

Social Mobility

The United States has an open class system, which makes social mobility possible

Social Mobility

- The movement between or within social classes

Social Mobility

Horizontal Mobility

- Movement within a social class
 - Ex: New job
 - Important step in career ladder (does not change wealth, power, or prestige)

Vertical Mobility

- Movement to a new social class
 - Ex: Promotion at work (assistant to manager)
 - Change in income moves one from working class to lower middle class

Social Mobility

Intragenerational Mobility

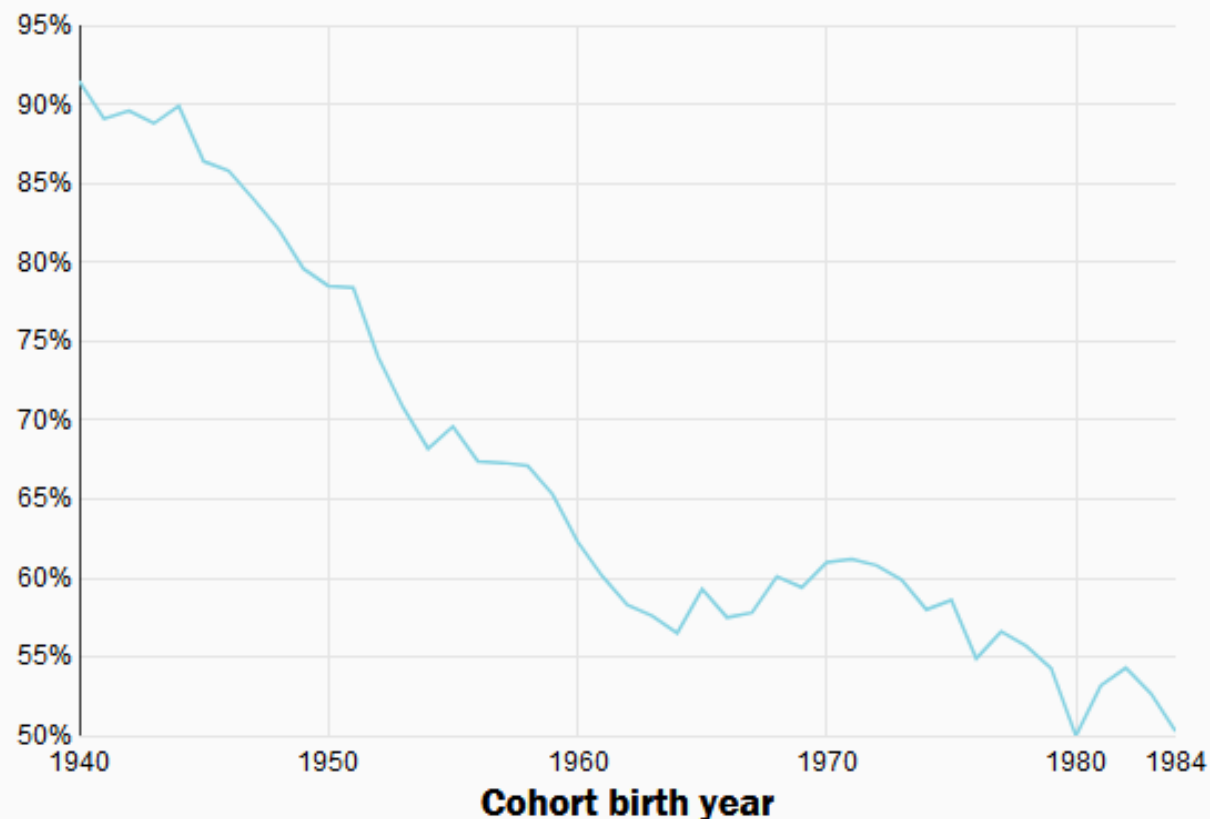
- Changes in social position during one person's life

Intergenerational Mobility

- Status differences between generations
 - Ex: The child of a mechanic becomes a doctor
 - Change in income moves one from working class to lower middle class

Absolute mobility has plummeted

Percentage of children earning more than their parents, by birth cohort



Source: Chetty et al. "The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility Since 1940." *Science* 356(6336): 398-406, 2017. Figure 1B. Data downloaded from www.equality-of-opportunity.org/data/

BROOKINGS

Comparing Immigrants, the Second Generation and All U.S. Adults

(1st generation refers to immigrants)

Median annual household income (in dollars)



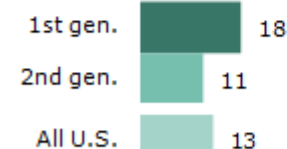
College graduates (% of ages 25 and older)



Homeownership rate (% of households)



In poverty (% of adults)



Notes: Based on adults. Annual income figure is adjusted and standardized to a household size of three; see Methodology. College graduates include those with a bachelor's degree or more. See Terminology for more on definition of generations.

Source: 2012 data from Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population surveys, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) file

PEW RESEARCH CENTER