

Is America Dreaming?: Understanding Social Mobility

- YT: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2XFh_tD2RA



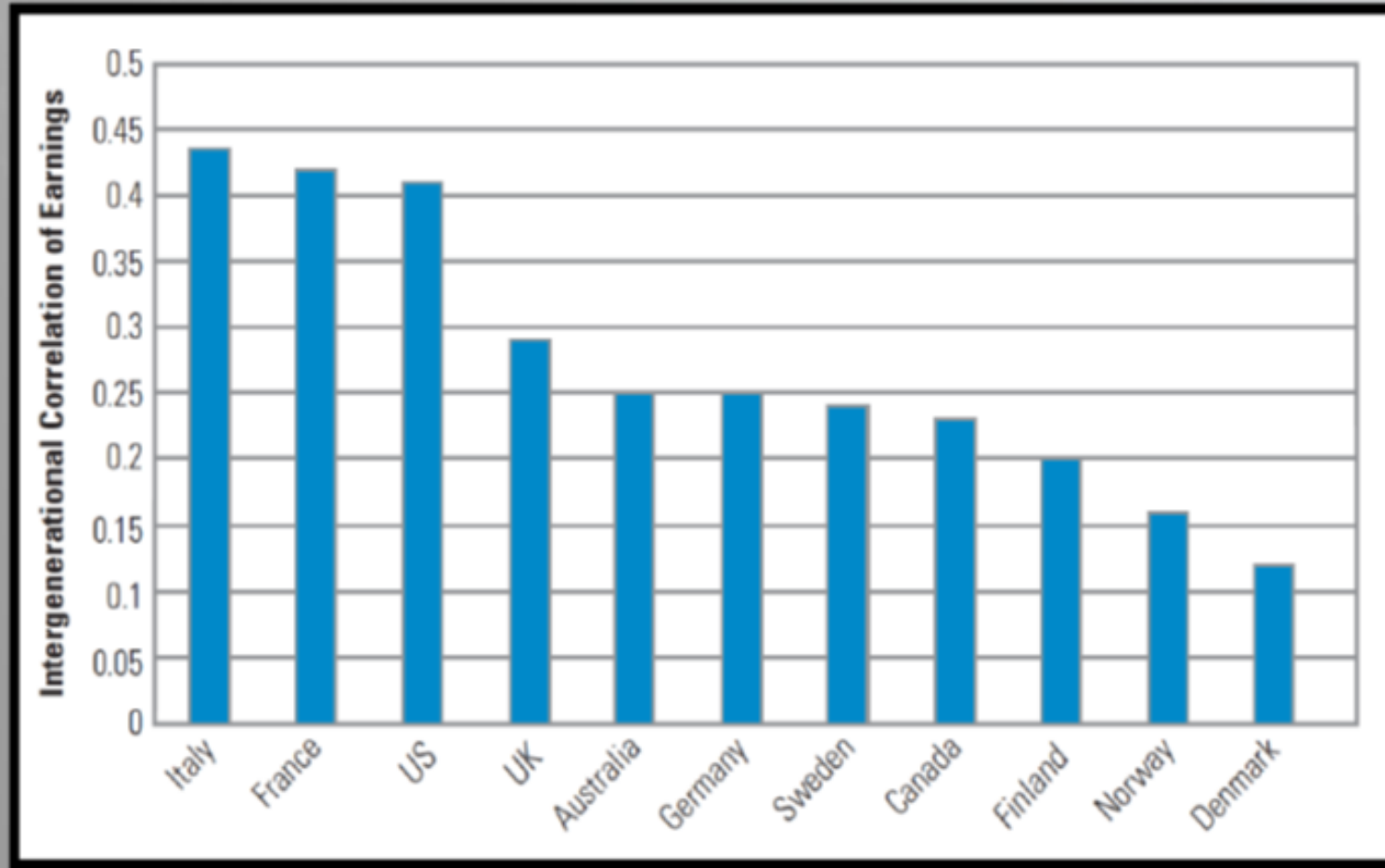
Social mobility

- Social mobility is the movement of people up or down the stratification system.
- Class systems allow for more movement than slave or caste systems.
- **Intragenerational and intergenerational** social mobility.
- While class systems do allow for **social mobility**, opportunities are not evenly distributed across social groups.
- Social origin class/actual social class position have a significant impact on many aspects of life, including education, occupation, place of residence, marriage partner, and more

Social mobility - politicians

- “I want to see social mobility rising once again,” said prime minister [Tony Blair in 2004](#)
- “We can unleash the biggest wave of social mobility since the second world war,” said prime minister [Gordon Brown in 2010](#).
- “I want to see a [more socially mobile Britain](#),” said David Cameron in 2013.
- “I want Britain to be the world’s great meritocracy,” said [Theresa May in 2016](#).

Social Mobility in Comparative Perspective



Absolute and relative social mobility

- Social mobility indicates „societal openness“
- Distinctions between *structural* and *exchange* mobility
- It is not possible to measure structural and exchange mobility in data *ex post*
- Structural and Exchange mobility are replaced by concepts *absolute* and *relative* mobility
 - explanation
 - Contingency table: Father, Son and The Holy Ghost (the core of mobility table) (R. Erikson, J. Golthorpe: *Constant Flux*, 1992)

Absolute and relative social mobility

- Absolute mobility is your chance of ending up in a different social class from the one you were born into.
 - That is around 80% and has been remarkably consistent for at least a century
 - But the movement is often small: from class 2 to 1, say, or from class 5 to 6.
- Relative mobility is different. That is your chance, if you started in, say, class 6 or 7, of making it to, say, class 1 or 2 compared with those who started at the top.
 - Here, if you start at the bottom, you are many times less likely to make it to the top than somebody born there.

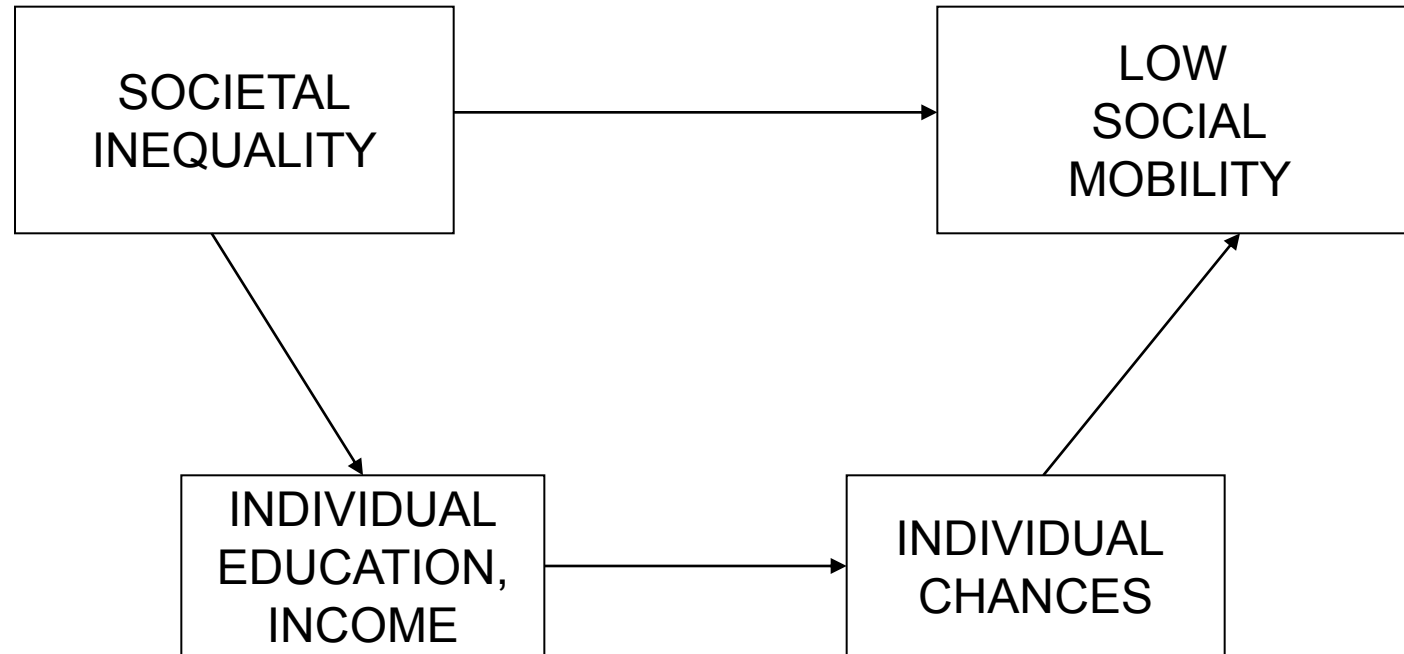
Trends in social mobility in European countries

- trends in social mobility in European countries
 - from agriculture to industry: industrial societies
 - from industry to services: post-industrial societies
 - these trends are reflected in structural social mobility trends
- but no changes in social fluidity (relative social mobility)
 - odds ratios are the same

Great Gatsby Curve - GGC

- What is the relationship between inequality and social mobility?
- in aggregated level higher economic inequality means lower social mobility and vice versa
- Great Gatsby curve
- How does it work in individual level?

COLEMAN'S BOAT APPLIED TO INEQUALITY



Coleman, 'Microfoundations and macrosocial behavior', 1987, page 165

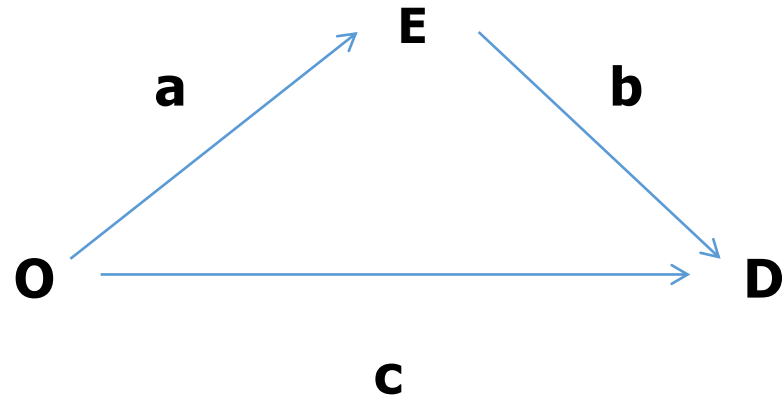
Explanation of social mobility I

- Social mobility research is very sophisticated from statistical point of view
 - theory and explanation of social mobility is weak point in SSR
- Two basic questions of mobility research:
 - Why does increase social mobility happen?
 - answer: theory of industrialization, technological and economic trends in modern societies (Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison, Myers, 1960; Treiman, 1970; Kerr, 1983), key role of education, from ascription to achievement (meritocracy)
 - Why there is reproduction of labour market position from one generation to other?
 - answer 1: theory of rational action (Goldthorpe, 1996; 2000), the aim is to avoid of social decrease, because of that strong orientation for social reproduction, especially in educational aspiration that are stratified according to social origin
 - answer 2: cultural capital is a tool for reproduction of class position via educational system (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1964; 1977)

Explanation of social mobility II

- Birth cohort replacement, education, equalization and compositional effect in social mobility development (Breen, Johnson, 2007)
 - Labour market is composed of birth cohort
 - Cohort replacement influences trends in social mobility
 - Argument: in each younger cohort we can measure higher social fluidity (lower OD association)
 - Why? Connections: O - E - D
 - Equalization effect:
 - Compositional effect
- This argument is relevant for stable democratic society „under normal circumstances“

OED triangle as a core of social mobility process



OD connection via E, indirect

OD connection, direct (via ownership, property, aspirations, access to occupations)

What we can expect in European states? Links a? b? c?

a) transition to school from family (equalization effect)

b) transition to labour market from educational system (compositional effect)

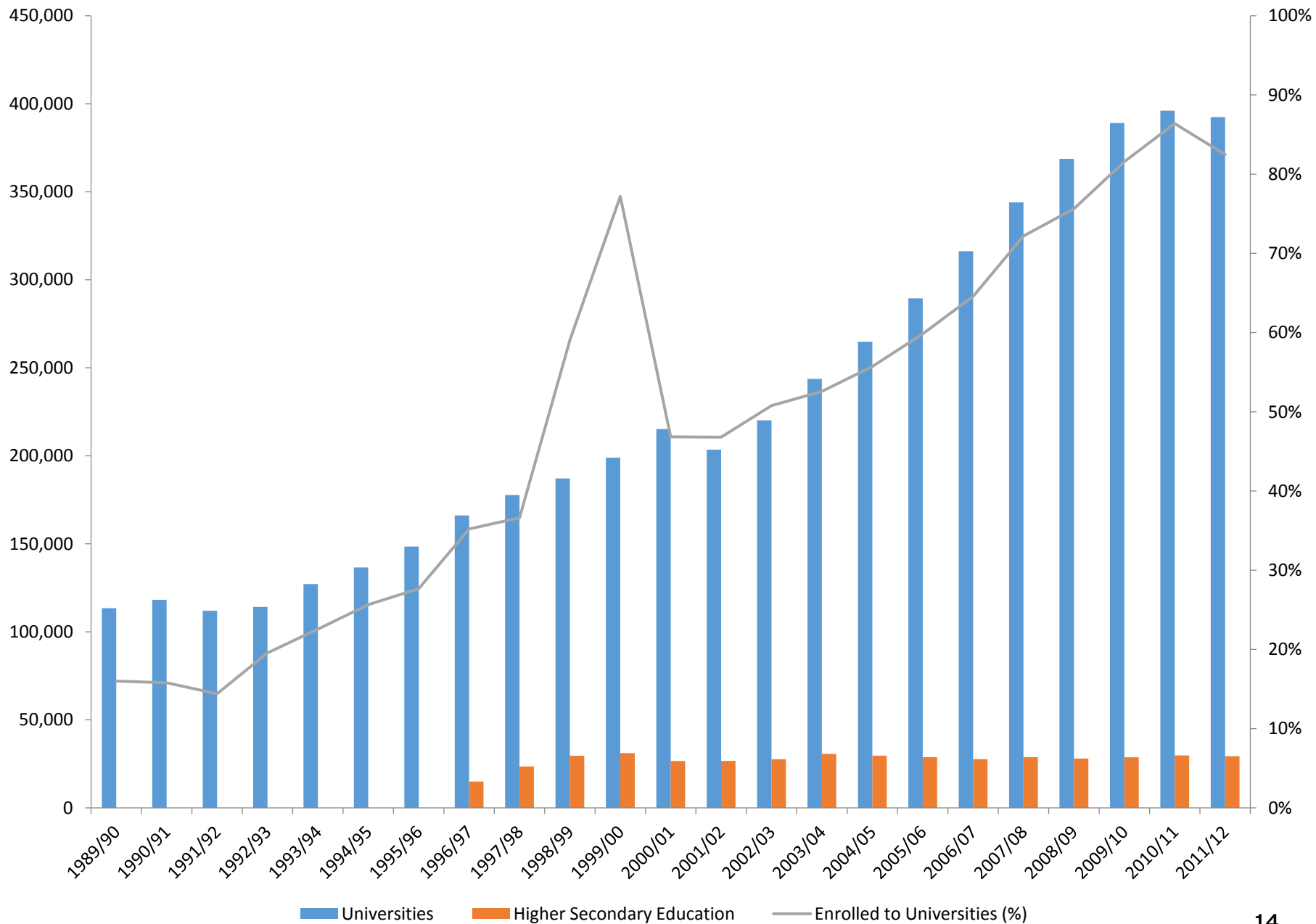
c) transition to labour market from family

Education and Social Mobility

Dual character of education

- Challenges traditional forms of allocating privileged positions in society
- Maintains privileged access to scarce positions if families with more resources are able to invest in better education

Educational expansion in the CR in last 20 years I



Educational expansion in the CR in last 20 years II

- What does educational expansion mean for transition to labour market?
 - Can we talk about the inflation of diploma/certificates?
 - If yes, is it good strategy to invest to education and increase number of young people in universities?
- What happens with returns to higher education?
 - In status consistency society they should be higher and increase
 - Yes, returns to higher education increase

Cultural capital: definition

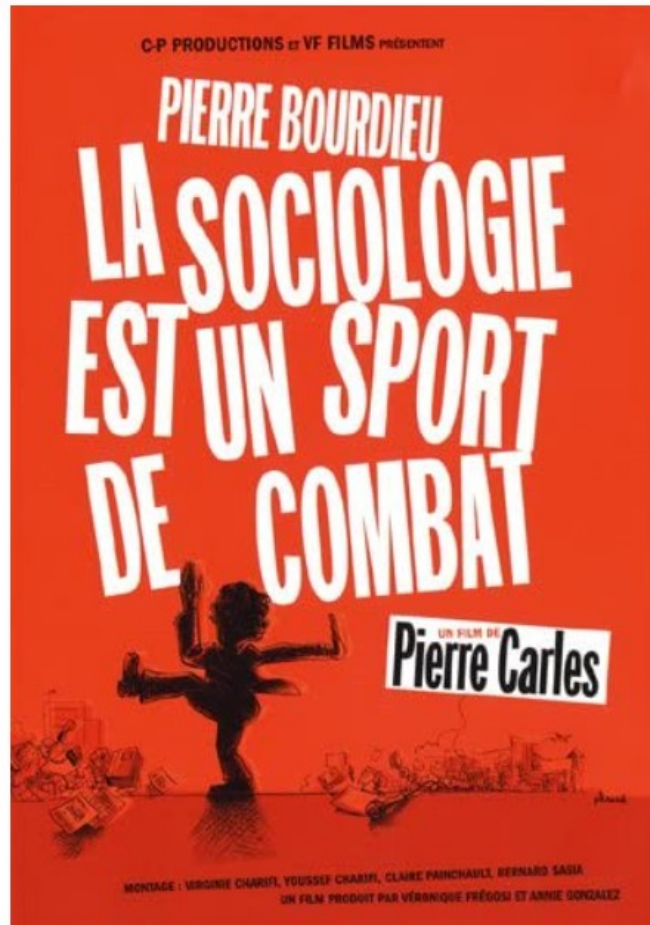
- Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1966, 1970, 1977)
 - Analysis of French society (1960s and 1970s)
 - Formulation of concept of cultural capital as a part of family origin of students
- Cultural capital is 'skill' acquired from parents
 - Cultural knowledge (orientation in dominant culture)
 - Linguistic abilities (ways of self-expressions)
 - Social knowledge (orientation in social relationships)
- Cultural capital exists in three ways
 - incorporated (personal dispositions acquired during socialization process)
 - objectivized (cultural artefacts connected with family of origin, pictures, books, sculptures)
 - institutionalized (academic titles, scientific degrees)

Cultural capital: explanation of class inequalities in education

- Educational system evaluates the level of cultural capital
 - Transformation of cultural capital to individual merit of children
 - Children with high level of cultural capital are better in school and leave educational system later
 - Children with low level of cultural capital are not so good, their school results are worse and leave educational system very soon
- Parents from higher social classes are connected with school via dominant culture, which means the success of their children in educational system
- Differences in cultural capital generate social class differences in education attainment

Pierre Bourdieu on social reproduction

- *La Sociologie est un sport de combat*
- YT: https://youtu.be/js_fVKBL5NA



Pierre Bourdieu