

## PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY: A REASSESSMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper focuses on parental socio-economic status and social mobility in our society. No society is static. This means that the individuals that constitute the society are not absolutely static. Sometimes, movement occurs in either workplace culminating in either demotion or promotion. In a nutshell, social mobility is the movement of individuals from one social position to another. Social mobility could be vertical, horizontal etc., while parental socio-economic status has to do with one's parent occupation in life or position. The type of work or job a parent does has great influence on a child's social mobility in our society as parents with high socio-economic status enhance their children social mobility and more when compared to parents with low socio-economic status. The research recommends that parents should strive hard through education in other to influence their children's social mobility in the society amongst others.*

*Keywords: Social Mobility, Parental Socio-Economic Status.*

### Introduction

Social mobility is the movement of a person or group of persons from one social position to another. It could be upwards or downwards. According to Pitirm A. Sorokin (Harvard Sociologist), social mobility is the passage of individuals from one social rank to another. The movement can be horizontal or vertical. Study in Per M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan shows that the major route to upward mobility is education. Denisoff and Wahrman (1975) in Elekwa (2013), the child of a farmer who goes to school and obtains a graduate training is likely to occupy a much higher social ranking than his parents. On the

other hand, the size of one's family also influences upward mobility. People from smaller families are more upwardly mobile than those from larger families. That is to say that parental socio-economic status influences mobility. People from high socio-economic background tend to enjoy a high level of (vertical) social mobility since; their families are usually smaller because of the high level of their parents' educational background and high level of socio-economic status. Parents with high socio-economic status in the society are majorly urban dwellers, enjoying a higher social mobility rate than rural dwellers whose parents are of the low socio-economic

status.

Father's education, father's occupational level, one's own education, and the kind of job one takes for his first job are particularly very important, Denisoff and Wahrman, in Elekwa (2013). Parental socio-economic status of an individual influences his mobility level in the society. Socio-economic status of one's parents has been identified as one of the factors that can help or hinder social mobility of an individual. For example, intergenerational social mobility, the social standing of children in relation to their parents, has special significance because it often reflects changes in society, that affect virtually every one. Macionis, (1994).

### **Parental Socio-Economic Status and Social Mobility**

In our society today, earning a higher college degree, securing a higher paying job or succeeding in a business endeavour contribute to upward mobility, and all these can be enhanced by an individual's parental socio-economic status in the society. Also, in a perfectly open system, the occupational status of one's parents would have absolutely no effect on one's own occupational status, while in a perfectly closed system or society the status of one's parents economically would be the only factor to determine one's own status, Denisoff and wahrman in Elekwa (2013).

There is no human community that is completely homogenous because even the simplest societies in the world give some people more responsibility than others and so reward them accordingly, thereby, helping to classifying the individuals. In all societies, we find the high and the low and in other societies a big in-between. Be it as it may, the stratification in societies has led some sociologists to

identify factors like sex, family background, size, education, position in the family, marriage, etc. as affecting social mobility rate amongst individuals in the societies.

*"The achievement and status of ones parents, grandparents and great grandparents could affect the status and access to privilege, power and prestige in the individual. Although the significance of family background is not pronounced in the Nigerian society but, it has always been a factor that affects social mobility in the society", Oniyama and oniyama, (2002).*

For example, an individual from a high socio-economic background or family will have access to good schools and therefore will be exposed to all the good opportunities in life. The importance of high socio-economic status of one's parents as a distinct advantage in access to privileges, power and prestige in thee society cannot be over emphasized. Social mobility rate of individuals from wealthy families is a sure thing.

### **Conclusion**

It is a general belief that children or individuals from middle class or rich families are few and so have all the necessary opportunities for upward social mobility because the family resources is adequate to take care of their needs. The middle class families are educated and so know the value of education; this makes for high social mobility rate amongst them.

Research has shown that the socio-economic status of parents to a large extent influences the level of education a child gets and so his upward social mobility rate in the society, Dienne (2012). More individuals from high socio-economic status

homes aspire to those highly rated professions in Nigeria like the medical profession unlike most individuals from low socio-economic status homes.

In a nutshell, social mobility is the movement of individuals from one social position to another. While parental socio-economic status has to do with the position or type of occupation one's parent occupy or do which influences individual's social mobility in our society.

### **Recommendations**

- Parents should strive hard through education in other to influence their children's social mobility in the society.
- Parents should also strive to educate their children to enable them occupy high positions in work places etc.

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