

translate such educational success as they may achieve into such labour market opportunities as may exist.¹⁴

Finally, though, perhaps the most significant question that arises from the analyses we have presented in this chapter is the following. Given that DESO is overestimated if attention is limited to educational attainment at labour market entry, and that whether or not individuals later make improvements in their relative qualification level has a significant effect on their eventual class destinations, does this continuing role of education make in the end for greater mobility – or greater immobility? This question becomes of heightened interest in view of a growing importance that has been attached in government circles over recent years to ‘lifelong learning’. Insofar as the implications for social mobility of policy initiatives in this regard have been considered, it would appear to have been supposed that they will be positive – if only perhaps on the basis of the rather simplistic assumption that more education, of whatever kind, must mean more mobility. But relevant evidence is in fact very limited. In the next chapter we take further our analyses of the experience of men and women in the 1970 birth cohort to try to throw a clearer light on the matter.

¹⁴ On social mobility cold spots, see further Social Mobility Commission (2016: chs. 3 and 4; 2017b) and the discussion in our concluding chapter. One may, incidentally, doubt if in places like Stoke, Blackpool and west Somerset worries over the availability of internships, paid or otherwise, are all that widespread.

9 | *Lifelong Learning: Compensation or Cumulative Advantage?*

Provision for lifelong learning has been widely regarded as a way in which men and women who have not performed well within the normal course of full-time education can later upgrade their levels of qualification. In the case of those of more disadvantaged social origins, who are likely to have below average levels of educational attainment on entering the labour market, lifelong learning has then been taken to have a particular value. For such men and women it can offer a ‘second chance’ through which they can compensate for their earlier lack of educational success and, in turn, improve their prospects of upward social mobility during worklife and thus intergenerationally. An influential report published by the Ministry of Education in 1959 made explicit the idea of an ‘alternative route’, via mainly part-time further education, which would enable those children, predominantly of working-class origin, who had failed to reach grammar schools or who had been ‘early leavers’ still to gain higher-level qualifications while in employment and in turn access managerial and professional occupations.¹

However, another possibility has to be recognised – as sociologists were in fact rather quick to point out. It may be that lifelong learning is not only, or not even primarily, pursued by men and women from less advantaged social origins but rather by those from more advantaged origins, and especially in cases where the latter had levels of educational attainment which, if not especially poor, were still insufficient to give them a strong assurance of maintaining their parents’ social position. Through further education, these individuals could take the opportunity of building on their previous qualifications, and in this case lifelong learning would serve less to give a second chance in a

¹ See Ministry of Education (1959). The report became widely known as the Crowther Report, after Sir Geoffrey Crowther, chairman of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), which was responsible for its production.

compensatory sense and more to give a second chance of realising cumulative advantage; the 'Matthew effect' would again be apparent. And, to the extent that this was so, lifelong learning would be likely to contribute less to social mobility than to social immobility.²

In the previous chapter we have seen that if individuals do improve their relative qualification level in the course of their working lives, this increases their chances of being found in the managerial and professional salariat, while if their relative level worsens their chances of being found in the wage-earning working class increase. We now wish to go into more detail in this connection by focusing on the two following questions. First, what is the association between individuals' class origins and the likelihood of their participation in lifelong learning that leads to further qualifications? And, second, what is the association between obtaining such qualifications and changes in individuals' class positions in working life and also in relation to their class origins?

We again confine our attention to the 1970 birth cohort. We draw on the data we have on cohort members' class origins and their complete employment and class histories up to age 38 as described in Chapter 7, and, in addition, we are also able to construct their complete educational and qualifications histories. In this latter case, we take into account all formal qualifications, whether academic or vocational, that cohort members had obtained, again up to age 38, and categorise these on the same lines as shown in Table 5.1 – although now with academic and vocational qualifications being treated separately. We then define qualifications resulting from some form of lifelong learning provision – or, for short, 'further qualifications' – as those that were gained following an individuals' first period of full-time education and entry into their first significant job, that is, one lasting for at least six months. We do not distinguish between qualifications gained from full-time and part-time further education since it is in fact the latter that very largely predominate.³

To begin with, it may be noted that among members of the 1970 birth cohort participation in lifelong learning was at quite a high

² For an early paper raising this possibility and discussing results obtained on the basis of data from the Nuffield mobility study, see Raffe (1979).

³ Data from the British Household Panel Study and its successor, the Understanding Society survey, show that over the period 1998–2012 less than 5 per cent of recorded 'adult learning episodes' were ones of full-time education.

level. Over half, 57 per cent of men and 54 per cent of women, had obtained further qualifications, mainly in early working life – that is, by their late twenties. Vocational qualifications were far more frequently acquired than academic qualifications – twice as often in the case of women and somewhat more than twice as often in the case of men.⁴

To establish the association between participation in lifelong learning and class origins, we start with a statistical model designed to show the effect of an individual's class origins on the probability that he or she obtained a further academic or a vocational qualification in any year of his or her working life up to age 38. The model includes a number of other variables apart from class origins that are known also to influence participation, such as previous qualifications and employment status (employee, self-employed, unemployed, inactive, etc.).⁵ Although these other variables are intended, given our focus on class origins, primarily to serve as controls, one outcome of particular relevance is the following. Consistently with most previous research, we find that an individual's previous level of *academic* qualification is an important factor in participation: the higher this level, the greater the probability that he or she will obtain a further qualification, whether of an academic or a vocational kind.⁶

Turning then to the effects of class origins, we show in Table 9.1 results from our initial model, labelled Model 1, for men and women separately. It can be seen that significant class origin effects occur mainly at the extremes of the class hierarchy and in relation to academic qualifications. Men and women originating in Class 1, the higher level of the managerial and professional salariat, are more likely

⁴ The extent of participation in lifelong learning in Britain seems to be often underappreciated. The Social Mobility Commission has claimed (Social Mobility Commission 2016: 148) – though without citing supporting evidence – that Britain has 'fallen behind other countries in its adult skills agenda'. But in a study based on data for 2007, Dämmerich et al. (2014) found that Britain in fact ranked top among European countries in terms of the proportion of its working-age population who were engaged in further education or training of some formal kind.

⁵ For a useful review of previous work on factors affecting participation in lifelong learning, see Tuckett and Field (2016).

⁶ The model is a binomial logistic regression model in which time dependency is taken into account via age year dummy variables and in which a person-specific random error term is included. For further details of the model and of all the analyses referred to in this chapter, see Bukodi (2017).

Table 9.1 Effect of class of origin on the probability of obtaining further qualifications^(a)

	Men		Women	
	Further qualification		Further qualification	
	Academic	Vocational	Academic	Vocational
Model 1				
Class of origin				
Class 7	—	ns	—	ns
Class 6	ns	ns	—	+
Class 5	ns	ns	ns	++
Class 4	reference		reference	
Class 3	ns	ns	ns	ns
Class 2	ns	ns	ns	ns
Class 1	+	—	++	ns
Model 2				
Class of origin is higher than own class in year before qualification obtained	++	ns	++	ns

Note (a) For symbols, see Table 6.1

Source: Bukodi (2017)

than those originating in other classes to obtain further academic qualifications, while men and women originating in Class 7, the lower level of the wage-earning working class, are less likely to do so – as also are women originating in Class 6. In contrast, the acquisition of further vocational qualifications shows no very systematic association with class origins. Men of Class 1 origin are less likely to obtain vocational qualifications than others, while women of Class 5 and Class 6 origins appear more likely.

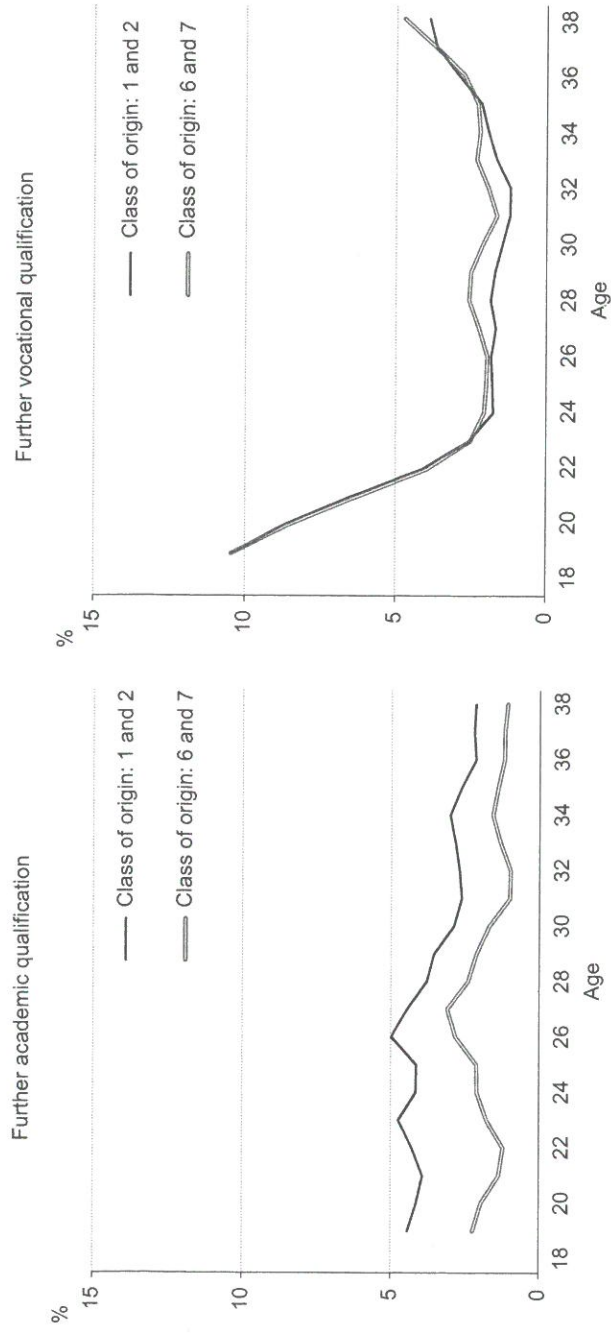
Class origin effects can, however, be treated in a different way, which adds to – and also suggests some explanation of – our results under Model 1. From our class and qualifications histories of members of the 1970 cohort, we can create a further variable that refers to whether or not at any point in their working lives individuals were in a less advantaged class position than that in which they originated, according to fivefold hierarchical division of NS-SEC (Table 1.1).

In Model 2 in Table 9.1, this variable replaces the class of origin variable of Model 1 – and with rather striking results. As can be seen, *being in a less advantaged class than that of their parents* strongly increases the probability that individuals will subsequently gain a further academic, though not a vocational, qualification. In other words, here we do find a rather clear indication that participation in lifelong learning provides a second chance of realising the advantages of social origins rather than a second chance of overcoming the disadvantages; at the same time, there is a still further indication that ‘class maintenance’ – the avoidance of downward class mobility – is a powerful motivational force.

The findings presented in Table 9.1 do not, however, take any account of the age at which further qualifications are obtained. Could it be the case that, insofar as a gap exists between the qualification levels of men and women of differing class origins at labour market entry, participation in lifelong learning does at all events bring about some narrowing in this gap over the course of working life? Does it, in other words, allow for some degree of ‘catch-up’ on the part of those who start out from disadvantaged origins?

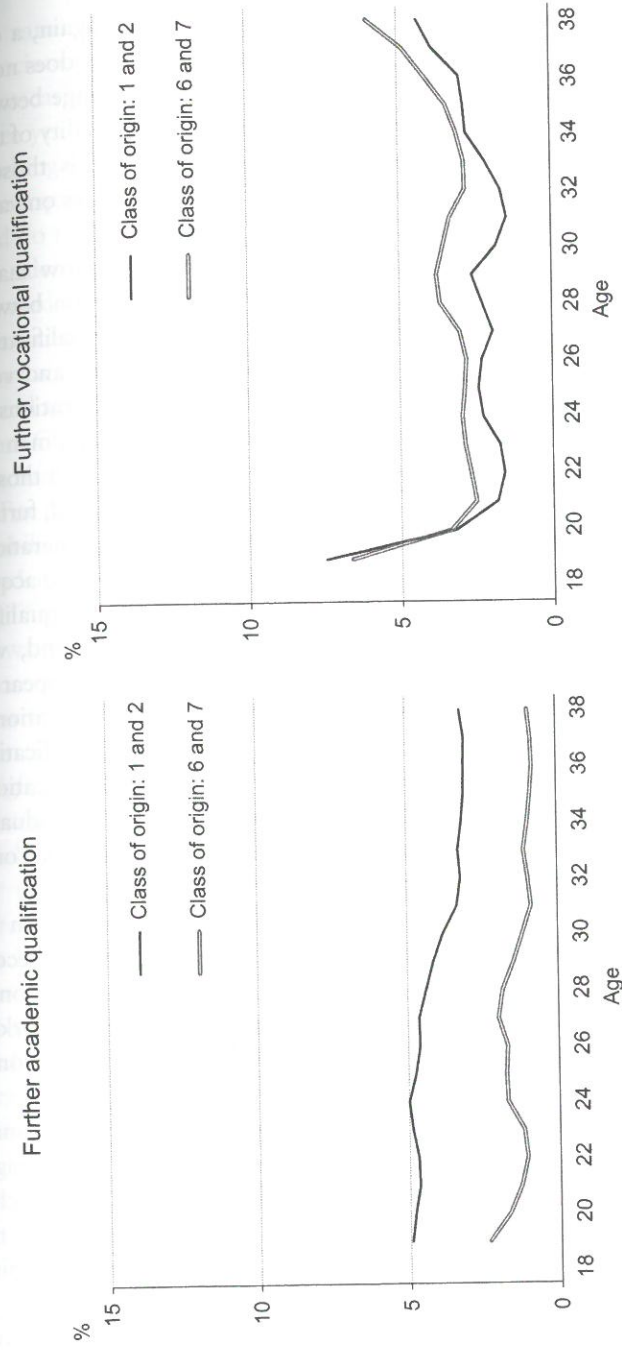
In Figures 9.1 and 9.2 we show probabilities estimated under a version of Model 1 of Table 9.1 of a man or women of Class 1 and 2 or of Class 6 and 7 origins obtaining further academic and vocational qualifications at all ages from 18 to 38. To simplify, we focus on the case of a hypothetical man or woman who is currently in full-time employment in a Class 3 position, who has higher secondary qualifications (category 5 in Table 5.1) and who has not experienced worklife mobility in the last five years. With different hypothetical persons we would of course have different results; but, unless rather extreme cases were to be taken, the probabilities produced could be expected to be on the same pattern so far as comparisons between individuals of Class 1 and 2 and Class 6 and 7 origins are concerned.

As regards gaining further academic qualifications, it can be seen that there is in fact no very great change in the difference in the probabilities of doing so for individuals of salariat and working-class origins over the age range covered. The probabilities for the former remain always above those for the latter; and, while the difference does reduce slightly from the early to the late twenties, it then with men falls very little further and with women stays essentially unaltered. There is, in other words, no evidence that catch-up occurs to any substantial extent.



Source: Bukodi (2017)

Figure 9.1 Estimated probability of attaining further qualifications by class of origin and age, men



Source: Bukodi (2017)

Figure 9.2 Estimated probability of attaining further qualifications by class of origin and age, women

As regards vocational qualifications, the situation is, again, a contrasting one, and so much so that the question of catch-up does not in fact arise. With men, there is very little difference at any age between those of salariat and of working-class origins in the probability of their gaining a vocational qualification, and with women it is those of working-class origin who, at all ages from the early twenties onwards, have somewhat the higher probability.

The results we have so far presented do then clearly show that in answering the first question we raised, that of the association between individuals' class origins and their acquisition of further qualifications through lifelong learning, the distinction between academic and vocational qualifications is crucial. In the case of academic qualifications, an association clearly exists. In the course of their working lives, men and women of the most advantaged class origins are more likely than those of the least advantaged to gain further academic qualifications; and, further, being in any class position that implies downward intergenerational mobility increases the probability that an individual will go on to acquire a further academic qualification. But in the case of vocational qualifications, no comparable associations with class origins exist; and, with women, it is, if anything, those of working-class origin who appear the most likely to obtain such qualifications. An evident consideration in explaining these findings is that courses leading to academic qualifications are likely to be more costly to pursue than those leading to vocational qualifications. However, the whole question of cost to the individual of further education, including opportunity costs as well as direct ones, would not appear to have been the subject of any detailed research.

At all events, what is important is that we should maintain the academic-vocational distinction in moving on now to our second question, that of the association between individuals' acquisition of further qualifications and their class mobility viewed in both worklife and intergenerational perspective – or, in other words, the question of the 'class returns' that further qualifications bring.

In seeking to answer this question, we have undertaken preliminary analyses of the time relationship between an individual gaining a further qualification and any subsequent change in his or her class position. We find that, if any change in class position does occur, this happens fairly quickly after the new qualification – most often within a year and almost always within two or three years.

We then develop our modelling strategy on the following lines. Using the same form of model as Model 1 of Table 9.1 and keeping

the same set of control variables, we focus, to begin with, on the association that exists between individuals obtaining further academic or vocational qualifications and their experiencing, within the next three years, upward or downward class mobility in the course of their working lives. As well as distinguishing between academic and vocational qualifications, we also distinguish between qualifications that do and do not raise individuals' levels of such qualification. And we also consider upward and downward mobility in three different ways: first, upward or downward mobility of any kind, in terms of the fivefold hierarchical divisions of NS-SEC; second, upward mobility to and downward mobility from Classes 1 and 2, the managerial and professional salariat; and, third, upward mobility to and downward mobility from Class 1 alone, the higher level of the salariat. Tables 9.2 and 9.3 are based on our results for men and for women treated separately.

For men, a fairly clear pattern of results emerges. As regards upward mobility, it can be seen from Table 9.2 that if a man obtains a new academic qualification that raises his level of such qualification, this significantly and quite strongly improves his chances of experiencing upward class mobility over the next three years, both of any kind and more specifically into Classes 1 and 2 or into Class 1 alone. And also a new academic qualification that does not upgrade his level of qualification still improves his chances of mobility into Class 1 – as a result, one might suppose, of widening his *range* of qualification. In contrast, a new vocational qualification has no effect on a man's chances of upward class mobility, whether it is one that raises his level of vocational qualification or not.⁷ As regards downward mobility, our findings are yet more straightforward. New qualifications, whether academic or vocational and whether marking an upgrading in qualification or not, appear to have no effect on reducing a man's risk of downward worklife mobility in any of the ways considered: that is, in no cell of the right-hand panel of Table 9.2 is there a negative sign. In short, we may say that, so far as men are concerned, further qualifications gained through lifelong learning are associated with their experience of class mobility in the course of working life in just one way: obtaining further *academic* qualifications increases their chances of *upward* mobility.

⁷ It is of course possible that further vocational qualifications bring earnings returns if not class returns, although the extensive research on this issue by economists would suggest that, at least in the case of men, earnings returns tend to be limited, if evident at all. See e.g. Jenkins et al. (2003), Wolf, Jenkins and Vignoles (2006) and Blanden et al. (2012).

Table 9.2 Effect of further qualifications on the probability of upward and downward worklife mobility, men^(a)

	Upward worklife mobility to			Downward worklife mobility from		
	Class			Class		
	any class	1 and 2	Class 1	any class	1 and 2	Class 1
New academic qualifications attained in past three years that raise level of qualification	++	++	++	ns	ns	ns
do not raise level of qualification	ns	ns	++	ns	ns	ns
New vocational qualifications attained in past three years that raise level of qualification	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
do not raise level of qualification	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns

Note (a) For symbols, see Table 6.1

Source: Bukodi (2017)

For women, the results presented in Table 9.3 turn out, in the case of further academic qualifications, to be on much the same lines as those for men. Where a woman raises her level of academic qualification, this increases her chances of upward worklife mobility in all three ways considered, and a new academic qualification that does not raise her academic level still improves her chances of upward mobility into the salariat. At the same time, further academic qualifications do no more for women than for men in reducing their risks of downward mobility.⁸ However, in the case of further vocational qualifications, a contrast shows up. While for men, these qualifications prove to be unassociated with their worklife class mobility, for women they are, in certain respects, associated with their chances of upward mobility and – what may appear a quite counterintuitive finding – also with their chances of downward mobility.

⁸ It should, though, be added that such further qualifications could have an indirect effect in this regard, in the case of men and women alike, insofar as they prevent an individual's *relative* qualification level from worsening, which, as was shown in Chapter 8, does increase the risk of downward mobility.

Table 9.3 Effect of further qualifications on the probability of upward and downward worklife mobility, women^(a)

	Upward worklife mobility to			Downward worklife mobility from		
	Class			Class		
	any class	1 and 2	Class 1	any class	1 and 2	Class 1
New academic qualifications attained in past three years that raise level of qualification	++	++	++	ns	ns	ns
do not raise level of qualification	ns	++	++	ns	ns	ns
New vocational qualifications attained in past three years that raise level of qualification	++	++	ns	+	++	++
do not raise level of qualification	++	++	ns	++	++	ns

Note (a) For symbols, see Table 6.1

Source: Bukodi (2017)

As regards upward mobility, further vocational qualifications do appear to help women to increase their chances of relatively short-range movement – from, say, working-class to intermediate class positions or into the lower-level managerial and professional positions of Class 2 – although not into the higher-level positions of Class 1 – following, say, the Type 3 class trajectory for women that was identified in Chapter 7. As regards the association between further vocational qualifications and downward mobility, more detailed analyses reveal that this very largely comes about in rather specific circumstances involving women's balancing of work and family life. That is, as a result of women who were previously in salariat or intermediate class positions obtaining relatively low level vocational qualifications during or after some time out of the labour market, usually on account of priority being given to family commitments, and in preparation for re-entry although often only part-time and in some less advantaged class position.⁹

⁹ See further Bukodi (2017). It should be noted that with many of these women, even a low-level vocational qualification will count as one raising their level of such qualification simply because they had no previous vocational qualifications at all. In the context of the discussion of women's mobility in Chapter 3, the

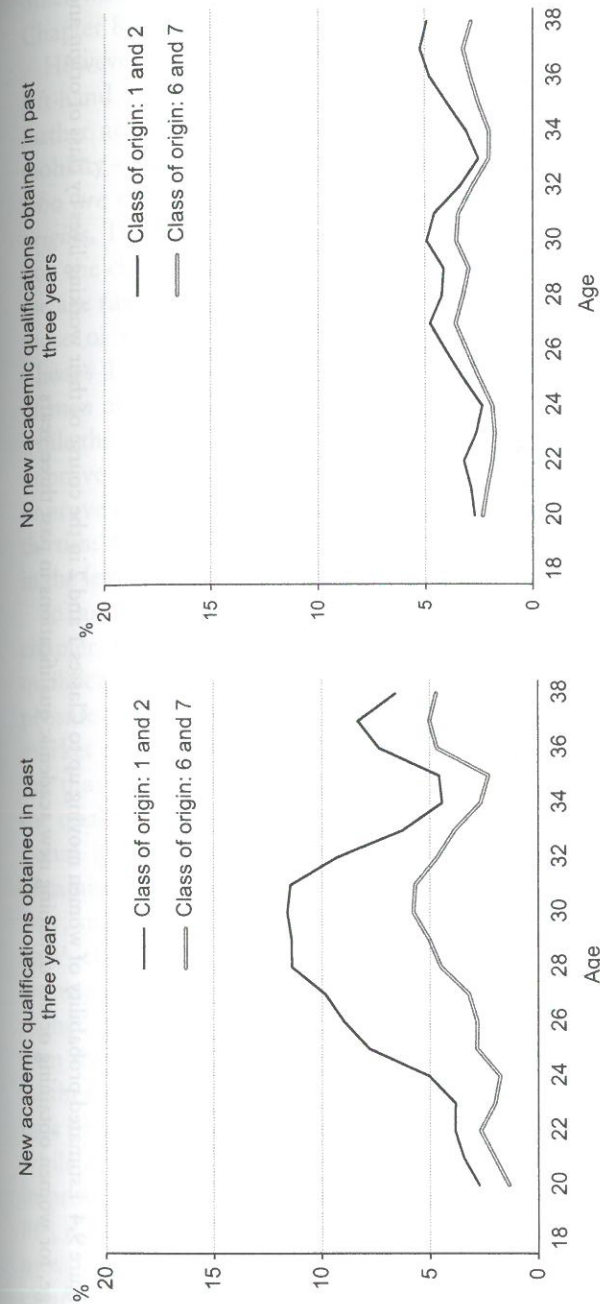
Vocational qualifications do then play a greater part in influencing women's worklife class mobility than men's. But it would still seem apparent that, in this regard, it is academic qualifications that are in general of main importance. And since we have previously shown that acquiring further academic qualifications is associated with more advantaged class origins, and especially with initial downward mobility from such origins, the evidence so far produced would suggest that, in intergenerational perspective, participation in lifelong learning may indeed contribute at least as much to class immobility as to class mobility. However, to complete our analyses, we need to go into somewhat more detail about how class origins and further academic qualifications come together in determining intergenerational mobility chances.

To do this, we work with a variant of our basic model, Model 1, under which we can estimate the probabilities of men and women experiencing upward mobility over the course of their working lives – that is, at all ages from 18 to 38 – according to whether or not they had obtained further academic qualifications within the past three years.¹⁰ And we then compare these probabilities for individuals of Class 1 and 2 origins and Class 6 and 7 origins, again focusing on the same hypothetical persons as in Figures 9.1 and 9.2: that is, men and women in Class 3 positions with higher secondary qualifications. In the case of men, we consider upward mobility to Class 1 but in the case of women, because of the relatively small numbers accessing Class 1, we consider upward mobility to Classes 1 and 2 together. Results for men are graphed in Figure 9.3 and for women in Figure 9.4.

What may first be observed is that in all graphs the chances of our hypothetical persons being upwardly mobile from their initial Class 3 positions to a Class 1 position, or with women to a Class 1 or 2 position, are always greater for those of Class 1 and 2, or salariat, origins than for those of Class 6 and 7, or working-class, origins – regardless of whether or not they have obtained a new academic qualification in addition to their higher secondary qualification. In

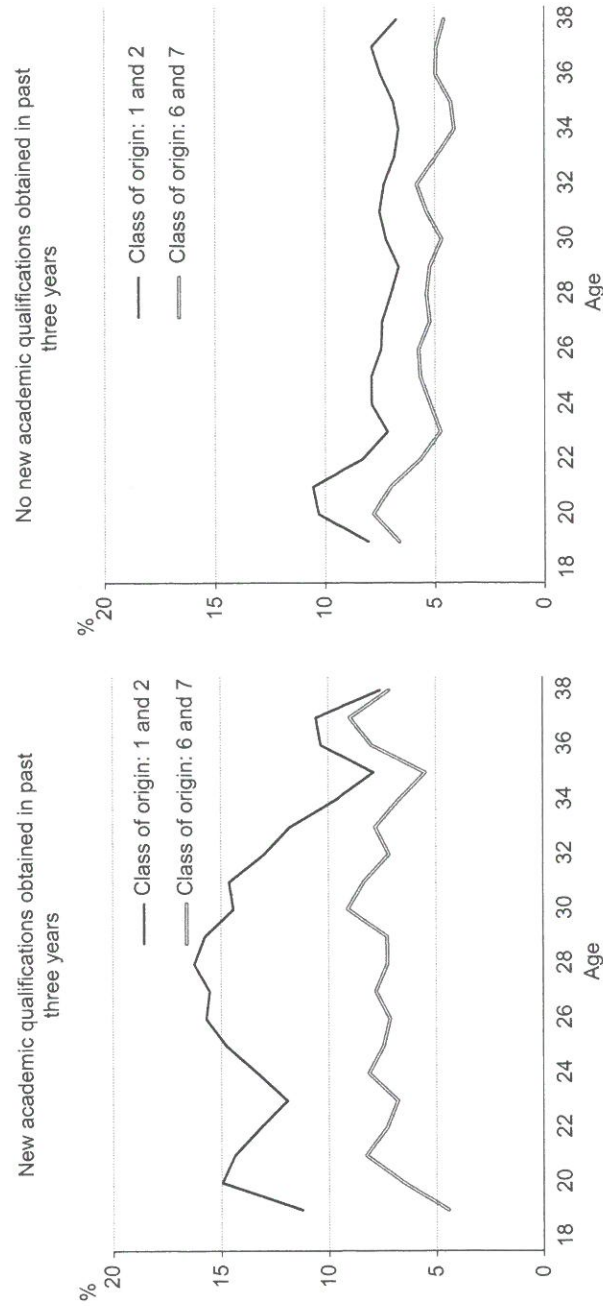
women in question here would number among the part-timers who did *not* move into relatively low-level employment from the first. On women's downward worklife mobility linked with a move to part-time working, see Dex and Bukodi (2012).

¹⁰ The same set of control variables are included as previously and also allowance is made for any interactions between obtaining further qualifications and age.



Source: Bukodi (2017)

Figure 9.3 Estimated probability of men moving up to Class 1 in the course of their working lives by class of origin and age, for men obtaining or not obtaining new academic qualifications in past three years



Source: Bukodi (2017)

Figure 9.4 Estimated probability of women moving up to Classes 1 and 2 in the course of their working lives by class of origin and age, for women obtaining or not obtaining new academic qualifications in past three years

other words – and as would be expected from the results reported in Chapter 8 – DESO is clearly present.

However, what can also be observed, in comparing the graphs in the left-hand and right-hand panels of the two figures, is that gaining a further academic qualification does increase the chances of upward mobility – and more so, in absolute terms, for our hypothetical persons who are of salariat origins than for those who are of working-class origins. Thus, for men who have gained no further academic qualification the chances of moving up to Class 1 remain generally low across the age range covered – never more than 5 per cent at any age even for those of salariat origin; for women, the chances of moving up to Classes 1 or 2 reach at most to around 10 per cent. But in the case of men and women who do obtain a further academic qualification, while the chances of upward mobility of those of working-class origins improve to some extent, the chances of those of salariat origins improve clearly more, and especially from the mid twenties to the early thirties: that is, the gaps that show up in the graphs are in general wider in the left-hand panels of the two figures than in the right-hand panels.

In answering the two questions from which we set out in this chapter, we have then produced fairly consistent evidence that further qualifications gained through lifelong learning do rather little to compensate for relatively low levels of educational attainment at labour market entry on the part of individuals of disadvantaged class origins, but that they do help individuals of more advantaged origins to add to the qualifications they have already acquired. On the one hand, vocational qualifications are those most frequently obtained, and while obtaining them is not associated with class origins in any systematic way, such qualifications have only limited effects in improving individuals' chances of upward worklife mobility. They do so for those women who acquire them, although not as regards accessing the higher-level managerial and professional positions of Class 1, but for men they would appear to have little effect at all. On the other hand, further academic qualifications are less often gained and it is individuals of advantaged class origins who are most likely to gain them. And while qualifications of this kind are in turn associated with generally improved chances of upward class mobility in the course of working life, it is individuals of advantaged origins who would appear to benefit most in this way. Taken overall, our results would therefore rather clearly indicate that while further qualifications obtained through

lifelong learning may play some, rather modest, part in promoting class mobility, they are of greater importance as a driver of what we have earlier referred to as 'counter mobility': that is, upward mobility achieved by individuals in the course of their working lives that *offsets* their earlier downward mobility by reference to the position of their parents and thus leads to intergenerational *immobility*.¹¹

Counter mobility through further education – 1

Adam

Adam's father was a ship's captain in the Merchant Navy. Adam passed the 11-plus – 'you would have to be thick not to pass it' – and was in the top stream at grammar school. He did well in O levels and took maths, physics and chemistry at A level. He got an A in maths but failed physics and chemistry. His parents were divorcing at the time but he does not believe this is why he failed: 'We were 17, 18 and we were going out clubbing it ... every night. That was the only reason why.' He could not take up the university place he had been offered in civil engineering, and after various short-term jobs ended up working as a hospital laboratory technician.

However, after several years he found this work boring and decided he wanted to move on. In his mid twenties, he took ONCs and HNCs on day release courses and on this basis was able to enter university as a mature student. He obtained degree-level qualifications in psychology and biology, and has since followed a career as a biological scientist in industry and government. While at university, he married a fellow student: 'It worked out quite well, you know.'

¹¹ If – as we would think quite possible – counter mobility is more frequent in Britain than in many other countries, in part at least because of the high level of participation in further education, this could account for the fact, referred to in Chapter 5 (n. 3), that in the 1970 cohort the interaction effect within the OED triangle favouring greater fluidity among those with higher education disappears by the time individuals have reached their late thirties. It could be that the previously weak OD association existing for those with higher levels of E is subsequently strengthened as a result of more individuals from more advantaged origins improving their level of qualification and achieving upward mobility during the course of their working lives.

Counter mobility through further education – 2

Graham

Graham grew up in what he describes as a 'definitely middle-class' family. He was expected to do well at school and reached the sixth form without difficulty – but then failed all his A levels: 'I didn't want to be at school in the sixth form.' What he wanted was to get away from home and 'to see the world', so he entered the Merchant Navy College to train as a ship's radio operator. But, having qualified, he was unable to find a job of this kind and, rather than 'going on the dole', went to work as a technician at an engineering firm. A few years later he was made redundant but then, after various routine jobs, was taken on as a radio technician at a military airbase.

At this point he decided to resume his education, while continuing in his job, and enrolled on an Open University course in mathematics and computing. He completed this over a five-year period, obtaining a B.Sc. degree. He now works for an aeronautical engineering company. His salary is such that he has been able to pay off the mortgage on the house that he and his wife have bought in an attractive coastal area, and he looks forward to retiring 'on a good company pension'.

His relations with his family, especially with his father, were never close after he left school and home, but now, after his father's death, he is re-establishing closer ties with his mother and brothers.

Lifelong learning does, then, represent a particularly significant case as regards the relation between educational policy and social mobility. As noted at the end of the last chapter, there has of late been growing governmental interest in increasing participation in lifelong learning. This is seen as an important means of ensuring adequate levels of skill and expertise within the workforce in the context of continuing rapid technological and organisational change and of an aging population. And, as also noted, it has at the same time been supposed that greater participation in lifelong learning will serve to increase social mobility. However, research that has been officially commissioned with the apparent expectation of producing supportive evidence in this latter respect has in fact produced results that could, at best, be described as ambivalent.

Most notably, a Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Research Paper, specifically concerned with the contribution of further education to social mobility, turned out to show that this contribution was quite problematic. Unsurprisingly, the paper confirmed the findings of previous research that, far from further education fulfilling a compensatory role, it was individuals with already relatively high levels of qualification who were most likely to participate; and, on the basis of further analyses – which would in fact appear likely to underestimate the association between social origins and destinations – still only very patchy evidence could be produced of qualifications obtained through lifelong learning raising individuals' chances of upward mobility intergenerationally.¹²

Our own results point to some clearer, if perhaps still less congenial, conclusions. We have already observed at a number of points that, if a long view is taken, little evidence is apparent that educational policies of expansion and reform can, on their own, do much to increase levels of social mobility, whether considered in absolute or relative terms. But with lifelong learning a different, and yet more challenging, situation is indicated. An educational policy of more extensive and higher-quality provision for the upgrading of qualifications in the course of working life, with its own well-defined rationale in terms of benefits for the national economy as well as for the individuals involved, would at the same time appear likely to have actually *adverse* effects so far as social mobility is concerned. That is, because opportunities for lifelong

¹² The research was the work of economists (Gloster et al., 2015), based on the datasets of the British Household Panel Study and the Understanding Society survey. The main shortcoming of the research is the same as that which we have noted in other work by economists on social mobility: i.e. the remarkably casual way in which both social origins and destinations are understood and measured. Social origins are treated only on the basis of parents' education, and social destinations on the basis of a 'compressed' version of the old Registrar General's Social Classes, although, and contrary to what is suggested in the research report, it is entirely possible with the datasets in question to use NS-SEC as regards both origins and destinations. A further relevant official inquiry is the Government Office for Science project on the Future of Skills and Lifelong Learning. A commissioned literature review on factors influencing participation in lifelong learning (Tuckett and Field, 2016) has already been referred to (n. 5 above) – the findings of which have been nicely summed up by its lead author as 'If you don't at first succeed – you don't succeed.' We were ourselves involved in the early stages of this project and presented some of our results relating to further education and social mobility; but this topic would seem subsequently to have dropped off the agenda.

learning turn out to provide 'second chances' not so much for men and women whose disadvantaged social origins have had limiting effects on their educational attainment prior to labour market entry, but more for those of more advantaged origins who while in full-time education have not realised their advantages to the full extent that they might.

What emerges from this situation that is of wider societal significance is in fact reinforcement for an argument we put forward earlier in Chapters 5 and 6. The consequences of educational policies will only be adequately assessed if the individuals they affect are not regarded as being uniform and passive, and if their probable reactions to particular policies are taken into account on the basis of an understanding of their differing motivations and resources. Thus, opportunities that allow for the avoidance of downward mobility on the part of individuals with resources adequate to pursue them could be expected to be more often exploited than opportunities for upward mobility for individuals whose more limited resources must mean that in deciding whether or not to take up these opportunities far more difficult cost-benefit considerations are likely to arise. Or, more generally, one could say, the impact of educational policy on the existing social order will always be strongly conditioned by the nature of the reception that policy initiatives receive from individuals holding more or less advantaged positions within this order.