Social Mobility and the Political Engagement of Second-Generation Migrants *

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Abstract

How does intergenerational social mobility shape the political engagement of second-generation migrants? While political participation among second-generation immigrants is often attributed to assimilation and improved socio-economic status compared to their first-generation parents, the role of intergenerational mobility itself remains underexplored. Using crossnational surveys from 19 European countries and household survey data from Switzerland, we examine how upward and downward mobility influence different forms of political engagement for first- and second-generation immigrants, drawing on a resource-based model of participation and theories from the immigration literature. While we expect general upward and downward effects of social mobility, we argue that the political engagement of first-generation immigrants should be more strongly affected by status loss than second-generation immigrants due to selection into migration. While our results suggest that social moblity per se does not necessarly affect political engagement of second-generation immigrants and natives, we find negative effects of status loss for first-generation immigrants. Our study integrates social mobility into research on migrant political behavior and offers a cross-national perspective, with implications for understanding political participation among populations with a migration background.

Keywords: Second-Generation Immigrants, Intergenerational Social Mobility, Political Engagement

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1 Introduction

With growing immigration since the 1990's, established democracies are becoming increasingly demographically diverse. While much of the immigration research focuses on first-generation immigrants, the second-generation receives often less attention - although there is evidence that second-generation immigrants do not necessarily behave the same as the first-generation when it comes to politics (e.g., Hill and Moreno, 1996; Maxwell, 2010). Focusing on the second-generation is, however, important as they represent a growing electoral force, while often navigating the complex of dynamics of two identities.

Prior studies often argue that besides cultural adaption and integration processes, an improved socio-economic standing of second-generation immigrants should positively affect their political engagement (e.g., Bevelander and Hutcheson, 2022). At the same time, children of immigrants still face significant barriers in the labour market (Zschirnt and Ruedin, 2016), and ethnic penalties influencing social mobility patterns (Kanitsar, 2024; but see, Bucca and Drouhot, 2024). Nevertheless, we know little if and how intergenerational social mobility of second-generation immigrants is associated with increased political participation. Given ongoing migration trends and demographic shifts, the second-generation is set to become an increasingly prominent share of the population and the electorate, making their political behaviour all the more consequential.

To test our expectations, we use the Swiss Household Panel, as well as data from 19 countries from the ESS, which we combine with data from the ESS-DEVO project (Ganzeboom, 2013), which provide information on recent employment, parents' occupation when respondents were 14, political behavior, and migration background. Our sample includes income-earning adults which we categorize into immobile, upwardly mobile, and downwardly mobile groups based on the respondent's occupational class relative to their parents using the European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC) (Rose and Harrison, 2010; Trinh and Bukodi, 2021). We find that downward

and upward mobility negatively and positively affects different measures of political engagement overall. We find generation-specific effects most consistently for the first-generation and past voting. Except for this last result, Diagonal Reference Models (Sobel, 1981; Sobel, 1985) suggest in most cases that differences in political engagement of upwardly and downwardly mobile respondents are not necessarily an effect of the mobility experience per se, but a result of ending up in a higher or lower social class.

This study contributes to the literature in at least two ways. First, we test the resource model of political participation from a new angle by assessing how intergenerational social mobility can explain increased political engagement of second-generation immigrants. While previous literature often accounts for education and income levels of the second-generation respondent and their parents, the direct in- or decrease of socio-economic status relative to the first-generation or native population is underexplored. Second, we also contribute the study of intergenerational mobility. Previous research generally investigates how intergenerational social mobility influences party support (e.g. Jerrim and Kaye, 2024; Ares and Van Ditmars, 2023). By contrast, we are among the first to empirically study the effects of intergenerational social mobility on political participation (see also Fan and Yan, 2019; Kim et al., 2023).

2 Theoretical Considerations

Research shows that intergenerational social mobility can outweigh initial political socialisation under certain circumstances. Given that socially mobile individuals are exposed to different norms of the new social class in the workplace, re-socialisation processes are expected to take place. By contrast, immobile individuals' attitudes and behaviours are likely reinforced (Abramson and Books, 1971). However, intergenerational social mobility patterns are likely not symmetric for upward and downward mobile individuals. While upward mobile individuals are expected to assimilate to their destination class, downward mobility individuals are often argued to retain political

attitudes and behaviour from their social class of origins (see e.g., Clifford and Heath, 1993; Weakliem, 1992; Wilensky and Edwards, 1959).

Recent empirical studies provide, however, mixed evidence for this asymmetric pattern. For instance, van Ditmars (2020) shows that vertically upward mobile children are indeed less influenced by the political ideology of their parents compared to the socially immobile, although the author attributes this result to self-selection rather than a causal mechanism. By contrast, compared to the immobile, downward mobile individuals are less influenced by the parental ideology in Germany, but not in Switzerland, where no difference among the two groups emerges. Jerrim and Kaye (2024) show that upward mobile individuals tend to assimilate to their destination class when it comes to voting Conservative in the UK, while downward mobile women, but not necessarily men, seem to preserve at least partly the voting behaviour of their origin class. While the outcomes of these studies are different to political participation, they provide insights when initial socialisation might be outweighed by class movements.

Nevertheless, only few studies focus on the relationship between social mobility and political participation. In terms of *intragenerational* mobility, Lahtinen et al. (2017) conclude that the socially mobile's turnout rate ends up being somewhere inbetween their origin and destination class. Focusing on *intergenerational* social mobility in China, Fan and Yan (2019) find evidence for a symmetric social mobility effect by showing that voting is generally influenced by destination effects. Focusing on intergenerational social mobility as a moderator, Kim et al. (2023) show that the effects of income inequality differ on turnout differ in high and low mobility societies. While income inequality can act as a boost for turnout in low mobility contexts especially for lower classes, it has a negative effect in societies with high levels of social mobility. While being insightful, it is to be determined whether these effects of social mobility on turnout are consistent patterns and if and how these dynamics apply to immigrants and their mobility trajectory.

Immigrant Political Engagement

More broadly speaking, the question of how immigrants electorally participate has become an increasing academic interest. Many studies on this topic find that foreign-born individuals tend to participate less often in elections and in other political activities compared to native-born individuals (see e.g., Barreto, 2005; DeSipio, 1996; Gidengil and Stolle, 2009; Helbling et al., 2016). This immigrant-native gap in political participation is often argued to be a consequence of the specific experiences and barriers immigrants face. Lower participation rates are, for example, linked to limited language proficiency, shorter length of residence, weaker national identification, different social networks and immigrants not being mobilised in election campaigns (Barreto, 2005; de Rooij, 2012; Huddy and Khatib, 2007; Ruedin, 2018; Spies et al., 2020). The extent of this immigrant-native gap varies, however, by region of origin (Bevelander and Hutcheson, 2022).

Besides these factors, also socio-economic explanations have been explored. For instance, Bass and Casper (2001) show in their analysis that education and income are positively correlated with registering and voting in the U.S. elections. Also Spies et al. (2020) show that, besides other factors, higher education levels are associated with higher turnout. While providing valuable insights for our understanding of immigrants and their political engagement, many of these studies focus on first-generation immigrants. These findings cannot be directly applied to the children of first-generation immigrants, given that they have been socialised into the social and political environment of the residence country rather than the origin country context.

Previous research indeed highlights that second-generation immigrants behave politically different to first-generation immigrants. Hill and Moreno (1996) show that second-generation Cuban immigrants differ to the first-generation in terms of political trust, partisanship and participation. There is, however, substantive variation in this difference depending on whether they arrived before or after the age of 10 in the U.S.. Political participation levels of second-generation immigrants have often shown

to be increasing compared to first-generation immigrants becoming more comparable to those of non-immigrant citizens (e.g., Bevelander and Hutcheson, 2022; Santoro and Segura, 2011).

To explain these different participation patterns, many of these studies point to assimilation processes of the second-generation to their non-immigrant peers. The resource model of political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1993) argues that increased resources should allow citizens to engage more strongly with politics. These resources time, money, but also civic skills, such as language ability and educational attainment (Brady et al., 1995). This in turn would predict that increased resources of second-generation immigrants should boost their political engagement compared to the first-generation (see also, Santoro and Segura, 2011). However, existing studies do usually not assess the effects of directly experienced intergenerational social mobility patterns of second-generation migrants with their political engagement. Although sometimes including parental socioeconomic status and the educational level of second-generation respondents when predicting political participation (see e.g., Borkowska and Luthra, 2024), these studies do not directly test whether socio-economic improvements relative to the parents of second-generation immigrants really matter for their subsequent political participation.

Based on considerations of the resource model, we therefore generally expect symmetric effects of intergenerational social mobility for both first-, second-generation immigrants and non-immigrants alike. More precisely, given an increase in resources upward social mobility should positively affect turnout compared to the immobile, while we should see the opposite pattern for second-generation immigrants experiencing downward social mobility. These considerations are also in line with results of Fan and Yan (2019) for non-immigrants.

Social mobility experiences are, however, rather complex when it comes to immigrants. Although first-generation immigrants often have higher earnings in the destination country than they had in their country of origin, this is not necessarily mirrored by

their occupational status or earnings relative to their native counterparts. Many first-generation immigrants experience downward mobility when they first arrive in the host country (Papademetriou et al., 2009, p.4). As a result, this status loss makes them feel comparably worse off, as their status in the origin country acts as their reference point (Engzell and Ichou, 2020). A similar pattern should apply to intergenerational downward mobility for the first-generation. Consequently, downward mobility should particularly depress political participation of the first-generation as this frustration might lead to alienation of particular formal politics, besides not having been socialised into host country politics.

By contrast, second-generation immigrants have been socialised into the host country context. From a socialisation perspective, social mobility effects should similarly affect second-generation immigrants as the native population. Nonetheless, second-generation specific effects could nonetheless appear: Segmented assimilation theory takes a rather divergent outlook on intergenerational social mobility outcomes. While some individuals experience adaptation and acculturation in terms of their well-being, others will be worse off than their parents and native peers due to discrimination and barriers (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997). Hence, from this perspective, upward and downward social mobility might translate to different forms of political engagement than formal participation.

3 Empirical Strategy

Studying how intergenerational social mobility affects political participation places specific data requirements, namely, that information regarding recent employment is available, parents' occupation when the respondent was between the years of 13 and 15 is provided, and political behaviour of the respondents is asked. As we focus on the second-generation of immigrants, we require information on the migration background of respondents. To this end, we rely on the European Social Survey (ESS)[1] and rely on

[1] 2002-2010, 19 European host countries (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Sweden

the parental ISCO-88 codes for the parental occupation provided by the ESS-DEVO project (Ganzeboom, 2013), as well as the Swiss Household Panel (SHP). We supplement the ESS with the SHP to provide a more in-depth country case replication and to test additional variables related to political engagement. Switzerland is an analytically useful case: it combines (a) a relatively high share of foreign-born residents, and (b) a moderate level of intergenerational social mobility.[2] [3] Our sample consists of income-earning adults above the age of 30 with the right to vote in their respective host country.

Our main dependent variables capture political participation by asking whether respondents voted in the last general election. In addition, we examine three broader dimensions of political engagement. Informal participation is measured as an index averaging participation in boycotts, strikes, and demonstrations for the SHP and as an index averaging participation in boycotts, demonstrations, signing petitions, contacting politicians and wearing a political badge in the last 12 months for the ESS. System support is captured through an index averaging trust in the federal government (trust in the parliament for the ESS) and satisfaction with democracy. Finally, using the SHP, political activation is measured through an index averaging political interest and political efficacy. We rely on the European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC), which groups occupations based on employment relations and work conditions.[4] ESeC is specifically designed for cross-national comparative research and harmonizes socio-economic class categories across Europe. This makes it well-suited for studying intergenerational social mobility in a multi-country framework and for analyzing patterns of social mobility across generations. We create a categorical variable for intergenerational social mobility by comparing a respondent's occupational class (destination) relative to that of their

[2]Switzerland shows a moderate level of intergenerational social mobility: socio-economic status is partly inherited, but mobility is higher than in Southern Europe and broadly in line with the European average. Information available through the Federal Statistical Office: `https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/economic-social-situation-population/economic-and-social-situation-of-the-population/social-mobility.html`.

[3]Switzerland has one of the highest shares of immigrants in Western Europe, of which 13.4% are naturalized citizens. Federal Statistical Office: `https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/population/migration-integration/by-migration-status.html`.

[4]See: ESeC User Guide.

parents (origin).[5] This means that intergenerational mobility occurs when a respondent has a different class than that of their parents. Based on this comparison, we distinguish between three mobility trajectories: immobility, upward mobility, and downward mobility, depending on whether respondents remain in, move above, or fall below their parents' class. To identify generational status, we classify first-generation immigrants as respondents born outside the host country. Second-generation immigrants are defined as respondents born in the host country with at least one parent born abroad. This definition follows standard practice in the comparative migration literature and ensures consistency across datasets.

We proceed in two steps. First, we compare second-generation immigrants to first-generation immigrants across mobility categories to assess how intergenerational changes in socio-economic status relate to political engagement. Second, we compare second-generation immigrants to native-born citizens. These comparisons are carried out for our key indicators of political participation. To estimate these relationships, we use cross-sectional linear probability models. We control for gender, marital status, age (including a squared term to capture potential non-linearities), and origin class allowing us to assess the association between mobility and political engagement, while accounting for standard predictors of political participation.

Following the social mobility literature, simple comparisons across mobility groups conflate the effects of origin and destination class positions, making it difficult to identify whether mobility itself has an independent effect. To address this, we additionally estimate Diagonal Reference Models (DRMs), which predict outcomes for mobile individuals as a weighted combination of their origin and destination class positions, and then test whether mobility exerts an additional residual influence (Sobel, 1981). In this framework, the relative influence parameters ("DRM weights") indicate whether political behaviour is shaped more strongly by one class position than the other, typically summing to one and often showing that destination class has substantially greater weight. Prior research finds that political participation tends to align with destination

[5]We primarily use the fathers' occupation, and when this is not available we rely on the mother's.

class rather than origin class (Fan and Yan, 2019; Kim et al., 2023); DRM allow us to test whether this holds in our context.

4 Empirical Results

Before turning to the regression analyses, we begin by presenting descriptive patterns to illustrate the socio-economic landscape of our sample. These descriptive plots provide an overview of intergenerational social mobility and key characteristics across generations and mobility groups. Figure 1 displays the distribution of intergenerational social mobility across generational groups. Among native citizens, the largest share is upwardly mobile, and the smallest proportion is downwardly mobile. Second-generation immigrants similarly show a higher share of upwardly mobile citizens relative to the other mobility groups. First-generation immigrants have a higher share of downward mobility.

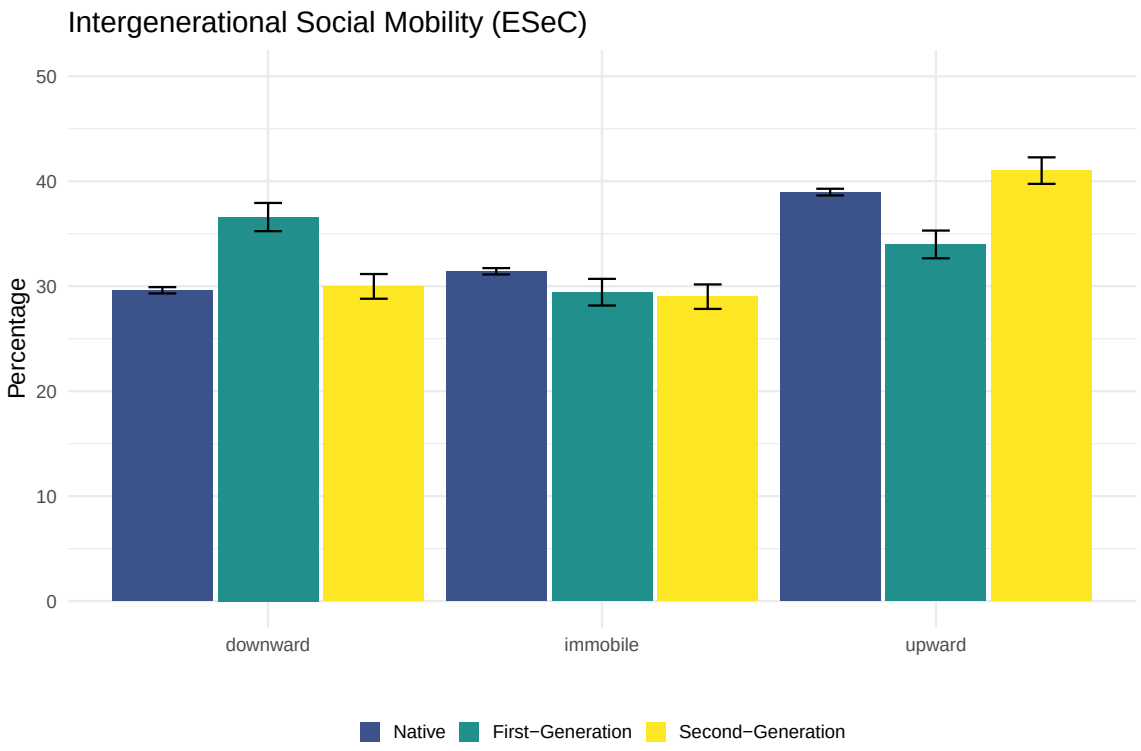

Figure 1: Distribution of intergenerational social mobility across generations.

4.1 First-generation versus Second-generation

While we find overall differences in average political participation such that upwardly (downwardly) mobile individuals are more (less) engaged relative to immobile individuals, does political engagement differ between first- and second-generation immigrants across mobility categories? The interaction coefficients indicate that it does, but only in the case of downward mobility.

In model 1 (voting), downward mobility reduces turnout (–0.09, $p < .01$) among first-generation immigrants, however, the positive interaction term with the second-generation (0.06, $p < .05$) shows that this negative effect is substantially weaker for the second-generation. The marginal effects in Figure 2 make this clear: while the turnout penalty associated with downward mobility depresses is pronounced among the first generation, the second-generation is insulated from the status-loss mechanism. Upward mobility, in contrast, is small and non-significant, indicating that the positive associations of upward mobility on voting is similar across both generations.

In model 2 (informal participation), we observe a similar pattern. Downward mobility is associated with lower informal participation among the first generation (–0.05, $p < .001$). The positive interaction term (+0.02, $p < .10$) again suggests that the downward mobility penalty is weaker for the second generation, as can also be seen in Figure 6. Upward mobility shows a positive association for first-generation immigrants (+0.05, $p < .001$), and the interaction is effectively zero, indicating parallel upward effects across generations.

Second-generation immigrants report lower system support overall compared to first-generation immigrants in model 3 (system support). Notably, the interaction between downward mobility and second-generation status is negative (–0.18, $p < .05$), meaning that while downward mobility does not significantly reduce system support among the first generation (main effect non-significant), it is associated with significantly lower system support among the second generation, as can also be seen in Figure 4. Upward mobility effects on system support do not meaningfully differ across

	Voting	Informal Participation	System Support
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Downward Mobility	-0.09^{**}	-0.05^{***}	-0.13
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.09)
Upward Mobility	0.05^{**}	0.05^{***}	0.13
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.10)
Second Generation	0.03	$0.02^{\dagger}$	-0.30^{**}
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.10)
Downward x Second-Gen.	0.06^{*}	$0.02^{\dagger}$	-0.18^{*}
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Upward x Second-Gen.	0.03	0.01	0.06
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.11)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
ESS Round FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.09	0.11	0.15
Adj. R^2	0.09	0.10	0.15
Num. obs.	9846	10103	10054
RMSE	0.38	0.22	2.00
N Clusters	19	19	19

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

Table 1: Statistical models

groups.

The results using the Swiss context and SHP data (see Appendix A) largely replicate the patterns observed in the ESS data. Among first-generation immigrants, downward mobility is strongly associated with lower participation in polls, lower political activation, and to a lesser extent lower informal participation and system support. Upward mobility shows the opposite pattern. For second-generation immigrants, however, the interaction terms again indicate that differences in mobility are flatter such that downward mobility penalties are smaller in magnitude and not distinguishable from zero, and upward mobility boosts are not significantly stronger than those of the first-generation. Here, we test political activation which shows that mobility matters more for the first-generation, while the second-generation is comparatively insulated from resource loss or gain, although no differences across mobility gradients exist. At the same time, the sign of the upward-mobility interaction for system support is positive (and

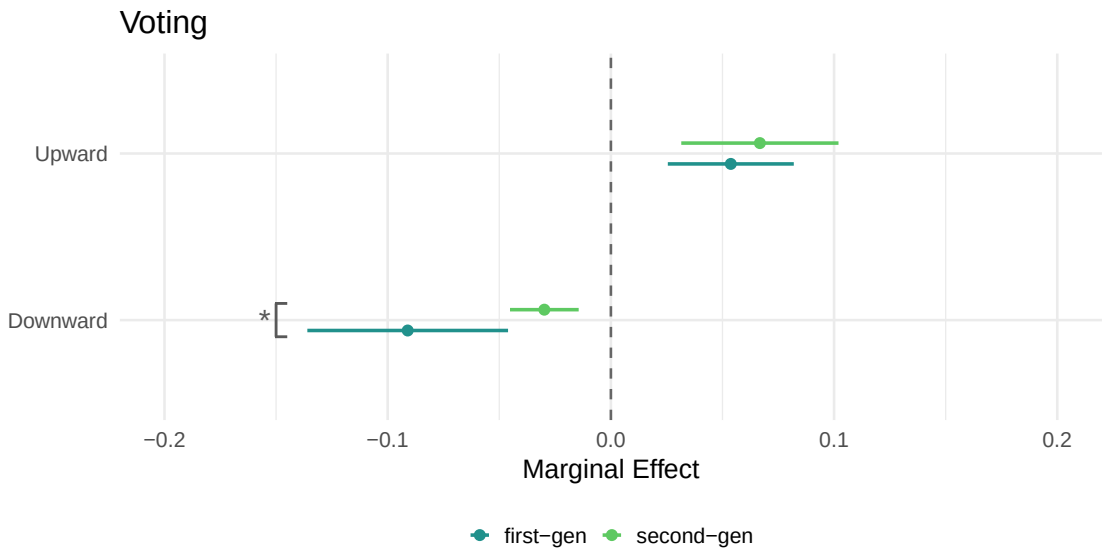

Figure 2: Marginal effects of Model 1, comparing voting across mobility categories and generations. * depicts p-value < 5%. 95% confidence intervals shown.

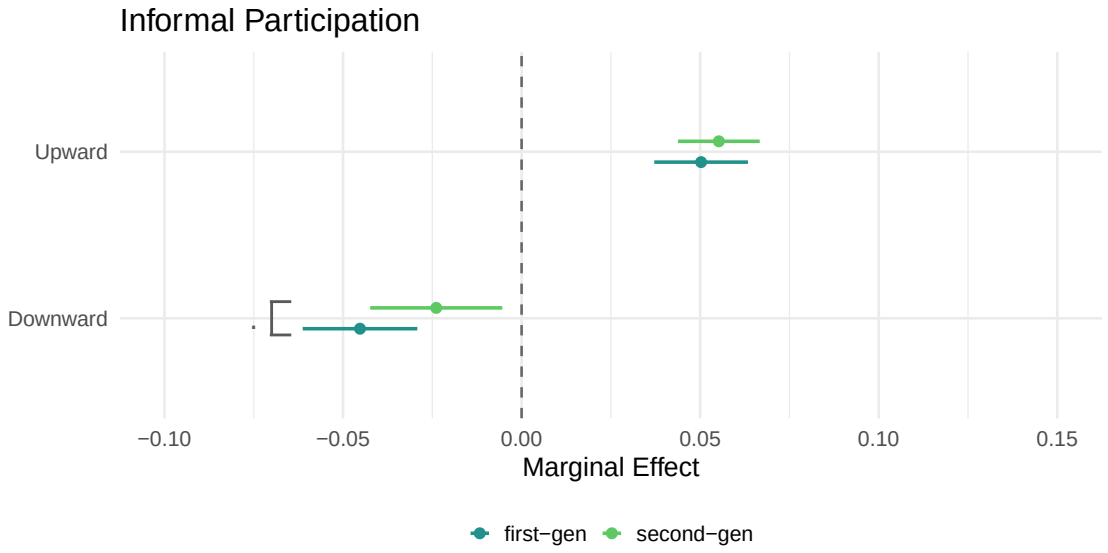

Figure 3: Marginal effects of Model 2, comparing informal participation across mobility categories and generations. . depicts p-value < 10%. 95% confidence intervals shown.

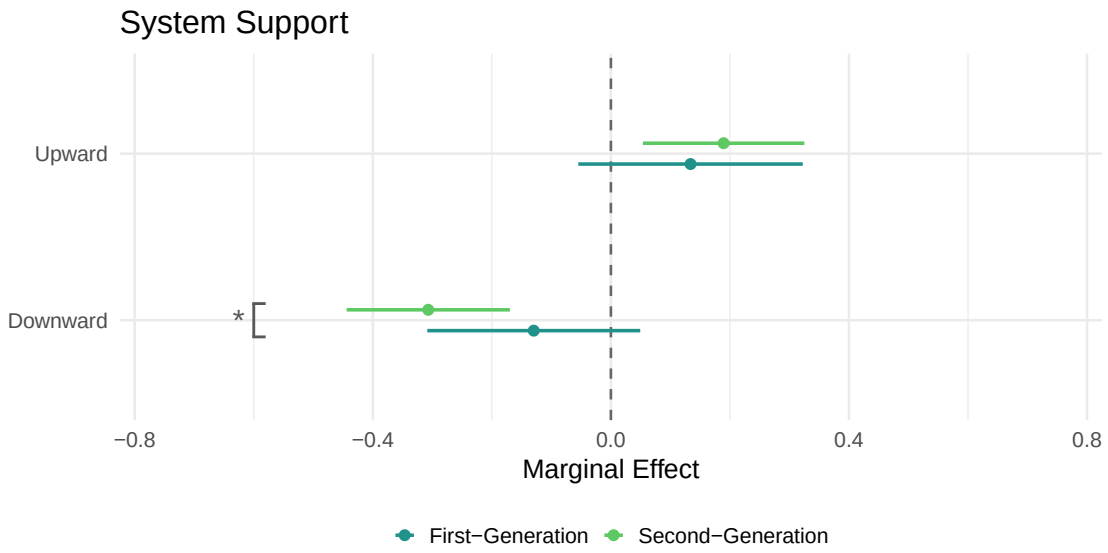

Figure 4: Marginal effects of Model 3, comparing system support across mobility categories and generations. * depicts p-value $< 5\%$. 95% confidence intervals shown.

borderline significant), suggesting that the direction of upward mobility translated into somewhat more system legitimation for the second-generation than the first.

	Voting	Informal Participation	System Support
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Downward Mobility	-0.04^{***}	-0.03^{***}	-0.33^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.03)
Upward Mobility	0.04^{***}	0.05^{***}	0.35^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.04)
Second Generation	-0.04^{**}	0.01^{*}	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.06)
Downward x Second-Gen.	0.02	0.01	-0.07
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.06)
Upward x Second-Gen.	0.03	$0.01^{\dagger}$	-0.05
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
ESS Round FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.07	0.11	0.19
Adj. R^2	0.07	0.11	0.19
Num. obs.	91469	92204	91846
RMSE	0.33	0.20	1.94
N Clusters	19	19	19

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

Table 2: Statistical models

4.2 Native versus Second-generation

When comparing second-generation immigrants to non-immigrants, we find no differences in the association of mobility and political engagement. Across voting, informal participation, and system support, the effects of intergenerational mobility among second-generation immigrants closely resemble those of natives. Upward mobility is associated with slightly higher political engagement and downward mobility with lower engagement for both groups, and the interaction terms show no differences in how mobility is associated with political engagement. The only notable difference is a small overall turnout gap, with second-generation immigrants being somewhat less likely to vote than natives regardless of mobility status. Overall, second-generation immigrants respond to changes in intergenerational social mobility in essentially the same way as natives, suggesting broadly similar patterns.

The SHP replication (see Appendix B) indicates that the interaction terms of the

mobility effects are broadly similar for natives and second-generation immigrant. Most of the interactions are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero, suggesting that intergenerational social mobility translates into political engagement in much the same way for both groups. However, the upward-mobility interaction for political activation, which we are unable to test with the ESS is positive, suggesting that upward mobility is linked to somewhat greater gains in political activation for the second-generation than natives. Overall, the Swiss data support the view that the second generation responds to mobility in a similar manner as natives, with both groups showing higher engagement when moving upward and lower engagement when experiencing downward mobility.

4.3 Second-generation by migration background

Among second-generation immigrants, upward mobility is associated with higher voting, informal participation, and system support, while downward mobility predicts lower engagement, especially for system support. When comparing European-origin and non-European-origin second-generation immigrants, the interaction terms are consistently small and not statistically significant. However, the signs of the coefficients point in a direction that suggests stronger negative consequences of downward mobility for non-European-origin, such as the negative interaction in model 1, and somewhat weaker positive effects of upward mobility. While these patterns cannot be interpreted as evidence, they do suggest that if differences exist, they may run in the direction that downward mobility penalizes those from non-European backgrounds more strongly.

	Voting	Informal Participation	System Support
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Downward Mobility	-0.02^{*}	-0.03^{*}	-0.39^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Upward Mobility	0.08^{**}	0.06^{***}	0.25^{**}
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.08)
Non-European	0.01	0.01	-0.05
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.10)
Downward x Non-European	-0.03	0.01	0.05
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.11)
Upward x Non-European	-0.02	0.00	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.14)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
ESS Round FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.11	0.10	0.17
Adj. R^2	0.11	0.10	0.16
Num. obs.	5369	5441	5430
RMSE	0.35	0.22	2.01
N Clusters	19	19	19

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

Table 3: Second-Generation only.

4.4 Disentangling Mobility from Destination Class Effects

To separate mobility effects from simple differences in class position, we estimate Diagonal Reference Models (DRMs) (Sobel, 1981). These models predict the outcomes of socially mobile individuals as a weighted combination of their origin and destination classes, and then test whether mobility itself has any additional, independent effect.

Across both datasets, the DRM weights consistently show that political engagement aligns more strongly with the destination class than with mobility status itself. The mobility margins in the ESS (Figure 5 suggest that what initially looks like upward or downward “mobility effects" largely reflects ending up in a higher or lower class, rather than the experience of moving. We replicate this pattern in the SHP (see Appendix C) and observe that the overall structure is the same. However, there is a small positive association between upward mobility and political activation for the second-generation. In both data sources, destination class dominates. This underscores that political engagement among both first- and second-generation immigrants is primarily shaped by where individuals end up in the class structure, not by whether they experienced mobility, which is in line with previous evidence (Fan and Yan, 2019; Kim et al., 2023).

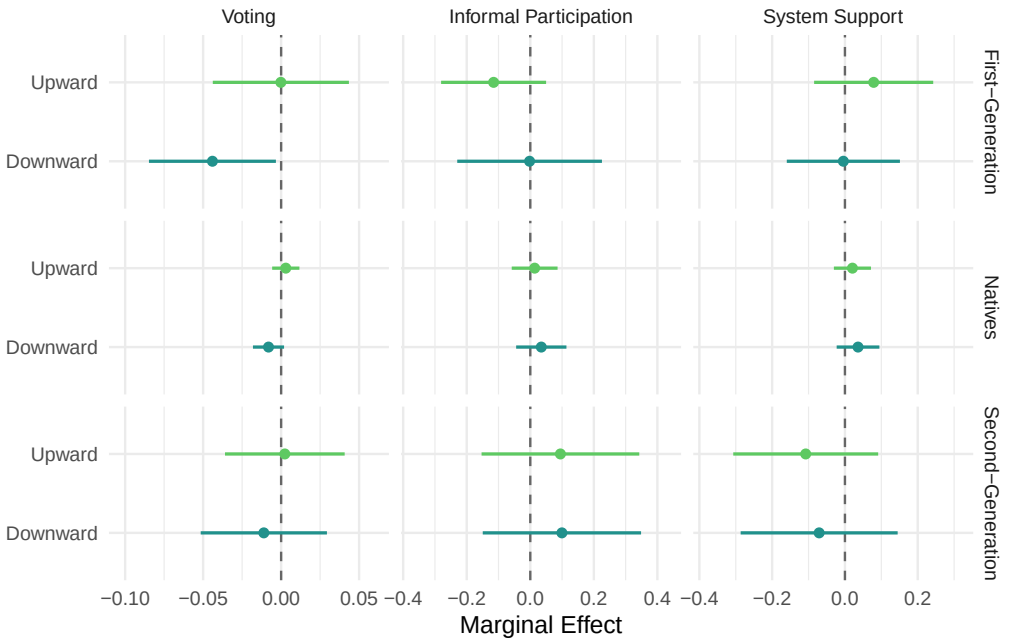

Figure 5: Marginal effects of Diagonal Reference Model based on ESS data. 95% confidence intervals shown.

5 Conclusion

How does intergenerational social mobility affect the political engagement of second-generation immigrants? Increased education and income levels, besides other adaptation and integration processes, of second-generation immigrants are often assumed to positively affect their political participation compared to their first-generation parents. However, education levels are not always matched by upward social mobility patterns (see Schaeffer, 2019) and intergenerational social mobility is rarely connected to political participation when it comes to second-generation immigrants. In this paper, we therefore seek to understand these dynamics to a greater extent.

Based on the resource model of political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1993), literature of intergenerational social mobility (e.g. Abramson and Books, 1971; Clifford and Heath, 1993), and segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997), we develop different expectations for the effect of intergenerational social mobility on political engagement for first- and second-generation immigrants. While upward and downward mobility is generally expected to positively and nega-

tively affect political engagement respectively, downward mobility should especially for first-generation immigrants lead to additional negative effects. On the other hand, this effect should disappear for the second-generation as they become more similar in their behaviour to native citizens. Nonetheless, based on segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997), we could also expect that second-generation immigrants especially engage less in formal politics as a result of social mobility and turn to to other forms of participation. In a future iteration, we investigate if heterogeneous conditions and diversity of second-generation immigrants leads to different dynamics more in-depth.

To test our expectations we use cross-sectional data from the ESS, coupled with data from the ESS-DEVO project (Ganzeboom, 2013), round 1-5 for 19 European countries, In addition, we use the Swiss Household Panel as an additional source to replicate our findings and investigate mechanisms more in-depth. We include respondents that are at least 30, employed and eligible to vote. Using a collapsed version of the ESeC-schema (Rose and Harrison, 2010; Trinh and Bukodi, 2021), we find that regardless of subgroup upward (downward) mobility is generally associated with higher (lower) political engagement. In addition, we find support for our expectation that downwardly first-generation immigrants are especially likely to participate less in formal politics, whereas second-generation immigrants tend to become more similar to native citizens. Finally, disentangling destination effects from mobility effects, we find that the general positive (negative) associations of upward (downward) mobility is in most cases not a result of social mobility per se, but of ending up in a higher (lower) social class.

Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of how intergenerational social mobility and formal political participation are connected for those with a migration background. By investigating these dynamics, we gain insights into whether intergenerational social mobility effects for those with migration background align with general social mobility patterns. In addition, the analysis provides insights into the political incorporation of the immigrant population, which is both an understudied, but also an under-represented social group in politics.

One limitation of the current study is the relatively small sample size of second-generation immigrants, which constrains statistical power and the generalizability of our findings. Nonetheless, given the scarcity of available data and the limited existing research, these results offer valuable early insights into the political behavior of this growing population.

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Appendices

A SHP: First vs Second-Generation

	Participation in Polls	Informal Participation	System Support	Political Activation
Downward Mobility	-1.088^{**}	$-0.677^{\dagger}$	$-0.290^{\dagger}$	-0.641^{**}
	(0.291)	(0.392)	(0.156)	(0.194)
Upward Mobility	0.592^{*}	0.165	0.124	0.425^{*}
	(0.264)	(0.406)	(0.151)	(0.192)
Second-Gen	0.098	-0.398	-0.554^{**}	-0.231
	(0.251)	(0.386)	(0.142)	(0.175)
Downward $\times$ Second-Gen	0.399	0.411	0.081	0.289
	(0.352)	(0.492)	(0.201)	(0.239)
Upward $\times$ Second-Gen	0.139	0.443	$0.295^{\dagger}$	0.336
	(0.307)	(0.473)	(0.174)	(0.215)
N	9817	4937	9855	9897
R^2	0.107	0.029	0.106	0.085
Adj. R^2	0.104	0.024	0.103	0.082
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SHP Round FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

B SHP: Native vs Second-Generation

	Participation in Polls	Informal Participation	System Support	Political Activation
Downward Mobility	-0.725^{**}	-0.435^{**}	-0.245^{**}	-0.487^{**}
	(0.087)	(0.122)	(0.048)	(0.058)
Upward Mobility	0.643^{**}	0.379^{**}	0.315^{**}	0.535^{**}
	(0.080)	(0.114)	(0.046)	(0.055)
Second-Gen	-0.064	-0.072	$-0.175^{\dagger}$	-0.250^{*}
	(0.153)	(0.233)	(0.096)	(0.101)
Downward × Second-Gen	0.040	0.210	-0.066	0.098
	(0.221)	(0.321)	(0.135)	(0.149)
Upward × Second-Gen	0.065	0.303	0.142	0.260^{*}
	(0.188)	(0.289)	(0.119)	(0.128)
N	44923	24092	44914	45089
R^2	0.089	0.048	0.081	0.088
Adj. R^2	0.088	0.047	0.081	0.088
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SHP Round FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

C SHP: Disentangling Mobility from Destination Class Effects

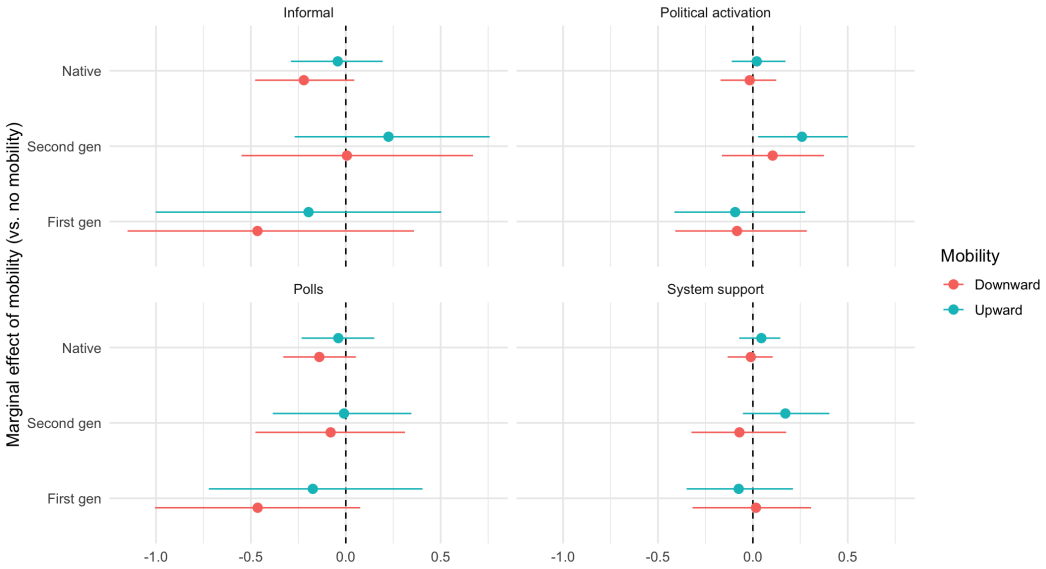

Figure 6: Marginal effects of Diagonal Reference Model based on SHP data. 95% confidence intervals shown.