

Chapter 1 : Economic Inequality: It's Far Worse Than You Think - Scientific American

"Mobility and Inequality delivers on its promise to integrate sociological and economic approaches to inequality. Leading scholars assess the past and set the future agenda for mobility research." Leading scholars assess the past and set the future agenda for mobility research."

Definition[edit] Social mobility is defined as the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between layers or tiers in an open system of social stratification. Open stratification systems are those in which at least some value is given to achieved status characteristics in a society. The movement can be in a downward or upward direction. Occupation is another measure used in researching mobility, which usually involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data, but other studies may concentrate on social class. Intergenerational upward mobility is more common, where children or grandchildren are in economic circumstances better than those of their parents or grandparents. In the US, this type of mobility is described as one of the fundamental features of the " American Dream " even though there is less such mobility than almost all other OECD countries. Social mobility is highly dependent on the overall structure of social statuses and occupations in a given society. Such dimensions within a given society can be seen as independent variables that can explain differences in social mobility at different times and places in different stratification systems. In addition, the same variables that contribute as intervening variables to the valuation of income or wealth and that also affect social status, social class , and social inequality do affect social mobility. These include sex or gender , race or ethnicity , and age. These differences persist and widen into young adulthood and beyond. Just as the gap in K test scores between high- and low-income students is growing, the difference in college graduation rates between the rich and the poor is also growing. Although the college graduation rate among the poorest households increased by about 4 percentage points between those born in the early s and those born in the early s, over this same period, the graduation rate increased by almost 20 percentage points for the wealthiest households. As the socioeconomic inequality continues to increase in the United States, being on either end of the spectrum makes a child more likely to remain there, and never become socially mobile. A child born to parents with income in the lowest quintile is more than ten times more likely to end up in the lowest quintile than the highest as an adult 43 percent versus 4 percent. And, a child born to parents in the highest quintile is five times more likely to end up in the highest quintile than the lowest 40 percent versus 8 percent. This parenting style, known as "accomplishment of natural growth" differs from the style of middle-class and upper-class parents with at least one parent having higher education , known as "cultural cultivation". Lower class children often attend lower quality schools, receive less attention from teachers, and ask for help much less than their higher class peers. Today, the gaps seen in both access to education and educational success graduating from a higher institution is even larger. Cultural capital , a term first coined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is the process of distinguishing between the economic aspects of class and powerful cultural assets. Bourdieu described three types of capital that place a person in a certain social category: Economic capital includes economic resources such as cash , credit , and other material assets. Social capital includes resources one achieves based on group membership, networks of influence, relationships and support from other people. Cultural capital is any advantage a person has that gives them a higher status in society, such as education , skills, or any other form of knowledge. Usually, people with all three types of capital have a high status in society. Bourdieu found that the culture of the upper social class is oriented more toward formal reasoning and abstract thought. The lower social class is geared more towards matters of facts and the necessities of life. He also found that the environment in which person develops has a large effect on the cultural resources that a person will have. It has been shown that students raised under the concerted cultivation approach have "an emerging sense of entitlement" which leads to asking teachers more questions and being a more active student, causing teachers to favor students raised in this manner. In this approach, which is more common amongst working-class families, parents do not focus on developing the special talents of their individual children, and they speak to their children in directives. Due to this, it is more rare for a child raised in this manner to question or challenge adults and conflict arises between

childrearing practices at home and school. Children raised in this manner are less inclined to participate in the classroom setting and are less likely to go out of their way to positively interact with teachers and form relationships. More disturbing was the fact that these differentials persisted even after controlling for obvious factors such as SAT scores and family socioeconomic status". This form of capital, identified by social scientists only in recent years, has to do with the education and life preparation of children. There is no international " benchmark " of social mobility, though one can compare measures of mobility across regions or countries or within a given area over time. Such comparisons typically look at intergenerational mobility, examining the extent to which children born into different families have different life chances and outcomes. The Great Gatsby Curve. Countries with more equality of wealth also have more social mobility. This indicates that equality of wealth and equality of opportunity go hand-in-hand. In this and other studies, in fact, the USA has very low mobility at the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, with mobility increasing slightly as one goes up the ladder. At the top rung of the ladder, however, mobility again decreases. In Britain, much debate on social mobility has been generated by comparisons of the National Child Development Study NCDS and the Birth Cohort Study BCS70 , [25] which compare intergenerational mobility in earnings between the and the UK cohorts, and claim that intergenerational mobility decreased substantially in this year period. These findings have been controversial, partly due to conflicting findings on social class mobility using the same datasets, [26] and partly due to questions regarding the analytical sample and the treatment of missing data. Some researchers claim that social mobility is actually declining. The contribution of education to social mobility often gets neglected in social mobility research although it really has the potential to transform the relationship between origins and destinations. There is some debate regarding how important educational attainment is for social mobility. A substantial literature argues that there is a direct effect of social origins DESO which cannot be explained by educational attainment. Graduation rates supply a rich context to these patterns. Lack of education frequently leads to lack of success in the future for many individuals. They do not possess the degrees required to even apply for a plethora of jobs. Therefore, these individuals may get stuck in communities that are at a stand still. Ultimately, the social classes remain stagnant because nothing is changing within each social construct and education is at the forefront in terms of its contribution to the future issues. Influence of intelligence and education[edit] Social status attainment and therefore social mobility in adulthood are of interest to psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, economists, epidemiologists and many more. The reason behind the interest is because it indicates access to material goods, educational opportunities, healthy environments, and nonetheless the economic growth. Most of the Scottish children which were born in participated in the Scottish Mental Survey , which was conducted under the auspices of the Scottish Council for Research in Education SCRE [47] and obtained the data of psychometric intelligence of Scottish pupils. The number of children who took the mental ability test based on the Moray House tests was 87, They were between age 10 and The tests covered general, spatial and numerical reasoning. Researchers separated into six social classes were used. Men at midlife social class I and II the highest, more professional also had the highest IQ at age Height at midlife, years of education and childhood IQ were significantly positively related to upward social mobility, while number of siblings had no significant effect. After controlling the effect of independent variables , only IQ at age 11 was significantly inversely related to downward movement in social mobility. Structural equation model of the direct and indirect influence of childhood position and IQ upon social status attainment at mid-life. Finally, height, education and IQ at age 11 were predictors of upward social mobility and only IQ at age 11 and height were significant predictors of downward social mobility. Another research [43] looked into the pivotal role of education in association between ability and social class attainment through three generations fathers, participants and offspring using the SMS [42] Lothian Birth Cohort educational data, childhood ability and late life intellectual function data. It was proposed that social class of origin acts as a ballast [43] restraining otherwise meritocratic social class movement, and that education is the primary means through which social class movement is both restrained and facilitatedâ€”therefore acting in a pivotal role. There was no direct link social classes across generations, but in each generation educational attainment was a predictor of social class, which is consistent with other studies. For each SD increase in education, the odds of moving upward on the

social class spectrum were 2. For each SD increase in education, the odds of moving upward were 3. In conclusion, education is very important, because it is the fundamental mechanism functioning both to hold individuals in their social class of origin and to make it possible for their movement upward or downward on the social class ladder. There was a lack of social mobility in the offspring generation as a whole. However, there was definitely individual offspring movement on the social class ladder: A very important pattern has also been confirmed: There were some great contributors to social class attainment and social class mobility in the twentieth century: Both social class attainment and social mobility are influenced by pre-existing levels of mental ability, [44] which was in consistence with other studies. Furthermore, educational attainment contributes to social class attainment through the contribution of mental ability to educational attainment. Even further, mental ability can contribute to social class attainment independent of actual educational attainment, as in when the educational attainment is prevented, individuals with higher mental ability manage to make use of the mental ability to work their way up on the social ladder. This study made clear that intergenerational transmission of educational attainment is one of the key ways in which social class was maintained within family, and there was also evidence that education attainment was increasing over time. Finally, the results suggest that social mobility moving upward and downward has increased in recent years in Britain. Education policies are often critiqued based on their impact on a single generation, but it is important to look at education policies and the effects they have on social mobility. In the research, elitist schools are defined as schools that focus on providing its best students with the tools to succeed, whereas an egalitarian school is one that predicates itself on giving equal opportunity to all its students to achieve academic success. It was also discovered that the system with the most elitist policies produced the greatest amount of utilitarian welfare. Logically, social mobility decreases with more elitist education systems and utilitarian welfare decreases with less elitist public education policies. This is explained as the researchers found that education has multiple benefits. It brings more productivity and has a value, which was a new thought for education. This shows that the arguments for the regressive model should not be without qualifications. Furthermore, in the elitist system, the effect of earnings distribution on growth is negatively impacted due to the polarizing social class structure with individuals at the top with all the capital and individuals at the bottom with nothing. It is almost impossible to achieve upward mobility without education. Education is frequently seen as a strong driver of social mobility. The higher the family income the better opportunities one is given to get a good education. The inequality in education makes it harder for low-income families to achieve social mobility. Research has indicated that inequality is connected to the deficiency of social mobility. In a period of growing inequality and low social mobility, fixing the quality of and access to education has the possibility to increase equality of opportunity for all Americans. The increase in graduation rates is causing an even bigger gap between high income children and low-income children. With such bad education that urban school are offering, parents of high income are moving out of these areas to give their children a better opportunity to succeed. As urban school systems worsen, high income families move to rich suburbs because that is where they feel better education is; if they do stay in the city, they put their children to private schools. The more money and time parents invest in their child plays a huge role in determining their success in school. Research has showed that higher mobility levels are perceived for locations where there are better schools.

Chapter 2 : The Relationship Between Income Inequality and Social Mobility | The Hamilton Project

Social mobility and inequality Upper bound. The American dream is simple: work hard and move up. As the country emerges from recession, the reality looks ever more complicated.

If poor people knew how rich rich people are, there would be riots in the streets. We have no idea how unequal our society has become. In their paper , Michael Norton and Dan Ariely analyzed beliefs about wealth inequality. They asked more than 5, Americans to guess the percentage of wealth i. Next, they asked people to construct their ideal distributions. Imagine a pizza of all the wealth in the United States. In an ideal world, how much should they have? The reality is strikingly different. And they would like to live on a kibbutz. This all might ring a bell. An infographic video of the study went viral and has been watched more than 16 million times. In a study published last year , Norton and Sorapop Kiatpongsan used a similar approach to assess perceptions of income inequality. They asked about 55, people from 40 countries to estimate how much corporate CEOs and unskilled workers earned. Then they asked people how much CEOs and workers should earn. Fifty years ago, it was to Again, the patterns were the same for all subgroups, regardless of age, education, political affiliation, or opinion on inequality and pay. To be fair, though, we do know that something is up. Just five percent of Americans think that inequality is a major problem in need of attention. One likely reason for this is identified by a third study , published earlier this year by Shai Davidai and Thomas Gilovich that suggests that our indifference lies in a distinctly American cultural optimism. At the core of the American Dream is the belief that anyone who works hard can move up economically regardless of his or her social circumstances. Davidai and Gilovich wanted to know whether people had a realistic sense of economic mobility. The researchers found Americans overestimate the amount of upward social mobility that exists in society. Sure enough, people think that moving up is significantly more likely than it is in reality. Interestingly, poorer and politically conservative participants thought that there is more mobility than richer and liberal participants. We are a nation of haves and soon-to-haves, of people who have made it and people who will make it. We may not want to believe it, but the United States is now the most unequal of all Western nations. To make matters worse, America has considerably less social mobility than Canada and Europe. By overemphasizing individual mobility, we ignore important social determinants of success like family inheritance, social connections, and structural discrimination. Our unique brand of optimism prevents us from making any real changes. And have you read a recent peer-reviewed paper that you would like to write about? Please send suggestions to Mind Matters editor Gareth Cook. Gareth, a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist, is the series editor of Best American Infographics and can be reached at garethideas AT gmail. He primarily studies social norms around technology, health, and illness. Follow Nick on Twitter fitznich Latest News.

Chapter 3 : Mobility and Inequality | Economic Policy Institute

Mobility and Inequality In Seattle, San Francisco and Salt Lake City, a child raised in the poorest 20 percent of families has more than a one in ten chance of ending up in the top 20 percent of earners as an adult.

Chapter 4 : Social mobility - Wikipedia

Available for Pre-order. This item will be released on January 7,