

The relative social mobility of the second generation in Europe and its determinants.

Immigration has an inter-generational impact, which can be studied via the outcomes of the children of immigrants, the second generation. Now that a lot of the children of labor migrants in Europe have come of age, it is now possible to study their occupational outcomes in more detail. The occupational outcomes of the second generation are important to examine for measuring the extent of their integration into the labor market, not only in terms of their overall attainment, but also in terms of the way in which low parental occupational positioning, which is a feature of most labor migrants' occupational status, is transmitted from the immigrant parent to the children; i.e. measuring the extent of occupational inequality in an inter-generational manner. The absence or presence of inter-generational mobility is an important aspect of the integration process, both for social reproduction at the group level but also to measure the extent of social reproduction in a comparative perspective.

Theory and previous findings

A review of the literature on the second generation conducted by Heath, Rethon and Kilpi (2008) has shown that, within Europe, the second generation does appear to struggle with regard to occupational attainment, some (i.e., the Turkish second generation in Germany) more than others. But current research seems to suggest that the second generation appears to be more successful in terms of inter-generational occupational mobility, in having higher rates of upward mobility than their peers in the comparison group.

The authors argue that the patterns of social reproduction can be mediated by migration, hence disturbing the classical origin-education-destination schema (OED, see Figure 1 below). This modified schema will be tested in this paper, whilst the typical OED relationship will also be analyzed for the comparison group. Emphasis will not only be on the group differences, but also on how particular institutional arrangements, such as the educational system, might help explain cross-national differences in social reproduction

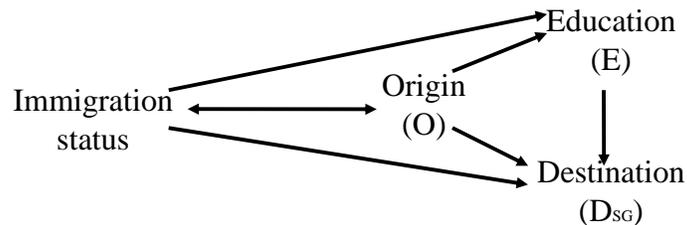


Figure 1 The OED schema, adapted to second-generation outcomes (Adapted from Heath et al. (2008))

Research questions

This paper will examine the level of inter-generational social mobility of the second generation in selected European cities and contrast it to that of their peers in the comparison group. It will focus on the unconditional second-generation effects, as well as the role that human capital plays on the relative social mobility of the second generation, both in general and in specific terms.

It is expected that the level of upward mobility will be higher for groups with low occupational positioning at origin (i.e. parental occupational positioning). This does imply that, for the Turkish and Moroccan second generation, groups who typically have lower parental social positioning, we expect a greater extent of mobility in relation to the comparison group, who will experience lower levels of upward mobility given high parental occupational status. Yet, we also expect to see a variation in outcomes depending on some institutional factors, such as the type of educational system. For example, in countries with strong vocational and apprenticeship systems, such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland, in which the second generation is well represented and where most of the occupations stemming from the vocational track will lead to lower occupational status, we expect to witness a lower level of occupational mobility.

Data, variables and methods

The data used in this paper is from “The Integration of the European Second Generation” (TIES) project. The survey collected information on approximately 10,000 individuals aged 18-35 with at least one immigrant parent from Morocco, Turkey or a former Yugoslavia, the second generation, as well as from individuals without an immigration background, the comparison group, in 15 European cities, regrouped in 8 ‘countries’ (see the project’s website, www.tiesproject.eu, for more detailed information). For the purpose of this paper, analyses for Austria (Linz and Vienna); Switzerland (Basel and Zurich); Germany (Berlin and Frankfurt); France (Paris and Strasbourg); the Netherlands (Amsterdam and Rotterdam); and Sweden (Stockholm) will be presented. Analyses are performed on individuals deemed out of the school system with valid information on their and their parents’ occupational status.

The variables used in the analyses are as follows. The main dependent variable is a measure of intergenerational mobility, here constructed as the distance between parental occupation at respondent’s age 15 and respondent’s current or last occupation. Both are based on a 3-category EGP classification. The main independent variable used is a group variable, which differentiates not only between the second generation and the comparison group. Measures of respondent’s human capital include highest level of education and labor market experience. Additional controls for city of residence, gender, age, partnership status and mother’s economic activity status are also present in the analyses.

The methods used are as follows: most of the analyses will be based on logistic and multinomial logistic regression models of occupational mobility, both comparing the second-generation outcomes with the comparison group and within the second generation itself. Emphasis will be put on the second-generation coefficients, and the variation between the gross and net second-generation effects, as well as on the average marginal effects of the explanatory variables. Gender effects will also be taken into account given the variation in upward mobility between men and women.

(Preliminary) Results

Figure 2 shows the extent of upward mobility by group and ‘country’. It suggests that members of the second generation tend, on average, to experience greater levels of

upward mobility than their peers in the comparison group, but that there is variation according to both origin and destination countries.

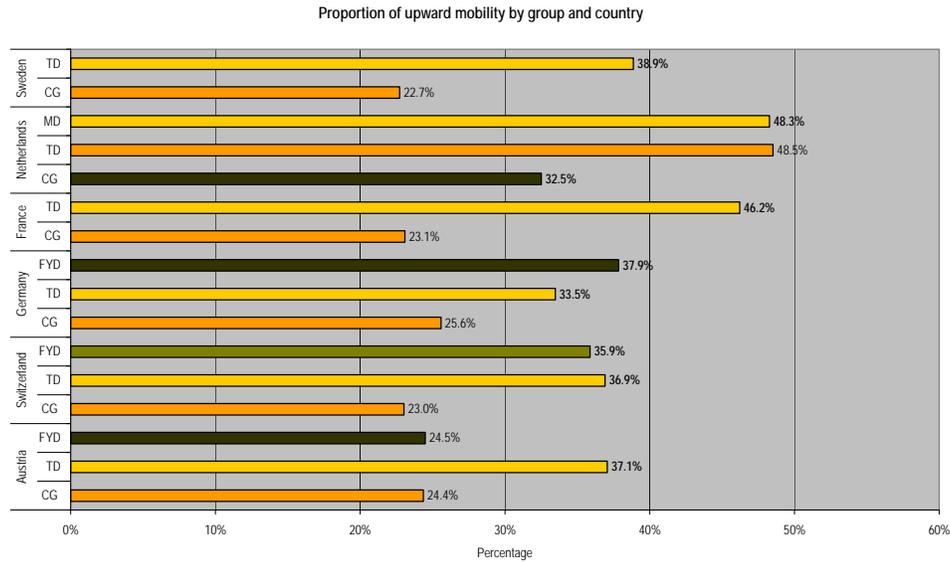


Figure 2 Proportion of upwardly mobile individuals

Yet, if we turn to the predicted probabilities of occupational attainment (Figure 3), it is possible to see that even though the level of second-generation upward mobility is high at the descriptive level, there are still some groups who experience lower levels of upward mobility than their counterparts in other ‘countries’ once specific controls are added to the picture. Whereas upward mobility appears to be quite high for the second generation in France, the Netherlands and Sweden, higher levels of ‘stability’ are present in ‘countries’ with strong vocational education systems (Austria, Switzerland and Germany). With regard to the impact of individual and human capital characteristics (not shown here), it also seems to suggest that respondent’s education plays an important yet not a sufficient role in explaining some of the second-generation gaps. Moreover, important gender differences also appear to be present, with second-generation women having much higher levels of upward mobility than their male counterparts.

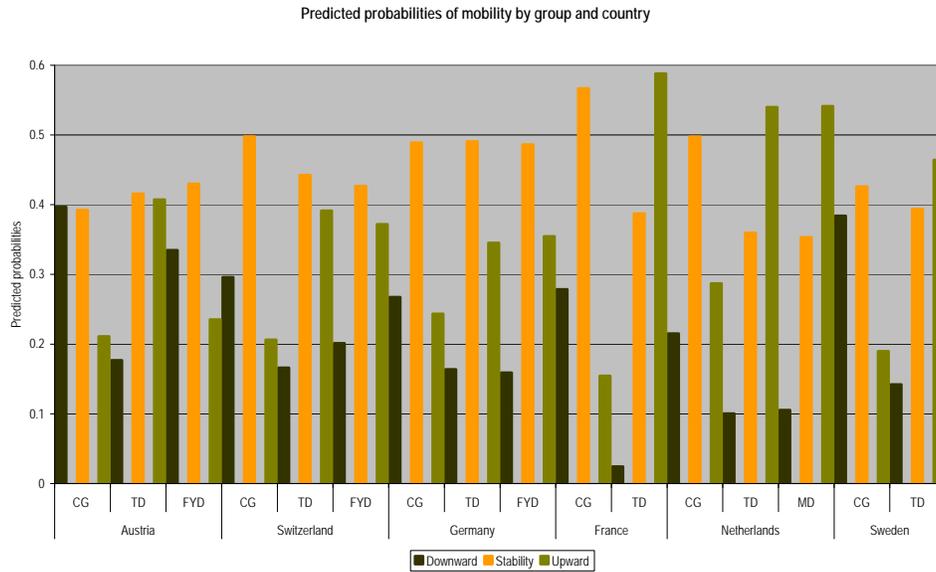


Figure 3 Predicted probabilities of mobility

Conclusions

Occupational mobility appears to be a feature of the second-generation experience in most of the TIES participating ‘countries’ and further analyses will help decipher which determinants are of importance, and what is their differing contributions to the second-generation outcomes. In light of results showing that occupational attainment is not as positive for the second generation as for the comparison group, this sheds a positive light on the integration story in the European context, yet with some shadows of social reproduction in some instances, given that some results seem to suggest that there could be some sort of institutional arrangements that appear to play an important role in the level of mobility encountered amongst the second generation. This will require further investigation.

Reference List

Heath, A. F., Rethon, C., & Kilpi, E. (2008). The second generation in Western Europe: Education, unemployment, and occupational attainment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34, 211-235.