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## SOCIAL MOBILITY AND JOB SATISFACTION: A REPLICATION AND EXTENSION\*

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### ABSTRACT

A recent study hypothesizes that manual workers have limited career mobility expectations and thus evaluate their own positions in reference to the positions of fathers, brothers, and/or peers. The present paper presents a test of this hypothesis. It is found that middle-class persons do not use these social references. It is possible that manual workers with limited expectations do use their brothers as a reference point whereas those with high expectations do not. However, although workers' positions relative to their fathers' positions are associated with evaluation, this is true regardless of mobility expectations. Positions of workers in relation to their peers is not associated with evaluation regardless of mobility expectations.

Among the numerous correlates of job satisfaction found in previous research, social mobility has emerged as an important correlate of particular interest to sociologists. Some job satisfaction studies have focused upon *career mobility* and related factors such as mobility perceptions, mobility expectations, and mobility aspirations. That job satisfaction is related to success in climbing the occupational hierarchy has been inferred from a number of studies reporting a direct relationship between occupational status and job satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> That job satisfaction may be a consequence of actual mobility and related factors, such as aspirations, has also been supported by previous research.<sup>2</sup> Other investi-

gators have focused upon *generational mobility* and related factors.<sup>3</sup> A recent investigation by Form and Geschwender, for example, suggests that among manual workers, generational mobility may be more closely associated with job satisfaction than career mobility because:<sup>4</sup>

1. Working-class members tend to perceive chances for career mobility as slight or limited.

*Satisfaction* (Columbus: Ohio State University, Bureau of Business Research, 1952), esp. pp. 41-42, and Nancy C. Morse, *Satisfaction in the White Collar Job* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, 1953), esp. pp. 4, 27-39, 74-75, and 111.

<sup>3</sup>Such a relationship is strongly implied by Robert K. Merton and Alice S. Kitt, "Reference Group Theory and Social Mobility," in Robert K. Merton and Paul F. Lazarsfeld (eds.), *Continuities in Social Research* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 84-95; Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification," in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Class, Status and Power: A Reader in Social Stratification* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 441-442, and by Peter M. Blau, "Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations," *American Sociological Review*, 21 (June 1956), p. 294.

<sup>4</sup>William H. Form and James A. Geschwender, "Social Reference Basis of Job Satisfaction: The Case of Manual Workers," *American Sociological Review*, 27 (April 1962), pp. 228-237.

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Gerald Gurin, Joseph Veroff, and Sheila Feld, *Americans View Their Mental Health* (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 163, and Chris Argyris, *Integrating the Individual and the Organization* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), pp. 50-54.

<sup>2</sup>R. P. Bullock, *Social Factors Related to Job*

2. Thus, rather than personal aspirations, working-class members use such persons as father, brother, or peer as reference points by which to evaluate their own occupational position.

3. Therefore, working-class members who have higher occupational prestige than their fathers, brothers, and/or peers have greater job satisfaction than those members having the same or lower prestige than their fathers, brothers, and/or peers.

Form and Geschwender tested hypotheses derived from only the third proposition.<sup>5</sup> Using data gathered from a sample of 545 manual workers in Lansing, Michigan, in 1950-1951, these hypotheses were supported, although the investigators noted:

This study did not provide direct evidence of the role of ideology as an intervening variable on the relationship between position in the social structure and the subjective evaluation of life circumstances.<sup>6</sup>

Our purpose is to subject their theory to a more rigorous test by (1) deriving hypotheses from the first two propositions and testing them rather than accepting them as a priori assumptions, (2) controlling for the intervening variable suggested in the first proposition—mobility expectations, and (3) exploring the relationships suggested above among working-class and middle-class samples. This research design not only permits a more rigorous test of the propositions listed above but also the examination of the relative influence of career mobility factors and generational mobility on job satisfaction.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

In addition to replicating the Form and Geschwender study, our task is to explore the

<sup>5</sup> Form and Geschwender had no data relating to respondents' mobility expectations or mobility aspirations; however, they did have data on parents' occupational aspirations for respondents. Four-fifths of their respondents reported their parents had no occupational aspirations for them, and another 37 percent of the parents were farmers (with little knowledge of the urban labor market). Thus, the number of respondents reporting parental aspirations was judged to be too small to permit meaningful statistical analysis (*Ibid.*, pp. 230-231).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

relationship between job satisfaction and mobility expectations—the explanatory, but unmeasured, variable used in their study. Thus, the following working hypotheses were derived from the propositions set forth above:

If working-class members tend to perceive chances for occupational mobility as slight or limited, then:

1. A majority of working-class respondents and a significantly greater proportion of workers than salaried managers will believe that their job does *not* lead to a promotion.

If it is true that many working-class members do not expect to achieve occupational positions of higher prestige, then:

2. A majority of working-class respondents and a significantly greater proportion of workers than salaried managers will report that they have no *desire* for promotion to the job immediately above theirs in the organizational hierarchy.

If individuals do not aspire to occupational positions of higher prestige *because* they perceive their chances for occupational mobility as being slight or limited, then:

3. A significantly greater proportion of managers and workers who report their job does *not* lead to a promotion will report that they have no desire for such a promotion than will the managers and workers who report their job *does* lead to a promotion.

If the use of parents', siblings', and peers' occupational positions as reference points in job evaluation is a consequence of low career mobility expectations (or "of desocialization from the aspirational complex learned in school"<sup>7</sup>), then *among those workers and managers who report they do not expect to be promoted to the job immediately above theirs in the organizational or occupational hierarchy:*

4. There will be a positive association between job satisfaction and occupational level of the subject relative to that of his father.

5. There will be a positive association between job satisfaction and occupational level of the subject relative to that of his brothers.

6. There will be a positive association between job satisfaction and generational occupational mobility of the subject relative to the mobility of all those of similar origin, i.e., those whose fathers'

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

occupations were similar to that of the subject's father (generational occupational mobility score, GOMS).<sup>8</sup>

If mobility expectations is an important explanatory variable, then it would logically follow that:

7. Among those workers and managers who reported that they expect promotion to the job immediately above theirs in the organizational or occupational hierarchy, there should be no meaningful association between job satisfaction and occupational level of the subject relative to that of his father, brothers, or peers.

Data for this study are from 225 interviews with manual workers and salaried managers in a Texas coastal community referred to here as "Gulftown." Gulftown is a rapidly growing industrial community (chemicals and nonferrous metals) with a population in excess of 11,000. Lists of salaried managers and manual workers living in Gulftown were compiled, and a random probability sample (and ordered alternate list) was drawn from each.<sup>9</sup> Complete data for this investigation were available for 162 manual workers and 63 salaried managers.<sup>10</sup> The white-collar manager sample includes professionals, semiprofessionals, managers, clerks, and office workers. The blue-collar sample includes foremen, skilled laborers, semiskilled laborers, service workers, and un-

<sup>8</sup> Hypotheses 4-6, with the exception of the control for mobility expectations, are the same as Form and Geschwender's Hypotheses 2-4 (*Ibid.*, pp. 229-230). Generational occupational mobility scores are defined and discussed by Melvin M. Tumin and Arnold S. Feldman, "Theory and Measurement of Occupational Mobility," *American Sociological Review*, 22 (June 1957), pp. 283-284.

<sup>9</sup> The data were gathered in September 1964. More detail in regard to methods may be found in Charles M. Bonjean, "Mass, Class, and the Industrial Community: A Comparative Analysis of Managers, Businessmen and Workers," *American Journal of Sociology*, 72 (September 1966), pp. 149-162.

<sup>10</sup> Replicating the Form and Geschwender study necessitated the reclassification of some respondents originally in the manager sample as manual workers. Other reports using these data employ local (Gulftown) definitions of "worker" and "manager"

skilled laborers. The former sample could be termed "middle class" and the latter "working class."

*Mobility perceptions* were measured by asking each respondent, "Does your job lead to a promotion if you do it well?" "Yes" answers were treated as indicators of positive mobility perceptions, while "no" answers were considered indicative of negative perceptions.

*Mobility expectations* were measured by asking each respondent if he thought things would work out so that he could be promoted to the position one step up the ladder from the occupational position he currently held. "Yes" answers were considered indicators of high mobility expectations, while "no" answers were considered indicators of low expectations.

*Mobility aspirations* were measured by first asking respondents, "In your company, what is the position one step up the ladder from you?" and then by asking, "Do you have any desire to ever hold this position?" Affirmative answers to the second question were considered indicators of high mobility aspirations.

*Job satisfaction* was measured by using the same question and similar response categories as those used by Form and Geschwender: "How do you like your job?" The five possible response categories, "very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied and very dissatisfied" were scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The mean score for workers was 4.01, slightly higher than Form and Geschwender's mean score of 3.84.<sup>11</sup> The mean score for managers was 4.24.

*Occupational prestige* levels were assigned values as follows: professional, 11; semiprofessionals, 10; owners and self-employed, 9; managers and white-collar sales, 8; owners and managers of farms, 7; clerical and office workers, 6; skilled workers and foremen, 5; semi-skilled workers, 4; service workers, 3; unskilled workers, 2; and agricultural day laborers, 1. Our classification departs from that of Form and Geschwender in that it is slightly more precise, using 11 categories instead of seven.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Form and Geschwender, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>12</sup> The more detailed classification scheme was used because (1) it is the scheme called for in

The *generational occupational mobility* score (GOMS) is an index of the subject's mobility relative to the mobility of all sons (in the sample) of fathers occupationally similar to the subject's father. In short, it is a measure of respondent mobility relative to the generational mobility of his peers. The revision suggested by Geschwender was used in this analysis.<sup>13</sup>

## FINDINGS

The idea that members of the working class tend to perceive chances for occupational mobility as slight or limited is given partial support. Hypothesis 1, which states that a *majority* of working-class respondents would report that their job does not lead to a promotion, is not supported. Table 1 indicates that more than half (57.0%) believe their job leads to a promotion if done well. On the other hand, mobility perceptions of manual workers *relative* to those of managers are indeed negative. A significantly larger proportion of managers (87.1%) state that their jobs lead to a promotion. It should also be noted that when asked if they *expected* to be promoted, a large majority (75.3%) of the manual workers said "no" (see Table 2). Mobility expectations of manual workers are also statistically significantly lower than those of managers.

That manual workers have low mobility aspirations is also given only partial support. Table 3 shows that, although a significantly greater proportion of workers (36.9%) than managers (23.3%) indicate they have no desire for promotion to the position above theirs in

the computation of generational occupational mobility scores (see Tumin and Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 285) and (2) because it was slightly more precise than the seven-category scheme used in the original analysis, differentiating, for example, between professionals and semiprofessionals.

<sup>13</sup> James A. Geschwender, "Theory and Measurement of Occupational Mobility: A Reexamination," *American Sociological Review*, 26 (June 1961), pp. 451-452. It should be noted that Geschwender has since developed some question about using GOMS scores where sampling does not yield a complete range of sons with similarly situated fathers. He now feels that the use of such scores should be restricted to samples of total communities (personal correspondence, May 13, 1966).

TABLE 1. PERCENT OF MANUAL WORKERS AND SALARIED MANAGERS INDICATING THEIR JOB LEADS TO A PROMOTION

	Percent	N
Manual workers.....	57.0	161
Managers.....	87.1	62

$P_{mw, m} < .001.$

TABLE 2. PERCENT OF MANUAL WORKERS AND SALARIED MANAGERS INDICATING THEY EXPECT TO BE PROMOTED

	Percent	N
Manual workers.....	24.7	162
Managers.....	87.1	62

$P_{mw, m} < .001.$

TABLE 3. PERCENT OF MANUAL WORKERS AND SALARIED MANAGERS REPORTING THEY HAVE NO DESIRE FOR PROMOTION (OR ITS EQUIVALENT)

	Percent	N
Manual workers.....	36.9	160
Managers.....	23.3	60

$P_{mw, m} < .05.$

the organizational or occupational hierarchy, a majority of the manual workers (63.1%) indicate that they *desire* such a promotion.

Table 4 shows that the great majority of manual workers and managers who believe their job leads to a promotion also express the desire for promotion. Furthermore, managers and workers who believe their job leads to a promotion are much more likely to express a desire for promotion than those respondents believing that their job does not lead to a promotion. Thus, the data support Hypothesis 3 which suggests that it is likely that individuals do not aspire to occupational positions of higher prestige because they perceive their chances for occupational mobility as being slight, limited, or nonexistent.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Not central, but perhaps related, to the miniature theory being examined is the relationship between mobility expectations, mobility aspirations, and job satisfaction. Data analysis indicated that manual workers and salaried managers who believed their jobs led to a promotion tended to evaluate their jobs in a more positive manner

TABLE 4. PERCENT OF MANUAL WORKERS AND MANAGERS WITH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MOBILITY PERCEPTIONS HAVING HIGH AND LOW MOBILITY ASPIRATIONS

Mobility Perceptions	Mobility Aspirations			
	Workers		Managers	
	(1) high	(2) low	(1) high	(2) low
Respondent's job leads to a promotion . . . . .	72.5 (N=66)	27.5 (N=25)	80.4 (N=41)	19.6 (N=10)
Respondent's job does <i>not</i> lead to a promotion . . . . .	51.5 (N=35)	48.5 (N=33)	50.0 (N=4)	50.0 (N=4)

$P_{mw}$  (positive perceptions) 1, 2 < .01.  
 $P_m$  (positive perceptions) 1, 2 < .01.

TABLE 5. JOB SATISFACTION AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF SONS RELATIVE TO THAT OF FATHERS, CONTROLLING FOR MOBILITY EXPECTATIONS

Sons' Occupational Level Relative to Fathers' Occupations (and sample)	High Expectations		Low Expectations	
	$\bar{X}$ Job Satisfaction Score of Sons	N	$\bar{X}$ Job Satisfaction Score of Sons	N
<i>Manual workers</i>				
1. Sons' occupations lower than fathers' occupational level	4.19	21	3.93	61
2. Sons' occupations the same as fathers' occupational level	4.00	7	3.92	22
3. Sons' occupations higher than fathers' occupational level	4.40	11	4.17	35
<i>Managers</i>				
1. Sons' occupations lower than fathers' occupational level	4.50	4	4.50	6
2. Sons' occupations the same as fathers' occupational level	4.00	2	5.00	2
3. Sons' occupations higher than fathers' occupational level	4.27	33	3.94	16

$P_{mw}$  (low expectations) 1, 3 approaches .05 ( $z = 1.92$ ).

An analysis of the data relating job satisfaction of manual workers and managers (considered separately) to their occupational positions relative to those of their fathers, brothers, and peers, without controlling for mobility expectations, yielded little support for the reference group explanation presented by Form and Geschwender. Some relationships were in the

than those who perceived their chances for occupational mobility as being limited, although the differences were not significant. On the other hand, mobility aspirations were related to job satisfaction in the opposite direction. Manual workers and salaried managers with low aspirations experienced greater job satisfaction than those with high aspirations. Indeed, this lends some support to the suggestion that high aspirants use higher-status groups as reference points in the valuation of their life situations and their jobs (as suggested by Form and Geschwender, *op. cit.*, p. 229). Similar findings have been reported by Morse, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-31.

expected direction, but none was statistically significant.<sup>15</sup>

If low mobility expectations lead to the adoption of fathers, brothers, and peers as significant others for purposes of evaluation, then among those respondents having low mobility expectations, the predicted relationships between job satisfaction and relative occupational level should be considerably stronger.

Table 5 indicates that among manual workers, there is a positive, although not statistically significant, association between job satisfaction and occupational level of the subject relative to that of his father *regardless of mobility expectations*. Thus, the control variable has little, if any, effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and generational mobility. This seems to indicate that if manual workers use their fathers as reference points to evaluate

<sup>15</sup> The tables are available upon request.

TABLE 6. JOB SATISFACTION AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS RELATIVE TO THAT OF BROTHERS, CONTROLLING FOR MOBILITY EXPECTATIONS

Occupational Level Relative to Brothers' Occupations (and sample)	High Expectations		Low Expectations	
	$\bar{X}$ Job Satis- faction Score	N	$\bar{X}$ Job Satis- faction Score	N
<i>Manual workers</i>				
1. Occupational level lower than that of brothers.....	4.26	19	3.93	41
2. Occupational level same as that of brothers.....	4.00	4	3.78	18
3. Occupational level higher than that of brothers.....	4.29	7	4.24	33
<i>Managers</i>				
1. Occupational level lower than that of brothers.....	4.50	6	4.50	6
2. Occupational level same as that of brothers.....	4.80	5	4.33	3
3. Occupational level higher than that of brothers.....	4.07	14	3.60	5

$F_{mv}$  (low expectations) 1, 3 < .05.

their own position, it is not because they have low mobility expectations, as suggested by Form and Geschwender. On the other hand, the data in Table 5 show that, although there may be some association between generational mobility and job satisfaction among manual workers, no such association exists among managers. This supports Form and Geschwender's suggestion that generational mobility may be relevant for manual workers but not for middle-class respondents.<sup>16</sup>

Among manual workers with low mobility expectations, there is a positive association between job satisfaction and the respondent's occupational level relative to that of his brothers' occupational level.<sup>17</sup> As Table 6 indicates, the control variable of mobility expectations appears to be critical because no such relationship is found among manual workers with high mobility expectations. It appears that among workers with low expectations, the relative position of one's brother is strongly related to job satisfaction. On the other hand,

<sup>16</sup> The relationship between managers' job satisfaction and occupational position relative to fathers' occupational positions should be interpreted with extreme caution given the small number of managers with occupations of lower prestige than those of their fathers.

<sup>17</sup> Form and Geschwender limited their analysis to workers having only one working brother. Our procedure departs from theirs at this point as we used the mean occupational position of all brothers. The number of cases in this analysis is smaller than the total sample because all respondents did not have brothers.

there is no statistically significant association between job satisfaction and brothers' positions relative to the respondent's position among managers. This finding, then, further suggests that job satisfaction may not be associated with the relative status or mobility of family members among middle-class respondents.

An examination of the data presented in Table 7 indicates that peers having fathers of similar occupational prestige to the subject's father (as indexed by the GOMS scores) are not a salient reference group for the workers and managers in Gulftown. Further, the control variable of mobility expectations appears to have no effect upon the relationship between GOMS and job satisfaction.

Form and Geschwender (and others) have noted that persons use many social references simultaneously. Consequently, they compared workers having upward generational occupational mobility (GOMS) and higher occupational prestige than both fathers and brothers with workers having downward mobility relative to peers and lower occupational prestige than their fathers and brothers. Since generational occupational mobility is not associated with job satisfaction in our samples, GOMS scores were deleted, and a comparison was made of workers having higher occupational prestige than fathers and brothers with workers having lower occupational prestige than fathers and brothers. As is shown in Table 8, there is a statistically significant association between job satisfaction and position relative to fathers and brothers for workers having low mo-

TABLE 7. JOB SATISFACTION AND VERTICAL OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AS MEASURED BY THE REVISED GENERATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY SCORE FOR MANUAL WORKERS AND MANAGERS WITH HIGH AND LOW MOBILITY EXPECTATIONS

GOMS z score	Managers				Manual workers			
	High Expectations		Low Expectations		High Expectations		Low Expectations	
	Job Satisfaction	N	Job Satisfaction	N	Job Satisfaction	N	Job Satisfaction	N
7.79	4.4	5						
7.85	4.0	2						
8.13	5.0	1						
8.23	3.7	3	4.0	2				
8.47	4.7	3	5.0	2				
8.50	4.0	1						
8.51			5.0	1				
8.60	5.0	1						
8.85			3.0	1				
8.90			4.0	1				
9.02	4.0	2						
9.11			4.0	1				
9.15	4.0	3	4.5	2				
9.21			4.0	1				
9.27			4.0	1				
9.33			4.0	1				
9.35	4.7	3						
9.45	4.0	1						
9.65					4.0	2	4.0	4
9.76					4.0	1	4.5	2
9.77	5.0	1	5.0	3				
9.98	4.0	1						
10.01	3.0	1	4.0	2				
10.05	4.5	2						
10.06	4.0	2	3.0	2				
10.08					4.5	2	4.0	3
10.10	4.5	2	4.0	1				
10.15	4.0	2						
10.20					3.0	2	4.1	8
10.23							4.0	3
10.35							4.0	2
10.44					4.0	1	5.0	2
10.48					4.2	4	3.9	15
10.50					5.0	1	4.0	1
10.51					4.0	7	4.0	17
10.62					5.0	1	1.0	1
10.64	4.0	1	4.0	1				
10.85					3.5	2	4.0	20
10.88							3.3	3
10.91							4.5	2
10.94					4.0	2	4.0	2
10.96					4.2	5	3.6	13
11.06							4.3	3
11.08			5.0	2	4.3	3	4.2	6
11.23					4.0	1		
11.27					4.0	1	5.0	1
11.35					4.0	1		
11.51					4.0	2	4.0	4
11.60					5.0	1	4.0	1
11.63					5.0	1		

\* (managers, high expectations) = -.11.  
 \* (managers, low expectations) = .02.  
 \* (workers, high expectations) = .16.  
 \* (workers, low expectations) = -.07.



TABLE 8. JOB SATISFACTION AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY RELATIVE TO FATHERS AND BROTHERS FOR WORKERS WITH HIGH AND LOW MOBILITY EXPECTATIONS

	Mobility Expectations			
	High		Low	
	$\bar{X}$ Job Satisfaction	N	$\bar{X}$ Job Satisfaction	N
Respondents' occupations higher than father and brothers	4.16	6	4.35	17
Respondents' occupations lower than father and brothers	4.23	13	3.75	24

$P_{\text{low}} \text{ expectations} < .01.$

bility expectations but not for workers having high mobility expectations. This provides further support for the third proposition. A similar analysis of managers was not done as there were too few cases of managers having lower occupational prestige than both fathers and brothers.

#### SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

Seven hypotheses have been examined in order to test the three propositions which summarize the reference group theory set forth by Form and Geschwender. The hypotheses were partially supported.

That working-class members tend to perceive chances for career mobility as slight or limited and that individuals with negative mobility perceptions have low aspirations were supported by the data.

The hypotheses based on the general proposition that respondents with low expectations for upward mobility would use fathers, brothers, and peers as reference points in evaluating their own occupational positions, whereas those with high mobility expectations would evaluate their positions in reference to their own career orientations, received only partial support among workers. The hypotheses were not supported for managers.

Although not statistically significant, workers having low mobility expectations with occupational prestige higher than that of their fathers tended to have higher job satisfaction scores than those with positions lower than their fathers. However, a similar association was found among workers having high mobility

expectations. Thus, generational mobility may be associated with job satisfaction, but mobility expectations may not be the relevant explanatory variable.

Manual workers with low mobility expectations having higher occupational prestige than brothers were more satisfied with their jobs than workers in positions having lower prestige than their brother's. As hypothesized, this relationship was not found among workers with high mobility expectations.

No association was found using generational occupational mobility (GOMS) as an independent variable for either workers or managers. Thus, the hypothesis suggesting peers as a reference point was not supported.

Combining workers having higher occupational prestige than both fathers and brothers and comparing them with those having lower prestige than both yielded a statistically significant association for workers with low mobility expectations but not among workers with high expectations. Thus, examining the use of two social references simultaneously provides clear support for the reference group explanation. Among those having low mobility expectations, the difference between the two mean job satisfaction scores is larger than the differences observed when fathers and brothers were considered independently. Further, the mean job satisfaction score for those having higher prestige than both fathers and brothers is considerably higher than the mean job satisfaction score for the entire sample of workers (4.35 compared with 4.01). Since the mean for the entire sample of workers falls approximately midway between the two relevant scores presented in Table 8, Form and Geschwender's suggestion that workers are both social references simultaneously to evaluate their occupational positions is given additional support.<sup>18</sup>

Apparently manual workers do use other family members (fathers and brothers) as ref-

<sup>18</sup> Form and Geschwender found approximately the same relationship using the combination of overachievement on GOMS and having an occupational level higher than that of father and brother compared with underachievement on GOMS and having an occupational level lower than father and brother. Of course, the findings in both studies do not "prove" that workers use both

erence points in evaluating their occupational position, whereas salaried managers do not. That this is done because of low mobility expectations appears to be most applicable in the case of brothers as reference points. Fathers may be reference points for manual workers regardless of their mobility expectations.

In general, then, with the exception of peers having fathers with similar occupational prestige to the respondent's father, Form and Geschwender's findings are supported, although their explanation is less well supported. Workers are said to use these significant social references in evaluating their own occupational positions because they have limited mobility expectations. By implication, individuals at other occupational levels should also use these significant others as reference points *if* they too have limited mobility expectations. Our findings indicate that this is not true for middle-class respondents and only partially supported for working-class respondents.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the problem at this point is to attempt to explain why workers use family members as social reference points to evaluate their own positions, while managers do not. It is true that managers are more mobile than workers and, in this manner, may cut off ties with family members. However, since 49.1 percent of the managers and 58.3 percent of the workers in this investigation had lived in Gulftown for more than ten years (a difference which is not statistically significant), it is not likely that this accounts for the difference in the use of family members as reference points.

Another obvious explanation may involve the fathers and brothers simultaneously as social references, but they strongly suggest that this is the case.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that the sample sizes for those respondents having the same and those having higher occupational prestige than brothers are quite small among workers with high mobility expectations (Table 6). Thus, given the possibility of sampling error, no strong contention can be made that mobility expectations is a critical variable in explaining this relationship. If brothers are indeed social references only under certain conditions (low mobility expectations), then investigations of the nature of adult sibling rivalry in working-class families could prove informative.

central place of the family of orientation (and the extended family) in the working-class subculture compared with the middle-class subculture. Data from our respondents indicate there is a significantly greater frequency of interaction among extended family members in the working-class sample as compared with the middle-class sample. Table 9 shows that 42.6 percent of the managers did not visit with any family members outside the nuclear family of procreation during the month prior to data collection, while only 11.0 percent of the workers were without extended family contact.<sup>20</sup> To the degree that individuals incorporated in a group's network of social relations are more likely to adhere to the group's norms and standards than nominal members not incorporated

TABLE 9. NUMBER OF TIMES MANUAL WORKERS AND MANAGERS VISITED RELATED FAMILIES DURING THE MONTH PRECEDING DATA COLLECTION

Number of visits	Managers		Workers	
	Percent	N	Percent	N
None.....	42.6	26	11.0	17
One.....	16.4	10	7.7	12
Two.....	8.2	5	13.6	21
Three.....	6.6	4	16.1	25
Four or more.....	26.2	16	51.6	80

Four or more visits,  $P_{mw, m} < .01$ .  
No visits,  $P_{mw, m} < .001$ .

or only slightly incorporated in the network of social relations, it follows that workers *would* be more likely to include family members in their occupational reference group.<sup>21</sup> This, of course, does not suggest that a reference group interpretation of job satisfaction would be in-

<sup>20</sup> The differential incidence of familial interaction among working-class and middle-class persons has been documented in several studies. See for example, Joseph A. Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1953), p. 208 and pp. 141-147; Marvin B. Sussman and Lee Burchinal, "Kin Family Network: Unheralded Structure in Current Conceptualizations of Family Functioning," in William J. Goode (ed.), *Readings on the Family and Society* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 170-175; and Bennett M. Berger, *Working Class Suburb: A Study of Auto Workers in Suburbia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960).

appropriate for middle-class persons, only that, if applicable, such persons use different reference points.

In summary, the use of family members as occupational reference points by working-class

<sup>21</sup> This has been suggested by Merton and Kitt, *op. cit.*, p. 94, and others.

respondents may be mediated by the "belief in opportunities or lack of opportunities for workers to rise in the occupational hierarchy,"<sup>22</sup> but it is probably also a consequence of the greater frequency of family interaction among respondents at this level.

<sup>22</sup> Form and Geschwender, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

## OCCUPATIONAL STATUS AND HUSBAND-WIFE SOCIAL PARTICIPATION\*

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates husband-wife social participation by occupational status in Greensboro, North Carolina. The major conclusions include the following: (1) In the sample as a whole, churchgoing and kin-visiting are the dominant activities, with family and commercial recreation also widespread and frequent. (2) Upper-middle-class professional and managerial couples most closely approximate the popular notion of "togetherness," as evidenced by their frequent participation in commercial recreation, churchgoing, and family entertaining and recreation. (3) Working-class couples' major social involvement is in kin-visiting. (4) The ideas of both a status continuum and the white-collar-blue-collar dichotomy are useful in interpreting the data, although the highest and lowest white-collar categories are difficult to account for by either of these conceptions.

These are days of husband-wife "togetherness" in the popular family magazines, and in much other family literature as well. They are days of the barbecue, the weekend at the lake, and the joint organizational membership. In view of the much-lamented impersonality of urban existence, husbands and wives are instructed to face life together, to enter the neighborhood, community, and society together. The assumed prevalence of the practice of couple mutuality has caused one author to caution about the dangers inherent in couples overdoing mutual recreational involvement.<sup>1</sup>

To what extent are the generalizations or

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<sup>1</sup> T. R. Young, "Recreation and Family Stress: An Essay in Institutional Conflicts," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 26 (February 1964), pp. 95-96.

admonitions regarding "togetherness" empirically correct? Which elements of urban populations do engage in activities together as couples, and in what activities do they participate? What, in fact, is the relation between occupational level and couple involvement? The answers to these and other questions regarding husband-wife leisure participation form the subject matter of the present paper.

There has been substantial recent research on social activity, but it is largely concerned with the individual rather than with the joint activity of husbands and wives. Nevertheless, a review of the literature on individual participation may serve as an appropriate point of departure for our discussion.

The most intensive and thorough analysis of social involvement refers to voluntary associations. This research has established the positive association between class, as measured by various indicators, and participation in both formal and informal organizations. This was reported by the Lynds more than a generation