

Intergenerational Social Mobility and Popular Explanations of Poverty: A Multi-level and Cross-National Analysis

ALEXI GUGUSHVILI

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

5TH LCSR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MOSCOW, 16 NOVEMBER 2015

Original LCSR proposal

Intergenerational social mobility



Self-serving bias in causal attribution



Support for democracy

Background

Intergenerational mobility – the most fundamental form of ascriptive inequality

Objectively (occupational) and subjectively measured

Established welfare democracies and transitional societies

Attitudinal implications of social mobility

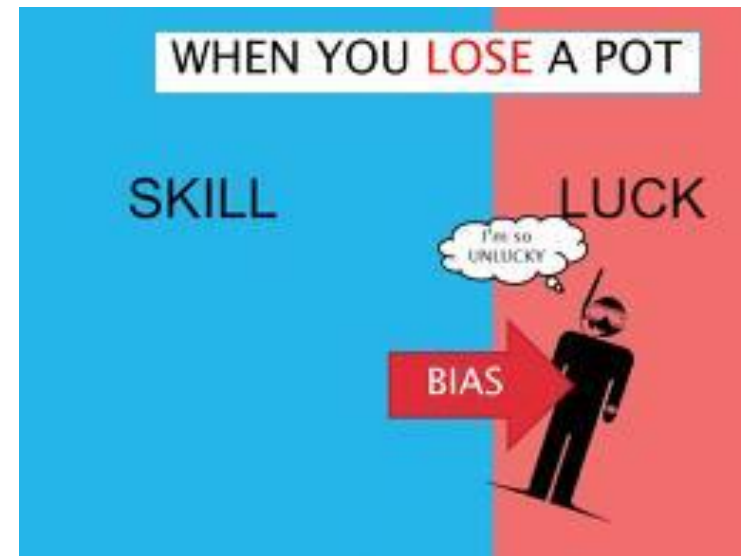
RQ: *Does social mobility affect perceptions of the causes of poverty?*

Causal attribution and self-serving bias

Success attributed to controlled factors



Failure attributed to uncontrolled factors



Theoretical model

Upward mobility  individual contribution in achieved success

Downward mobility  external factors in shaping life courses

Micro-level hypothesis 1

*Intergenerational upward
(downward) social mobility
positively (negatively) associates
with **belief that
individuals are
responsible for their own
failure***

Objective vs. subjective social mobility

Obj. vs. sub. split is important because we deal with attitudes

Objective mobility – occupational attainment

Subjective mobility – individuals' qualitative assessment

Relationships generally (not always) positive

Subjective mobility is correlated with a broad set of socio-demographic factors

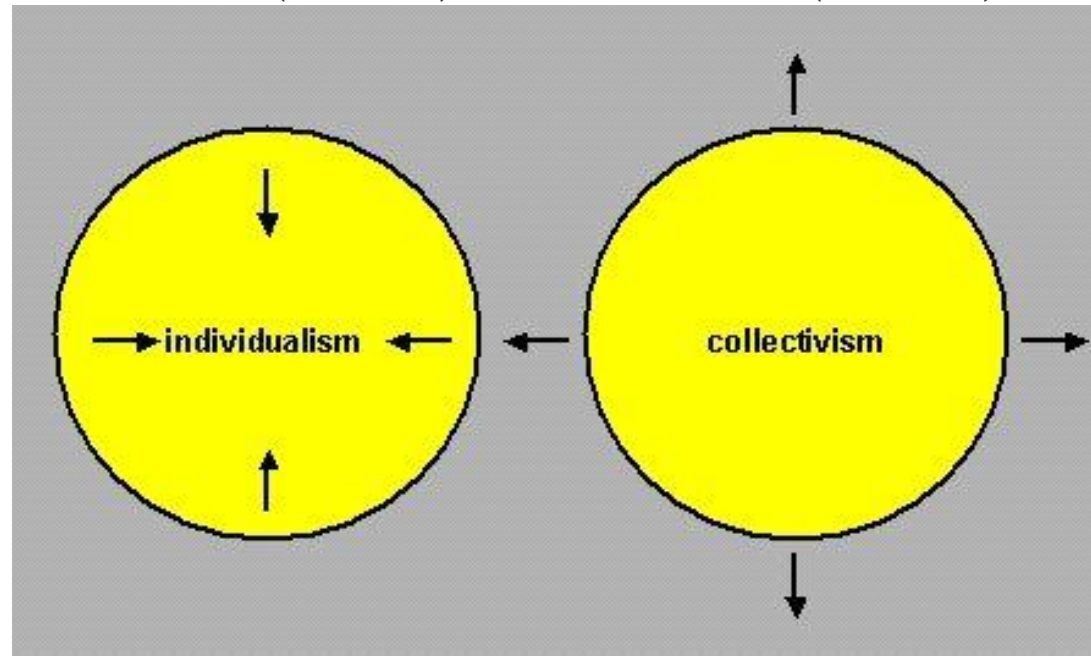
Mobility might matter only if individuals are aware of experiencing it

Micro-level hypothesis 2

The effect of intergenerational social mobility on popular explanations of poverty is stronger for subjective perception of mobility rather than objective occupational mobility

Macro-level analysis

Individualistic (internal) vs. collectivistic (external) cultures



Different degrees of external and internal causal attribution

Individualism, collectivism and development

The core of social and political sciences

- *e.g. Adam Smith, Max Weber*

Economic and cultural factors are intimately linked together

- *Economic growth and cultural factors are interconnected and provide an explanation of why some societies are rich and others are poor (Inglehart 1997)*
- *Causal links are not well understood*

Possible curvilinear relationship

- *Very poor and very rich are individualistic*

Macro-level hypothesis

*The effect of social mobility on belief for individual reasons of poverty is **stronger in more economically developed societies***

Micro-level data

European Values Study (EVS) [2008]

21 post-socialist countries:

- *EE, LT, LV, AL, HR, MC, SR, BG, CZ, HU, PL, RO, SK, SL, AM, AZ, BY, GE, MD, RU, UA*

20 other European societies

- *AU, BE, CY, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IS, IR, IT, LU, MT, NE, NO, PO, ES, SE, CH, UK*

Life in Transition Survey (LITS) [2010]

- Same countries but only *FR, DE, IT, UK and SE* in West

Dependent variable

Both EVS and LITS ask respondents the main reason why some people are in need:

- (a) because of laziness and lack of willpower
- (b) it is an inevitable part of modern life
- (c) because they have been unlucky
- (d) because of injustice in our society

IV: OBJECTIVE mobility (EVS)

Intergenerational difference in ISEI score

- Strongly downward mobile = [-21-72]
- Downward mobile = [-6-20]
- Non-mobile = [-5, +5]
- Upward mobile = agree [6-20]
- Strongly upward mobile = strongly agree [21-72]

IV: SUBJECTIVE mobility (LITS)

‘I have done better in life than my parents’

- Strongly downward mobile = strongly disagree
- Downward mobile = disagree
- Non-mobile = neither disagree nor agree
- Upward mobile = agree
- Strongly upward mobile = strongly agree

Basic controls

Gender (male=1)

Age, age-squared/100

Education (ISCED 0-6)

Labour market status (employed, unemployed, students, retired)

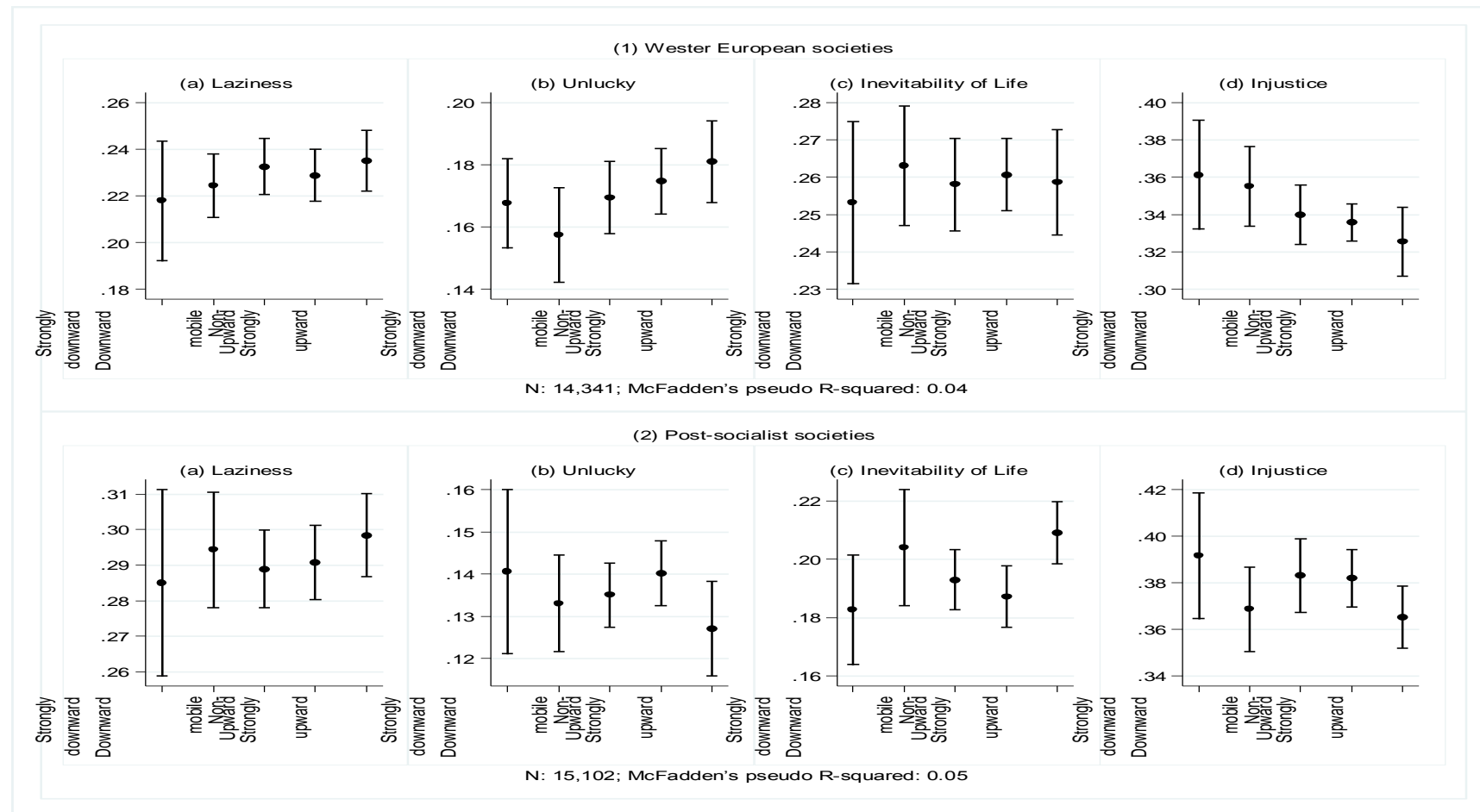
Cross-sectional analysis

Popular explanations of $\text{poverty}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i$
 $+ \beta_3 \text{education}_i + \beta_4 \text{labour market status}_i + \beta_5 \text{countries}_i$
 $+ \beta_6 \text{objective/subjective social mobility}_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$

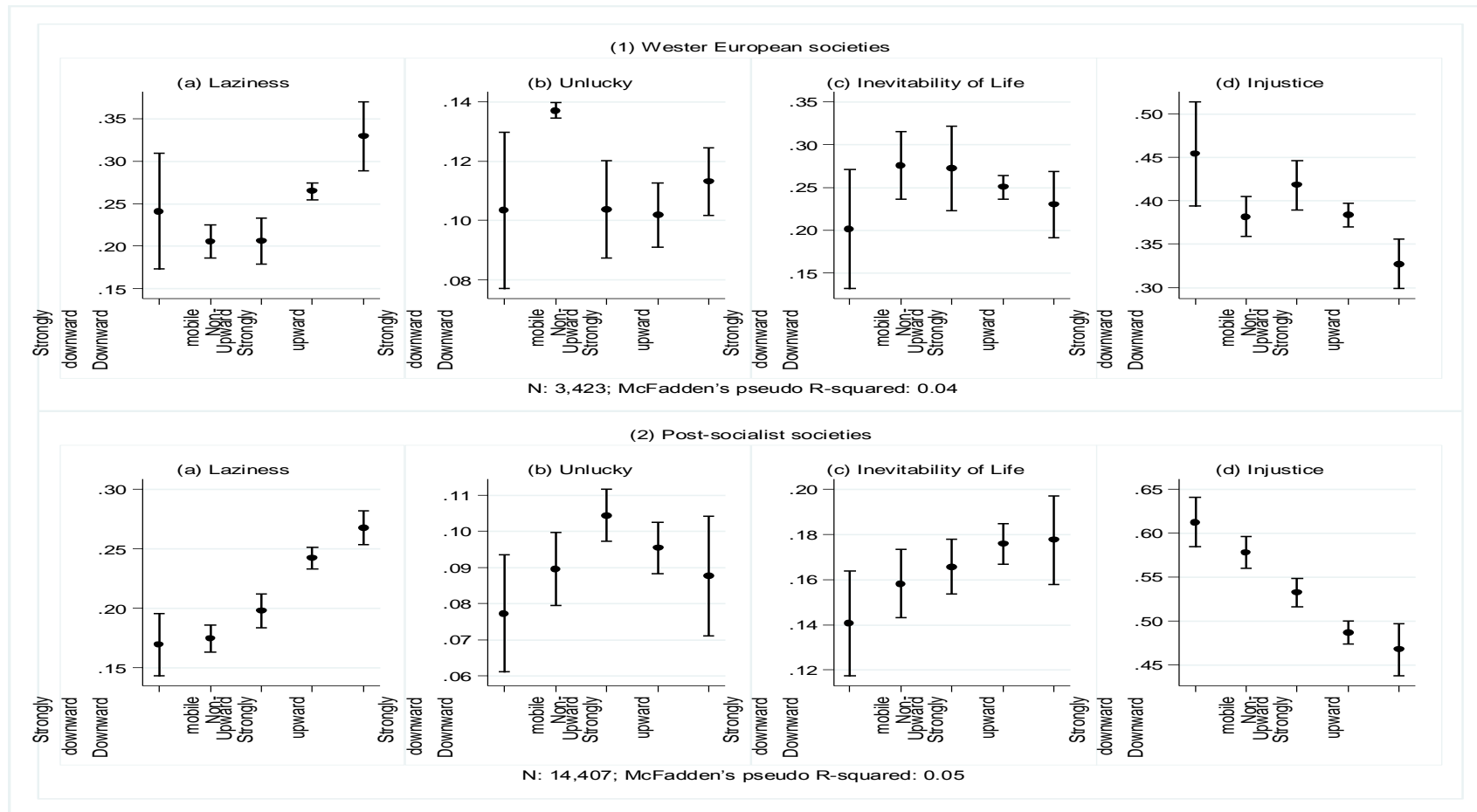
Stata:

Predictive margins after mlogit

Objective mobility, predictive margins, multinomial logistic models



Subjective mobility, predictive margins, multinomial logistic models



Multi-level analysis

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Popular explanations of poverty}_i &= \overbrace{\text{Model 1}} \\ &+ \gamma_1 \text{ development}_j + \gamma_2 \text{ democracy}_j \\ &+ \sum_{l=1}^2 \eta_l (\text{mobility}_{ij} \times [\gamma_1 \text{ development}_j + \gamma_2 \text{ inequality}_j]) \\ &+ U_{0j} \end{aligned}$$

Stata:

Multilevel multinomial regressions (mlogit with gllamm)

Multilevel analysis of SUBJECTIVE mobility

	Other European societies			Post-socialist societies		
	Reference: Injustice in society			Reference: Injustice in society		
	(I) Laziness	(II) Inevitability	(III) Bad luck	(I) Laziness	(II) Inevitability	(III) Bad luck
Social mobility						
Upward	1.585***	1.100	1.208***	1.701***	1.134*	1.350***
Strongly upward	1.990***	1.146	1.268***	2.040***	1.327**	1.566***
Contextual factors						
GDP per capita	1.103***	1.116***	1.264***	0.874**	1.025	0.938
Gini coefficient	1.073**	0.890***	1.163***	0.883***	0.770***	0.996
Interactions						
Upward * GDP	0.988	0.960	0.983	1.147*	1.012	1.176**
Strongly upward * GDP	1.018	1.233**	1.043	1.121	1.875***	1.579***
Upward * Gini	1.099**	0.944	0.940	1.133**	0.990	0.976
Strongly upward * Gini	1.128*	1.086	0.879*	1.086	1.242*	0.973
Country-level variance	0.157***			0.162***		
Log likelihood	-20,815			-16,477		
Observations/Countries	17,830/26			14,407/21		

Conclusions

Upwardly (downwardly) mobile individuals are more likely to explain poverty by laziness (social injustice)

But what really matters is subjective mobility

Economic development appears to have some association on mobile individuals' perceptions about poverty determinants

Output & plans

The article is under review in a relevant journal

- Feedback is very much welcome – ag900@cam.ac.uk

Analysis of longitudinal dataset (e.g. POLPAN)

Going back to the origins:

- Does social mobility affect support for democracy?

This report was presented at the 5th LCSR International Annual Conference “Cultural and Economic Changes under Cross-national Perspective”.

November 16 – 20, 2015 – Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

<http://lcsr.hse.ru/en/conf2015>

Настоящий доклад был представлен на V ежегодной международной конференции ЛССИ «Культурные и экономические изменения в сравнительной перспективе».

16-20 ноября 2015 года – НИУ ВШЭ, Москва, Россия.

<http://lcsr.hse.ru/en/conf2015>