Trends in the Intergenerational Transmission of Occupational Preferences, Segregation, and Wage Inequality - Empirical Evidence from Europe and the United States

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The political efforts to guarantee equal opportunities and gender equity in the work life, and the converging labor market behavior of women and men suggest a decreasing influence of family background variables on occupational choice (Harding 2005, Hellerstein and Sandler Morill 2011), a decreasing degree of occupational segregation (Jacobs 1989), and declining gender wage differentials (Altonji and Blank 1999, Commission of the European Communities 2007), and a decreasing effect of occupational sex segregation on gender wage differentials (Treiman and Hartmann 1981, Sorensen 1990).
The paper advances the previous literature and addresses to cohort differences concerning the intergenerational transmission of occupational preferences and the implication for occupational segregation, and gender wage differentials in selected European countries and the United States. Based on longitudinal data providing nationally representative socioeconomic data of children and their parents the paper analyzes the evolution of the impact of family background on the individual occupational choice, and the explanatory power of occupational segregation to maintain gender wage differentials. To evaluate the influence of individual and family background characteristics on occupational choice we employ multinomial logit models. We decompose segregation indices (Duncan and Duncan 1955, Karmel and Maclachlan 1988) into a “pure” gender component and components attributable to e.g. the gender distribution of education, or employment status (Spriggs and Williams 1996). The gender wage differentials are quantified using regression techniques, and decomposed in a component within-occupation stratification, and a ‘pure’ occupational segregation component.

The paper is organized in four sections. Section 1 discusses the related literature. Section 2 reports the data base and the methodological issues. In section 3 the empirical results are discussed. Section 4 concludes with a summary of findings and a discussion of policy implications.

References:


