

OCCUPATIONAL AND INDUSTRY MOBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1969-1992*

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Abstract

Using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, we investigate occupational and industrial mobility of individuals over the 1969-1980 and 1981-1992 periods in the U.S. We find that workers changed both occupation and industry more frequently in the later period. Workers, on average, shifted occupation 1.8 times in the earlier period and 2.1 times in the later, and shifted industry 0.8 and 1.2 times, respectively. We also find that occupational and industry changes are associated with lower earnings, though this effect has lessened over time (from a 13 percent earnings reduction per occupational change for men in 1972-74 to a 9 percent loss in 1990-92). Our results also indicate that older workers are less likely to shift occupation or industry, as are better paid men but not better paid women.

JEL classification: J24, J31, J62.

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