

Gender Differences in the Evaluation of Prestige

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This study examines the prestige accorded to male and female incumbents in occupations. Respondents were asked to rate the prestige of occupations and the prestige of male and female incumbents in those occupations. Two main findings are discussed in this paper. First, the prestige of male and female incumbents often differs substantially. The size of these differences is strongly related to the sex composition of the occupations. Second, the sex composition of occupations has a significant effect on the prestige of sex-atypical jobholders, even after the effects of perceived income and education are accounted for. The implications of these findings for theories and research on occupational prestige are discussed.

While recent work on stratification has shown a good deal of diversity, the status-attainment model remains the focal point for research on stratification. Research on new perspectives has added vitality to the debate on the nature of inequality. The current debate has helped to redirect attention to fundamental conceptual and measurement issues. Occupational prestige, the theoretical and empirical touchstone of the status-attainment perspective, is sharing in this reexamination.

The measurement of women's occupational standing has been a leading area of reappraisal in the status attainment perspective. Added impetus for this concern stems from the generally disappointing performance of status attainment research in elucidating male-female labor market differences (Huber, 1980; Acker, 1980). Research has revealed a few important differences between status attainment processes of men and women. This surprising result has refocused attention on the measurement of the occupational standing of men and women (England, 1979; Stevens and Featherman, 1981; Boyd and McRoberts, 1982; Jacobs, 1982).

This paper focuses on the measurement of occupational prestige. We identify the extent and pattern of differences in prestige accorded to male and female incumbents in the same occupations. We examine the influence of the sex composition of occupations on the prestige of male and female jobholders, after the effects of income and education have been taken into account.

Intra-Occupational Prestige Differences

It has been assumed that the prestige accorded to an occupation is conferred equally upon all incumbents in that occupation (Treiman, 1977). This investigation examines the possible variations in prestige accorded to different types of

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incumbents. The focus shifts from the evaluation of occupations to that of male and female incumbents in these occupations. While some refer to the prestige accorded to individuals in occupations as "esteem," we use the term "prestige" to refer to the evaluation of the social standing of people (Hodge, 1981; Treiman, 1977).

The world of work is sharply differentiated into male-dominated and female-dominated occupations. A high level of occupational segregation by sex has persisted in the United States since the turn of the century (Gross, 1968; Treiman and Terrell, 1975; England, 1981). Men and women generally work in occupations comprised predominantly of members of their own sex. In 1970, one-half of working women were employed in occupations with over 80 percent women employees; two-thirds of employed men were found in occupations with over 80 percent men (England, 1979:259). Changes since 1970 in the level of occupational sex-segregation appear to be quite modest (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978).

Occupational segregation by sex has important implications for occupational prestige which have not been generally recognized. The sex composition of a job is likely to affect how individuals in that job are viewed. In occupations where one sex comprises the clear majority of workers, sex-role expectations develop for those on the job and for the public at large (Tressemer and Pleck, 1974; Ferber et al., 1979; Davies, 1979). Thus, sex-role norms influence and are influenced by the sex composition of an occupation. Violating the occupational sex-role norms may engender general social disapproval.

Consider the case of two occupations, stenographer and firefighter. In 1970, over 93 percent of stenographers were women and over 99 percent of firefighters were men (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978). A woman firefighter is not generally viewed just like any other worker on the job. More specifically, we expect that a woman firefighter would receive lower prestige ratings than her male counterpart. The same would hold for a male stenographer. In general, we expect that sex-atypical jobholders who are viewed as occupying sex-inappropriate positions are likely to be penalized for their sex-role deviance. In each case, the worker in an occupation who faces an unfavorable sex ratio will suffer a prestige penalty, and his or her social standing will be evaluated lower than the sex-typical workers in the same occupation. Since most occupations have extremely skewed sex compositions, we expect this effect to be significant for a wide range of occupations. While some extreme sex-role stereotypes may have moderated in recent years, attitudes have not changed so much as to eliminate the general social disapproval for sex-role norm violation in occupational roles (Duncan and Duncan, 1978).

These general propositions imply two specific predictions for people's views of the prestige of jobholders. First, for a large number of occupations, respondents will accord significantly different levels of prestige to men and women incumbents in the same occupation. Second, we predict the sex differences in prestige will take the form of a prestige penalty for incumbents in sex-inappropriate occupations. That is, men incumbents in jobs typically held by women will be accorded less prestige than their female counterparts, and women incumbents in positions normally held by men will be accorded less prestige than their male counterparts.

Several studies have addressed this question, with mixed results. A number of them found modest to substantial differences in the prestige accorded to men and women incumbents in the same occupations (Walker and Bradley, 1973; Nilson, 1976; Guppy and Siltanen, 1977; Olson, 1979; Powell and Jacobs, 1984). These studies indicate that women in occupations where men predominate are accorded lower prestige than are their male counterparts; four of the five (Olson is the exception) report similar effects for men in jobs typically held by women. Bose (1974; Bose and Rossi, 1983) reported a number of relatively minor differences between the prestige accorded to men and women; however, the internal inconsistencies of her findings may explain the discrepancy between her and others' results (Powell and Jacobs, 1984). Nonetheless, the results of Bose's dissertation have generally been viewed as demonstrating that there are no important, systematic differences in the prestige accorded to men and women incumbents in the same occupations (Acker, 1980; England, 1979; Treiman, 1977). This research examines more fully the extent and determinants of sex differences in occupational prestige.

The investigation of possible differences in ratings of men and women in the same occupations bears directly on a key assumption of research which compares the status-attainment processes of men and women. A number of studies have attempted to compare the occupational attainments of men and women (Treas and Tyree, 1979; Sewell, et al., 1980; Marini, 1980; Featherman and Stevens, 1982; Rosenfeld, 1980; Boyd and McRoberts, 1982; Roos, 1981). These analyses depend upon accurate comparisons of the social standings of men and women. By basing their analyses on the same prestige metric for men and women, these studies implicitly assumed that there are no differences in the evaluation of men and women in the same occupations. Data on this basic premise thus have important implications for a growing body of research comparing men's and women's status-attainment processes.

Further, evidence on the perceived desirability of occupations for men and women may shed light on the sex differentiation of occupational choices. Sex-role attitudes are instilled in boys and girls at a young age (Newerowicz, 1979). Evidence of differences in the desirability of occupations for men and women may be related to the way young adults choose occupations. The questions raised here may be important for understanding the way sex-segregated occupational roles are maintained.

Determinants of Prestige

The second, perhaps more central, issue we examine is the determinants of prestige, with special emphasis on the effect of the sex type of occupation on the prestige of male and female incumbents. An analysis of the determinants of prestige must include those factors which have been demonstrated to be highly associated with prestige. A number of important studies have indicated that income and education are excellent predictors of the prestige of an occupation (Duncan, 1961; Coleman and Rainwater, 1978; Stevens and Featherman, 1981). This investigation can shed additional light on the question of the role of income and education as predictors of prestige. We ask two questions in this section. First, do respondents' perceptions of income and education predict the prestige

of occupations as well as do actual income and education? Second, how do income, education, and the sex composition of occupations contribute to the prestige of occupations and to the prestige of male and female incumbents?

Since Duncan's demonstration that income and education predict the lion's share of the variance in occupational prestige, these two variables have come to be accepted as comprising the principal socioeconomic components of the prestige structure. Yet, relatively little research has focused on whether the public makes the same connection as indicated by Duncan's equation (Coleman and Rainwater, 1978). Do respondents rate occupations mostly in recognition of the income and education of the incumbents in occupations? We asked respondents to rate the income and education they associated with each occupation. We thus have a subjective measure of income and education, which can be used to predict the prestige evaluation offered by respondents. We compare these results to the results obtained by predicting prestige from census data on the income and education of incumbents in occupations.

The link between income, education, and prestige becomes more complicated when sex composition is entered into the picture. Siegel (1971), recognizing the potential impact of sex composition on the social evaluation of an occupation, tested for the incremental effect of sex composition on occupational prestige, after education and income were taken into account. He found a slight, negative effect of higher proportions of women. In Siegel's analysis, the dependent variable was the general prestige of occupations; however, he did not obtain separate data on the prestige of male and female jobholders. Consequently, his conclusions do not preclude the possibility of strong sex composition effects on the prestige of male incumbents and their female counterparts. In this research, we test whether Siegel's findings can be extended to males and females in occupations. We examine whether the evaluation of female and male jobholders is rooted just in income and education or in sex composition, as well. Thus, we test the salience of the effect of sex composition of occupations, after income and education are accounted for.

The evidence we examine helps to highlight the nature of the occupational prestige hierarchy. The question of the extent to which the characteristics of incumbents affect the prestige of occupations is a central one for students of occupational prestige (Hodge and Hodge, 1965; Siegel, 1971; Treiman and Terrell, 1975; England, 1979). This investigation recasts this fundamental question by directly measuring the prestige of male and female incumbents in occupations. This approach more directly reveals the hidden assumptions of respondents than has previous research. The data discussed in this paper thus have important implications for both theory and research on occupational stratification.

Data and Methods

The research strategy called for obtaining responses to questions about the prestige of male incumbents, the prestige of female incumbents, and the general prestige of occupations with no incumbent specified. We also wanted to obtain separate ratings of perceived income and education for male incumbents, female incumbents, and occupations in general. This procedure enabled us to measure

the relationship between perceived income, education, and prestige for each type of incumbent. In order to produce a reasonable number of questions and minimize question overlap, we asked each respondent to rate 30 occupations for two out of three types of prestige and to estimate either the income or the education associated with each of the prestige ratings. Thus, we distributed questionnaires with three types of comparisons: approximately one-third of the respondents rated the prestige of male incumbents and general prestige; one-third rated the prestige of female incumbents and general prestige; and one-third rated the prestige of male incumbents and female incumbents. Each of the forms had an equal chance of appearing first in the questionnaire. The order of occupations was reversed in half of the questionnaires to cancel out ordering effects. For each type of prestige rating, we obtained half as many income and education responses as prestige ratings.

Two lists of occupations were used, each with 30 occupational titles. Selection of the occupations followed several criteria: (1) matching the distribution of workers in the prestige hierarchy as closely as possible, (2) including occupations typically held by women, and (3) maximizing the comparability of our findings to previous occupational prestige research. Of the occupational titles, 56 match census titles and have National Opinion Research Center (NORC) prestige scores available. The analyses reported here include only the 56 matching occupations. The mean NORC prestige score of the sample occupations is higher than the average of all occupations (46 vs. 42) and the standard deviation is slightly greater (16.9 vs. 16). As far as one-digit occupational categories are concerned, professional, clerical, and service occupations are overrepresented and craft and operative occupations are underrepresented. Although this bias is not unusual in this type of study, this overrepresentation is smaller than in most similar studies. Moreover, the sample occupations are representative of occupations in general. The hypothesis that the sample occupations are representative of the universe of all three-digit occupations (measured by NORC prestige scores) is not rejected, $p < .05$.

Questionnaires were administered in 1980 to students in a large, nonselective, private university in the northern United States in introductory economics courses. These students majored in many different subjects; their parents' incomes and occupations were modestly above the national average. These students might be expected to report smaller sex differences than a nationally representative sample because they are younger than average and better educated than average. The degree to which inferences may be drawn from this data is discussed in greater detail in the discussion section.

Overall, 325 of 352 respondents returned completed questionnaires, providing over 30,000 occupational ratings: 6,000 prestige ratings for male incumbents, 6,000 for female incumbents, 6,000 for general prestige, and 3,000 each for the income and education associated with male incumbents, female incumbents, and occupations in general. An additional 95 respondents completed a comparable prestige inventory, using a card-sort task, rather than a written questionnaire. The direction of results is consistent over these two methods of administration, suggesting that the results from the questionnaire are not simply an artifact of a particular method of administration.

Respondents rated the prestige on a scale of one to nine. Perceived income and education were also rated on a scale of one to nine. The responses were averaged and then transformed to a scale of zero to 100 in order to facilitate comparisons with the NORC prestige scores.

Findings

Intra-occupational prestige differences. The first issue we address is whether men and women in the same occupations are accorded the same prestige. Although the results are reported for the entire sample, the patterns discussed below apply to both male and female respondents; however, the patterns are stronger for male respondents. Separate prestige evaluations by sex of incumbent are available upon request.

Table 1 - Occupations by Size of Male-Female
Prestige Differences in Rating (N = 325)

| OCCUPATION | DIFFERENCE | MALE | | FEMALE | |
|-------------------------|------------|---------|------|--------|------|
| | RATE | RATE*** | RANK | RATE | RANK |
| Firefighter | 35.3** | 74.0 | 14.5 | 38.7 | 50 |
| Minister | 29.3** | 78.9 | 10 | 49.6 | 41 |
| Electrical Engineer | 27.2** | 87.3 | 6 | 60.1 | 33 |
| Automobile Mechanic | 25.5** | 57.1 | 23 | 31.6 | 51 |
| Plumber | 25.3** | 64.9 | 17 | 39.6 | 48.5 |
| Miner | 24.8** | 47.3 | 38 | 22.5 | 56 |
| Carpenter | 22.7** | 64.5 | 18 | 41.8 | 46 |
| Chemist | 20.6** | 87.6 | 5 | 67.0 | 25 |
| Dentist | 20.3** | 90.8 | 3 | 70.5 | 18 |
| Truck Driver | 20.3** | 49.9 | 30 | 29.6 | 52 |
| Judge | 19.2** | 95.5 | 1 | 76.3 | 10 |
| Farm Laborer | 19.1** | 48.6 | 32 | 29.5 | 53 |
| Police Officer | 17.7** | 69.3 | 16 | 51.6 | 38 |
| Building Superintendent | 13.7** | 53.3 | 25 | 39.6 | 48.5 |
| Electrician | 12.9** | 63.0 | 19 | 50.1 | 39 |
| Professional Athlete | 10.3** | 79.6 | 9 | 69.3 | 22 |
| Banker | 9.5** | 84.9 | 7 | 75.4 | 12 |
| Janitor | 8.7* | 32.0 | 52 | 23.3 | 55 |
| Lawyer | 8.2** | 90.0 | 4 | 81.8 | 5 |
| Architect | 8.1** | 80.0 | 8 | 71.9 | 16 |
| Funeral Director | 7.4* | 57.2 | 22 | 49.8 | 40 |
| Gas Station Attendant | 7.0 | 30.4 | 55 | 23.4 | 34 |
| Physician | 6.3** | 91.1 | 2 | 84.8 | 3 |
| Insurance Agent | 4.0 | 62.0 | 20 | 58.0 | 34 |
| Bartender | 2.6 | 51.0 | 28 | 48.4 | 43 |
| Psychologist | 2.2 | 76.5 | 11 | 74.3 | 13 |
| Barber | 1.0 | 47.0 | 39 | 46.0 | 44 |

| OCCUPATION | DIFFERENCE | MALE | | FEMALE | |
|----------------------------|------------|---------|------|--------|------|
| | RATE | RATE*** | RANK | RATE | RANK |
| Textile Worker | -1.5 | 41.3 | 44 | 42.8 | 45 |
| Bus Driver | -2.7 | 37.5 | 47 | 40.2 | 47 |
| Postal Clerk | -4.2 | 47.8 | 36.5 | 52.0 | 37 |
| Jouranlist | -4.7 | 74.6 | 13 | 79.3 | 8 |
| Baker | -5.1 | 48.5 | 33 | 53.6 | 36 |
| College Teacher | -5.4* | 74.0 | 14.5 | 79.4 | 7 |
| Waiter/Waitress | -5.9 | 42.6 | 43 | 48.5 | 42 |
| Tailor | -9.2** | 51.8 | 27 | 61.0 | 31 |
| High School Teacher | -10.4** | 59.5 | 21 | 69.9 | 19 |
| Professional Actor/Actress | -11.1** | 75.8 | 12 | 86.9 | 1 |
| Bookkeeper | -17.3** | 48.3 | 34 | 65.6 | 28 |
| Social Worker | -20.0** | 47.8 | 36.5 | 67.8 | 23 |
| Sales Clerk | -20.9** | 40.0 | 46 | 60.9 | 32 |
| Stenographer | -22.3** | 43.6 | 41 | 65.9 | 26.5 |
| Bank Teller | -23.0** | 48.1 | 35 | 71.1 | 17 |
| Key Punch Operator | -23.8** | 40.3 | 45 | 64.1 | 30 |
| Cashier | -25.8** | 30.7 | 54 | 56.5 | 35 |
| Dietician | -26.5** | 49.9 | 30 | 76.4 | 9 |
| Elementary School Teacher | -27.4** | 55.5 | 24 | 82.9 | 4 |
| Child Care Worker | -27.8** | 44.6 | 40 | 72.4 | 15 |
| Hairdresser | -30.0** | 35.9 | 48 | 65.9 | 26.5 |
| Registered Nurse | -31.1** | 49.9 | 30 | 81.0 | 6 |
| Airline Steward/Stewardess | -33.0** | 43.0 | 42 | 76.0 | 11 |
| Practical Nurse | -33.5** | 52.3 | 26 | 85.8 | 2 |
| Telephone Operator | -34.0** | 30.9 | 53 | 64.9 | 29 |
| Librarian | -35.2** | 32.3 | 51 | 67.5 | 24 |
| Typist | -36.2** | 33.6 | 49 | 69.8 | 20 |
| Secretary | -41.6** | 32.6 | 50 | 74.2 | 14 |
| Dressmaker | -41.8** | 27.9 | 56 | 69.7 | 21 |

* p < .05
**p < .01
***possible range from 0 to 100

Table 1 lists the occupations in order of the size of the differences between the prestige of male incumbents and female incumbents. We subtracted the score for female incumbents from the prestige accorded to male incumbents and labelled that the "prestige differential" or "male-female prestige gap." A positive difference indicates that men are accorded higher prestige ratings in an occupation than are women incumbents. For 45 of the 56 occupational titles examined, statistically significant differences between the prestige of male incumbents and the prestige of female incumbents are evident, $p < .01$. The differences range in size from 35.3 points (in favor of male firefighters) to 41.8 points (in favor of female dressmakers). These data are not consistent with the assumption that the prestige accorded to occupations applies equally to male and female incumbents.

The size of the male-female prestige gap is related to the sex composition of occupations. Table 1 reveals that the differentials favor men in occupations

where men predominate and women in occupations where women predominate. The largest variations appear in the most highly sex-segregated occupations, such as dressmaker, secretary, typist, minister, electrical engineer, and plumber. In contrast, the smallest differences are found among the occupations that do not significantly deviate from the overall sex composition of the labor force (i.e., 60 percent male). Such occupations include journalist, psychologist, postal clerk, and bus driver. The correlation between the size of the prestige penalty for women workers and the percent of men in an occupation in the 1970 census is +.92 for the 56 matching occupations. This result strongly supports the view that incremental changes in the sex composition of occupations affect the prestige accorded to sex-atypical workers. The greater the preponderance of the opposite sex, the more sex-atypical jobholders suffer a prestige penalty.

Consider the examples of stenographer and firefighter mentioned earlier. In our survey, male stenographers received average rating scores of 43.6, which ranked 41st for male incumbents (out of a possible 56). Female stenographers, on the other hand, were accorded relatively high scores, averaging 65.9, which was tied for 26th for women incumbents. Female firefighters were rated lower than male firefighters (average score: 38.7 vs. 74.0). In each case, the sex-atypical incumbents—male stenographers and female firefighters—received lower ratings than their sex-typical coworkers.

Determinants of prestige. The second issue we address is the extent to which income and education explain the general prestige of occupations, and the prestige of male and female perceived incumbents.

Our analysis utilizes perceived ratings of income and education, rather than census data on actual levels of income and education of individuals in an occupation. Table 2 compares the explanatory power of actual income and education vs. perceived income and education. The census education measure is the percentage of individuals with 12 or more years of education in 1970; the census income measure is the percentage earning over \$10,000 in 1970. These measures are used because of their comparability to the measures used by Duncan. Perceived income and education are measured on the same scale as prestige (zero to 100).

We note in Table 2 that actual income and education explain 75 percent of the variance, an amount comparable to that traditionally found in studies of the determinants of prestige. If income and education are crucial elements of the "evaluative arithmetic" of prestige (Coleman and Rainwater, 1978), we should expect to find at least the same percentage explained. To what extent do prestige evaluations reflect the public view of the income and education of occupations? Perceived income and education perform extraordinarily well as predictors of prestige, explaining over 93 percent of the variation in general prestige.

This finding confirms and extends previous research on occupational prestige. It confirms the findings of Duncan (1961), Siegel (1971), and Stevens and Featherman (1981) that occupational prestige is largely determined by the income and education of incumbents in occupations. The evidence also extends previous research by showing that respondents' perceptions of the income and education of jobholders are highly predictive of the prestige accorded to occupations. Previous research relied on measures of actual income and education of in-

Table 2 General Prestige of Occupations Predicted by Actual and Perceived** Income and Education

| | N | Education | | Income | | R ² |
|---------------|----|---------------|------|---------------|------|----------------|
| | | B | Beta | B | Beta | |
| 1 (Actual) | 56 | .35* (.06) | .44 | .45* (.07) | .55 | .75 |
| 2 (Perceived) | 56 | .48* (.05) | .64 | .38* (.06) | .38 | .93 |

* Significant at the .01 level

** As measured by the respondents' ratings of the occupation's education and income.

dividuals. The relationship between general occupational prestige and income and education is evident in the perceptions of respondents. Subsequent analyses report results only for perceived income and education.

To what extent do income, education, and the sex composition of occupations explain the prestige of occupations and of male and female incumbents? In addition to examining the three different prestige variables for the total list of occupations, we consider male-dominated and female-dominated occupations separately. Male-dominated occupations are defined as those with zero to 29.9 percent women; female-dominated are those with zero to 29.9 percent men. Certainly, there are alternative cutoff points between male-dominated and female-dominated occupations. For example, it has been argued that if the percentage of females in an occupation exceeds that of women in the labor force in general, then the occupation should be considered female-dominated (Oppenheimer, 1970). Using this reasoning, any occupation that is over 40 percent female should be deemed a "female occupation." Others have suggested that a female-dominated occupation is one in which women are numerically predominant (i.e., over 50 percent). We opt for the more restrictive operationalization of sex-typical occupations (i.e., over 70 percent male or female) to allow for those occupations which may be considered sex-neutral (for example, journalist). Nevertheless, since we find merit in the alternative definitions of sex-typical occupations, we have conducted regression analyses using the 50-percent and 40-percent cutoff points. These analyses, which are available upon request, produce results similar to those presented in this paper.

For general prestige for all occupations, income and education explain the overwhelming proportion of the variance, with a multiple R of .93 (see Table 3). This is also true when men's and women's occupations are examined separately (multiple R of .92 for men's occupations and .94 for women's occupations). The sex composition of the occupations adds no additional explanatory power. Thus, when general prestige is considered, only income and education are effective predictors. These findings correspond closely with those of Siegel.

Turning to the prestige of male incumbents, income and education explain a great deal of the variance, though somewhat less than is the case for general prestige (multiple R of .83) (see Table 4). The sex composition of occupations significantly adds to the explanation of the prestige of male incumbents (multiple R rises from .83 to .91). This additional effect of the sex composition of occupations is not uniform. For occupations in which men predominate, income and education explain 90 percent of the variance, with the sex composition of occupations adding no explanatory power. However, for occupations where women predominate, income and education explain only 57 percent of the prestige of male incumbents. The sex composition of occupations adds another 10 percent to the explanation of variance. For men in women's occupations, higher proportions of men add to the prestige accorded to men. Thus, for men as sex-typical incumbents, prestige is predicted by income and education; for men as sex-atypical incumbents, prestige is influenced by the degree of occupational sex-atypicality. When men are in the minority, the proportion of men has a significant, positive effect on the prestige of male jobholders.

Finally, the prestige of female incumbents in all occupations is also highly predicted by income and education, but not as highly as the prestige of male

Table 3 General Prestige of Occupations Predicted by Perceived Education, Perceived Income, *** and Percentage Male, by Sex-Type of Occupations

| All Occupations | N | Constant | Education | | Income | | % Male | | R ² |
|--|----|----------|---------------|------|----------------|------|---------------|------|----------------|
| | | | B (se) | Beta | B (se) | Beta | B (se) | Beta | |
| 1 | 56 | 7.6 | .48* (.05) | .64 | .38* (.06) | .38 | | | .93 |
| 2 | 56 | 7.7 | .48* (.05) | .63 | .38* (.07) | .38 | -.00 (.02) | -.01 | .93 |
| "Men's Occupations" (over 70% male) | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. | 28 | 8.2 | .52* (.08) | .67 | .35* (.11) | .33 | | | .92 |
| 4 | 28 | 27.3 | .53* (.08) | .69 | .35* (.11) | .33 | -.22 (.14) | -.09 | .92 |
| "Women's Occupations" (over 70% female) | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 18 | 9.7 | .48* (.07) | .75 | .32** (.13) | .26 | | | .94 |
| 6 | 18 | 11.1 | .49* (.08) | .77 | .29 (.18) | .23 | -.06 (.22) | -.02 | .94 |

* Significant at the .01 level

** Significant at the .05 level

*** As measured by respondents' ratings of the occupation's education and income.

Table 4 Prestige of Male Incumbents Predicted by Perceived Education, Perceived Income, and Percentage Male, by Sex-Type of Occupations ***

| All Occupations | N | Constant | Education | | Income | | % Male | | R ² |
|--|----|----------|---------------|------|---------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| | | | B (se) | Beta | B (se) | Beta | B (se) | Beta | |
| 1 | 56 | 11.9 | .19* (.07) | .26 | .65* (.09) | .69 | .16* (.02) | .32 | .83 |
| 2. | 56 | 9.8 | .27* (.05) | .37 | .44* (.07) | .46 | | | .91 |
| "Men's Occupations" (over 70% male) | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 28 | 23.7 | .35* (.07) | .55 | .37* (.10) | .44 | | | .90 |
| 4 | 28 | 30.8 | .35* (.08) | .55 | .37* (.10) | .44 | -.08 (.13) | -.04 | .90 |
| "Women's Occupations" (over 70% female) | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 18 | 19.7 | .22 (.12) | .29 | .27 (.27) | .50 | | | .57 |
| 6 | 18 | 7.2 | .15 (.12) | .33 | .53 (.27) | .57 | .54** (.22) | .44 | .67 |

* Significant at the .01 level

** Significant at the .05 level

*** As measured by the respondents' ratings of the education and income of a male incumbent

Table 5 Prestige of Female Incumbents Predicted by Perceived Education, Perceived Income, and Percentage Male, by Sex-Type of Occupations

| All Occupations | N | Constant | Education | | Income | | % Male | | R ² |
|--|----|----------|---------------|------|---------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| | | | B (se) | Beta | B (se) | Beta | B (se) | Beta | |
| 1 | 56 | 12.9 | .02 (.12) | .03 | .81* (.19) | .74 | -.27* (.02) | -.56 | .59 |
| 2 | 56 | 30.2 | .23* (.06) | .31 | .58* (.10) | .53 | | | .88 |
| "Men's Occupations" (over 70% male) | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 28 | 3.6 | .14 (.13) | .21 | .71* (.19) | .75 | | | .83 |
| 4 | 28 | 67.5 | .30* (.08) | .44 | .53* (.12) | .54 | -.69* (.10) | -.35 | .94 |
| "Women's Occupations" (over 70% female) | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 18 | 43.5 | .35* (.09) | .75 | .16 (.19) | .17 | | | .80 |
| 6 | 18 | 56.7 | .42* (.10) | .91 | -.08 (.27) | -.08 | -.35 (.28) | -.21 | .82 |

* Significant at the .01 level

** As measured by respondents' ratings of the education and income of a female incumbent

incumbents (multiple R^2 of .59) (see Table 5). As was the case for the prestige of male incumbents, the power of the sex composition of occupations is significant (increasing from an R^2 of .59 to .88) but not uniformly distributed. The influence of the sex composition of occupations on the prestige of female incumbents is observed in occupations where men predominate. For occupations where women predominate, income and education explain a large amount of the variance (multiple R^2 of .80), with only a very modest additional two percent explained by the sex composition of occupations. For men's occupations, income and education explain a similar amount of the prestige of women incumbents, while the sex composition adds a substantial amount of additional explanatory power (multiple R^2 rises from .83 to .94). For female jobholders, especially in sex-atypical occupational roles, the degree of occupational sex atypicality exerts a significant, negative effect on prestige.

Thus, when examining all occupations, income and education are powerful predictors of the general prestige of occupations and the prestige of male and female incumbents. Moreover, sex composition increases the explanatory power for the prestige of male and female incumbents, but not for general occupational prestige. In addition, when assessing predominantly sex-segregated occupations separately, the prestige of sex-typical incumbents is based primarily on education and income, while the prestige of sex-atypical incumbents is determined by sex composition as well.

Discussion

Generalizability. College students may not be representative of the public at large on attitudes regarding occupational roles. Thus, further research is needed to confirm the present, tentative findings. Several considerations, however, suggest that these results may not differ substantially for a random sample. First, the high correlations between the responses to the general prestige questions and previous occupational prestige findings should be noted. The 56 occupational titles which match the NORC scale correlated +.91 with the 1963 NORC results. If the occupation bankteller, whose sex-composition changed dramatically in recent decades, is removed, the correlation of the general prestige responses and the NORC survey is +.94. This finding supports the view that analysis of nonrepresentative samples on questions of occupational prestige is not an unreasonable proposition.

Researchers in this area have frequently argued that the striking uniformity in occupational prestige ratings across age, region, and social classes makes it likely that the results from selected populations will not significantly deviate from samples of the general population (Hodge, et al., 1964). Others have specifically made this point regarding college samples (Balkwell et al., 1980). In areas where this investigation overlaps previous research on occupational prestige, this sample does not produce unusual results. Yet, the same respondents rate men and women in the same occupations quite differently.

Second, the student sample is likely to hold relatively less rigid sex stereotypes or at least be less willing to admit to holding stereotypical views (Bose and Rossi,

1983). If anything, the present results understate the true extent of these relationships.

Third, the degree to which income and education predict the prestige ratings volunteered by this sample is in line with that obtained in other research (Duncan, 1961; Stevens and Featherman, 1981).

Finally, if these results are only indicative of attitudes in this age group, the data would still provide important evidence regarding career aspirations (Balkwell et al., 1980). Nonetheless, further evidence on these hypotheses is clearly needed.

Implications. These data have important implications for studies comparing the status attainment of men and women. Status-attainment studies, whether they use prestige or socioeconomic status as the dependent variable, assume that a common metric is applied to men and women and to male-dominated and female-dominated occupations. These data seriously question whether this assumption corresponds to the prestige evaluations of individuals.

Our evidence suggests that the sex composition of occupations confounds the measurement of the relative prestige of employed men and women. The prestige accorded to male and female incumbents in the same occupations often differs substantially. Sex-atypical incumbents—men in female-dominated occupations and women in male-dominated occupations—tend to be accorded less prestige than their sex-typical counterparts. The size of this prestige penalty is directly related to the extent of the unfavorable sex ratio. Thus, a central, and critical, assumption of status-attainment research on men and women lacks support. These data demonstrate the need to reevaluate the previous studies of women's occupational attainment which have utilized occupational prestige measures.

Our results indicate that the prestige penalty is strong for both males and females in sex-atypical occupations, even though recent evidence has demonstrated that males entering certain "female professions" tend to advance into the administrative component of the occupations faster than females and consequently earn considerably more than their female counterparts (Grimm and Stern, 1974; Parcel and Mueller, 1983). Moreover, the findings suggest that the sex composition of the occupation has a significant impact on the prestige evaluations of female and male incumbents beyond their perceived income and education. Thus, the prestige penalty is not explained by or consistent with the gender differentials in income and/or education.

There is a certain asymmetry in these data. Our results demonstrate that additional proportions of the opposite sex adversely affect the prestige of sex-atypical jobholders, but not of sex-typical incumbents. This paradox can be interpreted in terms of the analysis of Kanter (1977). She suggested that the minority group in an organization, the sex-atypical group, is more susceptible to changes in proportions than is the majority group. The social position of minority members depends upon how small a minority they constitute. The smaller the minority, the more vulnerable or disadvantaged the group becomes. The dominant position of the majority group, however, is not a function of marginal changes in the size of its majority. The evaluations of prestige made by the respondents in this study may reflect the dynamics of majorities and minorities in occupations.

As far as occupational aspirations are concerned, these data suggest a link between young men's and women's perceptions of occupational desirability and the sex segregation of occupations. The sample discussed in this paper is comprised of young adults facing career decisions. The data may be viewed as evidence of strong social disapproval for a sex-inappropriate occupational choice, as indicated by the prestige penalty assessed those in sex-deviant occupational roles.

This evidence may suggest an intermediate variable linking sex-role socialization to occupational segregation. Sex-stereotyped notions of the relative desirability of occupations may help to reinforce or perpetuate the sex segregation of occupations, even if the original causes of sex segregation lie elsewhere.

Goode (1978) suggested that prestige may serve as a mechanism of social control. He examined how "granting or withdrawing prestige or esteem controls the actions of both individuals and groups" (1978:15). Our findings indicate that the social control vested in the occupational prestige hierarchy may be experienced differently by men and women. Differences in prestige mirror sex-typical patterns and, as Goode's line of reasoning suggests, reinforce these patterns. Both men and women face a large number of occupations where they would be sex-atypical incumbents. The large, sex-differentiated component of prestige highlighted in this paper may serve to inhibit sex-atypical occupational choices. In addition, future studies of the evaluation of the prestige accorded to men and women in occupations may serve as a particularly salient indicator of change in occupationally related sex-role attitudes.

Finally, these findings have important implications for views of the occupational structure. The prevailing view is that the occupational hierarchy is essentially socioeconomic in nature. The prestige hierarchy and the socioeconomic hierarchy are viewed as largely congruent (Hauser and Featherman, 1977; Treiman, 1977). The evidence from this study both extends and revises this view.

The evidence presented here bolsters this view by showing that the prestige of occupations is highly predicted by the perceived income and education respondents associate with occupations. This finding extends previous research by demonstrating the link between income, education, and prestige in respondents' perceptions of occupations. However, the results also limit the prevailing view by showing that the congruence of prestige and socioeconomic status is limited primarily to sex-typical workers. The occupational prestige hierarchy is, in fact, a prestige hierarchy for sex-typical incumbents. This evidence supports the contention that the ascribed characteristics of incumbents affects the prestige accorded to occupations. The occupational-prestige hierarchy is really two hierarchies, each a sex-typical prestige hierarchy. The prestige of sex-atypical incumbents deviates systematically from the prestige accorded to sex-typical incumbents, even after the socioeconomic-status characteristics of the occupations are taken into account.

The notion of separate evaluative judgments for the occupational prestige of men and women may suggest the need for two occupational prestige scales, one for men and one for women. Some might find the use of two separate scales perplexing, because comparisons between the two groups would be difficult, if not impossible. But this difficulty is not avoided by using the present, single-prestige scale. We suggest that the same difficulty of inconsistent comparisons

between groups is still present. The two systems of prestige rankings, one for men and one for women, have merely been compressed into a single, sex-typical scale. The problem of different principles of evaluating male and female occupations does not disappear by simply embedding both sets of evaluations into a single scale.

The potential problem of inconsistent evaluations of certain types of occupations by certain groups has long been recognized by occupational prestige researchers (Reiss, 1961; Jencks et al., 1972; Treiman, 1977; Coxon and Jones, 1978). Inconsistent evaluations appear evident for sex-atypical workers in both male-dominated and female-dominated occupations. Although this analysis is limited to gender differentials, future research may corroborate the same problem for racial differences. The issues discussed here pose major questions for occupational prestige theory and research if further research bears out the findings of this study.

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