



Myers JDC
Brookdale

Socioeconomic Mobility in Israel

A Literature Review

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Editor: Revital Aviv Matok

English editing (Abstract): Suzanne Brown

Graphic design: Anat Perko Toledano

The review was commissioned by JDC-Ashalim and funded with its assistance.

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Jerusalem | December 2025

Abstract

Socioeconomic mobility, particularly the relationship between parents' economic status and the economic status their children attain in adulthood, is one of the key indicators of a country's equality of opportunity and social cohesion. A society with high mobility is one in which family background does not largely determine an individual's economic future, thereby supporting the full realization of each citizens' human capital.

Extensive academic literature has identified several major factors influencing mobility, including parental income and education, investments in early childhood education, the quality of the formal education system, neighborhood characteristics, and the evolving structure of the labor market. However, despite the considerable knowledge accumulated to date, there are two major gaps in the literature.

The first gap concerns the dynamics of the process of socioeconomic mobility. The literature documents numerous correlations between background characteristics and future outcomes. However, there is still a need to identify the stages of development and ages at which gaps between children from different backgrounds emerge and widen. Mapping these junctures can assist in guiding policy and in the development of targeted interventions that promote socioeconomic mobility.

The second gap relates to comprehensive predictive modeling. Most studies examine each influencing factor separately, but there is no comprehensive model that assesses the combined weight of multiple factors and enables reliable prediction of an individual's mobility prospects. Furthermore, empirical data on socioeconomic mobility always lags by a generation, leaving policymakers without an up-to-date picture of the equality of opportunity for today's children.

This literature review aims to map current knowledge on intergenerational mobility. It serves as an introduction to two forthcoming research reports that seek to bridge the gaps in current knowledge. The first report, "Socioeconomic Mobility in Israel: At What Developmental Stage Do Disparities Between Groups First Emerge?", focuses on identifying dynamic turning points in the life of individuals from different socio-economic groups. The second report, "A Predictive Model for Economic Mobility," presents an integrative statistical model for assessing mobility prospects. Together, the two studies aim to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the processes of mobility in Israel and to offer a knowledge-based foundation for policies that promote equality of opportunity.