

Spring 2016 Directive

Part 1: Social Mobility

This Directive is designed to get you writing about social mobility. We are interested to hear about your position in society and stories about the opportunities you have – or haven't – had in your life.

First thoughts

Before you read on, please jot down the words or phrases that come to mind when you think of the term 'social mobility'. Please don't feel the need to look this phrase up, we want your first reactions to the term.

Please start each part of your Directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number, sex, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember *not to identify yourself or other people inadvertently within your reply*. It is best to use initials instead of real names.

Who among your family and friends has done 'well' for themselves? What happened?
Has anyone among your family and friends experienced downward social mobility? If so, why?

Think back...

How would you describe your parents' and grandparents' social class(es)? Would you say that you belong to a different social class? If so, what has led to this change? If not, why not?

Has your social class changed since your childhood, or has it stayed the same? Please give details.

Do you have adult children? If so would you say that they are now in a different social class than the one they were born into? Why or why not?

In the past, have you ever felt like an outsider at school, at work, or in the neighbourhood where you lived? Please share any stories relating to this?

Do you feel that you belong in the neighbourhood where you live? At your workplace? With friends or colleagues? Please explain why or why not.

Britain today

Is Britain fair?

In your view, what does it mean to be successful?

Are there any opportunities that are only open to people from certain backgrounds?

Are there any barriers obstructing people from certain backgrounds?

Part 2: Higher Education

The second section of the Directive focuses on higher education. Even if you didn't go to university or college, we would like your thoughts about how not going has impacted on your life.

What does higher education mean to you? What value do you place on it?

Did you go to university?

If yes, please share your memories about:

How did you decide what courses and institutions to go to?

Did you know what to expect when you arrived at college/university?

How do you feel that you fitted into the social life?

How did higher education impact on your later life:

- Employment?
- Your social and political attitudes?
- The things you do in your non-work life (e.g. friendships, relationships, pastimes)?

If no, consider:

Why did you not go to university?

Do you think that not going to university has impacted your life in any way?

If you could change the past, would you have liked to have gone to university? If so, which university/college/course would you like to have attended?

Experiences of other family and friends

Did your parents, grandparents or other family members go to university?

What impact, if any, did this have on their lives?

Current/future generations

Are any of your children, or younger acquaintances studying at college or university? Have you noticed any changes in their lives? What impact do you think their decision will have on them? We are also interested in any reflections about younger people who have decided not to enter into higher education.

More students than ever before go to university. Has this altered the value of higher education?

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Part 3: The EU Referendum

Is Britain stronger in Europe, or should the nation vote to leave the European Union? Mass Observation wants your thoughts about the upcoming EU referendum...

Will you vote? Do you feel that your vote counts? If you don't intend to vote please explain why.

What are the key issues for the UK? Are there any issues that are particularly important to you and will affect how you vote?

Has membership of the EU benefited you, your local area or the UK? Or has it been a disadvantage?

What are your hopes and fears for the UK after the referendum is over?

Have you been following the news coverage? What do you make of the campaigns and declarations made by politicians, business leaders and others who publically speak about the referendum?

In the weeks running up to the referendum log how your opinions change as the campaigns develop. You might just want to record a few words to express how you feel, or write something longer. It would be useful if you could note down if any news coverage about the referendum alters your thinking.

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Please post your response to: **Freepost: RTGU-AYJE-YSSC, The Mass Observation Archive, The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP** or by email to: moa@sussex.ac.uk JS/FC Spring Directive/No. 105