Modern China Survey
(SSMCS) conducted at the beginning of 1988. It covers residents in
both urban and rural areas from Beijing, Shanghai, Liaoning,
Hebei, Shandong and Guizhou. The fieldwork of the survey was
jointly carried out by the Institute of Sociology at the Chinese
Academy of Social Sciences, the corresponding Institutes in Bei-
jing, Liaoning, Hebei, Shandong, Guizhou, and finally by the De-
partment of Sociology at Shanghai University. The sample design
was a combination of multi-stage quota and random sampling
(see Appendix A). The response rates achieved by the survey
generally approximate to 80 per cent, resulting in 4,723 and 4,658
individual cases for rural and urban areas, respectively. Having
implemented some *post hoc* weighting procedures, the final sam-

ple as compared with census data for China is found to be fairly
representative of the national population in terms of occupational
distribution. Due to the slightly differing coverage of the rural and
urban surveys, we shall restrict our analysis to the male national
labour force aged between 25 and 54,[10] amounting to 3,514
weighted cases.[11]

Although the occupational classification used in the SSMCS is
rather crude, it is the one reported in the *Statistical Yearbook of
China* and has been employed in previous studies (Lin and Bian
1991; Zhou et al. 1997). The occupational variables are measured
with the classifications: (1) professionals, (2) high- and middle-
grade cadres, (3) other nonmanuals, (4) sales workers, (5) service
workers, (6) agricultural workers, and (7) production and trans-
portation workers. More importantly, additional information on
the employment status of respondents to the SSMCS is given by a
special code for the occupational categories, broadly distinguish-
ing employees from employers or the self-employed. Yet, the
above scheme for occupational classification only applies to urban
respondents, urban respondents' fathers and rural respondents'
fathers, but not to rural respondents, for which two schemes were
used in the SSMCS to determine their occupations. Details of such
differences are described in Appendix B, which also show our
effort to construct a class scheme that can be reasonably applied to
the urban and rural occupational classifications alike.

The present class scheme differs from the conventional one[12]
in two important respects. First, "cadre" is taken here as a single
category, a broadly defined occupational group in China. Since
most of the research for state socialist societies has pointed out
their political and economic importance (cf. Zhou et al. 1996,
1997), we treat them as an independent category in our mobility
analysis. Secondly, the original classification of manual workers is
quite crude. No information about their skill levels is available
from the SSMCS so as to distinguish skilled from non-skilled
workers. This is a problem to which no satisfactory solution can be
found.

Method

Our objective is to analyse tables of intergenerational mobility from fathers' class positions to those of the male respondents who were aged between 25 and 54 at the time of interview.[13] We suppose that the Chinese respondents generally entered employment when they were 16 to 18, since the provision of tertiary education was rather limited in China. Precisely because of the extremely rare opportunities for career or job mobility in pre-reform China[14] (Davis 1990, 1992a), it is safe to further assume that the respondents could more or less reach their classes of "destination" in their late-20s. Therefore, the first of these cohorts comprises respondents aged 45-54, who probably attained their occupational mature stage during the period of the Great Leap Forward and recovery (1958-1965). The majority of the second cohort of respondents, who were 35-44 years of age at the time of interview, reached their occupational maturity during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The third comprises men aged 25-34, whose crucial working lives have fallen within the first decade of the reform era (1977-1988). Though the birth cohort construction is not meant to be completely mutually exclusive in terms of the socio-economic circumstances the members within each cohort experienced, the cohorts are fairly indicative of the different periods of the communist rule in China.

Some possible limitations to birth cohort construction as a means of studying trends in class mobility in China are worth noting. First, members in each cohort are only present-day survivors, but not true cohort members. All of those who suffered during political upheavals might be dead and were hence excluded from our "synthetic" cohort construction. Following this reasoning, long-range downward mobility might have been understated in our study. Yet this is not supported by our findings. Secondly, the occupations of respondents in the late 1980s might not be a reliable indicator of their class positions in the previous periods as those who had experienced the downward mobility during the revolutionary era, like the Cultural Revolution, could

catch up subsequently and get better jobs in the reform era. However, a field study conducted in urban China in the late 1980s shows unambiguously that residents there actually suffered high rates of skidding even in the reform era due to the policy measures of the late 1960s (Davis 1992b). In a similar vein, it might not be entirely convincing to assume that those in the youngest cohort were at the stage of occupational maturity in the reform era, especially with regard to the gradual opening of various employment opportunities during this period. However, relevant studies indicate that increases in job mobility up to the late 1980s are only marginal, if not insignificant (Davis 1992a). Nonetheless, we concede that further increases in job mobility from the 1990s onwards, especially among those with years of work experience and good social networks, could possibly nullify any attempt to use pseudo-cohorts formed on the basis of the occupational information collected in the 1990s to infer past mobility trends and patterns (Bian 1994). In any event, the results to be presented here can be seen as chronicling the intergenerational mobility pattern in socialist China by the late 1980s.

Model

Following the advances of the association model (Clogg and Shihadeh 1994; Wong 1990, 1994, 1995), we apply to the Chinese data the hybrid model (Wong 1992) that incorporates both log-linear and log-multiplicative row and column effects (*RC II*). In the original formulation, the hybrid model is devised to assess the relative importance of vertical and nonvertical mobility effects in industrial societies. The *RC II* has two particular strengths here. First, instead of assuming a fixed order of row and column class categories as does the log-linear model, the *RC II* estimates the distances between the class categories *a posteriori*, avoiding any strategy for ranking such categories. Indeed, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to rank by some external measures the class positions in China which have experienced decades of turbulence and transformation. Secondly, the hybrid model permits us

to incorporate some interesting mobility effects, such as that of the linear trend (Wong 1995) posited by the industrialism thesis. Likewise, the thesis of socio-institutional change is operationalized and represented here by some parameters of employment status inheritance, which can test the inheritance density within positions of the same employment status or the mobility propensity across positions of different employment statuses. To control for the effect of immobility across farm and non-farm positions in China, the model also incorporates the parameters of economic sector inheritance (see Appendix C for the design matrices).

The hybrid structural model of class mobility to be analysed in the present study can be expressed as:

$$F_{ij} = \eta \; \tau_i \; \tau_j \; \delta_i \; \gamma_m \; \lambda_q \; \exp(\phi\mu_i\nu_j) \tag{1}$$

where F_{ij} denotes the expected frequency in the ith row (origin) and jth column (destination) of the table ($i = 1,...I; j = 1,...J$), η is the geometric mean of F_{ij}; τ_i and τ_j are row and column marginal parameters, δ_i is the diagonal effect parameter; γ_m is the employment status inheritance parameter, with $m = 1,2$ for employee positions, and employer/self-employed positions respectively; λ_q is the economic sector inheritance parameter, with $q = 1,2$ for nonfarm and farm sectors; ϕ is the intrinsic association between rows and columns; and μ_i and ν_j are row and column scaling scores, subject to the normalization that $\sum_i \mu_i = \sum_j \nu_j = 0$ and $\sum_i \mu_i^2 = \sum_j \nu_j^2 = 1$. In addition, since we analyse square mobility tables, there could be a further constraint that $\mu_i = \nu_j$ when $i = j$, that is, equal scaling distances between origins and destinations.

If the birth cohort (K) is added to the model and a complete heterogeneous model is estimated, the expected frequency, F_{ijk}, with $k = 1,...,K$, may be written as:

$$F_{ijk} = \eta \; \tau_i \; \tau_j \; \tau_k \; \tau_{ik} \; \tau_{jk} \; \delta_{ik} \; \gamma_{mk} \; \lambda_{qk} \; \exp(\phi_k\mu_{ik}\nu_{jk}) \tag{2}$$

However, of great interest is the addition of some constraints to equation 2, such as a linear restriction on ϕ_k,

$$\phi_k = \phi \; (1 + ak') \tag{3}$$

where k' is the cohort covariate, ranging from 0 to $K-1$.[15] Another interesting constraint could be that on the cohort variation in γ_{mk} or λ_{qk} such that they vary across collapsed levels of K, instead of the original three levels. Intermediate models with constraints imposed on each of the relative mobility parameters are to be employed to test the three hypotheses discussed in the previous section.

Results

Test of Different Mobility Effects within Each Birth Cohort

A series of log-linear and log-multiplicative models are fitted to each birth cohort.[16] A brief comparison between the weighted sample and the occupational distribution of the Chinese census data (not shown here) does not suggest any strong evidence of the expansion across cohorts of the service class, which would be shown by the first category of our class scheme, professionals. On the contrary, there is a moderate expansion of manual workers and peasants, indicating the developing nature of the Chinese economy. In addition, owing to the enormous and undiminished size of the agricultural sector, which severely limits the extent of intergenerational mobility, the percentage of mobile respondents is not great, standing at around 40 to 50. Taken together, the above findings suggest that socialist China as a whole is basically a developing society at the early stage of industrialization with the predominance of primary and secondary sectors of production.

Table 2 reports log-likelihood ratio statistics (L^2) and BIC values together with degrees of freedom for the models listed in the upper panel. Neither the conditional independence nor the quasi-independence model fits the data as indicated by the large L^2. The quasi-symmetry model (Model 3) measures whether the mobility pattern is symmetrical within each cohort. Judging from the chi-square points, the quasi-symmetry model evidently gives a better

Table 2   Log-likelihood Ratio Statistics L^2 and BIC (in parentheses) for Vertical Association, Economic Sector Inheritance, Employment Status Inheritance, and Diagonal Effect in Each Birth Cohort

Models and contrasts		Cohort		
		45-54	35-44	25-34
Models	d.f.		L^2 (BIC)	
(1) Conditional independence	36	110.06 (-132.6)	284.70 (24.1)	268.03 (10.3)
(2) Quasi-independence	29	78.71 (-116.8)	172.88 (-37.1)	140.25 (-67.4)
(3) Quasi-symmetry	15	15.17 (-86.0)	35.54 (-73.1)	23.32 (-84.1)
(4) Uniform association	35	92.18 (-143.8)	181.89 (-71.5)	192.11 (-58.5)
(5) Equal RC, diagonal effect, economic sector inheritance, and employment status inheritance	21	17.80 (-123.8)	44.11 (-122.4)	32.86 (-117.5)
(6) Model 5 less vertical association	22	39.77 (-108.5)	46.66 (-112.6)	60.62 (-96.9)
(7) Model 5 less economic sector inheritance	22	17.96 (-130.4)	44.17 (-115.1)	32.98 (-124.5)
(8) Model 5 less employment status inheritance	24	32.35 (-129.4)	48.84 (-124.9)	33.23 (-124.3)
(9) Model 5 less diagonal effect	27	19.6 (-162.4)	66.54 (-129.0)	48.36 (-144.9)
Contrasts				
(1) Model (6) vs Model (5)	1	21.97*	2.55	27.76*
(2) Model (7) vs Model (5)	1	0.16	0.06	0.12
(3) Model (8) vs Model (5)	3	14.55*	4.73	0.37
(4) Model (9) vs Model (5)	6	1.8	22.43*	15.50*

Note: * p < .05.

fit to the data compared to the first or second model. The important finding so far is that mobility patterns tend to vary across the three cohorts.

To achieve greater parsimony, we fit to the data Model 4 to determine whether there is a linear-by-linear interaction along an *a priori* ranking of class categories.[17] Model 4 does not perform well as the residual deviances range from about 100 to 200 for each cohort on 35 degrees of freedom. Of great import is the introduction of three mobility effects in the log-multiplicative equal row and column effects model, i.e., diagonal effect, employment status and economic sector inheritance (see Appendix C). These effects are hypothesized on our understanding that intergenerational transmission of occupational or class positions in China can be traced to three distinct sources, namely, the direct inheritance of such positions from family or parents, the inheritance of employment status positions fostered by the socio-institutional structures of the society, and finally, the inheritance of farm positions induced by the developing nature of the economy (at least before the reform era). All of these effects are incorporated in Model 5 as a kind of *nonvertical* mobility (cf., Wong 1990, 1992). On balance, the BIC values tend to prefer Model 5 to the previous models. The last four models (from 6 to 9) are nested on Model 5 so that we can compare the relative importance of different mobility effects for each cohort, as shown in the lower panel.

Within the oldest cohort, both the employment status inheritance (contrast 3) and vertical mobility (contrast 1) significantly account for the mobility regime. This finding is indicative of the importance of employment status inheritance and its growing impact on intergenerational mobility at the early stage of socialist reconstruction in China. Moreover, contrast 1 in the oldest cohort suggests that intergenerational mobility during that period could be captured by a hierarchy of class positions estimated by the model (to be explained in the subsequent section). The chi-square distributions for the second cohort, however, show that none of the mobility effects is significant, except for the diagonal effect (contrast 4), whose significance also extends to members of the

youngest cohort (contrast 4). Finally, the influence of vertical mobility effect (contrast 1) tends to rise in the youngest cohort whereas the diminishing importance of employment status inheritance (contrast 3) to class mobility in that cohort appears to reflect the gradual change in its importance in the reform era.[18]

Overall, the finding on the variations across cohorts in vertical mobility in the case of China is tentatively consistent with the thesis of state socialist fluidity which asserts a *change* across cohorts in social fluidity. To illustrate, intergenerational mobility in the oldest cohort could be represented by a vertical hierarchy of class positions. However, the class mobility within the second cohort, whose members entered employment during the Cultural Revolution, could not be captured by any vertical class hierarchy (contrast 1 in the second cohort).[19] It is highly likely that intergenerational mobility as measured in the second cohort could be so unpatterned that no identifiable hierarchy could account for the intrinsic association between class origins and destinations. On the contrary, the mobility in the youngest cohort reverts to the previous state so that the general association between class origins and destinations can be summarized by a vertical hierarchy as that in the oldest cohort. To a certain extent, our preliminary findings based on this weighted sample are in line with Blau and Ruan's study (1990) in urban China that the process of status attainment during the Cultural Revolution contrasted markedly with that in earlier or later periods. Finally, we note the diminishing importance of employment status inheritance and the general insignificance of economic sector inheritance throughout the three cohorts. Nevertheless, we decide to retain the parameter of economic sector inheritance as a control factor for subsequent analysis primarily because of its strong theoretical justification in the context of socialist China.

"Visiting" the Three Hypotheses

While Table 2 offers us some preliminary evidence of change across cohorts in social fluidity and its constituent elements, the

overall pattern of variation remains murky. Table 3 explores in detail the relative importance of various mobility effects and the pattern of such changes across cohorts by analysing the three cohorts altogether. Models and descriptions are shown in the upper panel whereas selective contrasts are in the lower panel.

Model 1 does not fit the data well. Model 2, which is commonly referred to as the constant social fluidity model, specifies a global invariance in odds-ratios across three cohorts. The results show that the model fits the data at 0.05 level of probability and only 4.4 per cent of cases are misclassified.[20] Although its BIC is negative, it does not provide any information as to the structure of the mobility regime and the pattern of possible change. (Appendices D.1, D.2 and D.3 give three-dimensional pictures of father-son interaction parameters for each of the cohorts based on Model 2.) In order to identify any possible source of cross-cohort variation, we fit a series of log-multiplicative hybrid association models in the following. Model 3 hypothesizes a complete heterogeneous model (equation 2) with diagonal effect, employment status and economic sector inheritance effects. The goodness-of-fit of the model is 47.9 chi-square points with a negative BIC. To reduce its heterogeneity, the equality constraint on row and column effects is imposed ($\mu_{ik} = v_{jk}$) within each cohort. Significant improvement is made, as shown by the more negative BIC of Model 4. Model 5 demonstrates that the goodness-of-fit can be improved by assuming equal row and column effects across all cohorts ($\mu_i = v_j$).[21] This is a finding of substantive importance, since it suggests a common class structure prevailing over the cohorts covered by the present study, at least insofar as class structure is defined by mobility chances. Given that the scaling of class categories can be taken as identical across tables, it is worth further examining and comparing other mobility parameters.

To determine if additional constraints can be imposed, we carry out the following tests. Model 6, which postulates a homogeneous diagonal effect across cohorts (δ_i), compares favourably with Model 5 in terms of BIC statistic, though the chi-square points difference is marginally significant (contrast 1). To further

Table 3   Results of Log-linear and Log-multiplicative Analyses of Cross-cohort Variation in Class Mobility: Three Cohorts (N = 3,528)

Model descriptions and contrasts	d.f.	L^2	BIC	Index of dissimilarity
Models of cross-cohort variation				
(1) Conditional independence	108	662.8	-219.4	13.25
(2) Full two-way interaction	72	91.3	-496.8	4.37
(3) Complete heterogeneous model (μ_{ik}, v_{jk}, ϕ_k, δ_{lk}, γ_{mk}, and λ_{qk})	48	47.9	-344.2	1.74
(4) Heterogeneous equal RC, heterogeneous diagonal effect, employment status inheritance, economic sector inheritance, and intrinsic association ($\mu_{ik} = v_{jk}$, ϕ_k, δ_{lk}, γ_{mk}, and λ_{qk})	63	94.8	-419.8	3.30
(5) Homogeneous equal RC, heterogeneous diagonal effect, employment status inheritance, economic sector inheritance, intrinsic association and uniform general class inheritance ($\mu_i = v_j$, ϕ_k, δ_{lk}, ξ_k, γ_{mk} and λ_{qk})	73	111.2	-485.1	3.66
(6) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect, heterogeneous employment status inheritance, economic sector inheritance, intrinsic association, and uniform general class inheritance ($\mu_i = v_j$, ϕ_k, ξ_k, γ_{mk}, and λ_{qk} + homogeneous δ_l)	85	133.7	-560.6	4.60

Table 3   Results of Log-linear and Log-multiplicative Analyses of Cross-cohort Variation in Class Mobility: Three Cohorts (N = 3,528) (Continued)

	d.f.	L^2	BIC	Index of dissimilarity
(7) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect and uniform general class inheritance, heterogeneous employment status inheritance, economic sector inheritance, and intrinsic association ($\mu_i = v_j$, ϕ_k, γ_{mk} and λ_{qk} + homogeneous δ_l + homogeneous ξ)	87	137.6	-573.1	5.12
(8) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect, uniform general class inheritance, and employment status inheritance, heterogeneous economic sector inheritance, and intrinsic association ($\mu_i = v_j$, ϕ_k, and λ_{qk} + homogeneous δ_i + homogeneous ξ)	89	149.1	-577.9	5.56
(9) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect, uniform general class inheritance, and economic sector inheritance, heterogeneous employment status inheritance, and intrinsic association ($\mu_i = v_j$, ϕ_k, and γ_{mk} + homogeneous δ_i + homogeneous λ_q)	89	143.6	-583.4	4.94
(10) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect, uniform general class inheritance, and economic sector inheritance, heterogeneous employment status inheritance (with first and second cohorts collapsed), and intrinsic association ($\mu_i = v_j$, ϕ_k, and $\gamma_{mk'}$ (constrained 2 levels) + homogeneous δ_i, ξ, and λ_q)	90	147.0	-588.2	4.99

Table 3   Results of Log-linear and Log-multiplicative Analyses of Cross-cohort Variation in Class Mobility: Three Cohorts (N = 3,528) (Continued)

Model descriptions and contrasts	d.f.	L^2	BIC	Index of dissimilarity
(11) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect, uniform general class inheritance, and economic sector inheritance, heterogeneous employment status inheritance (with first and third cohorts collapsed), and intrinsic association ($\mu_4 = \nu_j$, ϕ_k, and γ_{mk}'' (constrained 2 levels) + homogeneous δ_i, ξ, and λ_q)	90	153.8	-581.3	5.39
(12) Homogeneous equal RC, homogeneous diagonal effect, uniform general class inheritance, and economic sector inheritance, heterogeneous employment status inheritance (with second and third cohorts collapsed), and intrinsic association ($\mu_4 = \nu_j$, ϕ_k, and γ_{mk}''' (constrained 2 levels) + homogeneous δ_i, ξ, and λ_q)	90	147.2	-588.0	5.26
(13) Model 10, with heterogeneous uniform general class inheritance replacing the homogeneous one (Model 10 + ξ_k)	88	145.6	-573.3	4.81
(14) Model 10, with linear constraint on intrinsic association replacing the heterogeneous one (Model 10 + ϕ_k (1+ak))	91	147.0	-596.3	4.50
(15) Model 14, with linear constraint on uniform general class inheritance replacing the homogeneous one (Model 14 + ξ_k (1+bk))	90	145.7	-589.5	4.74

Table 3   Results of Log-linear and Log-multiplicative Analyses of Cross-cohort Variation in Class Mobility: Three Cohorts (N = 3,528) (Continued)

Model descriptions and contrasts	d.f.	L^2	BIC	Index of dissimilarity
(16) Model 10, with homogeneous intrinsic association replacing the heterogeneous one ($\mu_4 = \nu_j$, and γ_{mk}' (constrained 2 levels) + homogeneous ϕ, δ_i, ξ, and λ_q)	92	148.2	-603.3	5.04
(17) Model 16, with collapsed diagonal effect replacing the original one (Model 16 with δ_r (constrained 5 levels))	94	150.4	-617.4	5.06
Contrasts				
(1) Model (6) vs Model (5)	12	22.5*		
(2) Model (7) vs Model (6)	2	3.9		
(3) Model (8) vs Model (7)	2	11.5*		
(4) Model (9) vs Model (7)	2	6.0*		
(5) Model (10) vs Model (9)	1	3.4		
(6) Model (11) vs Model (9)	1	10.2*		
(7) Model (12) vs Model (9)	1	3.6		

Note: * $p < .05$.

simplify the model, we then add the constraint of constant cross-cohort uniform general class inheritance (ξ) in Model 7. With an increase of 2 degrees of freedom, BIC statistic becomes even more negative (-573.1). Contrast 2 in the lower panel of Table 3 also leads us to prefer Model 7 to Model 6. According to the above analysis, neither the underlying class structure, as defined by mobility chances, nor the diagonal effect and the uniform general class inheritance effect vary across cohorts. What, if anything, can be identified to show changing mobility chances in China?

Model 8 specifies a constant inheritance effect in employment status (γ_m) whereas Model 9 hypothesizes a similar effect in economic sector (λ_q). With a more negative BIC (-583.4) and fewer misclassified cases (4.94 per cent), Model 9 evidently fits the data better than does Model 8. That is to say, the effect of employment status inheritance (γ_{mk}) on intergenerational class mobility tends to vary significantly across the three cohorts but that of the economic sector remains invariant (λ_q). The next interesting question is: What could be the pattern of such variation? There are three possible ways of collapsing the three cohorts, each of which has distinct implications that will be taken into account by the following models. Model 10 ($\gamma_{mk'}$) collapses the first and second cohorts while leaving the third intact. This model singles out the distinctive effect of *market-driven mobility* as explained earlier. Model 11 ($\gamma_{mk''}$) recognizes the overriding importance of *ideologically-induced fluidity* during the Cultural Revolution and, therefore, collapses the first and third cohorts and treats the second cohort as an independent category. Finally, Model 12 ($\gamma_{mk'''}$), which assumes a similar effect of *market-driven mobility* and *ideologically-induced fluidity* on intergenerational mobility, collapses the last two cohorts while leaving the first cohort as a single category. Results of the three models are again given in Table 3. Judging from either the BIC or chi-square differences (contrasts 5, 6 and 7), Model 10 performs slightly better than the rest of them. Our findings unequivocally suggest that any changing mobility chances over time in China are closely associated with the change in employment

status inheritance. Such a change, if it really occurs in the country, commences in the reform era.

As pointed out earlier, both the theses of industrialism and state socialist fluidity expect a change over time in social fluidity. Is there any other sign of varying mobility pattern that may be captured by the two theses, in addition to the changing employment status inheritance considered above? Models 13 to 16 are formulated to test these hypothetical predictions and all of these models are nested in one way or another. By allowing the parameters of intrinsic association (ϕ_k) and uniform general class inheritance (ξ_k) to be free to vary, Model 13 seeks to determine whether the two mobility effects vary significantly in a systematic or random manner expected by the theses of industrialism or state socialist fluidity. The BIC again indicates a preference for Model 10, rather than Model 13 positing the fluctuating mobility pattern. Estimates of the two sets of parameters (ϕ_k and ξ_k) in Model 13 are not significant either. Model 14, specifying the thesis of industrialism, retains all the constraints of Model 10, but imposes a linear constraint ($\phi_k(1+ak)$) on the intrinsic association parameter (Wong 1995). The more negative BIC statistic makes Model 14 (-596.3) preferable.[22] A more stringent linear constraint is postulated by Model 15, which additionally assumes a linear trend in uniform general class inheritance ($\xi_k(1+bk)$). No matter which goodness-of-fit statistic is chosen as a criterion, we should reject Model 15 in favour of Model 14. Finally, a constant cross-cohort intrinsic association model is estimated in Model 16, which at the same time retains all of the remaining features of Model 10. Model 16, notably, is preferred to the linear trend specification in Model 14 based either on the chi-square points difference or the BIC value (-603.3). Compared to all of the above models, Model 16 gives the best fit to the data. On this basis, we can argue that while the pattern of social fluidity in China does vary over time, the significant variation comes almost exclusively from the change in employment status inheritance during the reform era, irrespective of the various types of radical policies or campaigns launched under the pre-reforming Mao rule. Neither the industrialism nor the

state socialist fluidity theses offer much insight into the changing level of fluidity in China. Indeed, our finding is largely consonant with our socio-institutional change hypothesis. Finally, greater parsimony and more negative BIC value (-617.4) can be achieved by Model 17 that collapses some class categories for diagonal effect ($\delta_{i'}$).

"State Socialist" or Chinese Mobility Features

While our model choice overall supports the thesis of socio-institutional change, parameter estimates of the constrained diagonal effect ($\delta_{i'}$) from the preferred model (Model 17) tend to be consistent with some elements of the thesis of state socialist fluidity. The estimates ($\delta_{i'}$) in Table 4 indicate that petty bourgeoisie[23] and self-employed farmers,[24] usually remarkable for their intergenerational class inheritance as found in cross-national mobility studies, were somewhat unlikely to inherit their fathers' occupations in China. (Since the estimates in Table 4 are only partial effects, the net diagonal effect is partly or totally offset by the remainder in the preferred model depending on the class positions in question.) This can be seen as reflecting the sweeping effect of ownership restructuring instituted by the communist government in the early period of socialist reconstruction. In a word, the intergenerational class transmission among petty bourgeoisie and self-employed farmers was persistently disrupted across the three Chinese cohorts under study.

The scaling class scores ($\mu_i = v_j$) listed in Table 4 illustrate how the intergenerational class association pattern in China may share some mobility features with other state socialist societies. Based on these scaling scores, seven class categories are arranged in ascending order to form a hierarchy starting from other non-manual worker, professional, and so on, to self-employed farmer. The class scores can be interpreted as a probability of mobility propensity: the smaller the difference between the scores for a pair of categories, the more equal the outcome of the competition between the two categories as regards mobility from or into them.

Table 4   Parameter Estimates of Diagonal Effects and Scaling Scores for Each Class in Model 17 in Table 3

Class positions	Diagonal effects, $\delta_{i'}$	Scaling scores, $\mu_i = v_j$
Other nonmanual	0.183 (0.465)	-0.549
Professional	0.775* (0.142)	-0.411
Manual worker	0.775* (0.142)	-0.217
Cadre	0.111 (0.460)	0.075
Petty bourgeoisie	-0.937* (0.383)	0.160
Peasant	-0.045 (0.250)	0.365
Self-employed farmer	-0.937* (0.383)	0.567

Note: * $p < .05$.

In other words, the model scales occupational categories in terms of their patterns of dispersal and recruitment, with the inter-category distances becoming smaller as these patterns are more similar. As the preferred model assumes equal scaling scores for origin and destination, intergenerational mobility is the greatest between adjacent categories with the smallest score difference. Several interesting findings are worth mentioning. We firstly focus on those with agricultural backgrounds, who account for the overwhelming majority of the economically active population in China. Generally, the scores suggest a clear polarization between farm and non-farm classes in terms of the pattern of inflow into and outflow from a given category, a feature that is consistent with our basic understanding of Chinese society. In particular, there is a strong tendency for those with peasant background to

enter the two prosperous classes adjacent to them, i.e., petty bourgeoisie or self-employed farmers, who gradually re-emerge in the reform era. To a considerable extent, the mass of the agricultural population provides an indispensable source of recruitment for the property owning classes in reforming China.

In addition, the very close scaling distance between cadre and petty bourgeoisie suggests a quite high propensity for intergenerational interchange between the two classes. Given a minute outflow from the petty bourgeoisie who only constituted a marginal sector in father's generation, such a close distance can be interpreted as a quite high probability for those hailing from cadre families of becoming petty bourgeoisie.[25] This implies a cadre background advantage in setting up and managing businesses. All else being equal, a father's formal position in the state bureaucracy is an asset for a son who wishes to thrive in the market-oriented economy in China.

Another pair of classes that are characterized by a high probability of intergenerational interchange is that of professional and manual worker. Scaling scores reported in comparative mobility studies (Breen and Whelan 1985; Ganzeboom, Luijkx and Treiman 1989) normally do not indicate any close association between these two classes. Nevertheless, these estimated scores can be meaningfully interpreted in the Chinese context. The scores are basically consistent with the probable effect of the revolutionary communist policies on the intelligentsia whose offsprings had to take up manual jobs in consequence (Parish 1984). Further, the scores can be interpreted to mean that those of manual worker origin were likely to have professional jobs under extensive industrialization programmes or affirmative action policies which favoured children of manual workers in the educational or employment arena (Shirk 1982). In sum, the preferred model suggests that, with the changing employment status inheritance over time, the intergenerational mobility pattern as suggested by the parameters of diagonal effect and class scaling scores remains invariant across the three cohorts and, interestingly, the pattern is largely captured by the state socialist fluidity thesis.

Table 5 summarizes the parameter estimates of intrinsic association (ϕ), the constrained employment status ($\gamma_{mk'}$) and economic sector (λ) inheritance. While intrinsic association is invariably significant across the three cohorts, the level of employment status inheritance not only varies between the positions in question, but also the cohorts. Members of the first two cohorts with family background of employee positions are nearly five times more likely to follow in their fathers' footsteps (to become employees) than those originating and occupying employer or self-employed positions. Other things being equal, it is about two times more likely for those of employer or self-employed origins within the first two cohorts *not* to take up these positions in the economy.

Nevertheless, the probability for the youngest cohort of inheriting employee positions has dropped notably and is lower than that for the older cohorts. To illustrate, those in the youngest

Table 5   Parameter Estimates of General Association, Employment Status and Economic Sector Inheritance Effects on Class Mobility in Model 17 in Table 3

Effects	Cohort		
	45-54	35-44	25-34
General association (ϕ)	0.376*	0.376*	0.376*
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Employment status inheritance ($\gamma_{mk'}$)			
Employee positions	0.787*	0.787*	0.730*
	(0.399)	(0.399)	(0.322)
Employer or self-employed positions	-0.764*	-0.764*	0
	(0.331)	(0.331)	
Economic sector inheritance (λ)[a]			
Farm sector	0.715	0.715	0.715
	(0.680)	(0.680)	(0.680)

Notes: * p < .05.
      [a] Parameters for nonfarm sector are intrinsically set at zero.

cohort with family background in employee positions are just two times more likely to enter their fathers' positions, as compared to those who come from and then hold employer or self-employed positions. To be precise, the difference in the inheritance propensity between employee and employer/self-employed positions has significantly narrowed over the years, indicating a change in the employment status inheritance that has important implications for intergenerational class mobility. Finally, Table 5 shows that the parameter estimates for economic sector inheritance are not significant, having considered all of the mobility effects discussed above. However, this result should not be taken as implying that the economic sector has not ever constituted any effective barrier to intergenerational class mobility in China. Nor do the insignificant estimates provide a convincing case for removing the parameter of economic sector inheritance from the preferred model. Actually, as suggested by the scaling scores earlier, the polarization between farm and non-farm classes in terms of intergenerational dispersal or recruitment is clearly evident. Even though the associated estimates are not so significant, our decision is to include the parameter in the final model as a control variable in view of the hitherto urban-rural dichotomy in the society.

Conclusion

Mobility studies conventionally focus their theoretical attention on the magnitude of change in social fluidity over time and on the cross-national variation: whether the fluidity level is on the rise or decline, and whether the fluidity pattern significantly varies across different types of societies or across societies at varied levels of development. We argue in this paper that a fruitful way of identifying changing mobility chances over time should start off by recognizing the socio-institutional structures that are fundamental to the society concerned. We propose that the study of intergenerational mobility, similar to that of intragenerational job

mobility, should pay sufficient attention to the institutional context in which mobility actually takes place.[26] This observation is particularly relevant to state socialist societies on the following grounds.

Before the world-historic events in 1989-1990, state socialist societies were basically dominated by centrally planned economies whereby individual life chances were in principle determined by state hierarchies systematically. Institutional structures which buttressed rigorous policies to achieve the above purpose were erected. Nonetheless, with the increasing instability of communist parties and their collapse, the very foundations of those institutional structures no longer remain intact. We could easily miss the point when examining mobility patterns over this period without acknowledging the institutional transformation. The case of socialist China offers us a vivid example.

According to our analysis, a simple cohort test of social fluidity cannot reveal any significant change in mobility pattern in socialist China over the period under study. By centring on one important mobility context, the analysis precisely shows that the transformation of the socio-institutional structure in the country — a change in the relative importance of different employment status positions partly attributable to the loosening of the work sector system — constitutes a salient source of changing mobility chances across cohorts. That transformation can be operationally defined as a marked reduction in the intergenerational inheritance within the employee positions, and as a narrowing of the gap in the inheritance propensity between employee and employer/self-employed positions over the years. In other words, the transformation can also be interpreted as an increase in the intergenerational class mobility across positions of different employment statuses. In the light of this finding, our study challenges the conventional wisdom that changing mobility chances over years can be adequately represented by an increase or a decrease in the *level* of social fluidity as suggested by the theses of industrialism or state socialist fluidity, insofar as the

mobility in question hinges on the functioning or dismantling of socio-institutional structures central to the society.

Nevertheless, having identified the varying levels of intergenerational inheritance within positions of different employment statuses, our preferred model also shows that the thesis of state socialist fluidity can capture the mobility *pattern* in socialist China. Notably, the close intergenerational exchanges between professionals and manual workers testify to the lasting effect of affirmative communist policies adopted in China. The estimated scaling scores further suggest a strong intergenerational linkage between cadres and the rising prosperous entrepreneurs in reforming China, who were classified as petty bourgeoisie in our class scheme. This result proves the importance of a cadre family background, as compared with other family origins, in accounting for the current position of the petty bourgeoisie. It permits us to infer that the probability of becoming an entrepreneur may not be solely dependent on his previous cadre experience as the current literature claims (e.g., Nee 1991; Rona-Tas 1994), but also on a favoured family background.

Finally, our analyses illustrate a notable development of the work sector system in China starting from the reform era. Previous research largely subscribes to the view that the work sector system which served as an organizing principle of the society succeeded in maintaining its institutional resilience over decades of early communist rule. However, with the advent of market reforms, we doubt on the basis of our findings whether the entire work sector system and its different components can remain unaltered, and whether it can still function as a stable and viable mechanism of status transmission as stressed by Lin and Bian (1991). Above all, one observation is quite clear to us. As a cornerstone of the work sector system, the "employee economy" characteristic of the centrally planned system in China which redistributed material benefits and other resources across generations, has been faced with some challenges from the rising "petty bourgeois economy": The former "economy" has been undermined by the decreasing intergenerational inheritance of em-

ployee positions and by the increasing mobility from employee to employer/self-employed positions since the reform era (cf., Walder 1995b). To conclude, alternative sources of career, revenue, and income advancement have been opened up to Chinese citizens outside of the hierarchies of the party and command economy in parallel with the decline in at least one aspect of the sanctioning and monitoring capacity of the communist state.

Notes

1. Unless stated otherwise, the terms "social fluidity" and "societal openness" refer to the mobility measured in relative terms.
2. Walder (1995a) reconciled the competing importance of educational credentials and political loyalty in the career development in China. However, our focus here is mainly on the implication of social class background for intergenerational mobility.
3. Szelenyi's study (1988) is an exception.
4. Some recent studies (Cheng and Dai 1995; Marshall, Sydorenko and Roberts 1995) on intergenerational mobility in socialist China or the former Soviet Union overlook the point raised here.
5. For some examples of local studies or commentary on social stratification and mobility published in Chinese, see Zhang (1990), Wang (1987), etc.
6. Similarly, the several types of organizations and economic sectors identified in the study by Zhou et al. (1997) are also important indicators signalling institutional change in state socialist China.
7. For simplicity, these two sectors together with the private sector will hereafter be collectively referred to as "work sector." The collective sector in China before the reform era can be seen as an adjunct to the state sector. Wage and non-wage benefits provided by jobs in the collective sector were usually lower than those in the state sector.

8. It is worth noting that the consideration for adopting a class approach here is slightly different from that for mobility studies on European societies which assume that class positions need not be ordered in any consistent unidimensional fashion.

9. Readers may note that this pattern of change may not be unique to state socialist countries (DiPrete and Grusky 1990).

10. Our analysis in this paper focuses on the weighted sample as a whole, since the independent treatment of the Chinese urban and rural samples inevitably involves theoretical and empirical concerns quite different from the one currently addressed. For example, internal migration or urbanization in China (e.g., Banister 1987; Chan 1994) could complicate the question examined here. One popular strategy nowadays is to consider how the stratification process or mechanism in socialist China varies with region, or more conceptually, with the level of marketization (Nee 1996; Xie and Hannum 1996). Our position is that any thorough understanding of a mobility regime should start with an attempt to deal with the theoretical issues of comparative importance such as those raised at the beginning of this paper. Only after the most *basic* characteristics of the mobility regime can be identified, we may straighten out the question of regional variation in the mobility pattern in socialist China. This paper therefore confines itself to the "national" pattern of intergenerational mobility within the context of comparative mobility studies and temporarily leaves some other problems unresolved.

11. Model choice and parameter estimates remain basically unchanged if the present weighted sample (of 3,514 cases) are inflated to the original sample size (having 3,740 cases). The results to be reported are based on the former sample.

12. The CASMIN class scheme may be regarded as one of the conventional schemes for mobility or stratification analysis. See Hout, Brooks and Manza (1995) for an empirical critique.

13. Frequencies for cohort-specific mobility tables may be available from the author upon request.

14. Significant parameter estimates in piecewise exponential models of rates of job shifts do not necessarily imply a massive scale of career mobility taking place. They only suggest that such job shifts are particularly likely to occur among people of certain attributes (Zhou et al. 1997).

15. A more stringent test of the linear trend hypothesis also requires specification of a linear trend parameter for uniform general class inheritance, say ξ_k, with the following constraints imposed,

$$ln\ \xi_k = (1 + bk')\ ln\ \xi$$

where b, as well as a shown in equation 3, are linear trend coefficients. The model including ξ would be over-parameterized if it is estimated with equation 1.

16. All models are estimated by GLIM. To ensure iteration convergence, we add 0.2 to each empty cell (Masako 1994). For zero cells caused by weighting, decimals proportional to the weighted percentage of total frequencies are attached to those cells.

17. The ordering as shown in·Appendices B or C is given by a crude weighted average of the education and income levels for each of the class positions found in some local studies published in Chinese.

18. Although the BIC values do not uniformly prefer Model 5 to Models 6, 7, 8 or 9 across the three cohorts, it is taken as a base for subsequent model fitting exercises as its constituent log-linear or log-multiplicative effects are quite significant in each of the cohorts (as revealed by the four contrasts in the lower panel of the table). At all events, these effects are hypothesized on strong theoretical grounds.

19. This finding is unusual since vertical mobility effect is quite often a significant component of mobility in comparative mobility studies.

20. This finding is the same as the major conclusion drawn by Cheng and Dai (1995). Similarly, no significant change in the association between origin and destination can be found

when applying the uniform change model (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) to our weighted data.

21. It may be noted that Model 5 includes a parameter of uniform general class inheritance. The inclusion of that parameter, however, cannot substantively affect model choice since the model is over-parameterized.

22. A curvilinear (quadratic) trend model ($\phi_k(1+ak+bk^2)$) is fitted to the data, but its BIC is not as negative as that of Model 14.

23. Proprietors, due to their insignificant number, are in practice classified as petty bourgeoisie in our class scheme, see Appendix B.

24. The term "self-employed farmer" used in the present context refers to those farmers who hire workers as their farm labourers for agricultural or business purposes, see Appendix B.

25. Although the finding in Table 4 does not accord very well with what is demonstrated in Appendices D.1, D.2 and D.3, we suspect that the foregoing patterns of intergenerational interchange shown in the Appendices are "suppressed" by the absolute number of cadres and petty bourgeoisie in the mobility matrices. Furthermore, we are inclined to think that the three-dimensional pictures do not actually invalidate the interpretations of the scaling scores in Table 4 because the preferred model in Table 3 consists of quite a number of postulated effects. It is not very reasonable to expect that one of these postulated effects *completely* reflects the pattern of intergenerational mobility estimated by a full two-way interaction model.

26. The recent study by Zhou et al. (1997) offers us a good example of how the notion of institutional change can be incorporated into intragenerational job mobility in socialist China.

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Appendix A

Sampling

To capture the regional disparity in China, researchers of the SSMCS selected for study two municipalities and four provinces, namely, Beijing, Shanghai, Liaoning, Shandong, Hebei and Guizhou.[1] The household register (*hukou*) was taken as a frame for the selection of individual respondents, and rural and urban populations were sampled separately.

In rural areas, the individuals to be interviewed were members of the work force aged 16 to 55 in December 1987. The rural samples were obtained from the following five stages of sampling. The first stage involved the selection of one or more regions (*di qu*) within a province such that the differentiation of economic development of the province could be represented. Secondly, counties within these regions were selected using the method of systematic sampling. The third and fourth stages respectively involved a random selection of townships from the chosen counties, and that of villages from the townships. At the fifth and final stage, both the methods of proportionate stratification and systematic sampling were implemented to choose individuals from the villages. As far as municipalities were concerned, rural respondents were selected from the rural counties surrounding the city proper. Similar administrative units within these rural counties could also be found, such as townships and villages.

In urban areas, the individuals to be surveyed were the employed and the retired residing in urban areas in December 1987. Firstly, cities (*shi*) representative of their provinces' economic development were selected. At the second and third stages, subdistricts (*jie dao*) and neighbourhoods (*ju wei hui*) were selected on a simple random basis. The final stage of selecting individual respondents adopted the same methods as those used in the rural sampling.

Sample Weighting

The *post hoc* weighting procedures were twofold: firstly, for each of the provinces surveyed, the samples were weighted so as to reflect the proportion of the actual urban and rural populations of the concerned individual province; and secondly, the representativeness of these several weighted samples were extended to the rest of China. For the second step, we identified on the basis of several indicators five clusters of provinces in China that could best be represented by the two municipalities and four provinces on which we had information. The indicators as given by the *Statistical Yearbook of China* are listed as follows: (1) the level of industrialization, which is represented by the share of agricultural production in total product of society of a province; (2) the level of urbanization, which is given by the proportion of urban population to total population of a province; and (3) per capita gross domestic product of a province. By and large, these indicators can broadly reflect the socio-economic and industrial development of the provinces in China. We prefer this weighting procedure to the one adopted by Cheng and Dai (1995) primarily because the present strategy provides us with more clusters of provinces that can be represented by the two municipalities and four provinces. As the resulting weighted "national" sample does not greatly deviate from the census in terms of occupational distribution, we decided not to weight the samples according to that distribution.

Note

1. For convenience, we shall use the word "provinces" to refer to both provinces and municipalities hereafter.

Appendix B

I.   Occupational groupings used for classifying urban respondents, fathers of urban respondents, and fathers of rural respondents in the SSMCS:
1.   Professionals: scientists, engineers, teachers, etc.
2.   Higher and middle-grade cadres: administrators in national and local government.
3.   Other nonmanual workers: clerks, secretaries, etc.
4.   Sales workers: salesmen, retailers, etc.
5.   Service workers: waiters, stewards, etc.
6.   Agricultural workers: workers in agriculture, forestry, husbandry, fishery.
7.   Production and transportation workers: manual workers in manufacturing, construction, transport, etc.

There is an additional code in the data set indicating the "employment status" of individual respondents, distinguishing: (A) those employed in state or collective sectors, from (B) those who owned and managed their own businesses or even hired very few employees, and from (C) those who owned or managed their own businesses and hired more than eight employees. For example, those who were agricultural workers under the above scheme (I) and were either in groups B or C, are classified as "self-employed farmers" in the present study. Accordingly, "peasants" refer to the group A agricultural workers. In a similar vein, "petty bourgeoisie" in our study are the non-agricultural workers either in groups B or C. Lastly, the group A non-agricultural workers are classified into respective positions of our class scheme intuitively.

IIa. The first scheme of occupational groupings for classifying rural respondents in the SSMCS:
1.   Professionals: teachers, doctors, etc.
2.   Village cadres.
3.   Clerical and other nonmanual workers.
4.   Self-employed: private entrepreneurs.

5.   Manual workers: contract or temporary workers in village or urban enterprises.

IIb. The second scheme of classification for rural respondents in the SSMCS:
1.   Spending most of the time in agricultural work.
2.   Spending about half of the time in agricultural work.
3.   Spending less than half of the time in agricultural work.
We decide that the scheme IIa applies to the rural respondents who spent less than half of the time in agricultural work, whereas the rural respondents who spent at least half of the time in agricultural activities are either classified as "self-employed farmers" or "peasants" depending on whether they are categorized as self-employed in the scheme IIa.

III.   The class scheme for the analysis in this study:
1.   Professionals.
2.   Cadres/Officials.
3.   Other nonmanual workers.
4.   Petty bourgeoisie.
5.   Manual workers.
6.   Self-employed farmers.
7.   Peasants.

Appendix C   Design Matrices for Employment Status Inheritance, Economic Sector Inheritance, and Diagonal Effect

| Origin	Destination						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Employment status inheritance							
(1) Professional	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
(2) Cadre	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
(3) Other nonmanual	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
(4) Petty bourgeoisie	3	3	3	2	3	2	3
(5) Manual worker	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
(6) Self-employed farmer	3	3	3	2	3	2	3
(7) Peasant	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
Economic sector inheritance							
(1) Professional	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
(2) Cadre	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
(3) Other nonmanual	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
(4) Petty bourgeoisie	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
(5) Manual worker	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
(6) Self-employed farmer	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
(7) Peasant	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
Diagonal effect							
(1) Professional	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
(2) Cadre	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
(3) Other nonmanual	1	1	4	1	1	1	1
(4) Petty bourgeoisie	1	1	1	5	1	1	1
(5) Manual worker	1	1	1	1	6	1	1
(6) Self-employed farmer	1	1	1	1	1	7	1
(7) Peasant	1	1	1	1	1	1	8

Appendix D.1   Intergenerational Mobility and Inheritance Propensity for the First Cohort of Male Respondents Based on the Full Two-way Interaction Model in Table 3
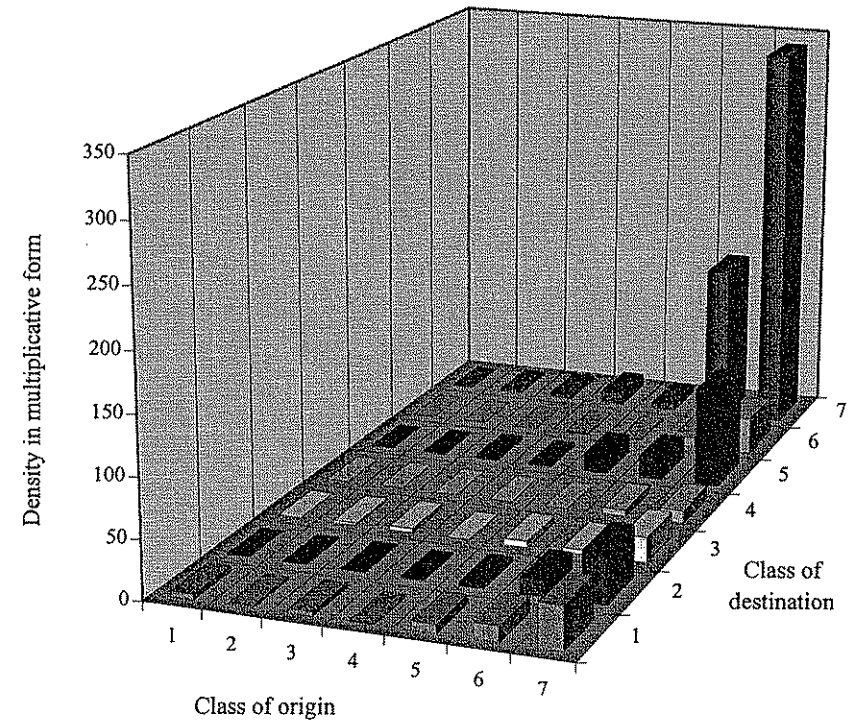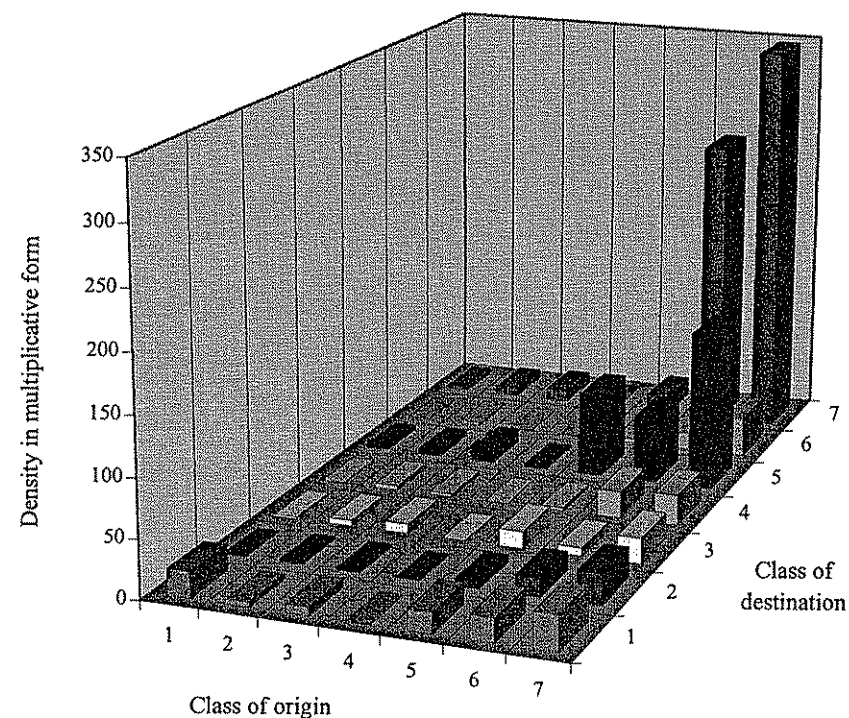
Appendix D.2   Intergenerational Mobility and Inheritance
Propensity for the Second Cohort of Male
Respondents Based on the Full Two-way
Interaction Model in Table 3
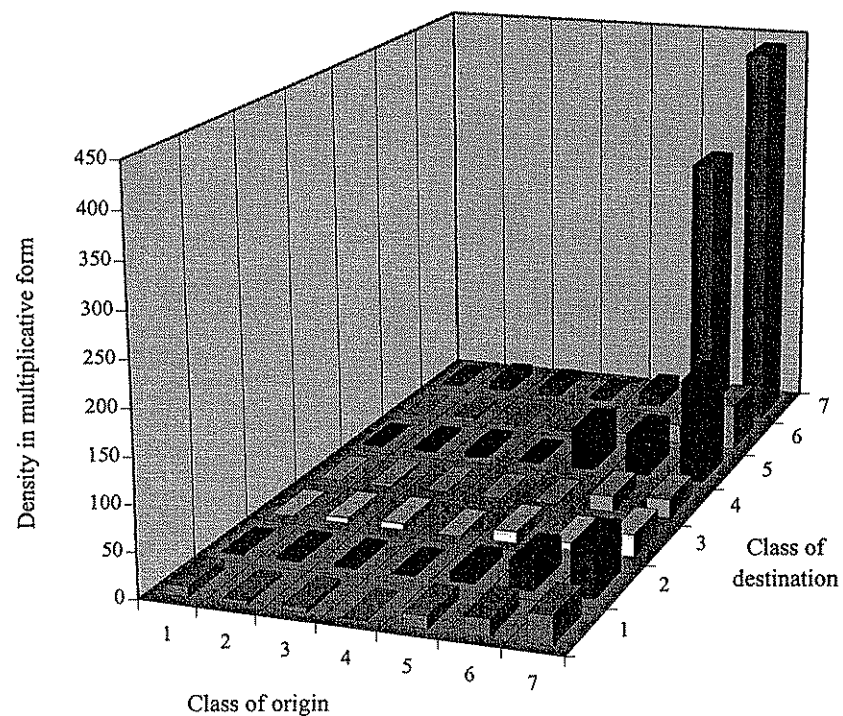
Appendix D.3   Intergenerational Mobility and Inheritance
Propensity for the Third Cohort of Male
Respondents Based on the Full Two-way
Interaction Model in Table 3

Intergenerational Mobility in a Context of Socio-institutional Change
The Case of Socialist China

Abstract

This paper offers an analysis of the intergenerational mobility among men in state socialist China, utilizing a data set collected in the late 1980s. Three hypotheses are set out to test against the Chinese data. They are respectively developed on the basis of the assumption about the logic of industrialism, the distinctive mobility patterns found in state socialist societies, and the change in the relative importance of different employment status positions in socialist China. In applying log-multiplicative association and hybrid models to the data, we find that significant changes in social fluidity largely have occurred during China's transition to a more market-oriented economy. Notably, our preferred model shows that such changes are associated with the rising importance of employer/self-employed positions in the economy which in turn forms an essential context for intergenerational status or resources transmission. In a broad sociological sense, our finding can be taken to mean that the socio-institutional structures central to a society intermingle with the intergenerational mobility so much so that detailed patterns of mobility can only be revealed if changes in these structures are taken into consideration.

社會主義中國的隔代流動

張可賢

（中文摘要）

　　自八十年代中期，社會主義中國的隔代流動分析，漸被納入國內外的研究議程。本文嘗試以階級爲分析架構，結合中國較獨特的社會經濟制度，輔以不同年齡組別的比較，探討中國隔代階級流動的整體模式以及其變化。結果顯示，就業地位（指僱主、自僱及受僱的身份）的變化構成隔代階級流動上升的主要來源，其變化大體反映在較年青的年齡組別內，以此推論，社會主義中國的隔代流動變化，基本上起始於市場改革的年代，以上分析結果亦與市場改革下所引起的產業及就業地位變化相互契合。此外，中國的隔代階級流動模式與前東歐共產主義社會在某程度上也頗爲相近。