

**Science/AAAS Editorial Board**

June 21, 2017

1200 New York Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
USA

To the editorial board,

Please find attached our article, *Measuring the “American Dream”*, which we are pleased to submit for publication in *Science* as a perspective.

In our article we comment on a research article that had recently appeared in *Science* — Raj Chetty *et al.*, “The fading American dream: Trends in absolute income mobility since 1940” (*Science* 10.1126/science.aal4617 (2017)).

In their paper, Chetty *et al.* provide one of the first attempts to describe the historical trend of absolute intergenerational mobility in the United States. Their thorough and impressive work contributes much to the ongoing academic discourse on intergenerational mobility and income inequality. In our article, we build on their results and highlight an often overlooked conceptual aspect of intergenerational mobility research. Notably, we discuss the relationship between absolute and relative mobility measures and point out that counter-intuitively, the canonical measures of absolute and relative mobility are inversely related. Therefore, studies of intergenerational mobility require a deep understanding of such subtleties to prevent misinterpretation.

We note that a longer version of this manuscript was previously sent to the authors of “The fading American dream: Trends in absolute income mobility since 1940” and to Miles Corak, an expert in the field of intergenerational mobility research and received positive feedback, however it was not submitted for publication to any other journal, or has been reviewed elsewhere. We also state that none of the material has been published or is under consideration elsewhere, including the Internet.

Sincerely,

**Yonatan Berman and Alexander Adamou**

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