Social Indicators Research (2022) 162:253–277
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02834-0

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

The Impact of Intergenerational Mobility on Well-being in Japan

Aram Kwon[1]

Accepted: 19 October 2021 / Published online: 2 November 2021

Abstract
The study investigates the relationship between intergenerational social class mobility and subjective well-being in Japan. It considers the macro-social context and examines how socioeconomic changes affect the association between intergenerational social class mobility and life satisfaction. Based on data drawn from the Social Stratification and Social Mobility Survey from 1985 to 2015 for both males and females, we adopted the diagonal reference model to measure the effects of origin, destination, and mobility. We found that the life satisfaction of mobile members was mainly determined by their destination rather than their origin classes. We did not find additional mobility effects. The analysis confirmed that the effects of class mobility differed across cohorts and that there is a trend of the origin and destination weights. Those who were mobile in a period of recession tended to be more affected by their origin class than those who were mobile in a period of high or stable economic growth. Whereas these trends were confirmed for both males and females, it was more prominent among females. We found additional mobility effects on the youngest female cohort and identified that horizontal mobility harms life satisfaction for this cohort. We also found that the association between class mobility and life satisfaction changes according to the socioeconomic environment and that the mobility impacts differ by gender.

Keywords Intergenerational mobility · Subjective well-being · Life satisfaction · Diagonal reference model · Cohort analysis

1 Introduction

Class mobility is an indicator of openness and equality of opportunity in society (Blossfeld & Shavit, 1992; Nennstiel, 2021, p. 1), therefore, there has been a large accumulation of class mobility studies, especially on social stratification. There have been discussions on the consequences of class mobility for individuals since the 1950s (Blau, 1956; Sorokin, 1959). This is because class mobility is not only a transition from an origin class to a new destination class but is accompanied by social, economic, and cultural changes.

✉ Aram Kwon
aram-kwon@aoni.waseda.jp

[1] Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University, Tokorozawa, Japan

The literature has indicated that class mobility affects social and political behaviors, values, and subjective well-being (SWB). Blau (1956) suggested that all new members of a social class have difficulty acculturating to its values, lifestyles, and behaviors, all of which differ from those of non-mobile members, and that the process also causes social insecurity (Blau, 1956, pp. 290–91). Sorokin (1959) assumed that class mobility entails mental strain and illnesses which cause psychological distress.

Although class mobility research has been thoroughly documented, empirical evidence of the consequences of class mobility for mobile members has been scarce (Marshall & Firth, 1999; Nikolaev & Burns, 2014). While Blau and Sorokin's works appeared in the 1950s, only a few empirical studies have been conducted since then (Alston & Knapp, 1974; Mitchell, 1972). Since the 2000s, empirical research conducted on the relationship between class mobility and SWB (i.e., life satisfaction, happiness, self-rated health) has started to accumulate. However, empirical evidence has been mixed. Some studies found no significant relationship between class mobility and SWB (Dhoore et al., 2019; Houle, 2011; Marshall & Firth, 1999). Whereas several studies reported significant effects of class mobility, the observed effects were inconsistent. Some indicated a positive (negative) impact of upward (downward) mobility on SWB (Nikolaeve & Burns, 2014; Zhao et al., 2017; Chan, 2018), whereas others indicated a negative (positive) effect of upward (downward) mobility (Graham & Pettinato, 2006; Hadjar & Samuel, 2015; Zang & Dirk de Graaf, 2016). The previous research remains inconclusive on the relationship between class mobility and SWB.

Although the literature has indicated that the consequences of class mobility can differ based on the macro-social context, research focusing on macro-social factors has been scarce. According to Germani (1966) and Goldthorpe (1987), high mobile rates may ease the detrimental consequences of class mobility, and those who shifted to a new class in society in large numbers experienced fewer issues while adapting to the destination class. As mobile individuals rely on several other members who have had similar experiences of mobility into their destination classes, they generally find it easy to integrate into their new class without experiencing social isolation. These studies show that the relationship between class mobility and SWB depends on mobility rates.

A few studies have considered the macro-social context to examine the relationship between class mobility and SWB (Dhoore et al., 2019; Hadjar & Samuel, 2015; Marshall & Firth, 1999). Marshall and Firth (1999) and Dhoore et al. (2019) concluded that there is no evidence that class mobility and SWB differ based macro-social context, whereas Hadjar and Samuel (2015) concluded that the effect of upward class mobility on SWB differed between countries. As most of these studies have focused on Western society, it is difficult to generalize the results concerning the impact of macro-social factors on the relationship between class mobility and SWB. Several class mobility studies have focused on the relationship between class mobility and the macro-social aspects of industrialization (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1987, 1992; Erikson et al., 1982; Featherman et al., 1975; Hout & Jackson, 1986; Ishida, 1993; Ishida et al., 1991; Lipset & Bendix, 1959). However, little is known about the consequences of class mobility and how they are affected by macro-social factors.

This study considers the macro-social context and focuses on the relationship between class mobility and SWB. It examines intergenerational social class mobility, which indicates mobility from the father's social class to the respondent's present social class, and life satisfaction, which is one of the representative measurements of SWB. It investigates whether the association between social class mobility and SWB depends on socioeconomic factors. It employs the Diagonal Reference Model (DRM) created

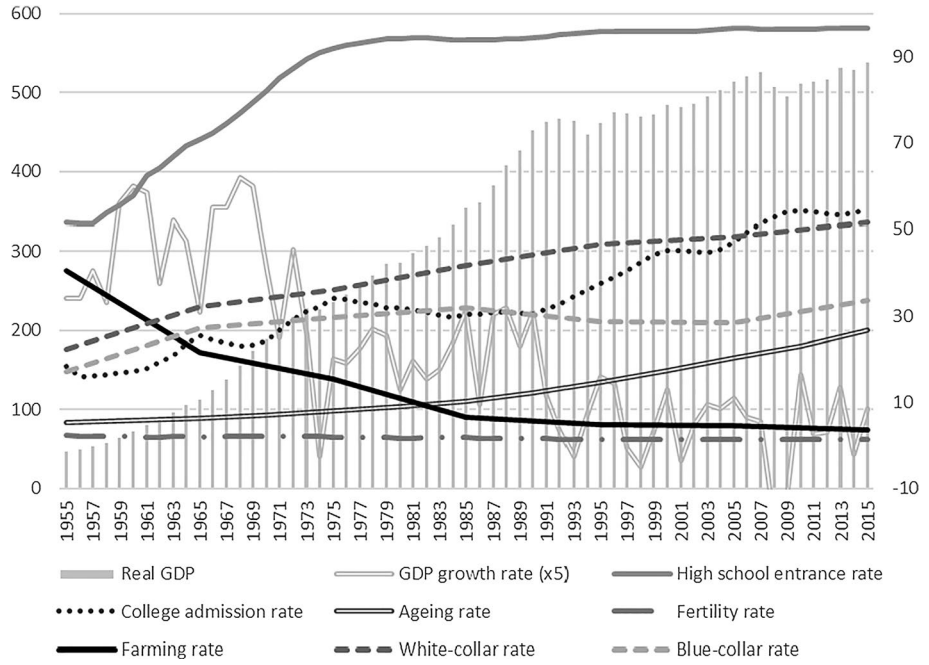

Fig. 1 Socioeconomic changes in Japan. Note) Real GDP indicators are from: MLIT (2012), Cabinet office (2021), High school/ college admission rate are from: e-Stat (2021), Ageing rate: Statistics Bureau of Japan (2020), Fertility rate: MHLW (2020), Blue (the sum of skilled manual, non-skilled manual), White (the sum of professional-managerial, routine, non-manual) collar, and Farming rates: Ishida (2018)

by Sobel (1981) to simultaneously estimate the origin, destination class, and effects of mobility.

2 Japan as a Case Study

This study focuses on Japanese society, which was the earliest Asian nation to industrialize. Understanding the mechanism of SWB in Japan, which has not been examined thus far in the literature, will facilitate a broad understanding and provide a valuable perspective on the relationship between class mobility and SWB. First, Japan has experienced remarkable economic changes over time. After World War II, it achieved a significant economic recovery and entered a phase of rapid economic growth from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s. Its real GDP and GDP growth rates increased rapidly during this period (Fig. 1). After the period of high economic growth, while the rate of growth slowed, it remained stable from the 1970s to the 1980s. When the bubble economy collapsed in the early 1990s, a prolonged economic recession began.

Along with economic changes, Japan's educational and occupational structures also changed significantly. As Fig. 1 shows, along with the expansion of compulsory education since the 1950s, the average educational level increased significantly. With progressive industrialization, the agricultural sector shrank dramatically, while both white and blue-collar occupations began to expand.

Demographic characteristics have also changed drastically since the postwar era. The size of the elderly population increased from 5.3% in 1955 to 28.9% in 2020 (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2020), which is the highest in the world. The total fertility rate declined from 2.37 in 1955 to 1.36 in 2019 (MHLW, 2020).

These significant socioeconomic changes, which have occurred only within 70 years, are inevitably related to social class mobility. The total mobility rates increased from the 1950s to the 1970s (Tominaga, 1979, 1992), wherein many members of society left the agricultural sector and shifted to the industrial sector. After the high economic growth period, the social structure gained stability. However, since the recession (from the 1990s), the rates of upward mobility have decreased while downward mobility has increased (Ishida, 2018, p. 49).

Japan has experienced significant socioeconomic change and with these changes, both social class and patterns of mobility have also changed. Therefore, the nation is most suited for an examination of how macro-social factors affect the relationship between social class mobility and SWB. As only a few studies have examined this relationship, little is known about how class mobility affects SWB and whether it has changed with socioeconomic changes in Japan. Kanai (2018), one of the few to examine this relationship, found that intergenerational downward class mobility began to affect SWB in the 2010s. This implies that socioeconomic changes affect the relationship between SWB and class mobility.

An additional advantage is that Japan has highly consistent datasets (Social Stratification and Social Mobility Survey) in place from 1955 to the present. These data allow us to track the impact of socioeconomic changes over time. Examining the relationship in one country can avoid measurement errors caused by cross-national analysis (Kang et al., 2020). Using Japan as a case study, will provide valuable insights for both Western countries in general and other Asian countries that have experienced similar processes of industrialization.

3 Literature Review and Hypotheses

This section reviews the theoretical and empirical research on class mobility and SWB and formulates hypotheses accordingly. Blau (1956) initially suggested the acculturation hypothesis, which assumes that mobile members' behaviors, values, and political behaviors are between the origin class and the destination class. Mobile members are not well integrated into the new class lifestyle. They do not have intensive contact with the new class; therefore, they do not have substantial opportunities for complete acculturation to the new class, either (Blau, 1956, p. 3). Mobile members are affected by both the origin and destination classes, and their behaviors are between the two. The acculturation hypothesis does not postulate an additional independent mobility effect.

Some empirical studies have reported results consistent with Blau's acculturation hypothesis (Dhoore et al., 2019; Houle, 2011; Houle & Martin, 2011; Schuck & Steiber, 2018). They have suggested that the SWB of mobile members lies between the non-mobile members of the origin and destination classes. None of them found any additional mobility effects. Therefore, considering Blau's acculturation hypothesis and following prior empirical evidence, we can formulate Hypothesis 1 as follows:

> **H1**. The SWB of mobile members is affected by both the origin and destination classes. As class mobile members never fully acculturate to the destination class, the SWB of mobile members lies between the non-mobile members of the origin and the destination classes (the acculturation hypothesis).

In contrast, Sorokin (1959) assumed that mobility accompanies the independent negative impact on the SWB of mobile members. This is called the dissociative hypothesis. Mobility accompanied massive economic and cultural changes. Mobile members experienced different environments and had to adapt to new settings, both cultural and economic. Sorokin found that these changes caused permanent mental strain and stress for mobile members. Therefore, mobility itself, regardless of the direction, has adverse effects on the SWB of a mobile member of society.

Studies have been conducted to empirically confirm Sorokin's dissociative hypothesis. However, there has been little support for it. Most studies have not found empirical evidence of the dissociative hypothesis (Chan, 2018; Dhoore et al., 2019; Houle, 2011; Houle & Martin, 2011; Zhao et al., 2017). Only a few found partially dissociative effects (Ellis & Lane, 1967; Hadjar & Samuel, 2015). Despite the scarce empirical support, Sorokin's hypothesis is one of the most critical theoretical approaches toward considering the relationship between SWB and social class mobility. What insights does Sorokin's hypothesis provide on the relationship between SWB and hierarchical mobility and its changes in the relationship in Japan? We formulate Hypotheses 2 and 2a as follows:

H2. SWB has an additional mobility effect.
H2a. All mobilities have adverse effects on SWB because mobility itself accompanies changes in the cultural or economic background, which cause strain and stress regardless of the direction of mobility (the dissociative hypothesis).

Furthermore, Duesenberry (1949)'s relative income hypothesis has implications when considering the impact of social class mobility on the SWB of mobile members. According to Duesenberry, utility is not determined by the absolute level of an individual's expenditure but rather by a function of the ratio of current expenditure to others (Duesenberry, 1949; Easterlin, 1974). The current utility is determined by a "comparison" to the reference group. The reference point can be distinguished into an internal reference point such as the past or expected future income and an external reference point such as family, other workers, region, neighborhood, or country (Clark et al., 2008, p. 100). Duesenberry's relative income hypothesis has been applied in SWB research in the context of "social comparison" (Easterlin, 1974, 1995; McBride, 2001; Clark et al., 2008; Clark & D'Angelo, 2010).

By applying Dusenberry's relative income hypothesis to the relationship between social class mobility and SWB, social class mobility can bring forth two different consequences on SWB. First, if a comparison is made with a past internal reference point such as the origin class, moving upward can affect a mobile individual's SWB positively, whereas moving downward can affect their SWB negatively. Individuals determine the SWB based on changes in their relative social status.

Some empirical studies have shown results that are consistent with this mechanism. Nikoleave and Burns (2014) and Chan (2018) have reported that upward mobility affects SWB positively. Zhao et al. (2017) and Kanai (2018) reported that downward inter/intragenerational mobility harms SWB.

If an individual determines the SWB based on internal reference points, we can formulate Hypothesis 2b as shown below. We refer to this as "the relative status hypothesis" because it assumes that changes in relative status affect SWB.

H2b. SWB is determined by a comparison of the past and present statuses. Therefore, whereas upward mobility has a positive impact on SWB, downward mobility has a negative impact (the relative status hypothesis).

If mobile individuals determine SWB through an external reference group, that is, non-mobile members of their destination class, upward mobility can have a negative effect because of their less advantageous origin class, and downward mobility can have a positive effect as their relatively beneficial origin class. Graham and Pettinato (2006) identified upwardly mobile members of middle-income group in Peru have relatively low SWB, and they called them "frustrated achievers." Zang and Dirk de Graaf (2016) found that intra-generational downward mobility positively affected SWB and called those presenting this condition "satisfied losers." Graham and Pettinato (2006) and Zang and Dirk de Graaf (2016) suggested that social comparison can affect SWB through a comparison with non-mobile members of the destination class.

If SWB is determined based on an external reference point, Hypothesis 2c can be postulated as shown below. In this study, we refer to this as "the inertia hypothesis" because it means that the economic and cultural background of the origin class will continue to affect mobile members.

H2c. The comparison with non-mobile members in the destination group determines SWB. Whereas upwardly mobile members harm SWB because of their less beneficial origin class, downwardly mobile ones have a higher SWB because of their beneficial origin class (the inertia hypothesis).

When we examine the SWB of members of society, we must consider a macro-social context. Changes in socioeconomic structure can affect people's well-being. Research suggests that high social mobility rates diminish the detrimental consequences of social mobility. As many people experienced social mobility during the period of dramatic change in socioeconomic structure, mobile members did not have severe maladjustment problems because there were many of them in their destination class. In contrast, when few socioeconomic changes occur and the social structure remains entrenched, the problem of adaptation to a new class may become prominent (Dhoore et al., 2019; Germani, 1966; Goldthorpe, 1987; Kessin, 1971).

Several studies that have considered the macro-social context have suggested that macro-social factors have an independent impact on SWB (Alesina et al., 2004; Senik, 2006; Fischer, 2009). Living in a socially mobile society (Fischer, 2009) or a society that is perceived to have high social mobility (which may not necessarily be true) (Alesina et al., 2004; Senik, 2006; Fischer, 2009) has been found to have a positive impact on an individual's SWB. Kanai (2018) found that intergenerational downward mobility harms life satisfaction among those who participated in the labor market after the 1990s.[1] Given this, we can assume that social mobility effects on SWB can differ according to the socioeconomic experience of members of society.

How will the macro-social context change the relationship between SWB and intergenerational mobility in Japan? We divide the time period into three phases of economic development: high economic growth, stable economic growth, recession eras, and examining the relationship between SWB and intergenerational social class mobility. In Japan, both socioeconomic structure and intergenerational mobility are closely related to the stage of economic development. Intergenerational social class mobility increased especially during the period of high economic growth (Tominaga, 1979, 1992). It then increased gradually in the 1980s and 1990s (Hashimoto, 1999), which was the period of stable growth. The

[1] However, as Kanai used OLS and mobility dummies, it was not clear how the SWB of mobile members was defined by their origin and destination classes and mobility, respectively and how it changed.

number of informal jobs increased significantly during the recession (indicating that more young people moved into the lower classes) and barriers to interclass mobility increased (Hashimoto, 1999, 2018; Sato, 2000). Considering the prior literature and the Japanese context, we present Hypothesis 3 as follows:

> **H3**. The effect of social class mobility on SWB differs based on socioeconomic changes and the extent of social class mobility. The detrimental impact of social class mobility was weak during the period of high economic growth because many people experienced mobility. However, the impact became vital during the recession because mobility decreased.

4 Data and Variables

4.1 Data

This empirical study is based on the National Survey of Social Stratification and Social Mobility (SSM) datasets of 1985, 1995, 2005, and 2015. This survey has been conducted by Japanese sociologists once every 10 years since 1955, which is one of the representative surveys in Japan. Sampling is conducted by each survey year based on the Basic Resident Register. It includes information on the socioeconomic status of both the respondents and their fathers. The survey has adopted many consistent questions throughout, which has made tracing change across time possible. In this paper, we integrated all datasets from 1985[2] to 2015 and used data for males and females aged 30 to 54 years who were born after 1936. We ensured that our research subjects were aged under 55 years to exclude people who re-entered the labor market after retirement. We also eliminated individuals who did not have any occupation at the time of study. After these criteria were applied, 9055 cases were found valid.

4.2 Variables

4.2.1 Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is SWB, which refers to people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives (Diener et al., 2009). SWB has been included in questionnaires for decades since Bradburn (1969), Cantril (1965), and Likert (1932) (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005, p. 1002). Many empirical studies have used self-reported measures of well-being such as life satisfaction and happiness (Dhoore et al., 2019; Hadjar & Samuel, 2015; Marshall & Firth, 1999; Nikolaev & Burns, 2014; Zhao et al., 2017).

Self-rated well-being may not be a perfect measure because it is based on the respondent's self-assessment. Regardless of the limitations, previous studies have shown that it is a reliable and consistent measure that contains important information (Costa & McCrae, 1988; Sandvik, 1993; Fernádez-Dols & Puiz-Belda, 1995; in details, see Nikolaev & Burns, 2014, p. 85). This study uses self-rated life satisfaction, which is the cognitive

[2] There are two reasons for using data from 1985 onward: first, females were included in the survey for the first time in 1985, and second, life satisfaction was included in the questionnaire from 1985 onward.

component of SWB based on evaluating the past, present, and future conditions (Campbell, 1981; Diener et al., 2005; Hadjar & Samuel, 2015, p.49). Considering that estimated happiness and life satisfaction equations have similar structures (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004), using life satisfaction as a representative measurement of SWB is reasonable. The question on life satisfaction was: "Overall, are you satisfied with your life?" The reply options on a Likert scale were: 1. Satisfied, 2. Somewhat satisfied, 3. Neither, 4. Somewhat dissatisfied, 5. Dissatisfied. We used these variables as continuous and reversed the options to interpret the results easily. Therefore, the options are: 1. Dissatisfied–5. Satisfied.

4.2.2 Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study include the origin and destination classes and mobility variables. The EGP class scheme comprising the following six categories (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992) was used: (1) service class, (2) routine clerical/sales, (3) petty bourgeoisie, (4) skilled manual, (5) semi-unskilled manual, and (6) farmers/farmworkers. The origin class refers to the main occupation of the respondent's father. The destination class refers to the respondent's occupation at the time of study.

We applied the "dominance" approach (Breen, 2004) for the married double-worker to determine a single position for a household. This approach uses two criteria: a full-time worker dominates a part-time worker and if both occupational positions are the same, the service class and the petty bourgeoisie dominate other classes. The six-category version of the EGP class scheme using SSM data was coded according to Takenoshita et al. (2008).

The EGP class scheme does not assume a class hierarchy. To capture the directions of mobility, we drew from Houle (2011) and used three mobility variables, namely upward, downward, and horizontal mobility. Upward mobility refers to mobility from another class to the service class or petty bourgeoisie, downward mobility refers to mobility from the service class or the petty bourgeoisie to another class. Horizontal mobility refers to all other forms of mobility. Accordingly, there were 2550 non-mobile (28.2%); 1428 downwardly mobile (15.8%); 2277 upwardly mobile (25.1%); and 2800 horizontally mobile (30.9%) members.

4.2.3 Covariates

We included covariates that are related to dependent variables. To examine the changes in SWB, we considered the influence of the Age Period Cohort (APC) effect (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008; Taromaru, 2016) on life satisfaction. Therefore, this study controlled the APC effect while using integrated data.

To control the age effect, age and squared age variables were used. To avoid multicollinearity, we used centered and centered squared age variables. To capture the cohort effect, we used three cohorts: that consider the economic circumstances when an individual gets their first job (20 years old), for persons born between 1936 and 1953 (high economic growth period), 1954 and 1970 (stable economic growth period), and 1971 and 1985 (recession period). To capture the period effect, we used the unemployment rate as a proxy variable. When we estimated the APC effect simultaneously, linear dependence occurred. There is a relationship among these variables, which is known as the "Identification problem" (Firebaugh, 1997). Besides the APC effect, gender and marital status were controlled.

Fig. 2 Class mobility table

5 Method

We adopted Sobel's (1981) DRM. Prior research has indicated that it is not enough to determine the effect of class mobility using the traditional regression model while estimating mobility effects. As class mobility is measured by the difference between the origin and destination classes, a multicollinearity problem occurs. We cannot estimate the effect of origin and destination classes, and class mobility simultaneously (Hendrickx et al., 1993; Houle, 2011; Zhao et al., 2017, p.58). To solve this problem, Sobel (1981) suggested the DRM, which is based on Blau's acculturation hypothesis. It postulates that an individual's current behaviors, perceptions, and values are affected by both their origin and destination classes (Blau, 1956; Sobel, 1981, p. 895). Therefore, in the DRM, the behavior of mobile members is determined by the weight of two non-mobile members: the origin and destination classes.

Figure 2 presents a class mobility table. The orange cells represent non-mobile members, whereas the gray ones (diagonal ones) represent mobile members. The parameters of mobile members comprised the weights of non-mobile members of both the origin and destination classes. The parameter of mobile members was constrained to add up to 1. Therefore, the base model of the DRM was as follows.

$$y_{ijk} = p * u_{ii} + (1 - p) * u_{jj} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \tag{1}$$

y_{ijk} means outcomes k of an individual whose origin class is i and whose destination class is j. p is the weight of the non-mobile origin class member and $1 - p$ represents the weight of the non-mobile destination class member.u_{ii} indicates the population means of k of the non-mobile members of the origin class, u_{jj} indicates population means of k of the members of the destination class. ε_{ijk} is a stochastic term with expectation 0. If p is larger than 0.5, the effect of the origin class is bigger than that of the destination class, and if p is less than 0.5, the effect of the destination class is bigger than that of the origin class. We can also test whether there is an additional independent mobility effect over and above the origin/destination effects. We can add the mobility variables to estimation (1). The estimation is as shown below:

$$y_{ijk=}p * u_{ii} + (1 - p) * u_{jj} + \gamma 1 down_{ij} + \gamma 2 up_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \tag{2}$$

We used estimations (1) and (2) with additional covariates as the model. In Model 1, we measured the impact of the origin and destination classes on mobile members after controlling for covariates (APC effect, gender, and marital status) (estimation (3)). In Model 2, in addition to Model 1, we added mobility variables (upward, downward, and horizontal mobility) to test whether there is an independent effect of the direction of mobility over and above the acculturation influence (estimation (4)).

Table 1 Social class mobility among cohorts

	Non-mobility	Downward mobility	Upward mobility	Horizontal mobility	Sum
Born in 1936–53	864	449	864	1023	3200
	27.00%	14.00%	27.00%	32.00%	100.00%
Born in 1954–70	1099	564	993	1217	3873
	28.40%	14.60%	25.60%	31.40%	100.00%
Born in 1971–85	587	415	420	560	1982
	29.60%	20.90%	21.20%	28.30%	100.00%
SUM	2550	1428	2277	2800	9055
	28.20%	15.80%	25.10%	30.90%	100.00%

$$y_{ijk} = p * u_{ii} + (1-p) * u_{jj} + \sum \beta cov_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \tag{3}$$

$$y_{ijk} = p * u_{ii} + (1-p) * u_{jj} + \gamma 1 down_{ij} + \gamma 2 up_{ij} + \gamma 3 horizontal_{ij} + \sum \beta cov_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \tag{4}$$

We used constrained nonlinear regression commands in SPSS to estimate the models.

6 Results

6.1 Social Class Mobility of Postwar Japan

Before clarifying the impact of social class mobility on SWB, we confirmed social class mobility among the cohorts. Table 1 displays the absolute amounts of non-mobility/mobility among cohorts. Table 1 shows that the percentages of mobility in the early two cohorts are almost the same. The result was quite different in the youngest cohort: whereas downward mobility increased, upward mobility decreased. The youngest cohort, whose members started their careers in the recession, experienced greater downward and lower upward mobility when compared to any of the previous cohorts. Table 1 presents the results of absolute social class mobility. Research has shown that relative social class mobility was remarkably stable in the postwar period in Japan (Ishida, 2018). Whereas relative mobility has not changed significantly, the youngest generation has had a greater chance to experience non-mobility and downward mobility than the former generations.

6.2 Social Class Mobility and SWB

Table 2 presents the average score of life satisfaction by class mobility table. The bold-highlighted cells placed diagonally represent immobility. All other cells represent mobility. Each cell represents an average score. The numbers in "n" indicate the number of respondents in each cell.

In Table 2, it can be seen that there is no obvious pattern of increase/decrease in SWB with class mobility. However, members of the service class tended to have relatively high scores for life satisfaction, whereas those of the semi-unskilled class tended to have lower

Table 2 SWB by social class mobility

Origin class	Destination class					
	Service class	Routine clerical/ sales	Petty bourgeoisie	Skilled manual	Semi-unskilled manual	Farmers/ Farm workers
Service class	**4.00**	3.89	3.77	3.84	3.85	3.56
n	**1178**	298	168	146	123	16
Routine clerical/ sales	3.98	**3.93**	3.89	3.88	3.71	4.20
n	329	**144**	61	100	65	5
Petty bourgeoisie	3.96	3.75	**3.78**	3.68	3.65	3.53
n	673	287	**485**	308	230	17
Skilled manual	3.98	3.75	3.61	**3.82**	3.60	3.64
n	519	219	160	**301**	211	14
Semi-unskilled manual	3.94	3.68	3.83	3.82	**3.51**	3.74
n	335	194	145	252	**262**	19
Farmers/Farm workers	3.93	3.72	3.64	3.64	3.45	**3.71**
n	468	206	255	343	319	**173**

The bold numbers in Table 2 represent the means of SWB of immobile members whose origin class and destination class are the same

SWB, regardless of their origin class. The SWB of the mobile members from both classes was similar to that of non-mobile members of their destination classes.

In the next section, we used DRM analysis and examined the components of the SWB of mobile members.

6.3 Multivariate Results

6.3.1 The Overall Effects of Social Class Mobility on SWB

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the overall effects of social class mobility on SWB. As Table 4 shows, the average scores for non-mobile members differ across the classes.

The average scores of life satisfaction for non-mobile members are ranked in the following order from high to low: service class (u11), routine clerical/sales (u22), petty bourgeoisie (u33), skilled manual (u44), farmers/farm workers (u66), and semi-unskilled class (u55). Whereas the service class had the highest score (3.541), the semi-unskilled class had the lowest (3.135). Aside from this, there was no consistent relationship between non-mobility and SWB.

From the covariates and the APC effect, it is clear that age and age squared were significant in life satisfaction (0.006, 0.001, respectively). Age had a curvilinear impact on life satisfaction (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008; Kobayashi, 2016). The female dummy had a positive effect on SWB (0.198), which means that females had higher life satisfaction than did males if other variables were controlled. The marriage dummy was positively related

Table 3 The overall effects of social class mobility (descriptive)

Descriptives		
	Mean/percentage	SD
Life satisfaction	3.82	0.998
Class position		
Origin class		
Service class	21.37%	
Routine clerical/sales	7.80%	
Petty bourgeoisie	22.15%	
Skilled manual	15.77%	
Semi-unskilled manual	13.37%	
Farmers/Farm workers	19.54%	
Current class		
Service class	38.79%	
Routine clerical/sales	14.93%	
Petty bourgeoisie	14.11%	
Skilled manual	16.06%	
Semi-unskilled manual	13.40%	
Farmers/Farm workers	2.70%	
Downward mobility	15.78%	
Upward mobility	25.17%	
Horizontal mobility	30.88%	
Covariates		
Age (centering)	0.00	6.87
Age squared (centering)	47.24	45.15
Female	50.00%	
Marital status (Ref: Single/divorced)		
Married	83.73%	
Cohorts (Ref: born in 1936–53)		
1954–70	42.78%	
1971–85	21.93%	
Unemployment rate	3.48	0.61
N	9028	

to SWB (0.297). Married people had higher levels of life satisfaction than those who were single, divorced, or widowed. Cohort effects were significant. Younger cohorts had higher SWB than those born between 1936 and 1953. Life satisfaction for the youngest cohort was much higher than that for those born between 1936 and 1953 and who got their first jobs in the high economic growth era. Although they did not have a beneficial economic background and experienced greater downward mobility, they tended to be satisfied with life overall. Unemployment rates, which serve as a proxy variable for a period, were not significantly related to SWB. These results show that age and cohort factors, rather than a period factor, significantly impacted SWB.

Focusing on the origin, the destination weights in Model 1, the weight of the destination class is much larger (0.745) than that of the origin class (0.255). The destination class weight was significantly larger than 0.5, which means that the SWB of mobile individuals

Table 4 The overall effects of social class mobility (diagonal reference model)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e
Estimated parameters				
origin class weight (p)	0.255	0.070***	0.220	0.101**
destination class weight(1 − p)	0.745	0.070***	0.780	0.101***
βdownward			−0.025	0.037
βupward			−0.026	0.035
βhorizontal			−0.041	0.030
u11 (Serviceclass)	3.541	0.073***	3.553	0.074***
u22 (Routine clerical/sales)	3.332	0.076***	3.362	0.081***
u33 (Petty bourgeoisie)	3.305	0.074***	3.323	0.076***
u44 (Skilled manual)	3.300	0.076***	3.329	0.079***
u55 (Semi-unskilled manual)	3.135	0.076***	3.166	0.079***
u66 (Farmers/Farm workers)	3.232	0.089***	3.257	0.091***
Covariates				
Age (centering)	0.006	0.002***	0.006	0.002***
Age square (centering)	0.001	0.000***	0.001	0.000***
Female dummy	0.198	0.021***	0.200	0.021***
Married dummy	0.297	0.029***	0.297	0.029***
Cohorts (Ref: born in 1936–53)				
1954–70	0.119	0.028***	0.119	0.028***
1971–85	0.409	0.036***	0.408	0.036***
Unemployment rate	−0.024	0.020	−0.024	0.020
Model fit				
Residual sum of squares	8452.786		8450.954	
Degree of freedom	14		17	
R^2	0.061		0.061	
N	9028			

***$p < .01$; **$p < .05$; *$p < .1$

was mostly shaped by their destination and not origin class. However, as Model 2 shows, there was no additional mobility effect on SWB.

These results are consistent with Marshall and Firth (1999), Houle (2011), Hadjar and Samuel (2015), and Dhoore et al. (2019), all of whom reported no additional mobility effects on SWB. As Blau (1956) assumed, the SWB of mobile members in Japan was in the acculturation process and influenced by both the origin and the destination classes. The SWB of mobile members was rather similar to that of non-mobile members in the destination class. However, there was no empirical evidence of additional mobility effects over and above the origin/destination class. Therefore, H1 (the acculturation hypothesis) was supported, and H2 was rejected.

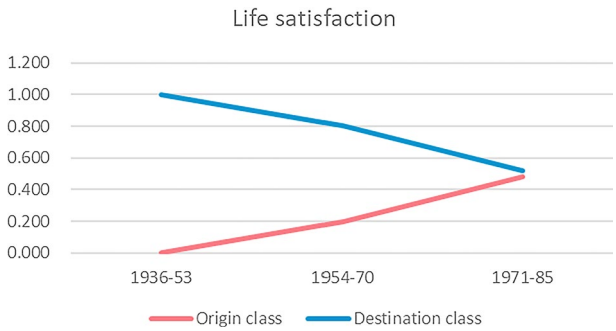

Fig. 3 Trends in the origin and destination class weights (both males and females)

6.3.2 Cohort Analysis I: Impacts of Social Class Mobility on SWB Among Cohorts

Society includes different generations. Although all generations live in the present and in the current socioeconomic structure, each one has a different socioeconomic background because each has lived in a different era.

After World War II, Japan underwent drastic socioeconomic changes. During the period of rapid economic growth, Japan's socioeconomic structure changed significantly. The peasant class disintegrated rapidly, and white-collar employment boomed (Hashimoto, 2013; Ishida, 2018). During the high economic growth period, most people were upwardly mobile, regardless of their absolute/relative mobility, and their wages and living standards also increased. Once the high economic growth period ended, the socioeconomic structure stabilized. After the bubble economy collapsed, Japan faced a prolonged recession. The employment market began to shrink and the number of non-regular workers increased, especially among the younger generation (Hashimoto, 2018).

Each generation in Japan has had a considerably different socioeconomic background and social class mobility experience. The youngest cohort had mobility experiences that differed from those of the older cohorts in the preceding section, and cohort experienced greater downward mobility. These different socioeconomic situations and experiences of mobility may have different consequences for SWB. Therefore, additional research is necessary to clarify whether mobility effects on SWB have changed with changes in the economic environment. This section conducts a DRM analysis for each cohort.

As shown in Model 1, the effects of the origin and destination classes and mobility on life satisfaction differed across cohorts. For the first cohort, the destination class weight was 1.0 and the origin class weight was 0, which means that the SWB of the male mobile members of these cohorts were not significantly different from that of the non-mobile members of the destination class. Although the destination class weight decreased in the second cohort, it dominated over the origin class weight. The life satisfaction of the mobile members of these two cohorts were mostly similar to that of the members of the non-mobile destination class.

However, the results for the youngest cohort, namely those who were born between 1971 and 1985 were very different from those of the older cohorts. The weights of the destination and origin classes decreased and increased considerably, respectively. The origin class weight (0.482) became more significant than that of the destination class (0.518). The life satisfaction of the youngest cohorts was formed by both their destination and origin classes. Figure 3 shows the trend in the origin/destination class weights. Whereas the impact of the origin class increased, that of the destination class decreased across cohorts.

Table 5 Cohort analysis

Cohorts	Born in 1936–1953				1954–1970				1971–1985			
	Model1		Model2		Model1		Model2		Model1		Model2	
	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e
Estimated parameters												
Origin class weight (p)	0.000	0.233	0.000	0.265	0.195	0.086**	0.092	0.122	0.482	0.124***	0.524	0.218**
Destination class weight (1 − p)	1.000	0.233***	1.000	0.265***	0.805	0.086***	0.908	0.122***	0.518	0.124***	0.476	0.218**
βdownward			0.007	0.073			0.030	0.059			−0.112	0.068
βupward			−0.023	0.059			−0.052	0.053			−0.055	0.074
βhorizontal			0.033	0.053			−0.057	0.046			−0.133	0.060**
Covariates												
Age	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.011	0.002***	0.011	0.002***	−0.004	0.005	−0.004	0.005
Female	0.251	0.036***	0.251	0.036***	0.181	0.032***	0.183	0.032***	0.168	0.042***	0.172	0.042***
Married dummy	0.219	0.061***	0.218	0.061***	0.271	0.044***	0.272	0.044***	0.372	0.049***	0.373	0.049***
Model fit												
Residual sum of squares	3036.886		3035.922		3178.049		3715.218		1688.855		1683.898	
Degree of freedom	10		13		10		13		10		13	
R^2	0.032		0.032		0.054		0.055		0.057		0.060	
N	3186				3862				1980			

***$p < .01$; **$p < .05$; *$p < .1$

The mobile members, those who got their first job in the recession era, were more affected by their origin class (Table 5).

Second, from Model 2, which validates the additional mobility effects, we found a significant mobility effect in the youngest cohort alone. Horizontal mobility harmed life satisfaction, whereas downward and upward mobility did not affect SWB for this cohort. However, aside from this, there were no significant mobility effects in any of the other cohorts.

Each cohort was affected differently by social class mobility. The high economic growth cohort was affected only by the destination class. We could not find any effect of origin class or mobility. Therefore, all hypotheses were rejected in the first cohort. In contrast, those who entered the labor market in the period of stable economic growth began to be affected by the origin and destination classes, although the origin class effect was rather small. Therefore, H1 was supported for the stable economic growth cohort. For the low growth cohort, the results proved H2, which postulated an additional mobility effect. However, the effect we found was not in perfect alignment with H2a, H2b, and H2c. We found that only horizontal mobility had an independent effect on SWB.

Horizontal mobility in this study includes movement from non-manual (manual) to manual (non-manual) occupations. Although we assumed that these mobilities belonged to the same category, there are considerable differences between non-manual and manual occupations in Japan. Horizontal mobility accompanies considerable cultural and occupational changes, without any significant socioeconomic rewards or disadvantages. It may cause some apparent confusion or stress, which may, in turn, negatively affect SWB for the young generation, who consider their origin class rather significant. Our results show that both the origin class and mobility began to affect the SWB of the younger generation.

The cohort analysis confirmed that social class mobility was considerably different for each cohort. Whereas the destination class effects tended to be dominant in the high economic growth era, the origin class effect tended to be significant in the recession era. Therefore, our results strongly supported H3.

6.3.3 Cohort Analysis II: Gender

We have confirmed the impact of social class mobility on SWB for the younger cohort, which had a more significant origin class effect. Social class mobility effects in the youngest cohort were significantly different from those of the former cohorts. However, this trend and mechanism may differ by gender. The career paths of males and females differ considerably in Japan. Many females are left out of the labor market after marriage and/or childbirth, and some of them re-enter the labor market after the infant care phase (Yoshida, 2004). In many cases, they enter the labor market as part-time workers to supplement their household incomes (Hashimoto, 2018). This section conducts a gender analysis and compares the mobility effect between males and females.

Tables 6 and 7 present the results for males and females, respectively. Model 1 in Table 6 shows that the results of the former two cohorts are significantly similar, and that the destination and origin class weights are 1.0 and 0, respectively. In contrast, as seen in the previous section, the result of the youngest cohort for males is considerably different from both these cohorts. The origin and destination class weights of the youngest cohort are 0.563 and 0.437, respectively. The origin class weight reversed the destination weight. Mobile members in the youngest cohort were more affected by their origin class. We were not able to find any mobility effect over and above these in any cohort for males.

Table 6 Cohort analysis (Males)

Cohorts	Bornin1936–1953				1954–1970				1971–1985			
	Model1		Model2		Model1		Model2		Model1		Model2	
	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e
Estimated parameters												
Origin class weight (p)	0.000	0.282	0.000	0.293	0.000	0.148	0.000	0.160	0.563	0.164**	0.931	0.403**
Destination class weight (1 − p)	1.000	0.282***	1.000	0.293**	1.000	0.148***	1.000	0.160***	0.437	0.164**	0.069	0.403
βdownward			0.026	0.097			−0.029	0.094			−0.208	0.129
βupward			0.024	0.073			−0.063	0.073			0.084	0.144
βhorizontal			0.067	0.071			−0.050	0.069			−0.072	0.091
Covariates												
Age	−0.003	0.004	−0.003	0.004	0.007	0.004**	0.008	0.004**	−0.008	0.008	−0.009	0.008
Married dummy	0.196	0.084**	0.194	0.084**	0.291	0.061***	0.293	0.061***	0.513	0.072***	0.504	0.072***
Model fit												
Residual sum of squares	1769.872		1768.885		1833.975		1832.848		867.266		863.475	
Degree of freedom	9		12		9		12		9		12	
R^2	0.017		0.018		0.053		0.053		0.071		0.075	
N	1807				1791				907			

***$p < .01$; **$p < .05$; *$p < .1$

Table 7 Cohort analysis (Females)

Cohorts	Born in 1936–1953				1954–1970				1971–1985			
	Model1		Model2		Model1		Model2		Model1		Model2	
	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e	Estimates	s.e
Estimated parameters												
origin class weight (p)	0.326	0.214	0.675	0.245**	0.380	0.095***	0.397	0.142**	0.507	0.116***	0.480	0.154**
destination class weight (1 − p)	0.674	0.214***	0.325	0.245	0.620	0.095***	0.603	0.142***	0.493	0.116***	0.520	0.154**
βdownward			−0.136	0.093			0.008	0.076			−0.090	0.083
βupward			0.027	0.091			0.029	0.075			−0.091	0.083
βhorizontal			0.002	0.078			0.036	0.064			−0.178	0.083**
Covariates												
Age	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.014	0.003***	0.014	0.003***	0.00	0.006	0.000	0.006
Married dummy	0.277	0.092**	0.280	0.091**	0.255	0.064***	0.014	0.064***	0.251	0.066***	0.257	0.067***
Model fit												
Residual sum of squares	1263.397		1262.021		1867.988		1866.778		804.082		800.113	
Degree of freedom	9		12		9		12		9		12	
R^2	0.019		0.02		0.043		0.043		0.036		0.041	
N	1379				2071				1073			

***$p < .01$; **$p < .05$; *$p < .1$

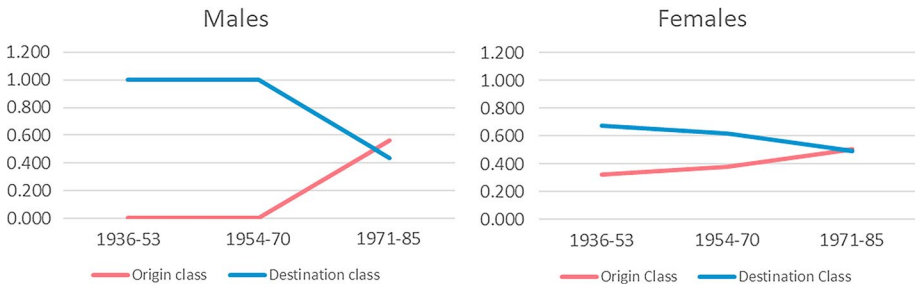

Fig. 4 Trends in the origin and destination class weights (left: males, right: females)

All hypotheses were rejected for the early two cohorts of males, whereas H1 was supported for the youngest cohort of males.

As can be seen in Table 7, the trend in the impact of social class mobility for females was quite different from that for males. The averages of origin class weights were considerably more extensive and the destination weight was smaller than that of males. In the previous section, we confirmed that the destination class weight for males born between 1936 and 1953 was 1.0. However, the destination class weight in the earliest cohort for females was much smaller. The trend in the impact of social class mobility was confirmed for the female cohorts; the younger cohort had considerable origin class weight. The origin class impact already expanded in the second cohort; that is, for those who got their jobs during the period of stable economic growth. It contrasts with the results found in the previous sections for males.

From Model 2 in Table 7, we confirmed additional mobility effects for the youngest cohort alone. Horizontal mobility had adverse effects on the SWB of the youngest female cohort. When other covariates and the origin/destination classes were controlled, horizontal mobility harmed SWB. We can thus assume that the negative horizontal mobility effect in Table 5 (analysis for both males and females) was mainly caused by the female cohort. H1 was supported for the first and second female cohorts. H2 was supported for the youngest cohort. However, H2a, H2b, and H3 did not explain this result fully.

The gender analysis presents three main findings. First, the trends in social class mobility impacted both males and females. The higher origin class influenced the younger cohorts. Second, the origin class impact was much larger among females of all cohorts than among males, and the origin class began to expand its affluence for females in the early period (see Fig. 4). Third, there were additional mobility effects in the youngest cohort of females alone. Horizontal mobility harmed SWB for the youngest females. The gender analysis also showed that the effect of horizontal mobility on the younger cohort was mainly attributed to females.

7 Discussion

Overall, the SWB of mobile members in Japan is under acculturation influence, just as Blau (1956) had assumed. The SWB of mobile members is shaped by their origin and destination classes. However, we did not find any evidence that all mobility has additional negative effects regardless of direction, as Sorokin (1959) suggested. These overall effects

vary by cohort and gender. The relationship between intergenerational mobility and SWB is more variable and complex than existing studies have assumed. Whereas many existing studies have not considered the variations in socioeconomic factors and the impact of gender, this study clearly shows that the effect of intergenerational mobility on SWB varies based on both socioeconomic context and gender.

We did not find any evidence that mobile members, especially male ones who entered the labor market during the period of high economic growth had adjustment problems as a result of their mobility. They were found to have SWB that was not different from that of their counterparts from the non-mobile destination class. The results are consistent with Germani (1966) and Goldthorpe (1987), who asserted that high mobility rates may ease the detrimental consequences of class mobility.

In contrast, the impact of the origin class increased significantly for the youngest cohort. Considering both the literature and the Japanese context, this may be interpreted as Sudo (2009) did. Sudo (2009) focused on non-mobile members who had the same occupation as their fathers at the time of his study and found that upper white-collar succession positively affected subjective social status. He indicated that in the stable economic growth era, occupational values also gained stability. He also noted that people could assess the value of both their own current and their fathers' occupations. Therefore, succession to an advantageous occupational position contributes toward having an "upper" status.

From this study, we can assume that a similar mechanism unfolded in the context of the SWB of the younger generation. During the recession, Japan's economic growth rate was meager, and occupational value did not change significantly. However, the income gap increased, and the labor market also changed. The proportion of non-regular workers increased dramatically, and most non-regular occupations began to be filled by the young generation (Hashimoto, 2018). The most recent cohort was at a disadvantage when compared to the former cohorts. We can assume that the value of the origin class gained clarity in the present period and became a crucial factor in determining the SWB. In this socioeconomic situation, the financial, cultural, and family background of the origin class began to influence the SWB of young mobile members. In contemporary Japan, the young generation began to maintain its origin class legacy.

Our study indicated that the origin class and mobility were more critical factors for females, especially for the youngest among them. Japanese females followed more complex career paths than males. Marriage and childbirth are critical variables in the career path for females. Many females experience career breaks as they leave the labor market after marriage and/or childbirth and re-enter it as part-time workers once they have settled down to raise their children. Prior studies thus identified the status of their husbands or households as critical to determining the subjective status of married females, rather than their own individual incomes or statuses (Akagawa, 2000; Aramaki, 2019). The recent economic downturn and worsening labor market conditions have directly affected females whose careers were precarious from the beginning. It may have increased the influence and mobility of the origin class, which had initially been a critical determinant of SWB.

This study has some limitations. First, we must examine the impact of intra-generational class mobility on SWB. Zang and Dirk de Graaf (2016) found differences between the inter- and intra-generational class mobility effects on SWB in China. We must examine how one's career changes affect the well-being of mobile members for a broad understanding of the relationship between class mobility and SWB in Japan.

Second, research has shown that the impact on SWB varies based on the class to and from which individuals have moved (Miwa & Yamamoto, 2012; Zhao et al., 2017). It is

essential to examine how the trajectory of mobility affects the SWB of mobile members to understand the consequences of class mobility further.

Third, we must examine the origin classes of both parents. Beller (2009) insisted on the importance of the mother's class while estimating class mobility effects. Shirahase and Ishida (2018) found that the mother's class affects the course of individual lives in Japan. Hirao and Taromaru (2011) recommended considering unemployed part-time workers as the origin class. We did not focus on unemployed individuals. The SWB of those from an unemployed origin class is likely to differ from that of others in a rather remarkable manner. We must expand and consider the scope of the class of origin.

8 Conclusion

To date, empirical research on the consequences of class mobility and related discussions has been limited. Little research has been conducted on how class mobility produces change according to relevant macro-social contexts. Using a Japanese representative national survey, namely the SSM Survey Datasets from 1985 to 2015, we examined the impact of intergenerational social class mobility on SWB and evaluated how the relations differ based on socioeconomic factors.

We drew up the acculturation, dissociative, relative status, and inertia hypotheses based on both a literature review and empirical research. We hypothesized that the effect of social class mobility differs across cohorts whose socioeconomic situations differed. We adopted the DRM method to deconstruct the origin, destination, and mobility effects. Using this approach, we arrived at three significant results.

First, it was clear that the overall effects of intergenerational social class mobility on SWB were affected mainly by their destination class, although the origin class did contribute toward the formation of SWB. The SWB of mobile members was highly similar to that of their non-mobile destination class counterparts. In contrast, no additional mobility effects were found.

Second, the cohort analysis showed that the effects of the origin and destination classes, and mobility differed across cohorts. The SWB of the high economic growth cohort was determined only by their destination class. In contrast, although the impact of the destination class was dominant, the origin class effect became significant in the stable economic growth cohort. We confirmed that the formation of SWB in the recession cohort was remarkably different from that of the former two cohorts. The origin class impact increased considerably. Horizontal mobility had a significant negative impact. None of the hypotheses we formulated fully explained the results of horizontal mobility. One possible interpretation is that the mobility between non-manual and manual occupations that accompanies tremendous changes in occupational conditions/culture without prominent socioeconomic advantages or disadvantages may harm the SWB of mobile members. Our results show that the youngest cohort began to be significantly affected by their origin class, implying that the youngest generation became more committed to their origin class even after gaining mobility.

The gender analysis presented a similar trend in the origin and destination class and mobility effects. The effects of destination class were dominant in the first and the second cohort. The youngest cohort began to be affected considerably by their origin class. The effects of the destination class were more dominant among males. Males who began their careers during the periods of high and stable economic growth were affected by their

destination rather than origin classes. We did not find the acculturation process in the two early cohorts of males.

All female cohorts were less affected by their destination class than were the male ones. Females tended to be more affected by their origin classes. We also found an additional negative horizontal mobility effect in the youngest female cohort. This shows that the effect of horizontal mobility in the youngest cohort as confirmed in the cohort analysis was attributed to females.

Overall, mobile members in Japan are currently in the course of acculturation. They have affected both origin and destination classes. However, the destination class mainly contributed toward formulating the SWB of mobile individuals. The impact of intergenerational mobility varies across cohorts, each with different socioeconomic experiences. Those who were mobile during the period of high economic growth were mainly affected by their destination classes. Those who were mobile in the recession were more under the influence of their origin classes. The results strongly show that the effects of class mobility on SWB vary across macro-social contexts. Our results imply the macro-social context should be considered while examining the impact of class mobility on SWB.

Acknowledgements The study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP25000001.

Authors' contributions This research was conducted by one author.

Funding The study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP25000001.

Availability of data and materials SSM 2015 survey data is allowed only for members. SSM 1985–2005 survey data are available only with the approval of SSJDA (https://csrda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp).

Code availability SPSS software was used to conduct the present research.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval Not applicable.

Consent to participate Not applicable.

Consent for publication Not applicable.

References

Akagawa, M. (2000). How is the hierarchical status of women determined? In K. Seiyama (Ed.), *Japanese hierarchical system 4* (pp. 47–63). University of Tokyo Press. in Japanese.

Alesina, A., Di Tella, R., & MacCulloch, R. (2004). Inequality and happiness: Are Europeans and Americans different? *Journal of Public Economics, 88*(9–10), 2009–2042.

Alston, J. P., & Knapp, M. J. (1974). Intergenerational mobility among black Americans: Background factors and attitudinal consequences. *Journal of Black Studies, 4*(3), 285–302.

Aramaki, S. (2019). Background of educational disparity. *Keiso Shobo.* in Japanese.

Beller, E. (2009). Bringing intergenerational social mobility research into the twenty-first century: Why mothers matter. *American Sociological Review, 74*(4), 507–528.

Blanchflower, D. G., & Oswald, A. J. (2004). Well-being over time in Britain and the USA. *Journal of Public Economics, 88*(7–8), 1359–1386.

Blanchflower, D. G., & Oswald, A. J. (2008). Is well-being U-shaped over the life cycle? *Social Science and Medicine, 66*(8), 1733–1749.
Blau, P. M. (1956). Social mobility and interpersonal relations. *American Sociological Review, 21*(3), 290–295.
Blossfeld, H. P., & Shavit, Y. (1992). Persisting barriers: Changes in educational opportunities in thirteen countries. In H.-P. Blossfeld & Y. Shavit (Eds.), *Persisting inequality* (pp. 1–23). Boulder: Westview.
Bradburn, N. M. (1969). *The structure of psychological well-being*. Aldine Publishing.
Breen, R. (2004). *Social mobility in Europe*. Oxford University Press.
Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. (2021). National accounts (GDP statistics). Retrieved June 5, 2021 from https://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/menu.html. in Japanese.
Campbell, A. (1981). *The sense of well-being in America: Recent patterns and trends*. McGraw-Hill.
Cantril, H. (1965). *The pattern of human concerns*. Rutgers University Press.
Chan, T. W. (2018). Social mobility and the well-being of individuals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 69*(1), 183–206. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12285
Clark, A. E., Frijters, P., & Shields, M. A. (2008). Relative income, happiness, and utility: An explanation for the easterlin paradox and other puzzles. *Journal of Economic Literature, 46*(1), 95–144. https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.46.1.95
Clark, A., & D'Angelo, E. (2010). *Upward social mobility, well-being and political preferences: Evidence from the BHPS*. Università Politecnica Delle Marche.
Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1988). Personality in adulthood: A six-year longitudinal study of self-reports and spouse ratings on the NEO Personality Inventory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(5), 853–863.
Dhoore, J., Daenekindt, S., & Roose, H. (2019). Social mobility and life satisfaction across European countries: A compositional perspective on dissociative consequences of social mobility. *Social Indicators Research, 144*(3), 1257–1272. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02083-2
Diener, E., Diener, M., & Diener, C. (2009). Factors predicting the subjective well-being of nations. In E. Diener (Ed.), *Culture and well-being. Social indicators research series.* (Vol. 38). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2352-0_3
Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2005). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction. In C. R. Synder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 63–73). Oxford University Press.
Duesenberry, J. S. (1949). *Income saving and the theory of consumer behavior*. Harvard University Press.
Ellis, R., & Lane, W. (1967). Social mobility and social isolation: A test of Sorokin's dissociative hypothesis. *American Sociological Review, 32*(2), 237–253. https://doi.org/10.2307/2091814
Easterlin, R. A. (1974). Does economic growth improve the human lot? Some empirical evidence. In P. A. David & M. W. Reder (Eds.), *Nations and households in economic growth* (pp. 89–125). Academic Press.
Easterlin, R. A. (1995). Will raising the incomes of all increase the happiness of all? *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, 27*(1), 35–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681(95)00003-B
Erikson, R., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (1987). Commonality and variation in social fluidity in industrial nations. Part I: A model for evaluating the "FJH hypothesis." *European Sociological Review, 3*(1), 54–77.
Erikson, R., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (1992). The CASMIN project and the American dream. *European Sociological Review, 8*(3), 283–305.
Erikson, R., Goldthorpe, J. H., & Portocarero, L. (1982). Social fluidity in industrial nations: England, France and Sweden. *The British Journal of Sociology, 33*(1), 1–34.
e-Stat, Portal site for Japanese government Statistics (2021). Basic school survey. *Annals of Statistics*. Retrieved June 5, 2021 from https://www.e-stat.go.jp/stat-search/files?page=1&layout=datalist&toukei=00400001&tstat=000001011528&cycle=0&tclass1=000001021812&stat_infid=000031852304&tclass2val=0. in Japanese.
Featherman, D. L., Lancaster Jones, F. L., & Hauser, R. M. (1975). Assumptions of social mobility research in the US: The case of occupational status. *Social Science Research, 4*(4), 329–360.
Fernández-Dols, J.-M., & Ruiz-Belda, M.-A. (1995). Are smiles a sign of happiness? Gold medal winners at the Olympic Games. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*(6), 1113.
Ferrer-i-Carbonell, A. (2005). Income and well-being: An empirical analysis of the comparison income effect. *Journal of Public Economics, 89*(5–6), 997–1019. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2004.06.003
Firebaugh, G. (1997). *Analyzing repeated surveys*. Sage.
Fischer, J. (2009). The welfare effects of social mobility: An analysis for OECD countries. *Germany: University Library of Munich, MPRA Paper.*

Germani, G. (1966). Social and political consequences of mobility. In N. J. Smelser & S. M. Lipset (Eds.), *Social structure and mobility in economic development* (pp. 364–394). Aldine Publishing.
Goldthorpe, J. H. (1987). *Social mobility and class structure in modern Britain* (2nd ed.). Clarendon Press.
Graham, C., & Pettinato, S. (2006). Frustrated achievers: Winners, losers, and subjective well-being in Peru's emerging economy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 606*(1), 128–153. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716206288192
Hadjar, A., & Samuel, R. (2015). Does upward social mobility increase life satisfaction? A longitudinal analysis using British and swiss panel data. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 39*, 48–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2014.12.002
Hashimoto, K. (1999). Class structure in contemporary Japan: Theory, method, and quantitative analysis. *Toshintou.*. in Japanese.
Hashimoto, K. (2013). *Postwar history of 'disparity.'* Kawai Books. in Japanese.
Hashimoto, K. (2018). The '*new*' Japanese class society. *Koudansya Gendaishinsyo.* in Japanese.
Hendrickx, J., De Graaf, N. D., Lammers, J., & Ultee, W. (1993). Models for status inconsistency and mobility: A comparison of the approaches by hope and Sobel with the mainstream square additive model. *Quality and Quantity, 27*(4), 335–352.
Hirao, I., & Taromaru, H. (2011). The location of nonstandard employment in intergenerational mobility regime. *Sociological Theory and Methods, 26*(2), 355–370. in Japanese.
Houle, J. N. (2011). The psychological impact of intragenerational social class mobility. *Social Science Research, 40*(3), 757–772. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.11.008
Houle, J. N., & Martin, M. A. (2011). Does intergenerational mobility shape psychological distress? Sorokin revisited. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 29*(2), 193–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2010.11.001
Hout, M., & Jackson, J. A. (1986). Dimensions of occupational mobility in the Republic of Ireland. *European Sociological Review, 2*(2), 114–137.
Ishida, H. (1993). *Social mobility in contemporary Japan*. Stanford University Press.
Ishida, H. (2018). Long-term trends in intergenerational class mobility in Japan. In T. Yoshida (Ed.), *The 2015 SSM research series 3: Class mobility and Health* 2015 SSM Research Group (pp. 41–64).
Ishida, H., Goldthorpe, J. H., & Erikson, R. (1991). Intergenerational class mobility in postwar Japan. *American Journal of Sociology, 96*(4), 954–992.
Kanai, M. (2018). Changes in the Impact of Social Mobility on Subjective wellbeing in Japan: Evidence from the SSM surveys from 1975 to 2015. In D. Kobayashi (Ed.), *The 2015 SSM research series 9: Social Attitude 2* 2015 SSM Research Group (pp. 165–183). in Japanese.
Kang, W. C., Lee, J. S., & Song, B. (2020). Envy and pride: How economic inequality deepens happiness inequality in South Korea. *Social Indicators Research, 150*(2), 617–637. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02339-2
Kessin, K. (1971). Social and psychological consequences of intergenerational occupational mobility. *American Journal of Sociology, 77*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1086/225064
Kobayashi, D. (2016). Age, period and cohort effects in life satisfaction. In H. Taromaru (Ed.), *Late modernity and transformation of value consciousness: Japanese consciousness 1973–2008* (pp. 75–92). University of Tokyo Press. in Japanese.
Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, *140*(5).
Lipset, S. M., & Bendix, R. (1959). *Social mobility in industrial society*. University of California Press.
Marshall, G., & Firth, D. (1999). Social mobility and personal satisfaction: Evidence from ten countries. *The British Journal of Sociology, 50*(1), 28–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.1999.00028.x
McBride, M. (2001). Relative-income effects on subjective well-being in the cross-section. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, 45*(3), 251–278.
MHLW. (2020). Changes in the number of births and total fertility rate. Retrieved June 5, 2021 from https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/wp/hakusyo/kousei/19/backdata/01-01-01-07.html. in Japanese.
Mitchell, R. E. (1972). Levels of emotional strain in East Asian cities. *Asian folklore & social life monographs*. Taipei, Formosa: The Orient Cultural Service. Retrieved from https://worlddatabaseofhappiness-archive.eur.nl/hap_bib/freetexts/mitchell_re_1972.pdf.
Miwa, S., & Yamamoto, K. (2012). The "within-subject" effects of intragenerational class mobility on subjective social status. *Sociological Theory and Methods, 27*(1), 63–84. in Japanese.
MLIT (2012). Long-term economic downturn. Retrieved June 5, 2021 from https://www.mlit.go.jp/hakusyo/mlit/h24/hakusho/h25/html/n1112000.html. in Japanese.
Nennstiel, R. (2021). On the way to becoming a society of downward mobility? Intergenerational occupational mobility in seven west German birth cohorts (1944–1978). *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2021.100609

Nikolaev, B., & Burns, A. (2014). Intergenerational mobility and subjective well-being—Evidence from the general social survey. *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, 53*(Dec), 82–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2014.08.005

Sandvik, E. (Ed.), (1993). Subjective well-being: The con-vergence and stability of self-report and non-self-report measures. Diener and Larry Seidlitz. *Journal of Personality*, 317–342.

Sato, T. (2000). Unequal Society Japan: Goodbye to the middle class. *Tyukousinsyo.* in Japanese.

Schuck, B., & Steiber, N. (2018). Does intergenerational educational mobility shape the well-being of young Europeans? Evidence from the European Social Survey. *Social Indicators Research, 139*(3), 1237–1255.

Senik, C. (2006). *Ambition and jealousy: Income interactions in the old Europe versus the new Europe and the United States* 2083. Retrieved from https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/33233. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

Shirahase, S., & Ishida, H. (2018). Social stratification and life course in an aging and low birth rate society: Focusing on the impact of class origin. *Sociological Theory and Methods, 33*(2), 185–201. in Japanese.

Sobel, M. E. (1981). Diagonal mobility models: A substantively motivated class of designs for the analysis of mobility effects. *American Sociological Review, 46*(6), 893–906. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095086

Sorokin, P. A. (1959). *Social and cultural mobility*. Free Press.

Statistics Bureau of Japan. (2020). Elderly population. Retrieved June 5, 2021 from https://www.stat.go.jp/data/topics/topi1261.html. in Japanese.

Sudo, N. (2009). Dynamics of class identification. *Keisou Syobo.* in Japanese.

Takenoshita, H., Tanabe, S., & Kanomata, N. (2008). Cross-national comparison and class classification: Conversion of occupational titles in Japan into cross-nationally comparable measures of class classification. *Annual Reports of Departments of Social & Human Studies and Language & Literature, 58*(2), 17–42. in Japanese.

Taromaru, H. (Ed.). (2016). *Late modernity and transformation of value consciousness: Japanese consciousness 1973–2008*. University of Tokyo Press. in Japanese.

Tominaga, K. (1979). Analysis of trends in social stratification and social mobility. In K. Tominaga (Ed.), *Hierarchical structure of Japan* (pp. 33–87). University of Tokyo Press. in Japanese.

Tominaga, K. (1992). Social stratification and its change in postwar Japan: 1955–1985. In Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo (Ed.), *Contemporary Japanese Society 6: Various aspects of the problem* (pp. 429–495). University of Tokyo Press. in Japanese.

Yoshida, T. (2004). The significance of the Rising M-shaped Curve. *Kazoku Syakaigaku Kenkyu, 16*(1), 61–70. in Japanese.

Zang, E., & Dirk de Graaf, N. (2016). Frustrated achievers or satisfied losers? Inter- and intragenerational social mobility and happiness in China. *Sociological Science, 3*, 779–800.

Zhao, Y., Li, Y., Heath, A., & Shryane, N. (2017). Inter- and intra-generational social mobility effects on subjective well-being—Evidence from Mainland China. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 48*, 54–66.