

Worklife Mobility Typologies as Background to Current Class Position — a Research Note

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Abstract: Retrospective job history data from a large probability sample of males in Northern Ireland is used to construct four typologies of intragenerational occupational mobility. The four typologies are based upon: (1) a Class (worklife) perspective; (2) an Internal and External Labour markets perspective; (3) Economic Sectors; (4) Career Increments. Each typology has a distinct conceptual background which leads to a unique and non-overlapping operationalisation. Present position does reflect past worklife history. Varying worklife mobility histories of different class strata are found by comparing the present social class position of respondents with their intragenerational mobility histories across the four typologies. These unique worklife mobility backgrounds support the utility of intragenerational analyses for class analysis.

I INTRODUCTION

This paper will present four distinct perspectives on the conceptualisation of worklife mobility: the “class” perspective with its origins in mainstream social stratification theory; the “career” perspective which evaluates worklives as conscious, incremental progressions through jobs; the “labour market” perspective based upon theories of internal and external labour markets; the “sector” perspective which centres upon divisions into centre and peripheral economic activity. Separate modes of operationalising the four perspectives are presented with reference to retrospective job histories. The proportional variation across the worklife of each perspective is evaluated. Finally, the background of current class positions — the extent to which current class positions result from a mixed or unmixed worklife history across each of the perspectives — will be presented.¹

1. The reader should note that this paper is an evaluation of the extent to which worklife mobility histories, conceived in different manners, differ across present class strata rather than in the first instance an empirical analysis of worklife mobility in Northern Ireland. For such analyses, see Miller (1986), Hout (1989) or Halpin and Chan (1998).

The dominant perspective on social mobility, particularly within Europe, remains the class perspective. The prime indicator of social position is a social class, with "class" being operationalised by a coding of occupation. The criteria for the operationalisation of class may purport to be based in either a Marxian (e.g., Wright) or a Weberian (e.g., Goldthorpe and Erikson) view of stratification, though many commentators have noted the considerable practical overlap in these conceptually distinct viewpoints (e.g., Sørensen, 1991). While intergenerational mobility, comparing the position of the current generation with that of their parents, has been the most commonly used, the study of *intragenerational*, or worklife, mobility is attracting increasing interest. The first investigations of intragenerational mobility were based upon a rudimentary comparison of social position at the time of entry into the labour market, as indexed by "first job", with the current position, indicated by present/last job. Phenomena such as "counter mobility" (returning during the career to an advantaged origin position after an initial low starting point) were investigated (e.g., Goldthorpe, 1987; Miller, 1986). Since then, a number of other analytical approaches have been utilised. The most well-known of these have been: the use of class spells — counts of the number of changes in externally-defined class position across the worklife (e.g., Featherman and Selbee, 1988; Carroll and Mayer, 1986); the duration of time spent in a class (e.g., Gershuny, 1993); hazard or rate models — predictive models of the likelihood that a certain type of job move will occur within a given span of time (e.g., Tuma and Hannan, 1984); and sequencing models — establishing similar sequences of job moves by the number of changes required to make one sequence resemble another (e.g., Abbott and Hrycak, 1990; Halpin and Chan, 1998).

While they differ in many respects, all of these analytic approaches share a common conceptual lineage — each has been brought to bear upon the study of intragenerational or worklife mobility by "mainstream" mobility researchers. The problems upon which they have been brought to bear are problems defined by the concerns of social stratification research. A feature of the study of intragenerational mobility, however, is that there are other paradigms of worklife mobility that have developed independently of the sociological study of social mobility. While the mainstream of mobility research can be considered to have drawn its inspiration from social stratification theory and attempts to relate the significance of empirical research results directly back to that broad body of theory, there are other "worklife" perspectives the backgrounds of which are more indirectly linked with issues of social stratification and mobility. At least three other views of worklife mobility can be identified that have "conceptual pedigrees" distinct from that of mainstream social mobility research: a career perspective; a labour market

perspective; and an economic sector perspective. These other perspectives now will be presented.

II WORKLIFE MOBILITY TYPES

(1) *The Career Perspective*

Intragenerational job mobility often is equated with career mobility. A variety of qualitative studies of "career" attainment in specific occupational situations, however, have provided an alternative conceptual orientation for viewing worklives. The concept of a career has evolved which sees the career as a series of gradual job increments taking place within a broad occupational situs in which the increments are a regular series of rises in level of skill, authority, self-autonomy at work, and occupational standing. In this manner, one can identify career progressions, simple improvements in job histories, stable job histories which lack an upward progression, and unstable or worsening job histories. This view of worklife mobility may be termed the "*Career*" perspective.

(2) *The Labour Market Perspective*

A second viewpoint, the *Labour Market* perspective, also has been advanced by researchers of worklife mobility. The jobs of a worklife are seen as occurring within either a "primary" or "secondary" labour market. Enterprises may require two types of workers: "primary" employees possessing scarce skills valuable to the firm who have possibly developed these skills through in-firm training or experience; and "secondary" employees who provide a flexible source of basic labour power that can be brought in or discarded at will depending upon short-term demand. Firms are seen as utilising different labour management strategies in order to fill their demands for each type of worker. "Primary" employees are selected on the basis of prior qualifications or their anticipated aptitude. Since their value to the firm (and to competitors) increases with experience and training, "primary" employees will be kept with the firm by a combination of strategies including training in skills that will not transfer easily to other employers, high and incremental wages, pension plans, "benevolent" management policies including rights of tenure, the tolerance or even encouragement of unionisation etc. Note that the motives underlying the management policies of a "good" firm are those of self-interest rather than altruism.

In contrast, the secondary labour market presents a negative image of the above. "Secondary" employees do not become more valuable to their employer with a longer tenure of employment. In contrast to "primary" employees, their main virtue is that, rather than being trained or endowed with specialist

skills, they can be “picked up” or “dropped” as varying conditions of labour demand dictate. (Dale, 1987, p. 561.) “Enlightened” management policies are absent, not due to any desire to exploit workers, but rather because they would neutralise the prime advantages of secondary labour; the low cost of their wages and their utility as a reserve pool of workers that can be moved easily in or out of the firm as changing market conditions require.

The labour market perspective has been elaborated further by a subdivision into “internal” and “external” labour markets. Individual firms will not be made up solely of primary or secondary employees but may contain workers of both types — primary employees recruited selectively who enjoy the benefits described above and secondary employees excluded from these benefits who will not receive opportunities for in-firm training and incremental advancement. In effect, two labour pools within individual firms are hypothesised — an “internal labour market” of privileged, selected workers who have the opportunity of availing themselves of the full advantages of primary workers and the others, employees within the firm who enjoy little more benefit than the (temporary) occupancy of a job. The boundaries between working within the firm and being out of it are permeable for these secondary employees. While they may have long *duration* of employment with a firm, they have few advantages as a result of their employment. In particular, they do not have security of tenure; a secondary worker of long duration may not be in an appreciably better position than a new secondary recruit.

To round off the consideration of this labour market perspective, a conception of “occupational internal labour markets” (“OILMs”) parallel to that of “firm internal labour markets” (“FILMs”) can also be identified in which the OILM transcends any single firm and,

comprises a particular occupational group, usually a craft (or professional) occupation. Here entry is generally controlled by members of the occupational group and mobility occurs among employers within the occupational group. In these markets the worker gets his security not from the individual employer but from his skill, the competitive supply of which is controlled by the occupational group. (Kalleberg and Sørensen, 1979, p. 359; see also Dale, 1987, p. 561.)

(3) *The Sector Perspective*

The Career perspective is grounded in job mobility across worklives and the Labour Market perspective can be seen as based partially upon job mobility but with the added dimension of inter- and intra-firm mobility. A third perspective, which can be labelled the “Sector” perspective, “extra-

occupational" and located at the level of firms and industries, can also be distinguished. Firms, and the industrial sectors in which they are located, can be categorised into "core" and "periphery" types. (Beck, Horan and Tolbert, 1978, p. 706.) Core firms and industries make up a more advantaged sector of the economy. Enterprises in the core tend to be large and "capital intensive" (that is, investment in physical plant is high), have secure, high profit margins, possess highly skilled unionised workforces and have clear, rational/bureaucratic styles of management. In contrast, enterprises in the peripheral sector tend to be smaller, profits are uncertain and fluctuations in demand and the failure of firms and crises in the industry are common. The workforce is less skilled and non-unionised and management is not what one would call "professional".²

The core economy includes those industries that comprise the muscle of ... economic and political power. ... The firms in the core economy are noted for high productivity, high profits, intensive utilisation of capital, high incidence of monopoly elements, and a high degree of unionisation. ...

Beyond the fringes of the core economy lies a set of industries that lack almost all of the advantages normally found in center firms. Concentrated in agriculture, nondurable manufacturing, retail trade, and sub-professional services, the peripheral industries are noted for their small firm size, labor intensity, product market competition, lack of unionization, and low wages. Unlike core sector industries, the periphery lacks the assets, size, and political power to take advantage of economies of scale or to spend large sums on research and development." (Bluestone *et al.*, 1973, pp. 28-29, cited in Beck, Horan and Tolbert, 1978, pp. 706-7.)

In an elaboration of this sectorial perspective, some authors (e.g., Hodson, 1978) separate out a third "public" category of state-owned firms and industries; seeing those enterprises in public ownership as being less directly driven by the need to secure profits and more insulated from the rigours of economic competition. While the above Labour Market and Career perspectives can be seen to relate directly to job mobility, the Sector perspective differs in that it defines a context within which different patterns of intragenerational mobility may take place.

2 Some authors label the core sector as "primary" and the peripheral sector as "secondary". Only the labels Core/Peripheral will be used here to avoid confusion with primary and secondary labour markets and also with the categorisation of industries into "primary" (extractive), "secondary" (manufacturing) and "tertiary" (services) industries.

(4) *The Class (Worklife) Perspective*

Many authors have noted that mobility between social classes can, of course, take place during worklives as well as between generations. This gives rise to a fourth perspective, that of *Class (worklife)*. Classes, if they are more than just aggregates of occupational codes, are made up of endogamous networks of social connections with distinct viewpoints, mores and interests. The dynamic of class formation takes place primarily within intragenerational worklife mobility (Esping-Andersen, 1993, pp. 16-17; Mayer and Carroll, 1987, pp. 14-15). Mobility between classes or strata must overcome barriers other than just the instrumental closure of scarce or valued social resources. Knowledge of mobility opportunities, the need to resocialise oneself in order to attempt mobility and the necessity both to break free from existing social networks and to form new networks may all constitute profound barriers to class mobility within a single lifetime. (Richardson, 1977.) If the class perspective is correct, mobility should be distinctly patterned and the worklife class composition of those located at the extremes of higher and lower strata should be more distinct than that of those in intermediate positions.

So, at least four distinct perspectives located in worklife mobility can be isolated — each with a distinct conceptual framework. One should note that on the ground there has been considerable overlap in their use. For example,

On a Weberian view of social class, the employees of a firm with an internal labor market may be said to compose a single class to the extent that their mobility experiences are homogeneous. ... Indeed, a reasonable interpretation of the literature on internal labor markets is that it sees employees working within such a firm as having qualitatively different career chances to others — they are, so to speak, a class apart (Mayer and Carroll, 1987, p. 18.)

“Classes are sets of structure positions. Social relationships within markets, especially within labor markets, and within firms define these positions.” (Sørensen, 1991, p. 72.) Writers concentrating on internal labour markets will rely to a great extent upon the idea of careers as a means of describing the worklife experiences of workers who are in internal labour markets (e.g., Kalleberg and Sørensen, 1979, pp. 359-360). The characteristics of typical workers in the core and peripheral sectors resemble those of primary and secondary employees respectively. In work, the difference between “stable/declining” job histories and “improving careers” resembles the distinction between peripheral and core sectors. Similarly, one could anticipate strong empirical associations between the social class level of a worklife and whether or not it was a “career” or the types of labour market in which the

worklife was concentrated. Nevertheless, while there may be considerable conceptual overlap, these perspectives do have different conceptual "lineages". Furthermore, conceptual arguments do not always lead one to clear conclusions as to what exact correspondences to expect. While an overlap between "true" career job changes and movements in an internal labour market could be expected, the anticipated form of other correspondences are not so clear (e.g., Esping-Andersen, 1993, p. 15). The current state of theorising in the related areas of "careers", "labour markets", "sectors" and the "social classes" of worklives has not gone as far as explicitly setting out in a systematic manner the potential interrelationships between these typologies; nor have the proportionate size of the possible interrelations been established. (Kalleberg and Sørensen, 1979.) The extent and nature of the actual correspondences between current social class and the other typologies is thus a matter for empirical verification. (Carroll and Mayer, 1986; Hachen, 1990.)

III OPERATIONALISATION OF THE "CAREER", "LABOUR MARKET", "SECTOR" AND "CLASS" (WORKLIFE) PERSPECTIVES

By their nature, the conceptualisations of careers and labour markets (particularly if internal labour markets are the focus) require worklife data of a continuous nature. The division of economic activity into "core", "peripheral" and "public" sectors needs at the minimum a detailed classification of industry and ideally would utilise firm-by-firm information of a high standard.

The retrospective job histories of the Irish mobility study provide detailed, continuous information on the work experiences of representative samples of Irish males aged between 18 and 65 that will allow operationalisation of the concepts of "career" and "labour market" mobility. The "Irish Mobility Study"³ collected information on many aspects of the respondents' lives and of their families that were relevant to the topic of social mobility, broadly conceived. While based upon a cross-sectional survey, the Irish mobility data takes a longitudinal form. The core of the interview schedule was a set of retrospective "life history" sections covering each respondent's migration, educational experience, work, and marriage and fertility. Any changes in the life history sections of the interview schedule were indexed by the year, month and age of the respondent at the time they occurred. This allows the data to be constituted in the form of a "grid" in which the status of any or all

3. Social Science Research Council (now Economic and Social Research Council) Grant HR1430/1. Comprehensive descriptions of the design and fieldwork of the study can be found in Jackson (1979) and Wiggins (1988).

respondents can be established by age, calendar month and year, or any other time-indexed point, such as "X years after starting first full-time job".

The coding of job data included the detailed classification of industry used by the British Census which, along with a special coding distinguishing between "public" and "private" sector jobs, allowed amalgamations into the labour market types and economic sectors used below. Also, coding into the British Census Employment Status and detailed Classification of Occupations allowed exact recoding into the Hope-Goldthorpe (CASMIN) class schema adapted below. The data used below are from the Northern Irish half of the Irish mobility study.

While these operationalisations are not perfect, being akin to a secondary analysis,⁴ they are at least as rigorous (and in many respects *more* rigorous) than many previous attempts to apply empirically the ideas of career, labour market and industrial sector. For instance, the operationalisations are based upon actual job changes rather than a cross tabulation matrix of positions held at one point in time compared with positions held at another time in which, for some, there has been no change between the two times. If the codings at two points in time are the same, it is because the two different positions being compared genuinely do have the same coding rather than being an artefact of the same position recorded twice.

Furthermore, the empirically distinct operationalisations of the concepts can be carried out so as to mirror their conceptually distinct origins. For example, the criteria for establishing that a particular job move is a "career increment" can be different from the criteria for establishing whether or not the same job move was one that occurred in a "primary internal" labour market — which criteria in turn can be defined differently from those for establishing whether the job moved into is located within the "core", "periphery" or "public" sectors.

(1) *The Career Perspective*

Utilising the Career Perspective as discussed above, job moves were categorised into four types of "career" moves:

(a) *"True" Career Moves* — Using the conceptualisation of career given in the discussion (and working within the limitations of the coding schemes used on the Irish mobility study while exploiting the potential of the complete sequential retrospective job histories), a job change that had at least one of the following characteristics was considered a *"true" career move*:

4. The fieldwork and coding of the Irish mobility study took place in the early 1970s when these perspectives were much less central concerns of or, in the case of labour market theory, largely absent from sociological thought.

- in manual work, a move from semi- or unskilled work to skilled work;
- in manual work, a move from a “worker” category to a foreman/supervisor category;⁵
- a move from “routine” non-manual work to the supervision of non-manual employees;
- a move from an apprenticeship to skilled manual work;
- a move from managing or employing less than 25 employees to employing 25 or more employees;
- a move from managing less than 25 employees to managing 25 or more employees;
- a move to a job in which a larger number of other workers are supervised than previously;
- any move in which the main reason for the job change was given as “promotion”;
- in agriculture, a move from agricultural labourer to farmer or farm manager.

Movement across a blue collar/white collar boundary was not in itself considered a career move.

(b) *“Improvements”* — (Again based upon the above conceptual discussion.) A job change with any of the following characteristics but none of the characteristics of a career move were considered to be an *“improvement”*:

- any move to a “higher” Hall-Jones occupational level except for a move from “Skilled manual” to “Routine nonmanual”;
- any move to a job more than eight units higher than the previous job on the 100-unit scale of “occupational standing” used by the Irish mobility study (the Irish Occupational Index);
- a move from unemployment or part-time work to full-time work;
- a move from unemployment to part-time work;
- any moves from the category “employee” to the categories of “employer”, “manager” or “self-employed” not already coded as “true” career moves;
- any job change that resulted in an increase in annual income of more than £200.

5. One should note that some have defined “proper” career moves in ways that exclude blue-collar job mobility *solely* because the jobs concerned involve manual work; thereby ruling out the possibility that manual workers could have careers in an analogous manner to their middle class counterparts. This paper does not subscribe to this view.

(c) *"Drops"* — Job changes with any of the following characteristics were considered "drops":

- any move to a "lower" Hall-Jones occupational level except for a move from "Routine non-manual" to "Skilled manual";
- any move to a job more than eight units lower than the previous job in its standing on the Irish Occupational Index;
- a move from full-time work to unemployment or part-time work;
- a move from part-time work to unemployment;
- in manual work, a move from skilled work to semi- or unskilled work;
- in manual work, a move from foreman/supervisor to a "worker" category;
- in non-manual work, a move from supervising non-manual employees to routine non-manual work;
- a move from employing 25 or more employees to employing or managing less than 25 employees;
- a move from managing 25 or more employees to managing less than 25 employees;
- any move from an employer or manager status to non-manual supervisor or any manual category;
- a shift from farmer or farm manager to agricultural labourer;
- any job change that resulted in a drop in annual income of more than £150;
- any job change resulting from redundancy or being fired.

In instances in which some criteria indicated a "drop" while others indicated an "improvement", the job change was considered to be a "drop". In the less likely instances in which some criteria suggested a "true" career move while others suggested a "drop", the "career" criteria took precedence.

(d) *"Stable"* — It was possible that a job change could have occurred for which none of the above criteria apply. In these cases, the change was recorded as "stable" move.

Altogether, the net result of applying these criteria to the respondents' job histories results in each job change being placed in a "Career" typology made up of four categories: (a) "True" career moves; (b) "Improvements"; (c) "Stable" job changes; and (d) "Drops".

(2) *The Labour Market Perspective*

In a similar manner, though applying a simpler set of criteria, the job changes can be put into a "Labour Market" typology also made up of four categories. If a job and its preceding one had the same detailed British

Census Standard Industrial Classification code, the job change was considered to be "internal".⁶ Similarly, a job change in which the prior and present jobs both had the same detailed occupational coding (the 223 "unit groups" of the OPCS *Classification of Occupations, 1970*) was typed as a "primary" change. By cross-referencing the two criteria, one arrives at four "labour market" categories of job change:

- (a) "Primary/Internal" — the move is into a job of the same detailed occupational and industrial codings;
- (b) "Secondary/Internal" — the move is into a job with a different occupational coding but the same industrial coding;⁷
- (c) "Primary/External" — the move is into a job with the same occupational coding but a different industrial coding;⁸
- (d) "Secondary/External" — the move is into a job with different occupational and industrial codings.⁹

(3) *The Sector Perspective*

The detailed industrial classification codes in combination with a separate coding of jobs into private or public sector jobs also allowed the development of an "Economic Sector" typology. Following Beck, Horan and Tolbert's (1978) discussion of "dual economy" typologies, jobs were categorised by their location into: (a) "Core"; (b) "Peripheral" or; (c) "Public" sectors.¹⁰

6. Ideally, job changes would only be coded as "internal" if the move had taken place as part of a "career chain" (Spenner, Otto and Call, 1982) or "job ladder"; and, in the case of FILM moves, within a single firm. The Irish data, unfortunately, were not coded by firm. The use of "same industry" as a proxy for "same firm" has been used elsewhere (e.g., Beck, Horan and Tolbert, 1978) with the rationale that the firms located under the same detailed industrial code will tend to be similar in their scale and organisation. Also, "same industry" will mean "same firm" at least part of the time. One should note that since the industry coding procedures used in the Irish mobility study were based on firm or enterprise, taking industry as a proxy for firm does mean that all those job changes considered as "external" will be accurately labelled "external" by firm as well as by industry. Furthermore, most of the respondents have spent all or most of their working lives in Northern Ireland. The small size of the province and the relatively small number of firms in it increases the probability that the same detailed coding of industry for two adjacent jobs does in fact reflect "same firm". Nevertheless, one must recognise that this is a "loose" operationalisation of the concept of internal labour market move.

7. (1) and (2) together make up FILM moves. (Althausen, 1989.)

8. (3) can also be called OILM moves.

9. While the labels applied to the four categories are different, this procedure follows very closely the "Labour Market Typology" utilised by Dale (1987).

10. The census coding of industrial divisions used to develop the categories of core, periphery and public does not include information on size of firm, productivity, unionisation etc, so, as with the internal/external distinction in the labour market typology, the operationalisation of "economic sector" is not perfect. The categorisation into sectors is shown in the Appendix.

(4) *The Class (Worklife) Perspective*

A "Class (worklife)" typology was developed in a like manner. Using occupational categories developed by Goldthorpe and Hope as part of the Nuffield College study of social mobility in England and Wales (Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974), all jobs held during the respondents' worklives were typed as: (a) "*Upper Middle Class*" (upper and lower service classes); (b) "*Lower Middle Class*" (the intermediate groups of other non-manual workers, proprietors and farmers) or; (c) "*Working Class*" (skilled, semi- and unskilled manual workers, including agricultural labourers) in order to yield a "Class (worklife)" typology.¹¹ Note that this "class schema" should be seen as an explicitly Weberian set of occupational categories.

IV THE RESULTS — ASSESSMENT OF WORKLIFE TYPOLOGIES

Some problems with this approach come from duration and sequence. With regard to duration, in the "economic sector" and "class" typologies, duration in a sector is the most meaningful way of applying the concept. Therefore, in the analyses below, "economic sector" and "class" (worklife) figures will be based on the proportionate duration of time spent in a given sector or social class, respectively.

In the case of the "career" and "labour market" typologies, however, the proportionate figures are based upon job *moves* rather than time in jobs. Therefore, a quick series of jobs held over a short time can potentially exert as much or more influence over the typing of a person's worklife as the rest of his time in work. While the typologies being used take account of sequence by comparing each current job with the immediately preceding job, the sequence of types of job changes across the *whole* worklife are not known. So, for example, an individual whose early jobs were a series of career progressions that then ended with several "drops" would end up being labelled, despite his failures at the end, as one whose worklife had been mainly a "true career".

The system of proportions used in the analyses below is defensible with regard to this problem. First, while duration is a problem for the "career" and "labour market" typologies, a solution emphasising duration would in fact have posed more problems for interpretation and analysis than the procedure that has been adopted. After categorising a job change as to type of move, one could then have computed the duration of time until the next job change and

11. Since the Northern Irish job data was coded using the British Census Occupational Classifications, the construction of the class schema could mirror that laid out in Goldthorpe and Hope (1974) exactly. Readers may note that this system of categorisation subsequently was adapted to form the basis of the CASMIN (Comparative Analysis of Occupational Mobility in Industrial Nations) occupational strata.

at the end arrived at a set of proportions based upon summed amounts of duration rather than simple job changes. In the cases of "careers" and "labour markets", however, the meaning of the concepts resides in the comparison between two jobs rather than time spent in a job; e.g., one is in an internal labour market by virtue of a series of moves within the labour market, not by retaining the same position in a firm for decades. Hence, replacing the system based on sequence with one based on duration would only introduce artefactual effects.

A second problem, the relative reliability of typing worklives by an aggregate of all job changes across a career in preference to attaching prime importance to the most recent job changes, can be seen more as a caution for interpreting results than as a problem requiring a solution. Taking the hypothetical worklife pattern of an individual who spends most of his¹² working life in a progression of incremental career moves followed by a "drop" at the end, one can argue that the most salient fact of the worklife is not the fall in recent years as the individual's career perhaps "peaked" and then began to decline but rather that the individual in fact had had a career.

Given the limitations of cross-sectional data collection in which information is usually obtained only for people's present occupations, most typologies of social position necessarily must concentrate solely upon the present situation. This leaves moot the question of the routes by which people came to occupy their present position. The operationalisation of a set of worklife typologies based upon proportion of moves or a proportionate duration could prove problematic if the latter part of a job history in fact was not representative of the worklife as a whole — particularly the case for the "Career" and "Labour market" typologies in which the proportions are based upon moves rather than total duration.

As a means of obtaining indications of the degree of reliability of the proportionate methodology, the categorisation of the last occupation or move is compared with the proportion of the respondent's whole worklife that falls into the same category for each of the four worklife typologies (Tables 1 to 4 below). While the last job or move does contribute to the overall proportion and consequently any correspondence must be partly artefactual, a high degree of correspondence nevertheless would indicate that relying upon

12. The reader may have noticed that the hypothetical examples being used refer to males. This is strictly accurate since the retrospective job histories upon which the analyses are based were collected only from men. It is worth remarking at this juncture that the techniques applied here to men could be even more appropriate for women (with some modifications for a more careful definition of part-time work and distinctions resulting from society applying the housewife role to women only). However questionable the human capital assumptions of regular full-time involvement in work on a basis of competition in a free and open labour market are for men, their questioning is doubly relevant for women.

proportions to determine worklife typologies is not introducing completely mis-specified applications. And, as argued above, there are advantages to relying upon a system of proportions as a more reliable means of typing worklives as a whole.

Table 1: *Proportions of Worklives in each Economic Sector by Sector of Present / Last Occupation*

<i>Present / Last Occupation is:</i>	<i>Proportion of Worklife in:</i>		
	<i>Core</i>	<i>Periphery</i>	<i>Public</i>
Core	0.65	0.26	0.04
Periphery	0.05	0.90	0.03
Public	0.08	0.32	0.53
Overall mean	0.18	0.66	0.09
Coefficient of variation	1.72	0.59	2.48
<i>Ratio of Mid to Lowest and Highest:</i>			
of Means	1.00	3.67	0.50
of coefficient of variation	1.00	0.34	1.42

- Notes:* (a) Differences between present economic sectors are significant over all three worklife typologies at 0.001 level.
 (b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.
 (c) Instances in the worklife where the respondent did not occupy a job could not be classified into an economic sector. Hence, the proportions in the rows will not sum to 1.00.

The results indicate that misgivings about mis-specification coming from "sequencing effects" are unfounded. In all four typologies the correspondence between the typing of the last occupation or move and the proportionate typing of the whole worklife is high. The "mismatches" (the term itself is a misnomer since exact correspondence would not be expected) broadly follow the relative frequencies of the occurrence of categories across all worklives. For instance, for those who are presently in jobs located in the core sector, 65 per cent of their worklives have been spent in the core sector and only a minuscule 4 per cent of worklives have been spent in the small public sector. Similarly, the coefficients of variation of the proportions, which are indicators of the relative homogeneity of the worklife categories, correspond in an inverse manner to the mean size of their distribution across all worklives. In Table 1, the smallest coefficient of variation is 0.59 for the largest sector, the periphery and the largest coefficient of variation is 2.48 for the smallest public sector. Moreover, while the more common categories exhibit less

Table 2: *Proportions of Career Types of Job Moves by Move into Present Work Position*

<i>Last Move was:</i>	<i>Proportion of Job Moves that were:</i>			
	<i>"True" Career</i>	<i>Improvement</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>"Drop"</i>
<i>"True" career</i>	0.63	0.13	0.05	0.19
<i>Improvement</i>	0.23	0.43	0.07	0.28
<i>Stable</i>	0.20	0.18	0.29	0.33
<i>'Drop'</i>	0.21	0.21	0.06	0.51
<i>Overall</i>	0.31	0.27	0.10	0.32
<i>Coefficient of variation</i>	0.90	0.82	1.51	0.74
<i>Ratio of Mid to Lowest and Highest:</i>				
<i>of means</i>	1.07	0.93	0.35	1.10
<i>of coefficient of variation</i>	1.05	1.01	1.76	0.86

Notes: (a) Differences between last move career types are significant over all four worklife typologies at 0.001 level.

(b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.

 Table 3: *Proportions of Labour Market Types of Job Moves by Move into Present Work Position*

<i>Last Move was:</i>	<i>Proportion of Job Moves that were:</i>			
	<i>Internal / Primary</i>	<i>Internal / Secondary</i>	<i>External / Primary</i>	<i>External / Secondary</i>
<i>Internal/Primary</i>	0.89	0.01	0.03	0.07
<i>Internal/Secondary</i>	0.08	0.82	0.01	0.09
<i>External/Primary</i>	0.13	0.02	0.70	0.15
<i>External/Secondary</i>	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.88
<i>Overall</i>	0.13	0.16	0.06	0.64
<i>Coefficient of variation</i>	2.02	2.01	3.12	0.62
<i>Ratio of Mid to Lowest and Highest:</i>				
<i>of Means</i>	0.90	1.10	0.41	4.41
<i>of coefficient of variation</i>	1.00	1.00	1.55	0.31

Notes: (a) Differences between last move labour market types are significant over all four worklife typologies at 0.001 level.

(b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.

variation, the range of variation is not as great as the range in mean occurrence. For instance, again in Table 1, the ratio of mean proportions in the three economic sectors ranges from 0.50 to 3.67 while the range of ratios of the corresponding coefficients of variation is only 0.34 to 1.42. That is, once one allows for the size of proportions, the less frequently occurring categories are more homogeneous than would be expected if movement in or out of them was due only to their smaller relative size.

V DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORKLIFE TYPOLOGIES ACROSS "PRESENT CLASS"

Turning to the worklife backgrounds of present class strata, the presentation of empirical results continues in the worklife perspective by displaying the distributions of the non-class worklife typologies across "present class" positions. As an aid to interpretation, the "upper" and "lower service" strata in the class schema are sub-divided into those with and without tertiary educational qualifications and the "skilled manual" strata is sub-divided into those who possess or do not possess apprenticeships or higher level vocational qualifications.

Table 4, "Proportions of Worklives in each Social Class by Class of Present/Last Occupation", displays a more complex pattern of results that are of substantive importance. As in the other tables, the association between the typing of the last job and the whole worklife is strong. The four manual categories of present occupation display worklife histories in which, on average, over 80 per cent of the worklives have been spent in "working class" jobs. Skilled manual workers who possess qualifications have spent the greatest proportion of their lives of all those in "working class" jobs; presumably reflecting the better manual jobs that can be gained with an apprenticeship or tertiary/vocational qualification.

In the "intermediate" categories of higher and lower non-manual workers and proprietors with and without employees, only the higher non-manual employees have had worklives in which over half of the career has been in "lower middle class" work. These categories do seem to be genuinely intermediate between white-collar and blue-collar work. While the modal category for lower non-manual employees and proprietors with employees is also "lower middle class" work, substantial proportions of their worklives have also been in the "working class". Current proprietors without employees have spent on average more of their worklives in "working class" jobs than in "lower middle class" jobs. Apparently there is truth to the stereotype of the working class employee who desires to become their own boss someday in a small independent business. Farmers, as a reflection of the usual pattern of

agricultural labour prior to becoming a farmer in their own right (often as a "family worker" awaiting inheritance), have spent more time in the "working class" category that includes agricultural workers than in the "lower middle class" category that includes farmers.

Table 4: *Proportions of Worklives in each Social Class by Class of Present / Last Occupation*

<i>Present / Last Occupation is:</i>	<i>Proportion of Worklife in:</i>		
	<i>Upper MC</i>	<i>Lower MC</i>	<i>Working</i>
Upper service with university/ professional qualification	0.83	0.12	0.01
Upper service, no tertiary qualification	0.26	0.46	0.15
Lower service with tertiary qualification	0.34	0.51	0.10
Lower service, no tertiary qualification	0.04	0.63	0.25
Higher non-manual	0.03	0.74	0.18
Lower non-manual	0.00	0.45	0.43
Proprietor with employees	0.12	0.47	0.35
Proprietor, no employees	0.04	0.27	0.65
Farmers	0.08	0.42	0.47
Skilled manual, qualified	0.01	0.10	0.87
Skilled manual, not qualified	0.00	0.12	0.81
Semi- and unskilled agricultural worker	0.01	0.08	0.83
	0.01	0.05	0.85
Overall	0.07	0.25	0.58
Coefficient of variation	3.20	1.36	0.67
	<i>Ratio of Mid to Lowest and Highest:</i>		
of Means	0.28	1.00	2.32
of coefficient of variation	2.35	1.00	0.49

Notes: (a) Differences between present social class level are significant over all three worklife typologies at 0.001 level.

(b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.

(c) Instances in the worklife where the respondent did not occupy a job could not be classified into class. Hence, the proportions in the rows will not sum to 1.00.

The importance of higher educational qualifications for early entry into the service class is clear. Those presently in upper service class occupations who also possess a university or professional qualification have spent on average over 80 per cent of their worklives in "upper middle class" jobs and virtually

none of their time in "working class" jobs. In marked contrast, those presently "upper service" without higher qualifications have spent on average only a quarter of their worklives at the "upper middle class" level and a significant portion of time in "working class" jobs. A similar pattern, though somewhat attenuated, also holds for those presently in the lower service strata. It is noteworthy that those in lower service occupations who do possess higher educational qualifications have spent proportionately more of their time in upper middle class jobs and less time in working class jobs than the part of the "upper service" group who lack higher qualifications.

To close, the backgrounds of the detailed social class categories in the other three worklife typologies will be displayed. Table 5 displays the proportions of worklives spent in the three economic sectors by the detailed categorisation of present social class. The importance of educational qualification for the participation of those presently in the "service" group remains apparent. Over half of the worklives on average has been spent in the core sector of those now in "upper" or "lower service" occupations who also have tertiary qualifications. In contrast, only a quarter of the worklives of upper and lower service class members who lack higher qualifications has been in the core economic sector. This figure is no higher than that for those currently in higher non-manual work. In its turn, the higher non-manual group has spent a longer average worklife time in the core sector than its lower non-manual counterpart. Partially as an artefact of the operationalisation of the peripheral category, farmers and both categories of proprietors have spent the vast majority of their worklives in the peripheral sector. (For farmers, this result is also an accurate depiction of the worklife pattern of agricultural labour to farmer. (Miller, 1986)) While the modal economic sector for all four "manual work" categories is the peripheral sector, the salience of location in the core sector for present employment in skilled manual work can be seen. When both skilled *and* qualified, manual workers show a higher average worklife duration in the core sector and a lower duration in the peripheral sector than either of the non-manual categories.

Turning to the consideration of present social class and the worklife career typology in Table 6 the modal proportion for all four service categories is "true" career moves. The two service groups without tertiary qualifications show on average a higher proportion of "true" career moves. Rather than indicating that high educational qualification mediates against "better" careers, however, a more plausible explanation is that more of those with tertiary qualifications enter directly into higher positions at the beginning of work and henceforth encounter a "ceiling". (The higher average proportions of "improvements" for the upper and lower service strata with qualifications and of "stable" job moves for those in the "upper service with university/

Table 5: *Proportions of Worklives in each Economic Sector by Class of Present / Last Occupation*

<i>Present / Last Occupation is:</i>	<i>Proportion of Worklife in:</i>		
	<i>Core</i>	<i>Periphery</i>	<i>Public</i>
Upper service with university/ professional qualification	0.59	0.13	0.18
Upper service, no tertiary qualification	0.26	0.42	0.14
Lower service with tertiary qualification	0.55	0.17	0.23
Lower service, no tertiary qualification	0.25	0.46	0.20
Higher non-manual	0.27	0.57	0.10
Lower non-manual	0.11	0.68	0.14
Proprietor with employees	0.06	0.90	0.03
Proprietor, no employees	0.03	0.92	0.04
Farmers	0.00	0.99	0.01
Skilled manual, qualified	0.31	0.53	0.08
Skilled manual, not qualified	0.22	0.63	0.07
Semi- and unskilled agricultural worker	0.14 0.03	0.72 0.83	0.09 0.09
Overall	0.18	0.66	0.09

Notes: (a) Differences between present social class level are significant over all three worklife typologies at 0.001 level.

(b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.

professional qualifications" stratum tends to confirm this.) Those presently in the service strata who got there without the benefit of high educational qualification are more likely to have arrived by the more indirect incremental route of a number of "true" career moves. Presumably these results reflect the importance of educational qualification for direct entry into the relatively privileged "service classes" that has been noted elsewhere in more rudimentary intragenerational analyses for Northern Ireland (Miller, 1986), the Republic of Ireland (Hout, 1989) and for England and Wales. (Goldthorpe, 1987.) When Gershuny carried out an analysis of historical trends in intragenerational mobility in England that utilised detailed retrospective job histories, he also found strong evidence for the increasing salience for direct entry via educational routes into upper middle class positions. (Gershuny, 1993.)¹³

13. While the Gershuny analysis utilises information from retrospective job histories in an innovative manner that makes use of highly detailed information, differences in approach and the systems of categorisation preclude the direct comparison of empirical results.

It is noteworthy that, in comparison to those in non-manual categories, those presently in the higher and lower non-manual categories do not display markedly better profiles across the four types of career worklife experience. The importance of the possession of skills and qualifications for what may be seen as "manual careers" (see Ashton 1973, cited in Brown, 1982, p. 125) appears in the contrasts in the proportions of "true" career moves and "drops" between the skilled and unskilled manual strata that work to the advantage of skilled workers (skilled manuals show higher proportions of "true" career moves and fewer "drops" than semi- and unskilled and agricultural workers). Finally, the large proportion of "true" career moves for farmers can be attributed to the above-noted pattern of movement from the category of "agricultural worker" to that of "farmer".

Table 7 displays the proportionate labour market experience of the detailed class categories. The large proportions of the worklives of the upper

Table 6: *Proportions of Moves in each Career Type by Class of Present/Last Occupation*

<i>Present/Last Occupation is:</i>	<i>Proportion of Moves in:</i>			
	<i>"True" Career</i>	<i>Improvement</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Drop</i>
Upper service with university/ professional qualification	0.46	0.25	0.14	0.15
Upper service, no tertiary qualification	0.57	0.17	0.06	0.20
Lower service with tertiary qualification	0.45	0.29	0.06	0.21
Lower service, no tertiary qualification	0.51	0.20	0.08	0.21
Higher non-manual	0.27	0.36	0.07	0.30
Lower non-manual	0.27	0.22	0.12	0.39
Proprietor with employees	0.39	0.26	0.13	0.23
Proprietor, no employees	0.17	0.37	0.10	0.36
Farmers	0.49	0.20	0.13	0.17
Skilled manual, qualified	0.35	0.25	0.10	0.30
Skilled manual, not qualified	0.25	0.29	0.10	0.35
Semi- and unskilled agricultural worker	0.16 0.13	0.30 0.27	0.10 0.10	0.43 0.50
Overall	0.31	0.27	0.10	0.32

Notes: (a) Differences between present social class level are significant in the three categories of "True" career", Improvement and "Drop" at the 0.001 level; in the "Stable" category at the 0.01 level.

(b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.

and lower service strata with higher qualifications that have been moves within a "primary/internal" labour market again indicates that many of these individuals entered directly into a higher level occupation in which they have then remained.¹⁴ Furthermore, the higher proportions of "secondary/internal" labour market moves of those in the service strata who do not possess higher educational qualifications are congruent with a worklife career in which indirect entry to the service strata has been gained through working one's way up an internal career ladder of a number of jobs within a

Table 7: *Proportions of Moves in each Labour Market Type by Class of Present / Last Occupation*

<i>Present / Last Occupation is:</i>	<i>Proportion of Moves in:</i>			
	<i>Primary / Internal</i>	<i>Secondary / Internal</i>	<i>Primary / External</i>	<i>Secondary / External</i>
Upper service with university/professional qualification	0.45	0.05	0.12	0.38
Upper service, no tertiary qualification	0.16	0.16	0.09	0.60
Lower service with tertiary qualification	0.42	0.09	0.05	0.44
Lower service, no tertiary qualification	0.14	0.17	0.05	0.64
Higher non-manual	0.11	0.07	0.12	0.70
Lower non-manual	0.11	0.10	0.05	0.74
Proprietor with employees	0.15	0.23	0.06	0.56
Proprietor, no employees	0.16	0.14	0.06	0.64
Farmers	0.06	0.78	0.01	0.15
Skilled manual, qualified	0.17	0.08	0.14	0.61
Skilled manual, not qualified	0.12	0.05	0.05	0.78
Semi- and unskilled agricultural worker	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.83
Overall	0.27	0.12	0.04	0.57
Overall	0.13	0.16	0.06	0.64

Notes: (a) Differences between present social class level are significant in the Primary/Internal, Primary/External and Secondary/External categories at the 0.001 level; in the Secondary/External category at the 0.01 level.

(b) Analysis limited to respondents aged over 27 who have held more than one job position.

14. Particularly when one notes that the analysis is restricted to individuals who have had at least two jobs in their working lives. Some "direct entrants" remain in their first job for a very extended period of time and thereby do not appear in these analyses. This is presumably because they find these upper service positions so congenial, and secure.

single firm or industry. The higher than average proportions of farmers and proprietors with employees in the same category of "secondary/internal" moves can be taken as specific instances of a general pattern of moving from being employed to becoming an owner within a single industrial category. The relatively exposed positions of the semi- and unskilled and the skilled manuals who lack qualifications can be seen when one notes that these two categories have the largest proportions of all whose job moves have been exposed to the rigours of a "secondary/external" labour market.

VI CONCLUSION

Looking across all four of the typologies, the present/last move or position is a good indicator of the overall worklife, but only in the restricted sense that the modal state across the whole worklife tends to be mirrored by the current state. There are exceptions to this rule — particularly for proprietors where the majority of the worklife would have been spent in the broad "working class" strata. Whether one is looking across the economic sector, careers, labour market or class typologies, there is variation in the background of each current state. The typology where the current state corresponds most closely to the whole worklife is that for labour markets, where typically over 80 per cent of job moves across the lifetime were in the same category as the last move. The career typology shows the most variation overall.

Looking at current class positions, one finds considerable difference in their backgrounds across the four typologies. Amongst the higher non-manual service strata, the possession of educational qualifications is a significant discriminator. The only service category that can claim to be truly "upper" across the whole of the worklife is the "upper service with university or professional qualification" group, where, overall, 83 per cent of the worklives have been spent in the upper middle class. The possession of higher educational qualifications for the service class categories raises the time they have spent in the core economic sector and primary/internal labour markets. Those in service groups that do not possess higher educational qualifications were the most likely to have used incremental career routes to reach their current positions.

The manual worker categories are firmly working class in that most of their worklives have been spent in the working class. There is evidence for genuine working class careers. Higher proportions of skilled manual workers with qualifications (compared to skilled manuals without qualifications, the semi- and unskilled or agricultural workers) have spent time in the core economic sector with more "true career" job moves. Proprietorship, whether urban or farm-based, shows its own special patterns of initial working class

experience ending in a lower middle class current position. By definition, moves in proprietorship, especially from agricultural worker to farmer, are almost always career moves. Current proprietors' worklives have been located almost exclusively within the peripheral sector. Finally, among the non-manual categories, the higher non-manual strata show patterns that are firmly located in the non-manual stratum throughout their worklives. In contrast, the patterns for the lower non-manual stratum resemble more that of the manual categories, raising the prospect of a "white collar proletariat".

The ability of worklife analyses to isolate mechanisms that point to the distinct life experiences of different class strata has been hypothesised as one of the main advantages of intragenerational over intergenerational analyses of social mobility (e.g., Esping-Andersen, 1993; Mayer and Carroll, 1987). The above results, which find varying patterns of class background across four distinct perspectives on worklife mobility, demonstrate just such phenomena of unique experiences across class strata.¹⁵

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15. One caution attached to these results must be the extent to which the Northern Irish data can be considered representative of contemporary intragenerational occupational mobility data. Since the operationalisations employed here are unique and detailed intragenerational job histories datasets are rare, the question at present must remain moot. On the one hand, the broad parameters of intragenerational mobility observed in the Northern Irish data do seem to resemble those for other countries (e.g., Germany as reported in Mayer and Carroll (1987) and England and Wales as reported in Goldthorpe (1987)). On the other hand, the retrospective life histories of the Irish mobility study were collected in the early 1970s and hence cover lifetimes stretching back to the early decades of the twentieth century. The nature of work in the industrialised world has undergone immense changes in the ensuing decades and today is distinctly "post-Fordist" with flexible working arrangements becoming much more prominent. Under such conditions, it is arguable that the concept of "career", as a lifetime's incremental process, is becoming obsolescent. An application of these concepts to a more contemporary dataset — especially one including the younger cohorts of both sexes — would allow an estimation of the reliability of the apparent parameters found here.

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APPENDIX

CATEGORISATION INTO ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Core:** Metal manufacturing, chemicals, all metal goods, engineering and vehicle industries, processing of rubber and plastics, air transport, banking and finance and insurance (except for "social security services");
- Periphery:** All agriculture, forestry and fishing, all energy industries other than those classified as public sector (the majority of those in energy industries which will include the production and distribution of electricity and gas were classified as public sector), extraction and preparation of ores and minerals, manufacture of non-metallic products, production of man-made fibres, textile, footwear and clothing manufacture, timber and wooden furniture, paper and paper products, printing and publishing, food, drink and tobacco manufacture, other manufacturing industries not elsewhere specified, construction, distribution, hotels and catering, repair of consumer goods and vehicles, sea transport, trans-

port support, storage and transport services not elsewhere specified, renting of movables, real estate and domestic and personal services and other services not elsewhere specified;

Public: Any job categorised as "public" by a coding of each job separately from the industrial coding in the original data was placed into this category. In effect this category includes most or all jobs in the industrial categories of production and distribution of electricity, gas or other forms of energy, water supply, railways, inland transport not elsewhere specified, postal services and telecommunications, public administration, national defence, social security, sanitary services, education, veterinary services and medical and other health services. While there is a degree of "measurement error" in the distinction between core and peripheral sectors, the result of basing the category of public sector on a separate original coding should mean a more valid separation out of public sector jobs.