

Social Mobility in *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006): A Sociological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The Pursuit of Happiness is a biopic film released in 2006 and directed by Gabriele Muccino. The film depicts social mobility and various issues related to a stratified society. This study examines how Chris Gardner embodied social mobility and the factors behind it. The data was derived from monologues, dialogues, and narrative segments in film scripts. Furthermore, the analysis employed the close reading method alongside Sorokin's theory of social mobility as articulated in "*Social and Cultural Mobility*" (1959). The findings portrayed how Chris Gardner's experience embodies social mobility, particularly upward mobility. This can be observed by his shift from a lower class (homelessness, financial instability, and unpaid internships) to an upper class (securing a permanent position as a stockbroker and successfully founding his own stock company). Moreover, the causes of this upward mobility include an environmental change (entering the stockbroker profession), differences between parents and their children (variations in characteristics between Chris and his parents), and defective social distribution (possessing talents and abilities confined to the upper classes).

Keywords: Social Class, Social Mobility, Social Stratification, Upward Mobility

INTRODUCTION

Sociological research has concentrated on social mobility due to concerns regarding class stratification and economic possibilities. In the last two decades, research on upward social mobility has increased significantly (Legewie, 2021). All of them were conducted as society demonstrated the existence of well-established social classes. Moreover, social class and stratification are inherently interconnected (Jalali, Introne, & Soundarajan, 2023). When looking at social stratification, it is a good idea to define social classes. Sociologists divide the United States into three classes: upper, middle, and lower (Conerly, Holmes, & Tamang, 2021). People in the upper classes have more chances and benefits. Manstead (2018) argues that working-class people find it harder to take advantage of educational and employment opportunities that would increase social mobility and improve their material situation because middle-class and upper-class people think and act differently. In addition, sociologists use jobs and parental incomes to figure out someone's social class, while economists look at how much money a person or family makes to study patterns of mobility (Eyles, Major, & Machin (2022). Furthermore, Nunn, Johnson, Monro, Bickerstaffe, & Kelsey (2007) suggest looking at how families purposefully improve their children's future social status within the field of social mobility economics. Additionally, Assari (2018) argues that increased socioeconomic status and enhanced access to social resources can improve an individual's social network, health

behaviors, material and human resources, and social influence while diminishing stress exposure. This is why individuals often ascend the socioeconomic hierarchy to achieve a prosperous existence. As research continues, it becomes clearer how important it is to understand how people move up in society and improve their socioeconomic status. In societies that are stratified, social mobility is made possible by the movement of individuals between different social classes. Sociology often looks at social mobility, which is how well or poorly people do in their social class. Many well-known scholars have written about this topic, including Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin in 1959.

Sorokin (1959) defined social mobility as the movement of a person or social entity from one social position to another created or modified by human action. He goes on to say that social mobility can be divided into vertical and horizontal categories. A person experiences vertical mobility when they move up or down the social hierarchy. Under the general heading of vertical movement, there are two additional subcategories: upward and downward mobility. On the other hand, horizontal mobility is the process through which an individual shifts their social standing while staying at the same social level. Sorokin's analysis offers a historical perspective still relevant in modern society by looking at the social structures that either facilitate or impede class mobility. In addition, the factors of mobility are further described in his study. There are three of them: change of environment, dissimilarity between parents and children, and defective social distribution.

The theories of social mobility support the main idea of *The Pursuit of Happiness*. The protagonist in the film experienced social mobility, particularly upward mobility. His efforts to advance socially are evident. The process of social mobility occurs when there is a change in the social status of an individual. Another study also reflects how this change can impact someone. This is because most people want to improve their lives by setting goals and dreams that will help them have a bigger impact on the world while also living happy, successful, and respected lives (Moran, 2023). This link to the past makes people think about where they came from and how their connections shaped who they are now. It shows how their past affects their present and future goals, as well as their long-distance emotional and mental connections (Wright, 2023).

Even though it seems hard for low-income families to move up in society, people can improve their socioeconomic status by being dedicated. In recent years, many famous people from different fields have risen above poverty to achieve success. To clarify the film's social context, here are examples of individuals who have ascended from diverse backgrounds and their present occupations. Oprah Winfrey ascended from poverty in rural Mississippi to become one of the world's wealthiest women, primarily through her role as the host of her talk show. Next is Cristiano Ronaldo whose mother was a chef and his father was a gardener in an impoverished Portuguese family. He is now one of the greatest footballers ever. Furthermore, Indonesia possesses numerous exemplars. Susi Pudjiastuti, who did not complete junior high school, established Susi Air and subsequently served as the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. She accomplished this by acquiring knowledge on initiating a business early. In addition, Brando, who goes by the name Windah Basudara, used to work as a waiter in a restaurant before becoming a famous YouTube gaming influencer with more than 16 million subscribers. The content he creates is creative and unique, making it appealing to audiences of all ages. Moreover, Cici Chania, who owns Pororo Shop, is a well-known TikTok creator. People love her TikTok videos with her adorable cat named Pororo. She went from having trouble with money to running one of the most popular online stores for cat clothes. As

illustrated by these successful individuals from a diverse array of backgrounds, there is the potential for every individual, regardless of their wealth, to enhance their socioeconomic status.

The Pursuit of Happyness, Gabriele Muccino's biographical film, was released in 2006. The 1981 San Francisco story follows Chris' rise from financial insecurity to stockbroker success. Chris thought he could support his family by selling portable bone-density scanners. Unfortunately, he was wrong. Chris and his son were left alone after his wife left for a job at a New York restaurant. He strives to improve their difficult situation. He was given the opportunity to work as an unpaid intern for Dean Witter after some time. His patience paid off. He was the only qualified company employee. He further founded his brokerage in 1987. One year later, he became a successful stockbroker. The film grossed almost \$300 million worldwide. Notable nominations included the Academy Award and Golden Globe for Best Leading Actor. In addition, it won the 2007 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Motion Picture. Moreover, many other honorees recognized it.

A lot of research has been conducted into this. The first one was "*Tennis as Social Mobilization to Achieve the American Dream in the Film King Richard* (2021)" by Ramadhan & Zakky (2024). The study used qualitative methods. Tennis helped players with low status break down racial barriers and gain success. The second was Haugen's "*The Lottery Fantasy and Social Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Literature: Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova*" by Haugen (2022). The article looked at how people could move up and down in society in the 18th-century lottery fantasy by Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova. A comparison of two works of literature is made. In conclusion, the lottery represents social mobility and the values of the Enlightenment. Next, there was "*Social Mobility in James Kelman's A Disseffaction*" by Alrayes (2020). Literary analysis examined how social mobility shaped working-class Scottish identity in post-industrial society. Social mobility can cause feelings of dislocation and estrangement from someone's roots, as shown by Patrick Doyle's disillusionment and alienation after trying to rise socially. The title of the next study was "*Education, Social Mobility, and Barriers in Nigerian Urban Novels*". Li (2025) states that education was a way to move up in society and a sign of structural barriers in Nigerian urban novels. Helon Habila and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's books looked at issues like social inequality, education, and how people from different cultures get along. The study uses theories from post-colonialism, culture, and social mobility. It showed how poverty, gender roles, and political unrest changed the way schools worked.

Previous studies have explored the topic in different ways. The author here used an original sociological method. In addition, this sociological study looked at how films affect social mobility. Therefore, this study examined social mobility and what affected the main character's social mobility in *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006).

METHOD

This study utilized Gabriele Muccino's *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006). Since its release, this biopic of Chris Gardner's life has had many successes. This film was chosen because it accurately depicts the author's topic. The main character's monologues, dialogues, and narration in the film's script were used to determine how the social mobility theory applied to him. Therefore, the main source of data for this study was a close reading of the film script. According to Ohrvik (2024), close reading means figuring out how easy a text is to read, what its purpose is, how to analyze it, and how to interpret it. The script was broken up into scenes that looked at upward mobility and what causes it. The author gathered script data after

carefully watching the film. Data quotations were analyzed using the chosen theory. The author collected data using Sorokin's (1959) social mobility theory after close reading. Additionally, the T-E-E-L (Topic-Evidence-Elaboration-Link) method was used to determine the topic-theory relationship.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Upward Social Mobility Portrayed in *The Pursuit of Happiness*

Financial Struggles

Financial instability is one of the primary factors that sets Chris Gardner on his path to upward social mobility in *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006). The film's social mobility process begins when Chris Gardner is shown as a person who is struggling financially. He and his family live a hard life in a big city with a lot of expenses. Furthermore, Chris' job as a salesman is insufficient to support his family, so his wife must work to supplement their income. It is not entirely successful because the family's income is insufficient to cover the rent for their current residence.

- Chris : "I spent our entire life savings on these things."
 Chris : "What I didn't know is that doctors and hospitals would consider them unnecessary luxuries."
 Chris : "So if I lost one, it was like losing a month's groceries."

(Timecode 00:21:07-00:21:34)

This data shows how bad financial choices can impact Chris and his family. His only source of income, bone density scanners that did not make money, also ensured he had a steady income. The family has trouble getting by and is behind on their rent. His wife worked hard even though she had to take care of Christopher. It also shows that their money problems are terrible. Chris becomes more determined to find new chances and a job that pays more as time goes on. Sorokin (1959) said that a person's initial position in the social hierarchy affects how easily they can move up or down. According to Sorokin, Chris is in the lowest socioeconomic class because he has no savings, property, or money to help him. This shows that unstable economies make it harder for people who do not have money or social advantages to move up in life and get basic needs like housing, transportation, and jobs.

Additionally, homelessness is another of Chris Gardner's biggest challenges. Chris and his son must live in a public shelter. They were evicted for nonpayment of rent due to Chris' inconsistent and insufficient bone-density scanner sales. They had no friends or family to help them find a stable place to live and no affordable housing options for the two of them. They had to wait every day outside a public shelter (while waiting to be admitted) to avoid sleeping in a public bathroom or somewhere inhospitable, as Chris did when the shelter was inaccessible.

- Worker : "Hi."
 Chris : "Can I ask you a question?"
 Worker : "Sure."

- Chris : *"We need a room. It's just until I can fix this and sell it. There's just some glass work."*
- Worker : *"Let me stop you right there. I wish I could help you."*
- Chris : *"This is my son, Christopher. He's 5 years old."*
- Worker : *"Hi, baby."*
- Chris : *"We need some place to stay."*
- Worker : *"Okay and I would love to help you but we don't take men here. It's only women and children. And then he can stay here but you have to find someplace else to go."*
- Chris : *"We gotta stay together. We got—We were...You gotta have some place."*
- Worker : *"Okay, listen. Try Glide Memorial. The building books up at 5. So you hurry up and get over there because there's a line."*
- Chris : *"And where is it? Where is it?"*
- Worker : *"Ellis and Jones."*

(Timecode 00:37:16-00:37:55)

In this conversation, Chris' searching a place for himself and Christopher symbolizes their homelessness and economic struggle. Chris' financial hardship also shows his low socioeconomic status. This turning point begins his serious struggle with homelessness, which he must navigate while pursuing a competitive internship. Shelters provide basic security for one night, but it is one of the lowest strata of environments, where people compete for basic needs in a limited-mobility environment. When there are open pathways (education, employment) for legitimate cross-class actions, Sorokin (1959) believes people can rise to higher strata. Chris' use of public shelters shows how close those pathways are: the longer he waits for a bed, the less time he must study, network, or work. These structural barriers make movement nearly impossible without external assistance or exceptional resilience. Therefore, in this chapter, Chris depicts one of the struggles that helped him achieve his dream of upward mobility despite harsh conditions.

The next big problem for Chris Gardner's plans to move up in society was finding out that the internship program at Dean Witter that he had applied for and been accepted into was not paid. This is devastating news, especially in such a difficult time. Chris is homeless, unemployed, broke, and a single parent with a young son at this point in the film. He panicked when he learned there would be no pay. Now he must balance the urgent need to make ends meet with the long-term desire for consistent employment and advancement.

- Mr. Twistle : *"Chris, I don't know how you did it dressed as a garbage man, but you really pulled it off in there."*
- Chris : *"Thank you very much, Mr. Twistle."*
- Mr. Twistle : *"Call me Jay. I'll talk to you soon."*
- Chris : *"I'll let you know, Jay."*
- Mr. Twistle : *"I'll let you know, Jay. What do you mean?"*
- Chris : *"Yeah, I'll give you a call tomorrow sometime."*
- Mr. Twistle : *"What are you talking? You hounded me for this. You stood here."*
- Chris : *"Listen, there's no salary."*

Mr. Twistle : “No.”
 Chris : “*I wasn’t aware of that.*”

(Timecode 00:45:51-00:46:15)

The dialogue between Chris and one of the company’s employees reveals that Chris is surprised to learn that the internship program pays nothing despite all his hard work. Chris now works full-time without pay to care for his son and for necessities after struggling with poverty and homelessness. Fortunately, he keeps going because he believes in himself despite his condition. Chris worked hard to get a job after becoming an intern. According to Sorokin (1959), the individuals have been shifted, and some have been able to advance while others have been kept in the lower strata.

Chris Gardner’s financial difficulties throughout the film suggest that he is at the bottom of the social class structure, as described by Sorokin (1959). Sorokin calculates class position by interacting with all population groups and their members. Chris barely makes ends meet selling scanners to uninterested clients. Chris and his son become homeless after losing their home and living in motels, public restrooms, and homeless shelters as their finances worsen. These are not isolated incidents, but evidence of material poverty, indicating that Chris is economically at the bottom of society. Chris must endure another layer of deprivation for the chance at upward mobility after eviction, shelter life, and financial struggles.

Social Struggles

Chris is socially disadvantaged because he lacks important social networks and relationships to advance in society. The film shows that Chris’ relationships limit him to lower-class people. Chris relies on these relationships for emotional support, but they do not offer professional development or mentorship that could lead to higher-level financial positions. Social network poverty also hinders upward mobility.

Chris : “*Man, I got two questions for you: What do you do? And how you do it?*”
 Ferrari Owner : “*Hahaha...I’m a stockbroker.*”
 Chris : “*Stockbroker. Oh, had to go to college to be a stockbroker, huh?*”
 Ferrari Owner : “*You don’t have to. Have to be good with numbers and good with people. That’s it.*”
 Chris : “*Hey, you take care. I’mma let you hang on to my car for the weekend. But I need it back for Monday. Feed the meter.*”
 Chris (Voice-over) : “*I still remember that moment. They all looked so damn happy to me. Why couldn’t I look like that?*”

(Timecode 00:09:36-00:10:27)

Chris Gardner’s conversation with the Ferrari owner represents a crucial moment in his life. It is at this point that his curiosity, driven by a lack of experience and social capital, prompts him to approach someone from a higher class and ask them how they achieved their success. Chris’ two specific questions, “What do you do?” and “How do you do it?” reflect both his desire to improve his life and his lack of access to privileged information. Most people who were born into or grew up in a professional or privileged environment learned this informal

knowledge from family, friends, or community. This exchange represents the social distance between Chris and the professional world he aspires to enter. Sorokin (1959) emphasizes that vertical mobility exists in society's openness and available modes of transportation. They include education, profession, and, most importantly, social networks. Because Chris has not established an embedded support system along the way, his mobility is solely dependent on his determination and chance encounters, such as the conversation with the Ferrari owner.

Financial Efforts

The next thing that happens in Chris's life that shows signs of upward mobility is that he always tries to escape his low-income situation. The story begins with a low-earning salesman who applies to intern at a stock company. In the film, Chris' life changes significantly when he applies for an internship at a well-known stock brokerage firm.

Chris : *"They'd stay till 7, but I had Christopher. I had to do in six hours what they do in nine."*

Chris : *"I realized by not hanging up the phone, I gained another eight minutes a day."*

(Timecode 01:03:5-01:04:08)

Chris' drive to succeed in the competitive unpaid internship is shown in this scene. Chris had to care for his son and outperform other interns despite having less time. He then looks for effective time management strategies. To be more productive, he cuts phone call pauses. This shows how determination, time management, and adaptability can help him rise socially and economically. Moreover, this scene shows Sorokin's (1959) vertical mobility theory, which holds that upward social mobility is possible but not equal for all. He claims that lower-class people must work harder and sacrifice more to have the same opportunities as higher-class people.

Even though anyone can apply for the internship, the fact that it is unpaid creates a barrier that favors people with a stable income. Chris Gardner's efforts as a bone-density scanner salesman included his risky application for an unpaid stockbroker internship and his persistence in selling scanners despite low demand. According to Sorokin (1959), upward mobility channels exist when people move from one social stratum to another through institution-based pathways like jobs, education, and training. Chris eagerly pursues such opportunities despite his economic and social disadvantage. Starting with an unpaid stockbroker internship and selling scanners leads to a lucrative career.

Social Efforts

This film scene shows how Chris always tries to get close to influential people. His workplace strengths include excellent communication. Chris convinced a Dean Witter employee of his other Rubik's cube skills. Chris may lack money and credentials. However, his confident speaking voice, ability to switch tones for different audiences, and ability to make an impression allow him to take the lead.

Chris : *"Mr. Twistle."*

Mr. Twistle : *"Yeah, hi."*

Chris : *"Hi. Chris Gardner."*

- Mr. Twistle : “Yeah, hi. Listen. What can I do for you?”
 Chris : “I submitted an application for the intern program about a month ago and I would just love to sit with you briefly—“
 Mr. Twistle : “Listen, I’m going to Noe Valley, Chris. Take care of yourself.”
 Chris : “Actually, I’m on my way to Noe Valley also. How about we share a ride?”
 Mr. Twistle : “All right. Get in.”

(Timecode 00:24:25-00:24:49)

This data from Chris Gardner and Mr. Twistle’s conversation is much more than just an exchange of words. It also demonstrates Chris’ ability to bridge the class gap, which is an important social skill given his desire for upward mobility. Sorokin’s (1959) theory of vertical mobility, specifically upward mobility, entails institutionalized means of moving up through elevators and raising a stratification system. Chris had limited access because he did not have a college degree or a professional resume in finance. As a result, he had to emphasize the importance of cultivating relationships with insiders who might be willing to help him. Chris strengthens an important relationship by taking a taxi with Mr. Twistle, turning everyday conversation into a multidimensional Rubik’s cube performance, and following up with polite persistence.

Achievement of Upward Mobility

Finally, Chris’ rise starts when he is hired to work for Dean Witter. His natural abilities accelerate his progress, and he eventually builds a successful company. This marks his transition from extreme poverty and homelessness to a high-status financial institution career.

- Narration : “After beginning his career at Dean Witter, Chris Gardner went on to found the investment firm Gardner Rich in 1987.”
 Narration : “In 2006, Chris Gardner sold a minority stake in his brokerage firm in a multi-million dollar deal.”

(Timecode 01:52:25-01:53:24)

Chris finally got hired after putting in much hard work during his internship. Success led him to start a brokerage firm. This shift reflects Chris’ upward social mobility. Successfully transitioning from salesman to businessman raises his social status. According to Sorokin (1959), the more money a man has, the higher his social status. Chris’ social status increases due to his multi-millionaire business success. It shows how overcoming adversity can ensure financial stability and personal success. Chris’ promotion also represents a complete rise from poverty to the professional upper classes.

Finally, Chris Gardner’s success in achieving upward mobility in *The Pursuit of Happyness* stems from his financial and social struggles, which began in response to the cumulative difficulties he faced in life. Chris’ persistence was demonstrated in a variety of ways, including selling difficult-to-sell medical scanners, going through the trials of homelessness with his son, and accepting a highly sought-after unpaid internship. According to Sorokin (1959), upward mobility refers to the transition from a lower social class to a higher one. These factors are influenced by the qualities, nature, and character of the selecting

institutions' organization, as well as the nature of the barrier to successful passage. Therefore, Chris moves into an absolute higher class as he becomes wealthier.

Factors of Upward Social Mobility

Change of Environment

Sorokin (1959) asserts that because people's social environments are always changing, and the rate of change is especially high there is always a vertical circulation factor in social life. After selling the scanners, Chris' life changes when he enters the finance field. Change can affect a person's life like this. His previous work did not offer commitment or investment in a new community, culture, or financial opportunities, so this change is significant.

Chris : *"This part of my life is called 'internship'."*
 Mr. Frakesh : *"Some of you are here because you know somebody. Some of you are here because you think you're somebody. There's one guy in here who's gonna be somebody. That person's gonna be the guy who can turn this into this. Eight hundred thousand in commission dollars."*

(Timecode 00:57:33-00:58:30)

The data indicates Chris' introduction to a new professional and social environment. In the film, the anthropo-social environment changed from selling bone density scanners on the street to working in an office. Chris is surrounded by everything new in this new environment. Chris adapts to avoid falling behind rather than becoming depressed. This transformation depends on Chris' ability to rise economically from the lower class. Although the internship is unpaid, the mentors give him many chances to improve. Chris' transition into a new anthropo-social environment goes beyond changing jobs. According to Sorokin (1959), the change puts some people in a better position. These people start to rise or keep their high positions. Diverging from his social class is a big step toward upward mobility. Chris' continued involvement with this new place and suffering shows his rise the hierarchy.

Dissimilarity of Parents and Children

Sorokin (1959) describes parent-child differences in his book. It stated that humans are not always socially similar to their parents. Chris' past contrasts with his future for himself and his son. Despite his difficult upbringing, he wanted to break the cycle of poverty and give his son a better life, which drove his pursuit of social mobility. This implies that children can rise or fall socially from their mid-born peers. His financial insecurity, lack of formal education, and lack of inherited wealth or privileges contrast with the future he envisions for himself and, most importantly, his young son.

Chris : *"Hey, don't ever let somebody tell you you can't do something. Not even me. All right?"*
 Christopher : *"All right."*
 Chris : *"You got a dream... you gotta protect it. People can't do something themselves, they wanna tell you you can't do it. If you want something, go get it. Period."*

(Timecode 00:55:01-00:55:36)

This conversation between Chris and Christopher shows that he wants to teach his son a different way of thinking than the one he learned as a child. The film does not show Chris' unstable and difficult childhood. However, according to many digital sources, he had an abusive stepfather and a prison-bound mother. That is why his goals were bigger than his social and financial status at the time. He worked hard to break the cycle of poverty and insecurity to give his son a better life. Chris is present and emotionally supportive, unlike his childhood. According to Sorokin's (1959) upward mobility theory, Chris' childhood and his son's future differ. Generational differences can also boost ambition to rise socially and build a prosperous life.

Defective Social Distribution

Chris Gardner's journey in *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) shows how improper social distribution can lead to upward mobility once the ability is recognized. Sorokin (1959) defines defective social distribution as the uneven distribution of talent, intelligence, and potential across all social classes, not just the upper class. Lack of opportunities can trap capable people in lower layers. Many capable people, like Chris, remain trapped below the social layers in this imperfect system because they lack access to the institutional channels (education, mentorship, or financial resources) needed for mobility.

Chris : *"Mr. Twistle, this is a very important—"*
 Mr. Twistle : *"I'm sorry, I'm sorry. This thing's impossible."*
 Chris : *"I can do it."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"No, you can't. No one can. It's bullshit."*
 Chris : *"No, I'm pretty sure I can do it."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"No, you can't."*
 Chris : *"Let me see. Give it here."*
 Chris : *"Oh yeah. Oh wow, you really messed it up."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"Sorry."*
 Chris : *"It looks like it works around a swivel, so the center pieces never move. So if it's yellow in the center, that's the yellow side. If it's red in the center, that's the red side."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"Okay."*
 Chris : *"So... you can slow down."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"Listen, we can drive around all day. I don't believe you can do this."*
 Chris : *"Yeah, I can."*

Mr. Twistle : *"See, that's all I've ever done."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"You almost have this side. Holy cow."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"You almost had that one. "*
 Chris : *"I'm gonna get it."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"Look at that. You're almost there."*
 Taxi driver : *"17. 10."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"This is me."*
 Mr. Twistle : *"Good job."*

(Timecode 00:25:16-00:27:47)

This data shows Chris' intelligence, problem-solving skills, and work-ethic. Higher-class people sometimes have these traits. Due to his lower socioeconomic status, the system prioritized these skills less. It occurs when lower-level people have talent and ability for higher-level roles and misrepresents social status. During his internship, Chris' skills were noticed, which helped him get a better job. Chris' rise from being homeless to being successful also shows that opportunity is more important than background. He did well when given the chance, while others tried to catch up. Gardner's rise supports Sorokin's (1959) theory that misplaced talent in hierarchical systems can lead to upward mobility, especially in open societies. Therefore, Sorokin's (1959) claim that unequal social class distribution of potential can lead to upward mobility is supported.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that the main character, Chris Gardner, rose in social class. His dedication and hard work elevate him socially. It begins when he endures many hardships his whole life. The financial issues include financial instability, homelessness, and unpaid internships. His social struggle comes from being unable to gain network, which drives him to meet powerful people. All of these indicate a lower social status due to his financial situation. He also sold bone density scanners, made influential relations, and applied for an unpaid Dean Witter internship to boost his social status. This paid off when he got a job at his internship company. A steady job can help him rise by providing a steady income. This is related to his initial financial and social issues. His job has helped him pursue his dreams even more. In addition, he started his own business and made more money than at his previous job. Social mobility theory by Sorokin examines how a person's job and income change as they rise in social class. Furthermore, this study also discusses the film's main social mobility factors. They are environmental changes, parent-child differences, and defective social strata distribution. Firstly, entering stockbroking is crucial for him to gain new skills and experiences despite his social background. The difference between Chris and his son, Christopher, were also discussed. This sub-topic discusses how Chris hopes to break his son's lower social background circle. He wanted Christopher's life improved, so he always encourages his son to dream about his future goals. Finally, the defective social distribution. Despite his lower social status, he can adapt and outperform people with higher social and economic statuses. Film data shows it too. All of these contribute to Chris' upward mobility in the film.

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