

Social Mobility

Sociology

Absolute and relative mobility, and why they can move in opposite directions.

Movement between class positions, measured across generations or within a career, and separable into absolute movement and relative chances of movement.

TWO SENSES

absolute, relative

COMPARED VIA

odds ratios

- Absolute: how many people ended up somewhere else.
- Relative: odds of one origin versus another.
- Room at the top can rise with fluidity unchanged.
- Post-war growth raised absolute mobility widely.
- Relative rates have proved unusually stable.
- Downward mobility is studied far less than upward.

LOOK FOR IT

More professional jobs means more people rise into them, while the advantage of starting there is untouched.

Educational reference. Cross-country mobility rankings are sensitive to method and data, and shift between studies.