What do we really know about social mobility (in the UK)?

Colin Mills
Department of Sociology and Nuffield College
Oxford University

Turku, 11 December 2014

Trying to establish the facts of the matter

Has origin-destination association changed over time in any particular direction?
If it has changed what is the magnitude (in units anyone would care about)?

No (proper) register data;

Some cohort data; 1946, 1958, 1970, 1980/84;

Lots of cross-sectional survey data of variable quality and consistency;

Need to consider all or as much as possible of the relevant evidence;

Three overlapping data series defined by consistency in coding of the occupational data:

Points of observation: 40

1. 1949-1969	3
2. 1963-1997	34
3. 1991-2010	6

NB levels are not comparable across series

Focus today on series 2. and 3.

Serious attempt made to:

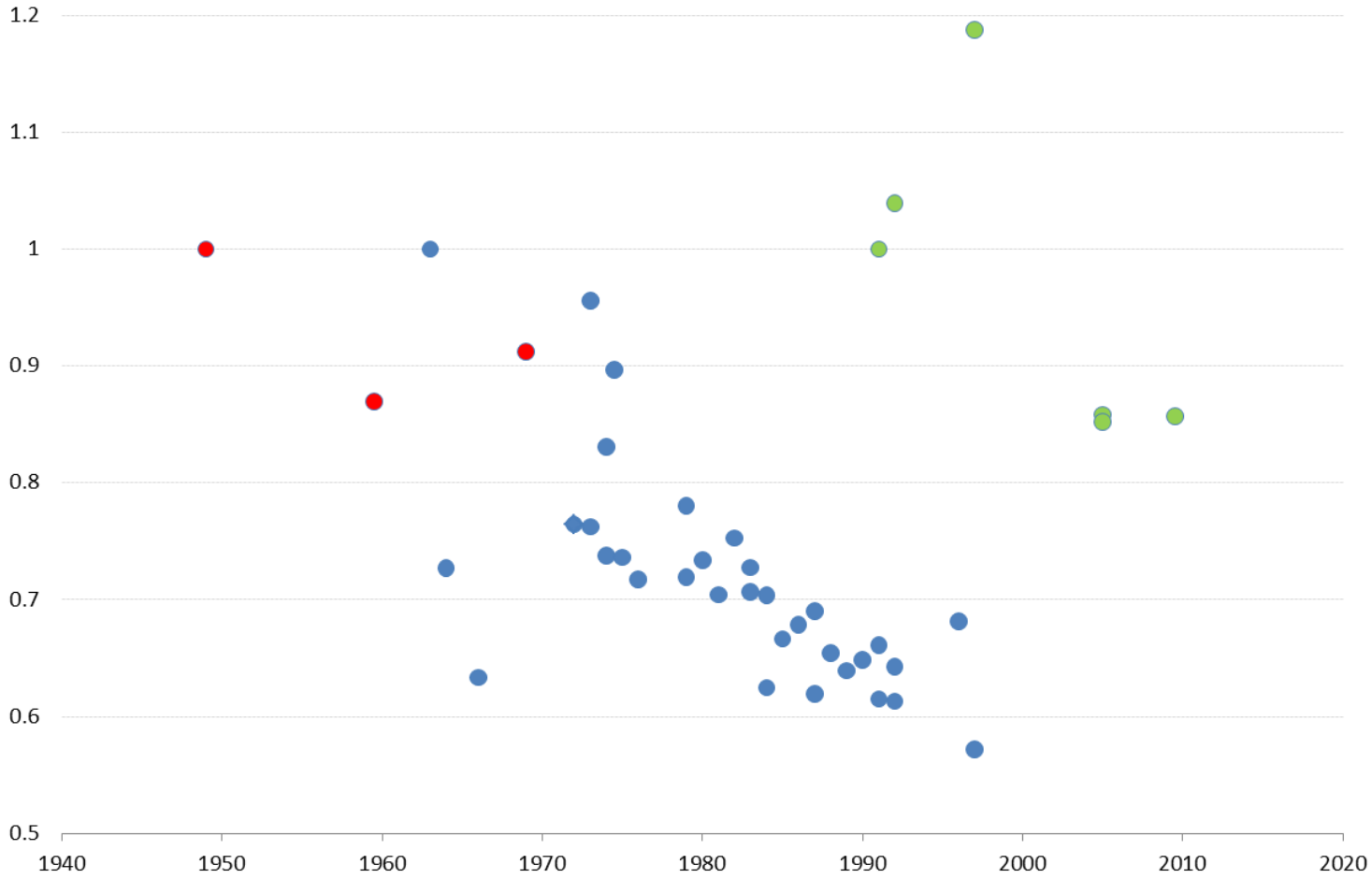
Post-stratify using either known population proportions or best large N estimates;

Explore plausible variations in occupational coding (some not available ie EGP).

Today illustrative results only:

Just for males - still working on females and households.

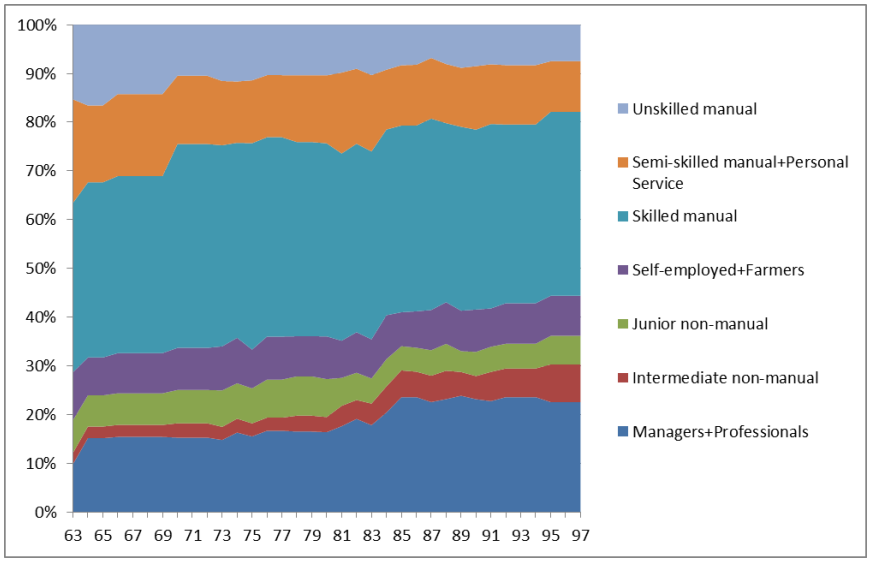
“Uni-diff” parameters, 40 surveys in 3 series, 1949-2010, UK constituent parts, males.



Red 1949-69; blue 1963-1997; green 1991-2010

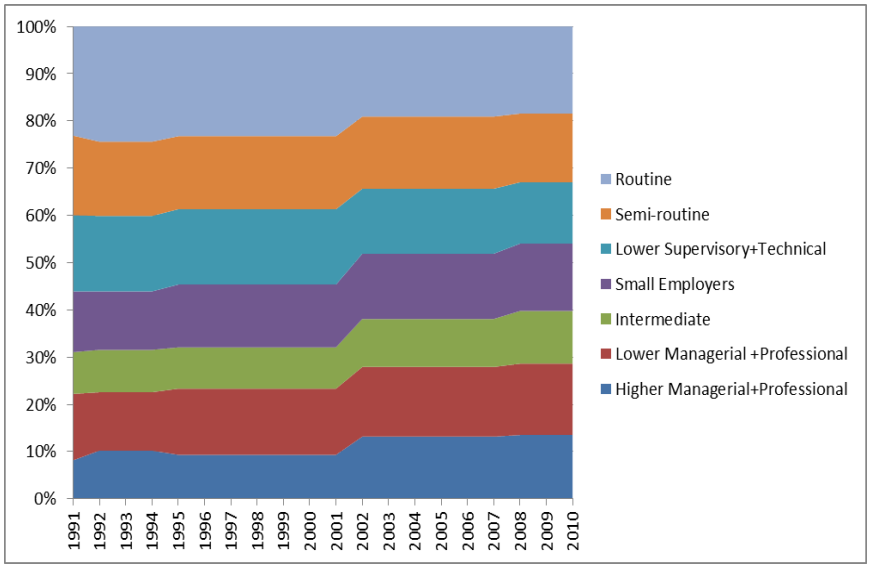
‘Class’ origin distribution, males

1963-97 (SEG)



Born 1904-1972;
Origins circa 1918-1986

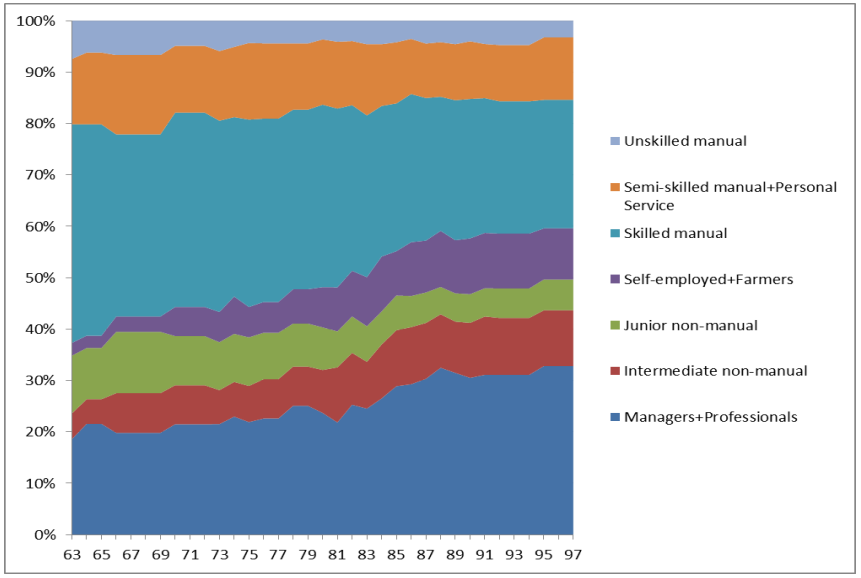
1991-2010 (NS-SEC)



Born 1932- 1985;
Origins circa 1946-1999

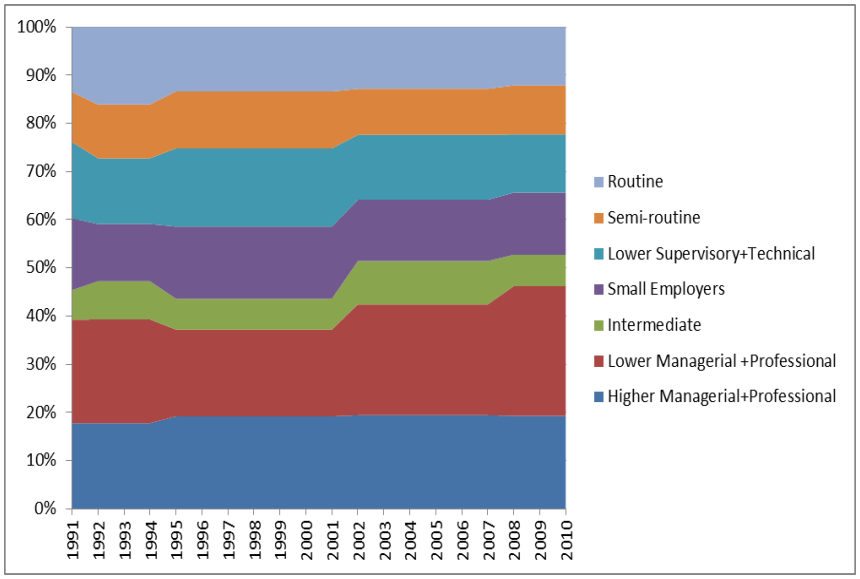
‘Class’ destination distribution, males

1963-97 (SEG)



Born 1904-1972;
Origins circa 1918-1986

1991-2010 (NS-SEC)



Born 1932- 1985;
Origins circa 1946-1999

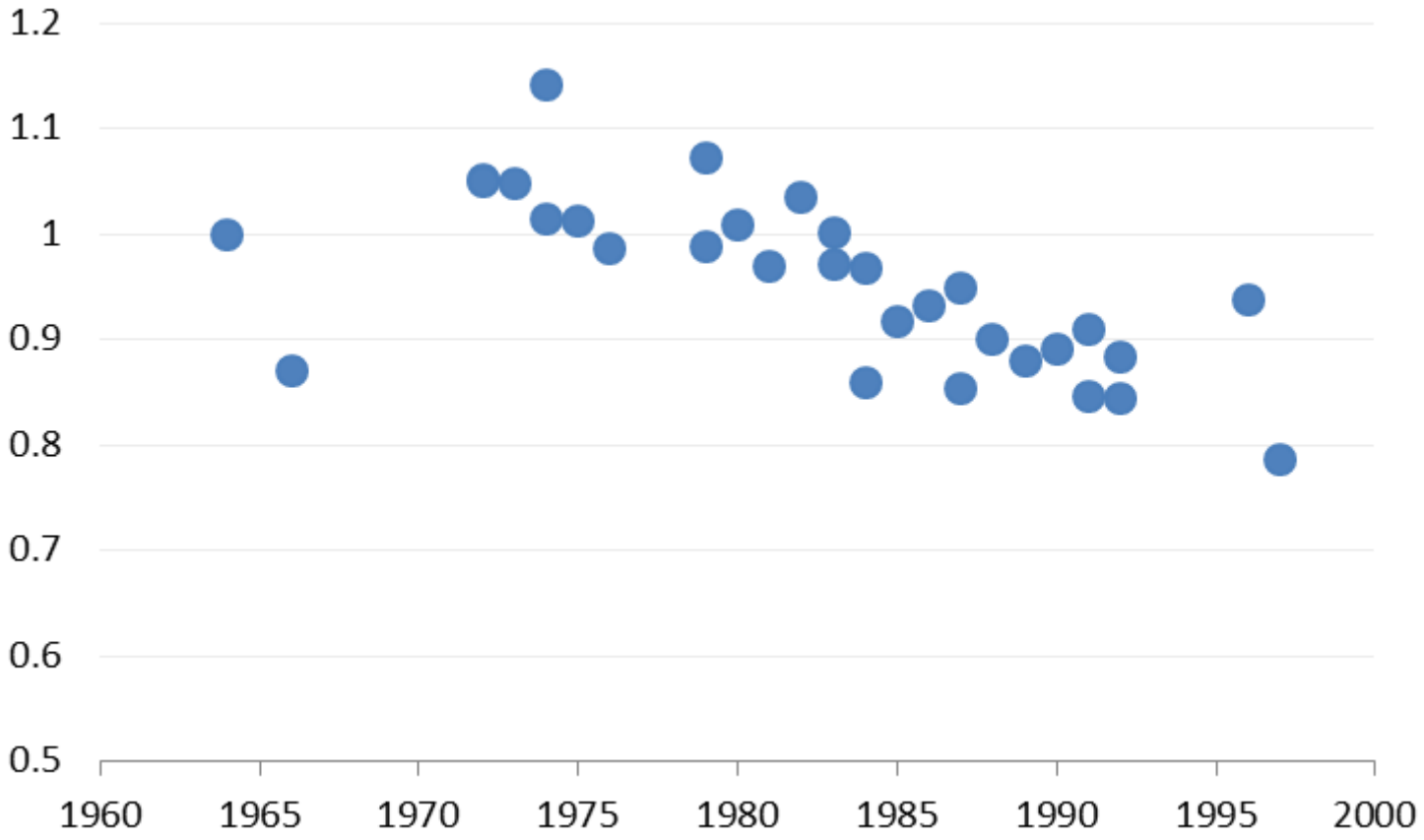
Model fit statistics, 34 surveys 1963-1997, UK constituent parts, males.

	L^2	df	p.	BIC	Δ
1.CSF	1487.3	1188	.00	-12341.7	3.4
2.“uni-diff”	1331.3	1155	.00	-12113.5	3.1
3.”uni-diff” linear	1397.6	1187	.00	-12419.7	3.2
Conditional test 1. v 2.	156.0	33	.00		
Conditional test 1. v 3.	89.7	1	.00		
Conditional test 2. v 3.	66.3	32	.00		

N =113609

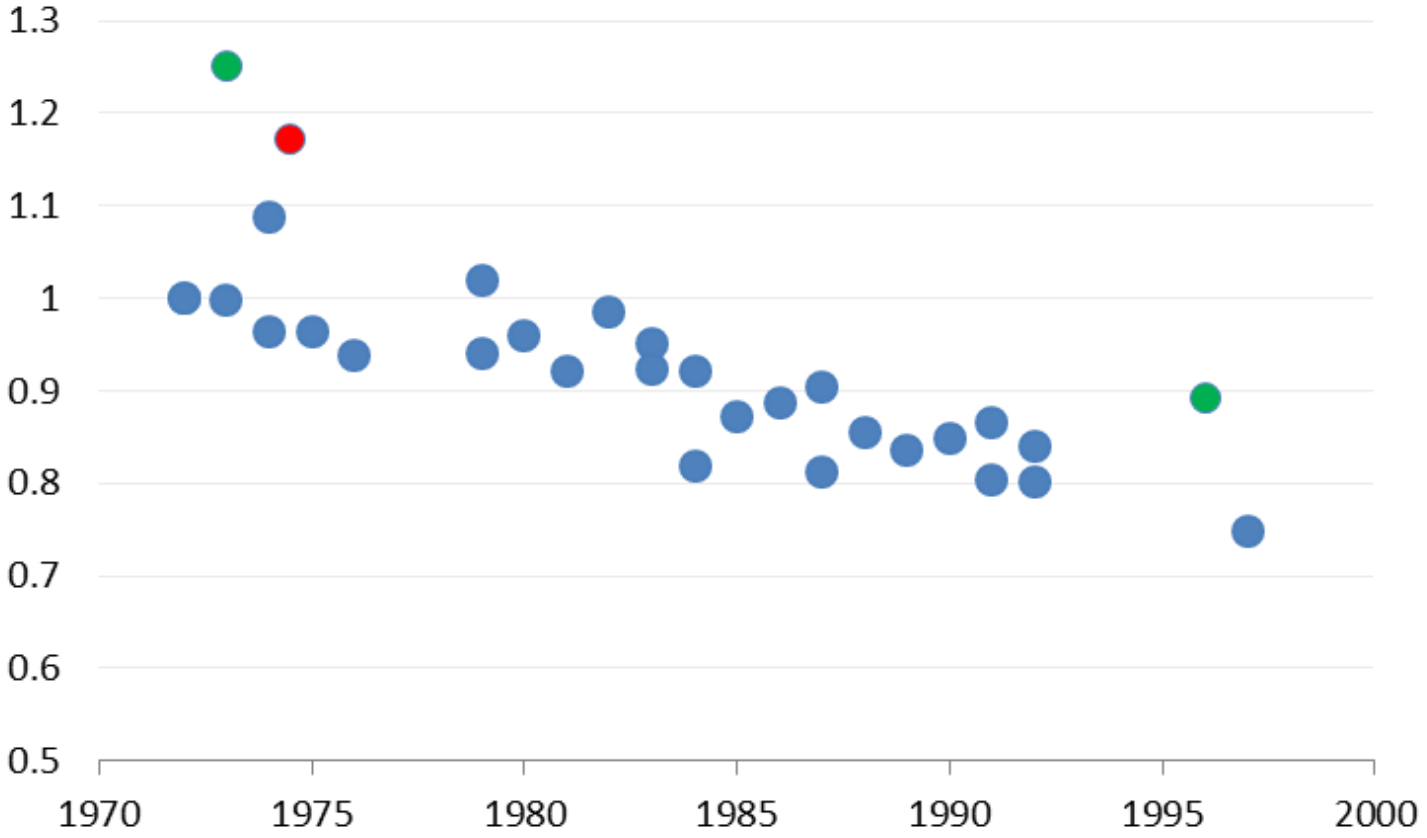
β = -0.008

“Uni-diff” parameters, 33 surveys (middle series), 1963 dropped, 1964-1997, UK constituent parts, males.



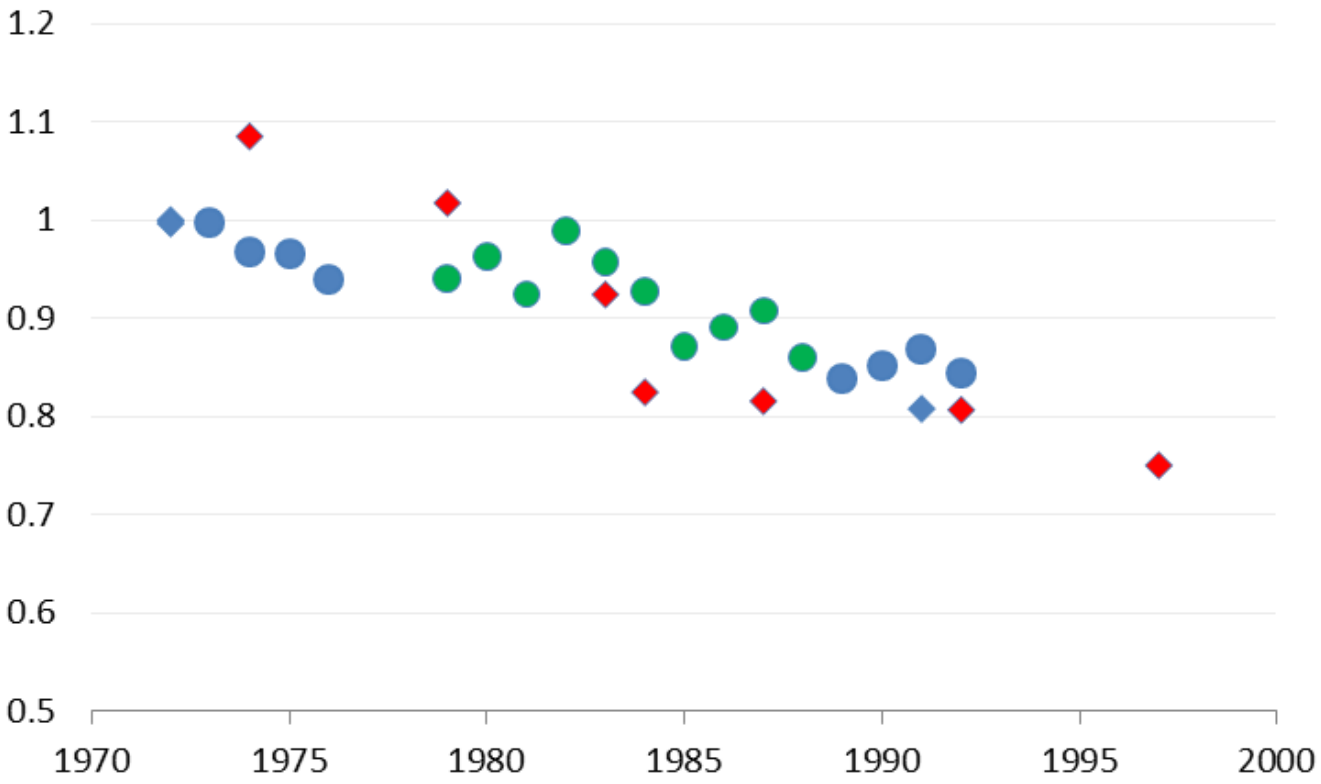
N = 113043; β = -0.008

“Uni-diff” parameters, 31 surveys (middle series) 1972-1997, UK constituent parts, males.



N = 111972, β = -0.008;
Green = Northern Ireland; Red = Scotland

"Uni-diff" parameters, 28 surveys (middle series) 1972-1997, Great Britain, males.



N = 105484; β = -0.007;

Red = N < 1000; Diamond = Origin when R is about 14; Green = age 25-49

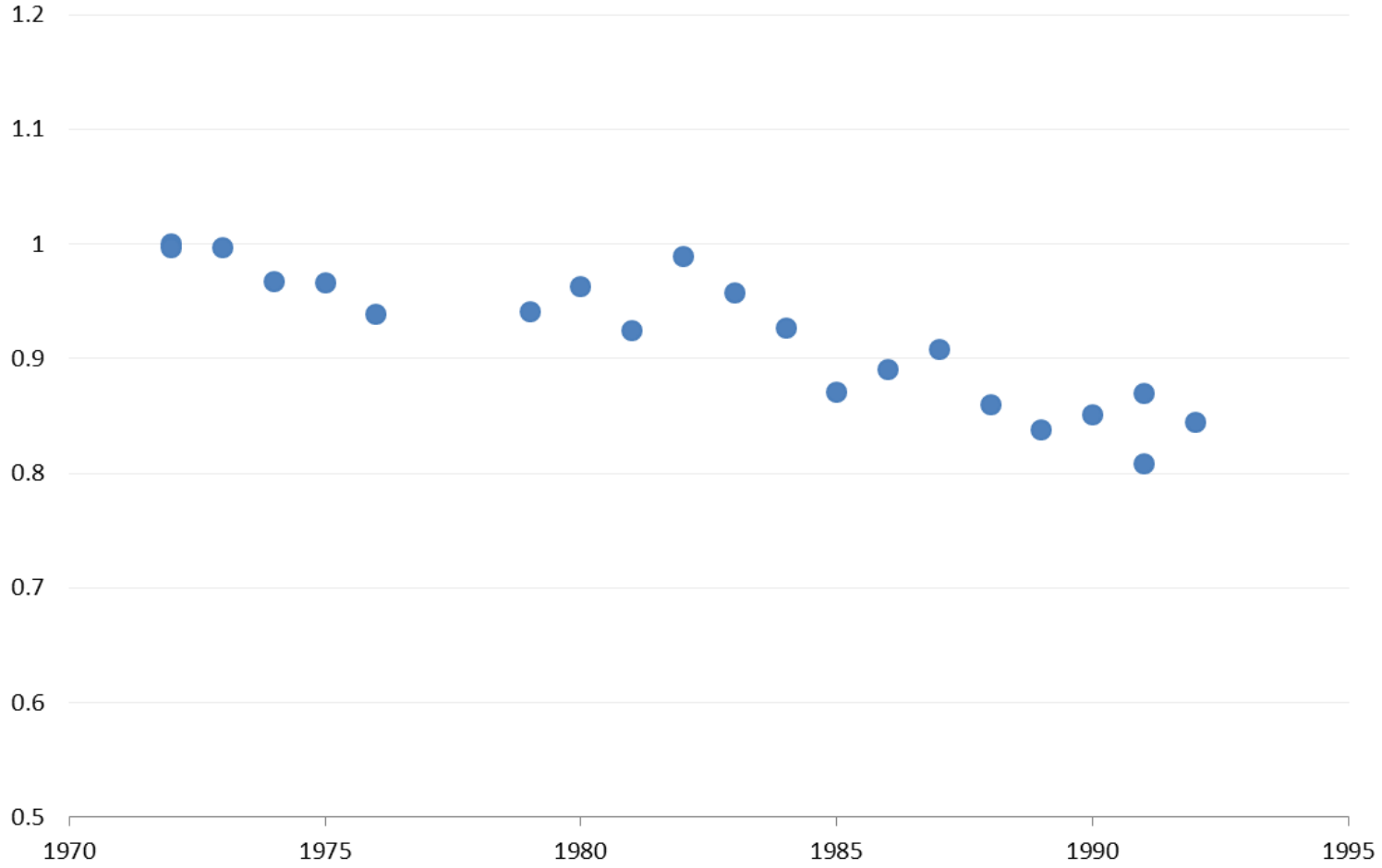
Model fit statistics, 21 surveys (middle series) 1972-1992, Great Britain, males.

	L^2	df	p.	BIC	Δ
1.CSF	772.9	720	.08	-7515.2	2.9
2.“uni-diff”	714.6	700	.34	-7343.3	2.6
3.”uni-diff” linear	724.8	719	.43	-7551.8	2.7
Conditional test 1. v 2.	58.3	20	.00		
Conditional test 1. v 3.	48.1	1	.00		
Conditional test 2. v 3.	10.2	19	.95		

N = 99832

β = -0.007

“Uni-diff” parameters, 21 surveys (middle series) 1972-1997, Great Britain, males.



N = 99832; β = -0.007

Model fit statistics, 6 surveys (third series) 1991-2010, Great Britain, males.

	L^2	df	p.	BIC	Δ
1.CSF	231.6	180	.00	-1587.9	3.1
2.“uni-diff”	215.4	175	.02	-1555.6	3.1
3.”uni-diff” linear	222.6	179	.03	-15881	3.1
Conditional test 1. v 2.	16.2	5	.00		
Conditional test 1. v 3.	9.0	1	.00		
Conditional test 2. v 3.	7.2	19	.95		

N = 24828

β = -0.010

Change in relative risk of being observed in top class- top class origin compared to others

	1972	1992		1991	2010
Base %	21.1	31.1	Base %	17.8	19.3
Intermediate non manual	1.3	1.2	Lower Managerial + Prof.	1.5	1.4
Junior non-manual	1.6	1.4	Intermediate	1.7	1.5
Self employed	2.5	2.2	Small employers	3.2	2.6
Skilled manual	2.9	2.1	Lower sup._ tech.	2.7	2.2
Semi-skilled	3.5	2.5	Semi-routine	3.1	2.5
Unskilled manual	5.0	3.3	Routine	4.2	3.0

Compensation

Shift from “What do we know?” to “What can we know?”

Identification problems rather than data problems

Examples

Richer characterization of origin (& destination) state;

Grand-parents – three generation “effects”.

Genuine exogenous variation