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THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL STRATA AND  
OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL  
EXPECTATIONS MEASURED ABSOLUTELY AND RELATIVELY

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
LAWRENCE JOSEPH RHOADES  
1969

THESIS



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## ABSTRACT

### THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL STRATA AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATIONS MEASURED ABSOLUTELY AND RELATIVELY

By

Lawrence Joseph Rhoades

The problem under investigation in this study is the relationship between social strata and occupational aspirations and occupational expectations. What we sought to determine was whether the aspirations and expectations of persons in the lower stratum were lower than the aspirations and expectations of persons in the upper stratum. Sociological literature offers opposing views on this question. Some researchers feel that the lack of upward mobility from the lower stratum is due to the lack of opportunity and not to the lack of aspirations and expectations. Other researchers believe that the orientation of persons in the lower stratum reduces aspirations and expectations, regardless of the opportunities available.

Much of the research underlying this controversy relies heavily on an absolute measure of aspirations and the assumption that an emphasis on economic benefits would lead to low aspirations and low expectations. Other research indicated a need for a distinction between aspirations and expectations and a need for a relative as well as an absolute measure of

each. In addition, evidence for or against the economic benefits proposition was required.

Consequently, a research design incorporating these factors was constructed. Existing data enabled the design to have a longitudinal as well as a cross-sectional aspect. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire given to male and female seniors attending public high schools in a rural area. The Duncan socio-economic index was used to determine the social status of the subject's family of orientation, his aspirations, and his expectations. The statistical analysis employed the chi-square statistic and the t-test for difference of means.

The data revealed that the absolute aspirations and the absolute expectations of lower stratum seniors were only slightly lower than those of their upper stratum counterparts. The relative aspirations and the relative expectations of lower stratum seniors, however, were considerably higher than those of upper stratum seniors. The economic benefits proposition was not supported. In addition, the data revealed a remarkable consistency over time between aspirations and expectations in each stratum whether measured relatively or absolutely. The data also revealed that females, particularly lower stratum females, have consistently higher aspirations and higher expectations than do males. Unfortunately, the compressed social strata exhibited in the samples limits the populations to which these findings can be generalized.

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By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

A recurring question in sociological literature is whether America has a common or a class-differentiated value system in regard to upward mobility orientation. Advocates of the "common" stance hold that it is the lack of opportunity and not the lack of occupational aspirations which prevents upward mobility from the lower class. Supporters of the "class" view believe the orientation of the lower strata reduces occupational aspirations, regardless of the opportunities available.

The research underlying this controversy, however, only used an absolute measure of aspirations and did not differentiate between aspirations and expectations. In addition, the research assumed that an emphasis on economic benefits would lead to a position in the lower end of the occupational structure.

The problem, then, is to subject these opposing views to an empirical test that differentiates between aspirations and expectations, measured relatively as well as absolutely. In addition, the test must seek evidence for or against the proposition that an emphasis on economic benefits will lead to a low position in the occupational structure.

Several results are possible from this test. The test may show that the views are really in opposition, offering support for one view as against the other. The test may also show that the views are complementary rather than opposing, providing some basis for reconciliation and synthesis.

### Significance of the Problem

The existence of obstructions to social mobility are of particular concern to any society which grants status on the basis of achievement, especially when it is coupled with an equal opportunity ideology. Mobility obstructions are an issue in American society, being part of the rhetoric of the civil rights movement and the continuing shortage of professional, managerial and scientific personnel.

Adherence to either the "common" or the "class" views will require different strategies in the development of a solution to the mobility problem. The "common" viewpoint would dictate a concentration on opening up the opportunity structure. The "class" viewpoint would entail the necessity of changing the value system of the lower strata and would place less emphasis on opening up the opportunity structure.

Porter, an advocate of the class view, amply demonstrated this difference in strategies in a journal article, in which he saw the inability of large scale, highly industrialized societies to produce a "full range of highly qualified manpower" as a threat to the future economic development of these

<sup>1</sup>  
societies. He felt the economic development may be seriously limited "because the occupational structure which is emerging demands more positive values about education and stronger mobility aspirations than appear to have been current in what we have been calling the modern industrial stage."<sup>2</sup>

Porter locates three areas within the industrial social structures which are dysfunctional for upward mobility orientations. They are the class system, particularly the working class culture, the family as a socializing agency, and the educational system.

Apparently, Porter senses that all may not be right with the middle and upper classes for he mentions that downward mobility out of these classes is an aspect of the manpower problem. Nevertheless, the major difficulty lies in the working class as indicated by the following quotations:

In the future, despite the impediments of their subculture, larger numbers of working-class children will have to acquire the educational and mobility values of the middle class.<sup>3</sup>

If serious efforts are to be made to draft working class children for the long and grinding educational experience the post-modern economy requires, policies will have to be devised to deal with the acute and complex problems of motivation. The provision of opportunity through training schemes and the democratization of education may not be enough. The solution may require a conscious attack on a set of outmoded values...<sup>4</sup>

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1. John Porter. "The Future of Upward Mobility" in American Sociological Review. (33) February 1968. pp. 5-19.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Id.

4. Ibid., p. 17.

## Review of Literature

Merton's influential paper on the structural sources of deviant behavior is generally cited as the foundation of the "common" viewpoint. For some reason, his critics have interpreted his paper to mean that a basic American cultural value, "monetary success," is held in equal proportions throughout the social strata. Nowhere does Merton make that statement, but his critics may have derived their interpretation by implication from the following statement:

Goals are held to transcend class lines, not to be bounded by them, yet the actual social organization is such that there exist class differentials in accessibility of the goals. 5

Merton's critics, however, could have implied class-differentiation in goals as well as means from his statements about the role of the family and individual modes of adaptation. It is interesting to note that Merton expected to find "ritualism" primarily in the lower middle class. Ritualism is "the abandoning or scaling down of the lofty cultural goals of great pecuniary success and rapid social mobility to the point where one's aspirations can be satisfied." 6 This mode of adaptation usually is attributed to the working or lower class by advocates of the "class" viewpoint.

Subsequently, Merton, in response to a paper by Hyman,

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5. Robert K. Merton. Social Theory and Social Structure. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1964. p. 146.

6. Ibid., pp. 149-150.

defended the "common" viewpoint while making explicit his assumption of class-differentiated goals as well as means:

...the analysis assumes that some individuals in the lower economic and social strata actually adopt the success-goal. For, after all, the analysis holds not that all or most members of the lower strata are subject to pressure toward nonconformist behavior of the various kinds set out in the typology of adaptation, but only that more of them are subject to this pressure than of those in the higher strata...It is therefore sufficient that a sizeable minority of the lower strata assimilate this goal for them to be differentially subject to this pressure as a result of their relatively smaller opportunities to achieve monetary success. <sup>7</sup>

Tentatively accepting Hyman's evidence of differentials in the proportions of the several social classes adopting the cultural goal of success, Merton points out that "it is not the relative proportions...that matter, but their absolute number."<sup>8</sup> Hyman's paper will be treated in more detail later.

Chinoy found support for the "common" viewpoint in his study of automobile workers.<sup>9</sup> Although the auto workers limited their aspirations to those alternatives which seemed possible for them to achieve, Chinoy felt they did not surrender their identification with the tradition of opportunity, for "they reconcile their limited aspirations with the cultural imperative to aim high and persevere by redefining 'getting ahead', by focusing their ambitions on their children,

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7. Ibid., p. 171.

8. Ibid., p. 174.

9. Ely Chinoy. "The Tradition of Opportunity and the Aspirations of Automobile Workers" in American Journal of Sociology. (57) March 1952. pp. 453-459.



and by verbally retaining the illusion of small business ambitions."<sup>10</sup> Another study of automobile workers largely supported Chinoy's findings.<sup>11</sup> A more recent study of 125 lower class Negro and white youths, age 16 to 20, also substantiated the "common" view. This study showed that 64 per cent of the Negro males and 41 per cent of the white males would like to have been employed in professional, semi-professional or executive positions at the time the data was collected. Comparable figures for the Negro and white females<sup>12</sup> were 47 and 27 per cent, respectively.

As Merton's paper established the foundation for the "common" stance, Hyman's "reply" laid the groundwork for the "class" view. Hyman recognized the objective obstacles facing lower class members, but he chose to emphasize:

...a system of beliefs and values within the lower classes which in turn reduces the very voluntary actions which would ameliorate their low position... To put it simply the lower class individual doesn't want as much success, knows he couldn't get it even if he wanted to, and doesn't want what might help him get success. 13

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10. Ibid.,

11. Robert H. Guest. "Work Careers and Aspirations of Automobile Workers" in American Sociological Review. (19) April 1954. pp. 155-163.

12. Aaron Antonovsky and Melvin J. Lerner. "Occupational Aspirations of Lower Class Negro and White Youths" in Social Problems. (7) Fall 1959. pp. 132-138.

13. Herbert H. Hyman. "The Value Systems of Different Classes" in Class, Status and Power, ed. by R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset. New York: The Free Press. 1966. p. 488.

After examining data collected in 1937 and 1947 opinion surveys, Hyman concluded "lower class individuals emphasize those factors which would lead to strive for careers which would be less high in the economic structure."<sup>14</sup> Hyman found lower class individuals emphasizing direct economic benefits of employment such as security, wages and fringe benefits, and the steadiness of employment, while the upper classes emphasized those aspects of the job which were congenial to their personality, interests and qualifications. Consequently, Hyman concluded:

...such desiderata (economic benefits) will be achieved in a 'good job' but not in such positions as managerial or professional jobs. These latter careers have greater elements of risk and are the very ones that would not mesh with the desire for stability, security and immediate economic benefits, but would mesh with the goal of congeniality to the individual's interests. <sup>15</sup>

Besides the differentials in job values, Hyman discovered differentials in the desire for education and in occupational and income aspirations.

Now, Hyman did recognize that a "sizeable proportion" of the lower class did not internalize this limiting value system. The lower class culture, however, does not receive credit for the mobility of its members. Rather, a lower class member must deny his culture of origin and internalize the value system of the upper classes in order to be mobile.

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14. Ibid., p. 492

15. Id.

Consequently, the lower class culture is condemned for the immobility of its members and irrelevant to their mobility. Pecuniary success is seen not as a cultural goal differentially but continuously shared throughout the social strata, but a class goal categorically limited to the middle and upper classes.

Lipset and Bendix who originally hypothesized that

...the desire to rise in status is intrinsic in all persons of lower status and that individuals and groups will attempt to improve their status (and self-evaluation) whenever they have any chance to do so 16

later concluded that their findings suggested

...that at the bottom of the social structure the problem is not merely one of 'natural endowment thwarted by inequality' as had been assumed previously...the preliminary survey given above suggests that the cumulation of disadvantages at the bottom of the social scale is in large part the result of a lack of interest in educational and occupational achievement. 17

Sewell, Haller and Straus concluded that "values specific to different status positions are important influences on levels of educational and occupational aspiration" after they studied Wisconsin high school seniors holding intelligence constant.<sup>18</sup> Supporting evidence for the "class" view was

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16. S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix. Social Mobility in Industrial Society. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1967. p. 73.

17. Ibid., pp. 286-287.

18. William H. Sewell, Archie O. Haller, Murray A. Straus. "Social Status and Educational and Occupational Aspiration" in American Sociological Review. (22) February 1957. pp. 67-73.

also found by Rosen,<sup>19</sup> Davis,<sup>20</sup> Bergel,<sup>21</sup> Schwarzweller,<sup>22</sup>  
<sup>23</sup> Hellingshead, <sup>24</sup> Kahl, <sup>25</sup> and Knupfer.

### Synthesis of Common versus Class Views

It seems that Homans' warning to social scientists to beware of "being split by a false dichotomy" has been overlooked by participants in the "common" versus "class" controversy. Yet, there appears to be ample justification for questioning the mutual exclusiveness of the "common" and "class" viewpoints, both in theoretical writings and in empirical findings.

#### Parsons comments:

At the 'top' of the system is the society as a total system, in the modern case organized as a single political collectivity, and institutionalizing a

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19. Bernard C. Rosen. "The Achievement Syndrome: A Psychocultural Dimension of Social Stratification" in American Sociological Review. (21) April 1956. pp. 203-211.

20. Allison Davis. "The Motivation of the Underprivileged Worker" in Industry and Society, ed. by William F. Whyte. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc. 1946. pp. 84-106.

21. Egon E. Bergel. Social Stratification. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc. 1962. pp. 405-425.

22. Harry K. Schwarzweller. "Values and Occupational Choice" in Social Forces. (39) December 1960. pp. 126-135.

23. A. B. Hellingshead. Elmtown's Youth. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1949. pp. 282-287.

24. Joseph A. Kahl. "Educational & Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys" in Harvard Educational Review. (23) Summer 1953. pp. 186-203.

25. Genevieve Knupfer. "Portrait of the Underdog" in Public Opinion Quarterly. Spring 1947. pp. 103-114.

single more or less integrated system of values. Because there are often many millions of concrete individuals in a society, it must be enormously differentiated and segmented at the lower levels. But if it is to have unity as a system it must also have a common culture, a highly generalized institutional system, and some concrete collectivity organized as a whole. 26

Kluckhohn points out that highly differentiated societies simultaneously have dominant and alternative cultural orientations.

Sociologists have all too frequently run aground in the application of their classifications and their analytical concepts...because of a failure to take into account the cultural variation both within and between societies. 27

Stouffer stresses the need for recognizing a range of permissible variability.

From the theoretical standpoint, the most important implication of this paper may stem from its stress on variability. In essay writing in this field it is common and convenient to think of a social norm as a point, or at least as a very narrow band on either side of a point. This probably is quite unrealistic as to most of our social behavior. And it may be precisely the ranges of permissible behavior which most need examination, if we are to make progress in this realm which is so central in social science. For it may be the very existence of some flexibility or social slip-page -- but not too much -- which makes behavior in groups possible. 28

An updated version of Stouffer's call for a range of

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26. Talcott Parsons. "General Theory in Sociology" in Sociology Today, ed. by Robert K. Merton, et al. Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Row. 1965. p. 8.

27. Florence R. Kluckhohn. "Dominant and Substitute Profiles of Cultural Orientations: Their Significance for the Analysis of Social Stratification" in Social Forces. (28) May 1950. pp. 376-393.

28. Samuel A. Stouffer. "An Analysis of Conflicting Social Norms" in American Sociological Review. (14) December 1949. pp. 707-717.

permissible variability is presented in Rodman's "value stretch" concept.

By value stretch I mean that the lower-class person, without abandoning the general values of the society develops an alternative set of values. Without abandoning the values placed on success, such as high income and high educational and occupational attainment, he stretches the values so that lesser degrees of success also become desirable. The result is that the members of the lower class, in many areas, have a wider range of values than others within the society. They share the general values of the society with members of other classes, but in addition they have stretched these values, or developed alternative values, which help them to adjust to their deprived circumstances. 29

Inkeles sees similar attitudes and values developing as what Kluckhohn called situational, instrumental and integrative patterns become similar.

If one general theory is valid, then to the extent that the conditions of life, the network of interpersonal relations in which people work, the patterns of reward and punishment, come to be more and more alike regardless of status and situs, to that degree should their perceptions, attitudes and values become similar. 30

Obviously, the patterns of the lower and upper classes are not similar. Consequently, it is not surprising that the classes have differentially assimilated the cultural goals. What is surprising is that the lower class does adhere to the mobility ethos, especially the "sizeable minority" which aims at the top.

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29. Hyman Rodman. "The Lower Class Value Stretch" in Social Forces. (42) pp. 205-215.

30. Alex Inkeles. "Industrial Man: The Relation of Status to Experience, Perception and Value" in American Journal of Sociology. (66) July 1960. p. 29.

Perhaps the most theoretically relevant discussion of the common-class dichotomy was made by Keller and Zavalloni. They point out that Hyman and Merton agree on one capital point:

...that the degree of personal ambition can be inferred from the cultural significance of the goal aspired to. If this goal ranks high, individual ambition must be great; if it ranks low, individual ambition must be small. 31

Keller and Zavalloni further point out that the degree of ambition can be equated with the rank of the desired goal only so long as this goal remains unspecified. Otherwise, the whole question of differential class access to the goals which are used as standards enters the picture.

Introducing the concept of relative distance, Keller and Zavalloni said:

We should thus be prepared to find class-determined variations in aspirations not because the individual class members are more or less ambitious but because the classes themselves are nearer to some goals than to others. The class-accessibility of a given goal will affect its saliency for the class independently from its saliency for the individuals within it. Social class alters the content of what is aspired to and thus constitutes an intervening variable between individual ambition and social achievement. Any given success-goal has both an absolute and a relative value, the first referring to the general consensus regarding its overall importance or desirability, the second its accessibility. 32

Consequently, Keller and Zavalloni respecified ambition

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31. Suzanne Keller and Marisa Zavalloni. "Ambition and Social Class: A Respecification" in Social Forces. (43) October 1964. p. 59.

32. Ibid., p. 60.

to include structural and personality components and re-specified achievement to have an absolute and relative value. A structural component refers to the amount of ambition required to achieve a specific culturally ranked goal in the light of one's social class. It is determined by the relative distance of a social class from the success-goal. A personality component refers to the needs, capacities, and talents of an individual. The absolute value of the goal is determined by the general consensus concerning the importance and desirability. The relative value of the goal is determined by the social class rating of its importance and desirability which in turn depends on a stratum's relative distance from it.

Keller and Zavalloni felt their framework of absolute and relative values of success-goals and personal and structural components of ambition makes a reinterpretation of Merton's and Hyman's conclusions possible.

Along with Hyman one can expect the lower classes to pursue not the same but less important goals than the middle class, and along with Merton one can continue to expect lower class individuals to be no less ambitious than middle class individuals. 33

The researchers also saw a need for a distinction between the working class and the "lumpenproletariat" who bias studies of working class aspirations in the direction of reduced aspirations or of indecision.

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33. Ibid., p. 61.



Finally, Keller and Zavalloni comment:

Since socially desirable success goals are not equally accessible to the different social classes, the motivation required to realize them cannot be treated as a constant. <sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, this theoretical discussion was not discovered until the research project was well under way and consequently many of its insights are not included in the design of this study.

Several empirical studies have also questioned the common-class dichotomy. Stephenson, in a study of 1,000 male and female ninth graders, was the first to distinguish between a realistic appraisal of life chances (expectations) and a more generally held aspiration for life goals in the stratification system. <sup>35</sup> He found that occupational aspirations were relatively unaffected by class while expectations were definitely affected. He also found that the higher the social class the greater the agreement between occupational aspirations and occupational expectations.

Bennett and Gist, in a study of ninth and twelfth graders, found class making a significant difference in terms of occupational expectations, but not in terms of aspirations. <sup>36</sup> They further reported that social class did

34. Ibid., p. 69

35. R. M. Stephenson. "Mobility Orientation and Stratification of 1,000 Ninth Graders" in American Sociological Review. (22) April 1957. pp. 204-212.

36. William S. Bennett, Jr. and Noel P. Gist. "Class and Family Influences on Student Aspirations" in Social Forces. (43) December 1964. pp. 167-173.

not correlate with the frequency of aspiration to continue school nor did it predict the extent of planning for future education or the type of future schooling desired. Youmans, in a study of Michigan twelfth graders, also found the traditional upward mobility orientation and a realistic understanding of their chances for success.<sup>37</sup> Goetz came up with the same findings in her study of male high school students.<sup>38</sup>

Empey questioned much of the existing research supporting the class view when he cited a need for a relative measure of occupational aspirations in addition to the absolute measure.

Previous investigations on this subject have dealt largely with occupational aspiration in absolute terms; that is, a monolithic definition of occupational success has been imposed upon the occupational hierarchy, and the aspirations of lower-class people have been compared with those of upper-class people. Almost without exception, the absolute occupational aspirations of the upper classes have been found to be 'higher' in the economic structure than those of the lower class. Because the lower classes are less inclined to aspire to professional and managerial occupations, such findings have supported the idea that they do not desire to 'get ahead.' But there is reason to believe that relative positions should be taken into account, that is, some attention should be paid to the class level from which the individual begins in deciding whether or not he desires to get ahead. 39

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37. E. Grant Youmans. "Occupational Expectations of 12th Grade Michigan Boys" in Journal of Experimental Education. (24) June 1956. pp. 259-271.

38. Wilma Goetz. "Occupational Aspirations of the Male Students in a Selected High School" in The American Catholic Sociological Review. (23) Winter 1962. pp. 338-349.

39. LaMar T. Empey. "Social Class and Occupational Aspiration: A Comparison of Absolute and Relative Measurement" in American Sociological Review. (21) December 1956. pp. 703-709.

Employing absolute and relative measures of occupational aspirations in a study of male high school seniors, Empey found the absolute aspirations of seniors from middle and upper classes were significantly higher than those of seniors from the lower classes while the relative aspirations of the lower class were significantly higher than those of the middle and upper classes. He also found little support for the proposition that lower class seniors are more inclined than middle and upper class seniors to reduce their occupational aspirations significantly to keep them in line with expectations.

Finally, Cuber and Kenkel believe that the problem in social stratification research is that the researchers present their data in terms of categories when it really forms a continuum.

The data of no study failed to show this hierarchical arrangement, even though persons who claim to have 'found' discrete categories emphasize, of course, the demarcation lines rather than the continuous character of their data...Claims that the society 'divides itself' into these oft-discussed class categories seems to be unsubstantiated by the methods which the researchers have said they used. 40

### Summary

A recurring question in sociological literature is whether America has a common or a class differentiated

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40. John F. Cuber and William F. Kenkel. Social Stratification in the United States. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1954. pp. 306-307.

value system in regard to upward mobility orientation. Advocates of the common stance believe that it is the lack of opportunity and not the lack of ambition which prevents upward mobility by lower class members. Supporters of the class view contend that a system of values and beliefs prevent lower class members from being or desiring to be upwardly mobile even when opportunity exists.

Theoretical discussions and empirical findings question the mutual exclusiveness of the common and class views. These works make a number of points. A social system requires the adhesive quality of a common culture, but this culture is most likely to be differentially assimilated and adapted throughout the social strata. Each culture contains a range of values and each value has a range of permissible variation. Ambition has structural as well as personality components and goals have absolute as well as relative values, depending on whether the perspective is societal or class. Finally, a distinction must be made between aspirations and expectations, between absolute and relative measures, between proportions and absolute numbers, and between categorical and continuous data.

In conclusion, it appears the evidence cited to affirm or deny the common-class controversy depends on the definitions, concepts and instruments used to collect and analyze the data. It also appears that more discriminating definitions, concepts and instruments are required if future research is to have some value. Only some of the refinements

suggested by this review are incorporated in this study. However, an attempt will be made in the concluding section of this thesis to sketch the general outline of what should be included in future research projects.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SAMPLE, PROCEDURES AND HYPOTHESES

#### Introduction

The review of literature in the previous chapter raises some pertinent questions about the relationship existing between social strata and occupational aspirations and occupational expectations. For instance, are aspirations and/or expectations class-and/or culture-based? What difference does relative and absolute measures make? Is there a greater gap between the aspirations and expectations of lower class high school seniors than there is for middle and upper class seniors? Do lower class seniors emphasize those job values which lead to jobs in the lower end of the occupational structure? The purpose of this chapter is to present the sample, the procedures and the hypotheses which were employed in seeking an empirical answer to these questions.

#### Sample

An attempt was made to answer these questions with data collected from male and female seniors who graduated from public high schools in Ontonagon County, Michigan, in 1957 and 1968. The 1957 sample is composed of 58 males and 65 females for a total of 123. The 1968 sample contains 90 males and 103 females for a total of 193.

Ontonagon county is a rural county with a history of out-migration. It has no urban areas according to the census definition. The largest community is the county seat, Ontonagon, which had a population of 2,358 in 1960. At the time of the initial survey, Ontonagon county was feeling the results of an economic boom. A copper mine which was opened in 1954 was employing 1,000 persons by March 1956. The reopening of a paper pulp mill in the village of Ontonagon in 1957 resulted in the employment of over 100 persons. These two new job sources upgraded the occupational structure in addition to increasing employment opportunities. The opening of the mine also resulted in the formation of a new community. The only significant event to occur during the 11-year interval between the first and second samples was the reduction of the number of school districts from six to four through consolidation.

Our sample covers the entire social strata in the county as all public high schools participated in the studies. There are no private high schools in the county. However, it may be said that our sample which only includes graduating seniors is biased because it does not include dropouts, and therefore, the lower class aspirations and expectations may be too high. By the same token, it can be argued that the elimination of the dropouts, assuming they are primarily lower class, gives us a truer picture of the

"stable working class."<sup>1</sup> A more serious problem, in terms of generalizing to other populations, is the compressed nature of the social strata in the county. There is virtually no upper middle or upper class in the county. If generalizations are made, therefore, they will have to be limited to areas with a similar social strata. See Table 1 and Table 2.

The data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. The same instrument was used in both instances. Also in both instances, the questionnaires were filled out in class approximately three months before graduation. More detailed information on the 1957 research procedure is not available. The procedure for the 1968 sample follows. A member of the research team read a prepared statement before each class before the questionnaires were filled out. The team member was present in the room during the period to answer questions. Students who did not finish the questionnaire during the class period reported to the guidance counselor's office during a study period to do so. The completion rate was about 99 per cent.

Our subjects can be characterized in Ginzberg's scheme<sup>2</sup> as being in the transition stage of the tentative period.

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1. S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman. "The Working Class Subculture: A New View" in Social Problems. (9) Summer 1961. pp. 86-97.

2. Eli Ginzberg. Occupational Choice. New York: Columbia University Press. 1951.



Table 1. Year, sex, socio-economic index score of father.

	1957			1968		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
90 to 96	0	1	1	1	0	1
80 to 89	0	1	1	0	6	6
70 to 79	0	2	2	3	3	6
60 to 69	3	0	3	4	4	8
50 to 59	3	1	4	10	6	16
40 to 49	4	7	11	10	15	25
30 to 39	4	5	9	11	10	21
20 to 29	3	6	9	4	13	17
10 to 19	23	28	51	26	24	50
0 to 9	11	14	25	14	18	32
Other (97 to 99)	1	0	1	6	4	10
No response	6	0	6	1	0	1
Totals	58	65	123	90	103	193

Table 2. Year, sex, socio-economic status of father.

	1957			1968		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Upper Stratum (40 to 96)	10	12	22	28	34	62
Lower Stratum (0 to 39)	41	53	94	55	65	120
Unused	7	0	7	7	4	11
Totals	58	65	123	90	103	193

According to Ginzberg, the transition stage produces a shift from subjective considerations to a greater awareness of external reality.) This concern with reality is what gives studies of high school seniors, rather than freshmen, sophomores and juniors, more value for predicting actual behavior. Even seniors still have the exploring period to go through, and consequently, may be several steps away from settling on a particular occupation.

A number of studies on occupational aspirations have been limited to male students. Our study includes females because of their increasing importance in the labor force. Sex, however, is controlled in the analysis.

Since our samples represent two points in time, the longitudinal aspect of the analysis naturally suggested itself. As scientists, we are expected to produce generalizations which are not time-bound. Consequently, we will pay particular attention to see if the relationships we discover are constant over the 11-year period. If they change, we will be interested in the direction of the change.

### Methods and Procedures

Class position was defined and quantified in terms of occupational status as determined by the Duncan socio-economic index.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, we are assuming that mass society

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3. Otis D. Duncan. "A Socio-economic Index for All Occupations," Table B-1 of Appendix B, in Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Occupations and Social Status. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, Inc. 1961.

is the chief determinant of stratification. The index was divided in to a lower stratum (0-39) and an upper stratum (40-96). The lack of subjects at the upper end of the index prevented a three-way split. For practical purposes our break represents a white-blue collar division. Only 23 jobs considered white collar in the census classification of jobs have scores under 40 while only 30 blue collar jobs have scores over 40. Upward mobility was defined as inter-generational movement to a position above that held by the father in the occupational hierarchy as determined by the Duncan index. The index, of course, is an ordinal rather than an interval measure. Nevertheless, it is treated as an interval measure in the statistical analysis because no other measures are available.

Our study distinguished between occupational aspirations and occupational expectations. We used the definition furnished by Caro and Pihlblad:

An occupational preference or aspiration (the occupation a person would like to have) may be taken to represent a pure occupational value -- uncontaminated by perceived limitations in accessibility. An occupational expectation (the occupation a person thinks he actually will have) may be interpreted as a reality-based compromise with an aspiration. <sup>4</sup>

In the terminology used by Haller and Miller, our procedure for ascertaining the aspirational level was

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4. F. G. Caro and C. Terence Pihlblad. "Aspirations and Expectations: A Reexamination of the Bases for Social Class Differences in the Occupational Orientations of Male High School Students" in Sociology and Social Research. (49) July 1965. pp. 465-476.

direct, continuous, single-item, free response, short-range, incomplete and unbalanced. The procedure for expectations can be described as direct, continuous, multiple-item, free response, short-range, incomplete and unbalanced.<sup>5</sup>

The actual questions used to acquire the data are given in the chapter on data analysis.

Our study also distinguished between absolute and relative standards of measurement. Here, we used the definitions furnished by Empey:

...when an absolute standard is used, the aspirations of lower-class seniors are compared with those of upper-class seniors; when a relative standard is used, each senior's occupational choice is compared with that of his father.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, our study attempts to distinguish between what Hyman calls those job characteristics which are "congeniality to person" and "economic benefit."<sup>7</sup> His reasoning behind this dichotomy was previously covered in the review of literature. Unfortunately, Hyman is not very specific in this area. Consequently, we made an arbitrary division of the 12 characteristics named in our questionnaire. Under "congeniality to person" we have included freedom of behavior, friendship with fellow employees, power and

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5. Archibald O. Haller and Irwin W. Miller. The Occupational Aspiration Scale: Theory, Structure and Correlates. E. Lansing, Mich.: Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University. 1963. pp. 17-20.

6. LaMar T. Empey. "Social Class and Occupational Aspiration: A Comparison of Absolute and Relative Measurement" in American Sociological Review. (21) pp. 703-709.

7. Hyman, op. cit., pp. 492-495.



authority, intellectual challenge, prestige or respect, public recognition, benefit to humanity, time to enjoy myself, and other. The "other" response gave the respondent an opportunity to write in a characteristic. Most responses tended to be of a personal nature, so they are included in the congeniality category. Under "economic benefit" we have placed chance for advancement, money, and security. The characteristic of "power and authority" was troublesome, but considering Keller's and Zavalloni's argument that the economic goal must be reached before the goals of power and prestige are considered, we have decided to place it with the "congeniality to person" characteristics.<sup>8</sup> In the analysis, we only used the characteristic the respondent considered the most important.

### Hypotheses

Six hypotheses were tested in the study. Each of the hypotheses was tested within each of the two samples. The findings were then compared for the two samples. Sex was controlled throughout the analysis. The hypotheses are:

1. The absolute occupational status aspirations of high school seniors from the upper stratum are higher than those of seniors from the lower stratum.
2. The relative occupational status aspirations of high school seniors from the lower stratum are higher than those of seniors from the upper stratum.

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8. Keller and Zavalloni, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

3. The absolute occupational status expectations of high school seniors from the upper stratum are higher than those of seniors from the lower stratum.

4. The relative occupational status expectations of high school seniors from the lower stratum are higher than those of seniors from the upper stratum.

5. The gap between occupational aspirations and occupational expectations will increase as one moves from the upper stratum to the lower stratum.

6. Seniors from the lower stratum emphasize those job values which destine them to jobs located lower in the occupational structure while seniors from the upper stratum emphasize those values which destine them to jobs located higher in the occupational structure.



## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

In this chapter we will present the data we have compiled to test the hypotheses advanced in the previous chapter. Two tables have been constructed for each of the first five hypotheses. The first table compares the upper stratum with the lower stratum in each sample. The second table holds the stratum constant and compares the two samples. The t-test for the difference between means was performed on each finding. Chi-square analysis was done on the tables constructed for the sixth hypothesis. The significance level for all hypotheses was set at .05. The observed frequencies are presented in parentheses in each table.

#### Hypothesis 1

The absolute occupational status aspirations of high school seniors from the upper stratum are higher than those of seniors from the lower stratum.

The data in Table 3 provide very mild support for this hypothesis. The absolute aspirations of the upper stratum seniors are higher than those of the lower stratum seniors, except for 1957 females. However, the findings reach or surpass the designated significance level only in the case of the 1957 males and the 1968 females. It should be noted that the aspirations of the females equal or

surpass their male counterparts, except for the upper stratum in the 1957 sample.

The data in Table 4 show that the mean absolute aspirations of the upper and lower stratum seniors have remained remarkably constant, especially among the lower stratum seniors. The only sizeable difference, 14 points, appears in the comparison of upper stratum males. This difference may be due to the number of cases on which the means are based or to the dampening effect of military draft or to a low probability of sharing in the family business which means success must be sought elsewhere.

## Hypothesis 2

The relative occupational status aspirations of high school seniors from the lower stratum are higher than those of seniors from the upper stratum.

The data in Table 5 provide considerable support for this hypothesis. The lower stratum in both samples have higher relative aspirations than do their upper stratum counterparts. The difference between the means is significant for all breakdowns except 1957 males. No clear pattern emerges when sex is controlled.

The data in Table 6 show very little change over the 11 year period. The most drastic change was between upper stratum males. The 19-point decrease was significant at the .05 level. It was the only difference which reached or surpassed the significance level. The difference, in fact, resulted in a negative value from a relative standpoint.

Table 3. Mean absolute occupational aspiration, socio-economic status, year, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	61 (18)	53 (81)	97	1.377
Males	71 (8)	50 (37)	43	2.059*
Females	54 (10)	56 (44)	52	0.333
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	60 (57)	55 (108)	163	1.298
Males	57 (26)	55 (48)	72	0.320
Females	63 (31)	55 (60)	89	1.709*

\* Significant .05 level.

Table 4. Longitudinal comparison of mean absolute occupational aspiration by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	61 (18)	60 (57)	73	0.152
Males	71 (8)	57 (26)	32	1.420
Females	54 (10)	63 (31)	39	1.072
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	53 (81)	55 (108)	187	0.606
Males	50 (37)	55 (48)	83	0.868
Females	56 (44)	55 (60)	102	0.275

Table 5. Mean relative occupational aspiration, socio-economic status, year, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	9 (18)	37 (81)	97	4.413**
Males	18 (8)	35 (37)	43	1.490
Females	1 (10)	40 (44)	52	5.843**
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	3 (57)	37 (108)	163	8.348**
Males	-1 (26)	37 (48)	72	5.795**
Females	6 (31)	37 (60)	89	6.168**

\*\* Significant .001 level.

Table 6. Longitudinal comparison of mean relative occupational aspiration by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	9 (18)	3 (57)	73	0.887
Males	18 (8)	-1 (26)	32	1.981*
Females	1 (10)	6 (31)	39	0.534
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	37 (81)	37 (108)	187	0.000
Males	35 (37)	37 (48)	83	0.313
Females	40 (44)	37 (60)	102	0.774

\* Significant .05 level.

Data for testing the first two hypotheses were garnered from the answers to the following open-ended question:

If you could have any job you wanted, regardless of the training or experience required, what job would you pick?

### Hypothesis 3

The absolute occupational status expectations of high school seniors from the upper stratum are higher than those of seniors from the lower stratum.

Data for this hypothesis were gathered by asking the subjects the following question: What jobs are you now seriously considering as a lifetime work? The subjects were asked to list a first and a second choice. Both of the choices were utilized in the analysis.

As Table 7 shows the upper stratum seniors had higher absolute first job expectations than did the lower stratum seniors. Females in both strata had higher expectations than their male counterparts. Except for the 1968 males, the differences between the strata are rather small. The differences in expectations between males and females is particularly pronounced in the lower stratum. None of the differences between the strata were significant.

The data in Table 9, however, reveal a different picture. That table deals with absolute second job expectations. Once again, the upper strata seniors had higher expectations than males, particularly in the lower stratum. The important point is that the mean difference between the strata is significant in all but one case. The exception

Table 7. Mean absolute first occupational expectation, year, socio-economic status, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	52 (20)	50 (84)	102	0.344
Males	47 (10)	44 (38)	46	0.287
Females	58 (10)	55 (46)	54	0.559
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	54 (59)	49 (113)	170	1.461
Males	52 (28)	43 (51)	77	1.614
Females	55 (31)	53 (62)	91	0.495

Table 8. Longitudinal comparison of mean absolute first occupational expectation by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	52 (20)	54 (59)	77	0.333
Males	47 (10)	52 (28)	36	0.485
Females	58 (10)	55 (31)	39	0.451
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	50 (84)	49 (113)	195	0.322
Males	44 (38)	43 (51)	87	0.186
Females	55 (46)	53 (62)	106	0.607

Table 9. Mean absolute second occupational expectation, year, socio-economic status, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	56 (18)	42 (69)	85	2.273*
Males	51 (9)	35 (34)	41	1.510
Females	61 (9)	49 (35)	42	2.145*
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	55 (49)	41 (93)	140	3.484**
Males	52 (24)	36 (44)	66	2.598*
Females	58 (25)	46 (49)	72	2.373*

\* Significant .05 level. \*\* Significant .001 level.

Table 10. Longitudinal comparison of mean absolute second occupational expectation by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	56 (18)	55 (49)	65	0.163
Males	51 (9)	52 (24)	31	0.095
Females	61 (9)	58 (25)	32	0.469
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	42 (69)	41 (93)	160	0.272
Males	35 (34)	36 (44)	76	0.172
Females	49 (35)	46 (49)	82	0.693

is 1957 senior males.

Consequently, it appears that our hypothesis should be refined to apply specifically to second choice expectations.

Table 8 and Table 10 which deal with the longitudinal aspect of the study reveal no significant differences.

#### Hypothesis 4

The relative occupational status expectation of high school seniors from the lower stratum are higher than those of seniors from the upper stratum.

Table 11 and Table 13 give strong support to this hypothesis. In all instances, the lower stratum has considerably higher relative expectations. This finding holds for first and second choice expectations. In addition, all of the findings are significant at the .05 level or better. Again, females have higher expectations than do their male counterparts. This finding also holds for first and second choice expectations. It should be noted that the relative expectations of the upper stratum seniors are negative in the majority of cases.

Once again, the longitudinal analysis, Table 12 and Table 14, reveals a remarkable consistency over time. None of the differences between the means were significant at the .05 level.



Table 11. Mean relative first occupational expectation, socio-economic status, year, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	-2 (20)	35 (84)	102	5.999**
Males	-5 (10)	29 (38)	46	3.150*
Females	1 (10)	39 (46)	54	5.970**
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	-3 (59)	31 (113)	170	9.199**
Males	-4 (28)	26 (51)	77	4.916**
Females	-3 (31)	35 (62)	91	8.683**

\* Significant .05 level.      \*\* Significant .001 level.

Table 12. Longitudinal comparison of mean relative first occupational expectation by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	-2 (20)	-3 (59)	77	0.159
Males	-5 (10)	-4 (28)	36	0.097
Females	1 (10)	-3 (31)	39	0.524
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	35 (84)	31 (113)	195	1.186
Males	29 (38)	26 (51)	87	0.508
Females	39 (46)	35 (62)	106	1.105

Table 13. Mean relative second occupational expectation, socio-economic status, year, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	0 (18)	27 (69)	85	4.096**
Males	0 (9)	20 (34)	41	1.740*
Females	-1 (9)	33 (35)	42	5.561**
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	-3 (49)	24 (93)	140	6.408**
Males	-5 (24)	20 (44)	66	4.035**
Females	-1 (25)	28 (49)	72	5.102**

\* Significant .05 level. \*\* Significant .001 level.

Table 14. Longitudinal comparison of mean relative second occupational expectation by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	0 (18)	-3 (49)	65	0.449
Males	0 (9)	-5 (24)	31	0.460
Females	-1 (9)	-1 (25)	32	0.000
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	27 (69)	24 (93)	160	0.780
Males	20 (34)	20 (44)	76	0.000
Females	33 (35)	28 (49)	82	1.080

### Hypothesis 5

The gap between occupational aspirations and occupational expectations will increase as one moves from the upper stratum to the lower stratum.

Our analysis here is limited to the differences between aspirations and first occupational expectations. As Table 15 indicates the analysis does not support the hypothesis. In only one case, 1968 males, was the mean difference between upper stratum aspirations and first choice expectations smaller than the mean difference between lower stratum aspirations and first choice expectations. None of the differences were significant at the .05 level. In general, females have less of a discrepancy between aspirations and first choice expectations, especially lower stratum females.

Once again the longitudinal analysis, Table 16, revealed no differences which were significant at the .05 level. It should be noted, however, that the mean difference between aspirations and first choice expectations declined for upper stratum males but increased for upper stratum females and lower stratum males and females.

### Hypothesis 6

Seniors from the lower stratum emphasize those job values which destine them to jobs located lower in the occupational structure while seniors from the upper stratum emphasize those values which destine them to jobs located higher in the occupational structure.

Data to test this hypothesis were gathered by asking the subjects to indicate what they most expected from the

Table 15. Mean difference between absolute occupational aspiration and absolute first occupational expectation, socio-economic status, year, sex.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>1957 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	10 (16)	3 (74)	88	1.183
Males	21 (8)	8 (34)	40	1.194
Females	-1 (8)	0 (40)	46	0.222
<u>1968 Seniors</u>				
All Subjects	7 (56)	6 (103)	157	0.289
Males	5 (26)	11 (46)	70	1.072
Females	9 (30)	3 (57)	85	1.451

Table 16. Longitudinal comparison of mean difference between absolute occupational aspiration and absolute first occupational expectation by socio-economic status, sex.

	1957	1968	Degrees of Freedom	T-Score
<u>Upper Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	10 (16)	7 (56)	70	0.461
Males	21 (8)	5 (26)	32	1.677
Females	-1 (8)	9 (30)	36	1.202
<u>Lower Stratum</u>				
All Subjects	3 (74)	6 (103)	175	0.974
Males	8 (34)	11 (46)	78	0.528
Females	0 (40)	3 (57)	95	1.028

job they wanted to make their life's work. A list of 11 characteristics was presented along with an "other" category which allowed the subject to write in some other characteristic. The subject was asked to check as many characteristics which were applicable and then indicate the two most important characteristics. Our analysis is limited to the most important characteristic.

The characteristics were then collapsed into our two categories: congeniality to person and economic benefits. A zero-order analysis of the relationship between socio-economic status and the most important job characteristic produced a chi-square which was significant at the .05 level for the 1968 sample, but not for the 1957 sample. See Table 17 and Table 18. The observed frequencies are presented in parentheses in each table. Expected frequencies are not given.

Table 17. Most important job characteristic by socio-economic status of subject in 1957 sample.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Totals
Congeniality to person	26% (11)	74% (31)	100% (42)
Economic benefit	13% (9)	87% (61)	100% (70)

<sup>2</sup>

x : 3.181      Not significant at .05 level.

Table 18. Most important job characteristic by socio-economic status of subject in 1968 sample.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Totals
Congeniality to person	40% (39)	60% (59)	100% (98)
Economic benefit	25% (19)	75% (58)	100% (77)

<sup>2</sup>  
x : 4.421      Significant at .05 level.

On the basis of these two tables alone it is difficult to accept or reject the hypothesis since we have support for going in both directions. The hypothesis, however, becomes increasingly untenable when sex is controlled. This first-order analysis produced no chi-squares which are significant at the .05 level. See Table 19 and Table 20.

According to the hypothesis we should expect students with upper stratum aspirations to emphasize "congeniality to person" job characteristics and we should expect students with lower stratum aspirations to emphasize "economic benefits" job characteristics. A series of tables was constructed to test this relationship. None of the tables produced a chi-square which was significant at the .05 level. A chi-square was not computed for some of the tables because more than 20 per cent of the cells had expected frequencies of less than five. The tables, however, are presented in the series. See Table 21 and Table 22.

Table 19. Most important job characteristic, sex, socioeconomic status, 1957 sample.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Totals
<u>Males*</u>			
Congeniality to person	30% (6)	70% (14)	100% (20)
Economic benefits	13% (4)	87% (26)	100% (30)
<u>Females*</u>			
Congeniality to person	23% (5)	77% (17)	100% (22)
Economic benefits	13% (5)	87% (35)	100% (40)

2

\* x not applicable because more than 20 per cent of the cells have an expected frequency of less than five. The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

Table 20. Most important job characteristic, sex, socio-economic status, 1968 sample.

	Upper Stratum	Lower Stratum	Totals
<u>Males**</u>			
Congeniality to person	40% (15)	60% (23)	100% (38)
Economic benefits	28% (11)	72% (29)	100% (40)
<u>Females***</u>			
Congeniality to person	40% (24)	60% (36)	100% (60)
Economic benefits	22% (8)	78% (29)	100% (37)
<hr/>			
<sup>2</sup> **x : 1.220	Not significant at .05 level.		
<sup>2</sup> ***x : 3.476	Not significant at .05 level.		



Table 21. Most important job characteristic by socio-economic status, sex, level of aspiration, 1957 sample.

	Upper Stratum Aspirations	Lower Stratum Aspirations	Totals
<u>Upper Stratum Males*</u>			
Congeniality to person	100% (5)	0% (0)	100% (5)
Economic benefits	100% (3)	0% (0)	100% (3)
<u>Upper Stratum Females*</u>			
Congeniality to person	100% (4)	0% (0)	100% (4)
Economic benefits	60% (3)	40% (2)	100% (5)
<u>Lower Stratum Males**</u>			
Congeniality to person	77% (10)	23% (3)	100% (13)
Economic benefits	58% (15)	42% (11)	100% (26)
<u>Lower Stratum Females*</u>			
Congeniality to person	82% (9)	18% (2)	100% (11)
Economic benefits	94% (32)	6% (2)	100% (34)

<sup>2</sup>  
 \*x not applicable because more than 20 per cent of the cells have an expected frequency of less than five. The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup>  
 \*\*x : 1.445 Not significant at .05 level.

Table 22. Most important job characteristic by socio-economic status, sex, level of aspiration, 1968 sample.

	Upper Stratum Aspirations	Lower Stratum Aspirations	Totals
<u>Upper Stratum Males*</u>			
Congeniality to person	79% (11)	21% (3)	100% (14)
Economic benefits	82% (9)	18% (2)	100% (11)
<u>Upper Stratum Females*</u>			
Congeniality to person	90% (19)	10% (2)	100% (21)
Economic benefits	100% (8)	0% (0)	100% (8)
<u>Lower Stratum Males**</u>			
Congeniality to person	77% (17)	23% (5)	100% (22)
Economic benefits	70% (16)	30% (7)	100% (23)
<u>Lower Stratum Females*</u>			
Congeniality to person	85% (29)	15% (5)	100% (34)
Economic benefits	85% (23)	15% (4)	100% (27)

<sup>2</sup>  
 \*x not applicable because more than 20 per cent of the cells have an expected frequency of less than five. The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup>  
 \*\*x : 0.366 Not significant at .05 level.

Fourfold tables were also constructed using the most important job characteristic, sex, socio-economic status, and level of first job expectation. None of the tables produced a chi-square which was significant at the .05 level.

It seems, therefore, that the relationship between socio-economic status and the most important job characteristic is not as simple as the hypothesis indicates. The original relationship is either spurious or the result of intervening variables.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

In the previous chapters we have presented the problem, outlined the sample, procedures and hypotheses, in addition to, analyzing the data. Consequently, we are at the point where we have to make some conclusions about the thousands of words and hundreds of numbers which paved the way to this point. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to state these conclusions and the implications this study has for future research on occupational aspirations and occupational expectations.

#### Conclusion

The data collected in this study offer strong support for the hypotheses dealing with the relative measurement of aspirations and relative measurement of first and second job expectations.

In addition, the data gave partial support to the hypothesis concerning the absolute measurement of job expectations. The support, however, is limited to the absolute measurement of second job expectations. The data do not support the hypothesis in relation to first job expectations.

Lack of support for the absolute measurement of first job expectations may mean that the first job expectations

of lower stratum seniors is not strongly grounded in reality. Support for the absolute measurement of second job expectations seems to indicate that lower stratum seniors limit themselves to a single shot at "success."

Support for the hypothesis dealing with the absolute measurement of occupational aspirations was so slight that it would be difficult to accept the hypothesis. Support for the hypothesis concerning job values is highly questionable. No support was offered for the hypothesis dealing with the relationship between socio-economic status and the gap between occupational aspirations and occupational expectations. It should be remembered, however, that our analysis was limited to first job expectations.

The question remaining, of course, is why was support lacking for these hypotheses. The fact that the absolute measurement of aspiration did not receive strong support is not surprising. Neither was it surprising that the hypothesis dealing with the relationship between socio-economic status and the gap between aspirations and expectations went unsupported. The review of literature cited several pieces of research which pointed to these possibilities. The obvious answer is that lower stratum seniors are as well integrated into American culture as their upper stratum counterparts, at least, in terms of "monetary success." The lack of support, however, may also be due to the under representation of seniors whose father's have a socio-economic index score in excess of 60.

The compressed nature of the social strata in Ontonagon county may also account for the lack of support received by the two remaining hypotheses. In fact, the compressed nature of the social strata may also account for the support received by the hypotheses dealing with relative measurement of aspirations and expectations and the hypothesis concerning the absolute measurement of second job expectations. In short, the compressed social strata limits the populations to which the findings of our study can be generalized. It should be noted, however, that many rural areas are characterized by a compressed social strata.

However, some additional comments, in regard to job characteristics, seem warranted. It appears that the categorization of job characteristics in terms of congeniality to person and economic benefits is of questionable value. The categories are not mutually exclusive in terms of jobs which are rated as lower stratum or upper stratum. In other words, lower stratum jobs do have characteristics which are congenial to the person, and upper stratum jobs definitely contain economic benefits.

It can also be concluded that ambition or the desire to get ahead is definitely not lacking among lower stratum seniors, especially females. The only way it can be said that ambition is lacking among lower stratum seniors is to define ambition solely in terms of those occupations which rank above 70 on the socio-economic index.

Finally, some comments need to be made on the consistently higher occupational aspirations and occupational expectations expressed by females, the remarkable consistency of the occupational aspirations and occupational expectations at two points in time, and the statistical analysis employed in this study.

Speculation about the higher aspirations and expectations expressed by females produces several possible answers. First, females typically aspire to white-collar jobs. White-collar jobs, in general, have higher socio-economic index scores than do blue-collar jobs. Second, jobs frequently held by females appear to be overrated by the socio-economic index. For instance, stenographers, typists, and secretaries are rated 61, bookkeepers are rated 51 and bank tellers are rated 52. Third, the aspirations and expectations of females may have a lower reality base due to less frequent employment while in school and a lower level of knowledge concerning wage scales and requirements for positions.

Speculation on the consistency of the aspirations and expectations expressed by males and females is a bit more difficult. The consistency may be the result of the relatively stable occupational structure in the county. It may also be the result of a failure to increase the flow of information concerning occupational opportunities. In addition, the consistency may be a result of a stable condition in terms of personal abilities, family resources and the availability of training facilities.

Finally, the statistical analysis performed in this study may be of questionable value. The socio-economic index is an ordinal rather than an interval measure. Nevertheless, means were computed for use in the t-test. Admittedly, this practice is quite common in the discipline, but it still raises questions. In addition, chi-squares could only be computed on some tables because of the low number of cases in several cells.

### Future Research

Future research on occupational aspirations and occupational expectations needs to be more sophisticated. In line with this declared need, the following suggestions are made.

First, ambition should not be defined solely in terms of the cultural significance of the goal. The relationship is not that simple. Instead, ambition should be defined in terms of the effort an individual must make in order to achieve some announced goal.

The effort an individual must exert in order to attain a certain goal depends on the social situation in which he exists and on his individual capabilities. Consequently, some attempt must be made to measure these items.

The social situation includes the income, education, and occupations represented in the kinship group, especially the parents; the occupations of significant others and lesser members of reference groups; the opportunity for training,



the ease or difficulty of access to the occupation. Individual capabilities include intelligence, emotional make-up and investment in self-identities.

This approach employs both absolute and relative measures. The absolute measure is the aspiration or expectation named by the subject. The relative measure is the amount of effort the individual must exert in order to reach his goal. Consequently, this approach counters the disadvantages of relying strictly on an absolute or a relative measure. Using this approach we would not necessarily classify a lower stratum individual as unambitious because he aspires to a lower stratum occupation nor would we necessarily classify an upper stratum individual as unambitious because he wants to retain the position he received from his parents, but not improve upon it.

Measurement still remains the major problem. How these variables can be quantified at the interval level is still a mystery.

Second, a range of permissible variation should be introduced into the distinction between aspirations and expectations. Each subject should be allowed to name as many aspirations and expectations as he feels are necessary. The subject should be asked to rank the aspirations and expectations he names in order of preference. He should also be asked to indicate which aspirations and expectations represent "success" from his point of view and from the point of view of his significant others.

Third, the socio-economic index should be treated as a continuum. This suggestion could be handled to some degree by dividing the index into 10 categories rather than two. The index is preferred over the census classification of occupations because the census classification is highly indiscriminate.

Fourth, the size of the sample should be large enough to allow an in-depth analysis. A sample size of 1,000 is suggested as a minimum. The sample may be stratified in order to insure ample representation in all categories. Limiting the sample to graduating high school seniors should give a fair representation of the stable working class.

Fifth, the analysis should be conducted in terms of absolute numbers as well as proportions. This procedure may present a more rational view of the mobility aspirations of the lower stratum.

Finally, it is hoped that at least one idea expressed in this thesis may be relevant to future research on occupational aspirations and occupational expectations.

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