BRIDGING THE GAP: ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY*

Orhan Torul†

Boğaziçi University

January 30, 2025

Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility using the World Bank's Global Database on Intergenerational Mobility. Employing multiple measures of relative mobility and the probability of descendants surpassing their parents' ordinal education level for absolute mobility, I uncover significant heterogeneity across countries, cohorts, and demographic groups. My findings reveal a consistent negative association between the intergenerational (years of schooling) regression coefficient and absolute ordinal upward mobility, while the relationship with the intergenerational correlation coefficient is more nuanced, requiring consideration of time-series variation and interaction effects. I demonstrate substantial gender differences, regional variations, and cohort effects in mobility patterns. These results highlight the importance of employing diverse mobility measures and accounting for demographic and temporal factors in intergenerational mobility research.

Keywords: Social Mobility; Educational Attainment; Intergenerational Persistence; Human Capital
JEL Classification: I24; J62; O15; C23; Z13

*I thank Eylül Burçak Akbulut for excellent research assistance. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Young Scientist Award (BAGEP) of Turkey's Science Academy and Boğaziçi University Research Fund grant number BAP 20050 for the preparation of this manuscript. All remaining errors are mine.

†Boğaziçi University, Department of Economics, Bebek, 34342, Istanbul, Turkey. Email: orhan.torul@bogazici.edu.tr

1 Introduction

The transmission of economic status across generations —*intergenerational mobility*— is a fundamental determinant of long-term inequality and social mobility. The increasing availability of data has led to a recent surge in studies exploring the empirics of intergenerational mobility. However, the metrics used to measure this mobility vary significantly across studies. Some researchers focus on *absolute intergenerational mobility*, examining whether descendants' economic outcomes surpass a certain threshold, often that of their parents. Others concentrate on *relative intergenerational mobility*, exploring how children's outcomes compare to their parents' relative position. While both approaches offer valuable insights, the relationship between these two types of mobility measures remains understudied, creating a critical gap in our understanding of social mobility dynamics. This paper aims to address this gap in the literature.

In a recent comprehensive analysis of income mobility measures, Deutscher and Mazumder (2023) highlight that different mobility measures can lead to divergent conclusions about the same region or country. They demonstrate that while measures within broad categories (such as relative or absolute mobility) tend to be highly correlated, measures across categories often show weak correlations. Building on their framework but focusing specifically on educational mobility, this paper provides new insights into how different measures of educational mobility relate to each other in a global context.

I leverage the World Bank's Global Database on Intergenerational Mobility (*GDIM*), which provides gender-country-cohort parent-descendant intergenerational educational mobility estimates for over 140 countries, using standardized educational definitions and harmonized methodological calculations. This comprehensive dataset offers an ideal framework for investigating the complex relationship between absolute and relative intergenerational mobility.

I employ various measures of relative mobility, including the intergenerational (years of schooling) regression coefficient (`IGP`, β), the intergenerational correlation coefficient (`IGC`,ρ), and the expected rank of descendants (`EXRANK`) born to parents in the bottom half of the education distribution. For absolute mobility, I use the probability of descendants surpassing their parents' ordinal education level conditional on parents' education not exceeding tertiary education.

My findings reveal a nuanced and heterogeneous relationship between absolute and relative mobility. The intergenerational regression coefficient consistently shows a negative and significant relationship with absolute upward mobility across various specifications and subgroups. However, the relationship between the intergenerational correlation coefficient and absolute upward mobility is more complex, requiring the consideration of time-series variation and interaction effects to uncover significant associations.

Gender differences play a crucial role, with sons and daughters exhibiting distinct patterns in the relationship between absolute and relative mobility. Regional variations significantly impact the relationship between mobility measures, highlighting the importance of considering geographical contexts. Additionally, cohort effects are substantial, indicating that the relationship between absolute and relative mobility evolves over time.

This study makes several key contributions to the literature on intergenerational mobility. First, I provide the first systematic analysis of the relationship between absolute and relative educational mobility

measures across a global sample, offering insights into how these different aspects of mobility are associated. This comprehensive approach reveals rich patterns that are not apparent when focusing on a single measure or country. Second, I uncover significant heterogeneity in this relationship across gender, country, and cohorts, highlighting the importance of context-specific factors in shaping mobility patterns. This finding highlights the need for nuanced, targeted approaches in both research and policy-making. Third, I demonstrate the value of employing multiple mobility measures to capture the multifaceted nature of intergenerational mobility, showing how different metrics can reveal complementary aspects of social mobility dynamics.

My findings contribute to the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between absolute and relative mobility measures, offering valuable insights for policymakers and researchers alike. By elucidating these complex relationships, this study aims to enhance our understanding of intergenerational mobility dynamics and their implications for inequality and opportunity. The results highlight the importance of accounting for various demographic and temporal factors when studying intergenerational mobility, suggesting that future research and policy interventions should consider these contextual elements. As such, this research not only bridges a gap in the existing literature but also provides a foundation for future studies to explore the multifaceted nature of intergenerational mobility more comprehensively.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 discusses related literature. Section 3 describes the data and methodology. Section 4 reports the results. Section 5 concludes.

2 Related Literature

The study of intergenerational mobility has gained significant traction in recent years, with researchers exploring various aspects of both absolute and relative mobility across different contexts. This growing body of literature provides crucial insights into the dynamics of social mobility and the persistence of educational attainment across generations.

A key recent contribution by Deutscher and Mazumder (2023) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding different mobility measures and their relationships. Using Australian income tax data, they demonstrate that while measures within broad categories (such as relative or absolute mobility) tend to be highly correlated, measures across categories often show weak correlations. Their analysis of the World Bank's *GDIM* database reveals similar patterns in educational mobility across countries, though they primarily focus on income mobility in their main analysis. Our study builds on their framework but focuses exclusively on educational mobility and provides a more detailed analysis of gender differences and regional variations.

Several recent studies have focused on measuring and interpreting trends in intergenerational mobility. Nybom and Stuhler (2024) provide a dynamic perspective on interpreting trends in intergenerational mobility, showing that past events can affect contemporary mobility trends. They demonstrate that structural changes may generate long-lasting, non-monotonic mobility trends, and that declining mobility may reflect past gains rather than recent deterioration in equality of opportunity. This dynamic approach highlights the importance of considering historical context when interpreting current mobility patterns.

The measurement and comparison of intergenerational mobility across countries have been subjects of intense scrutiny. Kunievsky (2024) investigates the Intergenerational Elasticity (*IGE*) and Rank-Rank coefficients, highlighting the challenges in interpreting cross-country comparisons using these measures. The study emphasizes the limitations of linear regression coefficients as summary statistics for intergenerational mobility comparisons, suggesting the need for more nuanced approaches to measuring and comparing mobility across different contexts.

In the context of developing countries, several studies have provided valuable insights into intergenerational mobility patterns. Alesina et al. (2021) investigate the evolution of inequality and intergenerational mobility in educational attainment in Africa using census data. They find that inequality has fallen across countries and intergenerational mobility has risen, with the overall drop in African inequality attributed mostly to declines in within-country, within-region, and within-ethnicity components. However, regional and ethnic differences in education persist. Neidhöfer et al. (2018) also contribute significantly to the literature by constructing a new database on educational inequality and intergenerational mobility in Latin America. Based on harmonized household survey data, they compute time series for several indexes of relative and absolute intergenerational education mobility for 18 Latin American countries over 50 years. Their findings indicate that intergenerational mobility is, on average, rising in Latin America, driven by high upward mobility of children from low-educated families. However, they also observe substantial immobility at the top of the distribution and significant cross-country differences associated with various socioeconomic factors.[1] Torul and Öztunalı (2017) study absolute and relative mobility in Europe using individual-level data from 34 countries and 46 cohorts born between 1940 and 1985. They provide a comprehensive analysis of mobility trends across different European regions and document considerable heterogeneity in intergenerational educational persistence both in levels and trends across countries and country groups. This study offers valuable insights into the diversity of mobility patterns within Europe, complementing the global perspective of the present paper.

The impact of major events on intergenerational mobility has also been a focus of recent research. Azevedo et al. (2023) investigate the longer-term inequality implications of COVID-19 school closures on intergenerational mobility in education, suggesting significant impacts on both absolute and relative mobility in the absence of remedial measures. This study underscores the potential long-term consequences of short-term disruptions in educational systems.[2]

Several studies have explored the relationship between education and intergenerational mobility. Bukodi et al. (2015) examine education as a mediator of intergenerational class mobility in Britain, finding that measuring education in relative terms leads to more stable associations in the Origin-Education-Destination (OED) triangle over time. Paterson (2024) investigates social class and sex differences in absolute and relative educational attainment in England, Scotland, and Wales, emphasizing the importance of relative measures for understanding the role of education in allocating people to employment.[3]

[1] Celhay and Gallegos (2022) also provide evidence on long-term intergenerational mobility in Latin America. They also note that while absolute mobility has increased, relative mobility has remained constant over fifty years. For another region-based investigation, see Ernst et al. (2024) who analyze intergenerational trends in educational and income mobility in the United States since the 1960s, showing an increase in upward mobility probability since the 1980s.

[2] For the role of intergenerational mobility on redistributive preferences, see Torul and Öztunalı (2024).

[3] For class mobility, see also Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2022).

The literature also highlights the importance of considering gender differences in intergenerational mobility. Nennstiel and Becker (2023) use administrative data to examine the extent to which absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility has changed in Switzerland for women and men from the 1951-1990 birth cohorts. They observe a trend toward less relative social mobility in the youngest cohorts and a strong convergence of mobility patterns between men and women over the cohort sequence.[4]

Recent research has also focused on methodological innovations in measuring intergenerational mobility. Ahsan et al. (2022) develop a methodology to incorporate the effects of family background on the conditional variance along with the standard conditional mean effects. They derive risk-adjusted measures of relative and absolute mobility, suggesting that standard measures may substantially underestimate the effects of family background on children's educational opportunities.

The present study contributes to this rich body of literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility across a large number of countries. Unlike previous studies that often focus on specific regions or countries, this paper offers a global perspective on the interplay between these two types of mobility measures in education. By utilizing the World Bank's Global Database on Intergenerational Mobility, it provides insights into how different measures of mobility relate to each other across various demographic and geographical contexts.

3 Data and Methodology

3.1 Data

This study utilizes the World Bank's Global Database on Intergenerational Mobility (*GDIM*) by van der Weide et al. (2024), which provides comprehensive data on intergenerational mobility (*IGM*) in education across multiple countries. The *GDIM* covers individuals born between 1940 and 1989, grouped into 10-year cohorts.

The *GDIM* focuses on educational mobility for several compelling reasons. First, human capital is fundamental to economic well-being, and education data across generations is more readily available compared to income data. Second, the estimation of educational mobility presents fewer methodological challenges than income mobility: education levels, once attained, remain constant throughout an individual's life, providing a stable measure for comparison.[5] Third, people can typically report their parents' education levels with high accuracy, enabling mobility studies without the need for extensive panel data, thereby reducing concerns regarding measurement errors. These factors collectively make education an ideal metric for studying intergenerational mobility across diverse global contexts.

The database provides estimates for different subpopulations:

- For parental educational attainment: 1) Mothers, 2) Fathers, 3) Average, and 4) Maximum
- For children's educational attainment: 1) Sons, 2) Daughters, and 3) All respondents

[4] For gender differences in a developing country context, see also Öztunalı and Torul (2022).

[5] See Nybom and Stuhler (2017) and Nybom and Stuhler (2016) for general concerns about estimating intergenerational income mobility consistently. See also Demirtaş and Torul (2024) for issues regarding developing economies.

This allows for exploring various mobility relationships, such as mother-daughter or father-son mobility combinations. For each country and cohort, the *GDIM* provides 12 estimates covering these different subpopulations. In this study, I investigate each of these 12 combinations in detail by using country and (10-year) cohort-specific estimates for these 12 parent and descendant combinations as the unit of analysis in regressions.[6]

3.2 Methodology

In this study, I employ multiple measures of intergenerational mobility to capture both absolute and relative aspects of mobility:

1. *Absolute Mobility* (`ABSCAT`): I use the probability of descendants surpassing their parents' ordinal education level as a measure of absolute mobility. This metric captures the extent to which individuals achieve higher educational attainment than their parents conditional on their parental education being less than tertiary education.[7]
2. *Relative Mobility*: I employ three measures of relative mobility:
   (a) Intergenerational Regression Coefficient (`IGP`, β): This measure captures the *persistence* of educational attainment across generations.[8]
   (b) Intergenerational Correlation Coefficient (`IGC`, ρ): This metric accounts for changes in the variance of educational attainment across generations since $\rho = \beta\frac{\sigma_p}{\sigma_c}$ where σ_p and σ_c denote the years of schooling standard deviations of parents and children, respectively.
   (c) Expected Rank (`EXRANK`): This measure indicates the expected educational rank of descendants when their parents are born in the bottom half of the education distribution.

To analyze the relationship between absolute and relative mobility, I employ a series of regression models:

- Model 1: Fixed-effects regression with country-fixed effects
- Model 2: Random-effects generalized least squares (*GLS*) regression
- Model 3. Fixed-effects regression incorporating country-fixed and time-fixed effects
- Model 4. Fixed-effects regression incorporating country-fixed and time-fixed effects, and the interactions between time-fixed effects and absolute mobility

[6] I append the cases of maximum parental education to the Online Appendix for brevity. The results when maximum parental education is used are often quantitatively similar to the case of father's education.

[7] For the ordinal education categories, I rely on the same 5-level categorization by GDIM: 1-Less than primary school graduate (`ISCED 0`), 2-Primary school graduate (`ISCED 1`), 3- Lower secondary school graduate (`ISCED 2`), 4- Upper secondary or post-secondary (non-tertiary) school graduate (`ISCED 3-4`), and 5-Tertiary school graduate (`ISCED 5-8`). As a robustness check, I also examine the case when the frequency of descendants surpassing their parents' years of education (`ABSYOS`) is proxied for absolute mobility. These results are available upon request.

[8] Several studies use `IGP` as an inverse measure of mobility as it reflects the association between parental and child educational attainment. An `IGP` value of 1 signifies a perfect correlation, implying that children's years of schooling, on average, precisely mirror that of their parents. Conversely, an `IGP` of 0 indicates no statistically significant association between parental and child educational levels. In this scenario, all children have an equal chance of educational attainment, regardless of their socioeconomic background. For a comprehensive recent discussion on intergenerational mobility, see Mogstad and Torsvik (2023).

- Model 5. Random-effects GLS regression with region-fixed effects, as well as time-fixed effects and the interactions between time-fixed effects and absolute mobility

These different specifications allow me to account for various factors that might influence the relationship between absolute and relative mobility, including country-specific characteristics, time trends, and regional variations.

I conduct separate analyses for different subpopulations (e.g., sons only, daughters only) to explore potential heterogeneity in mobility patterns across gender. Additionally, I examine how the relationship between absolute and relative mobility varies across different countries and cohorts.

By employing this comprehensive methodological approach, I aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility across diverse global contexts.

4 Results

My investigation reveals complex relationships between absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility across various specifications and subgroups. I present the key findings below, organized by the different measures of relative mobility employed.

4.1 Intergenerational Persistence (IGP) and Absolute Mobility

Table 1 presents the estimation results using intergenerational persistence (IGP) as a proxy for relative mobility and the probability of descendents' surpassing their parents' ordinal education (ABSCAT) as a proxy for absolute mobility. For IGP estimation, the dependent variable is the arithmetic mean of both parents' years of schooling, while the independent variable is the descendants' years of schooling, including both sons and daughters.

Models 1 and 2 differ in their inclusion of country-fixed effects and methodology: Model 1 is a fixed-effects (within) regression with country-fixed effects, whereas Model 2 is a random-effects generalized least squares (*GLS*) regression. Both models indicate a strong, negative correlation between absolute and (*inverse*) intergenerational relative mobility, with methodological differences having minimal impact on the correlation's magnitude. This negative and significant relationship is also evident in raw correlations, as illustrated in Figure A.1, which displays a scatterplot of these two mobility definitions. The fitted line's slope is comparable to the absolute mobility coefficients in Models 1 and 2.[9]

Model 3 demonstrates that, when controlling for absolute mobility and country-fixed effects, relative mobility declines across birth cohorts. While this finding is also apparent in Table A.1, Model 3 reinforces the importance of including cohort variables while confirming the robustness of the correlation between relative and absolute mobility.

[9] For the descriptive statics of parent-descendent combinations by birth cohort, refer to the Online Appendix.

Table 1: Estimation Results for Average Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.548***	-0.573***	-0.498***	-1.066***	-0.888***
	(0.106)	(0.084)	(0.092)	(0.087)	(0.082)
1940 Cohort			0.086***	-0.338***	-0.259**
			(0.026)	(0.105)	(0.105)
1950 Cohort			0.075***	-0.200***	-0.132*
			(0.020)	(0.075)	(0.078)
1960 Cohort			0.041***	-0.138***	-0.089*
			(0.014)	(0.048)	(0.050)
1970 Cohort			0.012	-0.185***	-0.148***
			(0.013)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.808***	0.666***
				(0.170)	(0.170)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.507***	0.381***
				(0.118)	(0.123)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.335***	0.243***
				(0.080)	(0.081)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.359***	0.292***
				(0.069)	(0.070)
East Asia and Pacific					0.141***
					(0.044)
Europe and Central Asia					0.042*
					(0.024)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.375***
					(0.027)
Middle East and North Africa					0.262***
					(0.062)
South Asia					0.362***
					(0.068)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.160***
					(0.033)
Constant	0.838***	0.853***	0.771***	1.080***	0.843***
	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.043)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Observations	549	549	549	549	549
R-squared	0.156	0.156	0.213	0.334	0.332
Number of Countries	142	142	142	142	142
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable, proxying for relative mobility, is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is the average of both parents' years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include both sons and daughters. Refer to the Data section for further details.

Model 4 reveals significant results for the interaction between absolute mobility and cohort variables. This indicates that, when controlling for country-fixed effects, the relationship between absolute and relative mobility significantly varies across birth cohorts.

To detect region-specific variation, Model 5 introduces region-fixed dummy variables while omitting country-fixed effects to avoid perfect multicollinearity. This specification demonstrates notable differences in relative mobility across regions while maintaining the robustness of the significant estimates from Model 4.[10]

[10]The interaction of region-fixed effects with absolute mobility yields insignificant coefficients and is omitted for brevity. Additional tests for interaction terms using `IGP` estimates for sons only, daughters only, mothers only, and fathers only were conducted. The only occasionally significant interaction term was for the Latin America and Caribbean region. These results are available upon request.

4.2 Gender-Specific Analysis

Tables 2 and 3 extend the analysis to cases where parental education is proxied by either the father's or the mother's years of schooling during the IGP estimation, respectively. Table 2 reports the findings when the father's education serves as the proxy. The fixed-effects regression in Model 1 and the random-effects *GLS* regression in Model 2 yield identical estimates for absolute mobility. Models 3 and 4 demonstrate the importance of including cohort-fixed effects and their interaction with absolute mobility to mitigate omitted variable bias. Model 5 reveals substantial regional variation in relative mobility. Across all specifications, the coefficients of absolute mobility, while varying in magnitude, remain negative and statistically significant at the 1% level.

Table 2: Estimation Results for Father's Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.352***	-0.357***	-0.293***	-0.712***	-0.599***
	(0.082)	(0.060)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.059)
1940 Cohort			0.054***	-0.248***	-0.201***
			(0.016)	(0.061)	(0.061)
1950 Cohort			0.035**	-0.172***	-0.134***
			(0.014)	(0.047)	(0.048)
1960 Cohort			0.021**	-0.099***	-0.071**
			(0.010)	(0.031)	(0.032)
1970 Cohort			0.012	-0.120***	-0.098***
			(0.009)	(0.031)	(0.031)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.561***	0.482***
				(0.101)	(0.100)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.371***	0.301***
				(0.075)	(0.075)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.216***	0.163***
				(0.052)	(0.052)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.232***	0.192***
				(0.049)	(0.050)
East Asia and Pacific					0.084***
					(0.031)
Europe and Central Asia					0.046**
					(0.022)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.303***
					(0.025)
Middle East and North Africa					0.123***
					(0.034)
South Asia					0.160***
					(0.040)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.085***
					(0.028)
Constant	0.608***	0.612***	0.554***	0.787***	0.634***
	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Observations	559	559	559	559	559
R-squared	0.123	0.123	0.159	0.304	0.302
Number of Countries	144	144	144	144	144
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (IGP), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by ABSCAT, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For IGP estimation, parental education is the father's years of schooling. IGP calculations include both sons and daughters. Refer to the Data section for further details.

Table 3 presents the results when the mother's education is used as the proxy for parental education in IGP calculations. The first two models produce similar coefficients for absolute mobility. The significance of cohort-fixed effects and their interaction with absolute mobility in Models 3 and 4 indicates considerable

time variation in both the level of relative mobility and its correlation with absolute mobility. Model 5 further confirms the presence of region-specific variation in relative mobility.

These results remain consistent with the main findings, emphasizing the robustness of the relationship between absolute and relative mobility across different specifications of parental education. They also emphasize the necessity of incorporating cohort effects and regional variations in examining mobility patterns.

Table 3: Estimation Results for Mother's Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.442***	-0.454***	-0.408***	-1.074***	-0.881***
	(0.093)	(0.079)	(0.080)	(0.095)	(0.081)
1940 Cohort			0.064**	-0.459***	-0.379***
			(0.026)	(0.100)	(0.097)
1950 Cohort			0.066***	-0.272***	-0.208**
			(0.021)	(0.084)	(0.088)
1960 Cohort			0.036**	-0.181***	-0.141**
			(0.014)	(0.058)	(0.058)
1970 Cohort			0.013	-0.193***	-0.169***
			(0.011)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.903***	0.771***
				(0.147)	(0.141)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.568***	0.457***
				(0.121)	(0.127)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.371***	0.297***
				(0.087)	(0.086)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.343***	0.299***
				(0.067)	(0.067)
East Asia and Pacific					0.137***
					(0.043)
Europe and Central Asia					0.058**
					(0.025)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.374***
					(0.028)
Middle East and North Africa					0.230***
					(0.067)
South Asia					0.378***
					(0.074)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.106***
					(0.037)
Constant	0.712***	0.721***	0.659***	1.054***	0.811***
	(0.054)	(0.057)	(0.042)	(0.058)	(0.054)
Observations	549	549	549	549	549
R-squared	0.110	0.110	0.146	0.312	0.310
Number of Countries	142	142	142	142	142
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is the mother's years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include both sons and daughters. Refer to the Data section for further details.

The analyses presented thus far do not differentiate between the genders of descendants. However, the literature suggests that gender-specific variations are often significant in intergenerational educational mobility (e.g., Öztunalı and Torul (2022)). To explore these potential differences, Tables 4 and 5 present estimations that consider only sons and only daughters, respectively, in the `IGP` calculations.

Table 4 presents the results for sons. Models 1 and 2 demonstrate that the fixed-effects and random-effects *GLS* estimates are not significantly different. Model 3 reveals strong time-series variation in relative

mobility, particularly when comparing cohorts born before and after the 1960s. Model 4 shows that the interaction of time-fixed effects with absolute mobility yields significant and non-monotonic variation, which remains robust when accounting for region-specific variation. Model 5 indicates the presence of region-specific variation in the level of relative mobility. Across all five models, a consistent relationship between absolute ande relative mobility is present.[11]

Table 4: Estimation Results for Average Parental Education & Sons Only

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.560***	-0.584***	-0.593***	-1.093***	-0.888***
	(0.104)	(0.082)	(0.095)	(0.093)	(0.084)
1940 Cohort			0.151***	-0.296***	-0.193*
			(0.030)	(0.096)	(0.101)
1950 Cohort			0.125***	-0.136*	-0.052
			(0.024)	(0.080)	(0.089)
1960 Cohort			0.072***	-0.061	-0.013
			(0.017)	(0.063)	(0.065)
1970 Cohort			0.026*	-0.150***	-0.120**
			(0.015)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.824***	0.637***
				(0.148)	(0.154)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.483***	0.322**
				(0.122)	(0.133)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.265**	0.167
				(0.102)	(0.102)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.327***	0.271***
				(0.079)	(0.077)
East Asia and Pacific					0.175***
					(0.056)
Europe and Central Asia					0.039
					(0.031)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.401***
					(0.035)
Middle East and North Africa					0.280***
					(0.067)
South Asia					0.449***
					(0.082)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.212***
					(0.036)
Constant	0.853***	0.866***	0.803***	1.074***	0.798***
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.050)
Observations	538	538	538	538	538
R-squared	0.154	0.154	0.286	0.377	0.373
Number of Countries	141	141	141	141	141
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is the average of both parents' years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include sons only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

Table 5 presents the findings when `IGP` estimates are based solely on daughters. The coefficient for absolute mobility is moderately smaller in magnitude for females compared to males. Nevertheless, all five models yield statistically significant coefficients for absolute mobility. Notably, the time-fixed effects in Model 3 are all insignificant, contrasting with the results for sons. Model 4 reveals that this is not due to a lack of time-series variation but rather to the absence of interaction terms. Model 5 demonstrates sub-

[11] Estimation results for additional parent-descendant combinations in IGP calculations are reported in Appendix Tables A.2, A.3, A.4, and A.5.

stantial region-specific variation, consistent with the previous set of regressions. These results suggest that while the relationship between absolute and relative mobility remains robust for daughters, the temporal dynamics differ from those observed for sons.

Table 5: Estimation Results for Average Parental Education & Daughters Only

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.403***	-0.450***	-0.387***	-0.981***	-0.801***
	(0.103)	(0.070)	(0.087)	(0.119)	(0.088)
1940 Cohort			0.014	-0.428***	-0.352***
			(0.029)	(0.097)	(0.091)
1950 Cohort			0.030	-0.265***	-0.201***
			(0.022)	(0.081)	(0.076)
1960 Cohort			0.019	-0.168***	-0.120**
			(0.015)	(0.055)	(0.052)
1970 Cohort			0.002	-0.172***	-0.135***
			(0.014)	(0.046)	(0.045)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.876***	0.745***
				(0.157)	(0.148)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.532***	0.418***
				(0.127)	(0.118)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.330***	0.240***
				(0.089)	(0.082)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.299***	0.233***
				(0.071)	(0.069)
East Asia and Pacific					0.126***
					(0.044)
Europe and Central Asia					0.053**
					(0.025)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.368***
					(0.031)
Middle East and North Africa					0.261***
					(0.069)
South Asia					0.259***
					(0.058)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.137***
					(0.041)
Constant	0.750***	0.779***	0.730***	1.056***	0.829***
	(0.052)	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.069)	(0.059)
Observations	544	544	544	544	544
R-squared	0.089	0.089	0.094	0.272	0.271
Number of Countries	141	141	141	141	141
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is the average of both parents' years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include daughters only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

4.3 Alternative Measures of Relative Mobility

The preceding results rely on the intergenerational regression coefficient β as the proxy for relative mobility. Another conventional metric in the related literature is the intergenerational regression coefficient ρ. Table 6 presents estimation results using the correlation coefficient calculated from the average parental years of schooling and the years of schooling of both sons and daughters.

Models 1 and 2 demonstrate that contrary to the regression coefficient case, the intergenerational correlation coefficient is not significantly associated with the frequency of descendants surpassing their parents' ordinal education, regardless of methodology. Model 3 shows that introducing time-fixed effects alone

does not yield a significant relationship between absolute and relative mobility. However, Model 4 reveals that including the interaction of time-fixed effects with absolute mobility negates this null result and produces a negative and significant relationship between the two mobility measures. Model 5 indicates that region-specific variation in relative mobility is limited (significant only for the Latin America and Caribbean region), and the significant association between the two mobility variables remains robust to the inclusion of region-fixed effects. Qualitatively similar results emerge for other parent-descent pair estimates.[12]

Table 6: Estimation Results for Average Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.034	-0.009	-0.028	-0.331***	-0.257***
	(0.049)	(0.041)	(0.045)	(0.060)	(0.049)
1940 Cohort			-0.021	-0.227***	-0.210***
			(0.015)	(0.049)	(0.047)
1950 Cohort			-0.038***	-0.212***	-0.204***
			(0.013)	(0.039)	(0.039)
1960 Cohort			-0.037***	-0.174***	-0.174***
			(0.010)	(0.029)	(0.028)
1970 Cohort			-0.013	-0.118***	-0.119***
			(0.008)	(0.023)	(0.022)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.388***	0.357***
				(0.081)	(0.077)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.320***	0.298***
				(0.063)	(0.062)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.253***	0.246***
				(0.048)	(0.047)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.190***	0.187***
				(0.039)	(0.038)
East Asia and Pacific					-0.011
					(0.057)
Europe and Central Asia					0.018
					(0.055)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.179***
					(0.056)
Middle East and North Africa					-0.013
					(0.064)
South Asia					0.043
					(0.066)
Sub-Saharan Africa					-0.003
					(0.057)
Constant	0.449***	0.441***	0.466***	0.630***	0.574***
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.034)	(0.060)
Observations	549	549	549	549	549
R-squared	0.002	0.002	0.046	0.156	0.149
Number of Countries	142	142	142	142	142
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational correlation coefficient (`IGC`), also known as ρ. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGC` estimation, parental education is the average of both parents' years of schooling. `IGC` calculations include both sons and daughters. Refer to the Data section for further details.

These findings suggest that raw correlations are insufficient in understanding the relationship between the intergenerational correlation coefficient and the probability of upward ordinal mobility. Instead, time-

[12] Results for correlation estimates of different parent and descendant combinations are appended to the Online Appendix. In most combinations, the first three model specifications yield insignificant coefficients for absolute mobility, which is negated by the inclusion of time-fixed effects and their interaction with the absolute mobility variable in Models 4 and 5. As with the intergenerational regression coefficient, the interaction of region-fixed effects with absolute mobility yields insignificant results, omitted for brevity.

series variation must be accounted for.

Table 7: Estimation Results for Average Parental Education & Daughters Only

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5
Absolute Mobility	3.788*	3.498**	1.069	12.639***	10.632***
	(2.008)	(1.466)	(1.942)	(2.776)	(2.235)
1940 Cohort			-1.974***	6.558***	5.720***
			(0.628)	(1.347)	(1.217)
1950 Cohort			-1.598***	4.721***	4.098***
			(0.533)	(1.339)	(1.221)
1960 Cohort			-0.456	3.732***	3.295***
			(0.430)	(1.050)	(0.963)
1970 Cohort			-0.198	1.473*	1.099
			(0.347)	(0.806)	(0.766)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				-16.852***	-15.580***
				(2.450)	(2.275)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				-11.522***	-10.588***
				(2.414)	(2.234)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				-7.449***	-6.815***
				(2.110)	(1.964)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				-2.520*	-2.033
				(1.496)	(1.422)
East Asia and Pacific					0.048
					(1.439)
Europe and Central Asia					1.223
					(1.264)
Latin America and Caribbean					-6.662***
					(1.508)
Middle East and North Africa					-1.204
					(1.633)
South Asia					-1.398
					(2.498)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.290
					(1.548)
Constant	37.369***	37.658***	39.505***	33.164***	34.496***
	(1.010)	(0.944)	(1.030)	(1.493)	(1.811)
Observations	544	544	544	544	544
R-squared	0.020	0.020	0.081	0.276	0.274
Number of Countries	141	141	141	141	141
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational correlation coefficient (`EXRANK`). Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `EXRANK` estimation, parental education is the average of both parents' years of schooling. `EXRANK` calculations include daughters only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

Finally, I investigate the relationship between absolute and relative mobility using the expected rank of descendants born to parents in the bottom half of the distribution as a proxy for relative mobility. While no robust findings emerge for descendants of both genders or sons only, the case of daughters yields consistent results. Table 7 reports the expected ranks of daughters against average parental education.

Models 1 and 2 in Table 7 demonstrate that, regardless of methodological choice (fixed-effect regression in Model 1 vs. random effect *GLS* regression in Model 2), daughters' expected ranks are higher in environments with higher average ordinal upward mobility. Model 3 shows this result disappears when time-fixed effects are accounted for. However, Model 4 reveals that this null result is due to the exclusion of the interaction between time-fixed effects and absolute mobility. Model 5 confirms that this result remains robust when region-fixed effects are included instead of country-fixed effects.

4.4 Robustness and Heterogeneity

To ensure the robustness of my findings, I conducted additional analyses. First, I examined the case where the frequency of descendants surpassing their parents' years of education (`ABSYOS`) is used as a proxy for absolute mobility. The results, available upon request, are qualitatively similar to the main findings. Second, I tested for interactions between region-fixed effects and absolute mobility, finding occasional significance only for the Latin America and Caribbean region. Third, I explored additional parent-descendant combinations in `IGP` calculations, with results reported in Appendix Tables A.2-A.5. I also explored additional parent-descendant combinations in `IGC` and `EXRANK` calculations, with the results reported in the Online Appendix.

These robustness checks and additional analyses reinforce the main findings while highlighting important heterogeneities across different subgroups and specifications.

In summary, these results demonstrate a complex and nuanced relationship between absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility. The findings highlight the importance of employing multiple mobility measures, considering gender differences, and accounting for regional and cohort effects when studying intergenerational mobility patterns.

5 Conclusions

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between absolute and relative intergenerational educational mobility across a diverse set of countries. By leveraging the World Bank's Global Database on Intergenerational Mobility, it offers several key insights that contribute to our understanding of social mobility dynamics on a global scale.

My findings reveal a complex and nuanced relationship between absolute and relative mobility measures. The intergenerational (years of schooling) regression coefficient consistently demonstrates a negative and significant relationship with absolute upward mobility across various specifications and subgroups. This suggests that countries with higher rates of absolute upward mobility tend to have lower levels of average intergenerational persistence in years of education, as can be expected.[13]

However, the relationship between the intergenerational correlation coefficient and absolute mobility proved to be more intricate, requiring the consideration of time-series variation and interaction effects to uncover significant associations. This highlights the importance of employing multiple mobility measures and accounting for various demographic and temporal factors when studying intergenerational mobility.

My analysis also reveals significant heterogeneity in mobility patterns across different demographic groups and regions. Gender differences play a crucial role, with sons and daughters exhibiting distinct patterns in the relationship between absolute and relative mobility. This highlights the need for gender-specific approaches in policies aimed at promoting social mobility.

Furthermore, I find substantial regional variations in mobility patterns, emphasizing the importance of

[13] The conceptual framework by Deutscher and Mazumder (2023) eloquently demonstrates how different absolute and relative mobility measures can relate to each other.

considering geographical contexts when interpreting mobility measures. These regional differences suggest that one-size-fits-all policies may be ineffective in promoting social mobility across diverse contexts.

The inclusion of cohort effects in my analysis demonstrated that the relationship between absolute and relative mobility evolves over time. This temporal dimension adds another layer of complexity to our understanding of intergenerational mobility and suggests that mobility trends should be interpreted with caution, as they may reflect long-term societal changes rather than immediate policy impacts.

While this study provides valuable insights, it also opens up avenues for future research. Further investigation into the causal mechanisms underlying the observed relationships between absolute and relative mobility could enhance our understanding of how these dynamics operate. Additionally, exploring how specific policy interventions affect both absolute and relative mobility simultaneously could provide practical guidance for policymakers seeking to promote social mobility.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on intergenerational mobility by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between absolute and relative educational mobility across a global context. By highlighting the rich and heterogeneous nature of this relationship, I hope to highlight the need for more nuanced approaches to studying and promoting social mobility in diverse societies around the world.

References

Ahsan, M. N., Emran, M. S., Jiang, H., and Shilpi, F. (2022). What the mean measures of mobility miss: Learning about intergenerational mobility from conditional variance. Technical report, GLO Discussion Paper.

Alesina, A., Hohmann, S., Michalopoulos, S., and Papaioannou, E. (2021). Intergenerational mobility in africa. *Econometrica*, 89(1):1–35.

Azevedo, J. P., Cojocaru, A., Talledo, V. M., and Narayan, A. (2023). Covid-19 school closures, learning losses and intergenerational mobility. *World Bank Working Paper*.

Bukodi, E. and Goldthorpe, J. H. (2022). Intergenerational class mobility in industrial and post-industrial societies: Towards a general theory. *Rationality and Society*, 34(3):271–301.

Bukodi, E., Goldthorpe, J. H., Waller, L., and Kuha, J. (2015). The mobility problem in b ritain: new findings from the analysis of birth cohort data. *The British journal of sociology*, 66(1):93–117.

Celhay, P. A. and Gallegos, S. (2022). Trends of educational mobility across three generations in latin america. *Retrieved from* https://scioteca.caf.com/handle/123456789/1906.

Demirtaş, N. M. and Torul, O. (2024). Intergenerational income mobility in turkey. *The Journal of Economic Inequality*, 22(1):185–209.

Deutscher, N. and Mazumder, B. (2023). Measuring intergenerational income mobility: A synthesis of approaches. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 61(3):988–1036.

Ernst, E., Langot, F., Merola, R., and Gonzales Pulgarin, J. J. (2024). *Intergenerational trends in educational and income mobility in the United States of America since the 1960s*. ILO Working Paper 111, ISBN: 9789220404812.

Kunievsky, N. (2024). On the interpretation of the intergenerational elasticity and the rank–rank coefficients for cross country comparison. *Economics Letters*, 236:111581.

Mogstad, M. and Torsvik, G. (2023). *Handbook of the Economics of the Family*, volume 1, chapter Family Background, Neighborhoods and Intergenerational Mobility. North Holland.

Neidhöfer, G., Serrano, J., and Gasparini, L. (2018). Educational Inequality and Intergenerational Mobility in Latin America: A New Database. *Journal of Development Economics*, 134:329–349.

Nennstiel, R. and Becker, R. (2023). Gendered intergenerational educational mobility patterns converge in the cohort sequence: evidence from switzerland using administrative data. *Frontiers in sociology*, 8:1172553.

Nybom, M. and Stuhler, J. (2016). Heterogeneous income profiles and lifecycle bias in intergenerational mobility estimation. *Journal of Human Resources*, 51(1):239–268.

Nybom, M. and Stuhler, J. (2017). Biases in standard measures of intergenerational income dependence. *Journal of Human Resources*, 52(3):800–825.

Nybom, M. and Stuhler, J. (2024). Interpreting trends in intergenerational mobility. *Journal of Political Economy*, 132(8):000–000.

Öztunalı, O. and Torul, O. (2022). The evolution of intergenerational educational mobility in turkey. *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*, 58(14):4033–4049.

Paterson, L. (2024). Social class and sex differences in absolute and relative educational attainment in england, scotland and wales since the middle of the twentieth century. *Research Papers in Education*, 39(1):67–92.

Torul, O. and Öztunalı, O. (2017). Intergenerational Educational Mobility in Europe. Boğaziçi University, Department of Economics Working Papers 2017/03. Available at http://web.boun.edu.tr/torul/ieme.pdf.

Torul, O. and Öztunalı, O. (2024). Intergenerational educational mobility and preferences for redistribution in europe: Intergenerational mobility and redistributive preferences. *Journal of Income Distribution®*.

van der Weide, R., Lakner, C., Mahler, D. G., Narayan, A., and Gupta, R. (2024). Intergenerational mobility around the world: A new database. *Journal of Development Economics*, 166:103167.

Appendix

A Tables and Figures

A.1 Tables

Table A.1: Descriptive Statistics

	Birth Cohort					
	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	Total
No. of Obs.	1,189 (17.7%)	1,259 (18.7%)	1,275 (19.0%)	1,271 (18.9%)	1,731 (25.7%)	6,725 (100.0%)
IGP	0.524 (0.386)	0.480 (0.266)	0.448 (0.220)	0.440 (0.182)	0.444 (0.184)	0.465 (0.254)
IGC	0.415 (0.172)	0.393 (0.147)	0.391 (0.117)	0.413 (0.111)	0.427 (0.114)	0.409 (0.133)
EXRANK	42.987 (7.069)	42.831 (6.911)	42.632 (6.295)	42.003 (5.743)	40.975 (5.306)	42.187 (6.274)
ABSCAT	0.478 (0.262)	0.542 (0.238)	0.565 (0.213)	0.545 (0.198)	0.543 (0.188)	0.536 (0.220)
Region						
East Asia & Pacific						
No. of Obs.	121 (10.2%)	144 (11.4%)	156 (12.2%)	152 (12.0%)	264 (15.3%)	837 (12.4%)
IGP	0.410 (0.188)	0.450 (0.352)	0.396 (0.230)	0.382 (0.207)	0.379 (0.167)	0.400 (0.231)
IGC	0.361 (0.118)	0.342 (0.112)	0.364 (0.106)	0.374 (0.119)	0.376 (0.113)	0.365 (0.114)
EXRANK	43.589 (6.213)	44.308 (7.054)	42.898 (5.954)	42.305 (5.351)	41.560 (3.984)	42.711 (5.639)
ABSCAT	0.562 (0.251)	0.613 (0.245)	0.681 (0.188)	0.703 (0.142)	0.649 (0.158)	0.646 (0.198)
Europe & Central Asia						
No. of Obs.	532 (44.7%)	564 (44.8%)	564 (44.2%)	564 (44.4%)	564 (32.6%)	2,788 (41.5%)
IGP	0.430 (0.169)	0.363 (0.155)	0.338 (0.136)	0.381 (0.129)	0.373 (0.128)	0.376 (0.147)
IGC	0.438 (0.119)	0.402 (0.118)	0.394 (0.105)	0.418 (0.102)	0.410 (0.107)	0.412 (0.111)
EXRANK	42.021 (5.260)	41.810 (4.878)	41.930 (4.475)	41.689 (4.067)	41.000 (4.131)	41.686 (4.587)
ABSCAT	0.651 (0.140)	0.674 (0.137)	0.641 (0.152)	0.561 (0.171)	0.554 (0.157)	0.616 (0.160)
Latin America & Caribbean						
No. of Obs.	135 (11.4%)	135 (10.7%)	135 (10.6%)	135 (10.6%)	147 (8.5%)	687 (10.2%)
IGP	0.776 (0.169)	0.711 (0.169)	0.614 (0.153)	0.540 (0.131)	0.467 (0.121)	0.619 (0.187)
IGC	0.580 (0.095)	0.548 (0.083)	0.515 (0.069)	0.523 (0.064)	0.516 (0.059)	0.536 (0.079)
EXRANK	36.431 (6.284)	36.734 (5.307)	37.189 (4.456)	36.951 (3.937)	36.778 (3.356)	36.816 (4.752)
ABSCAT	0.392 (0.145)	0.528 (0.164)	0.614 (0.150)	0.641 (0.133)	0.660 (0.112)	0.569 (0.172)
Middle East & North Africa						
No. of Obs.	84 (7.1%)	84 (6.7%)	84 (6.6%)	84 (6.6%)	132 (7.6%)	468 (7.0%)
IGP	0.613 (0.413)	0.623 (0.298)	0.550 (0.211)	0.429 (0.184)	0.401 (0.142)	0.511 (0.273)
IGC	0.317 (0.211)	0.330 (0.142)	0.333 (0.112)	0.342 (0.122)	0.390 (0.084)	0.347 (0.138)
EXRANK	44.871 (6.944)	44.311 (7.116)	44.568 (6.433)	43.393 (5.232)	41.449 (5.575)	43.486 (6.353)
ABSCAT	0.337 (0.239)	0.450 (0.232)	0.537 (0.225)	0.608 (0.166)	0.667 (0.141)	0.535 (0.231)
South Asia						
No. of Obs.	56 (4.7%)	60 (4.8%)	60 (4.7%)	60 (4.7%)	96 (5.5%)	332 (4.9%)
IGP	0.724 (0.329)	0.709 (0.275)	0.724 (0.269)	0.695 (0.262)	0.602 (0.275)	0.681 (0.285)
IGC	0.445 (0.106)	0.416 (0.122)	0.426 (0.107)	0.436 (0.114)	0.441 (0.148)	0.434 (0.124)
EXRANK	45.673 (8.165)	46.397 (8.870)	46.628 (9.293)	45.430 (9.764)	42.573 (7.387)	45.036 (8.706)
ABSCAT	0.230 (0.246)	0.287 (0.199)	0.331 (0.182)	0.406 (0.178)	0.532 (0.210)	0.378 (0.232)
Sub-Saharan Africa						
No. of Obs.	237 (19.9%)	248 (19.7%)	252 (19.8%)	252 (19.8%)	504 (29.1%)	1,493 (22.2%)
IGP	0.591 (0.695)	0.550 (0.285)	0.554 (0.220)	0.509 (0.173)	0.539 (0.190)	0.546 (0.340)
IGC	0.324 (0.237)	0.330 (0.187)	0.345 (0.121)	0.389 (0.097)	0.457 (0.114)	0.385 (0.162)
EXRANK	47.580 (7.886)	46.631 (8.064)	45.629 (7.572)	44.167 (7.012)	41.547 (6.361)	44.480 (7.589)
ABSCAT	0.175 (0.156)	0.281 (0.183)	0.352 (0.188)	0.363 (0.178)	0.407 (0.175)	0.333 (0.194)
North America						
No. of Obs.	24 (2.0%)	24 (1.9%)	24 (1.9%)	24 (1.9%)	24 (1.4%)	120 (1.8%)
IGP	0.308 (0.056)	0.321 (0.123)	0.300 (0.118)	0.292 (0.089)	0.283 (0.043)	0.301 (0.091)
IGC	0.382 (0.063)	0.419 (0.133)	0.408 (0.133)	0.391 (0.086)	0.366 (0.046)	0.393 (0.099)
EXRANK	40.041 (2.612)	38.909 (1.777)	39.782 (2.225)	39.704 (3.282)	38.657 (4.294)	39.419 (2.970)
ABSCAT	0.760 (0.088)	0.732 (0.122)	0.690 (0.137)	0.664 (0.143)	0.605 (0.142)	0.690 (0.137)

† *Notes*: This table reports the descriptive statistics of the GDIM dataset. Columns denote birth cohorts by decade. `IGP` and `IGC` stand for intergenerational regression and correlation coefficients, respectively. `EXRANK` stands for the expected rank of a child born to a parent from the bottom half of the education distribution. `ABSCAT` stands for the dummy variable that takes the value 1 if child's ordinal education category surpasses that of parent, and 0 otherwise; conditional on parent not being on the highest ordinal (*tertiary*) education category. The numbers in parentheses in the number of observation rows refer to their respective frequencies. The remaining numbers in parentheses next to the mean values denote standard deviations.

Table A.2: Estimation Results for Father's Parental Education & Sons Only

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.451***	-0.448***	-0.431***	-0.716***	-0.559***
	(0.108)	(0.080)	(0.096)	(0.067)	(0.061)
1940 Cohort			0.105***	-0.117	-0.038
			(0.022)	(0.108)	(0.115)
1950 Cohort			0.074***	-0.092*	-0.026
			(0.015)	(0.052)	(0.058)
1960 Cohort			0.050***	-0.015	0.024
			(0.012)	(0.052)	(0.051)
1970 Cohort			0.026**	-0.102**	-0.081*
			(0.012)	(0.044)	(0.043)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.403**	0.262
				(0.167)	(0.179)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.295***	0.172*
				(0.081)	(0.090)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.125	0.047
				(0.081)	(0.079)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.229***	0.188***
				(0.068)	(0.067)
East Asia and Pacific					0.095**
					(0.038)
Europe and Central Asia					0.027
					(0.029)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.300***
					(0.034)
Middle East and North Africa					0.105***
					(0.039)
South Asia					0.192***
					(0.051)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.106***
					(0.032)
Constant	0.677***	0.672***	0.619***	0.777***	0.601***
	(0.061)	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.036)	(0.043)
Observations	549	549	549	549	549
R-squared	0.139	0.139	0.228	0.268	0.262
Number of Countries	143	143	143	143	143
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is father's years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include sons only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

Table A.3: Estimation Results for Mother's Parental Education & Sons Only

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.433***	-0.458***	-0.445***	-1.048***	-0.844***
	(0.114)	(0.096)	(0.108)	(0.101)	(0.088)
1940 Cohort			0.098***	-0.414***	-0.324**
			(0.035)	(0.153)	(0.155)
1950 Cohort			0.083***	-0.284***	-0.218**
			(0.025)	(0.087)	(0.097)
1960 Cohort			0.050***	-0.110*	-0.087
			(0.017)	(0.061)	(0.062)
1970 Cohort			0.020	-0.155***	-0.152***
			(0.013)	(0.057)	(0.058)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.869***	0.712***
				(0.222)	(0.222)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.617***	0.492***
				(0.121)	(0.134)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.293***	0.236***
				(0.090)	(0.090)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.300***	0.287***
				(0.083)	(0.086)
East Asia and Pacific					0.159***
					(0.057)
Europe and Central Asia					0.060*
					(0.036)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.403***
					(0.041)
Middle East and North Africa					0.225***
					(0.066)
South Asia					0.424***
					(0.092)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.163***
					(0.044)
Constant	0.700***	0.717***	0.661***	1.018***	0.746***
	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.058)
Observations	539	539	539	539	539
R-squared	0.090	0.090	0.143	0.252	0.250
Number of Countries	141	141	141	141	141
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is mother's years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include sons only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

Table A.4: Estimation Results for Father's Parental Education & Daughters Only

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.217**	-0.244***	-0.212***	-0.671***	-0.539***
	(0.087)	(0.054)	(0.078)	(0.095)	(0.063)
1940 Cohort			0.003	-0.333***	-0.282***
			(0.020)	(0.057)	(0.053)
1950 Cohort			0.005	-0.224***	-0.183***
			(0.017)	(0.054)	(0.051)
1960 Cohort			0.001	-0.143***	-0.112***
			(0.012)	(0.037)	(0.036)
1970 Cohort			0.002	-0.112***	-0.086***
			(0.011)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.649***	0.568***
				(0.091)	(0.086)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.401***	0.331***
				(0.083)	(0.078)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.243***	0.186***
				(0.059)	(0.056)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.185***	0.141***
				(0.043)	(0.044)
East Asia and Pacific					0.076**
					(0.031)
Europe and Central Asia					0.066***
					(0.021)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.306***
					(0.027)
Middle East and North Africa					0.142***
					(0.037)
South Asia					0.100**
					(0.039)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.080**
					(0.032)
Constant	0.524***	0.541***	0.520***	0.776***	0.610***
	(0.044)	(0.033)	(0.040)	(0.054)	(0.046)
Observations	554	554	554	554	554
R-squared	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.266	0.263
Number of Countries	143	143	143	143	143
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is father's years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include daughters only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

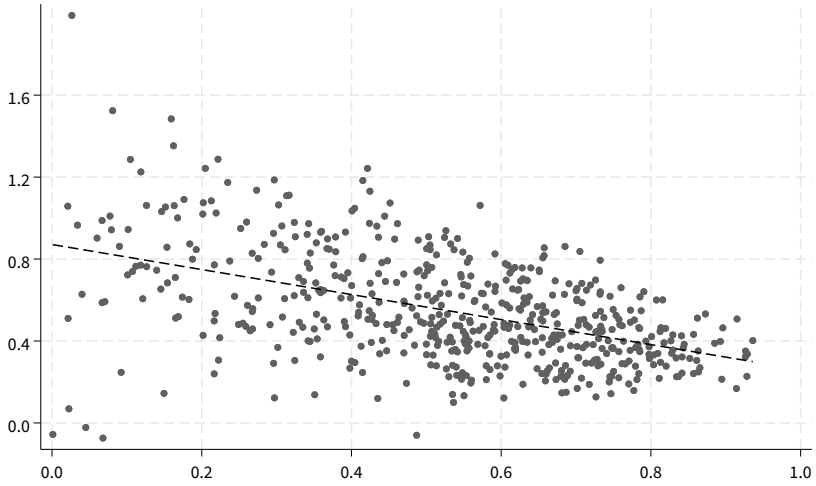
Table A.5: Estimation Results for Mother's Parental Education & Daughters Only

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4	(5) Model 5
Absolute Mobility	-0.478***	-0.470***	-0.438***	-1.020***	-0.788***
	(0.098)	(0.082)	(0.081)	(0.120)	(0.098)
1940 Cohort			0.034	-0.411***	-0.316***
			(0.031)	(0.120)	(0.114)
1950 Cohort			0.050**	-0.236**	-0.160
			(0.023)	(0.098)	(0.099)
1960 Cohort			0.025*	-0.194***	-0.141**
			(0.015)	(0.064)	(0.063)
1970 Cohort			0.005	-0.182***	-0.151***
			(0.011)	(0.043)	(0.046)
Absolute Mobility x 1940 Cohort				0.782***	0.634***
				(0.176)	(0.167)
Absolute Mobility x 1950 Cohort				0.467***	0.339**
				(0.143)	(0.145)
Absolute Mobility x 1960 Cohort				0.356***	0.263***
				(0.094)	(0.091)
Absolute Mobility x 1970 Cohort				0.300***	0.246***
				(0.063)	(0.068)
East Asia and Pacific					0.125***
					(0.042)
Europe and Central Asia					0.053**
					(0.023)
Latin America and Caribbean					0.344***
					(0.028)
Middle East and North Africa					0.221***
					(0.079)
South Asia					0.364***
					(0.075)
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.067
					(0.045)
Constant	0.742***	0.741***	0.699***	1.048***	0.798***
	(0.054)	(0.059)	(0.043)	(0.075)	(0.070)
Observations	544	544	544	544	544
R-squared	0.104	0.104	0.115	0.224	0.221
Number of Countries	141	141	141	141	141
Country FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

† *Notes*: Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The dependent variable proxying for relative mobility is the intergenerational regression coefficient (`IGP`), also known as β. Independent variables are listed in rows. Absolute mobility is proxied by `ABSCAT`, a threshold variable that equals 1 if the child's ordinal education category surpasses the parent's and 0 otherwise. The base birth cohort is 1980 when cohort variables are introduced. North America serves as the base region when regional variables are included. For `IGP` estimation, parental education is mother's years of schooling. `IGP` calculations include daughters only. Refer to the Data section for further details.

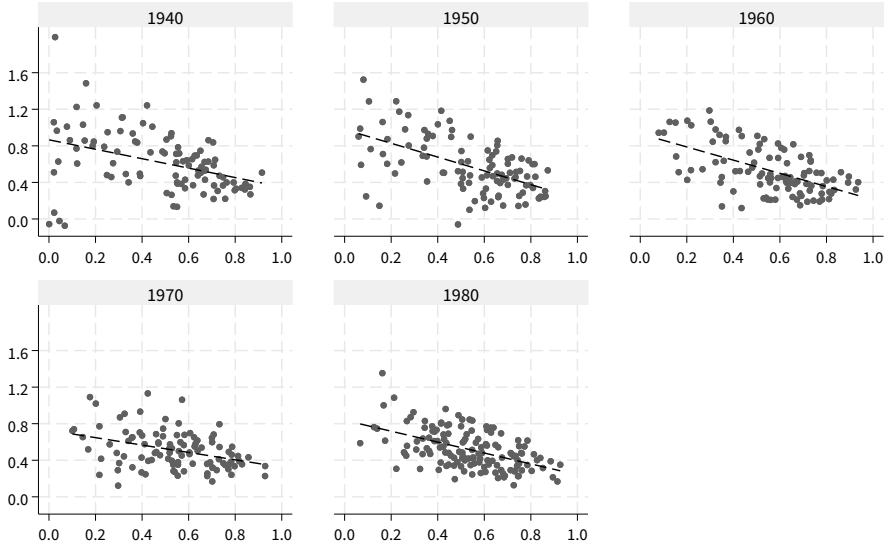
A.2 Figures

Figure A.1: IGP (via Average Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters) vs. ABSCAT



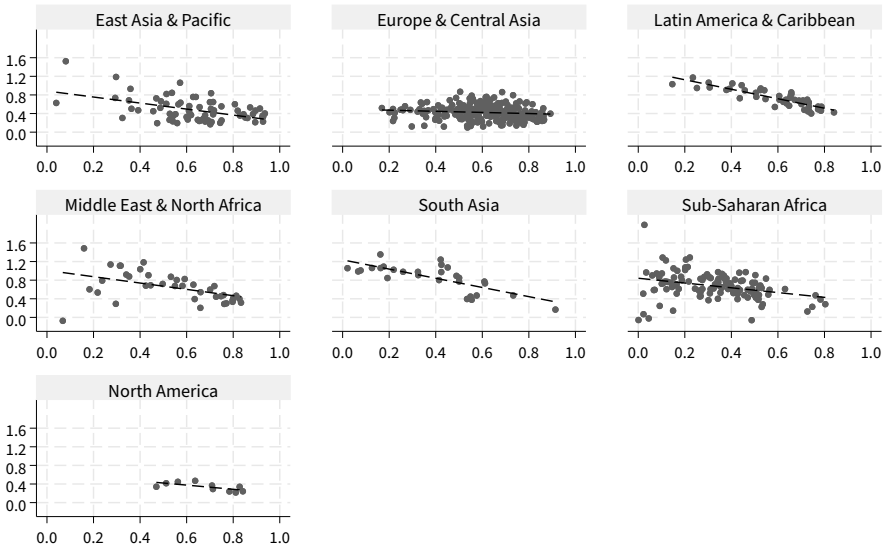
† *Notes*: This figure shows the scatterplot of relative and absolute intergenerational mobility. The horizontal axis denotes ABSCAT, a threshold variable that equals 1 if child's ordinal education category surpasses that of parent's, and 0 otherwise. The vertical axis denotes IGP, the intergenerational regression coefficient, i.e., β. IGP is based on the average parental education, and the observations of both sons and daughters. Dots depict actual observations and the dashed line depicts the fitted linear line.

Figure A.2: IGP (via Average Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters) vs. ABSCAT by Birth Cohort



† *Notes*: This figure shows the scatterplot of relative and absolute intergenerational mobility by birth cohort. The horizontal axis denotes ABSCAT, a threshold variable that equals 1 if child's ordinal education category surpasses that of parent's, and 0 otherwise. The vertical axis denotes IGP, the intergenerational regression coefficient, i.e., β. IGP is based on the average parental education, and the observations of both sons and daughters. Dots depict actual observations and the dashed line depicts the fitted linear line.

Figure A.3: IGP (via Average Parental Education & Both Sons and Daughters) vs. ABSCAT by Region



† *Notes*: This figure shows the scatterplot of relative and absolute intergenerational mobility by region. The horizontal axis denotes ABSCAT, a threshold variable that equals 1 if child's ordinal education category surpasses that of parent's, and 0 otherwise. The vertical axis denotes IGP, the intergenerational regression coefficient, i.e., β. IGP is based on the average parental education, and the observations of both sons and daughters. Dots depict actual observations and the dashed line depicts the fitted linear line.