The social stratification of internal geographical mobility in Europe.

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Abstract

Internal migration tends to be generated by the same forces that typically generate international migration: they are motivated by the opportunities for realizing economic gains and financial support for local activities, for investing in human capital and improving one's economic condition. We aim to add empirical results that can be relevant in the debate on long-range geographical mobility in different European societies.

We study the selection into geographical mobility, analysing the effects of socio-demographic characteristics on internal inter-regional mobility (NUTS-2 level), their interaction with time/cohorts and their changes according to the different definitions of geographical mobility (short/long distance, from rural to urban areas, etc.).

We use the SHARELIFE (2008-09) database. It is the third wave of SHARE (Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) providing life-history information about a representative sample of about 27,000 respondents aged 50 and over living in Europe.

1. Motivation

In the international literature, as well as in everyday language, the term «migration» has come to mean, almost exclusively, «international migration» (King and Skeldon 2010), and the growing policy concern with cross-borders migrants tends to overlook the contribution of within-borders migration. Nevertheless, the increasing complexity of human mobility requires that internal migration, a phenomenon that, at least in quantitative terms, appears to be even more relevant than international migration, should be taken into account. The overwhelming majority of people who move do so inside their own country. Even with a conservative definition of internal migration, which counts movement across only the largest zonal demarcations in a country, UN (2009) estimated 740 million internal migrants. The contemporary figure for international migrants, being defined as those residing outside their country of birth, was 214 million. The magnitude of the phenomenon has a significant impact on the social, economic and political spheres of states (Ellis 2012).

Existing literature suggest that internal migration, and long-range migration in particular, tends to be generated by the same forces that typically generate international migration. They are motivated by the opportunities for realizing economic gains and financial support for local activities, for investing in human capital and improving one's economic condition. We aim to add empirical results that can be relevant in the debate on long-range geographical mobility (inter-regional moves, namely among NUTS-2 level regions) in different European societies. We study the selection into geographical mobility, analysing how some socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, education, social class of origin, family events) affect the possibility of moving. Furthermore, we also study how this selection has changed over time/cohorts and how it changes according to the different definitions of geographical mobility (short/long distance, from rural to urban areas, etc.).

The main contribution of this paper is linked to shed light on analogies and differences within the European context. The comparative perspective used, ensured by using standardized data, allows to evaluate if the selectivity of internal migrants compared to the majority groups is based on similar factors in different European countries or, alternatively, there are peculiarities at country-level. The selection operates when internal migrants can be characterized by different personal traits or behaviours than those who

do not change residence. In general, migrants tend to be young, more educated, single and childless, and open to innovation. They are also frequently more able and motivated by a desire for personal achievement (Borjas et al. 1992). In this sense, we aim at testing if internal migration follows a similar (positive) selection or not across European countries

2. Theoretical contribution

We integrate migration in the analytical core of social stratification research, the so called social origin-education-destination (OED) triangle that represents the basic processes underlying the intergenerational reproduction of status (Blau and Duncan 1967; Bernardi and Ballarino 2016). Our analytical approach, in fact, looks at both education (E) and migration (M) as choices taken with the purpose of improving one's welfare, in particular by accessing to better occupational opportunities, and thus making social mobility possible. While this perspective is indebted to human capital theory, it differs from the latter since it sees both choices as embedded in a social context, first of all the household, and looks at their role in the intergenerational reproduction of socio-economic status.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical model underlying the analytical structure of this paper. The upper part of the figure comprises the well-known *OED* triangle representing the basic processes underlying the intergenerational reproduction of social stratification (Blau and Duncan 1967). In the triangle, the social background of origin (*O*) affects the social position of destination (*D*) in two ways: indirectly, i.e. via inequality of educational opportunities (*O-E*); and directly, net of the educational level achieved (*O-D*). The lower part of the figure adds a second triangle, *OMD*, where geographical area of origin (*GO*) and geographical mobility (*GM*) affect occupational destination *(D)*.

The model thus includes two ascribed factors affecting occupational achievement: social class of origin, and geographical origin. The two factors influence each other (*A*), since the residential history of the family of origin, determining where an individual is born (*GO*), is affected by the occupational career of the parents, that is, by his/her social class of origin (*O*). Geographical area of origin affects both educational achievement (*GO-E*) because the uneven distribution of schools and universities over regions affects the direct costs of schooling, and occupational achievement (*GO-D*) because the division of labour among territories shapes the occupational structure and thus the set of

opportunities available to individual careers. However, individuals are not 'trapped' in their geographical area of origin: they can move from their place of origin to another one in which opportunities are better. Hence, geographical mobility (*GM*) is seen as an achieved factor and, as education (*E*), to be analysed in terms of 'investment' in future occupational achievement (Sjaastad 1962). As an investment, GM implies costs, benefits and risk, and hence a process of social selection (Ballarino and Panichella 2015) involving both social and geographical origins, as well as the educational level achieved (links *S*).[1]

Fig. 1 – Theoretical model of the relations between geographical mobility and social stratification
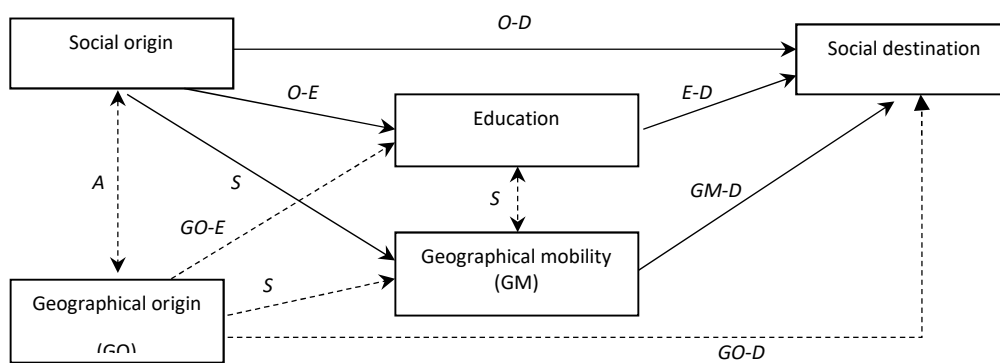
The second contribution of the proposed paper concerns migration research. Studying internal migration allows to compare those members of a given population who migrated with their peers who did not, a comparison typically absent from current migration research, which is mostly focussed on international migration and thus typically samples migrants as a part of the population of the destination country and compares their behaviour and achievement with the one of natives. At the contrary, we sample migrants as a part of the population of their country of origin. This is not only a problem of operationalization: by defining its objects as "migrants", that is as a distinct population, migration research often risks a substantial reification of the migration process, by which migration is turned into an ascribed quality (such as gender, ethnicity or place of birth), while it is not one. Crucially, our perspective sees migration as one of a set of possible events characterizing the life-course of individuals, allowing us to study the selection process leading to migration.

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[1] Figure 1 depicts a mutual connection between GM and education, since a number of individuals move for educational purposes.

3. Data and methods

We use the SHARELIFE (2008-09) database. It is the third wave of SHARE (Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) providing life-history information about a representative sample of about 27,000 respondents aged 50 and over living in Europe. Sharelife respondents are asked to report all the changes in accommodation (at regional level for internal moves) they had throughout their lives. The domains of interests also include family relationships history, housing, educational career and working history. Despite the retrospective nature of the data, it has been shown the ability of old-age respondents to recall with good accuracy events occurred many years ago (Havari and Mazzonna, 2015). The longitudinal data contained in this source will be useful in order to detect the relation between migration history, working career and social mobility (both from the intra- and the inter-generational viewpoint).

The selected subsample is composed by individual born between 1920 and 1959 living at the interview in the following countries: Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Poland, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, and Greece. The dependent variable is the number of inter-regional moves, including international mobility. However, as a first step of our analysis, we focus on the dummy variable ever moved yes/no. In the first stage of our analysis, we exclude international migrants. The resulting pooled dataset contains 19,320 cases. The number of cases by countries are shown in Table 1.

The main independent variable the level of education measured in years and then grouped in the following intervals: 0-10, 11-15, and 16 or more. This variable will be considered in their interaction with the country of residence. . The analysis also considers as control variables, sex, birth cohort (1920-29, 1930-39, 1940-49, 1950-59), and social class of origin as the occupation of the main breadwinner when the individual was 10 years old.

4. Preliminary results

Tab 1. Percentage of individual who experienced at least one inter-regional move. Individuals born between 1920 and 1960 (excluding international movers).

Tab. 1 – Percentage of individuals who experienced at least one episode of inter-regional mobility

	Never moved	Moved	Tot	n
Sweden	49.0	51.0	100.0	1,628
Denmark	45.3	54.7	100.0	1,775
Netherlands	63.0	37.0	100.0	1,971
Germany	67.5	32.5	100.0	1,476
France	63.6	36.4	100.0	1,826
Poland	71.3	28.8	100.0	1,798
Czech Rep.	75.3	24.8	100.0	1,697
Spain	72.6	27.4	100.0	2,023
Italy	77.3	22.7	100.0	2,299
Greece	72.8	27.2	100.0	2,827
	66.6	33.4	100.0	19,320

Source: own elaboration on SHARELife.

Overall, we have at one every three individual experienced an interregional move over her or his life course (Tab. 1). However, it emerges a quite high heterogeneity over countries with higher values in the Scandinavian area and a lower propensity to move in the East Europe and in the Mediterranean area with Germany, the Netherlands and France in the middle.

The relationship between education and internal mobility is evaluated though a multivariate analysis based on the estimation of logistic model. Figure 1 shows the resulting predicted probability according to the country of residence and the level of education. Results show that selectivity based on education tend to be confirmed in all the countries with propensity to move that tend to increase among more educated people. However, in southern Europe differences based on education are less relevant and not significant. These preliminary results suggest a different level of selectivity in the internal migration over European countries.
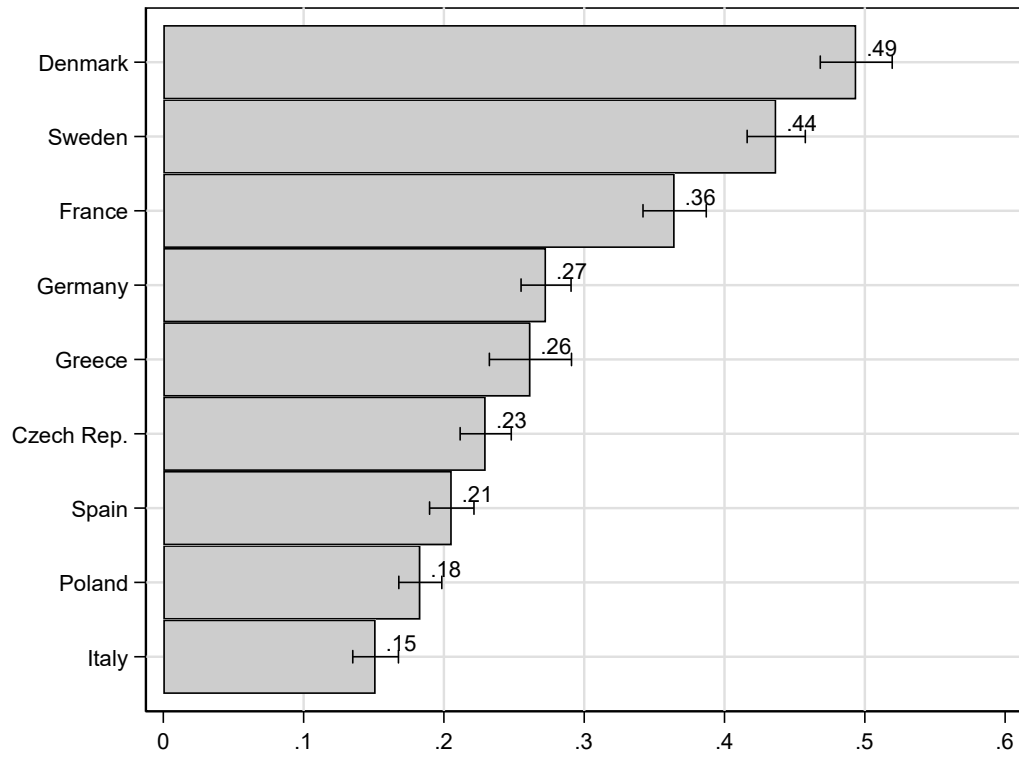
Further development of the analysis will consider other factor of selectivity potentially affecting the propensity to move linked to cohort, gender, social class of origin and family events.

Preliminary results

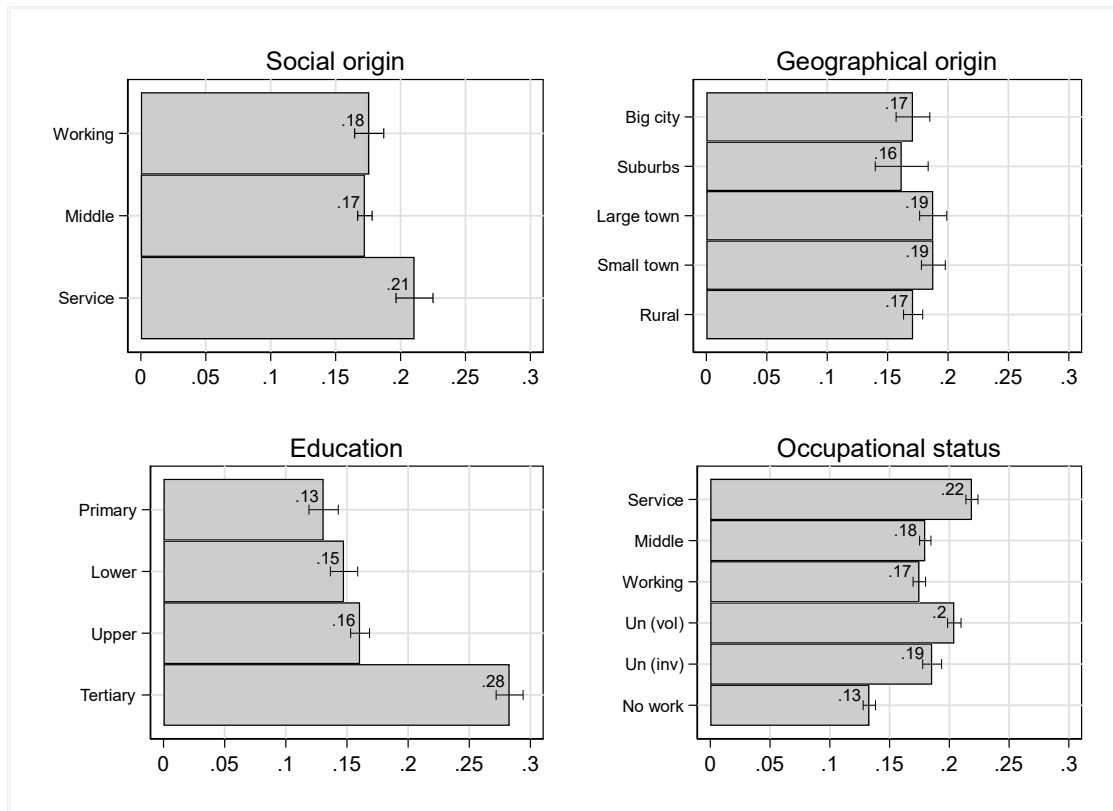**Figure 1: Probability of GM by age**
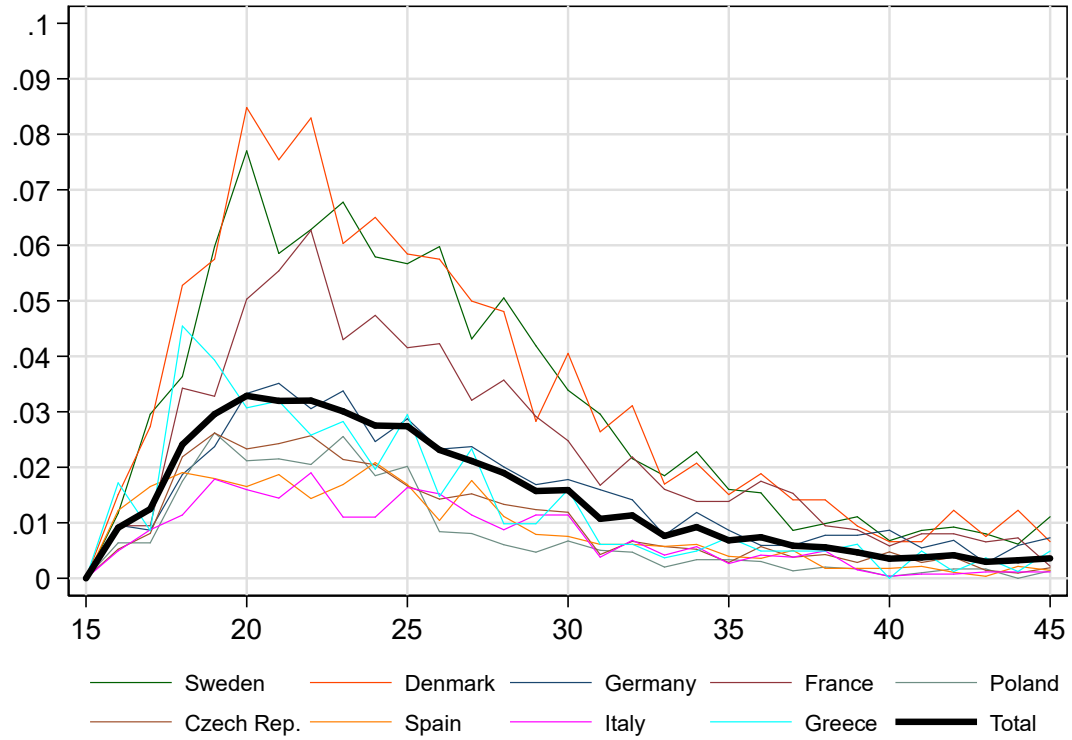
Figure 2: Probability of having experienced at least one episode of GM by country
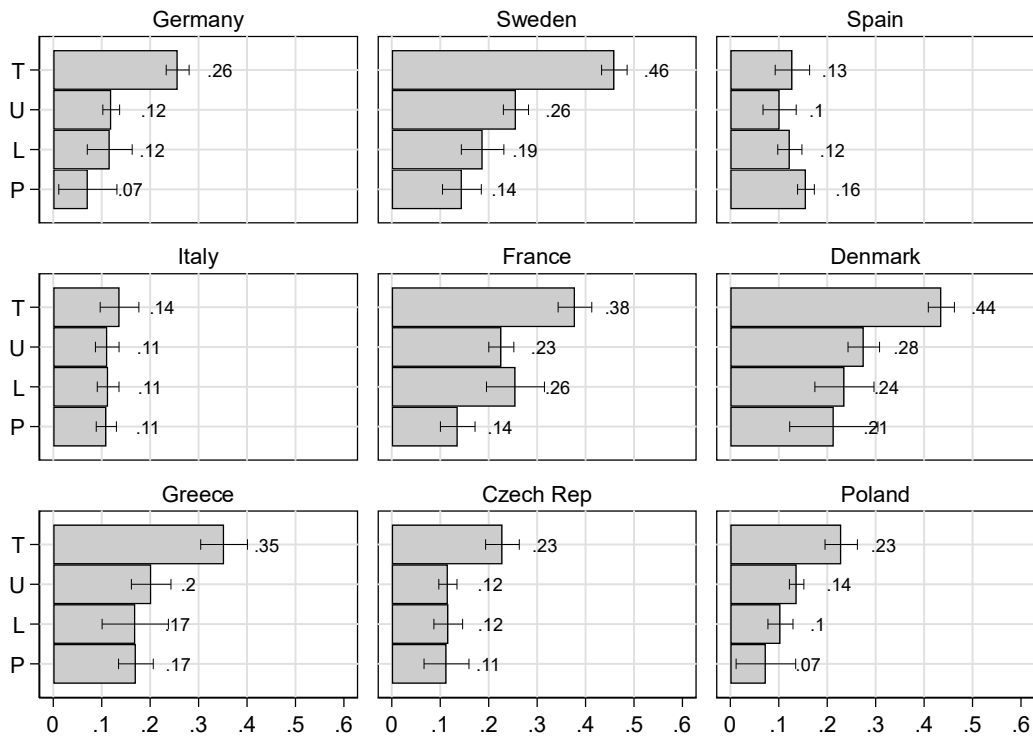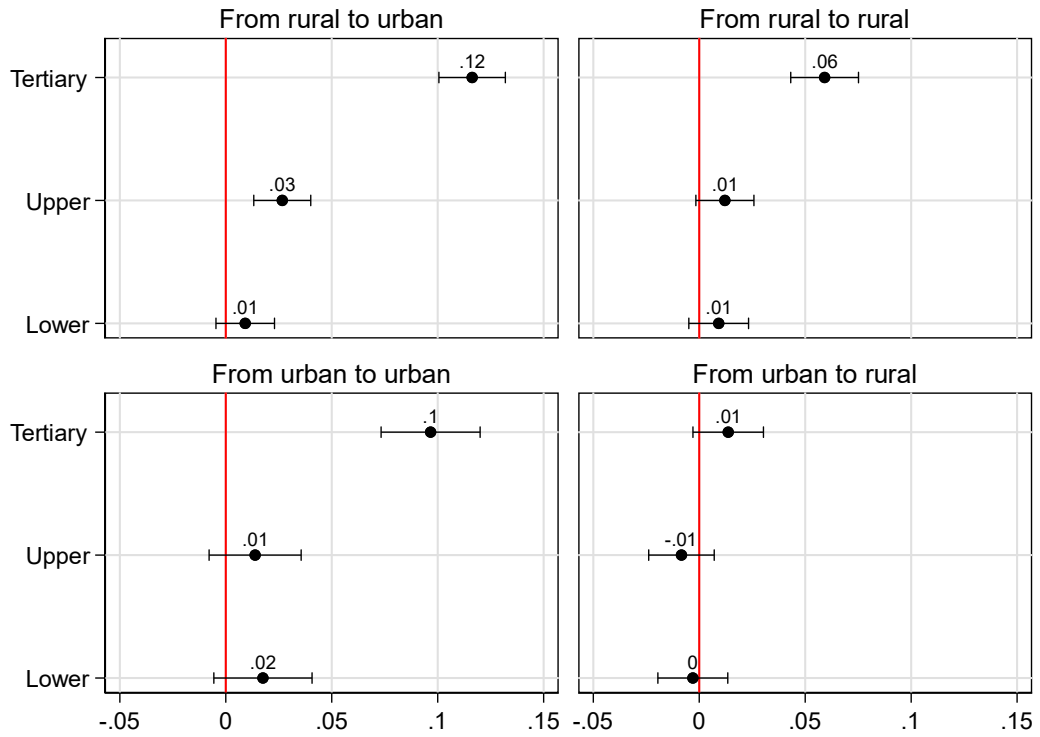
Figure 3: Average prediction of having experienced at least one episode of GM by ascribed (social class and geographical origin) and achieved factors (education and occupational status).

Figure 4: Average prediction of having experienced at least one episode of GM by education and country.

Figure 5: Differences in the average prediction of having experienced at least one episode of GM by type of movement (rural or urban) and education. Ref cat: primary educated. (Average preduciton: RU: 0.08; RR: 0.08; UU: 0.12; UR: 0.06)

Figure 6: Differences in the average prediction of having experienced at least one episode of GM by education, social class of origin and type of movement (rural or urban). Ref. Cat.: primary educated
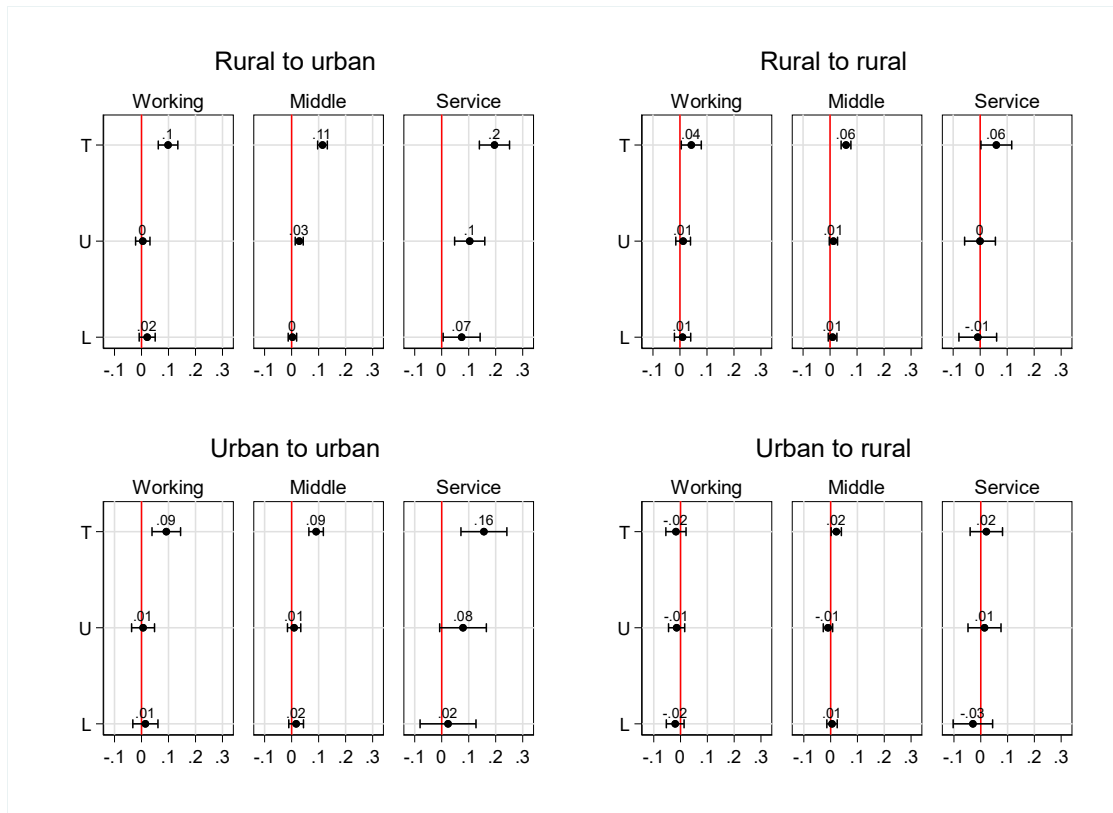
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