
Social Structures And Forces In A Person's Life

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, upward mobility's definition is the ability of an individual to rise to a higher economic and social position. Social structures are norms and institutions which are put forth by members of a society in adherence to various social and economic practices and generally as a natural order of life (Hertz, 3). In the United States of America, the USA, upward mobility can be construed as achieving the elusive 'American Dream,' where if you're hardworking enough and have got just the right ambition, you'll accomplish this elusive 'American Dream (Zelwegger, 210).' As statistics suggest, the role and influence of various social structures in molding a person's life are quite high and crucial. This essay seeks to illustrate and offer a discussion on different social structures, which are education, religion, family, race and class stratifications, and how they impact human life.

Today, human societies have put great emphasis on the role of education in not only providing knowledge but due to more significant benefits such as upward mobility. For this reason, education institutions such as schools, universities, or colleges are generally promiscuous as nearly every person has a right to education. Several research studies have found out that having a college degree increases your chances of success in achieving upward mobility. The principal argument is that most high paying jobs demand a higher degree of qualifications (Hertz, 9). Having a college or university degree, for instance, is a mark of academic and skill proficiency in a specific field. Hence, a degree holder has a more significant competitive advantage as he can negotiate for high paying jobs, which he meets the qualifications. On the contrary, a person who does not hold a degree can hardly compete against one who owns one (Chetty, 35). This has made it very hard for lowly educated people to attain upward mobility, given that most of the jobs that can enhance their chances of achieving upward mobility are far out of reach from them. Jobs, in fields such as manufacturing or engineering, exhibit higher demands for qualifications and skills, which, as a result, means that unskilful people cannot get employed. Additionally, the educational institution which one attends in the course of one's life greatly determines whether one's chances of achieving upward mobility increase rapidly (Hertz, 6). If a person underwent their education in a top tier elite school and attended an Ivy League University, then their chances of upward mobility seem higher than for those in lower-tier schools. Hardly can a person understate the role of educational institutions in enabling a person to achieve upward mobility.

The family institution is a primary social structure that can influence a person's life chances. In the family setting, parents or guardians play a critical role in the life of their dependants; for example, parents' occupation, earnings, and education background (Zelwegger, 213). In most cases, parents are the breadwinners and the family's providers. Hence, parents, in most cases, are the drivers in a person's early life. Parents with high-income capacity have the ability to avail of several options and resources to their offspring. A person can then use these resources to facilitate or propel one economically. For instance, parents with higher incomes have high ability and capacity, for example, to provide capital for a business start-up. On the other hand, however, poor income families or parents lack sufficient or adequate resources as their counterparts. In her research study, Chetty (32) established that children of parents who are college-educated have higher chances of gaining upward mobility faster. Conversely, children to non-educated parents are relatively unlikely to secure jobs as their counterparts.

Such family inequalities lead to a multiplier effect where there is an intergenerational lack of upward mobility. Chetty further augments this idea through her findings, which show that children born of poor parents who'd, however, migrated to better societies significantly increased the children's chance to gain upward mobility. The inference is that, within family institutions, parents as members play a critical and vital role in shaping a person's life choices.

In the current world, racial groups or societies are a controversial yet crucial social force in a person's life. Hertz (9) believes that race holds a higher degree and ability to determine a person's chances of gaining upward mobility. In his 2005 study on the United States, Hertz (5) found that white families are twice as likely to achieve upward mobility compared to black and Latino families. This is primarily due to American societal bias on the empowerment of Whites compared to other races, which eventually translates to the trend. On the other hand, black and Latino families have meager chances of achieving upward mobility leading to more likelihood of intergenerational downward mobility among non-whites (Chetty, 34). The principle point or inference is that hailing from the more dominant group in the society provides higher chances to upward mobility as well as opportunities to do so. Minority groups in the society ultimately have to work twice as hard as the superior group, as seen through the White society- dominant against the blacks and Latinos-minorities. Government policies promote these racial inequalities through income disparities, housing inequalities, and educational disparities, which further lowers chances for other non-white races to achieve upward mobility or at least have a chance at making it within the next generation (Chetty, 34). The reason being, the greater community, is more aligned to the control or rules of the more dominant group. Society members should rise and demand a more equal and fluid society, which promotes everyone's right to a better life and wellbeing.

Lastly but not least, social stratification leads to the formation of economic classes that play different roles in impacting a person's chance to gain upward mobility (Chetty, 36). Most commonly, prevailing class structures reflect on the views or ideologies of capitalism. Basically, these classes are usually created based on the economic status that a person holds e.g., wealthy, middle class, or poor. The top tier of the capitalist society is the rich, who control about 90% of the resources available in a particular society. Their chances of achieving upward mobility, which in their case would be hoarding more resources, are very high compared to other tiers of society (Chetty, 36). Additionally, the capitalist class has the resources to advance social policies that favor them, hence, higher chances of upward mobility than people in lower levels. The middle-class system structure in a society which embraces capitalism has a fair shot at achieving upward mobility within their lifetime, and one's chances are significantly boosted if one attains a college degree, which would, in turn, better advance your opportunities at achieving upward mobility. The bottom tier societal structure of capitalism is the poor whose chances at achieving upward mobility denoted by climbing to the middle-class tier of society are very low, given the massive inequalities capitalism offers.

Overall, this essay analyses and examines the role of different social forces and structures in shaping a person's life. The paper discusses educational institutions, families through the parents, race, and economic classes as major forces that enable to disable a person to gain upward mobility. Education assists through imparting skills that are necessary to secure the best jobs. A parent offers the necessary facilitative assistance, whereas economic and racial classes provide varying opportunities to various members. In essence, a person's effort is not sufficient to gain upward mobility, but other factors are at play as well.

Works cited

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