

Social mobility

Social mobility: movement of individuals, families, or groups through a system of social hierarchy or stratification. [...] If the move involves a change in social class, it is called "vertical mobility" and involves either "upward mobility" or "downward mobility." (Encyclopediea Britannica)

It depends on **occupations, capital** and the overall structure of a given society and the role it ascribes to them. The **measurement of social mobility** therefore varies depending on the country. **Cohort studies** compare the **attainment** of parents and their offspring and their relative predictability. **Education, IQ, connections, culture, and material assets** are among the pivotal ingredients that can account for an individual's ability to climb the social ladder.

The notion of social mobility implies that society is **stratified and open**; it is however difficult to know how much mobility is required for a group to preserve its traditions and social fabric while avoiding stagnation or stifling innovation.

Horatio Alger was a 19th century American writer famous for his "rags to riches" narrative that has become the metaphor for the American Dream (he repeatedly portrayed a young man who, by dint of hard work and personal merits climbed the rungs of the social ladder).

Education is considered to be a crucial link between the social background of individuals and their **later class destination**, raising the question of the degree to which the association between **class of origin** and destination can be **mediated through education**.

Millennials

Millennials, also known as Generation Y or the Net Generation, are the demographic cohort that directly follows Generation X, they are the last generation born in the 20th century. Neil Howe and William Strauss (in *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*, published in 1991) defined them as individuals born between 1982 and 2004. Globally, there are **1.8 billion** of them. They make up **25%** of the U.S. population and **21%** of consumer discretionary purchases.

The environment of the Millennials is characterised by a **socially-networked world** with more time spent online than in previous generations. They represent a niche and have received strong **marketing attention** all the more so since they are 2.5 times more likely to adopt technology early. Forty-six percent of them report having at least 200 friends on Facebook, compared with 19% of non-millennials. They are more willing than other generations to buy a product or service in order to support a cause (37%). They see themselves as self-absorbed (59%), politically unaffiliated (50%), and are the first generation expected to be **less economically successful** than their – overprotective – parents (Pew Center April 2015).

They came of age in the wake of the **economic slump** and many of them live with their parents, are compelled to postpone marriage, family-raising and home-buying. For these reasons, it is said they have a prolonged adolescence. What characterises their generation is unpaid internships, scarce entry-level jobs, the need for prior experience to find a job and crippling student loans. They are said to have less civic engagement and lower political participation than any previous group although they are more informed than any other generation before them.

One group is particularly hard-hit, the **NEETs**. For the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), NEET (not in employment, education or training) youth can be either unemployed or inactive and not involved in education or training. NEETs are thought to be at risk of becoming socially excluded since they live below the poverty line.

The OECD said that Europe had failed to live up to its promises through social contracts with youth and feared increasing political disenchantment.