

Aleh Mazol, Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Center (BEROC)
October 2022

Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Belarus

This brief presents an analysis of the magnitude of the intergenerational occupational mobility in Belarus, taking into account a differentiated gender effect. The analysis considers movements along the occupational scale for individuals with respect to their parents, both through an aggregate magnitude (using transition matrices and mobility rates) and in detail (using a multinomial logit model), using data from the 2017 Generations and Gender Survey for Belarus. The findings show, firstly, that the downward intergenerational changes of occupational status have a strong gender bias: downward mobility is higher for men than for women. Secondly, the probability of moving up the social ladder is higher for women than for men in Belarus. Additionally, the results verify the important role of education as a mechanism towards reaching a society with more equal opportunities. In particular, the effect is more intense for individuals with higher education.



Introduction

Intergenerational social mobility is defined as the movement of individuals from the social class of the family in which they lived when they were young (the origin class) into their current class position (the destination class), where social class is determined by as decided by income, occupation, education etc. (Ritzer, 2007; Scott and Marshall, 2009).

One of the main results from the economic literature on intergenerational social mobility shows that the degree of social mobility depends on the characteristics of an individual's family background. These characteristics include an individual's choice to acquire human capital and corresponding type of education, innate and acquired abilities, gender differences, or the knowledge people acquire through lifelong learning or work experience (Behrman & Taubman, 1990; Dutta, Sefton & Weale, 1999).

However, such characteristics may encourage children to work in the same occupations as their parents, slowing down intergenerational change. Research on intergenerational mobility can help identify and remove barriers to mobility which could improve the effective distribution of human skills and talents, in turn increasing productivity and promoting competitiveness and economic growth.

This brief summarizes the results of the first research focused on intergenerational occupational mobility in Belarus (Mazol, 2022). The research attempts to obtain new empirical evidence on intergenerational social mobility in Belarus by examining the movements of individuals along the occupational scale in relation to their parents, while taking into account other relevant factors such as gender differences and educational background of the individuals. Two specific gender dimensions are introduced: on the one hand, this study analyzes whether mobility in occupational categories differs for men and women; on the other hand, it examines

whether there is a difference in the transmission of occupational categories from fathers to sons in comparison to mothers to daughters.

Data and methodology

The study makes use of data from the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) conducted in Belarus in 2017 by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) within the framework of the Generations and Gender Program of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The survey provides information on a range of individual characteristics (age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, employment status, hours worked, wages earned, etc.) as well as household-level characteristics (household size and composition, religion, land ownership, location, asset ownership, etc.).

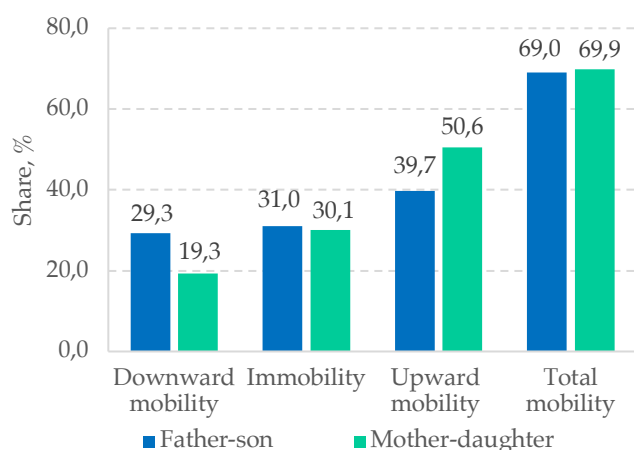
The research considers the subsample of respondents between 25-79 years old and utilizes the information on occupation of the respondent and his/her parents. In order to evaluate the intergenerational occupational mobility, occupations are ranked by their position in the occupational ladder according to the National Classification of Occupations, based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) This defines a ranking of occupations based on the performance area and qualification required to carry out the occupation, from armed forces occupations (ranking the highest), through a manager, a professional, a technician or professional associate, a clerk, a sales worker, a skilled agricultural worker, a craft worker a plant and machine operator, ending with an elementary occupation ranking the lowest. The influence from the father's/mother's occupation on that of the son's/daughter's is then estimated.

The analysis is carried out partly by estimation of transition matrices and mobility rates, and partly by the use of a multinomial logit model that aims to analyze the impact of a set of covariates on intergenerational occupational mobility. The



explanatory variables are: the highest degree of education an individual has achieved (educational attainment), gender, potential labor experience (calculated as the number of years an individual has regularly worked), status in the labor market (full-time or part-time), and region of residence. The choice of these independent variables relies on channels identified from relevant sociological and economic literature.

Figure 1. Intergenerational occupational transitions in percent, by gender lines



Source: Author's estimates based on GGS.

The intergenerational transmission of occupational immobility is almost equal for men and women (31 percent and 30,1 percent respectively). Occupational upward mobility is far more common as compared to downward mobility. 39,7 percent of men, compared to their father's, and 50,6 percent of women, compared to their mother's, have better occupations. The gender differences may be explained by the high proportion of women with higher educational levels in Belarus.

The estimates of the marginal effects obtained by the multinomial logit model indicate that social occupational mobility in Belarus depends on personal and labor characteristics. Three possible states are considered in relation to father-son and mother-daughter gender lines: the individual experiences downward intergenerational occupational mobility as compared to their parent of the same gender ($Y = 0$); they remain in the same

occupation (immobility) ($Y = 1$) or they experience upward intergenerational occupational mobility ($Y = 2$) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Estimates of the marginal effects corresponding to the multinomial logit model

Variables	Downward occupational mobility	Occupational immobility	Upward occupational mobility	
<i>Gender:</i>				
Male	0.094*** [0.014]	0.007 [0.015]	-0.101** [0.016]	
<i>Education level:</i>				
Lower secondary education (OV: Primary education)	0.013 [0.057]	-0.019 [0.063]	0.006 [0.056]	
Upper secondary education	-0.030 [0.055]	-0.110* [0.061]	0.136** [0.055]	
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	0.016 [0.060]	-0.087 [0.065]	0.071 [0.060]	
Bachelor's degree or higher	-0.131** [0.054]	-0.137** [0.057]	0.268*** [0.053]	
<i>Potential labor experience (in years)</i>				
Full-time	-0.002** [0.001]	-0.002** [0.001]	0.003*** [0.001]	
<i>Labor market status:</i>				
Full-time	-0.111*** [0.039]	-0.009 [0.036]	0.119*** [0.038]	
<i>Region of residence:</i>				
Brest region (OV: Minsk city)	-0.036 [0.024]	-0.068*** [0.026]	0.104*** [0.027]	
Vitebsk region	0.030 [0.026]	-0.098*** [0.027]	0.068** [0.027]	
Gomel region	-0.028 [0.024]	-0.017 [0.026]	0.045* [0.027]	
Grodno region	-0.061*** [0.023]	-0.096*** [0.026]	0.157*** [0.028]	
Minsk region	-0.013 [0.023]	-0.067*** [0.025]	0.080** [0.025]	
Mogilev region	-0.013 [0.027]	-0.040 [0.030]	0.053* [0.030]	
Observations				4,363

Notes: Estimates reflect weighted data. Standard errors in square brackets. Significance: *** – 1% level, ** – 5% level, * – 10% level. OV – omitted variable.

Source: Author's estimates based on GGS.

As evident from Table 1, gender is an important determinant of intergenerational occupational mobility. In particular, the results show that women are more likely to move up the social ladder than their male counterparts, as men are 10 percentage points less likely to have upward occupational mobility than women with similar (on average) socio-economic characteristics, with all coefficients being statistically significant.

In terms of educational attainment, the findings show that, on the one hand, higher educational attainment has a positive and significant influence on upward occupational mobility, with the highest values displayed for higher education. The probability of moving up to the occupational ladder is around 27 percentage points higher for an individual within this educational group than for an individual with primary studies and similar (on average) socio-economic characteristics. On the other hand, higher education has a negative and significant influence on downward occupational mobility, indicating that the



probability of moving down the occupational ladder is around 13 percentage points lower for a highly educated individual compared to an individual with primary education.

Considering human capital, there is a positive impact of potential labor experience on upward intergenerational occupational mobility. Specifically, the probability of moving up along the occupational ladder increases on average by about 0.3 percentage points for every additional year of labor experience.

Finally, the results show that full-time workers are more likely to move up the social ladder than their part-time counterparts. Full-time workers are about 12 percentage points more likely to experience upward occupational mobility and 11 percentage points less likely to face downward occupational mobility compared to their part-time working counterparts.

Conclusion

This brief summarizes the findings for the first study on intergenerational occupational mobility in Belarus.

Firstly, the findings indicate, from a gender perspective, that the probability of moving up the social ladder is higher for women than for men in Belarus.

Secondly, the research results verify the important role of education as a mechanism to reach a society with more equal opportunities. In particular, the

effect is more intense for individuals with higher educational attainments.

Thirdly, potential labor experience positively influences the upward intergenerational occupational mobility. This may reveal an underlying effect from training (however an unobservable variable given the data provided by the GGS).

Lastly, the impact of employment status on intergenerational occupational mobility in Belarus depends on the stability of labor relations, where possessing a part-time job worsens one's probability of accomplishing a social class advancement.

References

- Behrman, J., and P. Taubman. (1990). The Intergenerational Correlation between Children's Adult Earnings and Their Parents' Income: Results from the Michigan Panel Survey of Income Dynamics. *Review of Income and Wealth*, 36(2), pp. 115-127.
- Dutta, J., Sefton, J., and M. Weale. (1999). Education and Public Policy. *Fiscal Studies*, 20(4), pp. 351-386.
- Mazol, A. (2022). Intergenerational Occupational Mobility: Evidence from Belarus. BEROCC Working Paper Series, WP no. 79.
- Ritzer, G. (2007). *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Scott, J., and G. Marshall. (2009). *A Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.





Aleh Mazol

Belarusian Research and Outreach Center

mazol@beroc.by

<http://www.eng.beroc.by>

Aleh Mazol received his Bachelor's degree in Economics from the Belarusian State Economic University (2003) and obtained his Master's degree in Economics from Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) in 2013.

Since January 2015, Mazol works at the Belarusian Research and Outreach Center (BEROC) as a Researcher. His research interests are spatial economics, monetary economics, poverty and inequality and corporate governance.

freepolicybriefs.com

The Forum for Research on Eastern Europe and Emerging Economies is a network of academic experts on economic issues in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union at BEROC (Minsk), BICEPS (Riga), CEFIR (Moscow), CenEA (Szczecin), KEI (Kiev) and SITE (Stockholm). The weekly FREE Network Policy Brief Series provides research-based analyses of economic policy issues relevant to Eastern Europe and emerging markets. Opinions expressed in policy briefs and other publications are those of the authors; they do not necessarily reflect those of the FREE Network and its research institutes.

