

Declining Male Employment: A Cause for Concern

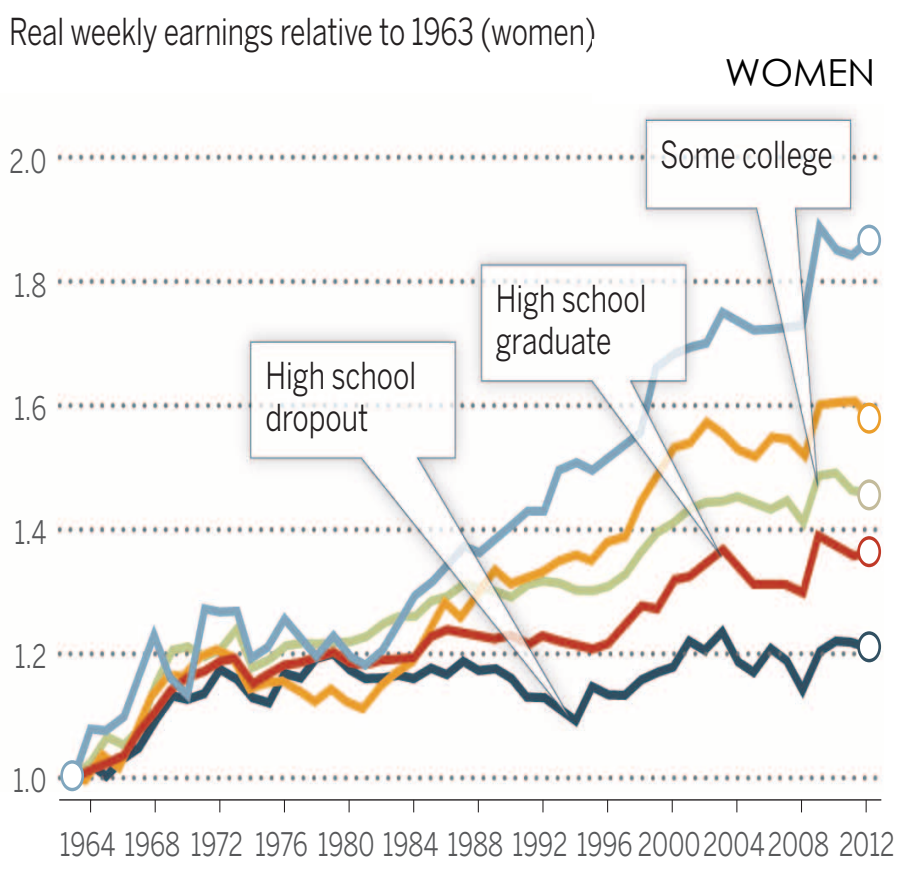
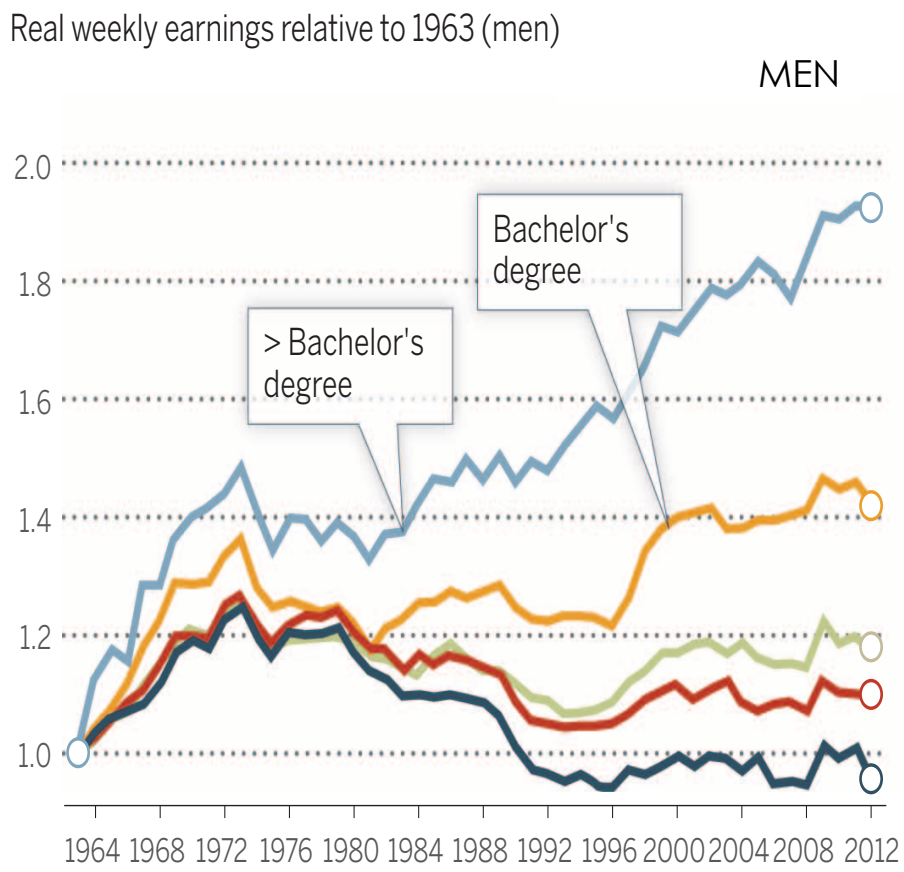
David Autor

MIT and NBER

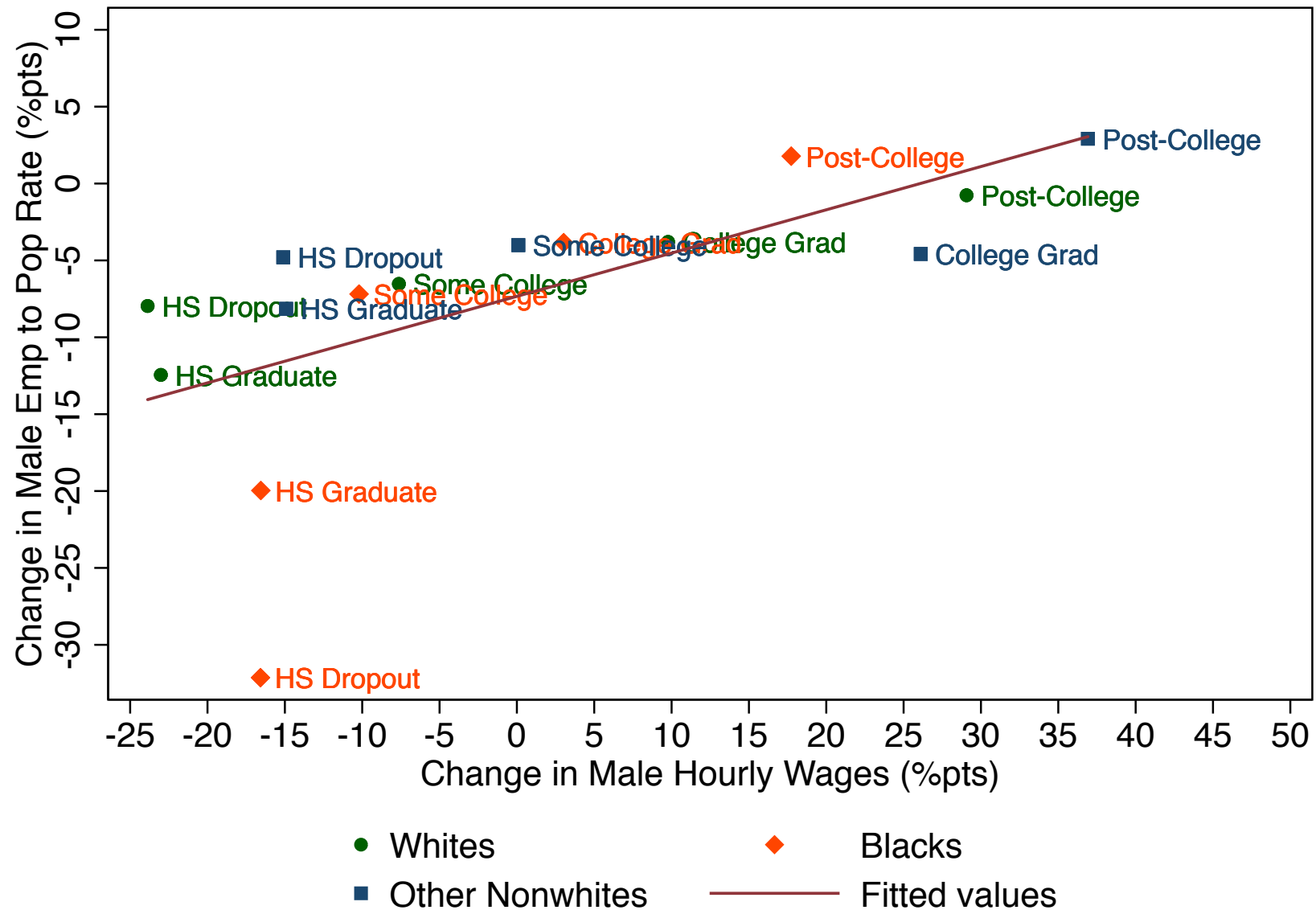
LSE/CEP Growth Commission Meeting

November 17, 2016

Diverging: Earnings of College Grads Rose 40 – 80% in 1980 – 2012, Earnings of High School or Lower Stagnated or Fell 20%



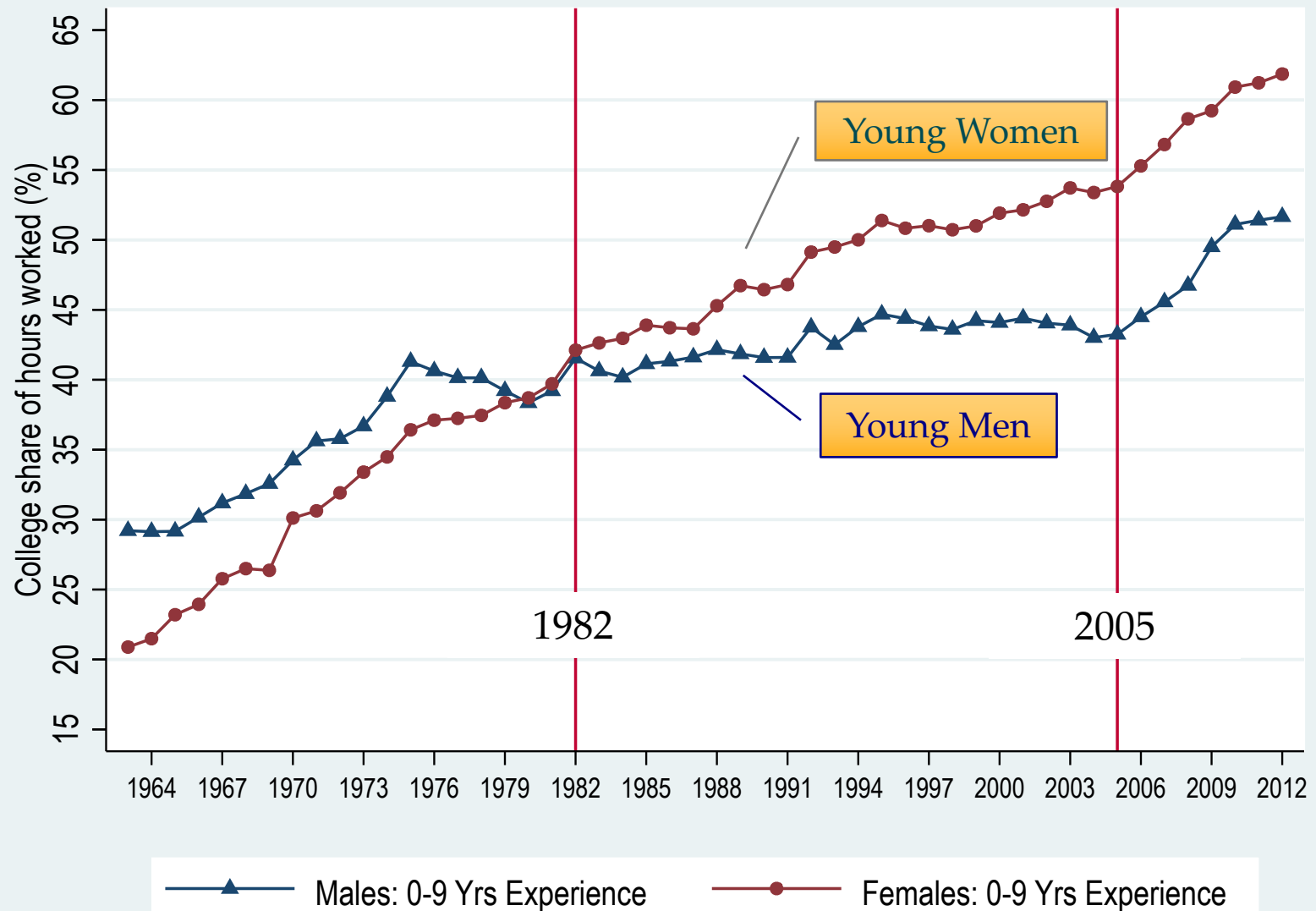
Not Participating: Employment Rates Are Dropping Among Young Males Who Face Declining Wages



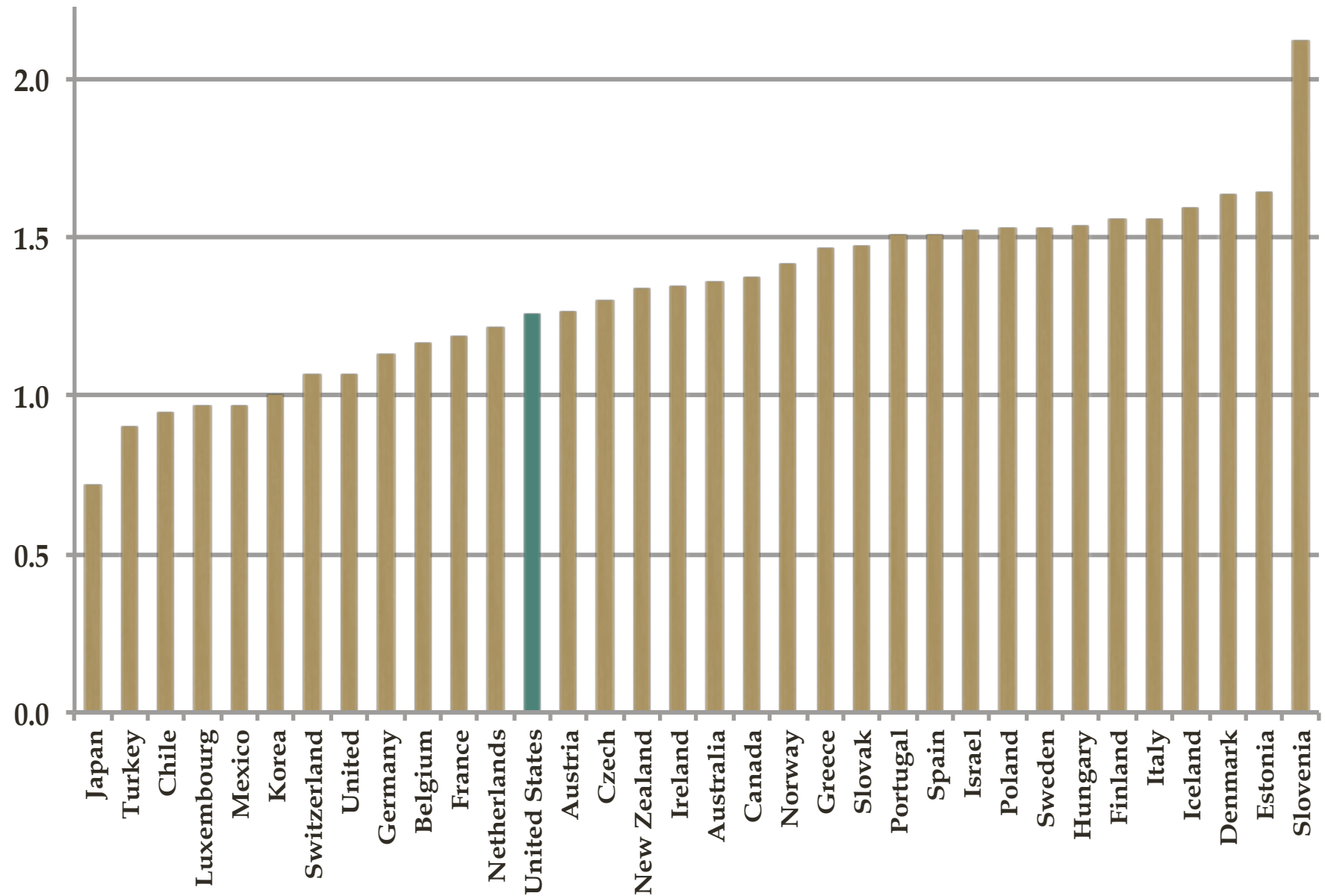
What's the problem?

- Stagnating male college attainment
- Skill-biased technical change
- Rapid globalization

Holding Back: Decelerating Supply of Young U.S. College Grads – Especially Young Males – Since '82

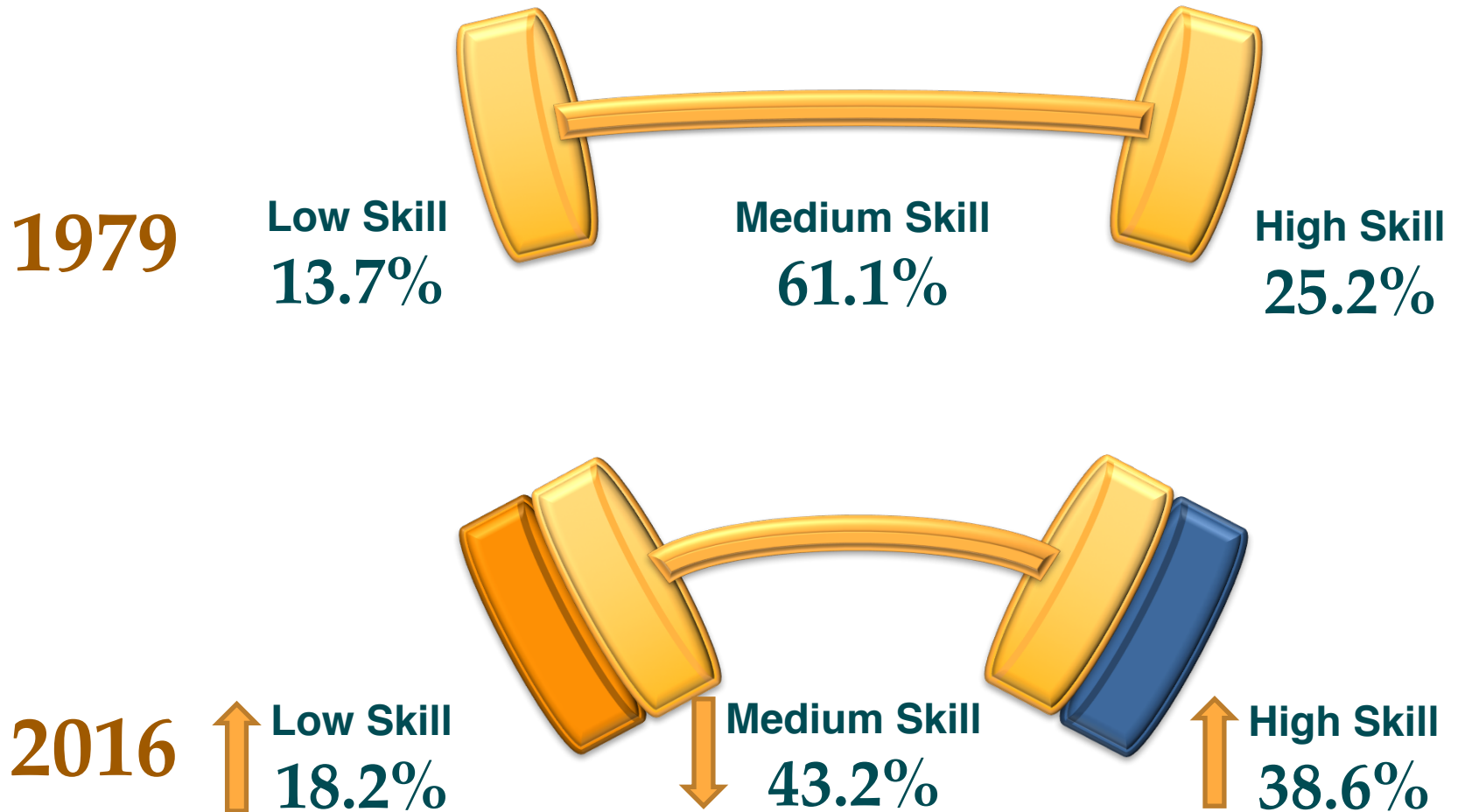


Tipping Point: Female/Male Ratio in College ('Tertiary') Educational Attainment in OECD Countries, 2011

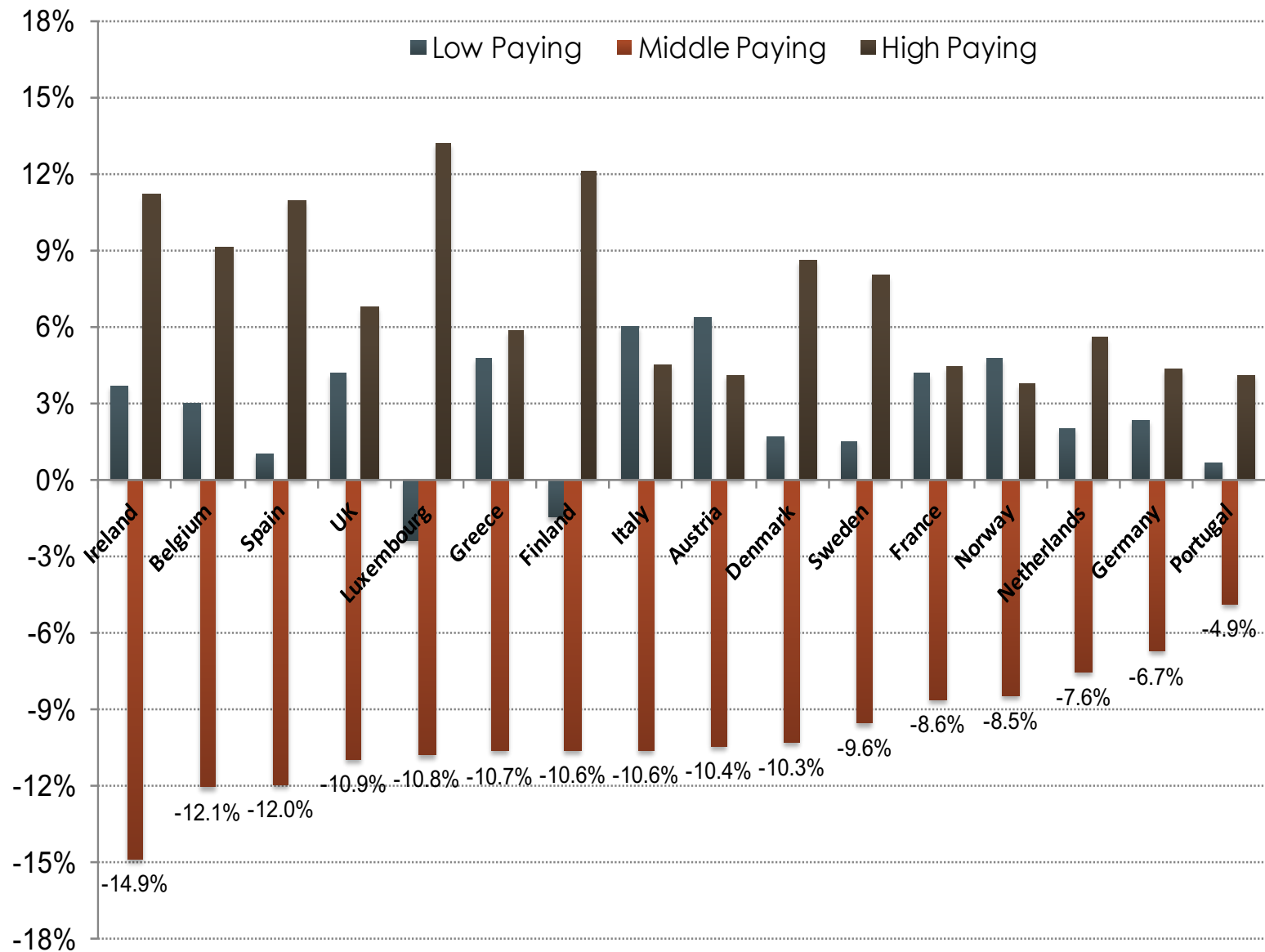


Source: OECD 2013

Biased Technical Change → Shrinking Middle: The 'Barbell' Labor Market (AKA Job Polarization)



Not Just a 'U.S. Thing:' Employment Polarization in Sixteen European Union Countries, 1993 - 2010



Globalizing: China's 2001 WTO Accession a Major Adverse Shock to U.S. Manufacturing Jobs (>1M Lost)

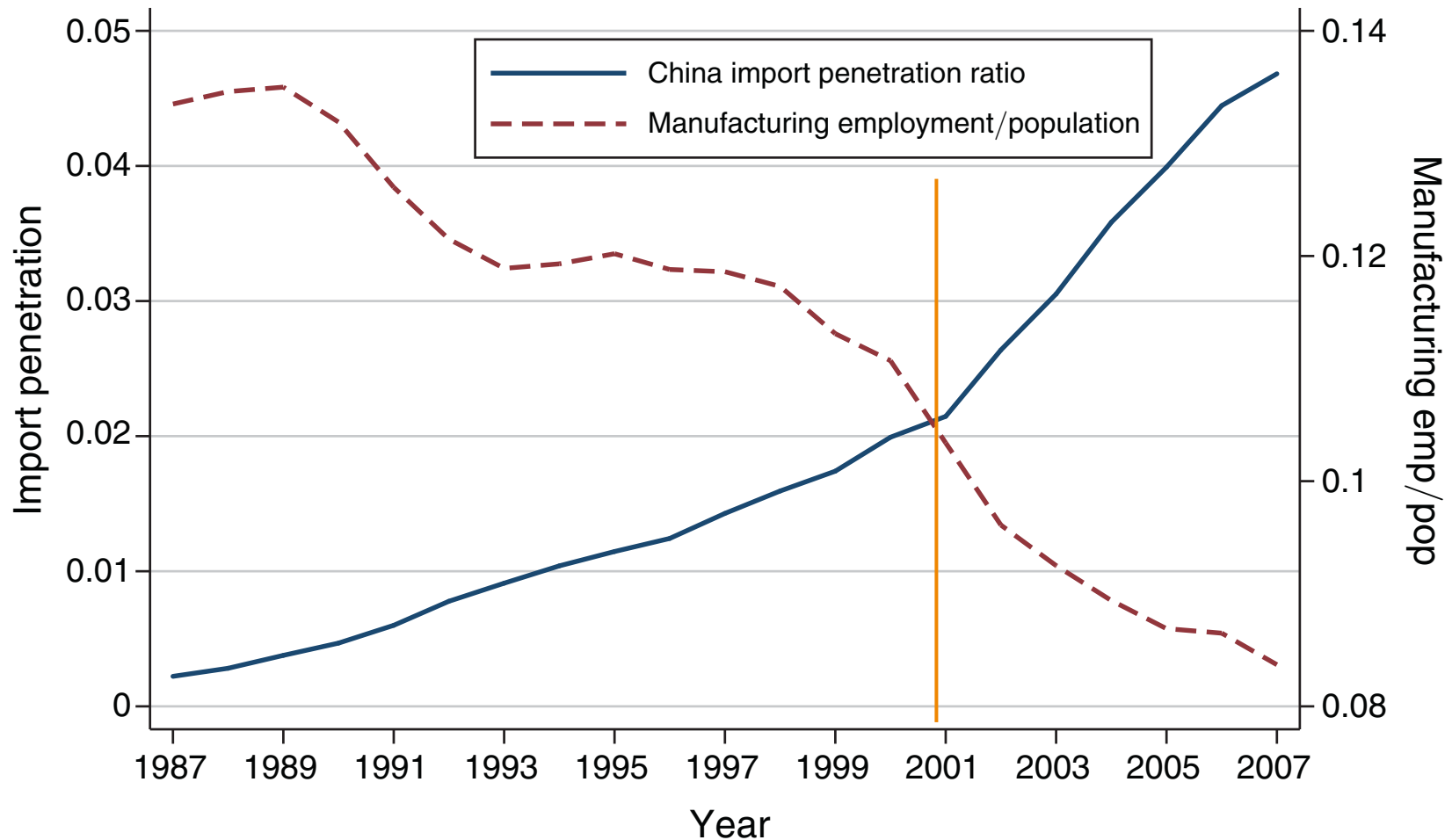
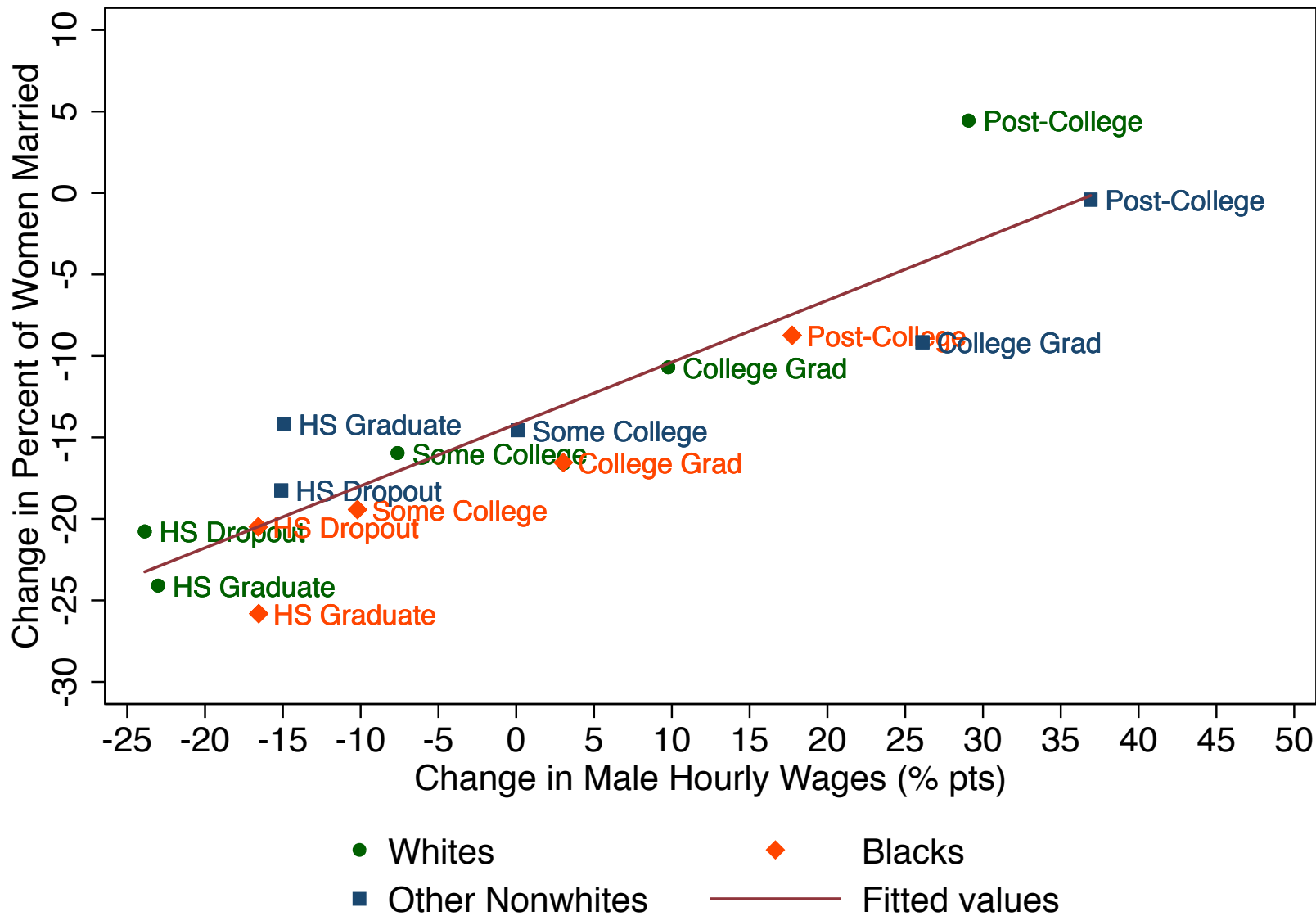


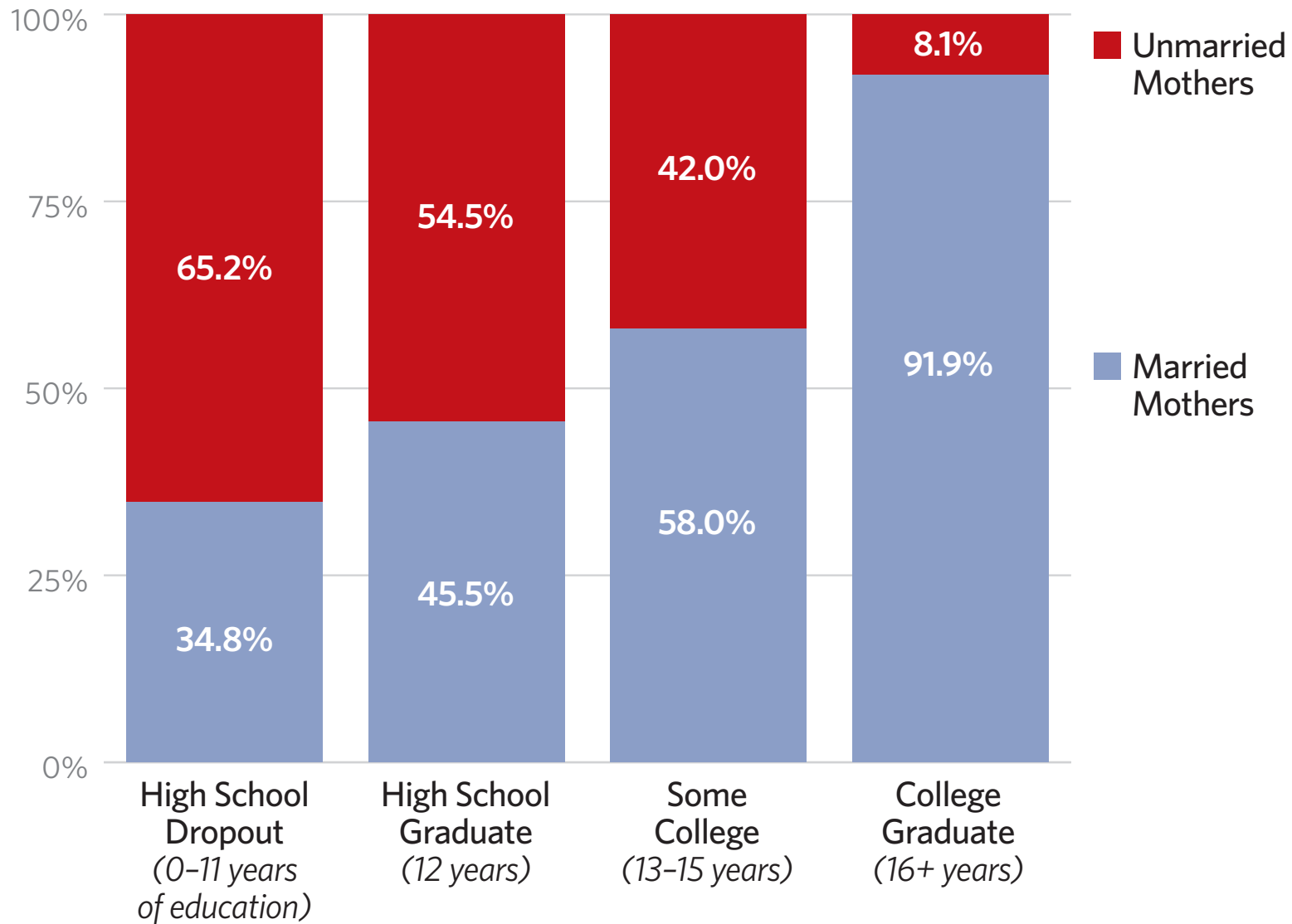
FIGURE 1. IMPORT PENETRATION RATIO FOR US IMPORTS FROM CHINA (*left scale*), AND SHARE OF US WORKING-AGE POPULATION EMPLOYED IN MANUFACTURING (*right scale*)

Why this matters:
Dynamism versus
dynasticism

Not the Right Guy: Changes in Female Marriage Rates vs. Changes in Male Earnings 1979 – 2008, Ages 25 – 39



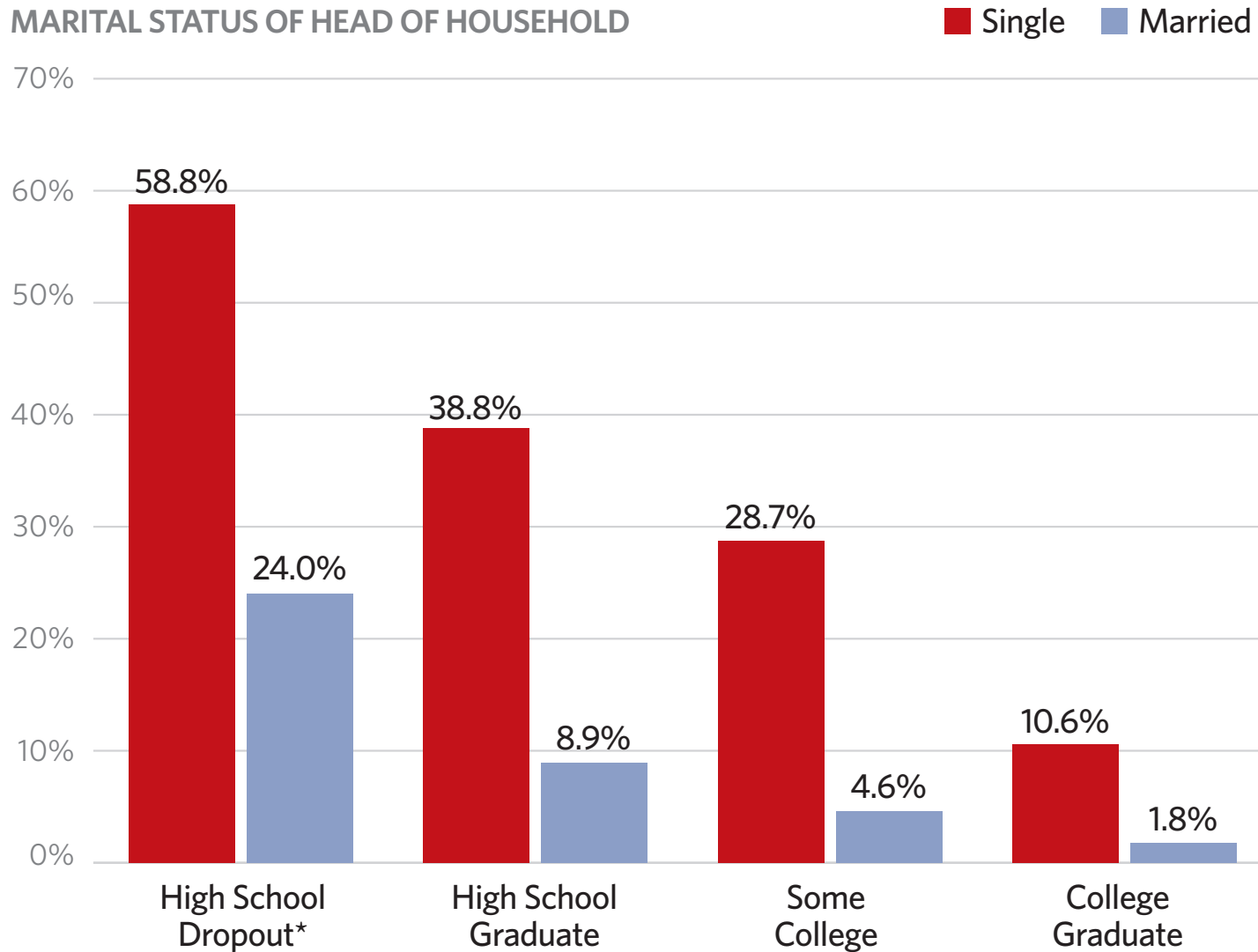
Unmarried with Children: Non-Marital Childbearing Much Higher among Non-College Women (2008 data)



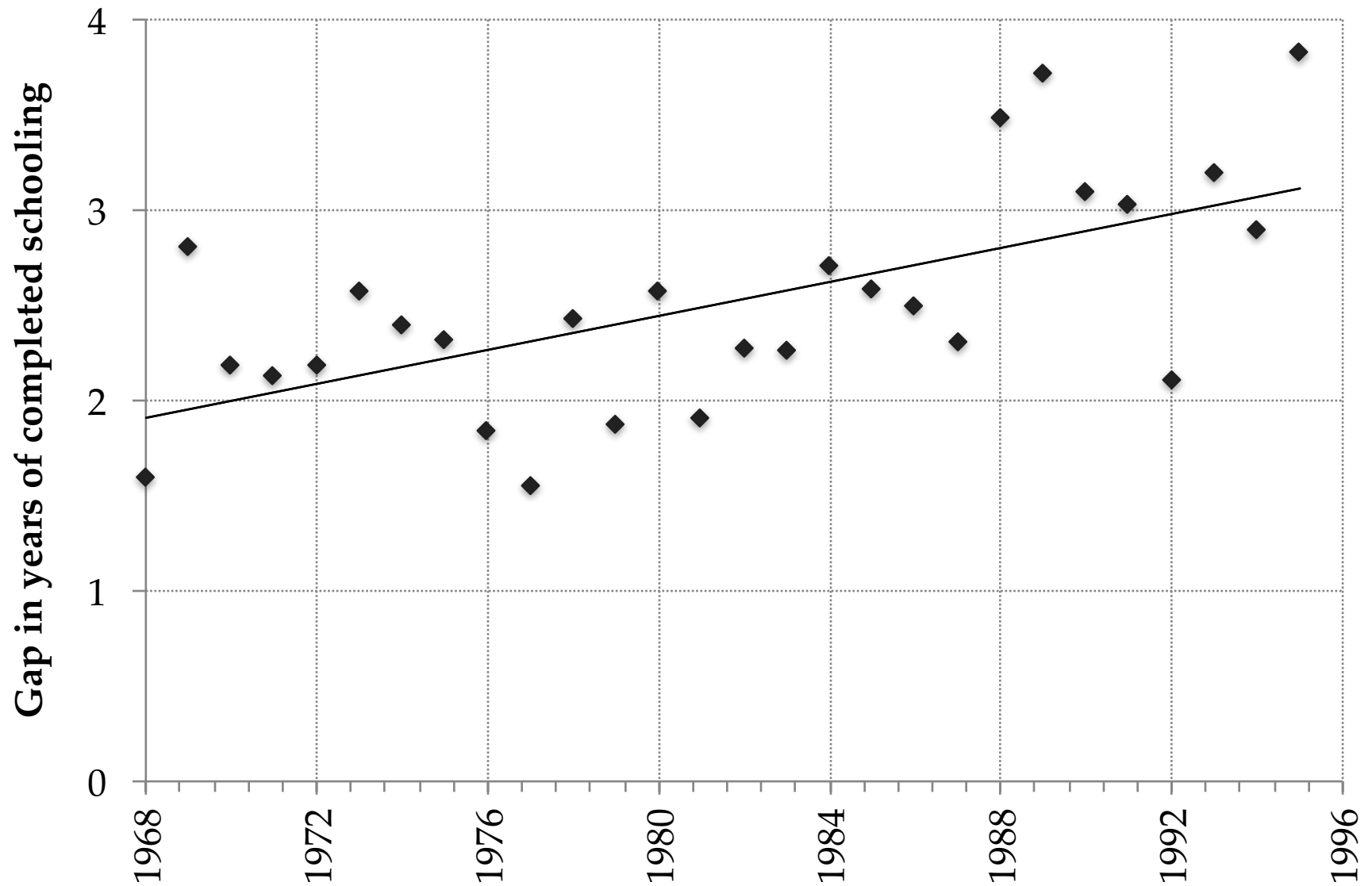
MOTHER'S EDUCATION LEVEL

Single and Poor: Poverty Far Higher Among Single-Headed Households at Every Education Level (2008 data)

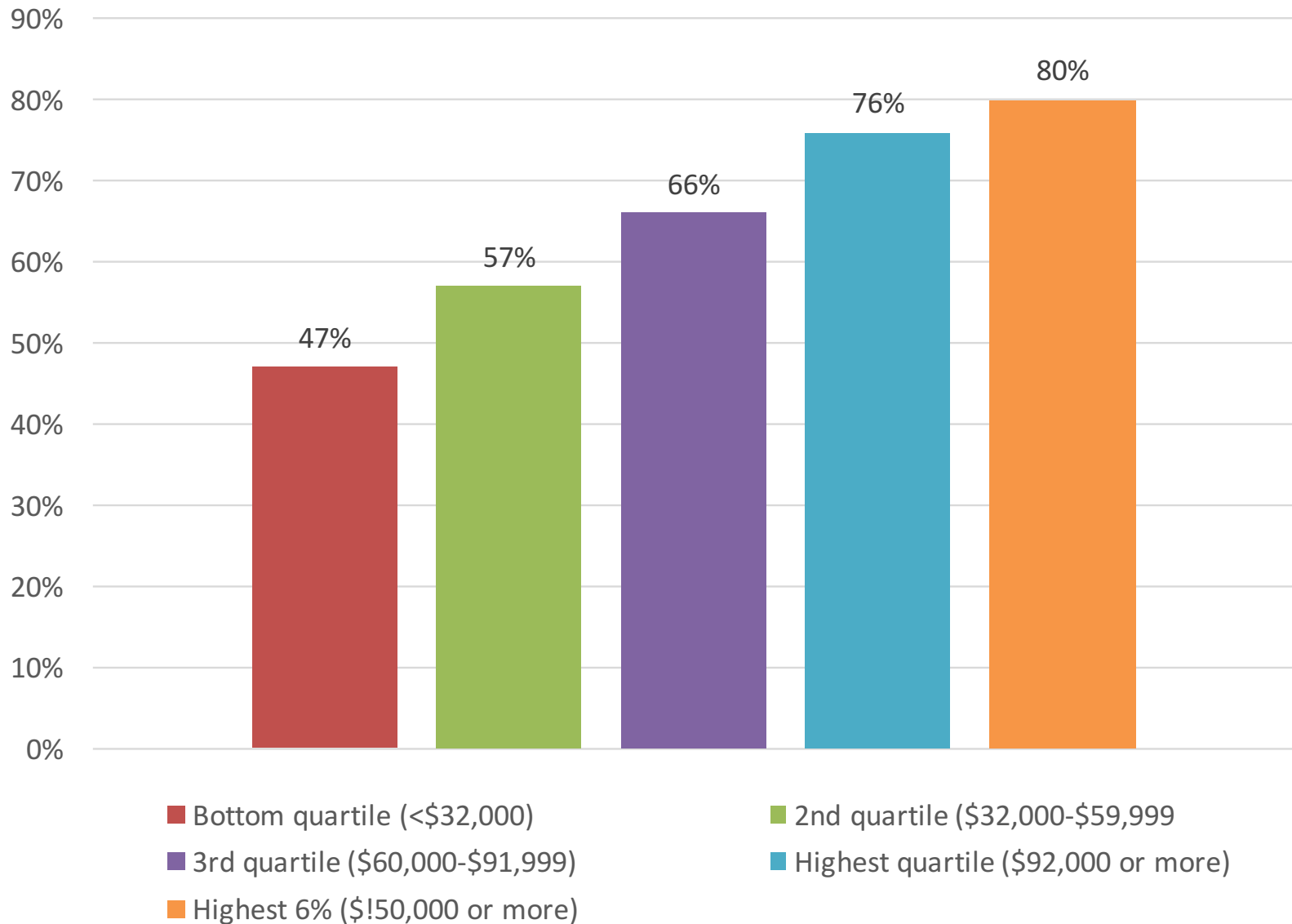
POVERTY RATE OF FAMILIES BY EDUCATION AND MARITAL STATUS OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD



Pulling away: Gap in Years of Schooling of Students from Top v. Bottom Quintiles of Families, '68 – '96 Birth Cohorts



Failure to Launch: BA Attainment for Students Enrolling in a 4-Year College in 2003/04 by Family Income Quartile



More Unequal and Less Mobile: Countries with High Income Inequality Have Low Intergenerational Mobility



Declining Male Employment: A Cause for Concern

- **A market economy needs some inequality**
- **Too much inequality? Dynamism begets dynasticism**
- **Male earnings and employment are falling**
 1. Stagnant college attainment
 2. Barbell job market (technical change)
 3. Rapid globalization (manufacturing jobs)
- **Why this matters**
 - Middle-class, two-parent families in decline
 - Low-income kids suffer from underinvestment
 - This inhibits meritocracy and mobility
- **Reversing the curse**
 - Raising earnings, employment of non-college adults
 - Improving educational outcomes, K-12 + college