

# Social Mobility

- **Social Inequality vs. Social Mobility**
  - Outcomes vs. opportunities
    - High inequality makes the consequences of social mobility greater
    - If there were perfect equality no one would care about social mobility
- **Forms of Social Mobility**
  - Occupational mobility
  - Educational mobility
  - Income (wage or family income) mobility
  - Wealth mobility
- **Starting point → Destination**
  - *Intergenerational* mobility parents → current
  - *Intragenerational* mobility first job/income etc → current

# Two sources of mobility: Growth and Openness

|             | Offspring high | Offspring low | Total |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| Parent high | 50             | 0             | 50    |
| Parent low  | 0              | 50            | 50    |
| Total       | 50             | 50            | 100   |

|             | Offspring high | Offspring low | Total |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| Parent high | 0              | 50            | 50    |
| Parent low  | 50             | 0             | 50    |
| Total       | 50             | 50            | 100   |

|             | Offspring high | Offspring low | Total |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| Parent high | 50             | 0             | 50    |
| Parent low  | 30             | 20            | 50    |
| Total       | 80             | 20            | 100   |

|             | Offspring high | Offspring low | Total |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| Parent high | 40             | 10            | 50    |
| Parent low  | 30             | 20            | 50    |
| Total       | 70             | 20            | 100   |

- ← No mobility
  - and no growth & no openness
- ← Perfect mobility
  - and no growth & full openness
- ← Mobility
  - and growth & no openness  
(notice no one moved down)
- ← Mobility
  - and growth & openness

# Occupational mobility

- Prestige scale

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| – Fortune Teller                  | 13 |
| – Dishwasher                      | 17 |
| – Used Car Salesman               | 25 |
| – Waiter in Restaurant            | 27 |
| – Bellhops                        | 27 |
| – Cooks                           | 30 |
| – Truck Drivers                   | 30 |
| – Aerobics Instructor             | 34 |
| – Travel Agent                    | 41 |
| – House Carpenter                 | 43 |
| – Real Estate Agent               | 48 |
| – Interior Decorator              | 48 |
| – Fireman                         | 53 |
| – Actor/Actress                   | 58 |
| – Policeman                       | 60 |
| – Sociologist                     | 61 |
| – Business Entrepreneur           | 62 |
| – Banker                          | 63 |
| – High School Teacher             | 66 |
| – School Principal                | 69 |
| – Architect                       | 73 |
| – Mining Engineer                 | 73 |
| – Legislator                      | 74 |
| – College Professor               | 74 |
| – Lawyer                          | 75 |
| – Professor of Mathematics        | 78 |
| – Astronaut                       | 80 |
| – College or University President | 81 |
| – Physician                       | 86 |

- Occupational groups:

- Upper professional
- Lower Professional
- Self-Employed
- Technical and Skilled
- Farm Sector
- Unskilled and Service

# Intergenerational persistence (elasticity)

- Occupational persistence:
  - 40%
  - Historical comparison:
    - *declining* due to growth in college attendance and jobs requiring college degrees
    - But for the younger cohorts of men there is a small increase
  - International comparison:
    - Middle position
      - » Countries better: Sweden, Canada, Norway
      - » Countries worse: Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Great Britain, France

# Intergenerational persistence (elasticity)

- Wealth persistence:
  - 50%
- Income persistence:
  - 54-60%
    - Historical comparison:
      - *No significant change in the last century.*
      - Stable until 1960s then a drop until 1980 and back to previous levels since then
      - Big immobility on the top and on the bottom, more movement in the middle
      - Women entered the work force and that increased income mobility overall
      - Since the 1980s, however there has been a *large increase in social inequalities*
    - International comparison:
      - Low position
        - » Countries better: Sweden, Canada, Norway, Finland and possibly, Germany and Great Britain
  - Worrisome signs for the future:
    - Increasing returns to higher education and increasing college tuition