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YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK. INCIDENCE OF INHERITANCE OF LOW ECONOMIC STATUS AND CONSTRAINTS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational mobility and social inequality are at the centre of a growing, albeit heterogeneous, body of literature and research, as well as of policy debates. However, what is conceived when speaking of generations and inequality transmission differs substantially depending on the field of study as well as on the discipline (see art. by Warzywoda-Kruszynska in this volume). Therefore, before describing trends, approaches and findings in studies on intergenerational transmission of inequalities, it is necessary to clarify first the different underlying concepts and to indicate what concepts we are dealing with in our study.

Searching for knowledge relating to it one has to direct attention to social mobility research and ask whether this type of research could be a source of knowledge about intergenerational transmission of inequalities.

From the theoretical point of view it is worth to indicate some links between social mobility and social inequality answering the following questions:

- What does inequality have to do with social mobility?
- How might inequality affect intergenerational mobility? or reversely,
- How might intergenerational mobility affect social inequality?

Both terms have different perspectives on time. Inequality usually refers to the contemporary differences in incomes, wages, and/or wealth at some point in time; intergenerational mobility refers to the difference between one generation and the next in these or other indicators of standards of living. Inequality is the negation of equality, plain and simple. Mobility is usually understood as “equality of opportunity” – the outcomes may be unequal but everyone, regardless of starting point, has the same opportunity to get a good result [Hout 2004].

Sociologists distinguish two types of mobility: exchange and structural mobility. Exchange mobility has come to mean the association between origins and destinations in intergenerational mobility. Thus, the mobility rate is a by-product of the relationship between social origins and destinations. Mobility is least when origins have a large effect – direct or indirect – on success; mobility would be very high if success ever turned out to be statistically independent of origins. Thus the high mobility might equalize high inequalities.

Structural mobility – brings together all the factors that contribute to success but are independent of social origins. In industrial societies economic and social restructurings gave rise to social mobility – most of it upward [e.g. Featherman and Hauser 1978; Goldthorpe 1980]. But in post-industrial societies the momentum has declined as the young generation enter labour categories not very different from the distribution of their origins.

Hout (2004) points out that structural mobility is crucial for understanding inequality and it is used to explain growing inequality but do not clarify the social consequences of rising inequality – including mobility chances.

Social mobility research has contributed to diverse projects on economic and social inequality and poverty and first of all, on class and stratification analysis. In sociology social mobility researchers use ‘occupation’ (since Blau and Duncan, 1967) as the most powerful single indicator of material reward and life chances. Distinguished occupational categories aggregate different level of social and material inequalities. During the past decades, sociologists in many countries have collected a large body of survey evidence about occupations and social status of parents and children, allowing them to compute mobility matrices and various other mobility measures.

The studies conducted in many countries show a mobility pattern that is characterized by high social inheritance and short-distance mobility [Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Wong 1992]. As T. Piketty states [2000]: *“This type of data does not generally allow for easy and reliable comparisons of mobility measures over time and across countries, given the substantial variability of occupational categories and social status scales. It is remarkable however that all comparative empirical studies of social mobility rates, based upon different data sets collected at different points in time, have found very similar mobility matrices across industrial nations, and in particular no significant difference between Europe and the United States”*.

Comparative studies of educational mobility also suggest a high level of commonality, both over time and across countries [Shavit and Blossfeld 1993]. A little variation in the pattern of relative rates occurs among different sub-populations

within national societies, i.e. between urban and rural areas or among geographical regions, and gender differences are slight - women showing, if anything, a weaker association between origins and destinations than men.

Also economic measures of intergenerational mobility which should in principle offer more reliable cross-country and time-series comparisons seem to confirm the sociologists' finding about the absence of any distinctive national patterns: intergenerational correlation coefficients for both total income and labor earnings seem to be very similar across developed countries [Bjorklund and Jantti 1998]. Mobility rates do not differ enormously across comparable countries. Such a result is based on social mobility research in which the progress is best demonstrated by better data sets and better ways of conceptualizing and analyzing mobility rates. Despite this fact, in the field there are still many unresolved problems and areas of uncertainty. One of them is for instance the role of social policy in the process of enhancing mobility and counteracting inheritance of disadvantaged social position.

The literature on social mobility to date, as Hount [2004] states, has offered surprisingly little evidence that links intergenerational mobility and immobility to economic or other inequality. Enormous effort has been invested in establishing and quantifying the intergenerational relationship. Numerous approaches have reached a common conclusion: the generations are not independent but there is substantial mobility.

THE PROFIT PROJECT – ASSUMPTIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The transfer of resources between generations has long been recognised as having both economic and social cohesion importance in a society. The flow – downwards to children (also upwards to parents) – has been reshaped by the setting up of welfare systems. Linked to this is the issue of the intergenerational transmission of inequality. Intergenerational transfers are a precious example of social capital building over time. But where they are the main transfers available to the younger generations, this may crystallise inequalities and cause social divisions, weakening a society's democratic fabric. Social policies which individualise social rights and options, partly de-familising individual life chances, are a crucial counter-balance to this risk.

If we want to answer how effectively social policy copes with Ilofl we have to know what are an extent and determinants of this phenomenon. How many

people who originated from poor families do remain poor and how many poor people increase their material status? Do social background effects on poverty increase over time?

The general assumption of the PROFIT project was that intergenerational inheritance of inequalities constrains the achievement of strategic objectives of the European Union, such as: sustainable development, social and territorial cohesion and high quality of life. Thus, inheritance of inequalities poses challenges to knowledge-based society, and science should support policy – makers in their endeavors to overcome transmission of inequalities from one generation to another.

The second assumption was that international comparative studies on social mobility are mostly limited to national dimension and comparisons between communities/municipalities located in different states are sparse. Since European social model is based on subsidiary principle it seemed important to search for good practices implemented at this level of governance.

The local level (municipality) was defined as medium-size town (50-70 thousands of residents) being administrative centre for surrounding villages and smaller towns. In each country one town was selected as a “suffering from disadvantages” medium-size town to conduct study there (see art. By T. Drabowicz). In each town survey was carried out among young adults (25-29 years old) to estimate the incidence of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities and reveal its correlates. Randomly selected samples covered 130-250 young persons in each town (altogether 1680 respondents).

Young people aged 25-29 were asked about their childhood, school times and present situation to achieve insight into the policy impact on the life course of individuals living in studied towns. Selection of respondents 25-29 years old was a consequence of the third assumption of the project that the start to the adulthood is a very important moment in the life course cycle of an individual determining future outcomes and occupational careers. This age cohort is very interesting for research purposes because it was the first generation entering adulthood in times of deepening changes in social structure of European societies marked by changing social mobility path and uncertainty concerning professional and private life. They are at the beginning of their biographies as adults and at this point in the life cycle, nothing is definitive. But, with caution, it is possible to predict their future achievements.

TABLE 1. Respondents in towns under study (frequency and %)

		Number of respondents		% of female
		Frequency	Percent	
FIN	<i>Pori</i>	258	15,4	63,6
ITA	<i>Rovigo</i>	251	14,9	48,2
EST	<i>Pärnu</i>	163	9,7	60,1
UK	<i>Loughborough</i>	133	7,9	40,6
LIT	<i>Jonava</i>	134	8,0	56,0
GER	<i>Giessen</i>	241	14,3	42,7
BUL	<i>Pernik</i>	250	14,9	50,0
PL	<i>Tomaszów Maz.</i>	250	14,9	48,8
Total		1680	100,0	51,3

The aim of the statistical analysis of the survey data was to answer two major questions:

1. Is low economic status (LES)/poverty transmitted across generations and if so, what is the extent of this phenomenon?
2. Which social factors facilitate the process of escaping LES/poverty at the stage of early adulthood and what is the role of social policy in this process?

TRANSMISSION OF LES/ POVERTY ACROSS GENERATIONS AND THE INCIDENCE OF THE PHENOMENON IN TOWNS UNDER STUDY

Subjective measure of inheritance of LES was applied in the analysis and namely: the respondent's comparison of the parental family/ household's material situation with his/her current family material situation.

There is a long-standing controversy in social indicators research about the advantages and disadvantages of 'objective' and 'subjective' approaches to measuring quantities of interest. The reasons for using the subjective instruments to measure a social position can be as follows:

1. Much objective information (for example, on income) is gathered by self-reporting to avoid measurement error (particularly when individuals are asked to recall the income of their parents) [see the discussion in Veenhoven 2001].
2. Ravallion and Lokshin [1999] show that total household income is a significant predictor of the answer to the subjective welfare question, although its explanatory power is lower.

3. Only subjective indicators allow for truly comprehensive assessments of social position. Objective indicators can best assess details, but ‘are typically less helpful in charting the whole’ [Veenhoven 2001: 12]. One can objectively measure a person’s income situation, accommodation, health status, social relations and so on, but there is no guiding rule on how to combine these pieces of information. Many of these problems can be avoided if people themselves, as experts, make an overall judgment of their lives [Delhey 2004].

The above points of views are not to argue that we should rely solely on subjective indicators. The idea is to argue for using both approaches, objective, and subjective, and to explore how they are linked (objective indicator of class affiliation is used by Mellin and Blom in this volume).

To assess the incidence of intergenerational economic mobility, a perception of economic well-being of family of origin and of respondents’ current family was measured based on answers to following questions:

- Which of the descriptions best describes the financial situation of your parental family (when you are 14 – 16 years old)?

- Which of the descriptions best describes financial situation of your present family/household?

A. We could not satisfy our basic needs
B. We had to spend our money very carefully } = **Poor/low economic status (LES)**

C. We had enough money for everyday expenses,
but we had to save money to make bigger purchases } = **Decent economic status (DES)**

D. We could afford much without special saving
E. We could afford a certain level of luxury } = **High economic status (HES)**

F. Difficult to say/Don’t know = **missing**

As shown in Table 2 and Graph 1 persistence of economic status is declared by slightly more than every second respondent - 52% (see orthogonal axe of the table). Those who are mobile constitute 47,5%, of the whole population in the study (47.2% among women and 45.5% among men Graph 2). This group is divided into those who are upwardly (21%) and those who are downwardly (24%) mobile.

Considering how much individuals have achieved, specific patterns of economic mobility can be distinguished as follows:

1. from LES to LES – **persistence of LES** (12,4% of total)
2. from LES to DES – moderate upward mobility (9,3%)

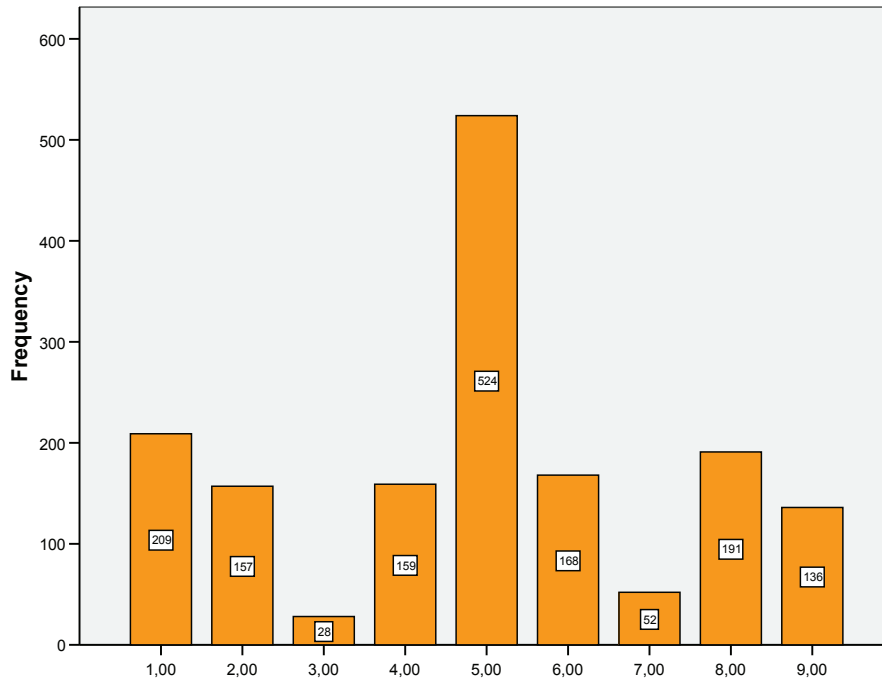
3. from LES to HES – substantial upward mobility (1,7)
4. from DES to LES – moderate downward mobility (9,5%)
5. from DES to DES – **persistence of DES** (31,2%)
6. from DES to HES – moderate upward mobility (10,0%)
7. from HES to LES – substantial downward mobility (3,1%)
8. from HES to DES – moderate downward mobility (11,4%)
9. from HES do HES – **persistence of HES** – (8,1%).

In the consolidated sample the largest group of respondents is constituted by those who continue decent economic standard. They claim that their parents could manage everyday expenses and so do they. The smallest groups are composed of those who grew up poor and achieved high economic status (1.7%) and of those who grew up in high economic status families and nowadays have low economic status (3.1%).

TABLE 2. Patterns of intergenerational economic mobility, the whole population (in %)

Economic status of parental family	Economic status of respondent's present family			Total
	Low/Poor (LES)	Decent (DES)	High (HES)	
Low/Poor (LES)	12.4	9.3	1.7	
Decent (DES)	9.5	31.2	10.0	
High (HES)	3.1	11.4	8.1	
Total				1624 = 100%

GRAPH 1. Patterns of intergenerational economic mobility flows, the whole population



1,00 – from LES to LES (pursuing LES) ; 2 – from LES to DES; 3 – from LES to HES; 4 – from DES to LES; 5 – from DES to DES pursuing DES); 6 – from DES to HES; 7 – from HES to LES; 8-from HES to DES; 9 – from HES to HES (pursuing HES)

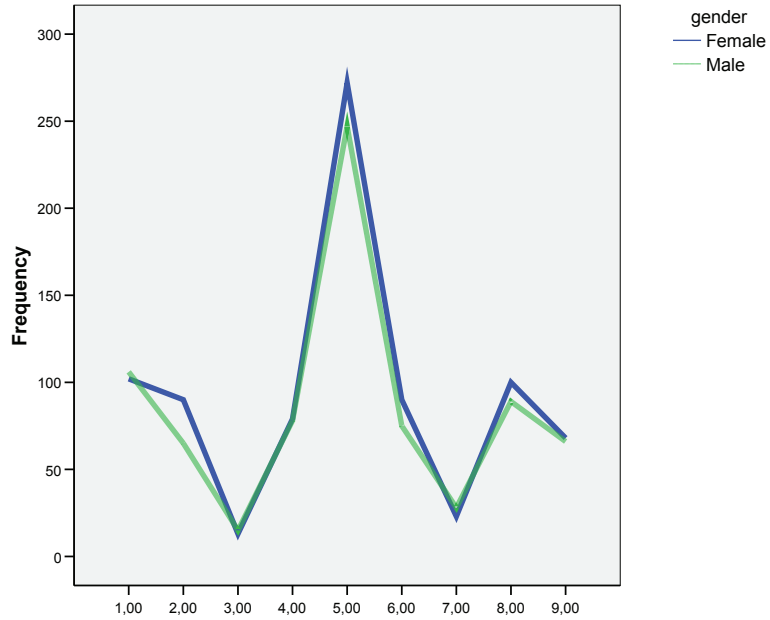
Intergenerational economic mobility patterns are very similar for men and women (Graph 4).

The incidence of intergenerational economic mobility differentiates between towns (Graph 3). Per cent of mobile persons ranges from 34% in Loughborough (UK) to 56% in Parnu EE and Pori (FI).

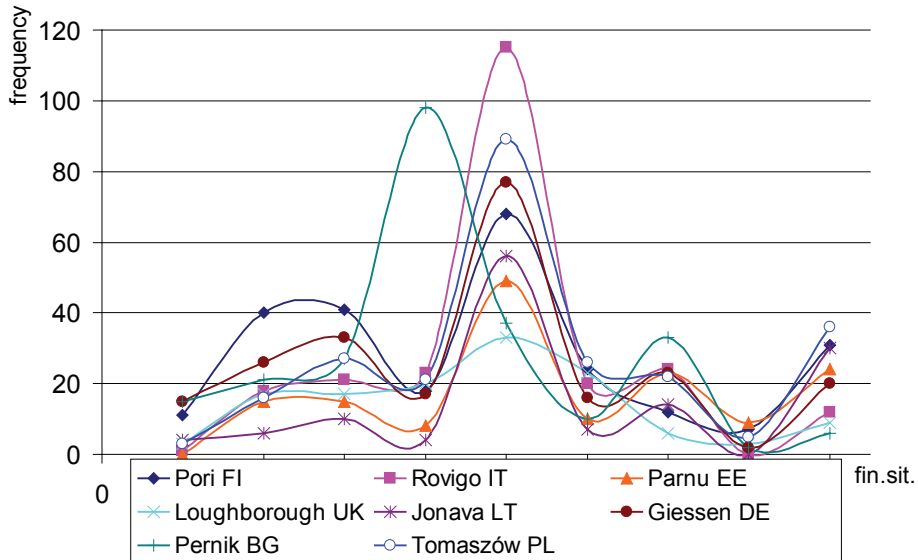
Taking into account the proportion of respondents leaving parental economic status, towns in the study can be clustered in three groups:

First is composed of Parnu/EE (56%), Pori/FI (56%) and Giessen/DE (52%), where more than half of respondents moved to other than parental economic status;

GRAPH 2. Patterns of intergenerational economic mobility, by gender



GRAPH 3. Patterns of intergenerational economic mobility, by towns



Second is composed of Pernik/BG (42%), Rovigo/ IT (42%), Tomaszów/ PL (44%), Jonava/ LT (49%);

Third is composed of Loughborough (34%).

The results seem to be in accordance with thesis of Breen and Luijx on cross-national “*convergence*” of absolute mobility resulting from the convergence of socio-occupational structure between countries. [see Domański 2007].

For social policy purposes the most valuable information concerns persistence of low economic status across generations since it can constrain achieving of European Union objectives.

To estimate the incidence of intergenerational inheritance of economic status we have calculated how many people who grew up poor (in LES families) have still LES/ are poor (trapped in LES/poverty) and how many who grew up in affluent families are still well-off. As shown in Table 3 current economic standing of individuals is interrelated with parental family economic status. Every second individual born poor stays poor and slightly more than one-third of those born in affluent families has still a high economic status. It is seldom for those being poor teenagers to achieve high economic living standard and for those having affluent parents to be slipped into poverty (LES) up early adulthood. However the substantial economic degradation (from HES to LES) occurs quite two times more frequently than substantial economic improvement (from LES to HES).

TABLE 3. Intergenerational inheritance of economic status (in%)

Economic status of parental family	Economic status of respondent's present family			N = 100%
	Low/Poor	Decent	High	
Low/Poor	53,0	39,8	7,1	394
Decent	18,7	61,6	19,7	851
High	13,7	50,4	35,9	379

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx.Sig
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,396	,000
	Cramer V	,280	,000
N of Valid Cases		1624	

As it is well-known, exchange mobility is influenced by changes in the social structure, external conditions, technological development, pace of economic development, etc. which occurred during the time of the respondents' growing

up. Structural determinants are eliminated by application of the *odds ratio*. The odds ratio is particularly useful if one wants to compare whether the probability of a certain event is the same for two groups. An odds ratio of 1 implies that the event is equally likely in both groups. An odds ratio greater than one implies that the event is more likely in the first group. An odds ratio less than one implies that the event is less likely in the first group

Odds ratio presented in Table 4 shows the chances to pursue LES as compared with chances of getting poor among those who grew up in families having decent and high economic status.

TABLE 4. Chances of pursuing of low economic status (poverty) as compared with getting poor among those growing up in families with decent and high economic status, by towns

Family economic status	Pori FI	Rovi-go IT	Parnu EE	Loughborough UK	Jo-nava LT	Gies-sen DE	Pernik BG	Tomaszów PL	Total
Decent	2.6	6.1	1.1	6.5	2.7	2.2	5.2	5.3	4.4
High	5.6	-	-	51.1	-	9.1	32.7	36.4	19.5

- too small national samples for calculation

In consolidated sample individuals growing up in Low Economic Status families are 4.4 times more likely to have Low Economic Status in their twenties in comparison with those who experienced a Decent Economic Status as teenagers and 19.5 times more likely when compared with those who grew up in High Economic Status families.

In all towns it is a greater probability to stay poor than to get poor when born in families having Decent and High Economic Status. Children born in Low Economic Status families as compared with those born in Decent Economic Status are in Giessen 2.2 times more likely and in Loughborough 6.5 times more likely be poor as young adults. Poor children as compared with those originated with High Economic Status families are in Pori 5.6 times and in Loughborough 51 times more likely to be poor in their twenties.

The data provide evidence that it is transmission of low economic status in towns in the study. However there are substantial differences between them. Parnu/EE is the only town where odds to be poor at the early adulthood are the same for those originated with families of Low and Decent Economic Status. At the other end is Loughborough where chances to stay poor for those born poor is many times more likely than for those originated in more affluent families.

If we compare odds ratio for a given town with the average for all studied towns two clusters can be distinguish:

One is composed of towns with odds ratio lower than average and comprising Parnu/EE, Giessen/DE, Pori/FI, Jonava/IT, and

Second is composed of towns with odds ratio higher than average and comprising Loughborough/UK, Tomaszów Maz./PL , Pernik/ BG and Rovigo/IT.

Summarizing, we can state that:

1. The young adults in the study, no matter which sex, perceive themselves as intergenerationally economic mobile

2. It is no clear division between respondents living in Western and Eastern European towns with reference to intergenerational economic mobility.

3. Parnu/EE, Pori/FI and Giessen/ DE seem to be the most open communities where more than a half of young adults moved from economic status of parents.

4. The least open society is Loughborough, where only one-third of young adults changed economic status of family of origin.

5. Despite relative high intergenerational economic mobility, as perceived by young adults, intergenerational transmission of economic status is substantial.

6. Every second respondent originated in Low Economic Status family declares to continue Low Economic Status as young adult.

7. Low economic status / poverty trap is experienced mostly by young people in Loughborough

8. While in Parnu/EE parental ES does not differentiate odds to get poor while young adult among born poor and born in Decent Economic Status Families, in Pori/FI and Giessen/DE chances to get poor among born poor as compared with those grew up in more affluent families is relatively the lowest among studied towns.

9. Towns where exchange economic mobility is the highest like Pori/EE, Parnu/FI, Giessen/DE are at the same time those where poverty trap is less extensive and in contrary, town where mobility flows are relatively weak, like Loughborough seems to be affected by poverty trap most heavily.

FACTORS DETERMINING THE PROCESS OF BEING TRAPPED IN LOW ECONOMIC STATUS (LES)

It has been assumed in the PROFIT that inheritance of inequalities/ poverty means a transmission of different kinds of disadvantages between parents and children resulting in low mobility flows of children born in low status families. However external intervention, in a form of different forms of welfare

and internal abilities of a child, like outstanding performance in school, may contribute to breaking a low status/ poverty chain.

Therefore, the questionnaire included questions indicating respondents' assessment of:

- quality of life when they were teenagers (housing, family relations, parents unemployment and education, alcohol/drug addiction etc)
- performance in school (playing truant, dropping out from school, etc)
- policy interventions (grants due to outstanding performance, material support at school due to financial hardship in family etc)
- their own achievements as young adults (education, unemployment etc)

To identify the impact of each of the above factors on inheritance of LES, correlation analysis was applied. The dependent variable was zero-one, where 1 stood for young people who inherited low economic status – 209 respondents and 0 – for others – 1449 respondents.

The following correlates of LES/poverty inheritance have been stated:

- Parent's frequent unemployment (VC = 0.22, p = 0.000)
- Low education of respondent (VC = 0.22, p = 0.000)
- Inheriting low education (VC = 0.22, p = 0.000)
- Low education of father (VC = 0.20, p = 0.000)
- Low education of mother (VC = 0.18, p = 0.000)
- Poor housing at time of childhood (VC = 0.18, p = 0.000)
- Respondent sometimes unemployed (VC = 0.17, p = 0.000)
- Support at school due to financial hardship (VC = 0.15, p = 0.000)
- Inheriting unemployment (VC = 0.15, p = 0.000).

There are no statistically significant correlations with other above mentioned variables. It means that in the studied sample 'soft' variables like family relations and addictions, as well as performance at school, do not correlate with intergenerational transmission of Low Economic Status.

What concerns young people who escaped from LES/poverty, their living conditions in terms of quality of life in family of origin and experiences during school years do not differ them from their peers who are trapped in LES. This is what differentiates them from the latter is positive stimulus they experienced more frequently (28% and 14% respectively) in a form of grants due to outstanding performance at school. It can be interpreted as policy intervention towards those living in precarious conditions who are able and ready to succeed at school.

Unfortunately, we were not able, due to small samples in towns, examine similarities and differences in correlates of intergenerational inheritance of LES between towns.

Summarizing, we can state that the analysis provide evidence that particularly cumulative effect of disadvantages contributes to intergenerational LES transmission. When both parents were unemployed, poor educated, living in poor housing, having low income what made a child eligible for some kind of material support at school, pursuing of LES by a child when adult is likely. It seems that “plastic spoon, silver spoon hypothesis” formulated by Yaqub applies to studied population.

FACTORS FACILITATING THE PROCESS OF GETTING OUT OF LES

To model the relationship between predictor variables of escaping from Low Economic Status logistic regression was applied. Logistic regression allows us, on the base of introduced to the equation independent variables, to predict whether a certain person originated from poor family is likely to escape from poverty at young adulthood. For the analysis a *Backward:LR* method of regression was selected.

The analysis was searching for the associations of escape from the LES in parental family to Decent or Higher Economic Status in early adulthood. The dependent variable was zero-one, where 1 stood for those who were upwardly mobile.

Independent variables were defined as follow:

1. Q6_2(1) When you were a teenager was your parental family affected by alcoholism/drug addiction or any other addiction? YES NO
2. Q6_3(1) When you were a teenager was your parental family affected by poor housing? YES NO
3. Q6_4(1) When you were a teenager was your parental family affected by poor family relations? YES NO
4. Q_22(1) During your school years, have you ever been provided with any kind of support because of financial hardship in your family? YES NO
5. Did you have poor performance/ troubles during your school time? YES NO
6. Q45(1) Have you ever been unemployed for more than 3 months since you started your first job? YES NO

7. Q24_1(1)When you were a teenager was your parental family affected by poor health? YES NO

8. Q27_tr respondent's educational status 0 - low 1 – medium and high

LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Test Hosmer i Lemeshowa

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	8,834	7	,265
...
5	2,379	6	,882

Variables in the Equation

Variable		B	Wald	Df	Sig	Exp(B)
Step 5(a)	Q6_3(1)	1,223	15,992	1	,000	3,398
	Q6_4(1)	,884	10,744	1	,001	2,420
	Q_22(1)	,942	15,875	1	,000	2,566
	Q45(1)	-,411	3,212	1	,073	,663
	Stala	-2,348	183,079	1	,000	,096

a Variables entered in step 1: Q6_1, Q6_2, Q6_3, Q6_4, Q_22, Q24_1, Q45, Q25_4, Q7_tr

Variables not in the Equation

Variables not In the Equation		Score	df	Sig.
Step 5	Q6_1(1)	,001	1	,974
	Q6_2(1)	1,370	1	,242
	Q24_1(1)	1,430	1	,232
	Q_7_tr	,291	1	,589

The above data indicate that:

- the chances of escaping poverty of respondents who grew up in decent housing conditions are three times higher than of those whose families of origin lived in overcrowded, poor-standard flats or had no flat on their own .

- The risk of LES/poverty transmission among young adults decreases by two-and-a-half where family relations were good.

- The risk of LES/poverty transmission among young adults decreases by two-and-a-half if they were not in need of financial support by school due to financial hardship in their families.

- The likelihood of economic mobility is by 66% lower among those never

unemployed than among those sometimes unemployed. This result can be interpreted as follows. To be unemployed one has to be previously employed. Those originated with LES families who started to work early are mostly low educated and thus vulnerable to unemployment. However being in work means to be in some extent financially independent what makes people feel more comfortable than if being still in parental family.

Factors determining escape from LES/poverty do not differentiate among female and males, as shown below.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION - FEMALE

Test Hosmer i Lemeshowa

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	8,772	7	,265
...
5	3,149	6	,790

Variables in the Equation

Variable		B	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 5(a)	Q6_1(1)	-,749	2,505	1	,113	,473
	Q6_3(1)	1,551	10,390	1	,001	4,715
	Q6_4(1)	,680	3,584	1	,058	1,975
	Q_22(1)	,906	8,280	1	,004	2,475
	Q45(1)	-,598	3,653	1	,056	,550
	Stała	-2,088	93,501	1	,000	,124

a Variables entered in step 1: Q6_1, Q6_2, Q6_3, Q6_4, Q_22, Q24_1, Q45, Q25_4, Q7_tr

Variables not in the Equation

Variables not In the Equation	Score	df	Sig.
Q6_2(1)	,880	1	,348
Q24_1(1)	,221	1	,638
Q 7_tr	,641	1	,423

The chances of women's economic success are strongly related, just like in the whole population, to such factors as: housing conditions (decent), family relations (good) and not being in need to receive support in school due to financial hardship in the family.

Factors related to escape from LES/poverty differentiate among towns which were clustered in three groups according to above mentioned economic mobility flows. The same set of variables was used in three subsequent equations in relation to three groups of towns.

The first group included towns with low mobility indexes, and namely Loughborough (UK) and Rovigo (IT).

The second group comprised Pori (FI) and Giessen (DE), where mobility and openness of structure were the highest.

The third group embraced post-socialist towns Pärnu (EST) Jonava (LIT) Pernik (BUL) and Tomaszow Maz (PL).

For towns where exchange and structure mobility are the lowest two factors rise chances of economic success: good housing (9.5 times) and good family relations (5.5 times).

For Pori and Giessen only one factor - respondent's educational status – matters.

For post-socialist towns the set of determinants of economic upward mobility is almost the same as for the whole population in the study. The only difference is that the set of variables also includes school difficulties. The likelihood for people not having troubles in school is higher than among those who did have.

The process of inheritance of social position or mobility is multidimensional and identifying all its determinants is impossible. Additionally, small numbers of national samples did not allow to use more advanced methods of testing the significance of differences. Presented analyses nevertheless allowed to describe and compare major processes related to Ilofl occurring at the local level in different towns.

CONCLUSION

Survey data provides evidence that inheritance of inequalities occurs in towns under study. Cumulative effect of discouraging family, poor housing and not-supportive school are the most likely factors leading individual to stay in poverty and follow parental life course. Policies can contribute to upward mobility of underprivileged young people by using different measures.

However, social policy which is concerned about intergenerational transmission of disadvantage social position (low economic status) faces two difficult sets of issues. First of all because many of the policies that might affect the intergenerational transmission of inequality are difficult to implement,

controversial and conflictual with interests of different groups. For example, one of instrument to reduce intergenerational inequalities is tax system but there must be a political climate to increasing the estate tax to limit intergenerational transfers. The next example - eliminating unemployment among young adults would reduce one of the component of the heritability of low income, but achieving this goal not disturbing the interests of other groups is very difficult. Improving educational achievement, especially for those whose parents have relatively low levels of schooling, would also reduce intergenerational transmission. But it is another goal very difficult to accomplish.

A second broad set of problems concerns the conflict of values. In societies intergenerational relations are based on important values of family life and privacy. Many people respect continuity in intergenerational relationships and do not treat intergenerational inheritance of inequality as an appropriate target for compensatory policy interventions. On the other hand, inheritance of inequality is perceived as unfair and very often the same people favor policies to compensate inherited disadvantages.

Addressing IIOFI as the policy challenge will require not only moral clarity about these and related issues, but a better accounting of which causal mechanisms are at work in producing the substantial levels of intergenerational persistence of economic differences. Intergenerational relations as a form of social capital need to be more fully studied, in their ways of functioning but also in both their positive (social cohesive) and potentially negative (crystallizing or even strengthening social inequality) effects.

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Ewa Rokicka

YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK. INCIDENCE OF INHERITANCE OF LOW ECONOMIC STATUS AND CONSTRAINTS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

(Summary)

The article presents findings of the survey conducted within the framework of the PROFIT project among young adults in eight European towns. The author attempts to assess the incidence of low socio- and economic status inheritance among the representatives of the investigated age group and to identify factors influencing the scope of their social mobility. The whole sample (1680 young Europeans) as well as samples from towns under study is a subject for statistical analysis.

MŁODZI DOROŚLI ZAGROŻENI DZIEDZICZENIEM UBÓSTWA.
ZJAWISKO TRANSMISJI NIERÓWNOŚCI SPOŁECZNYCH ORAZ CZYNNIKI
UTRUDNIAJĄCE SPOŁECZNĄ MOBILNOŚĆ

(Streszczenie)

W artykule zaprezentowane są rezultaty badań kwestionariuszowych przeprowadzonych w ramach projektu PROFIT w ośmiu miastach europejskich wśród młodych dorosłych. Autorka podejmuje próbę oszacowania zasięgu dziedziczenia niskiego statusu społeczno-ekonomicznego

w badanej grupie wiekowej, a także odpowiedzi na pytanie, jakie czynniki mają decydujący wpływ na skalę mobilności społecznej w tej populacji. Analizy statystyczne prowadzone są zarówno na poziomie całej próby – 1680 młodych Europejczyków jak i w odniesieniu do prób narodowych z poszczególnych uczestniczących w projekcie miast.