Moving around the City
Residential and Economic Mobility in Chicago, 1925-1930[1]

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Introduction

Academic studies of social mobility in North America and Europe have largely concentrated on the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth century. In the late nineteenth century the study of social mobility in North America and Britain has largely relied on linking individuals across different censuses. By contrast, in Scandinavia and the Netherlands prospectively recorded church and population registers explicitly recorded lives in transition, making historical longitudinal research slightly more feasible. In the late twentieth century, social scientists have relied on prospectively collected longitudinal samples that make repeated interviews of the same individuals or families. By comparison, social mobility from the turn of the twentieth century to World War II is somewhat under-studied. Studies of social mobility in United States in the late nineteenth century and late twentieth century suggest social mobility declined in both eras. Thus, unless social mobility has been continuously declining since the 1850s, the early twentieth century should have seen social mobility increase. It is clear, however, that the social structure of mobility and opportunity changed in the first half of the twentieth century.

Opportunities for social mobility in nineteenth century North America were connected to the availability of cheap land. By the early twentieth century there was much less cheap land that allowed men with little schooling to make rapid social progress by dint of their own labor and that of their family. Thus, the "opportunity structure" became more urbanized.[2] Residents of urban areas had a greater variety of jobs they could enter, or move to if they were not satisfied with their current position. Olsen's chapter in this volume shows a high degree of mobility in both jobs and residences in late nineteenth century Montréal. The concern of American corporations at the high turnover of workers in manufacturing jobs suggests that many workers exercised their options.[3] These factors suggest a basis for increasing social mobility. But at the same time, the returns to formal education expanded, and at least partly in response to high labor turnover, large corporations developed extensive internal labor markets.[4] This chapter explores these issues by examining the residential and occupational mobility of a group of Chicago families in the late 1920s. The families persisted in Chicago, but the male heads of households shifted jobs at a high rate,

confirming the impressions of contemporary observers about the turnover of urban workers between jobs. There is only limited evidence, however, that occupational mobility led to significant social or economic mobility for the group. While some men moved up the occupational ladder, their gains were nearly all offset by a slightly smaller group of men who moved down the occupational ladder.

Background

Comparing the studies of late nineteenth and late twentieth century American social mobility suggest that social mobility may have increased between 1900 and World War II. The current consensus in the scholarly literature is that social mobility decreased up to 1900, and also decreased in the late twentieth century. For example, Joseph Ferrie and Jason Long have argued that the United States had high levels of social mobility between 1850 and 1880, but that social mobility declined towards British levels across the turn of the twentieth century.[5] Scholars analyzing the late twentieth century United States have drawn qualitatively similar conclusions to a century earlier. Social mobility may have increased in the immediate aftermath of World War II, but since the 1970s mobility has decreased. Viewed across a half-century American social mobility has at best been static.[6] Many other scholars argue that social mobility has decreased in the United States, both compared to its own past, and compared to other industrialized countries such as Canada, Britain, or Australia.[7]

Thus, the emerging consensus that American social mobility declined in the late nineteenth century, and at best was static in the late twentieth century begs the question of what happened in the first half of the twentieth century. The early twentieth century provides further data possibilities for researching social mobility than the late nineteenth century. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, American governments, academics, and advocates for social policy reform carried out many social surveys. The surveys' focus on urban social conditions and living standards reveals a concern that recent migrants to the city—domestic or international—were, at best, at risk of not making enough money to support themselves or their families. At worst, urban migrants were seen as potential vectors of ill health and social disorder that would spread through neighborhoods, and even infect the middle and upper classes.[8]

Thus many of the surveys were concerned with understanding the ecology of urban life. Some prominent early examples include Charles Booth's multi-volume study of the London poor*,* W.E.B Du Bois' survey of African Americans in Philadelphia, and a multi-volume study of Pittsburgh supported by the Russell Sage Foundation.[9] The

majority of the surveys would be classified today as "mixed methods" research. They drew on multiple disciplines from the academy, and relied on a synthesis of quantitative data from samples of households, with qualitative data collected from interviews with local elites (such as politicians and employers) and studying relevant documents.[10] Social surveys of household and individuals often asked more questions than the contemporary census, such as income and hours of work.

Similarly, because social surveys were interested in assessing the [in]adequacy of low incomes they often asked about rents and expenditures on necessities such as clothing, heating fuel, and food.[11] Thus, when these social survey manuscripts survive for re-analysis by modern scholars they offer tremendous potential for understanding social conditions in the early twentieth century. Moreover, many of the surveys of individuals and households from the early twentieth century include identifying information about the respondent and their family. Privacy was a concern for scholars in the early twentieth century, but it appears to have been less of a concern than in the late twentieth century. Where manuscript surveys survive from this era they often include identifying information on the survey itself, or the "key" that links unique identification numbers and personally identifying information is elsewhere in the archival record.

Chicago as a site for social research

The lives of the urban working class in Chicago are well known to social scientists and historians. Between the 1880s and World War II Chicago was the site of multiple social surveys by urban reformers and social workers, academics, and government agencies from the city to the federal level. In the earliest years the surveys were collected atheoretically, or to document the case for progressive reforms. While the University of Chicago sociologists from the 1920s tried to separate themselves from the cause of social reform and the pragmatic needs of social workers, their theories of human ecology in the city owed a great debt to the masses of data collected about Chicago in the previous 40 years.[12] Despite a growing interest in longitudinal research in other areas of social science in the 1920s, few of the Chicago studies returned to the same individuals or families to see how they had fared. Yet it was a mark of Chicago-area urban research that scholars returned to the same neighborhoods, and tracked how they had changed. The Chicago sociologists made it easy for other scholars to return to the same neighborhoods by defining 75 (now 77) community areas that continue to be used in research.[13] In the 1920s as Chicago continued to grow rapidly, "residential stability" was a concern to the Chicago sociologists. In particular,

they were concerned with how low levels of residential stability contributed to poverty, delinquency and poor health.[14] The persistence of place, not people, was a defining element of the early years of Chicago social science. This generalization carries across in large part to the work done by the women scholars at the Chicago School of Social Service Administration.[15] Continuing more directly the line of work started by Jane Addams and the researchers who contributed to *Hull House Maps and Papers*, the emblematic works were largely done by the Abbott sisters, Grace and Edith, and Sophonisba Breckinridge.[16] Yet even though social work, compared to sociology, involved a greater continuing focus on the family and the individual, the research done by the [largely] female faculty and associates of the School of Social Service Administration also neglected longitudinal studies. The most prominent Chicago scholar to study subjects longitudinally before World War II was Ernest Burgess, whose interests in criminal recidivism and marital "success" led him to return to the same subjects for re-interview several years later.[17] But for the most part, social surveys in pre-World War II Chicago were social snapshots.

Data and methodology

The preservation of many of the manuscript materials that underlie Chicago social research allows us to revisit some of the Chicago families, and trace them through time. This paper uses a survey of working class families by Leila Houghteling from 1924/5. Houghteling was an "heiress" who surveyed 477 families in Chicago and its immediately adjacent suburbs for her PhD dissertation research in the School of Social Service Administration.[18]

Houghteling aimed to measure the income and standard of living of families in Chicago. The dissertation and the monograph are both sparse on details of the sample collection. In common with other social surveys collected during the infancy of statistical sampling theory, there was no explicit probabilistic scheme for choosing a set of respondents. The sampling frame was derived from payroll records of large employers. But Houghteling compared her sample with the 1920 census, and other surveys of Chicago workers and the implicit ideal of a representative sample underlies the data collection.[19]

Working class families—a husband, wife and ideally some children—were the subjects of the study. The target population was consistent with other social surveys of the time, including those collected by federal and state agencies. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics 1917/19 Cost of Living Survey that collected the original weights for the Consumer Price Index had a similar definition.[20] Many of these surveys restricted the number of

boarders or roomers a family could have if they were accepted into the sample. The moral concept was that intact families—who maintained a safe environment for their children by not having too many extra-familial boarders or roomers—were the families about whom governments and social service agencies should be concerned. Moreover, there were analytical reasons to restrict the numbers of non-family members in surveyed families. Household well-being is subject to significant economies of scale that come from sharing resources between household members. Non-family members may well have a different "sharing rule" with the household than the family. Working out how families pooled resources was a practical and analytical challenge with the technology of the time for analyzing quantitative data. The challenge would only be greater by including households with greater and more variable numbers of non-family members. Making the household composition of the sample more homogeneous thus had both moral and practical supports.

After Houghteling's 1927 death the University of Chicago Press published a revised manuscript posthumously as a monograph.[21] The original survey manuscripts were bound in three volumes and are held in the Special Collections Research Center of the University of Chicago Library.[22] Like other social surveyors of the era, Houghteling relied on social workers to help with data collection. The sometimes-tense interactions between middle class, educated social workers and their working class subjects are evident in many of the surveys.[23]

The judgments of the social workers are copious, because in comparison to other social surveys of this era and earlier, the Houghteling surveys have unusually detailed qualitative notes about the families. In part this was because the surveys included a question on "Indications of Poverty" and "Indications of Comfort" that invited the social worker to make subjective assessments of wellbeing. The instructions to investigators suggested "indications of comfort" could be "unusually good furniture, expensive rugs or lamps, etc."[24] Cleanliness dominated their concerns.[25] More than 100 of the 477 surveys note that the house was clean, and categorize cleanliness as an indication of well-being.[26] One interviewer noted positively that "the laundry had just come up from the hot wash …. and the underwear looked very new and well cared for."[27] Another commented favorably that she was offered wine while taking the survey.[28] Musical instruments, particularly pianos and organs, were noted as an indication of comfort. Often the notes explain the circumstances behind the numbers, such as a son-in-law not working because he had been gassed in the war, or a husband who had to switch jobs after being burned at work.[29] Houghteling seemed to be planning a follow-up study of the same families, because the social workers had to ask whether the wife and mother of the family was interested in the study, assess whether she kept good accounts and ask if she

might be contacted again. Houghteling's own untimely death meant that the follow-up study was never completed. Thus in part this chapter is homage to the work of Houghteling and her collaborators on the original study, completing in some fashion what they could not by linking the surveys to the 1920 and 1930 censuses.

Like many social surveys of the era—especially in Chicago where there were many large employers—Houghteling collected her sample by approaching large employers and asking their employment office to suggest workers who might be approached to be interviewed. Thus a number of large employers dominate the list of where husbands in the 1925 survey were employed, including International Harvester, Swift, Sears & Roebuck, Ryerson Steel, Wisconsin Steel, Chicago Surface Lines, Commonwealth Edison, and Pullman.[30]

The black families included a small number of "old settlers," and new migrants who had arrived during the Great Migration.[31] Black migrants turned out to be some of the hardest families to link from the Houghteling surveys to the 1920 and 1930 censuses. Although it is impossible to know why we could not link a particular family we suspect that the black families were hard to find in the census because they were recently migrated, or migrating at the time of the census. The enumeration of black households in the South appeared to be of low quality. Where we could identify a family there were often frequent small errors in the enumeration, either from lack of care or difficulty in communicating with the household. This pattern is consistent with evidence that the censuses of 1920, 1930 and 1940 had the highest under-enumeration of the black population in the century following the Civil War. In 1920 15% of the black population was uncounted, and 1930 improved only marginally to 12%.[32] Black under-enumeration was more than twice as great as the net under-enumeration rate.[33]

Because the Houghteling surveys were of families we concentrated on linking families between the survey manuscripts from 1925 and the population censuses of 1920 and 1930. The primary objective was to link the married couple in the family to their household in 1920 and 1930. Going forward to 1930 we ignored the destination of young adults or other family members who had left the household. In common with other modern projects to link individuals or families between sources we identified families with characteristics that should not change, or should change predictably. In the Houghteling survey we knew

- First and last names of all family members
- Age of family members in 1925
- Race of the husband and wife, defined as Black or White
- Nativity of the husband and wife, defined as Foreign or U.S. born

- Ethnicity of the husband and wife

In both 1920 and 1930 the census provided similar information, allowing a relatively high rate of accurate linkages. Overall we linked 55% of families to the 1920 census, and 69% (332/477) to the 1930 census. With the release of the 1940 census in April 2012, it has been possible to start extending the research forward another decade with one-third of the families currently linked to that census. This chapter analyzes the initial 277 families that were linked to the 1930 census.

The goal of the project was to link families both forward and backward, and searches in the Ancestry.com indices to the United States census were made jointly, trying to locate both 1920 and 1930 enumerations in one search. We began searching by trying for an exact match between the first and last name of the husband, his birth year calculated from his age in 1925, his spouse remaining the same, and his race. We prioritized searching for the husband, because in the rare cases where couples were not married at the 1920 census, we should at least be able to find the husband before marriage because his name would not have changed.[34] This did not always produce the right potential candidates for linking, so the next step was to try the characteristics of the wife. Finally, we tried including the characteristics of children. When we included children's characteristics we began by adding the youngest child alive in 1920, and progressively adding more children's names and characteristics. The youngest child alive in 1920 (typically aged 0-5) was often still in the household in 1930, and this made it easier to find the correct household on an initial search that included children's characteristics. Younger children's names were often spelt more consistently in the two sources—census and survey.

The small (48/477) number of native-born whites were the most straightforward to find, and we found 2/3 of these families going forward to 1930. Native born families were harder to link in the first instance, because the Houghteling sample did not record the state of birth. Once the family was found in one census we then had the state of birth for further searching. The most challenging couples to link were American-born blacks and descendants of European immigrants. There was substantial name homogeneity for both European immigrants and black migrants to the North. Names became more Anglicized over time for European migrants or descendants with a non-English name. For example, it was common for Stanislaus to become Stanley. The enumeration of blacks in the South appeared to vary more often from the Houghteling spellings and (especially) ages than the enumeration of native-born whites. Because of these challenges, we more often used information about children's names and birthplaces to find black and European immigrant families. Because the target population was families with children, this strategy

should not produce large biases with 75% of the families having a child aged between 5 and 10 with a high likelihood of being present in both 1925 and 1930.

Characteristics of the Houghteling families in 1925 and 1930

Despite the non-random sampling used in collecting the original Houghteling sample the characteristics of the families match up well with similar families from the 1920 census. Taking the broad Houghteling target population to be Chicago families where the husband was a semi-skilled or unskilled worker, and comparing the distribution of other characteristics allows us to see how large any differences between the census and the Houghteling families actually are (Table 1). One major difference is that the Houghteling sample is blacker and more foreign than the average family in Chicago with a semi-skilled or unskilled father. The Houghteling families had more co-resident children than similar census families, and wives were more likely to be working. The definition of women's work was much more inclusive in the budget studies than in the census. The higher prevalence of foreign and black families in the Houghteling sample probably accounts for the higher rate of boarding and lodging. Another factor inflating the rate of boarding and lodging in the Houghteling sample is that as a budget study it asked about boarders and lodgers in the household in the past year. To make the concept match more closely to the census enumeration we would need to compute a rate of boarding at the time of enumeration. But the average earnings of the husbands/fathers in the Houghteling sample match up nearly exactly with the contemporary average earnings for manufacturing and transportation workers. The heads of the Houghteling households reported average earnings of $1246, compared to the national average of $1240 for manufacturing and transportation workers in the same year.[35] Thus we can be reasonably sure that in 1925 the Houghteling families were representative of other working class families in Chicago.

Before we can discuss the transitions that the families made we need to compare the 1925 characteristics of the families we linked to 1930. It is nearly a given in longitudinal research that the people who are "lost to follow up" are different in some way from the people who can be traced over time. Remarkably there are few differences between the linked and non-linked sample. But even in the happy situation that we have here, where the two groups look alike at initial measurement cannot obscure the likelihood that the groups differ on some unobservable characteristics (such as "persistence"), or that the two groups develop differently after the initial survey.

Residential transitions of the Houghteling families from 1925-1930

The transitions of the linked families are nested within a very high degree of persistence in the city of Chicago and the surrounding area. Of the 277 families initially linked between 1925 and 1930, just 10 (3.6%) moved out of Chicago. Most families that moved did not go far. Two families went as far as Michigan (Detroit and Hamtrack City), others as close by as Berwyn, East Chicago (Illinois), and Waukesha (Wisconsin). While few families moved out of Chicago, there was a high degree of movement within the city.

Two thirds families lived in a different residence after five years. Yet this understates mobility by measuring it over a five year period. Because some people move multiple times, annual mobility rates are not simply five-year mobility rates divided by five. Comparing annual and five-year mobility rates in the United States after 1950 suggests that five-year mobility rates are about three times annual rates.[36] If the same relationship held in inter-war Chicago, one-in-five households would have moved annually. Even this estimate might be too low. Post-World War II surveys in the United States show around 35-40% of renters moving at least once in the past year.[37] While these five-year mobility rates appear high, they are comparable with other pre- World War II estimates of intra-urban mobility rates.[38] For example in the 1940 census, just 37% of 25-64 year old men in Chicago employed in similar occupations to the Houghteling sample, were living in the same house as five years earlier.

The high mobility rates in the Houghteling sample are consistent with evidence from other studies that before widespread car ownership people often moved when they changed jobs. In 1925 just six of the 477 families owned a car. With lengthy hours in working class jobs, residential moves that reduced the daily journey to work economized on commuting costs. Moving closer to a job made more sense when people were more certain of remaining in a job. In 1925, at least, there was a clear relationship for many of the families between the duration of current employment and residential proximity to the workplace. A sample of men from two large companies with one main factory—Ryerson Steel and International Harvester—were selected to examine this question in more detail by geocoding addresses, and measuring the distance to work. The longer a man had worked at either employer, the closer he lived to his workplace. Unfortunately the 1930 census only includes information on industry, and it is not possible to tell definitively whether a man had changed firms within the same industry, or continued to work at the exact same firm.

The Houghteling families made a significant move into home ownership over the five years they were followed (Table 2). In 1925 33% of the linked sample owned their own homes, while by 1930 45% of the families

owned their own home. Thus, by 1930 one third of the families renting in 1925 had made a transition to home ownership, while just ten families had reverted to renting. While the sample that was successfully linked had a higher rate of home-ownership (33%) than the non-linked group (24%) in 1925, the other characteristics of owning and renting families were similar in the linked and non-linked groups. In both linked and non-linked groups the home-owning families were slightly older. Men who owned their own home were 42 on average, compared to 38 among renters.

Both the 1925 survey and the 1930 census asked about the "cost of the house" if owned, and the value of the home. In both sources there is some missing data, so that of the 80 linked families owning homes in both years we only have 65 families who supplied the home value in both years. The values given in both years are highly correlated. For the 43 families who lived at the same address in both years, the mean increase in value was $730 (Figure 2). However, there were few families who reported the same cost in 1925 as house value in 1930, suggesting that respondents were trying to estimate current value in the 1930 census.

The transition to home ownership among a quarter of the 1925 renters is suggestive of the ambition for home ownership in Chicago families of the era that has been documented by other authors.[39] However, in both years a majority of families continued to rent. Concern with the rental market, and the high proportion of income spent on rent by African American families was a major part of Houghteling's original report on her work.[40] The Houghteling study collected the total amount of rent paid in the previous 12 months, whereas the census in 1930 reported on the contracted monthly amount for rent. Although inflation was moderate between 1925 and 1930 (and in some measures, negative), the average rents paid by the families increased significantly between 1925 and 1930 (Figure 3). In 1925 the average renting family paid $23.27 per month in rent ($23.32 for the linked families). In 1930 the average rent had moved up to $32/month. The increase in rents is visible all across the distribution (Figure 4). At the 25th and 75th percentiles of the rent distribution the increase was similar to the increase in the average rent. Without measures of housing quality in 1930 we do not know whether families were trading up to better houses. However, a pattern of more general rental increases is suggested by the fact that rents for families who remained in the same house also appeared to increase. Among the 25 families renting the same house in both years the average rent increased from $20/month to $25/month—very similar to the movement in rentals overall.

While the move to home ownership suggests that these families improved their economic status, other indicators suggest fewer economic gains for the families. Both the Houghteling study and the 1930 census enquired

about radio ownership. In 1925 only 8% (36/477) of the Houghteling sample owned a radio (25/277 or 9% in the linked sample). For comparison, 21% of the families owned a piano, 40% a "Victrola" record player, and 20% a telephone. As has been well documented by many historians radio ownership grew rapidly in Eastern and Midwestern cities in the 1920s and 1930s, and the 1930 census found that 40% of households nationwide had a radio.[41] In large cities the rate of radio ownership was higher: in cities like Chicago with a population of over one million people, 59% of the population and 56% of households had radios. Thus the rate of radio ownership in the Houghteling sample in 1930 (125/277) of 45% is actually well below the overall rate of radio ownership in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit and Los Angeles. Indeed in Chicago in 1930 63% of the population lived in a home with a radio. But again, by comparing the Houghteling sample with a similar population from the 1930 census we see that the rate of radio ownership in the Houghteling families was commensurate with the level in similar families. The Houghteling surveys confirm that radio ownership diffused quite rapidly in American cities in the 1920s, but that occupation and class stratified diffusion.

Labor force and occupational transitions

Despite the persistence in Chicago of the Houghteling families, there was a considerable extent of occupational and industrial movement by the husbands who were, by sample construction, all in full-time employment with large employers in 1925. Of the 277 linked husbands, only one-third (93/277) remained in the same major occupation and industry. Less than 20% (54/277) were in the exact same occupation and industry as in 1925 (Tables 3 and 4). Occupational and industrial change was measured by comparing the coded occupation, with occupations coded into the IPUMS 1950 coding scheme.[42] In the 1925 survey some men reported multiple jobs over the year the survey enquired about. For these men, the job they held for the longest part of the year was designated as the occupation for comparison with 1930. Remaining in the same "exact occupation" meant that the occupational code was identical in both years, although the literal response given to the enumerator may have changed. Some of the occupational categories that were frequently given by the Houghteling sample were quite broad, so even this measure understates change. For example, a "packer" and a "box maker" both receive the same occupational code in this coding system and a person switching between these jobs would be recorded as remaining in the same occupation. A more literal coding of some common occupations may reveal even more movement. People remaining in the same industry (meat packing or steel) could have changed employers. Thus we have a conservative measure

of occupational and industrial transitions, so it is striking how much movement there was between jobs in just five years. Less than one in five of the linked sample could have still been in the same job five years later.

The pattern of job transitions (Tables 5 and 6) does not suggest major movements up the occupational scale. But it does suggest some degree of movement. Broadly speaking the IPUMS "major groups" correspond to levels of perceived occupational status. A quarter of the 277 linked men moved up the occupational scale between 1925 and 1930 (equivalent to a move to the left in Table 5). A man who was a "laborer" in 1925, and a "maker" or "operator" in 1930 would be regarded as moving up the occupational scale. Indeed, one in six (23/142) unskilled workers in 1925 had moved up to a semi-skilled occupation by 1930. Some had even become clerical workers or sales workers, and one solitary person had been promoted to being a supervisor. More than half the skilled workers in 1930 had moved up from semi-skilled, unskilled and service jobs five years earlier. The specific occupations show a move into more skilled employment, rather than a move into supervisory positions or lower-level management. None of the Houghteling heads of household reported being a foreman, though several of their adult sons still living at home in 1930 were foremen.

While some moved up, others moved down. Nearly as many men moved from a skilled or semi-skilled occupation in 1925 to an unskilled occupation in 1930 (61/277) as moved up the occupational hierarchy. We should not make too much of these changes because it is difficult to tell from the limited descriptions in each source what exactly a person was doing. The skill and status difference between a semi-skilled "maker" and a "laborer" may just reflect the differing terms used within different firms, and not any real difference in what a person was doing. No matter how one interprets the differences between jobs, there is considerable evidence that these men were very mobile in the local labor market. Relatively few remained with the same employer five years later, and occupational changes were likely for those that remained in the same industry, and thus potentially with the same employer.

Conclusion

Leila Houghteling's original research has been widely cited by historians because of her sensitive portrayal of the lives of the industrial working class in the mid-1920s. The very questions on her survey about automobile and piano ownership, and the frequent notes by the interviewers of sewing machine ownership, indicate that consumer culture and material comfort was within reach for the low skilled and immigrants in America. Yet as Susan Porter Benson has shown recently working class lives could also be ones of struggle and work.[43]

While longitudinal studies often focus on change, the involvement of older children and wives in earning was an important continuity for working class families in Chicago. These families purchased their homes and consumer durables by relying on the labor of many family members. Husbands' wages were important, but on average made up only two-thirds of family earnings in 1925. Just 76 of 477 families in 1925 relied solely on the earnings of the father. This pattern persisted in the 1930 census. Only 15% of families relied solely on the husbands' earnings in both 1925 and 1930. For the remaining 85% of families, taking in boarders and lodgers and the earnings of wives and children remained a visible source of income. The continuing involvement of wives and young adult children in the labor market suggests that the occupational mobility of male household heads did not bring a high degree of security.

The focus on this chapter on transitions over just five years serves to emphasize the high degree of occupational circulation among the male household heads. At most, only twenty percent of the male household heads could have been in the same exact job in 1925 and 1930. A further 15% of the men appeared to be working in a closely related job, remaining in the same broad occupational or industrial category. Thus, at least two-thirds of these men made a significant change in their job in the space of five years, consistent with other historical evidence that labor turnover rates were high, though declining, in the 1920s.[44]

At the same time, these men and their families circulated around the Chicago area with 97% of the linked families remaining in the metropolitan area. The high degree of persistence in one area is also consistent with other historical evidence that American geographic mobility rates declined in the early twentieth century. Taken together, the high occupational mobility within a large metropolitan area suggests a new pattern of looking for opportunity within the city. Olsen's chapter on Montréal in this volume shows that these patterns of intra-urban mobility emerged in North American cities in the late nineteenth century. The qualitative picture of urban life is similar—frequent occupational transitions led to frequent residential moves as families balanced proximity to kin and industry. The experience of urban families thus differs significantly from the inter-state and long-distance moves for agricultural land that were common in the nineteenth century. While a significant minority of the families made a successful transition to home ownership by 1930, the aggregate pattern of only slight upward occupational mobility points to the continuing limits on social mobility for unskilled workers.

Table 1. Comparison of Houghteling families with 1920 census and 1925 Department of Public Welfare Survey

	1920 census	Houghteling sample	Houghteling families linked to 1930	1925 public welfare survey
Demographic and ethnic				
Age of father	40	39	40	
Number of children in primary family	2	3.6	3.7	
Foreign born white	0.59	0.72	0.75	
Native born white	0.06	0.10	0.11	
Black	0.35	0.18	0.14	
Speaks English (if foreign born)	0.87	0.76	0.75	
Housing				
≤ 1 person per room		0.34	0.35	0.52
Owned home	0.28	0.29	0.32	0.14
Earnings				
Total family earnings less than $100 per month		0.19	0.16	0.47
Mother/wife at work, or boarders kept	0.23	0.48	0.49	0.47
Father's earnings in past year		$1246.75	$1257.15	
		($313)	($329)	
Mother's earnings in past year		$166.56	$160.71	
		($296)	($289)	

Standard errors in parentheses

Table 2. Home ownership in 1925 and 1930

	Ownership in 1930		
Ownership in 1925	**Owned**	**Renting**	**Total**
Owned	80 (89% persistence)	10 (11% move to renting)	*90 (33%)*
Renting	46 (25% move to owning)	137 (75% persistence)	*183 (67%)*
Total	*126 (46%)*	*147 (54%)*	*273*

Table 3. Changes in exact occupation and industry

	Did not change exact industry	Changed industry	Total
Did not change exact occupation	54 (19%)	51 (18%)	105 (38%)
Changed exact occupation	58 (21%)	114 (41%)	172 (62%)
Total	112 (40%)	165 (60%)	277

Table 4. Changes in major group occupation and industry

	Did not change major group industry	Changed major group industry	Total
Did not change major group occupation	93 (34%)	55 (20%)	148 (54%)
Changed major group occupation	67 (24%)	62 (22%)	129 (46%)
Total	160 (58%)	117 (42%)	277

Table 5. Occupational transitions of head of household

	1930 occupation					
1925 occupation	White collar	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Service	Unskilled	Total
White collar	3	1	2	0	2	8
Skilled trades	2	12	1	1	7	23
Semi-skilled trades	4	8	15	4	31	62
Service	1	3	6	20	12	42
Unskilled	9	4	23	8	98	142
Total	19	28	47	33	150	277

Definitions of occupational categories: All occupations are coded into the IPUMS OCC1950 classification system.
White collar: Major groups 0, 2, 3, 4
Skilled trades: Major group 5. Carpenters and other ‘named’ trades.
Semi-skilled trades: Major group 6. Apprentices, operatives, stationary engineers, and “makers”
Service: Major group 7. Janitors, waiters, watchmen and guards
Unskilled. Major group 9. Laborers

Table 6. Industrial transitions of heads of household, 1925-30

	Industry in 1930									
			Manufacturing				Services			
Industry in 1925	Agriculture	Construction	Durable	Non-durable	Utilities Transport	Trade	Commercial	Consumer	Public	Total
Durable goods manufacturing	3	1	88	14	10	5	1	4	13	139
Non-durable manufacturing	1	0	8	37	2	4	1	1	6	60
Utilities and transport	0	4	7	3	27	1	0	1	5	48
Wholesale and retail	0	0	1	7	1	6	1	1	5	22
Public administration	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	2	8
Total	4	5	108	62	40	16	3	8	31	277

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Notes

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[2] Roberts, "The Entry into Employment: An approach towards a General Theory."

[3] Slichter, *The turnover of factory labor*.

[4] Goldin and Katz, *The Race Between Education and Technology*; Jacoby and Sharma, "Employment Duration and Industrial Labor Mobility in the United States 1880-1980." Sundstrom, "Internal labor markets before World War I: On-the-job training and employee promotion."

[5] Long and Ferrie, "Intergenerational Occupational."

[6] Lee and Solon, "Trends in Intergenerational Income Mobility."

[7] Grawe, "Intergenerational mobility for whom?"; Beller and Hout, "Intergenerational Social Mobility."

[8] Converse, *Survey research*; Ward, *Poverty, ethnicity*.

[9] Booth, *Life and Labour*; Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*; Kellogg, *Wage-earning Pittsburgh*.

[10] Aronovici, *The social survey*; Eaton and Harrison, *A bibliography of social surveys*.

[11] Gazeley and Newell, "The end of destitution."; Williams and Zimmerman, *Studies of Family Living*.

[12] Bulmer, *The Chicago school*; Park et al., *The city*. Sampson, *Great American City,* 34-35.

[13] Hunter, *Symbolic communities*; Smith and White, *Chicago, an experiment*; Venkatesh, "Chicago's Pragmatic Planners."

[14] Zorbaugh, *The gold coast*; O'Connor, *Poverty knowledge*, 81-83; Shaw and McKay, *Juvenile delinquency*.

[15] Sibley, "Invisible women?," 733-45.

[16] *Inter alia* Abbott, *Women in industry*; Abbott, *The Tenements of Chicago*; Breckinridge, *New homes for old*.

[17] Burgess and Cottrell, *Predicting Success or Failure*; Burgess, "Factors determining success."

[18] "Chicago Heiress, 'Friend of the Friendless,' Dies" *Chicago Tribune*, 3 January 1927, p.3.

[19] Houghteling, *The Income and Standards*: 20-22.

[20] Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Cost of Living*.

[21] Houghteling, *The Income and Standards*.

[22] Survey of Income and Cost of Living of Study, 1924-25. MS-1011. Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[23] May, "The 'Good Managers'" 351-72.

[24] Leila Houghteling, dissertation, p.165.

[25] I am indebted to my students in HIST234, HIST3869 and HIST1907W for these observations, and summarizing the notes on the Houghteling surveys.

[26] Mokyr, "Why more work?."

[27] Schedule A2.

[28] Schedule M20.

[29] Schedules A13 and J81.

[30] Neckerman, "Divided Households," 371-98.

[31] Grossman, *Land of hope*.

[32] Coale and Rives, “Statistical Reconstruction,” 21.

[33] King and Magnuson, “Perspectives,” 458. Hacker, “New Estimates,” 88.

[34] I have also saved images of the 1880, 1900, 1910 censuses, and World War I and World War II enlistment files for husbands. Going back before 1920 I “lose” many more European migrants to Europe, and many of the men are not yet married to their spouse.

[35] Douglas, *Real Wages*; Carter et al., *Historical Statistics*, Table Ba4323.

[36] Ihrke and Faber, "Geographical Mobility"

[37] Fischer, "Ever-More Rooted Americans," 188.

[38] Simmons, "Changing Residence," 622-51.

[39] Bigott, *From cottage to bungalow*.

[40] Houghteling, *The Income and Standards*: 110-13.

[41] Craig, *Fireside Politics*, 13; Bowden and Offer, "Household Appliances."

[42] Ronnander, "The Classification Of Work."

[43] Benson, *Household accounts.*

[79] Jacoby and Sharma, "Employment Duration and Industrial Labor Mobility in the United States 1880-1980."