6-1-1967

The influence of upward mobility on mothers' educational aspirations for their sons.

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Accepted for the faculty of the College of Graduate Studies of the University of Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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THE INFLUENCE OF UPWARD MOBILITY ON MOTHERS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR SONS

A Thesis 381

Presented to the

Department of Sociology

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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June 1967

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals have been instrumental in bringing this present study to fruition, their numbers being so many and their influence ranging across so much time, that only those immediately involved can be formally cited herein.

I am obliged to Dr. Crockett at the University of Nebraska for his guidance in the early phases of this research. Without the alternate curiosity, indulgence, eagerness, fortitude and over all kindness from the mothers of Lincoln, Nebraska, this research would have died aborning. I am grateful to those of my thesis committee--Dr. George Helling, Mr. Phil Vogt and Dr. R. Wykoff--who in the press of their schedules found time for raising pertinent questions relevant to this project.

The importance of the role of my advisor, Dr. Cora Martin, cannot be over estimated. Through a judicious admixture of persistence, prudence and patience--undergirded all the while by a rigorous scientism--Dr. Martin did much to channel my efforts, even in the face of my fears of being undone in a maze of textual footnotes and/or statistical tabulations.

In the final stages of this study my wife's encouragement, typing and editing skills were unstintingly given, both late and early.

To all the above individuals I am deeply grateful.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Social stratification belongs to the central core of classical sociology. Sociologists, along with other social scientists, have repeatedly shown that every known society is stratified. Social strata may be clearly defined (as in caste societies) or loosely defined (as in industrialized societies). Any analysis of stratification in an industrialized society is somewhat arbitrary since clear class boundaries are absent. It has, however, been found useful to construct artificial classes for the purpose of investigation, placing people in positions relative to each other to facilitate the ordering of social "facts". Such a procedure suggests consistent differences between classes on a number of objective features.[1]

Whatever indicators of stratification are used, evidence suggests that there are persistent differences in the norms, values, attitudes and behavior of individuals in different social strata. Of special concern to this research were the differences between classes in regard to the rearing of children. While there may not be complete agreement among social scientists as to the relative importance of childhood experiences on later life, the recognition of the fundamental nature of such experiences has led to a wide spread interest in and study

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[1] Bernard Berelson and Gary Steiner, Human Behavior, An Inventory of Scientific Findings (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1964), p. 454. These authors list the most commonly found features of class as: authority, power, property ownership, relation to means of production, education, control of land, income, consumption patterns, occupation, learning, wisdom, control over supernatural, public service, morality, kinship, ancestry, associational ties, ethnic status, religion, race.

of child-rearing practices. Frequently studies of child-rearing practices focus on inter-class variations.[2] Variables such as control of aggression, control of physical movement, control of feeding schedules, toilet training, amount and type of affection given the child, freedom to talk back to parents, control of manifestations of sexual behavior, amount of support given the child in various activities, and sanctioning behavior have all been studied.[3] Of particular concern to this study were findings related to parental educational aspirations and plans for the child.

Emphasis placed on college education was found by Hyman to vary positively with social class.[4] Crockett concluded from his study that parents of higher social class desired more education for their

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[2] Examples of such studies would include A. Davis and R.J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child Rearing", American Sociological Review, 11 (1946), p. 698-710; D. Aberle and K. Naegele, "Middle Class Fathers Occupational Role and Attitudes Toward Children", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 22 (April, 1952), p. 366; Martha Ericson, "Child Rearing and Social Status", American Journal of Sociology, 52 (1946), p. 190; A.W. Green, "The Middle Class Male Child and Neurosis", American Sociological Review, 11 (1946), p. 31-41; Melvin Kohn, "Social Class and Parent-Child Relationships: An Interpretation", American Journal of Sociology, 68 (January, 1963), p. 471-480; W.H. Sewell and A.O. Haller, "Factors in the Relation Between Social Status and the Personality Development of the Child," American Sociological Review, 24 (August, 1959), pp. 511-520.

[3] For an excellent summary statement see Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Socialization and Social Class Through Time and Space", in E. Maccoby, T. Newcomb and E. Hartley, eds., Readings in Social Psychology (New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1958), pp. 400-425.

[4] Herbert Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes", in Bendix and Lipset, eds., Class, Status and Power (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953), p. 430. Hyman found that 74 per cent of professional people emphasized college education as essential to advancement, compared to 62 per cent of business men and proprietors, vs. 64 per cent white collar, 53 per cent skilled labor, 49 per cent semi-skilled, 47 per cent of farmers, 35 per cent of non-farm laborers.

children.[5] Bordua's research indicated that social class and plans to enter college were positively related and when the parent stressed college the child more frequently planned for it.[6] In his research, Toby found that middle class parents (as compared to lower class) made it clear to their children that education was a serious matter; they reinforced the teacher's authority and prestige and taught their children to think abstractly.[7] Sewell, Haller and Strauss were able to show that for high school seniors, parental social class and educational aspirations of the children were positively related.[8] This was true for both boys and girls. Stephenson introduced an additional distinction showing that with respect to occupation the gap between the occupation aspired to and the one realistically planned for was greater with lower social class position. He found that persons of the lower classes frequently had the same occupational aspirations as those of the upper classes, but when asked to realistically evaluate their probable goals their plans

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[5]Harry Crockett, "Interaction of Social Class, Background, Level of Education and Strength of Motive to Achieve in Differential Occupational Mobility", Sociological Quarterly, (Summer, 1964), p. 231-242.

[6]David Bordua, "Educational Aspirations and Parental Stress on College", Social Forces, 38 (March, 1960), p. 262-269.

[7]Jackson Toby, "Orientation to Education as a Factor in the School Maladjustment of Lower Class Children", Social Forces, 35 (1957) p. 259-266.

[8] W. Sewell, A. Haller and A. Strauss, "Social Status and Educational and Occupational Aspirations", American Sociological Review, 22 (Feb., 1957), p. 67-73.

were lowered.[9] It might be expected that this would also be true with reference to education.

MOBILITY RELATED STUDIES

The literature reviewed above suggests that there is a positive relation between social class and amount of education desired by parents for their children (and in some cases by the children themselves). Such studies were based on a static conception of social class, viewing it at only one point in time. Using this conception an individual's social class position is considered only with reference to the present time. Analytically, such an approach may be useful but it is limited by the fact that individuals are influenced by both the past and present, and by future plans and anticipations. Many individuals are in the process of moving up or down the social ladder (and stopping them at one point during this movement may not give an accurate estimate of their social class position). Because individuals are influenced by the past, present and future, a more complete method of viewing them relative to social class position, would be to look at the direction of their mobility in relation to their current class position. Studies of child-rearing utilizing such an approach are much less extensive than those using the static conception of social class. Mobile parents make up a significant part of our population, and research of their child-rearing

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[9] Richard Stephenson, "Mobility Orientation and Stratification of One Thousand Ninth Graders", American Sociological Review, 22 (April, 1957), p. 204-212.

practices is overdue.[10] The mobile person, moving between occupational or social class strata, is probably not completely integrated into either his class of origin or the class to which he is moving. Although this has consequences both for the person and for the groups in which he participates, this research was concerned only with the former. From the observer's standpoint social conformity usually means abiding by the norms and expectations of the membership group. Probably many mobile persons have a psychological orientation not to their membership group but to the group to which they aspire (and to which they may be moving). In terms of reference group theory this means they conform to the norms of a non-membership group, using it as their frame of reference. As Merton has pointed out, this non-membership orientation may serve two functions: it may help get the person into the new group and may ease his adjustment once he is in it.[11] If the psychological orientation of the mobile person remains directed to his class of origin this will be dysfunctional to integration into the new class. To be properly integrated into a new social class the socially mobile person must convert to the norms and values of his new social position. This reorientation has been assumed to occur in much of the literature on mobility, and

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[10] Julius Roth and R. Peck, "Social Class and Social Mobility Factors Related to Marital Adjustment", American Sociological Review, 16 (Oct., 1951), p. 481. Using Burgess data and the Warner Class Schema they found that 45 per cent of 396 married females were not homogamous relative to social class.

[11] Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 265.

has been shown to be empirically true in a number of studies.[12] A review of these studies follows.

Lipset and Bendix state that those persons moving up the social ladder tend to change friends, organizations, neighborhoods, political attitudes, and in some cases even religious affiliation and personal names.[13] Further, "Mobile persons identify in norms, standards, values, appearance and behavior with the upper level to which they aspire."[14] Apparently the opposite is true for those who are downwardly mobile. They "...tend to retain the values, attitudes, norms, and standards of the class from which they are falling, partly in the aspiration and the hope to return."[15] This last finding has additional support. Wilensky found that the "Skidder"--the person who was downwardly mobile--was more conservative in his belief that America was a country of opportunity, and that people should have the right to a better job if they wanted.[16] Common sense and logic might suggest that the skidder would feel the opposite, tending to feel disaffection with a system in which he had not succeeded. Peter Blau indicates that the behavior of mobile persons

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[12] Richard Hamilton, "The Marginal Middle Class: A Reconsideration", American Sociological Review, 31 (April, 1966), p. 192-199. The findings of this study constitute one exception. Hamilton found that many working class people now in the middle class had not changed their orientations as expected.

[13] M. Lipset and R. Bendix, "Social Mobility in Industrial Society", University of California, Institute of Industrial Relations, (University of California Press, 1959), p. 18.

[14] Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 454.

[15] Ibid., p. 487.

[16] Harold Wilensky and H. Edwards, "The Skidder: Ideological Adjustments of the Downward Mobile Worker", American Sociological Review, (April, 1959), p. 215.

(whether up or down) falls somewhere in between that of their class of origin and their current class on such things as voting, family size and union membership.[17] Kahl found that lower class boys who went on for higher education were more likely to have had parents who were dissatisfied with their own class position.[18] This type of parent had mobility aspirations even though they were not mobile. Education is a widely recognized method of moving up the social hierarchy, so it might be expected that parents of this type would want their children to have more education than they had themselves. Zena Blau, in a study pertinent to this inquiry, found that 62 per cent of the mothers she interviewed believed they had changed their child-rearing practices from those of their own parents. She found that white middle-class mothers who were mobile--either up or down--were more change oriented than those who were stationary.[19] Blau did not present data showing the type or direction of change.

The picture that emerges is one of upwardly mobile persons engaging in anticipatory socialization in adopting, to some extent, the values, attitudes, norms and behavior of the class to which they aspire. Downwardly mobile persons cling to the values of their class of origin. Ascending the social ladder is the ideal norm in America. The person

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[17] Peter Blau, "Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations", American Sociological Review, (June, 1956), p. 290.

[18] J. Kahl, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys", Harvard Educational Review, 24 (August, 1953), p. 186-203.

[19] Zena Blau, "Class Structure, Mobility and Change in Child Rearing", Sociometry, 28 (June, 1965), p. 210-219.

going down either denies this movement or does not believe his current direction or status to be permanent. His frame of reference is still his class of origin. Results from the foregoing research support Merton's theory of anticipatory socialization--mobile persons do appear to orient themselves in various ways to the class to which they aspire.

Based on the literature cited above, this research assumed that upwardly mobile mothers would not have the same educational goals (for their sons) as mothers in their class of origin. (Downwardly mobile mothers were expected to retain the same educational goals for their sons as mothers in their class of origin; however, due to insufficient cases hypotheses dealing with downward mobility could not be tested.)

In American culture the male role is dominant and the status of a married woman is represented by the status of her husband. The female who is incorporated into a family unit thus has no independent status rating of her own; rather her status is that of the male head of the house. It is the male who on the basis of his education, income, occupation, place of residence, values and attitudes gives a social position to the family and all its members. Babchuk and Bates have shown that friends of the wife prior to marriage frequently do not remain friends of the married couple, rather friends of the couple are those people who were friends of the husband prior to marriage. New friendships are typically made by the husband, and these are considered more intimate by both wife and husband than are friendships made by the wife.[20]

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[20] Nicholas Babchuk and Alan Bates, "The Primary Relations of Middle Class Couples: A Study in Male Dominance", American Sociological Review, 28 (June, 1963), p. 377-384.

Thus the wife is enmeshed in the new social circle of her husband, and exposed to the norms, values, attitudes and behavior patterns of this group. Socialization of the mobile female into this group can now occur, but as has been pointed out, probably has occurred even before her actual appearance in the group in the form of anticipatory socialization. One might expect that a long courtship period would increase the amount of anticipatory socialization (as would length of time actually spent in the new stratum of the husband).

This research does not take the time factor into account, but assumes that if the mother is socially mobile the combined effects of anticipatory socialization and actual socialization during the 12 or more years of marriage will have been sufficient to have inculcated in her the values of her husband's social class. The specific value studied is the educational aspirations and plans for her sixth-grade son. The independent variable is mobility, the dependent variable this one aspect of socialization. This study has importance in that it deals with married females who, for various reasons are mobile, focusing on the effect of mobility on one aspect of their child-rearing practices. While it is realized the father is important in the socialization process of the child, this study deals only with the mother.

A summary of the main points presented herein serves to more directly show the derivation of the hypotheses:

1) Even though social class lines are somewhat arbitrary there are real differences between classes in values, attitudes, norms and behavior. One of these values is education.

2) The higher the social class the greater the value placed on formal education.

3) The discrepancy between the education desired and that realistically planned for is less the higher the social class.

4) Individuals who are upwardly mobile engage in anticipatory socialization, adopting the values of the class to which they aspire.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

1) Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will believe their sons should have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

2) Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will insist their sons have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

I. THE RESEARCH SITE

The research site for this study was Lincoln, Nebraska, a city of 150,000 located 50 miles south of Omaha.

II. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population was mothers of sixth-grade boys in 15 of the 34 Lincoln Public Schools. The school files contained information on the ethnicity of both mother and son, and on the marital state of the mother. Only white native-born mothers who were presently living with their first and only husband were interviewed. Age of the mothers ranged from 32 to 50 years.

Sixth-grade boys were used so that mothers, in answering questions on socialization, would be referring to a child of the same sex and about the same age. The 15 schools were selected by a panel of "experts" (made up of school officials familiar with the Lincoln School System) to consist of a majority of children from working and middle-class families, in which social mobility would be maximized.

Imposing these sampling criteria, 437 boys were from families who were eligible. Each of the 437 boys was assigned a number and selection was made using a table of random numbers. Sample size was set at 170 due to time and personnel requirements.

One hundred and forty-four mothers were interviewed. Of the 26 not interviewed, 19 refused, 5 had moved and could not be contacted, one was non-white and one had died. Five of the 144 mothers did not give

information on their former or current social class. Of the 139 mothers remaining, 10 did not give appropriate responses to questions on education, leaving a final sample of 129. The 41 mothers disqualified for the above reasons represented 24 per cent of the sample of 170. A comparison of respondents with non-respondents revealed no differences in regard to social class, area of residence, grade average or I.Q. of the boy, length of residence or number of residence changes.

III. DEFINITIONS

As noted in the first chapter this study posits the following hypotheses:

> 1) Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will believe their sons <u>should</u> have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.
>
> 2) Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will <u>insist</u> their sons have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

The independent variable in this study is social mobility; the dependent variable is the educational aspirations and plans held by the mother for her son.

A mother's <u>social class of origin</u> is defined as her father's usual occupation while she was growing up. This definition is used in an effort to avoid having the mother give her father's most prestigious occupation (the socially desirable response) while she was growing up. A mother's <u>current social class</u> is defined as the current status of her husband as indicated by his current occupation. Two measures of social class are used, both based on occupation. Using two measures will lessen the possibility that mobility might be an artifact of the occupational

or class schema used. One system of classification could conceivably show much mobility while another might show little depending on where the class divisions fell.

The two social class schemata employed were the Duncan Socio-economic Index and the Occupational Code. The Duncan Index is based on 1950 National Opinion Research Corporation data and uses a combined measure of income and education to give prestige rankings to different occupations (see Appendix A). The Occupational Code is based on the Census schema of ranking occupations, and was designed especially for this research (see Appendix B). One important difference between the two schemata is that the Duncan Index discriminates more finely with regard to farm related occupations, distributing them across all ranks. For example, the Duncan Index, with ranks from one to ten (ten being high) places farm owners in the upper half, ranking them from six to ten depending on the amount of acreage owned. Individuals who rent farms and farm laborers are ranked between one and four. The Occupational Code, however, placed all farmers in the bottom third of its ranks with farm owners ranked number seven and farm workers only two ranks lower. Farm tenants are ranked number eight. The different ranking of farmers by the two schemata was important in this study, as many of the respondents had farm backgrounds.

Ranks one, two, three and four in the Duncan Index are composed of unskilled and semi-skilled occupations, which in this study are referred to as <u>lower class</u>. Ranks five, six and seven using the Duncan Index are referred to as <u>working class</u>, and are composed mainly of skilled workers. Ranks eight, nine, and ten using the Duncan Index are called <u>middle class</u>

and are composed of white collar, business and professional people. Using Duncan's Index a mother was defined as upwardly mobile if her father's occupation was in a lower class than her husband's current occupation.

The Occupational Code was also trichotomized so that farm-related respondents (ranks seven, eight and nine) were referred to as lower class. Skilled and unskilled occupations (ranks four, five and six) were called working class. White collar, business and professional occupations (ranks one, two and three) were called middle class.

Using the Occupational Code a mother was defined as upwardly mobile if her father's occupation was in a lower class than her husband's current occupation.

The distinction between a mother's educational aspirations for her son, and educational plans for her son was operationalized by (1) asking the mother how much education she thought her son should have, then (2) asking how much education she would insist her son have. The first question was designed to indicate the educational aspiration the mother had for her son, while the second was designed to elicit a more realistic response, in the form of the minimum education a mother would insist her son have. The mothers were presented a choice of six responses in each instance:

1. some high school
2. high school graduate
3. some college
4. college graduate
5. post graduate degree
6. entirely up to son.

IV. DATA COLLECTION

Interviews for this study were done in the home of the respondent. The mother was initially contacted by a letter explaining the basic nature of the study and assuring her of its ethical character. (See Appendix C). All interviewers then called on the respondent in person, and either did the interview then or at a later arranged time. Almost all were contacted personally within ten days of the mailing date of the letter, and most were interviewed within 14 days after the letter was sent. Interviews were done by 16 sociology graduate students at the University of Nebraska all of whom had previous interviewing experience of this type. Fourteen of the sixteen interviewers were males. Interviews averaged 50 to 60 minutes in length.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Goodman's and Kruskal's Gamma statistical model (1954), a non-parametric measure of association, was used to measure the association of the variables studied.[21] Gamma makes no assumption about the normal distribution of the population. The Gamma measure ranges from -1 to 1, and indicates how much more probable a like order is than an unlike order. If the value is close to 1, a high positive association is indicated, and if the value is close to -1 a high negative association is indicated. Thus if one variable is known one can predict the probability of the second being associated with the first. An association of 0.21, for example, would mean a 21 per cent improvement in predictive accuracy. (See Appendix D.)

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[21] Morris Zelditch, A Basic Course in Sociological Statistics (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 180.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. ANALYSIS OF MOBILITY

Tables I and II show the amount and type of mobility that has occurred among mothers of the sample, with Table I using the Duncan Index and Table II the Occupational Code. The rows of the tables indicate the former status of the mothers, while columns indicate current status. The diagonals (where the same status for both rows and columns intersect) represent stable mothers.

TABLE I

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF MOBILITY
SHOWING FORMER AND CURRENT STATUS OF MOTHERS
USING THE DUNCAN INDEX

		CURRENT STATUS OF MOTHER			
		Middle 8,9,10	Working 5,6,7	Lower 1,2,3,4	Totals
FORMER STATUS OF MOTHER	Middle 8,9,10	42	4	0	46
	Working 5,6,7	31	8	2	41
	Lower 1,2,3,4	23	12	7	42
	Totals	96	24	9	129

TABLE II

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF MOBILITY
SHOWING FORMER AND CURRENT STATUS OF MOTHERS
USING THE OCCUPATIONAL CODE

		CURRENT STATUS OF MOTHER			
		Middle 1,2,3	Working 4,5,6	Lower 7,8,9	Totals
FORMER STATUS OF MOTHER	Middle 1,2,3	39	2	0	41
	Working 4,5,6	23	17	0	40
	Lower 7,8,9	32	16	0	48
	Totals	94	35	0	129

A comparison of the tables reveals that the row totals, indicating former status, are much alike, but that the Occupational Code placed more mothers in a lower former status. The Occupational Code has 48 mothers formerly in the lower class compared to only 42 using the Duncan Index. The Duncan Index has 46 mothers formerly in the middle class, while the Occupational Code has only 41.

Table I, using the Duncan Index, shows 57 mothers stable compared to 56 using the Occupational Code, Table II. However, the Occupational Code shows no stable mothers currently in the lower class and 17 in the working class, while the Duncan Index has 7 stable mothers currently in the lower class and only 8 in the working class. The difference in ranking is due mainly to the different classification of farmers. The

Occupational Code reserves ranks seven, eight and nine (lower class) for farm related occupations only, placing semi-skilled and skilled workers in ranks four, five and six (working class). The Duncan Index places semi-skilled workers in the lower class (ranks one, two, three and four) and distributes farm related occupations across the ranks (depending on whether one owns or rents the farm, or just labors on it). For this reason the Duncan Index also shows two other mothers currently in the lowest ranks, while the corresponding column in the Occupational Code is empty.

The Duncan Index shows 66 mothers upwardly mobile, compared to 71 using the Occupational Code. Both tables are much alike in that 54 of the upwardly mobile, using the Duncan Index are currently in the top ranks (middle class) compared to 55 in Table II (Occupational Code). However, the Occupational Code shows that 32 mothers have been upwardly mobile from the lower class to the middle class, while the Duncan Index shows that 9 fewer (23) have made this movement across two class boundaries. In addition the Occupational Code reveals that 16 mothers moved up from lower class to working, compared to only 12 using the Duncan Index. The only case where the Duncan Index shows more upward mobility is in the movement from working class to middle class, showing 31 mothers having made this move vs. 23 using the Occupational Code.

II. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The first hypothesis of this study stated that:

> Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will believe their sons <u>should</u> have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

Table III relates to this hypothesis, using the Duncan Index to compare the relation of mobile and stable mothers to the education they thought their sons should have. Mothers mobile from working to middle

TABLE III

DUNCAN INDEX COMPARING UPWARDLY MOBILE AND STABLE MOTHERS AND THE EDUCATION THEY THOUGHT THEIR SONS <u>SHOULD</u> HAVE

	EDUCATION				
	Post graduate Degree	College Degree	Some College	High School	Totals
MOBILE MOTHERS: working to middle class	5	21	3	1	30
STABLE MOTHERS: working class		4	4		8

GAMMA = +.722

class are compared to stable mothers in the working class--the class from which the mobile mothers originated.[22]

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[22] In answering questions on education, instead of selecting a level of education, mothers could choose the response "entirely up to son". Because such responses were of a different type than the responses dealing specifically with a level of education, they were

Table III shows that mobile mothers were more likely than stable to think their sons should have a post graduate degree, but one of the mobiles (vs. none of the stable) also thought her son should have only a high school education.[23]

Gamma was the statistical measure employed in this study. Table III has a Gamma association of +.722. This means that knowing that a mother was mobile or stable, it could be predicted with a 72.2 per cent increase in accuracy (over a chance basis) what education the mother thought her son should have. In other words mobile mothers thought their sons should have a higher education than stable mothers, 72.2 per cent of the time. Hypothesis one is thus supported.

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not included in the tables. No stable mothers were affected by this, but several of the mobile mothers were. For this reason Table III has one less mother mobile from working to middle class, than Table I. Table V, also using the Duncan Index, shows two fewer mothers mobile from working to middle class, than in Table I.

Using the Occupational Code, Table IV has one less mother mobile from working to middle class, than Table II, and Table VI has four fewer mobile from working to middle class than Table II.

It is interesting to note that all mothers giving the "entirely up to son" response were upwardly mobile (using either occupational schema) and more of them gave the "entirely up to son" response for insisted levels of education than for the education they thought their sons should have.

[23] Working and middle class mothers were used because they were the only ones containing sufficient numbers of both mobile and stable in both the Duncan Index and the Occupational Code. The Occupational Code does not contain any mothers currently in the lower class, therefore further mobility analysis could not be made. Despite the fact that the Duncan Index contains seven stable mothers currently in the lower class, there were insufficient cases for an analysis of mothers mobile from the lower class to the working class or from the lower class to the

Table IV shows the same information as Table III but uses the Occupational Code. As with the Duncan Index (Table III) more

TABLE IV

OCCUPATIONAL CODE COMPARING UPWARDLY MOBILE AND STABLE MOTHERS AND THE EDUCATION THEY THOUGHT THEIR SONS SHOULD HAVE

	EDUCATION				
	Post graduate degree	College degree	Some College	High School	Totals
MOBILE MOTHERS: working to middle class	3	18	1		22
STABLE MOTHERS: working class		10	4	3	17

GAMMA = +. 894

mobile mothers than stable thought their sons should have a post graduate degree. Contrary to the Duncan data (Table III) fewer mobile mothers than stable lowered educational goals to high school. Because of this the Gamma association should be higher. This is supported, as the Gamma association is +.894 (compared to +.722 using the Duncan Index, Table III). This means that given the fact

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middle class. However, when mothers mobile from lower to middle class were added to mothers mobile from working to middle class (Table III) sufficient numbers were obtained for a mobility analysis. When this was done the Gamma association was lowered from +.722 to +.529, suggesting that mothers mobile from lower to middle vs. those mobile from working to middle, did not value education as much. A more complete discussion of this follows Table V.

that a mother was mobile or stable, using the Occupational Code, it could be predicted 89.4 per cent of the time what education she thought her son should have.

Both Tables III and IV support hypothesis one; knowing a mother was mobile increased the ability to predict the amount of education that mothers desired for their sons.

The second hypothesis of this study stated that:

> Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will <u>insist</u> their sons have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

Tables V and VI relate to this hypothesis. Table V uses the Duncan Index, and as in Table III compares mobile mothers currently in the middle class with mothers in the working class--the class from

TABLE V

DUNCAN INDEX COMPARING UPWARDLY MOBILE AND STABLE MOTHERS AND THE EDUCATION THEY <u>INSISTED</u> THEIR SONS HAVE

	EDUCATION				
	Post graduate degree	College degree	Some college	High school	Total
MOBILE MOTHERS: working to middle class		16	5	8	29
STABLE MOTHERS: working class		2	2	4	8

GAMMA = +.468

which the mobile mothers originated.

Table V shows that all 5 mobile mothers who thought their sons should have a post graduate degree (Table III), have lowered the education they would insist their sons have. However, both stable and mobile mothers have lowered their educational goals for their sons. The Gamma association is +.468 for Table V, compared to +.722 in Table III. Again, this means that given knowledge of whether a mother was stable or mobile it could be predicted (using Table V) with a 46.8 per cent increase in accuracy (over chance) what education she would insist her son have. This supports hypothesis two, but the Gamma association is not as high as it was when the mothers were asked what education their sons should have (Table III).[24]

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[24] Tables III and V, using the Duncan Index, do not contain mothers mobile from lower class to middle class. There were not enough mothers stable in the lower class for a separate table analysing mothers mobile from lower class to middle class. However, if mothers mobile from lower class to middle class are included in Tables III and V, and also the stable mothers of the lower class, a further test of both hypotheses can be made. (This could not be done using the Occupational Code since there were no stable mothers in the lower class). Using the Duncan schema, tables were constructed comparing mothers mobile from lower to middle class and from working to middle class, plus stable mothers in their classes of origin (lower and working). When this was done the Gamma association for Table III (the education mothers thought their sons should have) was lowered from +.722 to +.529. The Gamma association for Table V (education mothers insisted sons have) however, was raised from +.468 to +.605. This suggests that mothers mobile from lower to middle class (vs. those mobile from working to middle class) are more reality oriented regarding their sons' education, in that they do not set unrealistically high goals when asked what education their sons should have, but their insisted educational goals are not lowered as much.

Table VI shows the same data as Table V, but uses the Occupational Code. Again, all mothers have lowered their educational goals.

TABLE VI

OCCUPATIONAL CODE COMPARING UPWARDLY MOBILE AND STABLE MOTHERS AND THE EDUCATION THEY INSISTED THEIR SONS HAVE

	EDUCATION				
	Post graduate Degree	College Degree	Some College	High School	Total
MOBILE MOTHERS: working to middle class		10	3	6	19
STABLE MOTHERS: working class		2	4	11	17

GAMMA +.626

None of the mobile mothers insisted on a post graduate degree for their sons (three thought their sons should have a post graduate degree, Table IV). The Gamma association is +.537. Again, as with the Duncan Index, using the Occupational Code it is evident that mothers have lowered their educational goals from those they thought their sons should have. However, comparing the should and insist tables, the Occupational Code shows a higher Gamma association in both cases.

Hypothesis two is supported by Tables V and VI, with Table VI indicating the higher association. Upwardly mobile mothers did insist

their sons have more education than mothers of the social class from which they originated.

SUMMARY

In summarizing it can be said that both hypotheses of this study were supported using the Gamma statistical model on mothers mobile from working to middle class. When mothers were asked what education they thought their sons should have an improvement in prediction of 72.2 per cent was made using the Duncan Index, compared to 89.4 per cent using the Occupational Code. When mothers were asked what education they would insist their sons have, predictive accuracy was lowered to 46.8 per cent (Duncan Index) and 62.6 per cent (Occupational Code). Upwardly mobile mothers thought their sons should have more education than stable mothers in their class of origin, and they insisted on more education than mothers in their class of origin.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research project studied the relation of upward social mobility on the educational aspirations mothers had for their sons. Mobility was the independent variable and educational interests articulated by mothers the dependent variable. Mothers were asked what education they thought their sons should have, in an attempt to elicit the educational aspirations they had for their sons. Mothers were also asked what education they would insist their sons have, in an attempt to find what their minimum educational standards would be. Responses of stable and mobile mothers were then compared.

The basic assumption derived from the research tradition was that upwardly mobile mothers would increase the education they wanted their sons to have as they moved into higher social classes. This assumption was based on two aspects of the research tradition, the first being that the higher the social class the greater the interest in education. Secondly, the literature indicated that individuals who were upwardly mobile changed many of their values to conform to the new classes into which they were moving. Individuals may change their values before they move into their new class, practicing anticipatory socialization, or their values may change after they enter the new social class. Thus it was posited that upwardly mobile mothers would increase educational goals for their sons as they moved up the social ladder.

The research had also shown that the discrepancy between the education desired and that planned for was less the higher the social class. Thus it was hypothesized that:

1) Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will believe their sons should have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

2) Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will insist their sons have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

It was recognized that in any study on mobility the amount of mobility indicated would be partially due to the particular class schema employed. For this reason two different occupational schemata were utilized in the data analysis.

II. FINDINGS

Hypothesis one stated that:

Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will believe their sons should have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

This hypothesis was supported by both occupational schemata, with the Occupational Code showing a higher Gamma association (+.894) than the Duncan Index (+.722). This discrepancy was attributed to the fact that the Occupational Code handled farmers as a single category and that in this schema everyone who moved from rural to urban was defined as upwardly mobile. Thus the difference in the Gamma association was in part a product of the occupational schema employed. However, it should be reiterated that whichever classification schema for occupation was used, both supported the hypothesis. Upwardly mobile mothers, when compared to mothers in their class of origin, did increase the education they thought their sons should have.

The second hypothesis stated that:

Mothers who have been upwardly mobile will insist their sons have more education than mothers of their social class of origin.

This hypothesis was supported by data using both the Occupational Code and the Duncan Index. As with the first hypothesis the Occupational Code showed a higher Gamma association (+.626) than did the Duncan Index (+.468). However, both tables showed a lower Gamma association than did the tables supporting the first hypothesis. Thus when mobile and stable mothers were compared in regard to the education they thought their sons should have, the Duncan Index showed a Gamma association of +.722. Again using the Duncan Index the association dropped to +.468 when mothers were asked what education they would insist their sons have. The corresponding decrease using the Occupational Code was from +.894 (education sons should have) to +.626 (education insisted upon).

Upwardly mobile mothers when compared to the stable mothers of their class of origin, have higher educational aspirations for their sons. However, when a more realistic evaluation of the minimum education insisted upon was obtained, the discrepancy in educational goals between mobile and stable mothers was less. Although not directly comparable this is somewhat divergent from Stephenson's findings. Stephenson's research indicated that with respect to occupation the gap between the occupation aspired to and the one realistically planned for was greater with lower social class position.[25] However, Stephenson was not dealing with mobile mothers, and he was studying occupational (not educational) aspirations and plans.

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[25] Richard Stephenson, op. cit., p. 212.

Hypothesis two was supported--upwardly mobile mothers did insist on more education for their sons than mothers of the class from which they originated.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study include the fact that mobility was analysed mainly in terms of occupation--a limitation all too common to other studies of mobility.[26] Even though the Duncan Index used a combination of education and income in determining rank, these two factors correlate highly with occupational prestige, so that a person's social class in the Duncan Index (apart from farm-related occupations) might not differ significantly from what it would be using the Occupational Code. In addition this limitation may have been compounded in that a mother's former status was considered to be that of her father, while her current status was defined as that of her husband. Thus the mother's own motivations and achievement values were not studied; such values might be related closely to her mobility and to the educational aspirations she had for her son.

Another limitation stemming from using occupational change as an indication of mobility is that the overall occupational structure of society may have undergone significant changes between the time a mother was growing up and the present. Thus mobility would not be the result of any particular achievement orientation of the mother (or the husband),

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[26] Leonard Reissman, Class In American Society (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959), p. 298. Reissman points out that the reason for using occupation to indicate mobility (as most studies do) is that it is objective, available, and is related to the outstanding image of class.

but would be due to basic societal changes in the type and number of occupations available to her husband.

Despite the fact that the question relating to father's occupation was designed to avoid having the respondent cite her father's most prestigious occupation, she may still have given his most prestigious occupation. Related to this the accuracy of the mother's recall may have been distorted. Either an incorrect recall of her father's occupation, or citing his most prestigious occupation (rather than his typical one) would distort the amount of mobility shown by the occupational schemata.

An additional major limitation of this research is that the father's role in the socialization process of the child was not studied. Much of the current research on socialization make this same oversight, with the result that social scientists may tend to minimize the importance of the father in socializing the child.

Finally, certain limitations of the sample must be cited, the first being its relatively small size. In addition the sample was restricted to working and middle class respondents, many of whom were of rural backgrounds; therefore, the findings of this study have a restricted level of generality.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study add to the accumulated data which have shown that upwardly mobile individuals change many of their values to conform to their new social class. This research extended the study

of mobility-related value changes, focusing on the changes in educational interests mothers had for their sons.

Additional research should be directed toward overcoming at least some of the limitations of this study. A study utilizing a larger sample with fewer restrictions in class composition is needed. A more detailed analysis (necessitating a larger sample) of types of mobility could profitably be made, to see if mobility between certain classes or occupations has different implications than mobility between other classes or occupations. A comparison of upwardly mobile mothers with downwardly mobile mothers is indicated.

A more intensive study of why mothers upwardly mobile from lower to middle class set their educational aspirations for their sons somewhat lower than mothers mobile from working to middle class, yet lower their insisted educational levels relatively less, should prove illuminating.

Future research of this type would be more complete and accurate if it also studied the father's role in socialization. In addition, inquiry designed to test the suspected importance of the temporal factor in the socialization of the mobile mother, could be studied, showing how the length of time spent in a new social class relates to value changes in the mobile individual. For example a study could be made of mothers married for two years, compared to those married four or six years, and so forth.

On a much larger order future studies could attempt to control for major changes in the overall occupational structure of society, thus

delineating to some extent the amount of mobility that might be due to such basic changes.

In summary it can be said that new approaches to the problem of value changes occasioned by mobility are indicated, so that the ramifications of mobility as they affect both man and society can be better comprehended.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DUNCAN SOCIOECONOMIC INDEX

The Duncan Socioeconomic Index is based on a combined measure of the educational attainments and income of each of forty-five occupations (all of which can be matched with Census designations). The Duncan Index has a correlation of .91 with the North and Hatt 1947 Occupational schema.

The Duncan Socioeconomic Index has ten major divisions each composed of occupations that are relatively alike. Occasionally a particular occupation may rank higher or lower than the majority of those in its division. For example, the occupation of entertainer is listed in the first category (below) of professional, technical and kindred workers, (ranks eight, nine and ten) yet its rank is only six. Similarly, a transportation foreman in the fifth category (craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers, ranks five, six and seven) has a rank of ten. While a few exceptional cases may overlap between the major divisions, generally most occupations of the major divisions are within the ranks of that division as given below. The major divisions are:

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	DECILE SCORE
I. Professional, technical and kindred workers	8,9,10
II. Managers, officials and proprietors (except farm)	8,9,10
III. Clerical and kindred workers	7,8,9

IV. Sales workers	7, 8, 9
V. Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	5, 6, 7
VI. Operatives and kindred workers	4, 5, 6
VII. Private household workers (i.e housekeepers, household workers)	1, 2, 3
VIII. Service workers, except private household	2, 3, 4
IX. Laborers, except farm and mine	1, 2, 3

X. Farmers

	Dry-land acres	Irrigated acres	
Own:	1,000 or more	500 or more	10
	500-999	260-499	9
	220-499	180-259	7
	under 220	under 180	6
Rent:	220 or more	180 or more	4
	under 220	under 180	3
	Farm laborer	Farm laborer	1

Farm manager: a point below owner

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONAL CODE

Since 1930 the United States Census Classification of Occupational Groups has been based on Alba M. Edward's Social Economic Grouping of Occupations (first published in 1934). The Census Classification divides occupations into six major groups with each group purported to have a somewhat distinct economic standard of life and similar social characteristics. The six major occupational groups are:

1. Professional, technical and kindred workers
2. Business managers, officials, and proprietors (including farm owners and managers)
3. Clerical and sales workers
4. Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers
5. Operatives and kindred workers
6. Unskilled, service, and domestic workers (including farm laborers)

The Occupational Code used in this study was based on the Census Classification above, and was different in that it had nine major occupational groups, as follows:

1. Professional and military officer
2. Business
3. White collar
4. Skilled
5. Semi-skilled, military non-commissioned
6. Unskilled

7. Farm owner

8. Farm Tenant

9. Farm worker

The Occupational Code was also different from the Census Classification in that farm related occupations were placed in the bottom three ranks. The rationale behind this was the belief that in terms of amount of education and type of work performed, farm related occupations would properly fit into these ranks. In addition the Occupational Code provided a specific rank for tenant farmers, while the Census Classification did not.

APPENDIX C

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

Lincoln, Nebraska

Department of Sociology

March 14, 1966

Mrs. Kelly O. Magnuson
1545 B Street
Lincoln, Nebraska

Dear Mrs. Magnuson:

I am writing to ask your cooperation in a survey being conducted by the University of Nebraska. The purpose of this study is to find out how the people of Lincoln feel about the community as a place to live and rear children, and their attitudes toward several other current topics.

In order to gain a good cross-section of Lincoln residents, a sample of persons living in Lincoln was selected on a chance basis. Your name was selected in this way, and we look forward to talking with you.

These interviews are completely confidential and all reports based on them are purely statistical. Names are never used and the people we talk to are never identified in any way.

One of our interviewers will call on you within the next several days. The interviewer is a graduate student at the University of Nebraska and carries a University identification card. There is, of course, no selling or commercial activity associated with this survey. If you would like further information about the study, I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Harry J. Crockett, Jr., Ph.D.
Project Director

APPENDIX D

EXPLANATION OF THE GAMMA STATISTICAL MODEL

The Gamma statistical model (after Goodman and Kruskel, 1954)[27] is a non-parametric, symmetrical statistic, designed especially for treating ordinal data. Gamma is a measure of association used to improve prediction relative to association between two variables. Given events A and B, if A is consistently reproduced in the order of B, a like order or positive association exists. If A is consistently reversed by the order of B, an unlike order or negative association exists. Gamma, then, is based on the idea of predicting the order of event B with respect to A (or vice versa) on successive draws.

The Gamma association ranges from -1 (and unlike order) to +1 (a like order) and tells how much more probable a like order is than an unlike order. The Gamma measure is:

$$\text{Gamma} = \frac{N_s - N_d}{N_s + N_d}$$

where N_s= the probability of a like order
and, N_d= the probability of an unlike order.

An association of +.700, for example, would mean that events A and B were associated 70 per cent of the time.

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[27]Morris Zelditch, A Basic Course in Sociological Statistics (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 180.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What was your father's usual occupation while you were growing up?
   a. If farm: Did he own____; rent_____; manage____; or work for hire?
   b. If own, rent, or manage: About how many acres did he farm?_____.
   c. Was the land arid or semi-arid? Yes____; No____.
   d. If yes: Was the land irrigated? (Number acres irrigated)_____.
   e. What was the major cash crop?_____.

2. What kind of work does your husband do for a living? If retired, unemployed, or deceased, obtain usual occupation.
   a. If farm: Does he own____; rent____; manage____; or work for hire____?
   b. If own, rent, or manage: About how many acres did he farm?_____.
   c. Is the land arid or semi-arid? Yes____; No____.
   d. If yes: Is the land irrigated? (Number acres irrigated)_____.
   e. What is the major cash crop?_____.

3. Looking toward the future, how much education do you think your son should have?
   a. some high school
   b. high school graduate
   c. some college
   d. college graduate
   e. post graduate degree
   f. entirely up to son

4. How much education will you insist your son have?
   a. some high school
   b. high school graduate
   c. some college
   d. college graduate
   e. post graduate degree
   f. entirely up to son