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Social Mobility and Social Participation

By WILLIAM H. SEWELL

ABSTRACT: This article examines the charts and tables contained in chapter 11 of *Social Indicators, 1976* covering a wide range of social behavior under the general topic "Social Mobility and Social Participation." The topics covered include educational and occupational mobility, voting in national elections, volunteer work, charitable giving, participation in community organizations, views on religion, and feelings of anomie. Most readers will agree that this is a potpourri of topics but that all have bearing on the well-being of citizens. There would be less agreement on the significance of most of the indicators for public policy. The factual conclusions that can be drawn from the tables and charts are discussed and additional information from recent research on some of the topics is presented—particularly on educational and occupational mobility, voting and political behavior, and participation in community organizations.

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CHAPTER 11 of *Social Indicators, 1976*, is devoted to the topic "Social Mobility and Social Participation." It includes 22 charts and the tables on which these charts are based. The sources of this information are numerous, but all come from sample surveys made by various governmental and private-not-for-profit research agencies. Unlike indicators based on census data, the time dimensions involved are usually limited to recent years; consequently, it is difficult in some instances to detect a trend. The indicators selected for inclusion actually cover a very wide range of social behavior that presumably provide a basis for gauging the well-being of citizens in the United States, which is the stated purpose of the chapter. They are educational and occupational mobility, voting in national elections, volunteer work, charitable giving, participation in voluntary associations, views on the importance of religion, and feelings of anomie. This is indeed a potpourri of topics, but most readers would agree that all of them have a bearing on the well-being of citizens. On the particular indicators selected for presentation and their importance for social well-being, there will be much less general agreement. Finally, there would be great disagreement about the significance of most of the indicators for public policy. I am not convinced that my opinions on these matters are of any great interest, nor are any more informed than those of the reader. Consequently, little space will be devoted to these matters. Rather, the factual conclusions that can be drawn from the information contained in the indicators will be discussed. If I consider the topic to be of great importance and if I know something about it from my own re-

search and reading, additional information will be presented. Greatest attention will be given to social mobility because this is my area of specialization. Somewhat less attention will be given to voting and political behavior because I have not done original research in this area, but an attempt will be made to supplement the information reflected in the indicators by providing a brief and selective summary of pertinent findings from recent research on the topic. I have no special knowledge or interest in the other topics contained under the rubric social participation. Consequently, my handling of these matters admittedly will be perfunctory.

SOCIAL MOBILITY

Sociologists have long been fascinated with the amount and nature of social mobility in a given society. American sociologists have been particularly concerned with this subject, perhaps because the American value system places great emphasis not only on socioeconomic achievement but also on equality of opportunity for social and economic advancement. Much of the research on social stratification in American society has been involved with the extent to which the members of our society, at a particular point in time, have been able to take advantage of opportunities to improve their social status over that of their parents and with the trends in social mobility over time. Most of the studies have been of adult, white males, and have been concerned with comparing the attainments of a sample of sons with those of their fathers. Much of this research has been done using a mobility table in which the son's current status (education,

occupation, earnings, etc.) is cross-tabulated with his father's status at some point in the father's working career. Such a table provides the basis for estimating the extent to which adult sons have moved up or down or remained in the same status category as their fathers. The marginals of the mobility table also provide information on the status distributions of the father's and the son's generations. However, only limited inferences about earlier periods may be drawn from these comparisons because the fathers tend to be a biased sample of men in the parental generation—obviously males without male children could not possibly be in the sample. For that matter, there are a number of technical problems, which need not be gone into here, in the computation of mobility statistics from mobility matrices.¹

The two status achievements that have been the subject of greatest analysis are educational and occupational attainments—the two on which charts and tables have been presented in Chapter 11 of *Social Indicators*, 1976.

Educational mobility

Data are available to show the changes in the mean levels of education completed by five-year birth cohorts of American men in the civilian, noninstitutionalized population in March 1962 and March 1973, and to indicate the intergenerational—father to son—shifts in educational attainment at the two time periods. The 1962 data are from the Blau and Duncan Occupational Changes in a Generation (OCG)

1. For a discussion of these problems, see Robert M. Hauser, "A Structural Model of the Mobility Table," *Social Forces*, vol. 56 (March 1978).

survey² and the 1973 data are from replicate surveys conducted by Featherman and Hauser.^{3,4}

Levels of education of cohorts of men born since 1900 have been increasing substantially and regularly over a period of 50 years. The evidence for this is that both in the 1962 and in the 1973 samples, men in each successively younger birth cohort had obtained more education than those born earlier in the century. Thus, in the 1962 sample the range in mean educational attainment was from 8.9 for men aged 60–65 (born 1897–1901) to 11.8 for men aged 20–25 (born 1937–41). In the 1973 sample, the means for the same age groups were 9.9 (born 1907–11) and 12.8 (born 1937–51), respectively. If we compare the oldest age group, those who were 60–65 in 1962, with the youngest, those who were 20–25 in 1973, the mean increase in schooling is 3.7 years, which probably is an underestimate of the true increase because many of those in the youngest cohort were still in school or would return for more schooling in the future.

Another important trend is that there has been a great decrease in the variability of schooling across age cohorts. Because of this trend and the general trend toward higher levels of educational attainment, inequality in the distribution of schooling has fallen rapidly from one

2. Peter M. Blau and Otis D. Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure* (New York: Wiley, 1967).

3. David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, "Design for A Replicate Study of Social Mobility in the United States," in *Social Indicator Models*, eds. Kenneth C. Land and Seymour Spilerman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975) pp. 219–52.

4. Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, "Equality of Schooling: Trends and Prospects," *Sociology of Education*, vol. 49 (April 1976) pp. 99–120.

cohort to the next. Thus, schooling has become more equally distributed during the twentieth century.⁵

In March 1962 sons reported that they have had from two to three years more education than their fathers. For the 1973 survey, the sons reported from two to almost four years more schooling than their fathers. The intergenerational differences were greatest in the ten year period 1917–27 and have since declined. Thus, the trend would appear to be for the educational gap between fathers and their sons to be narrowing over time. It is possible that this gap will continue to lessen because of the increasingly high proportion of men in each cohort who are graduating from high school and obtaining postsecondary education. Unless a trend toward greater college retention occurs in the future, it seems quite likely that we will soon be reaching a mean educational level that will not be greatly exceeded by future generations.

Hauser and Featherman have done further analysis of the data from the OCG surveys. Their regression analysis of factors associated with educational achievement indicates that the disadvantages which in the past have been associated with farm background, broken families, southern birth, black skin, and Spanish origin seem to be declining but that those associated with large families and poorly educated fathers have persisted. Finally, their analysis of similarities in the correlations between the educational attainments of their sample members and their eldest brothers indicates that at least 50 percent of the variance in schooling which they have observed in their analysis can be explained by

the global effects of family background.⁶

Race and schooling

Unfortunately, there is no information on mean years of schooling completed nor on intergenerational shifts in educational attainment for blacks. However, we may again turn to the research of Hauser and Featherman for information on trends in schooling by race.⁷ Their evidence, comparing the educational achievements of white and black men in the 1962 and 1973 OCG samples, shows that there were large and regular increases in the educational attainments of both races. The mean years of schooling of the total sample of black males was 8.1 years in 1962 and 10.1 years in 1973; the comparable figures for white males were 11.0 years in 1962 and 12.0 years in 1973. In 1962, the oldest cohort of black workers (aged 60–65) averaged 5.4 years of schooling, but by 1973 the youngest cohort (aged 20–25) averaged 11.6 years; for whites the comparable means were 9.6 and 12.7. Also, there was a decline in educational inequality, as indicated by lower standard deviations, for both black and white males. This decline was brought about by the combined effects of the reduced importance of social background and by increased equality among men with the same social backgrounds. Specific comparisons of the mean educational attainments of black and white males by birth cohorts reveals that among young males (aged 25–34) the gap between the races narrowed from 2.3 in 1962 to 1.2 years in 1973. Actually, when differences in the socioeconomic backgrounds of black and white young men are

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 102–104.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 104–18.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–16.

taken into account, their educational attainments are now virtually identical. Hauser and Featherman did not have similar information on the educational attainments of either black or white females, so parallel comparisons were not made for women.

The fact that comparable tables covering women's educational achievements by race are not available from the OCG surveys, and that no attempt has been made to present the data from Census and other sources on trends in women's educational mobility, must be counted as a major shortcoming of Chapter 11 of *Social Indicators*, 1976.

Occupational mobility

There have been important changes in social stratification and, more particularly, in occupational mobility in the United States in the period 1962-73.⁸ A comparison of the data for 1962 with the same data for 1973 for all employed men, mainly white, shows a trend away from farming and manual occupations into white-collar occupations. The percentage of all employed men who were in each of the white-collar occupational categories was somewhat larger in 1973 than in 1962, whereas the percentage in each manual occupational category declined slightly and the percentage in farming declined markedly during the period. This overall trend out of farming and manual occupations into the white-collar occupations has been going on in the United States throughout this century.

8. Based on tables contained in Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, "Occupations and Social Mobility in the United States" (Discussion Paper no. 36, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1976).

On the whole, blacks have made a rather striking shift from lower status occupations to higher status occupations during the period. Just under 6 percent of all employed black men were in upper white-collar jobs in 1962, but in 1973 almost 12 percent were so employed. Likewise, only 6 percent of the blacks were in lower white-collar occupations in 1962 in comparison with just over 11 percent in 1973. Moreover, black gains were not limited to the white-collar occupations; blacks were also considerably more likely to be in upper manual occupations in 1973 than in 1962 (15 percent versus 9 percent, respectively). These upward trends in the occupational distribution of black workers resulted from shifts out of lower manual work and farming into higher status occupations. However, it should be noted that despite the marked gains by blacks, inferrable from the occupational distributions in 1962 and 1973, blacks in 1973 were still noticeably concentrated in the lower manual occupational status category; 68 percent of all black workers were lower manual in 1962 and in 1973 the figure was 59 percent.

There was a marked tendency toward occupational status inheritance for the total male civilian labor force, both in 1962 and in 1973. Sons in a given occupational status category were more likely to have been recruited from their father's occupational category than from any other occupational category. There was also a great deal of occupational mobility among male workers, both in the 1962 and in the 1973 samples. In both years, well over one-fourth of the sons of upper white-collar workers were in manual occupations; for sons of lower white-collar workers the movement into the manual occupations was still greater. However,

there was even more upward mobility: in both of the years, from 30 to 40 percent of the sons of manual workers were engaged in white-collar work. A comparison of the occupational distributions of sons and their fathers indicates that approximately one-half of the sons were upwardly mobile in 1962 and in 1973. What is striking, however, is that there are no important differences in the patterns of father-son mobility in 1962 and 1973.

The pattern of occupational inheritance, indicated by the fact that sons were most likely to be in the same occupational status category as their fathers, does not hold for blacks in either 1962 or 1973. The most striking fact is that black fathers are less able to pass on their higher status occupations to their sons than are higher status fathers generally. Thus, in both 1962 and 1973, but especially in 1962, the most likely destination for sons of blacks whose fathers were white-collar workers was lower manual occupations. In fact, this was the most likely occupation for black males, in both 1962 and 1973, regardless of their origins. Upward movement, from the manual to the white-collar occupations, although sizeable, was considerably less marked in both years. The movement out of farming, especially into the manual occupations, was impressive in both years. Still there was a rather dramatic shift in 1973 in the occupational mobility of black men toward the pattern which characterized all men in the labor force in 1962 and 1973. Thus, in 1973 there was a strong tendency for black sons of white-collar fathers to become white-collar workers, and there was an increased likelihood that sons of farmers and manual workers would enter the white-col-

lar occupations. Even with these changes, black men in 1973 experienced less occupational inheritance and less upward mobility than all employed men.

What has been said above is true only in a gross sense and more precise conclusions about occupational mobility in the period can come only from more complete analysis of the data. It is obvious that one would wish to know more accurately the extent to which upward mobility during the period is due to increases in the relative mobility chances of men whose fathers held different occupations, rather than to changes in the occupational structure over the period. One would wish also to know the extent to which any gains in upward occupational mobility, for either whites or blacks, were distributed among various age cohorts of employed men. Finally, to the extent possible, one would wish to know more about the complex process by which sons attain their current occupational status, taking into account at least their socioeconomic origins, including their fathers' occupation and their fathers' education, their own educational attainments, and their initial jobs. These are the variables used by Blau and Duncan in their now classic causal model of occupational attainment.⁹ If possible, one would wish also to know the effects of measured ability and other social-psychological variables such as school grades, the encouragement of significant others, and educational and occupational aspirations in the attainment process. These are the variables that Sewell and his associates have introduced into the Blau and Duncan model to

9. Blau and Duncan, *American Occupational Structure*, pp. 163-204.

further explain the process of socioeconomic achievement.¹⁰

Fortunately, in the past ten years a great deal of analyses of the kinds noted above have been completed. Although many scholars have been involved in this research, the most pertinent and extensive recent work has been carried out by Featherman and Hauser, using data from the OCG surveys and the Census. While it would be impossible in the space available to adequately summarize their analyses, several of their major conclusions should be presented to round out our discussion of occupational mobility.¹¹

10. William H. Sewell, Archibald O. Haller, and Alejandro Portes, "The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 34 (February 1969) pp. 82-92; and William H. Sewell, Archibald O. Haller, and George W. Ohlendorf, "The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process: Replication and Revisions," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 35 (December 1970) pp. 1014-27.

11. For further detail and for consideration of aspects of their work not covered by references in this article, the reader may wish to consult Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, *The Process of Stratification: Trends and Analysis* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); and David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, *Opportunity and Change* (forthcoming, Academic Press).

Important recent work on stratification and social mobility not cited in this article would include at least the following: James S. Coleman *et al.*, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1966); Otis D. Duncan, David L. Featherman, and Beverly Duncan, *Socioeconomic Background and Achievement* (New York: Seminar Press, 1972); R. W. Hodge and D. J. Treiman, "Class Identification in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 73 (March 1968), pp. 535-42; Leo A. Goodman, "How to Ransack Social Mobility Tables and Other Kinds of Cross-Classification Tables," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 75 (July 1969) pp. 1-40; Otis D. Duncan, "Social Stratification and Social Mobility: Problems in the Measurement of Trend," in *Indicators of Social Change*,

First, using much finer grained categories of occupational status, they have shown that the shift in the occupational structure, toward the ranks of upper white-collar and lower white-collar occupations and away from farming and manual occupations, has been going on for several decades in the United States.¹²

Second, the long-time trend in occupational mobility in the United States is neither uniform nor inevitable. In the period 1962-73 there was more mobility than in the previous decade but less than in 1942-52. Future occupational mobility is greatly limited by the rapid depletion of such occupational groups as service workers, laborers, and farmers, which in the past have served as sources for recruitment into the higher status occupations.

Third, no changes have taken place in the rates of intergenerational occupational mobility in the American male labor force in the last half-century that cannot be accounted for by the changing occupational distribution.¹³ The evidence

eds. Eleanor B. Sheldon and Wilbert E. Moore (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968); Natale R. Ramsøy, "Changes in the Rates and Forms of Mobility," in *Social Structure and Mobility in Economic Development*, eds. Neil J. Smelser and Seymour M. Lipset (Chicago: Aldine, 1966); Lawrence E. Hazelrigg and Maurice A. Garnier, "Occupational Mobility In Industrial Societies: A Comparative Analysis of Differential Access to Occupational Ranks in Seventeen Countries," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 41 (June 1976) pp. 498-510; and Joan Huber and William H. Form, *Income and Ideology* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

12. Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, "Trends in the Occupational Mobility of U.S. Men, 1962-1970," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 38 (June 1973) pp. 302-10.

13. See especially Robert M. Hauser *et al.*, "Temporal Change in Occupational Mobility: Evidence for Men in the United States,"

indicates that although successive cohorts have had more opportunities to enter high status occupations, regardless of their social origins, the dependence of son's occupation upon father's has been remarkably stable for more than 50 years in the United States.

Fourth, turning more specifically to the findings regarding occupational mobility by race, it is clear that although the average occupational status of men in the experienced civilian labor force rose between 1962 and 1973, blacks gained more than whites but black men were still considerably behind white men in occupational status in 1973. In fact, blacks in 1973 had not yet reached the average occupational status held by white men in 1962.¹⁴ In examining the reasons behind the shifts, Featherman and Hauser note that among white men family factors were less important in occupational allocation in 1973 than they were in 1962, but that schooling had increased in importance; whereas, among black men the effects of family background have become more closely linked with occupational attainment over the period and black men with the same socioeconomic background and educational attainment were in higher status jobs in 1973 than in 1962.¹⁵

American Sociological Review, vol. 40 (June 1975), pp. 279-97; and Robert M. Hauser *et al.*, "Structural Changes in Social Mobility Among Men in the United States," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 40 (October 1975), pp. 585-98.

14. Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, "White-Nonwhite Differentials in Social Mobility Among Men in the United States, 1962-1972," *Demography*, vol. 11 (May 1974) pp. 247-65.

15. David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, "Changes in the Socioeconomic Stratification of the Races," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 82 (November 1976) pp. 621-51.

Moreover, in younger cohorts of workers, patterns of occupational stratification by race were less in 1973 than in 1962, but socioeconomic discrimination by race was still marked in the older cohorts of workers. Featherman and Hauser in summarizing their findings say ". . . race and class have become less important in the processes that allocate men from families to schooling and subsequently to positions in the occupational hierarchy."¹⁶

Economic attainments

The distribution of income and wealth have not been discussed in this paper, even though many consider this to be the ultimate stratification issue, because these matters are covered in another chapter of *Social Indicators*, 1976, and in another essay in this issue of THE ANNALS. We should summarize briefly, however, the results of recent attempts to use the Blau and Duncan¹⁷ and the Wisconsin causal models¹⁸ to explain economic achievements. The two best-known studies, by Jencks¹⁹ and Sewell and Hauser²⁰ have shown that although the status attainment models explain educational and occupa-

16. *Ibid.*, p. 621.

17. Blau and Duncan, *American Occupational Structure*.

18. Sewell, Haller, and Portes, "Educational and Early Occupation Attainment Process."

19. Christopher Jencks, *et al.*, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effects of Family and Schooling in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).

20. William H. Sewell and Robert M. Hauser, "Causes and Consequences of Higher Education: Models of the Status Attainment Process," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, vol. 54 (December 1972) pp. 851-61 and *Idem*, *Education, Occupation, and Earnings: Achievement in the Early Career* (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

tional attainments quite effectively (as being largely dependent on socioeconomic background and ability), they are much less efficient in explaining economic attainments, accounting for 8 to 20 percent of the variance in earnings or income, depending on the model and the sample used.

This finding has resulted in a great deal of controversy, especially among those who have thought that programs designed to reduce educational inequality would greatly reduce economic inequality. While neither Jencks nor Sewell and Hauser deny that education influences earnings or income, their results indicate that factors not included in their models must be taken into account in explaining inequality in economic attainment. Jencks has said that the principal factor may be luck. Sewell and Hauser place less emphasis on luck, although not denying its importance, and suggest that factors having to do with more recent experiences such as family formation, marital stability, migration, job markets, on-the-job training, and job satisfaction may help to explain economic success. They and other researchers, including Jencks, have undertaken research to test these suppositions. The search for causal explanations of differences in economic attainments is likely to continue to engage the attention of social scientists during the next decade as new data accumulate and as better multivariate techniques become available for data analysis.

Sexual stratification

Although the tables on social mobility presented in *Social Indicators, 1976*, do not contain information on sexual inequalities in socioeconomic achievements, our exposi-

tion would be incomplete without a summary of the most important findings of the recent research on the occupational mobility of women. The major studies have been those of Tyree and Treas, Treiman and Terrell, McClendon, Featherman and Hauser, and Sewell, Hauser and Wolf.²¹ Because the Featherman and Hauser analysis is based on the OCG-I and -II surveys, and because their results do not differ greatly from those of most of the other studies, we may summarize their findings, supplementing them with information from other research where appropriate.²²

The Featherman and Hauser

21. Andrea Tyree and Judith Treas, "The Occupation and Marital Mobility of Women," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 39 (June 1974), pp. 293-302; Donald J. Treiman and Kermit Terrell, "Sex and the Process of Status Attainment: A Comparison of Working Women and Men," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 40 (April 1975) pp. 194-200; McKee J. McClendon, "The Occupational Status Attainment of Males and Females," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 41 (February 1976), pp. 52-64; David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, "Sexual Inequalities and Socioeconomic Achievement in the U.S., 1962-73," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 41 (June 1976) pp. 462-83; and William H. Sewell, Robert M. Hauser, and Wendy C. Wolf, "New Findings in Sex Similarities and Differences in the Occupational Attainment Process," (Paper for the Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1977).

22. The analysis reported by Featherman and Hauser is based on married persons in the experienced labor force in 1962 and 1973 and therefore their findings for women (the wives of the men in the OCC samples) may not hold for all employed women. However, evidence from a recent study indicates that this sampling limitation probably does not bias their results appreciably. Wendy C. Wolf, "How Biased are Sex Comparisons of Occupational Attainment when Wives of Male Respondents are Utilized as the Sample of Women?" (Paper no. 17 for the Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1977).

analysis of intercohort shifts in educational attainment, occupational status, and earnings, indicates that there were socioeconomic improvements for both men and women during the period 1962–73. Improvements in the educational and occupational attainments of women somewhat exceed those for men, on the average, but the ratios of female to male average earnings were slightly lower in 1973 than in 1962, 0.38 and 0.39, respectively. Thus, greater equality of educational and occupational opportunity has not yet produced anything approaching equality of economic opportunity for women. Causal models show that men and women tend to be allocated to educational and occupational statuses in much the same way. Women's socioeconomic achievements are less related to family origins, especially farm origins, than are men's and the net effect of educational attainment on occupational status is greater for women than for men.²³

These findings are in general agreement with the earlier studies cited above. However, the most recent study, by Sewell, Hauser, and Wolf, in which attainment models are based on large independent samples of men and women, and which contain additional important variables not available in the OCG data sets, such as parental income, measured intelligence, and first job, reports interesting differences in the occupational attainment processes of males and females that have not been noted before.²⁴ The most important finding from the standpoint of the current discussion is that, although women obtain first

jobs that on the average are of considerably higher status than those of men, by mid-life men are in higher status occupations than women. Their discussion of the way men and women are sorted into occupations suggests a complicated allocation process. Apparently both men and women rely heavily on their educational attainments for their first jobs but for later occupational placement men rely increasingly on experience and less on educational attainments. Women, on the other hand, because they have less continuous occupational histories and because the occupations they enter provide fewer opportunities for promotion to higher status jobs, must continue to depend mainly on their educational qualifications for later occupational placement. Men clearly profit by their experience in the labor market and tend to be upwardly mobile over their working lives, whereas women tend to remain essentially at the same occupational status level throughout their working careers.

Subjective class placement

American scholars have long been interested in subjective class placement; essentially the question is "how do people place themselves in the class structure?" Subjective class placement may be viewed as the psychological dimension of class, based on self-attribution and identification with others perceived to have similar attitudes, values, and interests. Centers's classic studies showed that over half (51 percent of all American adult male workers in 1945 considered themselves to be in the working class and well over two-fifths (43 percent) placed themselves in the middle class.²⁵ Only 3 percent

23. Featherman and Hauser, "Sexual Inequalities and Socioeconomic Achievement."

24. Sewell, Hauser, and Wolf, "New Findings in Sex Similarities."

25. Richard Centers, *The Psychology of Social Class* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1949) and Idem, "Social

placed themselves in the upper class and only 1 percent said they were lower class. One of the most interesting findings was that, regardless of occupation, most men placed themselves in either the middle or the working class category. Even the owners of large businesses and professional men were quite unlikely to place themselves in the upper class, and manual workers were even more unlikely to place themselves in the lower class.

Centers's questions have been repeated in the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey in each successive year since 1972. The interesting fact is not that so little change has taken place in subjective class placement over the four-year period covered by the NORC surveys, but that contemporary men's subjective placements do not differ in any substantial way from those reported by Centers over 30 years ago. Thus, it would appear that, for whatever reasons, American men hold tenaciously to the view that they are members of a society in which almost everyone is concentrated into two main classes at the middle of a hierarchy in which few persons are in either the upper or the lower classes.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

This section of the social report has little if anything to do with social mobility but is included in the same chapter because social participation and social mobility are as-

Class, Occupation, and Reputed Belief," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 58 (May 1953), pp. 543-55. See also, Mary R. Jackman and Robert W. Jackman, "An Interpretation of the Relationship Between Objective and Subjective Social Status," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 38 (October 1973) pp. 569-82.

sumed to have a central role in the well-being of the citizens of the United States. The section is concerned with the extent to which citizens are involved in different forms of personal and community activities, including voting in national elections, volunteer work, philanthropy, and group and association membership. Also included are selected indicators of religiosity and anomie.

Voting behavior

Perhaps the most generally interesting set of indicators in this section have to do with voting behavior. This is a topic to which social scientists have devoted great attention over the years.²⁶ These indicators are designed to call attention to trends in voting in national elections and to the reasons given for not participating in elections by various categories of persons of voting age. Voting in national elections has varied a good deal between 1930 and 1976, reaching a peak in 1960 when 63 percent of the voting aged population voted in the presidential election. Since 1960 the percentage voting in presidential elections

26. In addition to those studies directly cited in this article, at least the following should be mentioned: Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard R. Berelson, and Helen Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pierce, 1944); Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963); V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1961); Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nye, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); James D. Wright, *The Dissent of the Governed* (New York: Academic Press, 1976); Walter D. Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1970).

has declined steadily, reaching a low of 53 percent in the 1976 elections. The trend in voting in congressional elections is exactly the same, but the percentage voting is always smaller than in presidential elections. Voting is still less in congressional contests in which there is no presidential election. This oldest of political democracies had the lowest voting participation rate of any of the seven major democratic countries for which such data are available.

Comparisons of voting behavior by race and ethnic origin categories over the period 1964–76 show quite clearly that whites are more likely to vote in national elections than are blacks; persons of Spanish origin are least likely to vote of any of the three racial-ethnic categories. There has been a downward trend in voting in presidential and congressional elections by blacks and persons of Spanish origin, just as by white voters, since 1964.

The reason respondents to a national survey, who were registered to vote in the 1974 elections, gave for not voting indicates differences by race and sex.²⁷ Women, regardless of race, gave illness or family emergencies as their main reasons for not voting. Men were much more likely than women to claim that they could not leave work or get to the voting place—this was particularly true for black men. Lack of interest was given as the reason for not voting by almost one-fifth of all voters and the differences between the races and sexes were small. Very few persons (less than 2 percent) indicated that they did not vote

because they felt that their vote would not count.

Two-fifths of the respondents to the survey question asking people why they did not register to vote in the November 1974 election gave as their reason lack of interest.²⁸ There were no marked sex differences in responses to this question, but blacks gave this response more frequently than whites. Other analysis of the data from these surveys reveals that there were striking differences between major social categories in both registration and voting. The social categories with the highest participation were older persons (aged 45 to 74), those who resided outside of the South, the highly educated (college graduates), those with high annual incomes (over \$25,000), and professional and technical workers. Those least likely to register and vote were young persons (aged 18 to 24), residents of the South, those with less than eight years of schooling, those with low annual incomes (less than \$5,000), and blue-collar laborers.

The decline in political participation during the past 20 years has occupied the attention of many students of political behavior. Much of the research seeking to explain voter apathy has been done using data from periodic surveys of the public conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan, beginning with the 1944 presidential election and continuing to the present.²⁹ Data from these surveys have been supplemented by

28. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Voting in November 1976" (Advanced Report), ser. P-20, no. 204 (Washington, D.C., December 1976).

29. Angus Campbell and Robert L. Kohn, *The People Elect A President* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Survey Research Center, ser. no. 9, 1952); and Angus Campbell *et al.*, *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley, 1960).

27. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1974," *Current Population Reports*, ser. P-20, no. 293 (Washington, D.C., April 1976).

less comprehensive information on the political activities of Americans from the Gallup poll, since 1935,³⁰ and from the National Opinion Research Center study of the 1944 presidential election.³¹

It is neither possible nor necessary to go into detail about the results of the many studies of political behavior in the past 20 years, but a recent comprehensive analysis of changing political behavior, based largely on the Survey Research Center files, by Nye, Verba, and Petrocik (*The Changing American Voter*) may be paraphrased and summarized.³² They find that politics in the United States has changed markedly since the 1950s and that the public has responded in ways that differ fundamentally from political behavior typical of earlier periods. In the 1950s the vast majority of citizens were satisfied with the political process and, although they were only mildly involved in politics, were aligned with one or the other of the two major political parties. In contrast, in the 1960s and early 1970s, citizens were politically aroused by specific issues, identified less with political parties, had less faith in political leaders, and tended to be dissatisfied with the political process.

Nye, Verba, and Petrocik suggest that the political malaise of recent years can perhaps be attributed to the failure of government to solve the major crises of the period: race conflict, the war in Viet Nam, urban decay, Watergate, unemployment,

and inflation. All of these issues cut across traditional political party lines and have resulted in a weakening in party loyalty on the part of both voters and candidates. The percentage of citizens who consider themselves to be independent voters has grown substantially and now is approximately the same as the proportion who say they are Democrats and is twice the size of the percentage who say they are Republicans. Issue voting has increased greatly over the period and there has been greater emphasis on the personality of the candidates, with increasing dependence on television in political campaigns. Issue orientation, lack of party identification, distrust of the political process, and a tendency not to register to vote unless the issues or candidates engage their attention, all tend to characterize the younger voters—especially those who have recently obtained the franchise.³³

What these changes portend for the future of party politics in the United States is not presently apparent. Nye, Verba, and Petrocik suggest that what may evolve is a politics of issue-based factions, with parties and candidates becoming more responsive to citizens' concerns. This does not mean that party politics is likely to fade out of the picture. There are still many more citizens who identify with one of the two major parties than who consider themselves to be independents. Moreover, there is no evidence suggesting the emergence of any signifi-

30. George Gallup, *The Gallup Poll, 1935–1971* (New York: Random House, 1972).

31. Sheldon J. Korchin, "Psychological Variables in the Behavior of Voters" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1946).

32. Norman H. Nye, Sidney Verba, and John Petrocik, *The Changing American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

33. Participation in elections is lower for citizens 18 to 20 than for any age category. The next least likely group to register or to vote is the 21 to 24 age category. (See the previously cited *Current Population Reports*, ser. P-20, no. 293). Thus has the extension of the franchise to citizens aged 18 to 20 contributed to the downward trend in voting in national elections since 1972.

cant new party. Pomper, in his preliminary analysis of the 1976 presidential election, finds party loyalty to be on the upsurge for the first time in a generation and suggests that the existing parties may be in the process of creating new alliances along regional, class, and issue lines.³⁴ Miller and Levitan argue that lasting political partisan realignment will depend on the ability of leaders to mobilize the electorate around issues.³⁵ Crucial in any realignment will be the young voters, about half of whom are independents and thus are open to persuasion, rather than older voters, most of whom tend to be identified with and loyal to their political party.³⁶

Other indicators

Just under 24 percent of all persons over 14 years of age did volunteer work of one kind or another in 1974. There appears to have been an increase in the percentage engaged in volunteer work since 1965. Volunteer workers tend to be employed, married, and in the age group 25–44. Whites are much more likely than blacks to do volunteer work.

34. Gerald M. Pomper, "The Presidential Election" in *The Election of 1976*, eds. Gerald M. Pomper et al. (New York: McKay, 1976).

35. Warren E. Miller and Teresa E. Levitan, *Leadership and Change: The New Politics and The American Electorate* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1976).

36. Converse has demonstrated the importance of new entrance into the voting electorate in producing enduring shifts in political alignments as far back as the elections of 1932 and 1936. See especially, Philip E. Converse, "Public Opinion and Voting Behavior" in *Handbook of Political Science*, vol. 4, eds. Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 75–171; also Kristi Andersen, "Generations, Partisan Shifts and Realignment" in Nye, Verba, and Petrocik, *The Changing American Voter*, chap. 5, pp. 74–95.

Unfortunately, nothing in the *Social Indicators, 1976* is given on the sex composition of volunteers. The principal reasons given for doing volunteer work are the desire to help people, a sense of duty, and enjoyment of the work.

Households with incomes of over \$20,000 in 1973 accounted for almost half (46 percent) of all charitable giving in the United States. The estimated funds spent on private philanthropy rose from just under \$9,000,000 in 1960 to over \$25,000,000 in 1974. The largest allocations throughout the period were for religion, followed by health, education, and welfare.

National associations are also considered in chapter 11 of *Social Indicators, 1976*. Apparently educational and cultural organizations have grown most rapidly during the period (1968–73), followed by health and medical associations, with scientific, engineering, and technical organizations also prominent. All the types of organizations studied seem to have grown over the period with the single exception of the fraternal, nationality, and ethnic category. The chapter also shows that membership is greatest in church affiliated organizations, followed by membership in school-related groups, sports associations, labor unions, and fraternal associations. There has been a general increase in participation in Red Cross and in scouting organizations through 1970, with some decline in 1974.

Religious beliefs

A huge majority of those responding in 1975–76 to a question on the relative importance of religious beliefs to them said that religious beliefs are very important. Likewise, the preponderant majority expressed a great deal of confidence in or-

ganized religion. Although the majority of those in all social categories shared this view, it was held most strongly by nonwhites, housewives, those with no more than eight grades of schooling, and persons over 50 years of age. A comparison between respondents to this question from selected countries indicates that Americans are outstanding in their confidence in organized religion. The percentage believing that religion is increasing its influence declined drastically between 1957 and 1970, but rose appreciably in 1975 for both males and females and for Protestants and Catholics.

Alienation

From the responses of national samples of adults to specific statements in the Srole Anomie Scale, it is apparent that the majority subscribe to the view that most people do not really know on whom they can count these days, think that public officials are not interested in the common man, and don't care what happens to the next guy. On the other hand, most people disagree with the view that a person has to live for today, that nothing is worthwhile anymore, that it is unfair to bring a child into the world anymore, and that money is the most important thing in life. Between 1974 and 1976 there was a slight trend toward agreement with the latter set of responses. The answers reflecting the more anomic positions are much more likely to be held by those with little schooling. There is no striking response pattern by age. No comparisons are made by sex, race-ethnicity, or socioeconomic categories.³⁷

37. There is a vast literature on alienation in the United States, much of which deals with political alienation. Even a summary review of this literature is beyond

An Additional Note on Social Participation

Social scientists have long been interested in the study of citizen participation in the formal and informal activities of the community. Numerous articles and books have been devoted to this general subject. Unfortunately, there have been very few national surveys of the extent and nature of social participation in the United States at different points in our history. Hyman and Wright have succeeded in providing us with the best available information on trends in voluntary association membership by means of secondary analysis of replications of national surveys made over the period 1955-69 by the National Opinion Research Center.³⁸ Voluntary association membership is not, and has not been, characteristic of the majority of American adults. Relatively few belong to as many as two organizations. However, there has been a small, but noteworthy, increase in memberships over the period studied. Membership is directly related to current socioeconomic status, measured in a variety of ways, including income, occupation, and education. The trend toward in-

the scope of this paper. Fortunately for the interested reader recent reviews are available. For an authoritative summary and critique of writings on the general topic, see Melvin Seeman, "Alienation Studies," in *Annual Review of Sociology*, ed. Alex Inkeles (Palo Alto, Calif.: Annual Reviews, Inc., 1975), pp. 91-124. Robert R. Alford and Roger Friedland, "Political Participation and Public Policy," in *Ibid.*, pp. 429-79, provide an equally comprehensive and authoritative review of the literature on political alienation.

38. Herbert H. Hyman and Charles R. Wright, "Trends in Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Replication Based on Secondary Analysis of National Sample Surveys," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 36 (April 1971), pp. 191-206.

creased associational membership occurs in each socioeconomic category, especially among those of lower socioeconomic status. The trend toward increased membership applies to both black and white adults, but is greater for blacks. A recent comprehensive review of the literature on voluntarism by Smith adds to the above the following facts: males have higher membership rates in voluntary associations than females, persons in the age range 35–55 are more likely to participate than those in older or younger age groups, and married people are more likely to participate than single people.³⁹ Smith also presents evidence from a small number of studies which suggests that higher participation in voluntary associations is associated with more favorable test scores on such personality traits as social conformity, efficacy (internal control), self-confidence, sociability, assertiveness, need for affiliations, and general personality adjustment. Hyman and Wright and Smith point to the great need for national panel studies on social participation and suggest the need for more sophisticated research on the causes and consequences of participation in voluntary associations.⁴⁰

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The level of education in the United States has increased substantially for both black and white men over the past 50 years. Blacks

still lag behind white men in schooling but the gap is closing. Among young men racial differences in educational achievement are least because of increased educational opportunities for blacks in recent years.

There has been a marked change in the occupational structure in the United States in the last half century, with a great shift out of farming and manual occupations into white-collar occupations and professions. Blacks have shared in this shift but still continue to be concentrated in the lower status manual occupations.

Occupational status inheritance continues to characterize the employed male population in the United States; sons in a given occupational status category are more likely to have been recruited from their fathers' occupational status category than from any other category. But occupational mobility also continues in the United States. Clearly there is more upward mobility, sons of farmers and manual workers becoming white-collar workers, than downward mobility, sons of white-collar workers becoming blue-collar workers and farmers. However, no changes in occupational mobility have taken place in the last half century that cannot be accounted for by the changing occupational distribution.

National surveys show that black men have made greater gains in occupational status than white men during the period 1962–73, but still in 1973 had not reached the average occupational status held by white men in 1962.

Analysis of intercohort shifts in educational attainment, occupational status, and earnings indicates that there were socioeconomic improvements for both men and women in the period 1962–73. Improvements in the educational and

39. David H. Smith, "Voluntary Action Groups and Voluntary Groups" in *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 1, ed. Inkeles (Palo Alto, Calif.: Annual Review, Inc., 1975), pp. 247–70.

40. For examples of the use of causal models in the explanation of participation, see Richard F. Curtis and Elton F. Jackson, *Inequality in American Communities* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

occupational status of women exceeded those for men but these gains had not yet resulted in anything approaching equal economic opportunity for women.

Recent surveys indicate that Americans hold tenaciously to the view that our society consists of two main classes, positioned in the middle of a status hierarchy, in which relatively few persons are in either the lower or the upper class.

Voting in national elections in the United States has varied considerably from 1930 to 1976, reaching a high of 63 percent in 1960 and steadily declining to 53 percent in 1976. Those least likely to register to vote are young persons (18–24), residents of the South, those with eight years of schooling, blue-collar workers, and blacks.

Recent studies of elections and political participation have noted marked changes in political beliefs and behavior in the past 20 years. In comparison with the 1950s, citizens of the 1960s and 1970s tend to be much less identified with political parties, have less faith in political leaders, are more dissatisfied with the political process, and are more likely to be aroused by specific issues. Young people, particularly those who have recently gained the franchise, are most likely to exhibit these characteristics and are least likely to register to vote.

What these changes portend for the future of party politics in the United States is not clear at present. Possibly a new politics will emerge

based on issue-based factions with parties and candidates becoming more responsive to citizens' concerns. Possibly the existing parties will be able to create new alliances along regional, class, age, and issue lines. To date there is little evidence suggesting the emergence of any significant new party.

It is difficult to make any broad generalization on the basis of the evidence contained in *Social Indicators, 1976* concerning social participation in the United States. Participation in voluntary organizations does not appear to have changed greatly in recent years. Most Americans participate in fewer than two voluntary associations. Answers to questions regarding the importance of religion and religious beliefs indicate a higher level of religiosity in the United States than in other industrialized countries for which comparisons are possible. From survey information there is evidence that the majority of adults subscribe to statements which indicate lack of trust in others—especially public officials—but most seem to think that life is still worthwhile and say that money is not the most important thing in life. How this would compare with what citizens would have said a generation or two ago or how these responses would differ from country to country is not known. Without such comparisons it is difficult to gauge the significance of these responses as indicators of the well-being of the citizens of the United States.

SOCIAL MOBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Table 11/1

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND INTERGENERATIONAL
SHIFTS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MALES,
BY YEAR BORN: 1962 AND 1973**

(As of March of each year: civilian noninstitutional population)

Year of birth	Mean years of school completed		Intergenerational shifts (father to son)	
	1962	1973	1962	1973
1947-1951	(¹)	12.81	(¹)	2.13
1942-1946	(¹)	12.76	(¹)	2.87
1937-1941	11.78	12.40	2.14	3.22
1932-1936	11.75	12.02	2.93	3.56
1927-1931	11.57	11.72	3.16	3.72
1922-1926	11.19	11.46	3.28	3.77
1917-1921	10.80	11.03	3.07	3.68
1912-1916	10.40	10.55	3.03	3.44
1907-1911	9.86	9.87	2.47	2.97
1902-1906	9.22	(¹)	2.06	(¹)
1897-1901	8.91	(¹)	1.98	(¹)

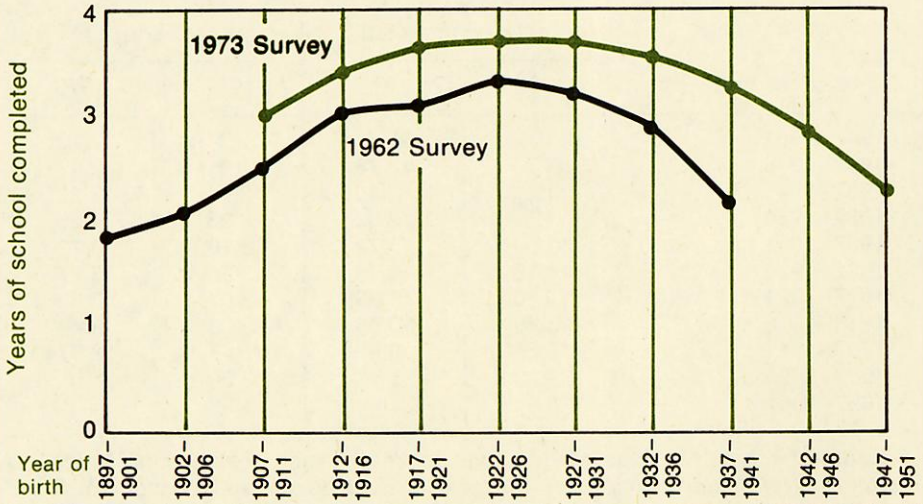
Source: Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, *Equality of Access to Schooling: Trends and Prospects*, (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin). Used by permission.

¹ Not covered in survey.

Chart 11/1B

Social Indicators, 1976

INTERGENERATIONAL SHIFTS IN MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED (FATHER TO SON): U.S. MALE CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONAL POPULATION IN 1962 AND 1973 BY YEAR OF BIRTH



Source: see table 11/2

SOCIAL MOBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Table 11/2
OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF MALES, BY RACE: 1962 and 1973
 (Percent of the experienced civilian labor force aged 20 to 64)

Year of survey and father's occupation	Total	Son's current occupation					Distribu- tion of fathers by occu- pation
		Upper white collar	Lower white collar	Upper manual	Lower manual	Farm	
ALL MALES							
1962							
Total	100.0	27.8	12.4	20.0	32.1	7.7	100.0
Upper white collar	100.0	53.8	17.6	12.5	14.8	1.3	16.5
Lower white collar	100.0	45.6	20.0	14.4	18.3	1.7	7.6
Upper manual	100.0	28.1	13.4	27.8	29.5	1.2	19.0
Lower manual	100.0	20.3	12.3	21.6	43.8	2.0	27.5
Farm	100.0	15.6	7.0	19.2	36.1	22.2	29.4
1973							
Total	100.0	29.9	12.7	21.7	31.5	4.1	100.0
Upper white collar	100.0	52.0	16.0	13.8	17.1	1.1	18.2
Lower white collar	100.0	42.3	19.7	15.3	21.9	.8	9.0
Upper manual	100.0	29.4	13.0	27.4	29.0	1.1	20.5
Lower manual	100.0	22.5	12.0	23.7	40.8	1.0	29.7
Farm	100.0	17.5	7.8	22.7	37.2	14.8	22.6
BLACK MALES							
1962							
Total	100.0	5.9	6.1	9.1	68.3	10.6	100.0
Upper white collar	100.0	10.4	10.3	19.7	59.6	—	4.5
Lower white collar	100.0	14.4	13.5	—	72.1	—	1.9
Upper manual	100.0	8.5	9.7	10.4	67.9	3.6	9.0
Lower manual	100.0	7.6	8.0	10.8	71.4	2.3	37.2
Farm	100.0	3.2	3.3	7.0	66.7	19.8	47.4
1973							
Total	100.0	11.8	10.6	14.8	59.4	3.6	100.0
Upper white collar	100.0	33.2	21.8	10.1	34.8	—	5.0
Lower white collar	100.0	23.8	17.2	12.3	45.8	.9	3.5
Upper manual	100.0	15.2	14.7	15.0	54.9	.2	10.2
Lower manual	100.0	12.4	11.2	13.9	61.4	1.1	46.1
Farm	100.0	5.6	6.2	16.8	62.9	8.5	35.1

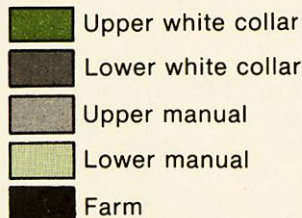
Source: Robert M. Hauser and David L. Featherman, *Occupations and Social Mobility in the U.S.* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin). Used by permission.

— Represents zero.

Chart 11/2

Social Indicators, 1976

MOBILITY FROM FATHER'S (OR OTHER FAMILY HEAD'S) OCCUPATION TO CURRENT OCCUPATION, BY RACE: U.S. MEN IN THE EXPERIENCED CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE AGED 20 TO 64 IN 1962 AND 1973



SON'S CURRENT OCCUPATION
UPPER WHITE COLLAR



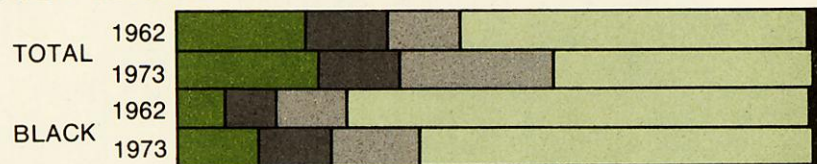
LOWER WHITE COLLAR



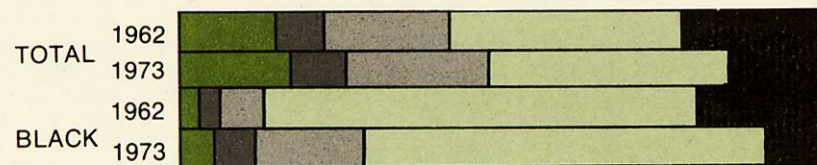
UPPER MANUAL



LOWER MANUAL



FARM



YEAR AND FATHER'S OCCUPATION

0 20 40 60 80 100
Percent distribution

Source: see table 11/2

Chart 11/4

Social Indicators, 1976

REPORTED VOTERS AS A PERCENT OF POPULATION OF VOTING AGE, 1964 TO 1976

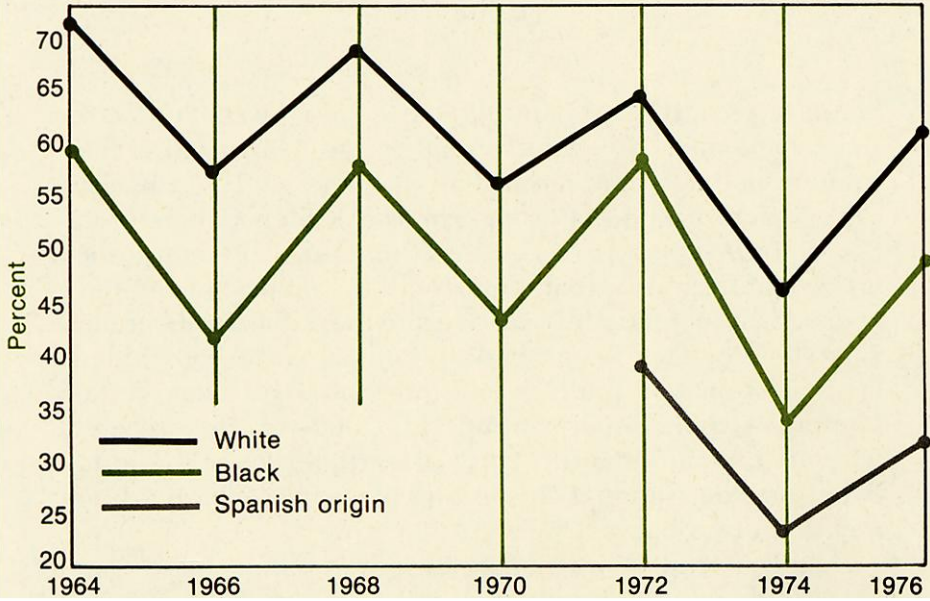


Table 11/4

REPORTED VOTERS AS A PERCENT OF THE VOTING-AGE POPULATION, BY RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN: 1964-1976

Race and Spanish Origin	1964 ¹	1966 ²	1968 ¹	1970 ²	1972 ¹	1974 ²	1976 ¹
Total voting age population, thous. .	110,604	112,800	116,535	120,701	136,203	141,299	146,548
PERCENT REPORTING THAT THEY VOTED							
Total	69.3	55.4	67.8	54.6	63.0	44.7	59.2
White	70.7	57.0	69.1	56.0	64.5	46.3	60.9
Black	58.5	41.7	57.6	43.5	52.1	33.8	48.7
Spanish origin ³	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	37.5	22.9	31.8

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 304.

Note: In 1964, 1966, 1968, and 1970, data include persons 18 years old and over in Georgia and Kentucky, 19 years old and over in Alaska, 20 years old and over in Hawaii, and 21 years old and over in the remaining states. Includes all persons 18 years old and over in 1972, 1974, and 1976. Data relate to the civilian noninstitutional population, excluding inmates of institutions and members of the Armed Forces.

NA Not available.

¹ Presidential election years (including congressional elections).

² Congressional election years only.

³ Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.