

The Dynamics of Social Mobility: A Comparison Between Urban and Rural Communities

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the dynamics of social mobility in urban and rural communities and the factors that influence the different levels of social mobility between the two areas. Social mobility in urban areas is more open thanks to access to education, more diverse jobs and supportive infrastructure, but social and economic disparities still prevent some individuals from taking advantage of these opportunities. Rural areas have limited access to education, dependence on the agricultural sector and lack of jobs opportunities can lower social mobility. This study identifies factors that influence differences in social mobility, including government policies, infrastructure and the role of culture. More inclusive policies are needed to increase opportunities for rural individuals to access education and jobs that can improve their social status. The study concludes that although cities offer more opportunities, differences in access to resources and education still shape inequalities in social mobility between urban and rural areas. It is important to formulate policies that support equal opportunities for communities in both regions.

INTRODUCTION

Social mobility is the process of individuals or groups moving from one social stratum to another, influenced by various factors, including education, jobs and economics. Social mobility in urban communities is often faster and more open than in rural areas, where access to education and jobs is limited. Many people migrate to cities in search of better opportunities to improve their lives. This phenomenon has led to a more dynamic social structure in cities, where individuals can move more freely between social strata, thanks to easier access to information, infrastructure and more diverse jobs opportunities. However, while cities provide a wide range of opportunities, not all individuals are able to take advantage of them, given the persistence of social and economic inequalities.

Social mobility is more limited and often hampered by limited access to education, health facilities and jobs opportunities in rural areas. Rural communities tend to be more rigid in their social structure, where one's role and status is often influenced by traditional factors such as family status and more binding occupations, such as agriculture.

While there is potential for mobility, this is often hindered by structural factors that are stronger in rural areas, creating disparities between urban and rural areas. This inhibits individuals from changing their social position, despite their greater potential. A comparative study of social mobility in these two regions is essential to understand the differences and challenges faced by people in each region.

One of the key issues in the dynamics of social mobility in urban and rural communities is inequality in access to education and skills training. Despite greater access to education, there are significant social disparities between different economic groups in rural areas. This makes it difficult for some individuals from low-income groups to take advantage of opportunities, even though they live in areas with better educational facilities (Putnam, 2015). Low access to adequate educational facilities and limited skills training in rural areas make social mobility more difficult. Many people in rural areas are stuck in low-income jobs and find it difficult to change their fortunes, despite the desire to move to higher social layers. Inequality in access to education and skills training is a key factor hindering social mobility.

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Another key issue is the lack of access to jobs that can promote social mobility. Although jobs opportunities are more diverse in big cities, not all individuals can access jobs that match their skills and education (Brown et al., 2010). This is due to fierce competition and the need to have strong social networks in order to secure better-paying jobs. Opportunities to obtain better jobs are very limited in rural areas, as the majority of jobs are still dependent on the agricultural sector or jobs that do not require high skills, which in turn limits opportunities to rise to higher social layers (Glaeser, 2011). These two issues create persistent inequalities between urban and rural communities in terms of social mobility.

Differences in social mobility between urban and rural communities have a significant impact on social and economic development in both regions. Despite greater access to economic opportunities in cities, growing social disparities mean that social mobility is not always equitable. Despite efforts to improve access to education and training in rural areas, many individuals are still hampered in achieving social change for the better. Observing these dynamics is crucial to formulating policies that can address these disparities and create more equitable opportunities for all levels of society, both in urban and rural areas.

This study aims to understand the dynamics of social mobility in urban and rural communities, and identify the factors that influence the differences in social mobility levels between the two regions. The study will also explore the structural factors, education and economic opportunities that shape these differences, and how these disparities affect the social and economic welfare of individuals in the two regions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The literature study approach in this study is used to explore various existing understandings and findings regarding the dynamics of social mobility in urban and rural communities. Through literature analysis, researchers can identify relevant theories, explore previous research, and compare various findings related to social mobility in the two regions. This method is useful for exploring factors that influence differences in levels of social mobility in cities and villages, such as access to education, jobs and the economy (Kraus et al., 2010). According to Sahoo and Kaur (2020), literature studies allow researchers to gain insights from various published perspectives, enriching the understanding of the social mechanisms that shape social mobility patterns. This approach made researchers to identify gaps and provide a more complete picture of the social mobility phenomenon in both regions.

The literature also provides an opportunity to analyze the different policies and social spheres that influence social mobility. Some studies show that development policies in urban areas often focus more on infrastructure and economic opportunities that can support social mobility, while in rural areas, policies focus more on the agricultural sector that is less supportive of occupational diversification (Ravallion, 2016). Through this approach, researchers can develop a more structured conceptual framework of how social mobility is shaped by various factors, and compare different socio-economic conditions in the two regions. Sharma and Tripathi (2017) point out that literature review allows researchers to see the interrelationship between social and economic structures in analyzing social mobility in various geographical settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one social position to another, often measured in terms of differences in economic status, education or jobs. This concept is crucial to understanding the social dynamics of various societies, both urban and rural. Social mobility can operate with different dynamics, depending on access to resources and existing social structures. Social mobility tends to be higher in urban areas due to more job opportunities, education, and supportive social networks (Major & Machin, 2018). Social mobility in rural areas is more limited due to factors such as dependence on the agricultural sector, limited access to higher education, and scarce jobs opportunities that can improve an individual's social status (Lipset, 2018).

The dynamics of social mobility in urban communities are determined by several factors, such as better access to education, developed infrastructure and diverse jobs opportunities. Education is one of the main factors that determine one's position in the social structure, and urban communities tend to have more access to higher education institutions. Rural communities tend to be more limited in terms of access to education, which limits opportunities to move to higher social layers. Urban communities, with greater access to higher education and more diverse employment opportunities, have greater social mobility, while rural communities, limited by a lack of educational facilities and employment opportunities, are often trapped in lower social positions. This creates a gap between urban and rural levels of social mobility that can often lead to differences in economic and social disparities between the two regions (Davis, 2017).

Jobs factors also strongly influence the level of social mobility. Diverse jobs sectors allow individuals to move between social layers in urban communities, either through formal or informal jobs (Tonkiss, 2014). For example, a person who starts his or her career in a low-level job can reach a higher position by acquiring additional skills or through further education. Most jobs are focused on the agricultural sector or less high-skilled jobs in rural areas, making it difficult for individuals to achieve significant social mobility. Dependence on the agricultural sector that cannot support high social mobility, especially in light of globalization and evolving technology, is another barrier to social mobility in rural areas (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019).

Social mobility is also often affected by existing economic and social inequalities. Differences in economic status, such as differences in income and access to wealth, can limit individuals' ability to achieve social mobility (Mirowsky, 2017). Despite opportunities for advancement, social mobility often depends on an individual's family background, early education and ability to access supportive social networks. Reliance on traditional occupations and lack of opportunities to acquire new skills or improve education limit social movement for communities in rural areas (Glaeser, 2011).

Another factor that affects social mobility is the existence of infrastructure and its quality. Infrastructure such as transportation, access to information technology, and health facilities play an important role in facilitating social mobility. Better infrastructure in urban areas makes it easier for individuals to access various opportunities, such as jobs or education opportunities, which can accelerate their movement to higher social layers. Meanwhile, in rural areas, limited infrastructure leads to greater isolation, limiting access to opportunities that can support social mobility (Deininger, 2013).

Government policies also have a major influence on social mobility in both regions. Development policies in urban areas that focus on improving access to education and reducing poverty tend to favor higher social mobility. Policies that are more oriented towards developing the agricultural sector or that do not include the non-agricultural sector in rural areas and make social mobility more limited (Shucksmith, 2012). Ravallion (2016) points out that policies that provide opportunities for access to education and skills training to rural communities are critical to improving social mobility in the area. Policies designed to improve the quality of education in rural areas, as well as provide skills training relevant to the needs of the modern labor market, will open up new opportunities for individuals to access better jobs and improve their living standards.

The gap in social mobility between urban and rural areas is also influenced by cultural factors and social values. Stronger values of individualism in urban areas allow individuals to more freely pursue social mobility, while in rural areas, communitarianism and traditional values often limit individuals' choices and opportunities to change their social status (Bertaux & Thompson, 2017). Rural communities prioritize tradition and kinship, the process of social movement driven by personal aspirations is slower than in urban areas, which focus more on meritocracy and recognition based on personal achievement (Putnam, 2015). The cultural gap between urban and rural communities plays a significant role in exacerbating inequalities in social mobility, where rural areas are more constrained by more collective and traditional values, while urban areas provide greater room for mobility based on individual achievement and ability.

Gender inequality also affects the level of social mobility, especially in rural areas. Women are often limited in their access to education and jobs that can improve social status in many rural areas. Although in urban areas women's social mobility tends to be higher, gender gaps remain in terms of income and access to higher social positions. According to Seguino (2013), gender inequality in rural areas exacerbates gaps in social mobility, with women often trapped in traditional roles that limit their opportunities to improve their social status.

Technological aspects also affect social mobility in both regions. Rapid technological development creates new opportunities for individuals in urban communities to access information, education and jobs through digital platforms. This accelerates social mobility, especially for those who have access to and the ability to use technology. Technology in rural areas can be a tool to enhance social mobility but limited access to technology is one of the factors hindering this process. Internet and technology infrastructure in rural areas is still lagging behind compared to urban areas, making it more difficult for individuals in rural areas to access opportunities that can support social mobility (Sahoo & Kaur, 2020).

Dependence on the agricultural sector has a significant impact on the dynamics of social mobility in rural areas. In many rural communities, predominantly agricultural work is often seasonal and unstable, resulting in low incomes and economic insecurity. This creates a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break, where individuals and families are trapped in jobs that do not provide opportunities for better skills development. With limited access to education and training, rural communities often lack options to improve their quality of life, hindering social mobility.

Urbanization and the development of diverse economic sectors in cities provide wider opportunities for individuals to develop skills and move into higher paying jobs. In urban environments, there is better access to education, training and different types of jobs that allow individuals to improve their social and economic status. Sectors such as industry, services and information technology offer opportunities that are not available in rural areas, encouraging individuals to leave agrarian life in search of better opportunities in cities.

Dependence on the agricultural sector in rural areas significantly limits the possibility of social mobility in terms of education, employment and income (Bell & Osti, 2010). To address this issue, strategic interventions from the government and relevant agencies are needed to improve access to education and skills training in rural areas. In addition, infrastructure development and support for economic diversification in rural areas can help create new opportunities, allowing communities to transition to more productive and sustainable sectors. With these measures, it is hoped that social mobility in rural areas can increase, providing new hope for future generations.

Based on existing studies, it can be concluded that social mobility in urban communities is more influenced by access to better education, more diverse employment opportunities, and more developed infrastructure, while in rural areas, social mobility is more limited by factors such as dependence on the agricultural sector, limited access to education, and policies that do not sufficiently support the non-agricultural sector. To improve social mobility in both regions, more inclusive policies are needed that take into account the specific socio-economic conditions in each region, both urban and rural. Social mobility in both regions can be improved with the right policies that create more equitable opportunities for all levels of society.

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of social mobility in urban and rural communities show significant differences that are influenced by various social, economic and cultural factors. Opportunities for social mobility in urban communities are greater thanks to greater access of education, more diverse jobs and supportive infrastructure. Urbanites also have wider social networks and opportunities to build relationships that support career development. However, social and economic inequalities persist, hindering some individuals' access to opportunities. Social mobility in rural areas is more limited due to dependence on

the agricultural sector, lack of access to higher education, and limited jobs opportunities. The gap in social mobility between the two regions should receive serious attention, especially in inclusive development policies that take into account the specific socio-economic conditions in each region.

Policies that facilitate access to education, skills training, and better infrastructure, especially in rural areas are needed to promote more equitable social mobility. The government should focus on developing the non-agricultural sector and improving people's skills to take advantage of wider jobs opportunities. Reducing social and economic disparities between cities and villages is crucial to creating a more just and balanced communities. Efforts to strengthen policies that support more equitable access to education, jobs and economic opportunities are key to creating higher social mobility in both regions.

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