

**Trends in Intragenerational Mobility in the United States and the
Western States of Germany (1984-2006)**

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Abstract

Using data from the PSID for the United States and the SOEP for the Western States of Germany we show that Shorrocks R measures of the mobility of after tax income are not only sensitive to the length of time over which they are estimated but can also be sensitive to the period chosen for analysis. Using consistent time spans, we confirm the permanent share of after tax income inequality was substantially greater in the United States than in Germany prior to reunification. Since 1989, while there has been little change in the United States, the share of permanent inequality in Germany has significantly increased. As a result, estimates of intragenerational mobility for the U.S. and Germany are much more similar now than they were in the 1980s.

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