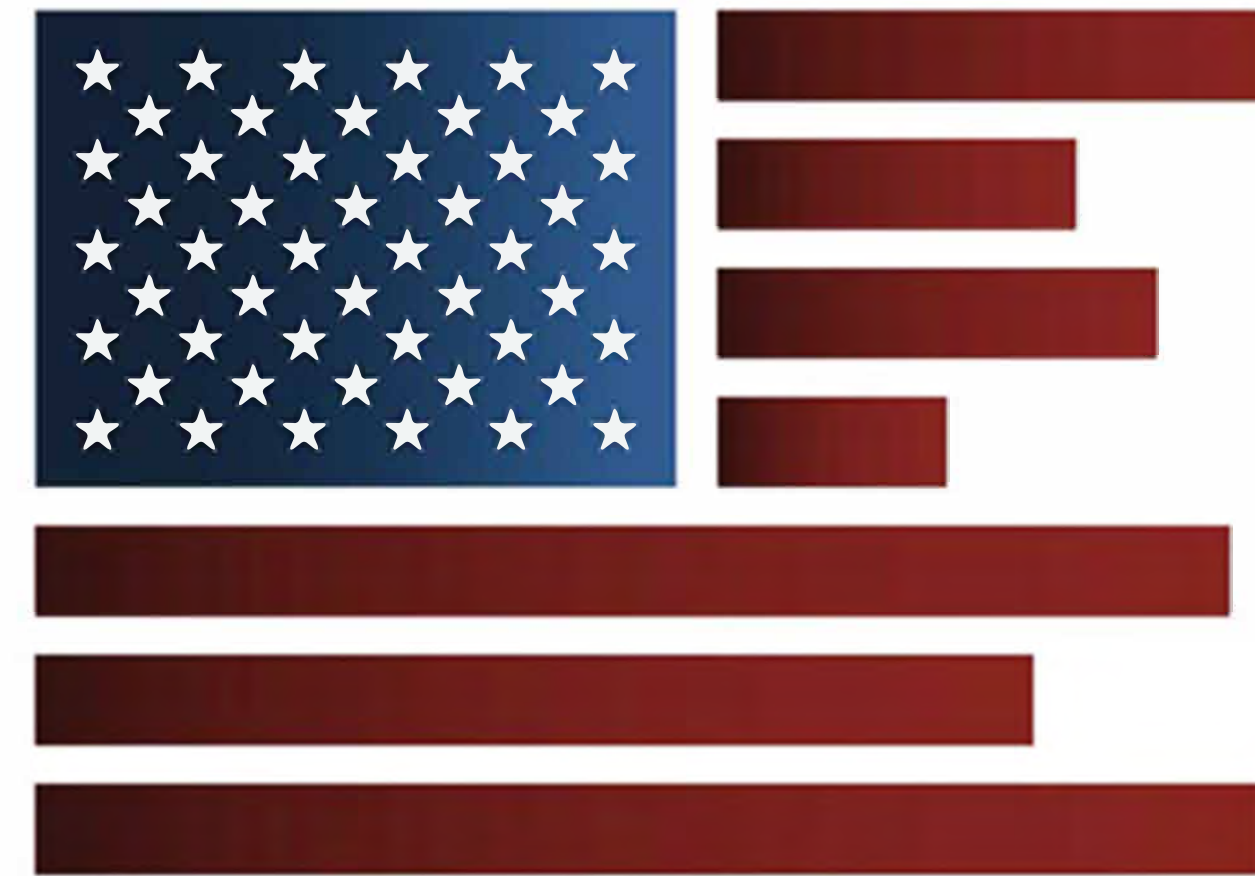


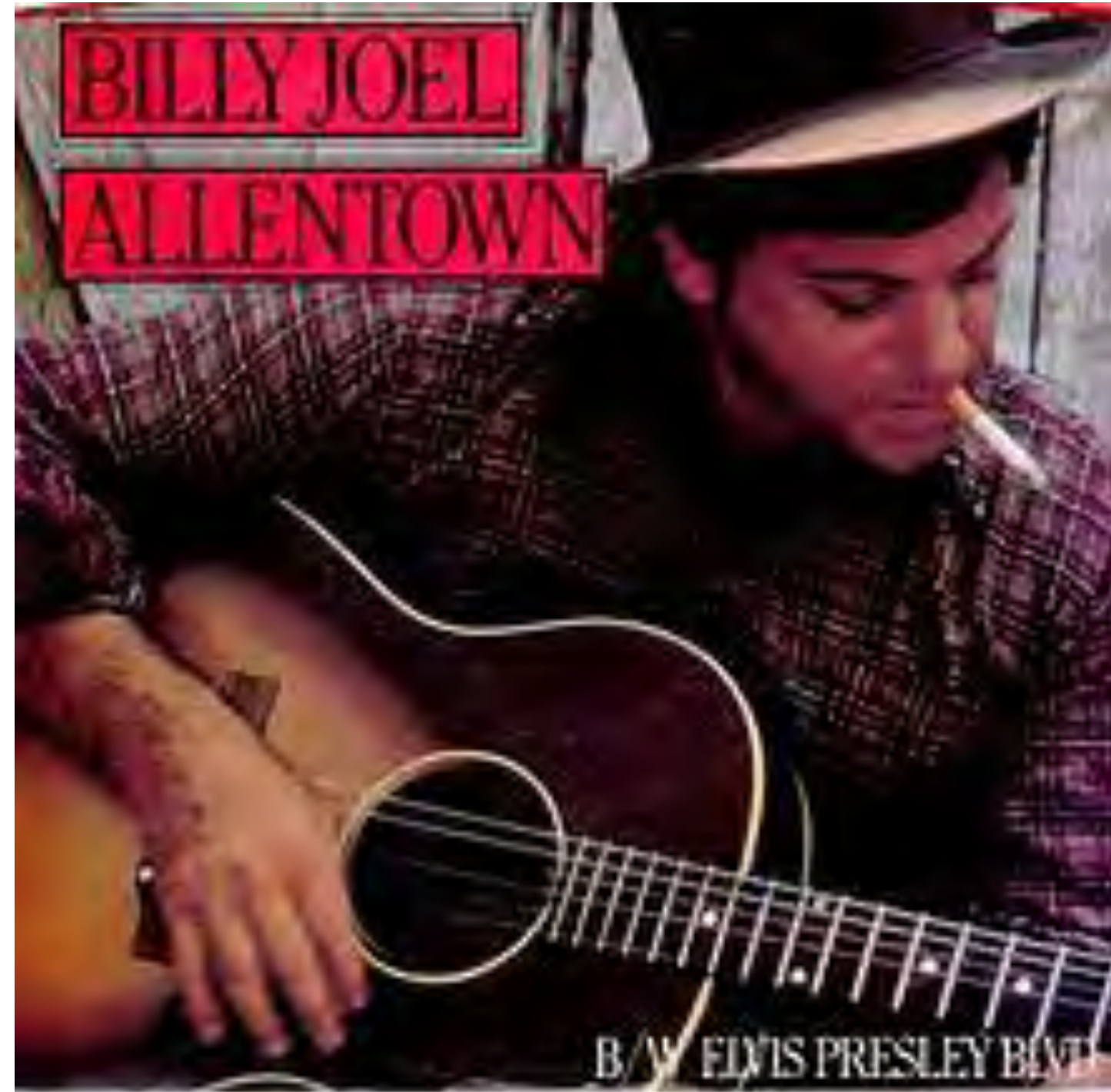
STATE of the UNION



SOCIAL MOBILITY

Michael Hout
New York University

Americans worried about declining social mobility for a long time now



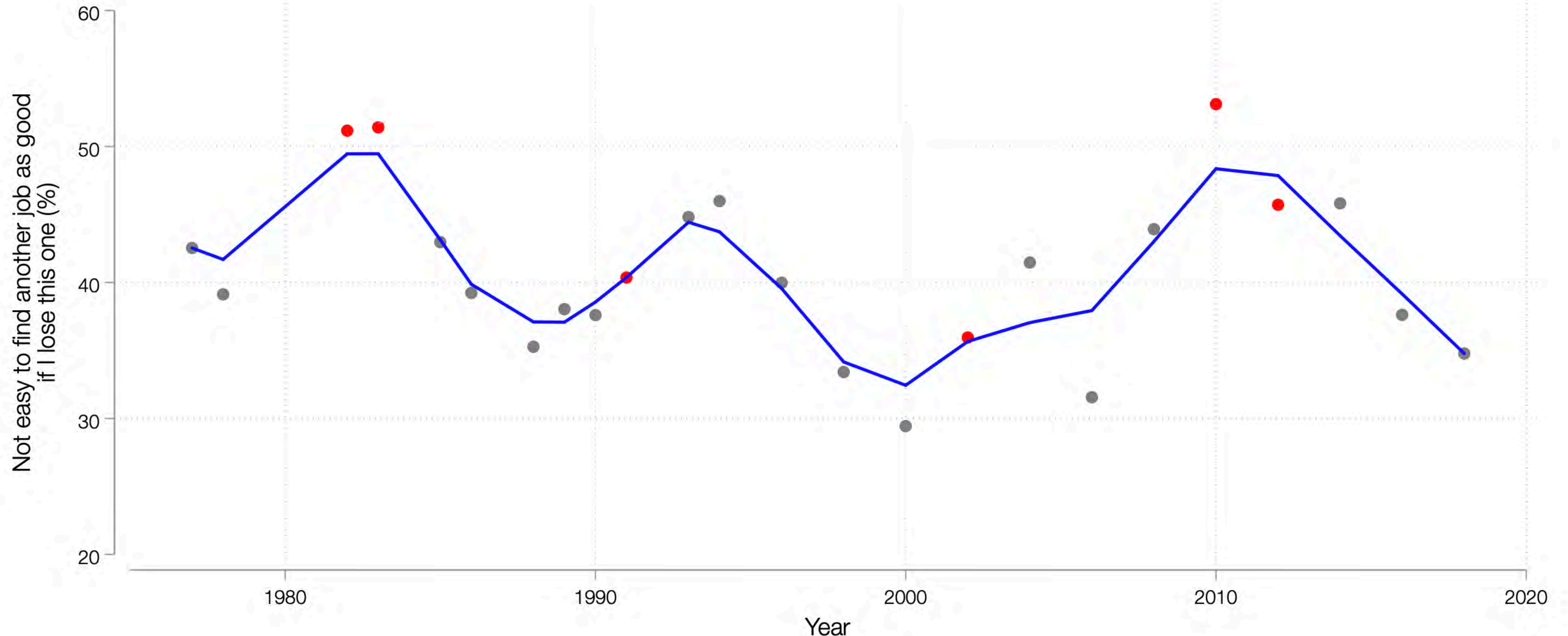
1982



Bruce Springsteen My Hometown

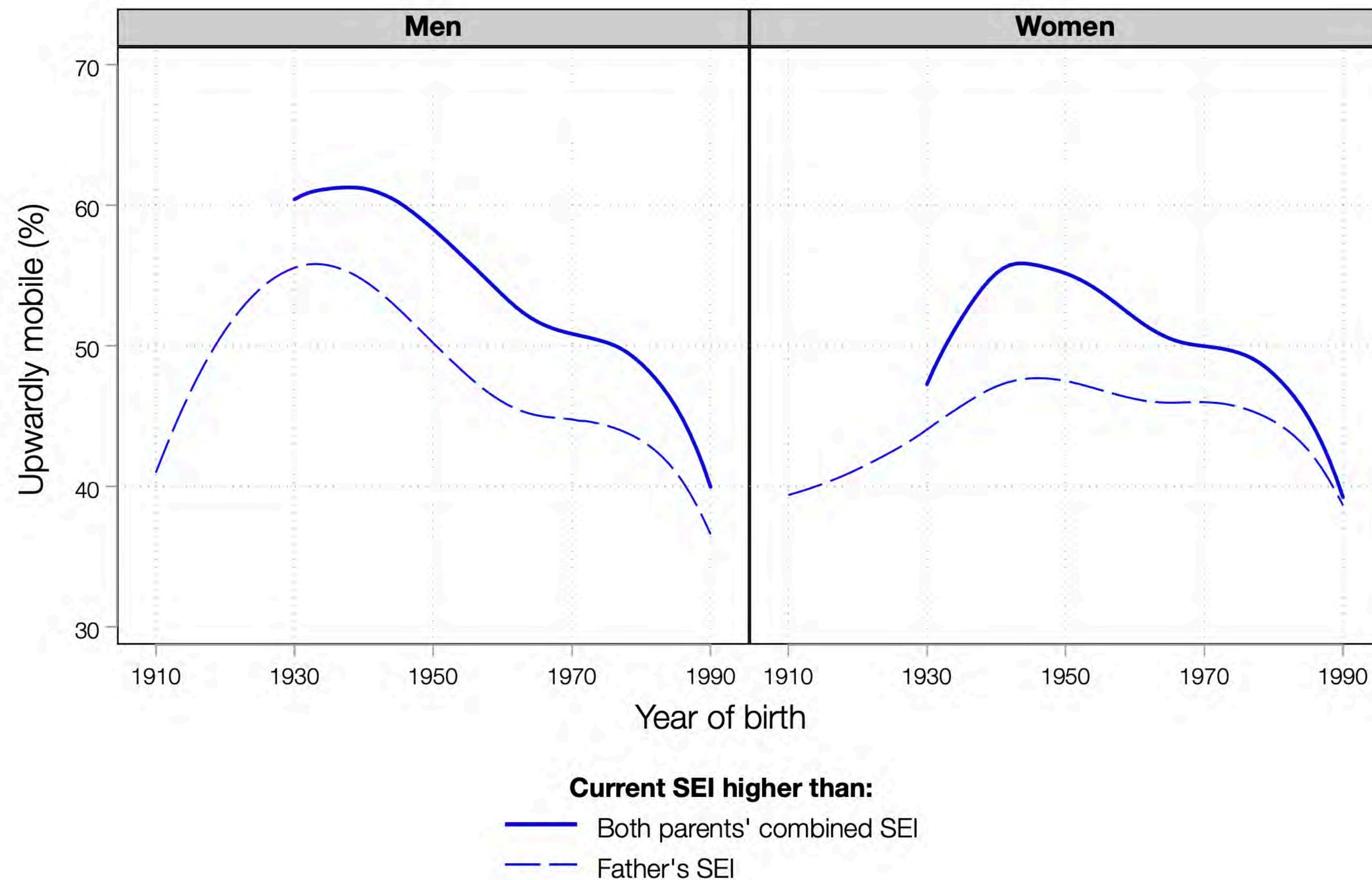
1984

Americans worried about declining social mobility for a long time now



Note: Data slightly smoothed by locally estimated (lowess) regression. Red data points show recessions.
Source: General Social Surveys, 1977-2018.

Actual mobility by year of birth



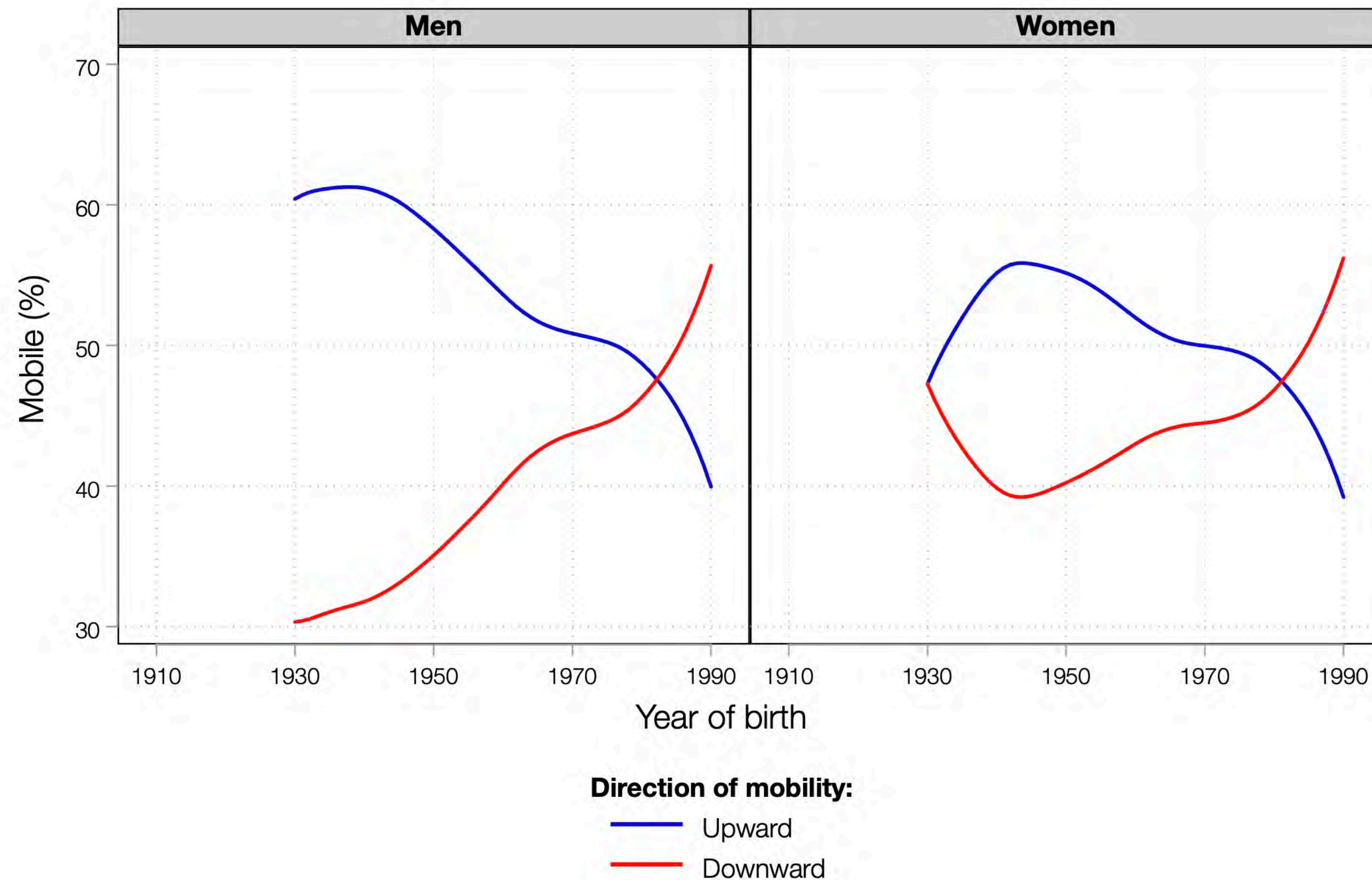
Men's mobility peaked among those born in the Great Depression

Women's mobility peaked among boomers

Millennials are the only cohort with more downward than upward mobility.

Note: People 25–74 years old, raised in the United States, and born 1910–1990. Excluding people whose parents worked in agriculture.
Source data on both parents: General Social Surveys, 1994–2016.
Source data on fathers: General Social Surveys, 1972–2016.

Actual mobility by year of birth



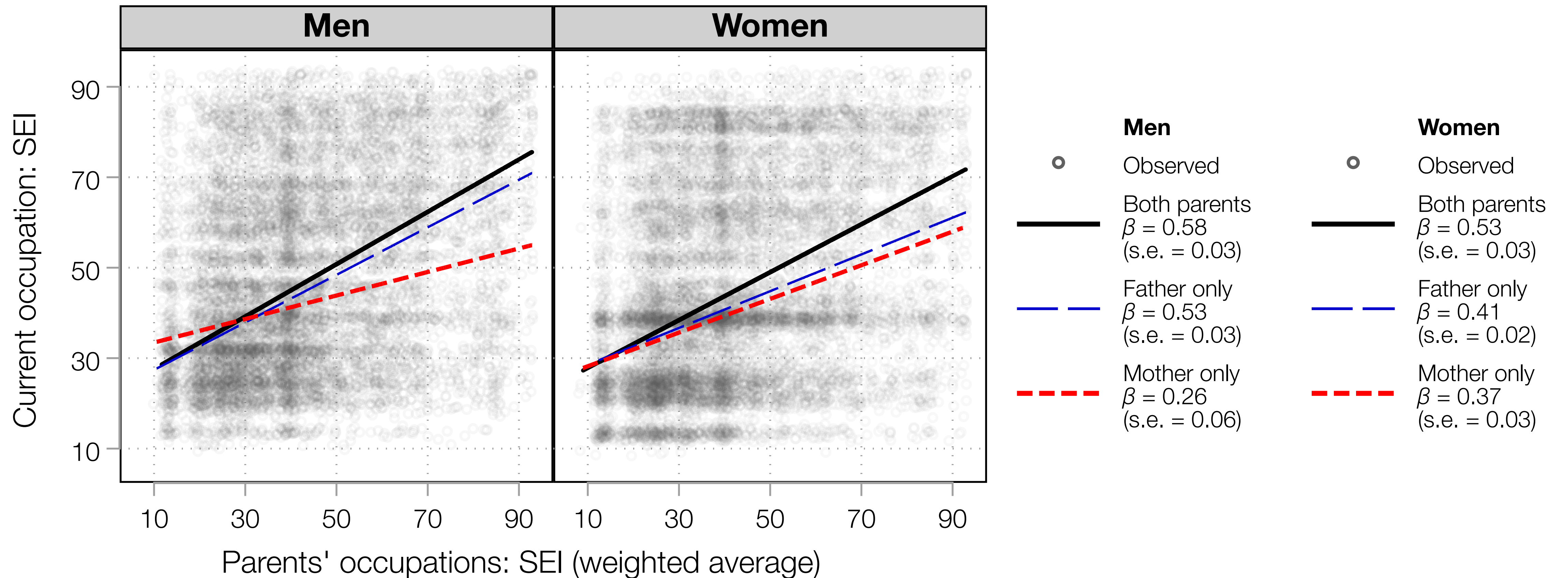
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Intergenerational persistence (& mobility) depend on family structure



Note: People 25–74 years old, raised in the United States, and born 1910–1990.
Excluding people whose parents worked in agriculture.
Source: General Social Surveys, 1994–2016.

Education mediates much of the bivariate association

College as "great equalizer"

Hout (1988)

Torche (2011)

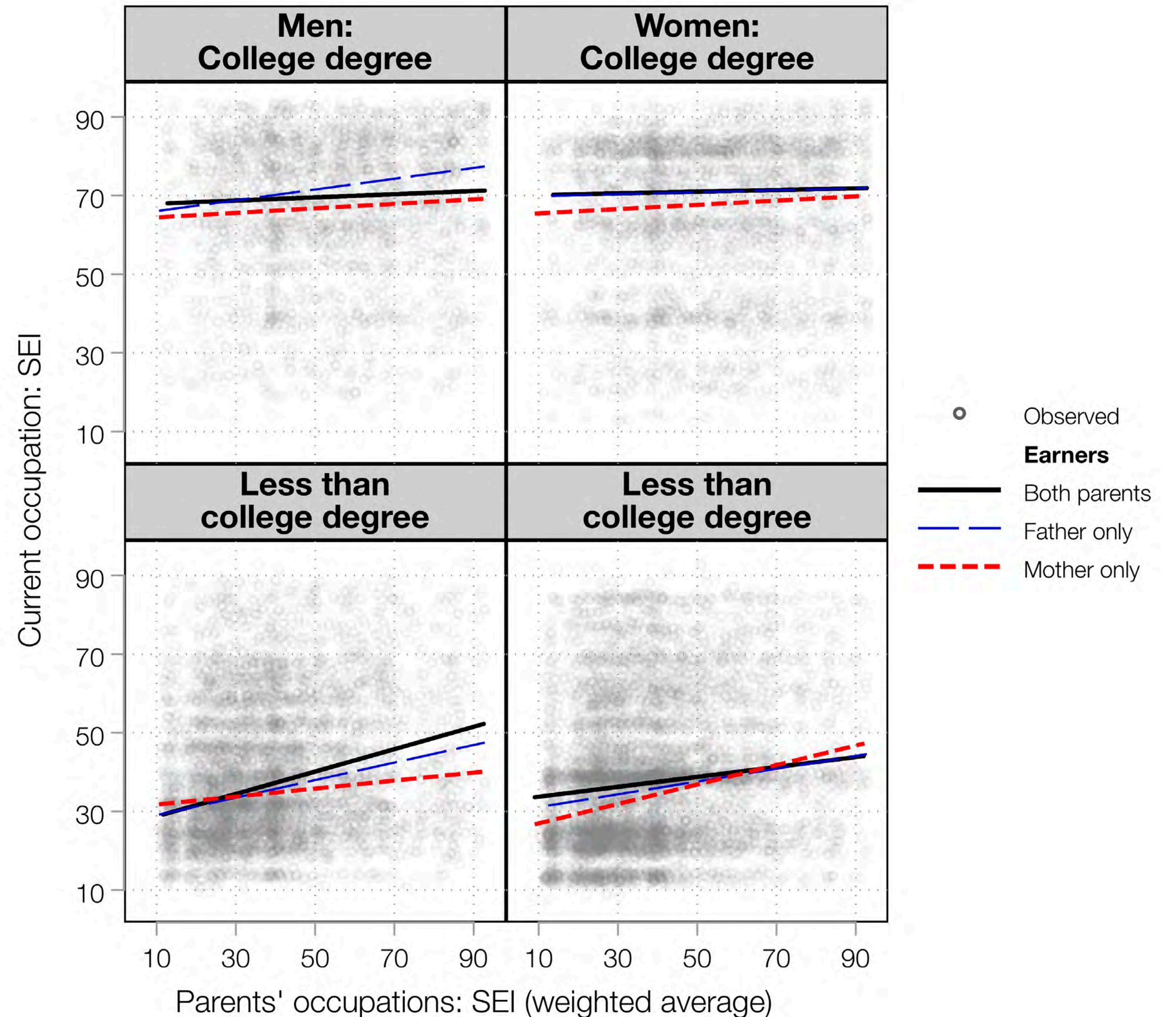
Zhou (2019)

Breen & Müller (2019)

College graduates: OD association null among college graduates

Less than college degree: OD association ~60% weaker than without education control (but still significant)

Implication: Inequality of college opportunity is a major factor in US intergenerational persistence



Inequality of college opportunity is a major factor in US mobility

