



Regional Disparities in Intergenerational Social Mobility

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Abstract

Equality of opportunity is a cornerstone of the European social model, yet the probability of an individual improving their socio-economic status relative to their parents remains heavily dictated by their place of birth. While the "Great Gatsby Curve" is well-documented at the national level, the spatial dimension of intergenerational mobility – and the specific role of regional context in shaping life chances - remains underexplored. This special session aims to bridge this gap by investigating the "geography of opportunity" across Europe, analysing the drivers behind subnational variations in social mobility.

We invite empirical contributions that map and analyse the spatial heterogeneity of social mobility, addressing the systematic differences between EU Member States and regions.

Key areas of focus include identifying regional determinants of mobility, such as educational infrastructure, labor market dynamism, and industrial composition. Furthermore, given the fluidity of European labor market, we especially welcome research examining the complex role of internal and cross-border migration as either a catalyst for, or a barrier to, upward mobility.

Beyond academic inquiry, this session emphasizes policy relevance. By distinguishing "social elevator" regions from "mobility traps," this research seeks to provide an evidence base for integrated regional development strategies. The discussion will explore how regional mobility metrics can serve as benchmarks for monitoring social convergence under the European Pillar of Social Rights. Ultimately, this session seeks to translate spatial data into actionable insights, helping policymakers design place-based interventions that decouple a child's future from their postal code.