Department of Political Science

On Social Mobility: the Other Side of the Coin

A quantitative study on how intergenerational social mobility direction affects satisfaction with democracy in European countries

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Abstract

High intergenerational social mobility is by scholars depicted as something good. However, high intergenerational social mobility not only encompasses mobility upward but also mobility downward. It has been found by previous scholars that mobility direction affects political distrust, nonetheless there is still little research on the adverse political outcomes of intergenerational social mobility direction. This thesis aims to partly fill this gap by contrasting individuals experiencing upward mobility with individuals experiencing mobility downward. Asymmetry in mobility direction is expected to affect satisfaction with democracy; individuals experiencing mobility upward will be more satisfied because they ascribe their mobility to individual efforts, whereas individuals experiencing mobility downward will be less satisfied because they blame political institutions for their mobility direction. Two hypotheses are formed and tested. I use the European Social Survey Round 8 dataset to analyse how mobility direction affects satisfaction through Ordinary Least Squares regression. The variables controlled for are age, domestic origin, gender and educational level. The results suggest that the hypotheses partially hold. Individuals who are mobile downwards are not less satisfied with democracy than the reference group as a whole, but they are less satisfied with democracy than individuals mobile upward. Non-mobile individuals are found to be the least satisfied. This concludes that it is mobility levels rather than direction that causes dissatisfaction.

Key words: Satisfaction with democracy; Intergenerational social mobility; Mobility direction

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1. Introduction

Satisfaction with democracy is by many scholars said to be of vital importance for political stability in democratic countries (Quaranta & Martini 2016:165). Under recent years, political discontent in Europe has become a pressing issue for European policymakers (Bache et al. 2015, Piketty 2015, Quaranta 2015). Economic inequalities, wage stagnation and lack of opportunities are the alleged causes of the growing discontent (Ingham 2008: 157, 174, 212-213, Quaranta 2015, Day & Fiske 2016). Inequalities of income and wealth and social mobility are not the same thing, but can be related if the wealth of one generation determines the wealth of the next (Putnam 2016: 31). Intergenerational social mobility allows inequalities in income and wealth to persist, but can prevent the relative inequalities from skyrocketing in different directions because opportunities to education and income are redistributed between classes (Putnam 2016: 41-43). Social mobility is usually portrayed as distribution of opportunities between individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and is depicted as something inherently good (Putnam 2016: 31, Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Friedman 2013, Björklund, Roine & Waldenström 2008, Corak 2013, Ichino, Karabarbounis & Moretti 2010). However, high mobility is not necessarily entirely positive; it might also bring certain problems along with it. High mobility also includes mobility downward, which under some circumstances might result in unwanted outcomes (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016, Friedman 2013). Directions of intergenerational social mobility have been shown to affect how citizens evaluate the political system (ibid). For instance, low mobility decreases the likelihood of system justification and mobility downward results in political distrust (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016). The direction of mobility might have even stronger implications as differences in relative distribution increase. Scholars express a need to further understand how social mobility, perceived or de facto, affects political outcomes (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016, Friedman 2013, Wagner, Schneider & Halla 2009: 33). This issue is what I in this thesis will address. Previous literature has found that intergenerational social mobility explains lack of system justification and trust in politics because citizens who experience low or downward mobility do not perceive the system as meritocratic, i.e., that it produces outcomes that are fair with regard to individual effort (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016).

We still know little about the potential negative political outcomes of high intergenerational social mobility. If there is no knowledge on what the outcomes are and how they occur, nothing can be done to address the negative political outcomes, for instance low satisfaction with democracy or low political trust (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017). To study how intergenerational social mobility direction affects satisfaction with democracy would give more knowledge on this subject, and might improve our understanding of the relationship between evaluation of the system and feelings of injustice and mobility.

I will argue that intergenerational social mobility affects satisfaction with democracy. The direction in which individuals are mobile will affect their perceptions of why they have moved in a certain direction. When individuals experience downward mobility, they will put the blame on the system for not correcting for factors that they themselves do not believe they carry the responsibility for (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016, Lühiste 2014, Rothstein 2013: 1010, 1014, Spicker 2008). If they move upward however, they will ascribe their achievement to individual efforts (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016). Given that social mobility under certain circumstances may result in undesirable outcomes, this study can contribute with important knowledge on political outcomes of high social mobility. Moreover, it may give explanations to the current political climate in European democracies.

1.1. Aim & Research Question

Building on previous literature this thesis aims to further elaborate this branch of scholarship by studying how social mobility affects political outcomes, and, more importantly, to pinpoint that high social mobility can have adverse effects. The research question is therefore:
Does intergenerational social mobility direction in European democracies affect satisfaction with democracy?

At a time when relative inequality is increasing, information on how satisfaction with democracy is affected by intergenerational mobility downwards might give answers to some of the most discussed topics on European democracy (Ingham 2008: 212-213). Lack of legitimacy is portrayed as one of the most pressing dissatisfaction concerns for the European Union, and is often explained as a result of the alleged democratic deficit of the union (Bache et al. 2015, Piketty 2015). If a great deal of the European constituency has experienced

intergenerational social mobility downward and if this change has caused low satisfaction with democracy, this might be an alternative explanation to dissatisfaction.

To the general public it is of interest because it is they who are subject to social mobility, and it is they who express satisfaction with democracy. To know the cause of this satisfaction, or dissatisfaction for that matter, and the consequences of social mobility, is important because the ideal situation is that satisfaction is high since it indicates well functioning democratic institutions and political stability (Linde & Ekman 2003: 400, Quaranta & Martini 2016:165). If there are negative outcomes of high mobility such as low trust or low satisfaction with democracy, these must be addressed. Low trust for instance, implies low life satisfaction (Nannestad 2008).

Below follows a literature review on satisfaction with democracy and intergenerational social mobility, followed by a theoretical framework, hypotheses, method and data discussion, results and an analytical discussion of the results and conclusions in that order.

2. Literature Review

Below I present a review of literature on intergenerational social mobility, the political outcomes of social mobility and satisfaction with democracy and how this study will contribute to existing literature. The purpose of the literature's review is to find the existing literature's most accurate answer to the research question.

2.1. Intergenerational Mobility & Potential Political Outcomes

Considering previous studies on the subject, intergenerational social mobility is often assumed to be a goal for all societies that strive to achieve meritocratic societal openness and equal opportunities for all (Björklund, Roine & Waldenström 2008, Corak 2013, Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:10, Friedman 2013:1-2, Ichino, Karabarbounis & Moretti 2010). This assumption has however led researchers to almost exclusively discuss mobility measurements and origins rather than trying to empirically establish its causes and consequences (Friedman 2013: 2). High intergenerational social mobility does not necessarily result in solely positive outcomes (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Friedman 2013).

2.1.1. Levels of intergenerational social mobility

Intergenerational social mobility is a situation in which an individual has a different social situation than its parents (Daenekindt 2016). The intergenerational correlation coefficient describes how factors in a parent's life affect the child's future opportunities to reach certain a class, level of education or income, i.e., how family or parental socioeconomic status determines an individual's future opportunities (Bladen 2013:38, Björklund & Jäntti 2011: 510, Causa & Johansson 2010, Smeeding 2013: 4). The values of the intergenerational correlation coefficient[1] in some European democracies are listed in Table 1 and show that aggregate intergenerational social mobility within the European democracies used in this analysis vary a great deal. Finland, for instance has a great deal of intergenerational social

[1] The intergenerational correlation coefficient β, represents the relationship between parental income in period *t-1* the individuals adult income in period *t.* For the sake of simplicity, an individual is assumed to live for two periods, *t-1* and *t* (Frid & Hermann 2016:7). The variables in the equation below are the intercept *a,* and y^t the individuals income as an adult in period *t.* Then there's correction factor ε^t, that captures everything that effects y^t apart from the parental income y^{t-1} and finally β, which represents the relationship between parental income in period *t-1* the individuals adult income in period *t* .

$$y^t = a + (\beta \, x \, y^{t-1}) + \varepsilon^t$$

This equation is referred to as the Becker & Tomes (1979) model (in Frid & Hermann 2016:7).

mobility; it is very common for individuals to have another income, educational level or class compared to their parents. In Slovenia and the United Kingdom, however, this is more uncommon, which is shown by the high values of β. The income, educational level or class of an individual is highly correlated with the parents ditto. This data is presented to give an idea of how mobility levels vary within this study's analysed population.

Table 1: The Beta-coefficient in European countries.

Country	β-value
Switzerland	0,46
Germany	0,32
Sweden	0,27
Slovenia	0,54
Finland	0,18
France	0,41
United Kingdom	0,50
Norway	0,17

Source: Corak 2012

2.1.2. Political Outcomes of Intergenerational Social Mobility

Not until very recently has intergenerational social mobility been considered an independent variable with both positive and negative outcomes (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Day & Fiske 2016). The literature on political outcomes of intergenerational social mobility has traditionally focused on how social mobility affects voting behaviour (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 2). One study on this, by Clifford and Heath (1993:57), finds that the direction of intergenerational social mobility does not affect turnout, but it does however affect political right-left preferences. However the literature on the overall political outcomes of social mobility direction is scarce; only two recent studies have examined the political outcomes of intergenerational social mobility.

Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) study whether and how intergenerational social mobility downward causes individuals to distrust in politics as a result of them ascribing their misfortunes to the functioning of the political system and therefore perceiving

it as unfair (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 5). They mean that the psychological experience of being mobile in different directions explains their attitudes to political institutions. For instance, it has been shown that mobility downward results in a feeling of injustice, while upward mobility is attributed to one's own efforts (Newman 1989, Spruyt 2015). More findings related to this are the findings on internal-external attribution styles. Failure is shown to go hand in hand with external attribution style. Individuals who experience failure blame external occurrences, while success is praised as self-achievement (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 11). By using Diagonal Reference Models to analyse data from the Netherlands' Longitudinal Life-course Study, the researchers find that individuals who have experienced intergenerational mobility downward are more likely to show distrust in politics (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:10-11). Upward mobility, however, does not seem to affect system explanations (ibid.). Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) claim that the reason for this is that upward mobility is by the individual thought to occur because of personal characteristics, independent of how political institutions function. Upward mobility is perceived as a reward to individual efforts, made possible by meritocratic institutions, while mobility downwards is by individuals explained as a cause of unjust institutions. The results show that downward mobility creates political distrust (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 10).[2] It is possible that the relationship between mobility direction and satisfaction with democracy takes the same shape. However, the results that find upward mobility to cause less distrust (relative to the downwardly mobile group) are not statistically significant (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 11). It could be that downward mobility experience affects the individual to a much larger extent than upward mobility (ibid).

Day and Fiske (2016) arrive at similar conclusions when they examine whether perceptions of social mobility affect willingness to defend the system. System defence decreases when participants in the experimental study perceive mobility as low (Day & Fiske 2016: 271-272). Mediation of mobility was designed by giving participants different reports on social mobility. Willingness to defend the system decreases when the individual perceives its own mobility as low, since it damages the individual's opinion of the fairness of the system (Day & Fiske

[2] Important to note is that political trust *is not* satisfaction with democracy. However one can imagine that one is not particularly satisfied with institutions that one does not trust. Hence, political trust and satisfaction with democracy can be said to be related concepts.

2016: 272). This relationship persists when political orientation is controlled for (ibid.).[3] The data they use is set in an American context, and though political systems in European democracies and in the United States have similarities, they are by no means equivalent. The findings of Day and Fiske (2016) are not extensive enough to draw conclusions between satisfaction with democracy and social mobility direction, since the study does not study mobility direction but mobility levels. This thesis will pick up on the requests of previous scholars to examine political outcomes of mobility and try to explain how mobility direction can affect satisfaction with democracy in European democracies.

Both Day and Fiske (2016) and Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) find that political outcomes of mobility direction and levels are shaped by a tendency to perceive meritocratic principles differently. It is possible that the mechanism behind social mobility that affects political outcomes is the individual's perceptions of meritocracy. These perceptions vary with mobility, as Day and Fiske (2016) and Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) find. Following this conclusion, this study will theorise that satisfaction with democracy is affected by social mobility direction, because mobility direction gives the individual different experiences which affect perceptions of meritocracy and hence satisfaction.

2.1.3. The Satisfaction with Democracy Literature

Satisfaction with democracy is one of the most common measures of how content citizens are with the current regime, and the concept has been widely studied. Satisfaction with democracy has predominantly been explained by variation in institutional factors such as the constitutional prerequisites for political actors in the political system and the quality of government (Quaranta & Martini 2016:165, Thomassen 2001, Stockemer & Sundström 2013: 141). For example, the more consensual a democracy's political system is, the more likely it is that losers are satisfied with the current system, while winners are less satisfied (Anderson & Guillory 1997: 78). Aarts and Thomassen (2008: 17) claim that it is the fact that consensual democracies are more *representative* of the electorate that causes citizens in proportional systems to be more satisfied with their regime, i.e., accountability is less important in the

[3] It should be said that the perceptions of mobility are not the equivalent of every individual's actual mobility. However, the theory in this thesis will state that mobility will affect satisfaction with democracy because they feel unfairly treated when background factors are not controlled for. Implicitly then, it will be assumed that the individual has some kind of perception of mobility that is in line with their actual mobility.

evaluation process. Quality of government has been found to be a strong determinant of satisfaction with democracy (Stockemer & Sundström 2013, Wagner, Schneider & Halla 2009). Social mobility varies in many ways with corruption, because corruption favours those who are already in leading positions in society (Boudreaux 2014:13). Regardless of the relationship between corruption and social mobility however, they are two different concepts that can independently affect satisfaction with democracy. A more recent study examines how individual satisfaction with social protection systems predict satisfaction with democracy (Lühiste 2014). These results might tell us that social mobility, inequalities and satisfaction with democracy are closely related.

2.1.4. Income inequality, Social Mobility Levels & Satisfaction with Democracy

Social mobility level is closely related to income inequalities (Bladen 2013: 62, Causa & Johansson 2010, Corak 2006, 2013:3, Putnam 2016: 31, 41-43, Smeeding 2013). Corak (2013:3) illustrates a close relationship between the Gini-coefficient and mobility though the Great Gatsby curve, where higher Gini-value corresponds with lower intergenerational mobility. However, in *Jumping off the Great Gatsby Curve,* Boudreaux (2014:13) finds that it is institutions that foster entrepreneurship and low corruption that cause high mobility. Mobility also varies within income brackets; low and high income individuals are less mobile than middle income individuals (Bratberg et al. 2017:91). This might tell us that it is middle income individuals who are most likely to also be mobile downwards.

In countries with higher income equality, citizens express more satisfaction with the current democratic regime (Anderson & Singer 2008:564-565,583). Inequalities in income and wealth and levels of social mobility as stated earlier, are not to be confused as the same thing (Putnam 2016: 31). Theoretically at least, relative poverty can be very large without it being perceived as unfair, as long as mobility between individuals in different income brackets is very high (Frid & Hermann 2016:13). Given that everyone in this theoretical society is above an absolute poverty level, this kind of society might even be desirable since it creates high incentives for individuals to work hard for what they want (ibid.).

However, high mobility implicitly means that some individuals end up being worse off than their parents. Given that income inequality has risen in the past thirty years and that it is middle income takers who are the most mobile, and therefore most likely to be mobile

downward, this might have caused some individuals, most likely in the middle class, to drop down into the lower income deciles (Bratberg et al. 2017:91, Ingham 2008: 157, 174, 212-213). If some have dropped in income, this might result in their children acquiring a lower level of education, for instance.[4]

2.2. The Gap & Contribution To Existing Literature

Existing literature has found many solid explanations to satisfaction with democracy and intergenerational social mobility separately. Be that as it may, the relationship *between* the two is understudied. Conclusions need to be tested further to be able to establish a broader knowledge of the relationship and the possible implications it might have for both policy and future research on democracy evaluation (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 10, Day & Fiske 2016). Moreover, the social mobility literature is particularly interested in mobility levels. In this study I will examine intergenerational social mobility direction. This study will fill the existing literature gap by searching for political consequences of social mobility direction. By utilising European Social Survey's latest dataset this thesis shall try to answer if intergenerational social mobility has any implications for political behaviour, by examining whether the mobility direction affects satisfaction with democracy. Thus the results contribute to the field of mobility and regime support studies.

[4] It should be noted that there are many factors that affect a child's educational performance (Putnam 2016).

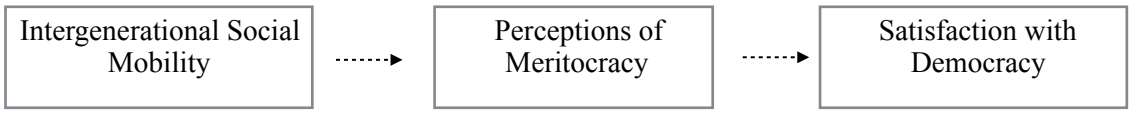
3. Theoretical Framework

Using a common definition of satisfaction with democracy I will in this thesis theorise that satisfaction with democracy is negatively affected by social mobility downwards. Like previous studies I will in this thesis use Linde and Ekman's (2003) definition of satisfaction with democracy (Dahlberg, Ekman & Holmberg 2013:5 Stockemer & Sundström 2013:141, Wagner, Scheider & Halla 2009:32, Quaranta & Martini 2016). Satisfaction with democracy is not the citizen's evaluation of democratic values and principles per se, but rather an indication of how satisfied citizens are with the performance and outcomes of democratic institutions (Linde & Ekman 2003: 393). It should also be noted that not only the evaluation of actual performance is expressed when citizens declare their satisfaction with democracy, but also the *lack* of performance (Linde & Ekman 2003: 400).

3.2. How the Direction of Intergenerational Social Mobility Affects Satisfaction with Democracy

Individuals with intergenerational social mobility downward are more likely to resort to institutional explanations for their mobility whereas upward mobility is affiliated with the belief that one is rewarded for hard work (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:11 , Newman 1989, Spruyt 2015). The argument that satisfaction with democracy is affected by intergenerational social mobility is based on the assumption that when one experiences intergenerational social mobility downward this will be perceived as unjust. Day and Fiske (2016) and Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) find that political outcomes of mobility are shaped by a tendency to perceive meritocratic principles differently, depending on level and direction. This thesis will theorise that the mechanism behind social mobility affecting political outcomes, is the individual's perceptions of meritocracy. The relationship between intergenerational social mobility and satisfaction with democracy can be illustrated as in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model.



High mobility is often depicted as something inherently good, something indicating an open and equal society (Björklund, Roine & Waldenström 2008, Corak 2013, Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:10, Friedman 2013:1-12, Ichino, Karabarbounis & Moretti 2010). However, high mobility not only encompasses mobility upward but also mobility downward. If one is worse off than one's parents, one is prone to feel misfortunate and is more likely than upwardly mobile individuals to blame democratic institutions for one's "misfortune" (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017). Day and Fiske (2017) find that the theoretical premise is that the likelihood of system justification (in this case a democratic system) decreases when individuals experience low intergenerational social mobility, which leads one to think that the same might occur if one moves down in the social hierarchy in relation to one's parents. If adult income differences are large between parents and child, one can expect this to cause a relatively low satisfaction with democracy. Thus, as mobility downward increases (in relative terms, i.e., the larger the difference between parental and one's own income), the more one can expect satisfaction with democracy to decrease.[5]

3.3. Specified Aim & Hypotheses

Below follows a description of the specified aim and hypotheses.

3.3.1. Specified Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to study whether intergenerational social mobility direction affects satisfaction with democracy. By contrasting individuals experiencing upward mobility with individuals experiencing mobility downward this thesis will be able to answer if direction matters for citizens' satisfaction with democratic output. The study will focus on the asymmetry in satisfaction between the upwardly mobile and the downwardly mobile.

3.3.2. Hypotheses

Individuals who move upwards ascribe their success to their own individual efforts while individuals who are mobile downwards resort to institutional explanations. Individuals who experience high mobility downward can be expected to express low satisfaction with

[5] Inherited wealth might function as a parachute for individuals with de facto downward mobility as inheritance allows them to uphold certain living standards. Therefore it should also be noted that mobility direction could affect satisfaction with democracy differently depending on the individuals net worth. I.e. there might be an interaction affect between intergenerational mobility direction and economic inequality. However this is left to future studies to elaborate and empirically underpin.

democracy, because one is more likely to blame political institutions for misfortunes than to give them credit for success (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:10-11, Day & Fiske 2016: 272). The mechanism that creates the asymmetry, or the satisfaction gap if you will, between upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals is their differentiated perception of the rule of meritocracy in their society. This brings us to the two hypotheses that are to be tested.

H1: *Individuals who experience intergenerational social mobility downwards will express less satisfaction with democracy compared to others, because they do not believe that society operates according to meritocratic principles.*

H2: *Individuals who experience intergenerational social mobility upwards will be more satisfied with democracy compared to others, because they ascribe their mobility to their own individual efforts.*

4. Design & Method

To fulfil the purpose and answer the research question, I will use statistic design. This design makes it possible to control for variables that covary with *both* the independent and dependent variable and allows us to analyse many units at the same time (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 97-99). The data will be collected from European Social Survey and I will analyse the data by using Ordinary Least Squares (Cortinas & Black 2012: 494, 580, Lühiste 2014, Wagner, Scheider & Halla 2009). Below follows an account for design, data and operationalisation of the theoretical concepts, and how cofounding variables will be controlled for.

4.1. Research Design & Method of Analysis

In this section I will argue that a statistical design and method is appropriate to test the hypotheses and answer the research question.

To be able to answer the research question one needs to be able to determine whether there is an overall pattern for how direction of intergenerational mobility and satisfaction with democracy covary. To do this, it is appropriate to analyse how satisfaction with democracy and intergenerational mobility vary across many units. Statistic design is appropriate for such an analysis (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 98-100).

The theoretical framework discusses how intergenerational social mobility can affect individuals' satisfaction with democracy under certain circumstances, which presupposes an ability to generalise to a larger population. Since the purpose is to test the theory, statistic design and method is appropriate (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 97-99, 346-347). Linear regression is particularly useful because there exist various variables that will need to be controlled for before any conclusions can be drawn (Cortinas & Black 2012: 494, 580, Esaiasson et al. 2012: 97-99, 346-347). If a simple correlation was done it would be difficult to certify that eventual results are not biased by a cofounding variable (ibid).

4.2. Data

This section will briefly discuss the choice of data and why it is appropriate for testing the hypotheses and answer the research question. Possibilities to generalise to a larger population from this data will also be discussed.

The data that will be used comes from European Social Survey Round 8 (European Social Survey 2016a). The data is of high quality and many of the survey questions are formed in such a way that they deliberately capture the theoretical concepts of this thesis (European Social Survey 2016b, 2016c, Thomassen 2001).

Moreover, this study aims to explore how intergenerational social mobility affects satisfaction among European citizens. The data will not be analysed in a comparative cross-county setting, which means no country-comparative conclusions will be drawn. Rather, each individual will be analysed and therefore conclusions will regard individual behaviour notwithstanding what country the individual resides in. According to the research question, it is individuals within European democracies that are the units of analysis. Consequently, the population to which the thesis aims to generalise must be European citizens. The respondents in European Social Survey are randomly selected to represent the composition of the European population in all relevant aspects, and hence allows the conclusions to be generalised to a wider European population (European Social Survey 2016c). The extensiveness of the data might also allow for generalisations to a non European population to be made.

4.2.2. Excluded Data

This is not to say that national context is of no importance for individual mobility, evaluations of meritocracy and satisfaction of democracy. However, cross-country comparisons is a task for future research projects. The counties included in Round 8 are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (European Social Survey 2016a). According to Freedom House's (2017) democracy index the Russian Federation does not qualify as a democracy. Therefore, Russia will be excluded from the analysis, since satisfaction with democracy might have an entirely different meaning to Russian citizens. Their conception of the term might not be in accordance to Linde and Ekman's (2003) definition.

Israel is not strictly speaking situated on the European continent. However, European Social Survey has made the decision to include Israel for the supposed reason that data on the country is relevant to fulfil the projects' aims. Therefore Israel's geographical location shall be ignored and the data from the country will not be excluded, since there is no reason to believe that this might hamper the results (European Social Survey 2017, Freedom House 2017).

4.3. Method & Data Critique

When testing hypotheses, survey data is appropriate to use because it shows the frequency of every answer within the sample (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 29). There are also issues with using survey data. For one thing the questions are standardised, which can potentially be a problem because it makes it more difficult to gather information about respondents' perceptions and thoughts of the world and why exactly the respondents' perceptions and thoughts are in a certain way. In this respect, interviews might have been a more appropriate method, and is something future studies might explore (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 252-254). However, even though the perceptions are an important part of the theoretical framework, the research question and the hypotheses aim to work out if there is a *general* pattern in the relationship between intergenerational social mobility and satisfaction with democracy and, most importantly, to test the causality in this relationship. For this, a quantitative method of gathering data is more appropriate than a qualitative one (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 29). Because of its ability to attest frequency in the answers, survey data can tell us whether downwardly mobile individuals tend to be less satisfied than their upwardly mobile citizens. Survey data also allows the results and conclusions to be generalised to a larger population, because the respondents have been randomly selected to represent the population of Europe (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 229, European Social Survey 2016c).

The hypotheses postulate that it is mobility direction that affects satisfaction with democracy and not the other way around. The chosen design cannot account for reversed causality, which is a methodological limitation. It will be left to future research to study. Another methodological problem is that the design and method cannot account for eventual inaccuracies in respondents' answers. Sporadic inaccuracies only include minor reliability problems, given the large sample. However, structural inaccuracies will hurt the results validity greatly.

4.4. Measurements

Below follows a review of how the theoretical concepts will be operationalised, as well as discussion and operationalisation of cofounding variables.

4.4.1. Independent Variable — Intergenerational Social Mobility Direction

The independent variable is intergenerational social mobility direction. This section will present how the independent variable is to be operationalised. First, an index on the relationship between individual and parental educational attainment is created out of the original variables in the dataset. Thereafter, two dummies for mobility direction are created to measure the asymmetry between upwardly mobile and downwardly mobile individuals.

Intergenerational social mobility is usually measured by scholars as a correlation between parents' and their children's future education or income. Unfortunately, European Social Survey Round 8 only includes educational attainment of the parent and respondent and does not collect any information on parental income (European Social Survey 2016a). Therefore the theoretical term intergenerational social mobility is operationalised with regard to educational attainment.

Education is a key indicator of social status, and one can expect educational attainment to say a great deal about income (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017: 4). In fact, Roemer (2004:56) argues that it is parental education rather than income which determines the future opportunities of the child. Concerning the suggested causal mechanism, educational attainment is particularly appropriate to use. Failure in educational attainment is very closely related to feeling misfortunate and therefore affects perceptions of meritocracy (Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:5).

Two variables for individuals' educational attainment and father's educational attainment are recoded and will be used to create the independent variable.[6] This thesis will operationalise direction in intergenerational social mobility as the difference between the child's and the father's respective educational attainment.[7]

[6] Higher and lower secondary education has been assumed to result in the same future prospects. Vocational education with access to higher education has been assumed to result in the same future educational and labour prospects as general and academic secondary education. The difference is access to higher education. It is assumed that access to higher education to a great extent determines one's future labour market opportunities. For more information on how the original variable has been recoded, see Appendix.

[7] Mother's educational attainment is not used because it might still be common for women in Europe of older generations to not work. Including the mother's educational attainment might distort the data and make interpretations of the results more complicated. However, it should be noted that mother's parental education might very well be a determinant of the individual's educational attainment.

The variables for educational attainment can take values ranging between 0 and 7. The values are coded as follows: 0 = not completed primary school, 1 = completed primary school, 2 = completed vocational secondary school with no access to higher education, 3 = completed general or academic secondary education with access to higher education, 4 = post secondary education not resulting in a bachelor degree, 5 = completed a bachelor degree, 6 = completed a master degree and 7 = completed Ph.D studies.[8] From these variables, an index for mobility direction is created[9]

To be able to compare the directions and distinguish between upwardly, downwardly and non-mobile individuals, two dummies are created; all individuals with lower educational attainment than their parent, that is those with a value of (-6) to (-1), have been given the value of 1 for mobility downward (Cortinas & Black 2012: 594-595). The direction of mobility is ordinal; the variable does not have any equidistance but can be ordered (Cortinas & Black 2012: 9-10, 594-595, Esaiasson et al. 2012: 348-349). The use of dummy variables allows ordinal level data to be analysed through regression (Cortinas & Black 2012: 282-283, 594-595). All the individuals with values ≤ 0 are given the value of 0 indicating individuals not mobile downward. To be able to establish how the asymmetry in mobility direction affects satisfaction with democracy, a dummy for mobility upward is created according to the same principles as for mobility downward. In the 0 category for each dummy, the non-mobile[10] are also included as a reference group.

4.4.2. Dependent Variable — Satisfaction with Democracy

The dependent variable has been operationalised as the question: *how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country where respondent is resident]?* The respondent can answer on a scale from 0, meaning very dissatisfied to 10 meaning very satisfied (European Social Survey 2016b). The question has been specifically designed to capture the theoretical meaning stated above, i.e., satisfied with the regime output rather than regime ideals (Dahlberg, Ekman & Holmberg 2013:5, Lind & Edman 2003, Stockemer & Sundström 2013:141, Thomassen 2001:201, 229, Wagner, Scheider & Halla 2009:32, Quaranta & Martini 2016). The close relationship between the theoretical term and the actual measurement of it, is

[8] See Appendix and ESS8 - Appendix 1 (2016) for more information.

[9] See Appendix for equation for the mobility direction index.

[10] Individuals with the same educational attainment as their parent.

indeed one of the most prominent benefits with using the European Social Survey dataset. Strictly speaking, the variable is not on an interval level; it is difficult to measure individuals' satisfaction in real terms. The variable will nonetheless be treated as if it was on interval scale (Cortinas & Black 2012: 9-10, 594-595, Esaiasson et al. 2012: 348-349, Wagner, Scheider & Halla 2009).[11]

4.4.3. Mediator — Perceptions of Meritocracy

The European Social Survey has one question relating to the concept of meritocracy: *Large differences in people's incomes are acceptable to reward differences in talents and efforts* (European Social Survey 2016b). The argument made is that if one moves downward one does not agree that income differences is synonymous with rewarding talents and efforts (ibid). One can answer on a scale from 1-5; 1 meaning *strongly agree* and 5 meaning *strongly disagree.* To make the variable values more intuitive, it is recoded to 0 meaning *strongly disagree* and 4 meaning *strongly agree.*

I would argue that this measurement of perceptions of meritocracy is by no means ideal, since it is plausible that one can perceive that rewards should be fair in relation to talents and efforts, only that one does not believe that large income differences are appropriate rewards. However this is the best measurement of perceptions of meritocracy available. Moreover, it is interesting to study attitudes to income differences in relation to mobility since there might be a relationship between mobility direction and attitudes. Given that previous studies have found that income inequalities are related to satisfaction with democracy, there is reason to believe that there exists a relationship.

4.4.4. Cofounding Variables

To avoid omitted variable bias that might cause spuriously drawn conclusions, other variables that might affect the dependent and independent variable must be controlled for (Cortinas & Black 2012: 494, 580, Esaiasson et al. 2012: 97-99, 346-347). A criteria for a variable to be controlled for is that there is reason to believe it affects *both* the dependent and the independent (Esaiasson et al. 2012: 84-85, 99, Sundell 2012a). Below follows a discussion of these and how they will be controlled for.

[11] The same will apply to the mediator

Both potential explanations for *levels* of intergenerational social mobility and satisfaction with democracy are quite easy to find. To find explanations to the *directions* of intergenerational social mobility on the other hand is much more difficult due to the fact that the field of study is relatively new, and hence, there is not a great deal of research that gives empirical suggestions as to what these explanations might be. In this study I will do as previous scholars and control for socio-demographic variables such as gender, age and domestic origin (Anderson & Singer 2008, Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, Lühiste 2014). Gender is operationalised as a dummy for being female[12] and age runs from values of 30 to 65. Domestic origin is a dummy for *born in the country of residence*[13] (European Social Survey 2016a).

Income inequality has a documented effect on satisfaction with democracy (Anderson & Singer 2008:564-565,583). It also covaries with *levels* of mobility, as is illustrated by the so called *Great Gatsby Curve* (Bladen 2013: 62, Causa & Johansson 2010, Corak 2006, 2013:3, Smeeding 2013). However, there is no empirical evidence that income inequality affects mobility *direction* and there is no intuitive relationship between directions of mobility and income inequality, and therefore income inequality will not be controlled for.

Corruption has an empirically documented effect on satisfaction with democracy and affects levels of mobility (Boudreaux 2014, Stockemer & Sundström 2013, Wagner, Schneider & Halla 2009). Perceptions of corruption are also very closely related to the mediator, perceptions of meritocracy (ibid.). However, there are no empirical findings that indicate that corruption or corruption perceptions affect mobility *direction*.

Education will be controlled for, since the design does not account for the fact that some might have parents with higher educational titles, but they do not necessarily perceive themselves as mobile downwards. For instance, if one has parents who have acquired Ph.D degrees and oneself has acquired a bachelor degree in business administration, one is going to be defined as mobile downward by this study's operationalisation. That is, one will have an index value of (-2).

[12] Value 0 = male and value 1 = female

[13] Value 0 = not born in country of residence, 1 = born in country of residence

If there is satisfaction among individuals mobile downward, this might be due to very different levels of high and low mobility in European countries. It might be noted that the countries with high mobility also tend to be those with extensive social protection systems, for instance Sweden, Denmark and Finland (OECD 2017a, 2017b). To control for the fact that respondents within the same country will give answers dependent of one another, the regressions will also include a dummy variable for each country included in the sample.

5. Results & Analysis

Below follows a presentation of the study results and an analysis of the results.

5.1. Descriptives

Before presenting the results of the regression analysis the descriptives of all the variables used are presented to give an idea of how the data points are distributed; the descriptive statistics function as benchmarks when analysing the regression results (Sundell 2012b, Wagner, Scheider & Halla 2009: 35).

5.1.1. Supporting the Operationalisation of the Independent Variable

The descriptives in this section are presented to motivate the operationalisation of the two dummies for mobility direction. The data shows the distribution of the data points within the categories in the variables. Overall, this section gives the information that the general tendency is for the second generation to be more educated than the first generation (see table 2). The mean value of educational attainment is greater than the mean value of parental educational attainment.

To pinpoint that parental educational attainment predicts individual educational attainment in the countries in the dataset, a regression is run.[14] The regression is done to support the operationalisation of intergenerational social mobility index. The descriptives show a relationship that is in line with previous findings (Björklund, Roine & Waldenström 2008, Corak 2013, Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017:10, Friedman 2013:1-12, Ichino, Karabarbounis & Moretti 2010). The correlation coefficient is quite strong, the beta-coefficient has a value of 0,349. However it is also quite far from 1, which indicates that there are many other explanations to educational attainment.

Table 2: Descriptives of educational attainment.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Parental educational attainment	2,62	1,64	29904
Educational attainment	3,39	1,54	29904

Source: European Social Survey (2017) and authors' own calculations.

[14] According to the Becker and Tomes model (Frid & Hedmann 2016).

Table 3: Effect of parental educational attainment on individual educational attainment, unstandardised beta-coefficients. (standard errors in parentheses)

Parental educational attainment	0.349** (0,005)
Intercept	2,475** (0,016)
N	29904
R2(adj)	0,138

**p<0,01

Source: European Social Survey (2017) and authors' own calculations.

The beta-coefficient's value is 0,349, which is quite high compared to the high mobility countries in the dataset like Norway, but low compared to countries like Slovenia (see table 1). The intercept tells us that the second generation tends to have climbed at least two steps higher than on the educational ladder[15] than their parents. This might be due to a policy change of some sort, giving the second generation access to university education whether they enrolled in vocational secondary education or academic. The increased tendency to participate in higher education than one's parent could increase the mobility direction effect, making individuals seem more mobile than they actually perceive themselves to be. This thesis will study actual mobility direction, but for this to affect satisfaction with democracy through perceptions about meritocratic principles, there has to be some coherence between actual mobility and perceived mobility. The fact that the second generation tends to be more educated might mean that the effect of the upward mobility is somewhat subdued and the effect of mobility downward is slightly amplified. This needs to be taken in to account when analysing the results.

5.1.2. Descriptives of Independent, Dependent and Mediator

In this section descriptives of the independent, dependent and the mediator are presented. Again, this is done to give an understanding of how the data is distributed (Wagner, Scheider & Halla. 2009: 35).

[15] Educational ladder is a concept borrowed from Putnam (2017).

From the figures below we can conclude that there is a general tendency to be more satisfied with democracy than dissatisfied, and that it is highly usual that one is more mobile upwards than downwards; only 17,4% of the sample have less educational attainment than their parent. Important to keep in mind is the tendency for the second generation to be more educated than their parents, which might explain why it is more common to be mobile upwards than downwards.

The dependent variable slightly violates one of the assumptions of the regression model; it is not normally distributed (Cortinas & Black 2012: 502). However, the used sample size is asymptotic which makes the models robust against normality.[16] The mean value of the dependant, 5,52, tells us that the respondents are fairly satisfied with their democracies.[17]

The mean value of perceptions of meritocracy is 2,14. It is quite common to agree with large income differences being a good way to reward differences in talents and efforts.

Table 4: Descriptives of mobility upwards, downwards, satisfaction with democracy and perceptions of meritocracy.

Variable	N	Mean	St.deviation	Min	Max
Mobility down	29904	0,174	0,38	0	1
Mobility up	29904	0,497	0,50	0	1
Satisfaction with democracy	32473	5,52	2,44	0	10
Perceptions of meritocracy	32862	2,14	1,11	0	4

Source: European Social Survey (2017) and authors' own calculations.

[16] Se Appendix for p-plot. When $N \rightarrow \infty$ or $N > 30$ the normality assumption does not apply

[17] Se Appendix for distribution

5.2. Bivariate Correlations

A correlation matrix is presented below to give an understanding of how the variables are related to each other.

Table 5: Correlation matrix including control variables

	Mobility down	Mobility up	Satisfaction with democracy	Perceptions of meritocracy	Gender	Age	Domestic origin	Educational level
Mobility down	1	0,457**	0,012*	0,007	-0,023**	-0,182**	−0,006	−0,206**
Mobility up	0,457**	1	0,019**	-0,017**	0,033**	0,138**	-0,015*	0,375**
Satisfaction with democracy	0,012*	0,019**	1	0,079**	-0,028**	-0,042**	-0,,082**	0,132**
Perceptions of meritocracy	0,007	-0,017**	0,079**	1	-0,065**	-0,039**	-0,022**	0,009
Gender	-0,023**	0,033**	-0,028**	-0,065**	1	0,029**	−0,005	-0,033**
Age	-0,182**	0,138**	-0,042**	-0,039**	0,029**	1	-0,012*	-0,102**
Domestic origin	−0,006	-0,015*	-0,082**	-0,022**	−0,005	-0,012*	1	-0,062**
Educational level	-0,206**	0,375**	0,132**	0,009	0,033**	-0,102**	-0,062**	1

**p< 0.01
* p<0.05

Source: European Social Survey (2017) and authors' own calculations.

The matrix shows that the bivariate relationship is as H1 states. Individuals mobile down are according to this matrix *less* satisfied with democracy than the reference group. The Pearson correlation coefficients do not take very high values, which indicates that the relationship is not particularly strong. This might however change in the regression analysis when country dummies are included. Females tend to be less mobile downwards than males (-0,028) and older individuals tend to be less mobile downwards than younger (-0,039). Higher educated individuals are less mobile downwards and more mobile upwards (-0,206 for mobility down and 0,375 for mobility up). Whether one is born within the country or not seems to be of little importance. The coefficient for mobility down is not significant, meaning that we cannot be sure if it actually affects mobility down or not. The coefficient for mobility up is small

(-0,015). Domestic origin, however, has a stronger relationship to satisfaction with democracy. The multicollinearity between the independent and the control variables is not particularly strong; none of the Pearson correlation coefficients are close or equal to 0,7 (Cortinas & Black 2012: 611).

For perceptions of meritocracy to be a mediator it has to have a bivariate relationship to the dependent and the independent respectively. There is a significant, albeit weak correlation between the mediator and the dummy for mobility up (-0,017). This is contradictory to theorised expectations. The Pearson correlation coefficient for mobility down is not significant. There is a slightly stronger, positive and significant correlation between the independent, satisfaction with democracy and the mediator (0,079). The more satisfied with democracy one is, the more one agrees with income differences being a good way to reward differences in talents and efforts. This can be interpreted as perceiving society as more meritocratic, which is inline with the hypotheses and previous findings (Day & Fiske 2016, Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017, European Social Survey 2016b).

Perceptions of meritocracy does not, in the bivariate correlation, seem to be a mediator of the relationship between mobility direction and satisfaction with democracy. The relationship might however change in the regression when country dummies are included.

5.3. Regression Analysis

Below follow a presentation and analysis of results from the linear regression models. In each model I included a dummy for each of the 17 countries.

Table 6: Regression table of satisfaction with democracy as dependent variable in model 1 and 4. Perceptions of meritocracy as dependant in model 2 and 3. Unstandardised beta coefficients (Standard errors within parentheses)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Mobility down	0,162** (0,04)	0,036 (0,19)	0,025 (0,019)	0,159** (0,04)
Mobility up	0,186** (0,031)	−0,006 (0,15)	-0,015 (0,16)	0,020** (0,033)
Gender			-0,146** (0,013)	-0,085** (0,026)
Age			-0,002** (0,000)	-0,004** (0,001)´
Domestic origin			-0,046 (0,020)	-0,5** (0,043)
Educational level			0,017** (0,005)	0,159** (0,10)
Intercept	4,378** (0,087)	1,687** (0,04)	1,843** (0,51)	4,541** (0,110)
Adjusted R2	0,124	0,061	0,067	0,139
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	29160	29462	29374	29090

**p< 0.01
* p<0.05

Source: European Social Survey (2017) and authors' own calculations. Note: The country specific dummies are included in each model. The values for beta coefficients for each country can be found in the Appendix.

Model 1 is run with the dummies for mobility direction as regressors and satisfaction with democracy as regressand. The two dummies are run simultaneously since the hypotheses focus on the asymmetry in satisfaction with democracy between mobile upwards and mobile downwards. Including both gives a reference group of non-mobile individuals.[18] The value of the intercept, 4,378, tells us that individuals who are not mobile at all are moderately satisfied with democracy. The values range from 0-10, 4,378 is closer to 0 than to 10 and is below 5, which is the middle value. The middle value can be interpreted as not satisfied but not

[18] Non-mobile individuals are placed in the 0 category in both the dummy variables.

dissatisfied. Non-mobile (i.e., having the same educational attainment as one's parent) can therefore be said do be somewhat dissatisfied. This is inline with Day & Fiske's (2016) findings. The positive value of the regression coefficient for mobility downwards is contrary to the expectations theorised. The effect of having less educational attainment than ones parent is 0,162 to satisfaction with a standard error of 0,04. The hypotheses stated that the effect would be negative. The effect is however smaller than the effect of being mobile upwards (a coefficient of 0,186). The effect of being mobile up on satisfaction with democracy is 0,08 standard deviations while the effect of being mobile down is 0,07. The positive value of the coefficients for mobility up and mobility down tells us that if one has *equal* educational attainment as one's parent, one is *less* satisfied with democracy than if one has different educational attainment than ones parent, whether it be more or less. The relationship between mobility direction and satisfaction with democracy is also quite different from the one shown in the bivariate correlation matrix above.

Model 2 is designed to analyse how well the independent predicts the value of the mediator. The relationship between mobility direction and whether one agrees with the statement: *Large differences in people's incomes are acceptable to reward differences in talents and efforts*, is not significant. The criteria for a variable to be a mediator is that there is reason to believe that it is predicted by the independent (Sundell 2012a). The coefficients are not significant and do not take particularly high values, which suggests that the theorised expectations where inaccurate. The results contrast to Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster's (2017) result, which suggests that there is a distinct difference between how political trust and satisfaction with democracy relate to mobility direction. The divergence of results in relation to Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) might also indicate that it is not appropriate to operationalise people's perceptions of meritocracy as agreeing with income differences being a good way to reward talent and efforts. The relationship might however change when cofounding variables are included.

Model 3 consists of model 2 and the cofounding variables. The coefficient for mobility upward slightly decreased while the coefficient for mobility down increased. However, non of the coefficients are significant. The values are also still very low. This suggests that mobility direction does not predicts perceptions of meritocracy. No further analysis on this matter will be made.

Model 4 consists of the independent, the dependent and the control variables. Two things can be concluded from the analysis of model 4. First the effect of being mobile downwards on satisfaction with democracy is weakened; the regression coefficient is now 0,159. Second, the effect of being mobile upward is very much weakened by the cofounding variables (regression coefficient 0,02). Age does not affect satisfaction greatly, though the coefficient of - 0,04 is significant. Domestic origin has a great impact on satisfaction with democracy (value of coefficient - 0,5). However only 12,2% of the sample[19] are born outside of their country.[20] The effect of being female slightly affects satisfaction negatively. Females are slightly less satisfied than males (-0,085). Educational level affects satisfaction with democracy as much as being mobile downward (0,159), suggesting that they are satisfied with democracy because of their education rather than their mobility direction.

These results show that H1 and H2 only hold partially. First of all, the mediator seems not to be relevant. Individuals who are mobile downwards are less satisfied with democracy than individuals who have higher education than their parents, but they are more satisfied than non-mobile individuals. If individuals mobile upwards are satisfied, it is a result of high educational attainment rather than high upward mobility level. The ANOVA table for each model gives F-values higher than the critical F-values.[21] The values are significant for each model with a P-value of 0,000 and are compared to a critical F-value for the same level of significance. This means that the null-hypothesis can be rejected for all models and that a model with no independent variables does not fit the data as well as the models used in this analysis. The positive signs of the coefficients tell us that mobile individuals are more satisfied with democracy than individuals who have the same educational attainment as their parents, which leads one to think that it is levels of mobility rather than direction, that might affect satisfaction with democracy. The adjusted R2 values tell us that mobility direction explains some variation in satisfaction with democracy. However, there are clearly more explanatory variables to be studied. Most of the results are through out this study statistically significant; p-values is almost always less than 0,01. This might be due to the sample size being asymptotic, which results in the p-value approaching zero. Thus, the p-values will

[19] See Appendix for frequencies of cofounding variables.

[20] The sample is designed to be representative of the residents in the countries included in the sample (European Social Survey, 2016b). See discussion in chapter 4.

[21] See Appendix for model Anova tables.

always show significance.[22] Also important to remember is that the models are not as robust as they ideally should be (Cortinas & Black 2012: 502, 611). This means the significance of the results must be interpreted with caution.

[22] When N is very large or $\rightarrow\infty$, $p \rightarrow 0$

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine how social mobility in European democracies affects satisfaction with democracy. Additionally, the aim was to empirically pinpoint that high intergenerational mobility can produce adverse outcomes. The research question was: *Does intergenerational social mobility direction in European democracies affect satisfaction with democracy?*

The theoretical framework predicted that individuals who are mobile upward would tend to ascribe their mobility to individual talents or efforts such as cognitive skills or hard work ethic, while individuals mobile downwards would blame their failures on factors beyond their influence (Day & Fiske 2016 Daenekindt, van der Waal & de Koster 2017). Consequently, the hypotheses stated that mobility downwards will cause individuals to be less satisfied with democracy than their upwardly mobile counterparts (ibid.). The results suggest that H1 and H2 only partially hold. While individuals who are mobile downwards are not less satisfied with democracy than the reference group in general, they are however less satisfied than individuals mobile upward. Individuals mobile upward tend to be satisfied not because of mobility direction, but because they tend to be highly educated. Rather, it is non-mobile individuals that are the least satisfied with democracy. Below follows a summary of possible conclusions that can be drawn from the results presented above, as well as suggestions for future areas of research.

According to the results, perceptions of meritocracy are not related to the direction of mobility as theorised. From this it might be concluded that perceptions of meritocracy in fact are not affected by mobility direction as first suggested. The divergence from the theory might be due to the fact that the theoretical framework is drawn from the results of Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) and Day and Fiske (2016), who study other dependent variables. Moreover, Day and Fiske (2016) do not study the direction but rather the level of intergenerational mobility, suggesting that there is more than a conceptual difference between mobility direction and mobility level. The divergence from Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017) might be due to poor validity, since the distance between the theoretical term and the measurement is not ideal (Esaiasson et al. 2012:58-63). Nonetheless, it can be concluded that mobility direction does not affect the degree to which people agree with the statement: *larger differences in peoples incomes are acceptable to reward differences in talent*

and effort (European Social Survey 2012a). This study encompasses a larger amount of data and is set in a wider context than the data used by Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster (2017). The extensiveness and quality of the data should allow the results to be generalised at least to the countries included in the sample, but also to countries with similar political systems.

The positive signs of the regression coefficients tell us that mobile individuals are more satisfied with democracy than individuals who have the same educational attainment as their parents. It could be interpreted then, that it is the level of mobility, rather than the direction, that is of greatest significance to satisfaction with democracy. However, remembering that the second generation tends to be more educated, the effect of upward mobility on satisfaction with democracy might be subdued and the effect of mobility downward may be slightly amplified. This is a methodological limitation of the models used in this study; they do not account for this endogenous problem. Future studies should try to establish whether the trend to be more educated than ones parent affects this study's conclusions. Instead of only using parental educational attainment as a benchmark, future studies can compare average educational attainment in the second generation with divergences from it. This might give answers to whether relative mobility in relation to others in the same generation matters as much as absolute mobility in relation to one's parent.

The asymmetry between upward mobility and downward mobility are in line with both the hypotheses of this study and Daenekindt, van der Waal and de Koster's (2017) results. However, the reasons as to why remain unclear; is it mobility direction or educational level that matters? From this one can conclude that more research on the relationship between intergenerational social mobility and regime support is needed. If educational level is the reason for upwardly mobile individuals to be more satisfied than downwardly mobile, what is it with education that creates this asymmetry? Causes of the satisfaction gap between non-mobile and mobile need to be further studied since inequality in satisfaction[23]might itself cause certain political outcomes between groups within our societies. The fact that non-mobile individuals are the least satisfied also implies that high intergenerational social mobility is better than low. I have in this thesis however postulated *high* mobility, but one

[23] Inequality in satisfaction is a term borrowed from Wagner, Scheider & Halla (2009).

might ask is if there a breaking point. Maybe downward mobility is more common in Denmark than in Slovenia because the overall *level* of mobility is higher. Future studies could explore this through for instance, cross-country comparisons.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Coding of Variables

Values of the original values from the European Social Survey Round 8 (2016a)

Highest level of education (edulvlb) *Father's highest level of Education* (edulvlfb)

0 = "Not completed ISCED level 1"

113 = "ISCED 1, completed primary education"

129 = "Vocational ISCED 2C < 2 years, no access ISCED 3"

212 = "General/pre-vocational ISCED 2A/2B, access ISCED 3 vocational"

213 = "General ISCED 2A, access ISCED 3A general/all 3"

221 = "Vocational ISCED 2C >= 2 years, no access ISCED 3"

222 = "Vocational ISCED 2A/2B, access ISCED 3 vocational"

223 = "Vocational ISCED 2, access ISCED 3 general/all"

229 = "Vocational ISCED 3C < 2 years, no access ISCED 5"

311 = "General ISCED 3 >=2 years, no access ISCED 5"

312 = "General ISCED 3A/3B, access ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A"

313 = "General ISCED 3A, access upper tier ISCED 5A/all 5"

321 = "Vocational ISCED 3C >= 2 years, no access ISCED 5"

322 = "Vocational ISCED 3A, access ISCED 5B/ lower tier 5A"

323 = "Vocational ISCED 3A, access upper tier ISCED 5A/all 5"

412 = "General ISCED 4A/4B, access ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A"

413 = "General ISCED 4A, access upper tier ISCED 5A/all 5"

421 = "ISCED 4 programmes without access ISCED 5"

422 = "Vocational ISCED 4A/4B, access ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A"

423 = "Vocational ISCED 4A, access upper tier ISCED 5A/all 5"

510 = "ISCED 5A short, intermediate/academic/general tertiary below bachelor"

520 = "ISCED 5B short, advanced vocational qualifications"

610 = "ISCED 5A medium, bachelor/equivalent from lower tier tertiary"

620 = "ISCED 5A medium, bachelor/equivalent from upper/single tier tertiary"

710 = "ISCED 5A long, master/equivalent from lower tier tertiary"

720 = "ISCED 5A long, master/equivalent from upper/single tier tertiary"

800 = "ISCED 6, doctoral degree"

5555 = "Other"

7777 = "Refusal"

8888 = "Don't know"

9999 = "No answer"

Recoded to (ESS8 - Appendix 1 2016:3-6) for two variables — *individual educational attainment* and *father's educational attainment*

0 → 0 = not completed primary school

113 → 1 = completed primary school

129, 212, 221, 222 229, 311, 321, 323, 421 → 2 = completed vocational secondary school with no access to higher education

213, 223, 312, 313, 322, 412, 413, 422, 423 → 3 = completed general or academic secondary education with access to higher education

510, 520 → 4 = post secondary education not resulting in a bachelor degree

610, 620 → 5 = completed a bachelor degree

710, 720 → 6 = completed a master degree

800 → 7 = completed Ph.D studies.

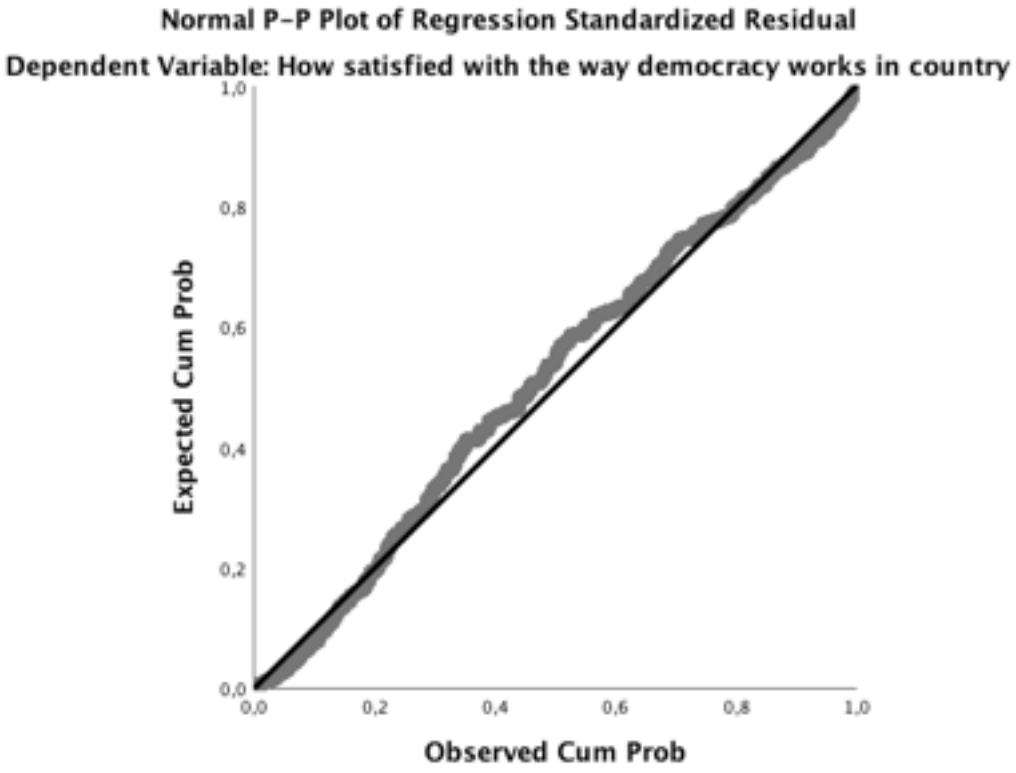
All other values → ”system missing”

8.2 Equation for Mobility Index

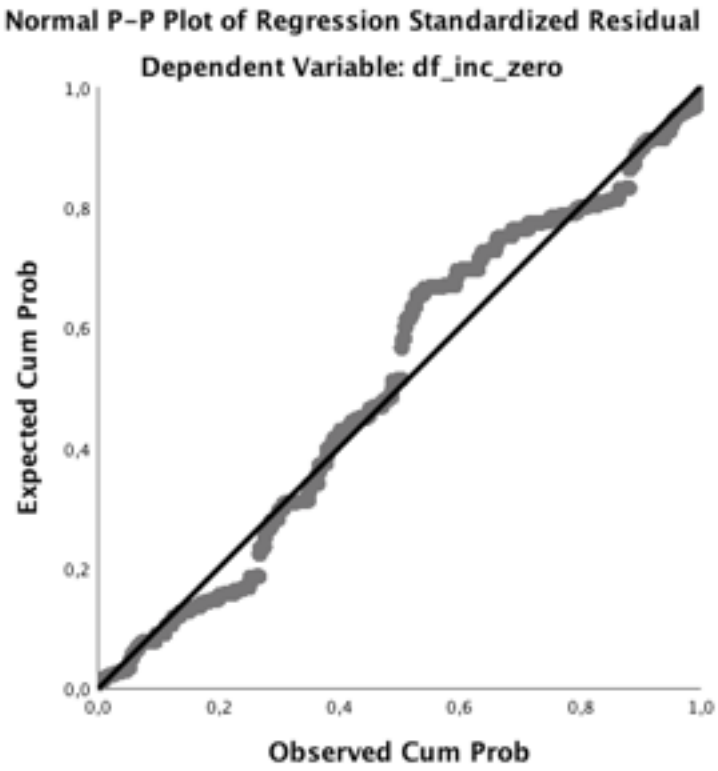
(*individual educational attainment*) − (*father's educational attainment*) = *mobility direction*

8.3 P-plots

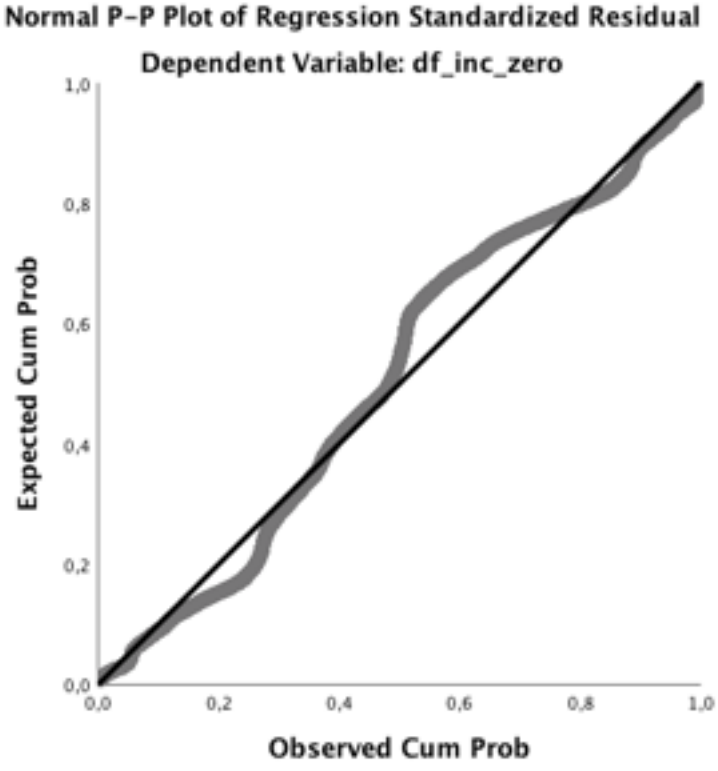
Model 1: *Satisfaction with democracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent



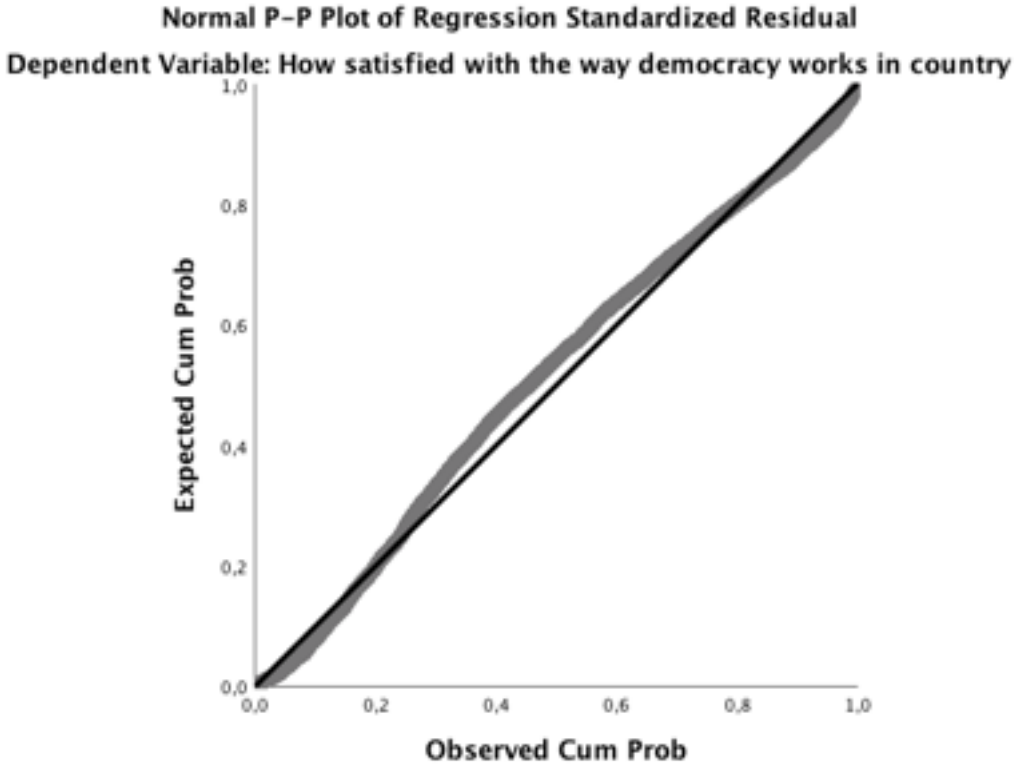
Model 2: The mediator *Perceptions of meritocracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent



Model 3: The mediator *Perceptions of meritocracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent, including cofounding variables age, domestic origin, gender and education

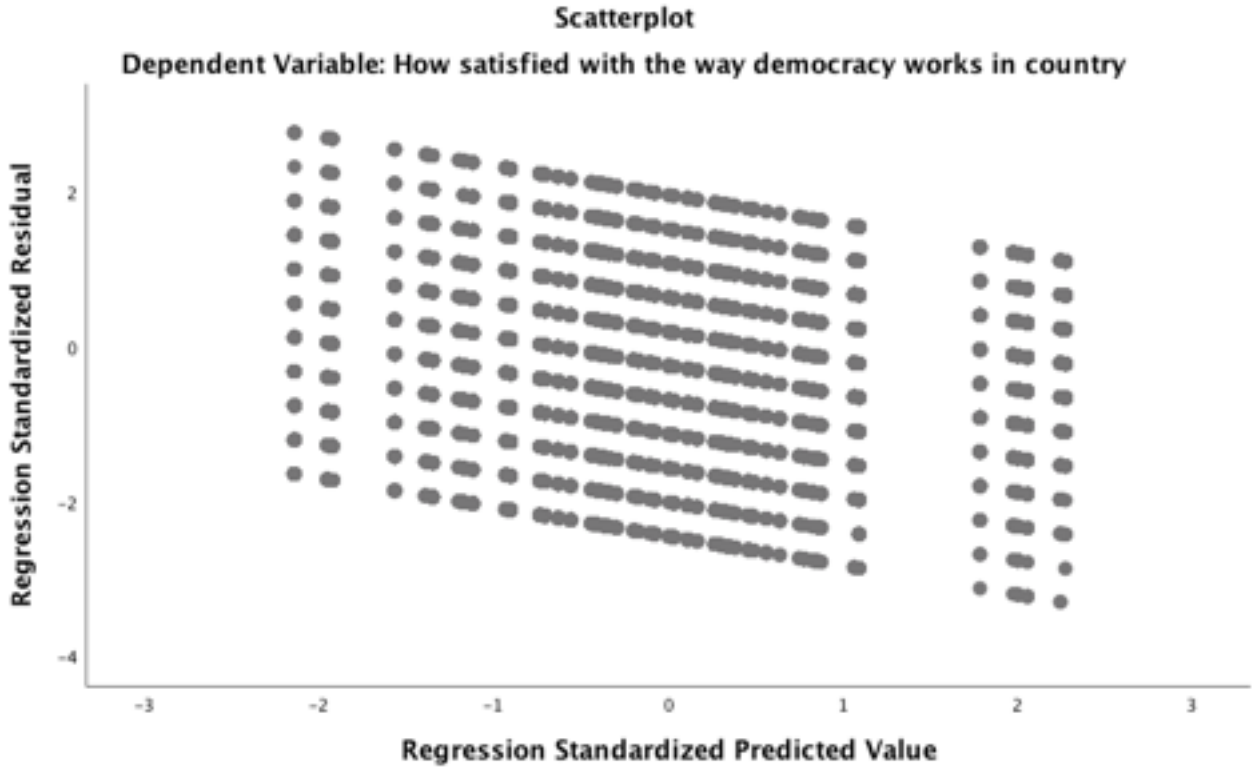


Model 4: *Satisfaction with democracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent, including cofounding variables age, domestic origin, gender and education

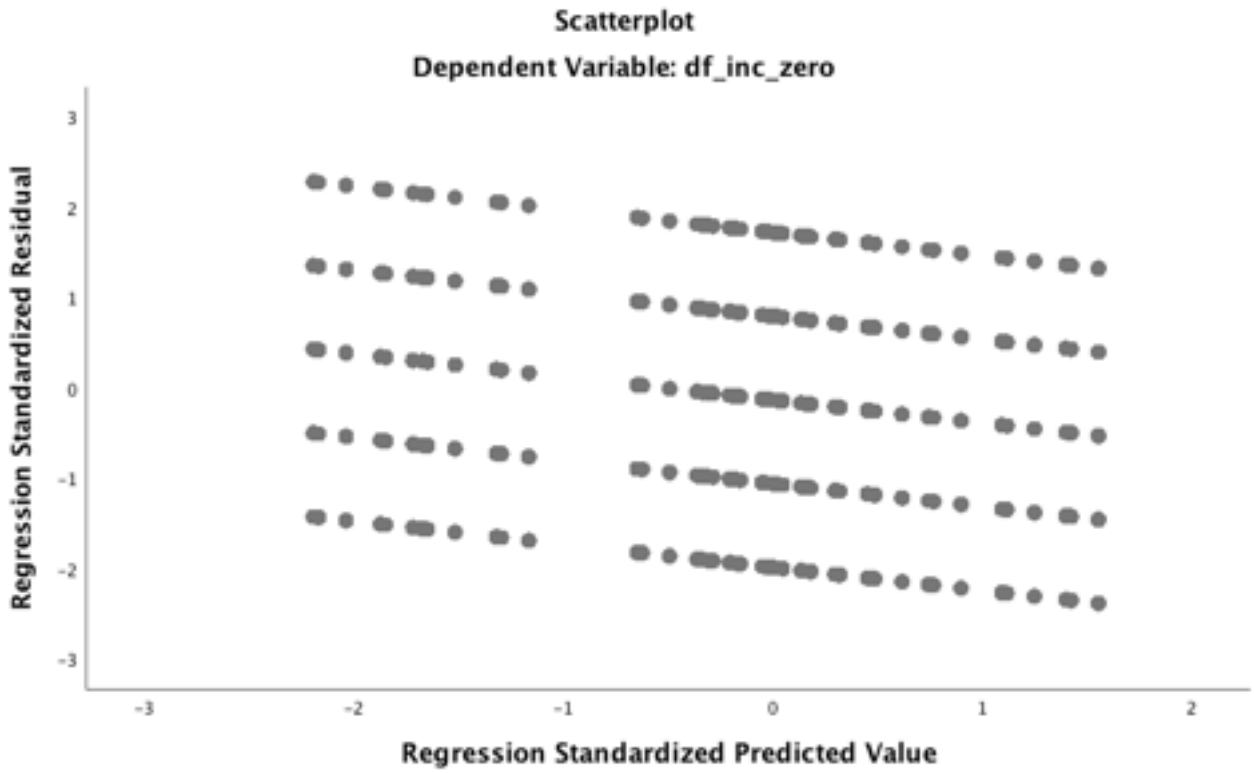


8.4 Residual Plots

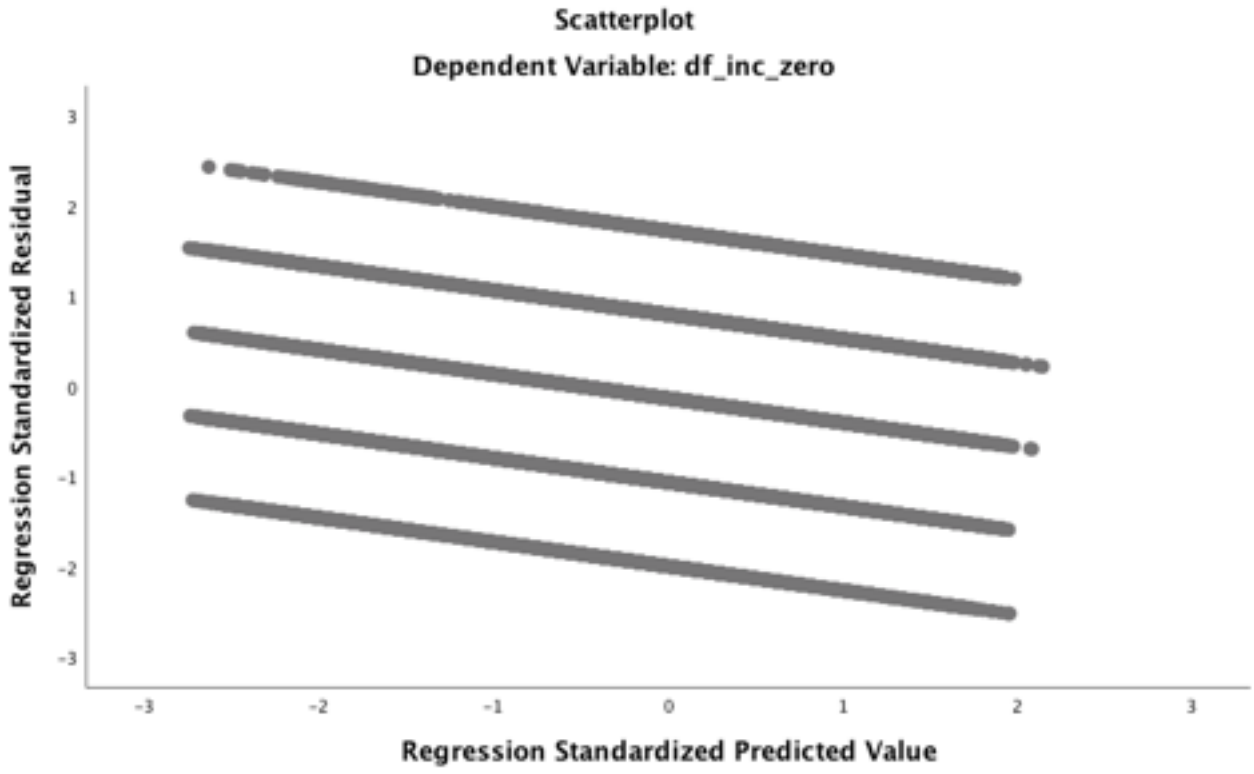
Model 1: *Satisfaction with democracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent



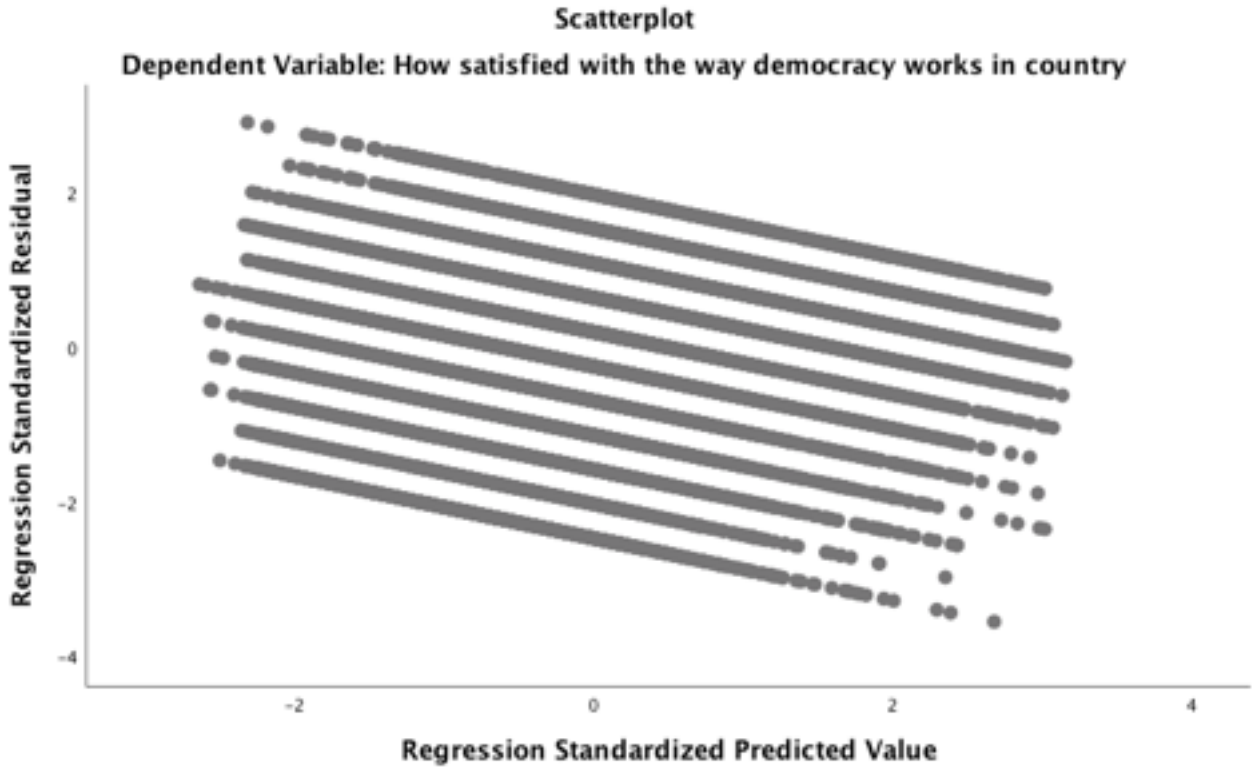
Model 2: The mediator *Perceptions of meritocracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent



Model 3: The mediator *Perceptions of meritocracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent, including cofounding variables age, domestic origin, gender and education



Model 4: *Satisfaction with democracy* as dependent, country and mobility dummies as independent, including cofounding variables age, domestic origin, gender and education



8.5 Regression Coefficients for Country-dummies

Model 1

Country	Unstandardised beta coefficient (standard error within parenthesis)
Austria	1,282** (0,099)
Belgium	1,282** (0,101)
Switzerland	2,944** (0,104)
The Czech Republic	0,709** (0,098)
Germany	1.416** (0,096)
Estonia	0,649** (0,100)
Finland	1,733** (0,100)
France	−0,152 (0,100)

The United Kingdom	0,855** (0,102)
Ireland	0,934** (0,097)
Israel	0,397** (0,097)
Iceland	1,328** (0,116)
The Netherlands	1,666** (0,103)
Norway	2,712** (0103)
Poland	0,230 (0,103)
Sweden	1,935** (0,104)
Slovenia	−0,642** (0,106)
**p< 0.01 * p<0.05	

Model 2

Country	Unstandardised beta coefficient (standard error within parenthesis)
Austria	0,283** (0,046)
Belgium	0,361** (0,047)
Switzerland	0,0468** (0,048)
The Czech Republic	0,847** (0,045)
Germany	0,505** (0,044)
Estonia	0,046** (0,046)
Finland	-0,144** (0,046)
France	0,376** (0,046)
The United Kingdom	0,589* (0,047)
Ireland	0,763** (0,044)
Israel	0,456* (0,045)
Iceland	0,097** (0,053)

The Netherlands	0,543** (0,047)
Norway	0,407** (0,047)
Poland	0,847** (0,047)
Sweden	0,847** (0,048)
Slovenia	-0,055 (0,049)
**p< 0.01 * p<0.05	

Model 3

Country	Unstandardised beta coefficient (standard error within parenthesis)
Austria	0,293** (0,019)
Belgium	0,355** (0,047)
Switzerland	0,457** (0,048)
The Czech Republic	0,858** (0,045)
Germany	0,495** (0,044)
Estonia	0,669** (0,046)
Finland	-0135** (0,046)
France	0,394** (0,047)
The United Kingdom	0,608** (0,047)
Ireland	0,764** (0,044)
Israel	0,441** (0,045)
Iceland	0,1 (0,053)
The Netherlands	0,555** (0,047)
Norway	0,394** (0,047)
Poland	0,858** (0,047)
Sweden	0,410** (0,048)

Slovenia	-0,042 (0,013)
**p< 0.01 * p<0.05	

Model 4:

Country	Unstandardised beta coefficient (standard error within parenthesis)
Austria	1,365** (0,099)
Belgium	1,074** (0,101)
Switzerland	2,898** (0,104)
The Czech Republic	0,880** (0,097)
Germany	1,422** (0,097)
Estonia	0,681** (0,099)
Finland	1.872** (0,099)
France	0,012 (0,1)
The United Kingdom	0,963** (0,102)
Ireland	1,032** (0,097)
Israel	0,374** (0,097)
Iceland	1,418** (0,115)
The Netherlands	1,758** (0,102)
Norway	2,714** (0,102)
Poland	0,394** (0,102)
Sweden	2,040** (0,104)
Slovenia	-0,5** (0,43)
**p< 0.01 * p<0.05	

8.7. Descriptives & Frequencies of Cofounding Variables

8.7.1. Descriptives

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Domestic origin	0,880	0,325	33149
Age	49,01	18,867	33307
Gender	0,518	0,499	33423
Educational level	3,339	1,53	33265

8.7.2. Frequencies

Gender	Valid percent
0(Not female)	48,2
1(Female)	51,8

Domestic origin	Valid percent
0(Not domestic origin)	12,0
1(Domestic origin)	88,0

Age	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
15-25	12,80	12,8
26-35	14,9	27,7
36-45	15,9	43,6
46-55	17,1	60,7
56-65	17,2	77,9
66-75	13,7	91,6
76-85	6,9	98,5
86-95	1,5	100
96-105	0	100

Note: only respondents aged 30-65 are included in the analysis

Educational level	Valid percent
0	0,8
1	6,5
2	24,9
3	34,0
4	8,4
5	11,8
6	12,5
7	1,2

8.8 ANOVA Tables for All Models

Model 1

	∑ squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	21295	19	1121	218	0,000
Residual	150030	29149	5,147		
Total	171324	29168			

Model 2

	∑ squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	2243	19	118	101	0,000
Residual	34271	29442	1		
Total	366514	29461			

Model 3

	∑ squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	2456	23	107	92	0,000
Residual	33957	29350	1		
Total	36412	29373			

Model 4

	∑ squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	23920	23	1040	206	0,000
Residual	147079	29066	5		
Total	170998	29089			