# Falling sideways? Social status and the true nature of elite downward mobility

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**ABSTRACT**

Downward mobility is an essential, but commonly overlooked component of social mobility. Existing estimates of downward mobility are routinely based on unidimensional measures of income and social class. This ignores the potential for substantial retention of advantage in other domains of stratification – particularly social status.

In this paper, I use highly detailed occupational data from a representative UK sample to examine patterns of multidimensional mobility among those from the most advantaged backgrounds. I find that multidimensional measures reveal dramatically different patterns of downward mobility – particularly for women, who, when downwardly mobile in terms of social *class,* often retain privileged social *status* positions.

I also find that those whose parents held jobs at the very top of the status distribution were much less likely to be downwardly mobile than previous mobility estimates have suggested – consistent with public perceptions of a 'glass floor'

**KEYWORDS**

social mobility; downward mobility; privilege; opportunity hoarding; glass floor; social status; social class; occupational prestige

# 1. Introduction

Across countries, social mobility policy and advocacy focuses overwhelmingly on *upward* mobility (Reeves & Howard 2013; McKnight, 2015). However, *downward* mobility is arguably a more important indicator of social fluidity and openness. Retention of privilege across generations has long been recognised as a sign of social sclerosis. As Miller (1960) notes: "a society which is dropping sons born in advantaged strata out of these strata has more openness than one which brings up talented manual sons but safe-guards the privileges of the already advantaged" (p.59). Further, the end of the 20th Century expansion of the professional class has made downward mobility from the top a necessary precondition for upward mobility to occur (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2022).

Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2022) place elite immobility at the centre of their general theory of intergenerational social mobility. Advantaged parents are strongly motivated to avoid downward mobility among their offspring, and can deploy substantial resources to prevent it. According to Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2022), this nexus of means and motivation represents "the basic source of the resistance to change" (p.283) in the direction of greater social fluidity.

The resources on which advantaged families are able to draw are considerable. Most obviously, they include material assets, which offer a variety of guardrails and springboards: including the purchase of educational advantage – such as private schooling, extra-curricular tuition, and housing near high-performing state schools (Montacute & Cullinane, 2018); financial support for offspring taking riskier, or initially low or unpaid career opportunities in competitive industries (Manzoni, 2018); and the funding of opportunities for 'counter-mobility' to offset early educational or career failure (Bukodi et al., 2016).

Privileged families can also draw on important social and cultural resources. Children from more advantaged backgrounds are more likely to interact with family networks featuring occupationally useful role models and contacts (Ballarino & Bernardi, 2016). They are also more likely to be socialised into cultural norms and practices that help facilitate occupational advancement (Reeves and de Vries, 2019). Advantaged families can also draw on career and educational expertise, including 'behind the scenes' knowledge of the access requirements for elite roles, and an understanding of how to navigate higher educational pathways (Rivera, 2016). Taken together, these 'opportunity hoarding' strategies may create a 'glass floor' (Reeves & Howard, 2013), precluding any meaningful descent down the social ladder.

The concept of the 'glass floor' accords with a widespread perception that rates of intergenerational downward mobility in economically unequal societies – such as the US and the UK – are unacceptably low (Satz & White, 2022). However, this conclusion sits uneasily with empirical research on actual rates of downward mobility, which tends to find that the *majority* of those born in the most advantaged classes or income strata do not end up in the top stratum themselves (Bukodi et al, 2015). This suggests much a much lower degree of intergenerational retention of advantage than one might expect from popular discourse.

In this paper I examine downward mobility from a multi-dimensional perspective. While popular perceptions of immobility at the top are likely to incorporate multiple dimensions of advantage, both material and social, academic research on social mobility tends to be unidimensional in nature. In the analyses reported below, I use multidimensional measures of social origin and destination to examine patterns of downward mobility from the most advantaged strata in a very large British sample. This multidimensional approach substantially changes the observed nature and pattern of downward mobility in Britain – and, for women, dramatically so. It also highlights sub-strata for

whom parental advantage is particularly 'sticky' – and for whom the perception of a 'glass floor' might be a better fit.

### 1.1. The multidimensionality of social position and its relevance for downward mobility

Empirical research on social mobility tends to focus on a single dimension of social position. Economists tend to focus on income, whereas sociologists focus on social class or, less commonly, gradational measures of 'occupational status' (Rytina, 2000). Often implicit (and sometimes explicit) in these unidimensional approaches is the notion that there exists a latent hierarchy of general social 'advantage', for which the measure at hand may serve as a proxy (Blossfeld, 2019). However, different dimensions of advantage are both conceptually distinct, and have different implications for people's lived experience and prospects (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007).

In this paper I focus particularly on the Weberian distinction between class and status (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007). According to this perspective, social *class* is defined entirely by one's economic position: classes are differentiated on the basis of their relationship to property and the labour market (Weber, 2010). In contemporary class schemes – for example, the widely used Erikson-Goldthorpe (1992) scheme – this is principally operationalised on the basis of employment relations. Employers are distinguished from employees, and employees are distinguished according to the extent to which they perform loosely regulated work in exchange for a salary (a service contract) as opposed to tightly regulated work in exchange for wages related to output or time worked (a labour contract) (Bukodi et al., 2015). Categorical differentiations are derived according to the extent to which class members' occupations adhere to the ideal form of the service or labour contract. For example, 'higher professionals' (such as doctors and lawyers) may be differentiated from 'lower professionals' because the labour of the former is typically more loosely regulated, and is more likely to involve regular pay increments, structured promotions, and other benefits (Bukodi et al., 2015).

By contrast, social status groups (*Stande* in Weber's terminology) are defined according to a subjective "social assessment of honour" (Weber, 2010) – the extent to which one is 'looked up to' in society. Social status may be determined by a variety of factors, including consumption patterns and behaviour (Waters & Waters, 2010). However, a particularly important determinant of status is the prestige accorded to one's occupation (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2004).

The contrast between the following two occupational incumbents illustrates the importance of the class/status distinction:

- Jane is an insurance underwriter. Her work is likely regulated by a service contract, with a high salary, good job security, and a high likelihood of pay increases and promotions. As such, Erikson-Goldthorpe type class schemes would place Jane's job squarely in the most advantaged class of 'higher professionals'.
- Anoosh is a political correspondent for a national magazine. Typical of many creative occupations, she is likely to have lower job security, and a less clear path toward pay increases and promotion. As such, she is in a less advantaged economic position than Jane, and would typically be classed as a 'lower professional'. However, creative jobs like Anoosh's are some of the most sought after and prestigious in society.

Jane and Anoosh are both 'advantaged', but in ways that are importantly different for their lived experience. While, Jane may have more material comfort and stability, she will not have the same daily experience of prestige and respect. While Anoosh may be looked up to, she is likely to have a lower material standard of living, and to be more financially insecure. Class and occupational prestige are not functioning here as interchangeable proxies of a generalised unidimensional 'advantage'.

Social status is examined in social mobility research far less frequently than social class or income – and is rarely distinguished at all in advocacy or policy discussions.[1] However, it is a vitally important part of people's lived experience. Research suggests that people are very aware of their status position relative to others (Koski et al., 2015); that they are often willing to sacrifice material comfort for a relative gain in status position (Frank, 1985); and that relative status deprivation has a significant impact on mental and physical health, over and above material living standards (Mishra & Carleton, 2015). Research on the occupational aspirations of young people also suggests that they are often driven more strongly by occupational prestige than social class (Mann et al., 2013). As Bukodi et al. (2011) note: "status can be seen as a major reward obtained via occupation" (p.630) – one that may function as an addition to class or income, but also potentially as an alternative to them. Bukodi et al. (2021) have also suggested that status loss may actually be more psychologically aversive than class loss.

With respect to social mobility, ignoring the distinction between class and status provides a drastically incomplete picture of social origins and destinations. In terms of social origins, parental class and status may operate through different mechanisms to have a cumulative or interactive effect on child outcomes (Blossfeld, 2019). For example, parental *status* may be more strongly implicated in the inheritance of cultural norms and resources (Meraviglia & Buiss, 2015; Blossfeld, 2019); whereas parental *class* may facilitate more material support (Blossfeld, 2019; Thaning, 2021).

A multidimensional view is arguably even more important when considering social *destinations,* because examining only unidimensional destinations is likely to lead to a substantial over-estimation of downward mobility rates. Considering the pen portraits sketched above, let us say that Anoosh's parent is a medical doctor. Medical doctors are 'higher professionals', and hence, from a unidimensional class perspective, Anoosh has been downwardly mobile. However, given the prestige of her destination, it is not clear that this would be experienced or perceived as a meaningful loss of position. With respect to 'opportunity hoarding', it is far from obvious that Anoosh's parents would be expected to deploy their resource advantages to prevent the 'downward mobility' she has experienced. Indeed, research on creative professions is often concerned with the opposite expectation – that privileged parents will exploit their resources to *assist* their offspring in accessing creative jobs, thereby potentially blocking talented youngsters from more humble backgrounds from accessing these prestigious roles (Brook, 2023).

### 1.2. Downward mobility and gender

Distinguishing between class and status origins and destinations is likely to be particularly important in understanding gendered patterns of mobility. Previous unidimensional research on class mobility has drawn the relatively straightforward conclusion that women from advantaged backgrounds are more likely to be downwardly mobile than their male peers (Bukodi et al., 2015). Explanations for this pattern principally focus on the role of caring for children: women from privileged backgrounds may either struggle to return to high-level employment after having children (Goldthorpe & Mills, 2004), or they may pre-emptively decide to enter lower-level, more family-friendly, employment than their background would normally facilitate (Bukodi et al., 2017). Women from advantaged backgrounds may also be socialised towards pro-social or creative careers (de Vries & Rentfrow, 2016), which may lead to a lower class positions.

[1] Indeed the two dimensions are often elided. For example, a 2020 UK Social Mobility Commission (SMC) report on downward mobility describes the potential effects of "lowered status in the eyes of society", despite operationalising mobility purely in terms of social class.

It is plausible that taking a multidimensional view of women's destinations will reveal a different pattern. In particular, many 'family-friendly', pro-social, and creative occupations are afforded higher levels of prestige than their income or class positions would suggest. It is therefore possible that apparent downward class or income mobility among women from privileged backgrounds conceals considerable retention of advantage in terms of occupational prestige.

Taking an *individual* view of social destinations is also likely to lead to an incomplete picture of downward mobility – particularly for women. Research has shown that, among women from advantaged backgrounds, downward class or income mobility is often 'compensated' by a higher earning/higher social class spouse (Chadwick & Solon, 2002; Raaum et al., 2008; Bukodi et al., 2017). The extent to which this may also be true of social status – and hence multidimensional – destinations remains unexplored. However, in the same way that material resources are shared between spouses, social status is likely to be, to a large extent, a shared resource. Status in one's own eyes, and in the eyes of wider society, depends on household as well as individual level characteristics (Nielsen et al., 2015). Crucially, the higher status spouse is also likely to contribute strongly to social affiliations – a key indicator of status position (Chan, 2019).

### 1.3. Existing evidence on downward mobility from the top

I have already noted that existing social mobility research is primarily unidimensional in nature – with sociologists primarily focusing on class transitions, while economists focus on income elasticities. In sociological research on class mobility, the 'top' is usually defined as higher professionals, senior managers, and large employers (Class 1 in Erikson-Goldthorpe based schemes), or as the broader 'salariat' encompassing lower professionals and managers (Class 2). Absolute downward mobility from the top would therefore be a destination outside these classes, typically measured at 'occupational maturity' (around age 30 or above) (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2011).[2]

Contemporary British estimates place the rate of absolute downward mobility from the most advantaged Class 1 backgrounds at around 60% for men, and around 75% for women, with around half of these fractions being 'short-range' downwardly mobile to Class 2, and the remainder suffering longer-range falls (Bukodi et al., 2015; SMC, 2020). Women's higher rates of downward mobility are explained by structural difference in the male and female labour markets, with women being over-represented in lower-class occupations (Bukodi & Paskov, 2020). Studies outside the UK have found similar prevalences and patterns (OECD, 2018; Bukodi & Paskov, 2020).

Studies of intergenerational *income* mobility primarily focus on overall elasticities, and therefore rarely provide specific estimates of downward mobility. However, research examining intergenerational transitions between income fractions has yielded results very similar to those described for class – with around 55-60% of British men whose parents were in the top quarter or fifth of the income distribution themselves being in a lower fraction at occupational maturity (Blanden et al., 2002; Jantti et al., 2006; OECD, 2018). Gender differences in downward income mobility are less clear because they depend on whether transitions are analysed based on gender-specific income distributions. If they are, daughters' income positions are calculated only relative to other women (and vice-versa) – concealing gender differences in downward mobility rates that are due to structural differences in the male and female income distributions (Blanden et al., 2002).

[2] Sociological research also often examines *relative* mobility – the relative chances of those from different class origins reaching different class destinations. However, here I focus on absolute downward mobility as reflecting the 'felt' (and perceived) mobility of individuals (Buscha & Sturgis, 2008).

In a direct comparison (among men only) Goldthorpe (2013) finds similar rates of downward mobility from the top for both income and class (63% and 61%, respectively). However, he is highly critical of the income approach, suggesting that class is a superior measure of the intergenerational persistence of economic advantage – because it is associated not only with income, but also with "earnings security, short-term earnings stability and longer-term earnings prospects and with the extent of fringe benefits gained from employment" (p.438).

Relative to income and social class, contemporary studies of intergenerational *status* mobility are rare – and where they exist tend to focus on overall gradational elasticities (e.g. Rytina, 2016). I am aware of only one contemporary study of prestige mobility which takes a categorical approach:[3] Garcia-Mainar and Montuenga (2020) use a survey based measure to scale Spanish occupations by prestige, examining intergenerational movement between quintiles of this scale. They find that 59% of men born to fathers in the top quintile were downwardly mobile to lower prestige strata, with around 40% falling to below the 2nd quintile. For women, these figures were similar – 63% and 44% respectively (Garcia-Mainar & Montuenga, 2020).

### 1.3.1. Multi-dimensional studies

As I have argued, unidimensional studies are likely to offer only a limited view of the multi-dimensional transmission of advantage. In recent years, research has begun to address this limitation by incorporating multidimensional measures of social position. However, the vast majority of this research has focused on the effect of multidimensional parental advantage on children's outcomes – which are themselves mostly captured on only one dimension. For example, Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2013) argue that parental class, social status and education might each be separately important for children's outcomes – and that, if examined alone, the total effect of social origin will be underestimated. This expectation is supported in their analysis of the effect of social origins on children's educational attainment in the UK (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2013).

Other studies have taken a similar approach to investigating non-educational outcomes. Pfeffer & Hallsten (2012) find independent effects of parental resources on offspring occupational success. Mood (2017) finds similar independent effects on earnings in Swedish register data, additionally finding that focusing on a single dimension of parental advantage under-estimates intergenerational persistence by about a quarter. Gugushvili et al. (2017), examining the direct effect of parental origin on destination social class, also find that parental class, status, and education all have independent effects. They also show that unidimensional measures lead to a substantial under-estimation of the effect of parental origins (Gugushvili et al., 2017). Finally, Engzell et al. (2020) argue that the previously observed effect of grandparental SES on children's outcomes is in fact due to the use of unidimensional measures of parental SES. They show that when the income, wealth, and social class of parents is combined, the apparent effect of grandparental SES on children's earnings disappears.

Each of the above studies takes a multidimensional view of social origins. However, they take a only a unidimensional view of social *destinations*. The only study of which I am aware which takes a genuinely multidimensional approach to destinations is that conducted by the UK SMC (2020). The results of this study with respect to social class are reported above. However, the researchers also examine the earnings destinations of the downwardly class mobile. They find that those who are

[3] Here I am not including studies which employ measures of socio-economic status (SES), such as the relatively widely used Duncan Socio-Economic Index (SEI) (Hauser & Warren, 2008). This measure, derived from the average income and education levels of occupational incumbents, was originally formulated as a proxy for occupational prestige (Hauser & Warren, 2008). However, it was subsequently argued that it in fact captures advantage more generally (Hauser & Warren, 2008), and it is in those terms that is now most commonly used.

downwardly mobile from the broad salariat do not have an earnings advantage over their peers in their destination class (SMC, 2020). This suggests that those who are downwardly mobile in class terms are also genuinely downwardly mobile in terms of earnings. However, because class and earnings are not combined into a multidimensional measure, these analyses cannot be used to estimate what proportion of those born into the most advantaged stratum are downwardly mobile in terms of both class *and* earnings.

### 1.4. Differentiating within 'advantaged' origins

An additional gap in existing downward mobility research is that origin strata are often treated as homogenous. For example, to my knowledge, no analyses have compared downward mobility rates between sub-groups within the highest occupational class origins, or within the top stratum of status origins. This is an important omission given that differentiations within these strata are likely to have important implications for multidimensional downward mobility.

In terms of class, the most advantaged category in Erikson-Goldthorpe type class schemes encompasses a wide variety of occupations including: i) large employers, senior executives and managers, ii) 'traditional' higher professionals such as lawyers and doctors, and iii) 'new' higher professionals such as software developers. Guveli et al., (2007) note that sub-groups of this class are likely to differ in socially important ways. The high grade 'social and cultural specialists' most likely to predominate in (ii) are more left-wing in their political orientation, and have higher levels of cultural capital. By contrast, the high grade 'technocrats' in (particularly) (i) represent an economic elite with potentially somewhat weaker cultural capital. While both are advantaged, 'technocrat' parents may therefore be better positioned to support their offspring in material terms, while traditional professional parents may have more social and cultural resources to exploit and pass on. Independent of social status, these differences within the most advantaged class backgrounds may have a significant effect on patterns of downward class and status mobility.

Independent of class, distinctions within the most advantaged status backgrounds may also be important. In a more straightforward fashion, those from the very highest status backgrounds are likely to have access to greater social and cultural resources, and therefore to be particularly resistant to downward mobility (especially in status terms).

### 1.5. The present study

The existing evidence can be summarised as follows:

- Downward mobility from the top in terms of income and social class (considered separately) is relatively common – on the order of 50-60%, with around half of this figure being 'long-range' mobility (to below the second class/income stratum).
- Women from the most advantaged class backgrounds are more likely than men to be downwardly class mobile.
- Downward mobility in terms of social status is largely unexplored, but there is some evidence to suggest that rates of downward mobility from the top may be similar to those observed for income and social class.
- Multiple dimensions of parental advantage – including class, status, education, and income – are likely to have independent, cumulative effects on children's outcomes.
- Downward class or income mobility may often be compensated by elite spouses – particularly for women

This leaves significant gaps in our understanding of downward mobility from the most advantaged backgrounds. In this study, I address these gaps by using large-scale data from the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) to address the following research questions:

*RQ1: What is the prevalence of (long and short-range) intergenerational downward mobility from the most advantaged stratum in terms of* social status*? How does this compare to patterns of downward class mobility?*

*RQ1a: How do patterns of downward status mobility from differ by gender? Are women more likely to retain advantage in terms of status than class?*

*RQ2: What is the prevalence and patterning of downward mobility from the top when origins and destinations are considered multidimensionally in terms of both class and status?*

*RQ3: How does the prevalence and patterning of multidimensional downward mobility change for men and women if destinations are measured at the family, rather than the individual level?*

*RQ4: Do rates of downward mobility differ between different elements of the most advantaged class and status origins?*

# 2. Methods

## 2.1. Data

The analyses reported below are based on data from the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) (ONS, 2023) – the UK's largest survey of employment circumstances. The survey is based on a single-stage random probability sample of private households from the Postcode Address File (in Britain) and the POINTER register of domestic properties (in Northern Ireland). It can therefore be considered substantively representative of the population of UK households.

The LFS is conducted each year using a quarterly panel design. A fifth of the panel is replaced each quarter, meaning that panel members are interviewed for five consecutive quarterly waves before being removed. All interviews are conducted face-to-face.

In 2014, the LFS added a question on the occupation held by the respondent's highest earning parent when the respondent was 14,[4] allowing for the analysis of intergenerational occupational mobility. This question is asked in the July-September (JS) survey only. For the purposes of my analysis, I combined data from the JS surveys conducted from 2014 to 2019, excluding repeat respondents.[5] LFS Secure Access data was used because it provides parental occupation information at a higher resolution than the public access version. This data was accessed through the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) Secure Research Service (SRS).

In all of the analyses reported below, data is weighted using the person weights provided by the LFS, and standard errors are adjusted to account for clustering within households.

The analysis sample was restricted to respondents aged 30-59 whose main current activity was paid employment (including part-time and self-employment) (N=155,274). The sample was additionally

[4] It is possible that the highest earning parent may not be the parent with the highest social class or (more plausibly) social status occupation. However, inspection of data sources which include data on both parents suggests that this is rare, especially in the top class and status categories, and is therefore unlikely to be a source of significant bias.

[5] Data for years subsequent to 2019 was not included due to the extreme effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market.

restricted to respondents who had at least one earning co-resident parent or caregiver at age 14, and who provided data on parent or caregiver occupation, leaving a final sample of 111,881.[6]

## 2.2. Measures

### 2.2.1. Social class

Social class was captured using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC; Rose et al., 2005). NS-SEC divides occupations into eight 'analytic classes' based on typical employment relations (see Table 1).

--TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE--

These classes are further sub-divided into a number of operational categories and sub-categories. For example (and relevant to the analyses reported below), Class 1.2 comprises 'traditional' higher professionals, such as lawyers and medical doctors, and 'new' higher professionals, such as IT professionals.

NS-SEC classes for origin and destination (main) occupation were derived from four-digit Standard Occupational Classification 2010 (SOC2010) codes using the simplified method (omitting employment status information)[7] (ONS, 2010). Classes 3-5, which are typically considered non-hierarchical (Bukodi et al., 2015), were collapsed into a single class, as were Classes 6-7.

### 2.2.2. Social status

Social status was primarily measured using scores on the Cambridge Social Interaction Scale (CAMSIS; Lambert & Griffiths., 2018). This is a 'social distance' measure derived from patterns of friendship or (as in this case) marriage. Occupations which often marry or befriend each other (i.e. are socially proximate) are assumed to occupy similar positions in the social hierarchy; while occupations which rarely do so are assumed to occupy distant positions (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2004; Lambert & Griffiths, 2018).

It is important to note here that the authors of CAMSIS have argued that occupational data cannot be used to differentiate between different dimensions of advantage (Bihagen & Lambert, 2018), and that therefore CAMSIS (and all other occupational scaling measures) capture social position only in a general sense, combining both material and social factors (Lambert & Griffiths, 2018). In using CAMSIS as a measure of status I am following the alternative argument put forward by Chan and Goldthorpe (2004, 2007). Chan and Goldthorpe (2004) argue that intimate social association is strongly dependent on parity of social status, and that therefore there is a strong case that what is being captured by social distance measures (including CAMSIS and their own Chan-Goldthorpe scale, which is constructed in a very similar way) is in fact status in the Weberian sense. They offer strong support for this contention by demonstrating that, when entered in a model together with social class, social distance measures have a much stronger relationship with social and cultural outcomes, and a much weaker relationship with outcomes more reflective of material conditions (Chan &

[6] The majority of exclusions are due to missing parental occupation data, most of which is due to respondents whose data were brought forward from a previous wave (in which the social mobility questions were not asked). Since younger people are slightly less likely to respond to multiple waves, this makes the sample slightly older than the underlying working age population.

[7] Parental employment status is not recorded in the LFS, and this therefore maintains consistency between origin and destination social class assignment.

Goldthorpe, 2007). This case is further strengthened by occupations with 'discordant' class and status positions – such as the creative professions – which accord well with an intuitive sense of occupational prestige (and with survey-based measures of prestige).

Origin and destination (main) occupation four-digit SOC2010 codes were matched to male scale CAMSIS scores provided by Lambert (2012),[8] using the method without employment status information. Scores were then assigned to four categories (S1 to S4, with S1 being the highest) corresponding to the distribution (in the analysis sample) of the four NS-SEC categories described above, among origin and destination occupations separately. For example, in the analysis sample, 18% of origin occupations fell into NS-SEC Class 1. Therefore origin occupations falling into the top 18% of CAMSIS scores (in the origin distribution) were assigned to the top status group. 20% of destination occupations fell into NS-SEC Class 1. Therefore destination occupations whose CAMSIS score fell above approximately the 80$^{th}$ percentile were assigned to the top status group.

This approach allows for the observation of structural effects – for example, for downward mobility rates to be suppressed due to an increase in the prevalence of high-status jobs. However, it does mean that occupations may change status group as an artefact of boundary movement. For example, an occupation at the 81$^{st}$ percentile of the CAMSIS distribution would be categorised in S1 for parents and S2 for respondents. One consequence of this may be apparent downward status mobility among people who hold exactly the same job as their parents. This affects only a small number of jobs at the S1/S2 borderline. However, it affects a larger number of jobs in S3 and S4, which change size more dramatically between parents and respondents – and this should be considered when interpreting patterns of longer range downward mobility. Nevertheless, this approach is preferable to delineating status groups based on fixed proportions (e.g. quintiles). The latter method would also result in identical occupations shifting status groups between generations – for example, occupations in the top 20% of the parental CAMSIS distribution may fall below this in the respondent distribution – while also failing to allow for structural effects.

Following the same rationale of allowing for structural effects, status group categories for men and women were assigned according to the common CAMSIS distribution across both genders. This allows for the observation of gender differences in status mobility resulting from structural differences in the male and female labour markets.

Given the disagreement around CAMSIS as a measure of status, all analyses were also replicated using the Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS; Trieman, 1977). SIOPS is a survey based measure of subjective perceptions occupational prestige (Treiman, 1977). To calculate SIOPS scores, SOC2010 codes were first converted to International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-08) codes using the mapping provided by the ONS (2010). ISCO-08 codes were then matched to SIOPS scores using the lookup provided by Ganzeboom and Treiman (2019).

### 2.2.3. Multidimensional class/status

Following Blossfeld (2019), combined class/status variables were created for origin and destination occupations through a simple combination of the categorical class and status measures described above. This yields 16 possible categories, though in practice categories representing highly discordant class and status combinations were empty or very sparse. For example, no respondents or parents had occupations which were in Class 1/Status Group 4, or Class 6-7/Status Group 1. Example occupations in each multidimensional class/status category are given in Web Appendix A.

[8] These scores are based on marital relationships in the 2010-2012 Labour Force Survey.

#### 2.2.4. Family-level class and status destinations

Family-level class and status destinations for respondents were constructed using the dominance approach (Erikson, 1984). Among respondents with spouses, civil partners, or cohabiting partners, family multidimensional class/status was determined by replacing the respondent's class/status with their partner's if a) this would increase both class and status position, or b) it would increase class without reducing status, or vice-versa.

# 3. Analyses and results

## 3.1. Descriptive statistics

Tables 2 and 3 provide descriptive statistics for respondent and parental characteristics (respectively) in the analysis sample. These tables show that, as expected, the female class distribution differs from that of men, with women being substantially less likely to hold C1 jobs. However, the upper half of the *status* distribution is much more similar between genders, with women and men being equally likely to hold occupations in the top status category. Men are also substantially more likely than women to hold the lowest status occupations (likely due to the higher prevalence of low status manual work among men).

Also notable from Tables 2 and 3 is the 'upshifting' of the class distribution between parents (primarily male main wage earners) and male respondents. Around 35% of origin occupations were equally divided between C1 and C2, compared to around 50% of male destination occupations. This upshift is also present in the status distribution – however, this is due to the imposed link between the class and status distributions described above.

--TABLE 2 & 3 ABOUT HERE—

## 3.2. Class and status transitions

Analysis of class transitions shows that 59% of men from C1 backgrounds were downwardly mobile to lower class occupations, with around 29% being 'long-range' downwardly mobile (to a destination below C2). Women from C1 backgrounds were much more likely than men to be downwardly mobile overall (75%), and somewhat more likely to be long-range downwardly mobile (37%). Full class transition matrices are given in Web Appendix B.

Status transition matrices are given in Tables 4 and 5. Among men, these show a slightly higher rate of downward status mobility than was observed for class: around 63% of men from S1 backgrounds were downwardly status mobile, with 33% being long-range downwardly mobile.

65% of women from S1 backgrounds were downwardly status mobile, and 35% were long-range downwardly mobile. Women are therefore substantially less likely to be downwardly status mobile than they are to be downwardly class mobile, and their rates of downward status mobility mirror those of men. This largely reflects structural differences in the distribution of status and class: while women are substantially under-represented in the highest *class* occupations, they are roughly equally represented in the highest *status* occupations.

--TABLE 4 & 5 ABOUT HERE—

### 3.3. Multidimensional downward mobility

Figure 1 shows the percentage of men and women from top class/status origins in a selected set of class/status destinations, contrasting individual and family destination measures.[9]

Focusing fist on individual destinations, this figure shows that 50% of men and 59% of women from 'doubly advantaged' (C1S1) backgrounds have occupations which fall below the top category in both class *and* status; while 22% and 25% (respectively) are long-range downwardly mobile – having occupations which fall into the lowest two class *and* status categories. This is a somewhat lower rate of downward mobility than observed for either class or status alone, particularly for men.

Expanding advantaged origins to encapsulate high class *or* status backgrounds (C1S1/C1S2/C2S1) yields similar results. 53% of men and 61% of women from these backgrounds have fallen below the top category in both class and status; while 24% and 26% (respectively) have been downwardly mobile to the lower two class and status categories.

When considering advantaged origins both narrowly and broadly, women are more likely than men to be multidimensionally downwardly mobile. This is because women are at greater risk of downward *class* mobility, while having an equal risk of downward *status* mobility. Women from advantaged backgrounds are more likely than men to hold C2S1 occupations, but are less likely to hold C1S2, and particularly C1S1 occupations. The prevalence of long-range downward mobility is, however, similar across both genders.

--FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE—

Figure 2 shows that using destination measures at the family-level reduces the overall prevalence of downward mobility substantially. For those from C1S1 backgrounds, the risk of falling outside the top category in both class and status declines from 50% to 41% for men, and from 59% to 44% for women. For those from advantaged backgrounds more broadly, these falls are from 53% to 44%, and from 61% to 47%, respectively. McNemar's tests show that these differences are statistically significant for both men and women ($p<0.001$ for all contrasts).

Long-range downward mobility is also less common when using family-level measures. For those from C1S1 backgrounds, rates of long-range downward mobility decline from 22% to 15% for men, and from 25% to 16% for women. For those from advantaged backgrounds defined more broadly, these declines are from 24% to 16%, and from 26% to 17%, respectively. Again, these differences are statistically significant ($p<0.001$ for all contrasts).

Finally, family-level measures disproportionately affect the observed mobility patterns of women, almost eliminating women's increased risk of downward mobility compared to men.

### 3.4. Differential downward mobility within advantaged origins

Figure 2 shows the distribution of selected family class/status destinations among men and women from C1S1 backgrounds, differentiating between the following sub-fractions of C1:

[9] Tables in Web Appendix B

- Class 1.1: Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations[10]
- Traditional higher professionals
- 'New' higher professionals

Figure 2 shows that, among both men and women from C1S1 backgrounds, overall downward mobility rates are lowest among those from 'traditional' professional backgrounds, and highest among those from Class 1.1 backgrounds.[11] For both men and women, logistic regression analysis shows that these differences are statistically significant ($p<0.001$). For men, rates among those from 'new' professional backgrounds fall in between these two extremes – however, these rates are not significantly different from either of the other groups. Among, women, overall downward mobility rates among those from new and traditional professional backgrounds are essentially the same, and the difference between 'new' professional and Class 1.1. backgrounds is statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

Rates of longer-range mobility follow the same pattern, with long-range downward mobility being highest among those from Class 1.1 backgrounds, and lower among those from traditional and new higher professional backgrounds (patterns of statistical significance are the same as those for overall downward mobility).

--FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE—

Figure 3 shows the distribution of selected family class/status destinations for men and women from C1S1 backgrounds, differentiating between i) the top 1% of the origin CAMSIS distribution, ii) the top 5%, and iii) remainder of S1 (i.e. between the 18$^{th}$ and 5$^{th}$ percentiles).[12]

Figure 3 shows that, among both men and women from C1S1 backgrounds, overall and long-range downward mobility rates are substantially lower among those whose parents had the highest status occupations. For example, among men with C1S1 origins, 43% of those whose parental occupation fell between the 18$^{th}$ and the 5$^{th}$ percentile of CAMSIS scores had destinations below C1 and S1, and 16% had destinations below C2 and S2. The figures for men whose parental occupation fell in the top 1% of CAMSIS scores were 32% and 11% respectively.

Logistic regression analysis shows that, when comparing those from top 1% and top 5% backgrounds, the difference in overall mobility rates is statistically significant for both men and women ($p<0.01$). The difference in long-range mobility is non-significant for men, but significant for women ($p<0.05$).

Comparing those from top 1% backgrounds to those below the 5$^{th}$ percentile of S1, the differences in both overall and long range mobility are statistically significant for both men and women ($p<0.01$ for all contrasts).

The downward mobility rates for those from the highest status backgrounds are particularly notable because they are lower than the headline rates for those from C1S1 backgrounds shown in Figure 1. Only 32% of men and 33% of women from the highest status backgrounds had destinations outside

[10] Large employers are not distinguished in this data because NS-SEC classes were assigned without incorporating information on employment status (including numbers of employees)
[11] Table in Web Appendix B
[12] Table in Web Appendix B

the most advantaged categories of both class and status, and only a tenth were long-range downwardly mobile.

--FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE—

### 3.5. Typical occupational trajectories

Table 6 provides the most common origin and destination occupations for respondents following a selected set of mobility trajectories. Aside from aiding the interpretation of the mobility results reported above, examining typical occupations also reveals several notable patterns. First, women in all of these downwardly mobile trajectories have higher social position spouses than comparable men. For example, men who have been downwardly mobile from C1S1 origins to C1S2 or C2S2 destinations most commonly have C2S2 spouses. By contrast, women following the same trajectories most commonly have C1S1 spouses. This is consistent with the finding that family-level destination measures substantially reduce women's apparent rates of downward mobility, and supports previous research showing that women from advantaged backgrounds often 'compensate' for personal downward mobility through their spouse's occupation (e.g. Raaum et al., 2008).

Second, typical trajectories reveal the specific importance of the teaching profession as a destination for downwardly class mobile women. 8% of women from C1S1 backgrounds are primary, secondary, or further education teachers (compared with 3% of men). Combined together, this makes teaching the most popular occupation among women from these backgrounds (and from advantaged backgrounds more broadly). C2S1 is a particularly common destination for women from advantaged backgrounds, and teaching plays a crucial role in this mobility trajectory. Among women from C1S1 backgrounds with C2S1 destinations, more than half (54%) are teachers. Teaching is therefore an important path by which women from advantaged backgrounds may be downwardly *class* mobile while retaining *status*.

--TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE—

### 3.6. Robustness checks

I probed the robustness of the results, first by substituting SIOPS for CAMSIS scores; and second by restricting the sample to those aged 40+ to account for the potential effect of intragenerational mobility.

Substituting SIOPS for CAMSIS scores had very little substantive effect on the results. The only notable difference arose when comparing mobility rates between sub-classes of Class 1. Using CAMSIS scores, men from 'traditional' professional backgrounds were significantly less likely to be downwardly mobile overall than those from Class 1.1 backgrounds. When status groups were based on SIOPS scores, this difference between Class 1.1 and traditional professionals was smaller and no longer statistically significant. This may be due to a different balance of 'traditional' versus Class 1.1 professions within Status Group 1 under the SIOPS scheme. The increased risk of long-range downward mobility among those from Class 1.1 origins – relative to those from traditional professional backgrounds – nonetheless remained significant. The pattern of results for women also remained unchanged.

Restricting the sample to those aged 40+ had no substantive effect on the results.

# 4. Discussion

Traditional, unidimensional studies of social mobility have produced relatively consistent results with respect to the prevalence and patterning of downward mobility. Focusing on social class in particular, the majority of men, and the vast majority of women, from the most advantaged class backgrounds fall into jobs that are below this upper echelon – with at least half of those who are downwardly mobile falling out of the salariat altogether (Goldthorpe & Jackson, 2007; SMC 2020). However, the results reported here show that, when information on social status is incorporated into a multidimensional view of social mobility, a very different picture is revealed – particularly for women.

73% of working women from 'doubly' advantaged class and status backgrounds have occupations that are categorised as NS-SEC Class 2 or below. This figure represents downward mobility as defined by social class alone. Conversely, if we consider downward mobility solely in terms of *social status*, 63% of women from multidimensionally advantaged backgrounds have jobs that are less respected than that of their highest earning parent.

From a multidimensional perspective, both of these narratives are clearly incomplete. However, it is the unidimensional focus on class (predominant in existing social mobility research) that is most partial – because women from advantaged backgrounds are much more likely to experience a decline in class while maintaining status than the reverse. 23% of all women from multidimensionally advantaged households who are downwardly *class* mobile remain in the highest status jobs. This large group – 14% of all working women from these backgrounds – may not have matched their parents' material success. However, the high esteem in which their destination occupations are held means that this may not be experienced as a meaningful loss of social position – either by the respondents themselves, or their parents (Bukodi et al., 2021). The experience of this group represents a key part of the story of women's downward mobility that is ignored by an exclusive focus on social class.

A multidimensional perspective also expands our understanding of men's downward mobility, though to a more modest degree. Principally, multidimensional analysis shows that men from the most advantaged background have roughly the same chance as their female peers of experiencing a decline in status, while being much less likely to see a fall in class position. Among those who are downwardly mobile, men are much more likely than women to retain their parents' class position while dropping in terms of status – for example, entering business or technical professions which, while lower prestige, nevertheless share advantages in terms of employment conditions that place them in Class 1. This pattern has important implications for economic inequalities between the sexes: while daughters from privileged backgrounds may be broadly expected to match the status attainment of sons, they are much less likely to reap the material rewards associated with Class 1 professions.

This gendered pattern of downward mobility is consistent with previous research on two factors which may affect male and female career choices. The first is stereotyped beliefs which tend to see caring or creative professions as more 'feminine', and technical and business professions – and the aspiration for economic rewards in general – as more 'masculine' (Lupart, Cannon & Telfer, 2004). Previous research has shown, for example, that parental advantage has a much stronger effect on the *economic* aspirations of men than women, and a much stronger effect on the *aesthetic* aspirations of women than men (de Vries & Rentfrow, 2016). The patterns of mobility observed in the present study may therefore be explained by stronger socialisation of girls from advantaged families into creative or caring occupational aspirations. These career paths allow for the retention of social

respect, but are less well rewarded economically. By contrast, boys from privileged backgrounds may be socialized to place a stronger emphasis on pursuing economic rewards.

A second major factor structuring career choices by gender is childcare. Due to the still dominant social belief that mothers should be the primary parent, a substantial fraction of women from advantaged backgrounds are likely to prefer 'family-friendly' careers (Bukodi et al., 2017). As Bukodi et al., (2017) note, this may lead them to take up lower class employment than their backgrounds would normally facilitate. However, some family-friendly careers still allow for the retention of status, if not class. This may explain some portion of the popularity of teaching – a C2S1 occupation in the present analysis – among women from advantaged backgrounds: it is a highly respectable career which is nevertheless relatively compatible with caring responsibilities.

More broadly, these gendered patterns of mobility suggest the exchangeability of class and prestige in occupational preferences (Bukodi et al., 2011). In order to match their parents' elevated social position, the offspring of advantaged families may pursue careers which offer economic *and* status rewards. However, they may also exchange one for the other – for example, pursuing occupations that, though they may not be of the top flight in terms of pay and conditions, are nevertheless highly respectable.

A second notable finding from the mobility patterns reported above is the role of *family* destination measures in further reducing apparent rates of downward mobility. For both men and women, accounting for spousal social position reveals higher rates of retention of advantage. However, this effect is much stronger for women than for men, and in fact eliminates women's apparently higher risk of multidimensional downward mobility. When examined at the family level, around 55-60% of men and women from multidimensionally advantaged backgrounds held occupations that were in the most advantaged category of class or prestige. For women, this is more than twice the rate of retention of advantage than is observed using unidimensional measures of individual class. For men it is a 40% greater rate. Accounting for spousal social position also reveals the rarity of substantive, long-range falls in multidimensional social position. At the family level, only around 15% of men and women are downwardly mobile to destinations outside of the top two categories in both class and status.

Finally, my analysis also shows that particular class and status origins *within* the most privileged categories, are more likely to lead to advantaged destinations. The offspring of parents who held occupations in the very top fractions of the status distribution (which includes the 'traditional' higher professions) are particularly likely to attain multidimensionally advantaged occupations themselves. Among these groups class and status ceilings are particularly 'sticky', with rates of retention of advantage being upwards of 60%, and rates of long-range downward mobility as low as 10%. These figures accord much more closely than previous estimates with the popular perception of a 'glass floor' protecting children from privileged backgrounds from meaningful downward mobility.

As noted above, the 'stickiness' of the class/status ceiling is likely to be linked to the differential possession of cultural and social resources – including social networks, educational expertise, and 'middle-class' norms and values. Parents holding higher professional, or otherwise highly prestigious occupations are the most likely to hold considerable stock of these resources. Conversely, those holding 'technocratic' occupations (Guveli et al., 2007) outside this rarified sphere (for example engineers, IT professionals, and others) may be less well-resourced in this respect – leaving their offspring at higher risk of downward mobility (Richardson, 1977). This may also be related to changing educational requirements for specific occupations over time (SMC, 2020). It is plausible that access to Class 1 (or high status) occupations has become increasingly dependent on graduate

qualifications over time (Schwartz, 2023). Children whose parents did not obtain a degree but who 'rose through the ranks' to attain, for example, a management position in Class 1.1., would therefore struggle to reach the same position without a university education.

## 4.1. Conclusion

The primary contribution of this paper has been to demonstrate the extent to which the existing unidimensional picture of downward mobility is drastically incomplete. The above results show that excluding information on social status leaves us with a highly distorted understanding of the occupational destinations of those from the most advantaged backgrounds – particularly for women. These findings suggest that the 'opportunity hoarding' strategies of privileged parents may be directed towards the achievement of prestige as well as, or in place of, class position – particularly for daughters. This is relevant for future academic work on the prevalence and determinants of social mobility, but also for public policy. Any attempt to address 'opportunity hoarding' and the 'glass floor' must recognise that prestige is a resource that can be hoarded as much as – and separately from – material rewards.[13]

The results also show that socio-economic advantage is very 'sticky' among those originating in the most advantaged sub-strata within the top class/status groups. This strong inheritance of privilege – which has not been revealed by previous research, which treats 'advantaged' origins very broadly – accords much more strongly with public perceptions of a 'glass floor'. Though it should be noted that an important limitation of the present research is that it does not incorporate direct measures of material living standards. Given the high level of material support that children from advantaged backgrounds receive (e.g. Boileau & Sturrock, 2023), it is likely that the above reported estimates are in fact *conservative* with respect to the true extent of inherited privilege.

[13] Though it is also worth noting that these results are still consistent with greater economic rewards accruing to men, and thereby to the perpetuation of gender economic inequality

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# TABLES

**Table 1. NS-SEC Analytic Classes**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.1 | Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations |
| 1.2 | Higher professional occupations |
| 2 | Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations |
| 3 | Intermediate occupations |
| 4 | Small employers and own account workers |
| 5 | Lower supervisory and technical occupations |
| 6 | Semi-routine occupations |
| 7 | Routine occupations |

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics – respondents (female N=55,816; male N=56,065)**

| | MEN | | WOMEN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Statistic** | **95% CI** | **Statistic** | **95% CI** |
| **Mean age** | 44.4 | 44.4 to 44.5 | 44.7 | 44.6 to 44.8 |
| **NS-SEC** | | | | |
| **1** | 25.3 | 24.9 to 25.7 | 15.5 | 15.2 to 15.8 |
| **2** | 25.5 | 25.1 to 25.9 | 31.7 | 31.3 to 32.1 |
| **3-5** | 27.9 | 27.5 to 28.3 | 28.5 | 28.1 to 28.9 |
| **6-7** | 21.3 | 21.0 to 21.7 | 24.2 | 23.8 to 24.6 |
| **Status group** | | | | |
| **1** | 19.9 | 19.6 to 20.3 | 20.4 | 20.0 to 20.7 |
| **2** | 26.3 | 25.9 to 26.7 | 28.3 | 27.9 to 28.7 |
| **3** | 23.0 | 22.6 to 23.3 | 34.6 | 34.2 to 35.0 |
| **4** | 30.8 | 30.4 to 31.2 | 16.7 | 16.4 to 17.0 |
| **Mean CAMSIS** | 50.7 | 50.6 to 50.9 | 53.2 | 53.0 to 53.3 |
| **Class/status** | | | | |
| **C1S1** | 13.6 | 13.3 to 13.9 | 9.7 | 9.5 to 10.0 |
| **C1S2** | 10.2 | 10.0 to 10.4 | 5.6 | 5.4 to 5.8 |
| **C1S3** | 1.5 | 1.4 to 1.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 to 0.2 |
| **C1S4** | - | - | - | - |
| **C2S1** | 5.3 | 5.1 to 5.5 | 8.7 | 8.5 to 9.0 |
| **C2S2** | 12.5 | 12.3 to 12.9 | 14.0 | 13.7 to 14.3 |
| **C2S3** | 7.0 | 6.7 to 7.2 | 8.2 | 7.9 to 8.4 |
| **C2S4** | 0.7 | 0.6 to 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.8 to 1.0 |
| **C3-5S1** | 1.1 | 0.9 to 1.1 | 1.9 | 1.8 to 2.1 |
| **C3-5S2** | 3.3 | 3.1 to 3.4 | 7.3 | 7.1 to 7.5 |
| **C3-5S3** | 12.1 | 11.9 to 12.4 | 17.1 | 16.8 to 17.4 |
| **C3-5S4** | 11.5 | 11.2 to 11.7 | 2.2 | 2.1 to 2.3 |
| **C6-7S1** | - | - | - | - |
| **C6-7S2** | 0.3 | 0.2 to 0.3 | 1.5 | 1.4 to 1.6 |
| **C6-7S3** | 2.4 | 2.3 to 2.5 | 9.1 | 8.9 to 9.4 |
| **C6-7S4** | 18.7 | 18.3 to 19.1 | 13.7 | 13.3 to 14.0 |

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics – parents (N=111,881)**

| | Statistic | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|
| **Primary earner** | | |
| **Mother** | 14.4 | 14.2 to 14.7 |
| **Father** | 79.2 | 78.9 to 79.4 |
| **Other family member** | 1.6 | 1.6 to 1.7 |
| **Joint earners** | 4.8 | 4.7 to 4.9 |
| **NS-SEC** | | |
| **1** | 17.6 | 17.4 to 17.9 |
| **2** | 17.6 | 17.4 to 17.9 |
| **3-5** | 37.1 | 36.8 to 37.4 |
| **6-7** | 27.6 | 27.3 to 27.9 |
| **NS-SEC – operational categories** | | |
| Large employers & higher managers[14] | 5.4 | 5.3 to 5.6 |
| 'Traditional' higher professional | 9.9 | 9.7 to 10.0 |
| 'New' higher professional | 2.3 | 2.2 to 2.4 |
| **Status group** | | |
| **1** | 17.9 | 17.6 to 18.1 |
| **2** | 17.4 | 17.1 to 17.6 |
| **3** | 37.2 | 36.9 to 37.5 |
| **4** | 27.6 | 27.3 to 27.9 |
| **Mean CAMSIS** | 47.5 | 47.4 to 47.6 |
| **Class by status** | | |
| **C1S1** | 10.9 | 10.7 to 11.1 |
| **C1S2** | 5.5 | 5.3 to 5.6 |
| **C1S3** | 1.3 | 1.2 to 1.4 |
| **C1S4** | - | - |
| **C2S1** | 6.4 | 6.2 to 6.5 |
| **C2S2** | 6.0 | 5.9 to 6.2 |
| **C2S3** | 4.7 | 4.6 to 4.9 |
| **C2S4** | 0.5 | 0.4 to 0.5 |
| **C3-5S1** | 0.6 | 0.6 to 0.7 |
| **C3-5S2** | 5.6 | 5.5 to 5.7 |
| **C3-5S3** | 23.2 | 22.9 to 23.5 |
| **C3-5S4** | 7.7 | 7.6 to 7.9 |
| **C6-7S1** | - | - |
| **C6-7S2** | 0.3 | 0.2 to 0.3 |
| **C6-7S3** | 8.0 | 7.8 to 8.1 |
| **C6-7S4** | 19.4 | 19.2 to 19.7 |

[14] Large employers not distinguished in data

**Table 4. Status transition matrix for men - % within origin status group (N=56,065) (95% CIs in parentheses)**

| | Destination | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **1** | 37.1 | 30.0 | 18.6 | 14.3 |
| | (36.0 to 38.1) | (29.1 to 31.0) | (17.8 to 19.4) | (13.6 to 15.0) |
| **2** | 25.3 | 32.8 | 21.5 | 20.4 |
| | (24.4 to 26.2) | (31.8 to 33.8) | (20.7 to 23.8) | (19.6 to 21.3) |
| **3** | 16.2 | 25.5 | 25.6 | 32.7 |
| | (15.7 to 16.7) | (24.9 to 26.2) | (25.0 to 26.2) | (32.0 to 33.3) |
| **4** | 10.5 | 20.8 | 23.2 | 45.5 |
| | (10.0 to 11.0) | (20.1 to 21.4) | (22.5 to 23.9) | (44.7 to 46.5) |

**Table 5. Status transition matrix for women - % within origin status group (N=55,816) (95% CIs in parentheses)**

| | Destination | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **1** | 35.3 | 30.1 | 26.8 | 7.8 |
| | (34.3 to 36.3) | (29.1 to 31.1) | (25.9 to 27.7) | (7.3 to 8.4) |
| **2** | 25.1 | 32.0 | 31.8 | 11.1 |
| | (24.2 to 26.0) | (31.0 to 33.0) | (30.9 to 32.8) | (10.4 to 11.7) |
| **3** | 17.4 | 27.6 | 37.2 | 17.8 |
| | (16.8 to 17.9) | (27.0 to 28.3) | (36.5 to 37.9) | (17.3 to 18.4) |
| **4** | 11.8 | 25.7 | 37.9 | 24.6 |
| | (11.3 to 12.4) | (25.0 to 26.4) | (37.1 to 38.7) | (23.9 to 25.3) |

**Table 6. Typical origin and destination occupations, and spousal class/status for selected mobility trajectories**

| | Parent's occupation | Own occupation | | Spousal class/status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C1S1 to C1S2** | Civil engineers<br>Chartered accountants | *Men* | Sales accounts and business development managers<br>IT specialist managers | C2S2 |
| | | *Women* | Sales accounts and business development managers<br>HR managers | C1S1 |
| **C1S1 to C2S1** | Higher education teaching professionals<br>Medical doctors | *Men* | Secondary school teacher<br>IT and telecoms directors | C2S1 |
| | | *Women* | Primary school teacher<br>Secondary school teacher | C1S1 |
| **C1S1 to C2S2** | Civil engineers<br>Chartered accountants | *Men* | Managers and directors in retail and wholesale<br>IT and telecoms professionals | C2S2 |
| | | *Women* | Office managers<br>Marketing associate professionals | C1S1 |
| **C1S1 to C3+ & S3+** | Officers in armed forces<br>Civil engineers | *Men* | Book-keepers<br>Construction and building trades | C4S4 |
| | | *Women* | Other administrative occupations<br>Care workers and home carers | C3S3 |

# FIGURES

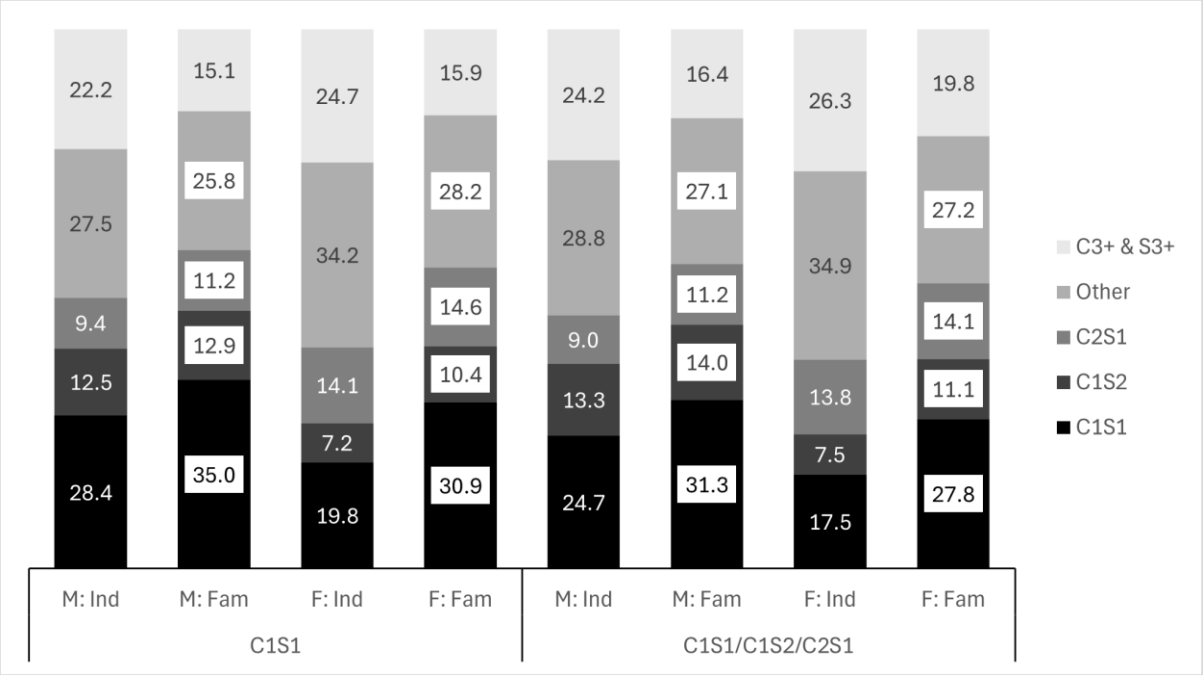


**Figure 1. Individual and family class/status destinations by class/status origin (male N=56,065, female N=55,816)**

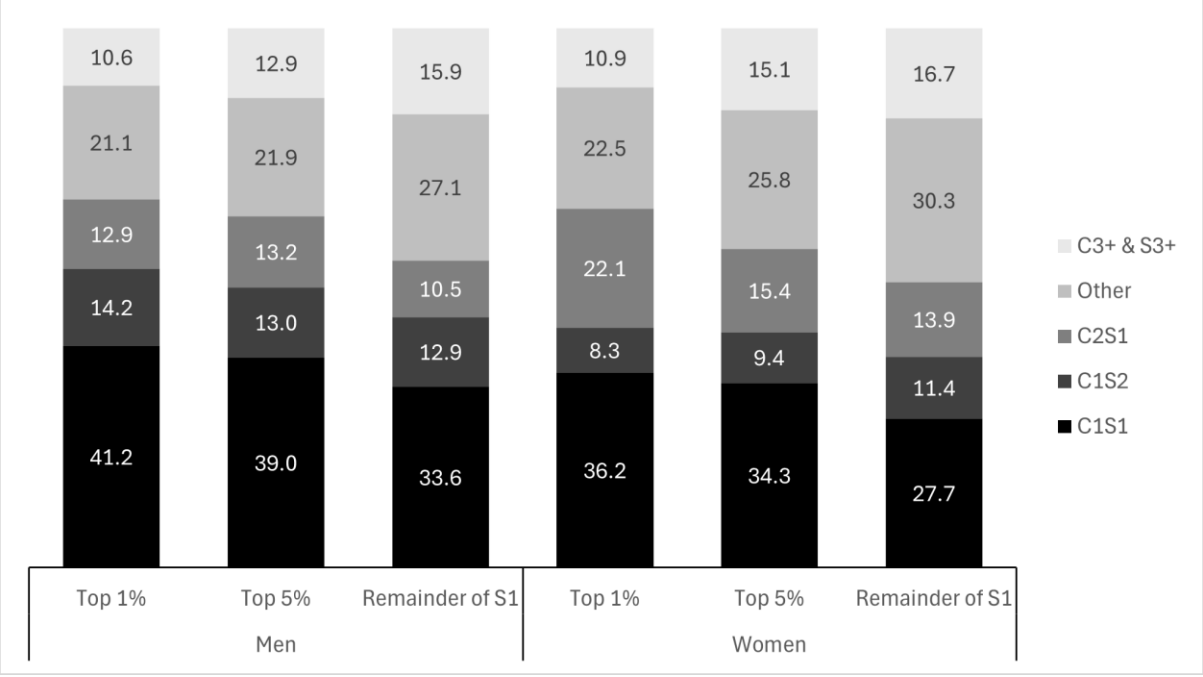


**Figure 2. Family class/status destinations of those from C1S1 backgrounds, by position within C1 (male N=56,065, female N=55,816)**

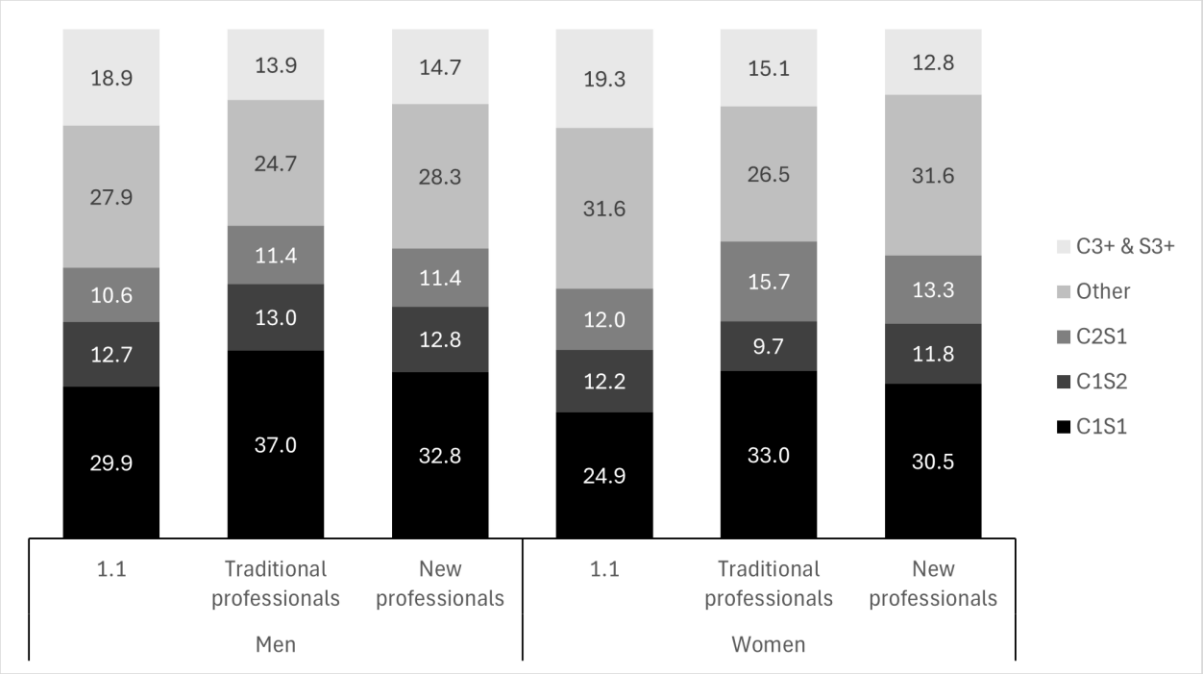


**Figure 3. Family class/status destinations of those from C1S1 backgrounds, by position within S1 (male N=56,065, female N=55,816)**