



Title: Developing an indicator of social mobility in Australia

Author(s): Lisa Denny

Affiliation: University of Tasmania

Lisa.Denny@utas.edu.au

Abstract:

Improvement in the capacity to generate income is a significant contributor to individual prosperity and upward movement in socio-economic status. Known as social mobility, intergenerational improvement in income generation has been traditionally driven by improvements in educational attainment. Evidence of social mobility has been obvious in times of economic and social revolution, however, following restructure further social mobility may be minimal. Additionally, social mobility is difficult to measure. Using ABS Census of Population and Housing data over five decades from 1971, this paper explores the concept of social mobility with an attempt to define and measure its progress. The paper finds that while improved educational attainment provides the potential for improved social mobility, it is not until this educational attainment is utilised in the labour force that social mobility is realised.