

SEX AND CONSENSUS IN OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE RATINGS*

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ABSTRACT

This paper reassesses the issue of consensus in occupational prestige evaluation. It is argued that consensus must apply to incumbents in occupations as well as to occupations in the abstract. New data are presented in order to determine if consensus in occupational prestige attribution varies with the sex of the incumbent. The evidence from a college sample suggests that there is much less agreement regarding the prestige of female incumbents than of male incumbents.

Occupational prestige and socio-economic indices derived from it represent a major focal point for social stratification research. A central feature of prestige as a metric for ranking occupations is that it is based on popular evaluations. Consequently, those advocating and utilizing these scales have sought to demonstrate that there is a high level of consensus in the evaluation of occupations over time and across age, sex, race, region, and socio-economic groupings (Reiss, 1961; Hodge, Siegel and Rossi, 1964; Siegel, 1971; Jencks, et al., 1972). More recent work has focused on the degree of consensus in ratings among individuals within major social categories (Balkwell et al., 1982, 1980; Guppy, 1982; Coxon and Jones, 1978; Kraus et al., 1982, 1978).

Another important issue which has emerged more recently is the applicability of prestige measures to women. A number of studies have tested the degree to which men and women in the same occupation receive the same prestige (Bose, 1974; Olson, 1979; Guppy and Siltanen, 1977; Powell and Jacobs, 1980). These studies examine the possible variation in prestige accorded to different types of incumbents. The focus shifts from the evaluation of occupations to the evaluation of incumbents in occupations. In this paper we seek to join these two research approaches by focusing on the degree to which consensus in occupational prestige attribution varies as a function of the sex of the jobholder.

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CONSENSUS IN OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE

Research on the level of consensus in occupational prestige evaluation has generally employed one of two measurement approaches. One research approach has examined the variance in the rating of a particular occupation (Reiss, 1961; Siegel, 1971). This analysis notes that the greater the variation in the prestige ratings of an individual occupation, the lower the level of consensus. Another research approach has examined the correlation between the ratings by particular individuals. The question this approach addresses is the degree to which a pair of individuals agree on the ordering of a set of occupations.

The latter approach is exemplified in recent work by Balkwell, Bates and Garbin (1980). Focusing on consensus as a critical assumption for occupational prestige measures, Balkwell et al. present evidence from a college sample to address two questions: 1) how much agreement is there between individuals in the ranking of occupations; and 2) how much agreement is there between individuals' ratings and the occupational prestige scale, which is constructed by averaging the ratings of all respondents.

Balkwell, Bates and Garbin report a high level of consensus between individuals, with a median person-person correlation of .769, and an even higher level of agreement between individuals and the aggregate prestige scale (.886). They argue that these results strongly support the key premise of consensus in occupational prestige evaluation. Focusing on the individual-aggregate correlations, Kraus, Schild and Hodge report a mean individual-aggregate correlation of .64 on an Israeli sample. Using a similar approach, Guppy (1982) reports that the level of agreement increases as social class increases.

Our analysis follows Balkwell et al.'s approach quite closely. We focus on the level of agreement, both person-to-person and person-to-aggregate; we also briefly examine the variance in prestige for individual occupations. We also extend this line of inquiry and correct certain limitations which may have artificially inflated the level of consensus that Balkwell et al. reported. By choosing occupations which are quite distant from one another in the prestige hierarchy, Balkwell et al. artificially increased the level of consensus in the data.¹ The research focus on consensus in occupational prestige ratings is broadened to include the question of variations in the levels of agreement in rating male and female incumbents.

SEX AND OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE

The question of the applicability of prestige and socio-economic measures to both men and women has arisen in recent years as a number of researchers have attempted to compare the occupational status attainment process of men and women (Marini, 1980; Sewell, Hauser and Wolf, 1980; Treas and Tyree, 1979). The generally disappointing results of the male-female status attainment comparisons have led to a resurgence of interest in the accurate measurement of the occupational standing of men and women (Boyd and McRoberts, 1982; Stevens and Featherman, 1981; England, 1979). An examination of the important underlying assumption of consensus as it applies to men and women will contribute to this ongoing reassessment.

The seminal North-Hatt research on occupational prestige implied that respondents presume the jobholders were male and focused on occupations predominantly filled by men (NORC, 1947; Reiss, 1961). Subsequent research (Siegel, 1971) included a number of occupations typically held by women, and the survey instrument carefully avoided reference to the sex of the jobholders. While this approach represented an important improvement, it unfortunately precluded comparisons of the evaluation of men and women incumbents in the same occupations.

In the past decade, several studies have directly addressed the question of gender-differences in the ratings of men and women incumbents in the same occupations. These studies test the assumption that the prestige accorded to an occupation is conferred equally on all incumbents in that occupation. The results have been mixed. Bose (1974) found only very modest differences; whereas, Nilson (1976), Walker and Bradley (1973), Guppy and Siltanen (1977), Olson (1979) and Powell and Jacobs (1980) found moderate to large differences. Specifically, women in occupations in which men predominate were accorded lower prestige, on the average, than their male counterparts. A similar pattern was found for males in predominantly female occupations.²

The analysis of the above studies focused on the question "Do men and women incumbents in the same occupation receive the same prestige?" The question we will address here is "Is there more variation in the ranking of women in occupations than there is of men?" We hypothesize that there will be more disagreement in the ranking of women incumbents in occupations. We suggest that respondents' reactions to and evaluations of women in occupations will vary a great deal.

We expect the rating of women in the large number of occupations typically held by men may spark substantial disagreement. It has been suggested by some that women in the large number of occupations in which men predominated will be penalized for violating sex-role norms (Nilson, 1976). It has been argued by others that females may be rewarded for challenging the male occupational world by entering occupations predominantly held by males (Bose, 1974). Others maintain that individuals will accord equal prestige to men and women filling the same position (Treiman and Terrell, 1975).

These hypotheses ignore the possible variation in attitudes toward sex-atypical jobholders. Individuals who approve sex-atypical occupational choices may coexist within the population with individuals who disapprove of such behavior. We expect that some individuals will reward women for entering 'masculine' occupations; others will penalize them; and others will accord equal prestige to men and women incumbents in these occupations. The result is a more varied response to women in these occupations, and therefore, a lower level of consensus.³

The above considerations suggest reduced levels of agreement for women in jobs typically held by men. In addition, there may also be growing disagreement over the standing of women in jobs in which women predominate. Whereas their white collar status was once sufficient to guarantee these jobs moderately high standing, some have argued that the meagre financial rewards and opportunities for advancement associated with 'women's work' place these jobs much closer to the bottom of the occupational ladder. Adherence to this viewpoint by some while others maintain the more traditional view will increase the level of disagreement about the standing of women in these jobs (Stromberg and Harkness, 1979).

These arguments imply a lower level of agreement regarding the ratings of female jobholders than of male jobholders. This suggests that the level of person-to-person correlations should be lower when respondents rate female incumbents than when respondents rate male incumbents. No direct examination of the degree of consensus of men and women in occupations has been reported. We will present new data to address this important issue.

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 asked each respondent to rate 30 occupations for two out of the three types of prestige. We, therefore, distributed questionnaires with three types of comparisons: some respondents rated men and general prestige; some rated women and general prestige, and some rated men and women. Each of the forms had an equal chance of appearing first in the questionnaire. In addition, the order of occupations was reversed in half of the questionnaires to cancel out possible ordering effects.

Two lists of occupations were used, each with 30 occupational titles. (The 'occupation' 'housewife' was included in both lists). The selection of the 58 labor-force occupations followed several criteria. First, we wanted to match the distribution of workers in the prestige hierarchy as closely as possible. Second, we wanted to include occupations typically held by women. Third, we wanted to maximize the comparability of our findings to previous occupational prestige research. The mean and standard deviation of the prestige scores of the sample occupations match the prestige distribution of all three-digit occupations quite well. List A, for which results are presented below, matches the distribution of NORC prestige scores for Census titles quite closely (mean = 44.4 vs 42.0; st. dev = 16.3 vs. 16.0).

Questionnaires were administered to students in a large, non-selective private university in the northeast in introductory economics courses. These students majored in many different subject areas; their parents' incomes and occupations were modestly above the national average.

Overall 325 of 350 respondents returned usable questionnaires, providing over 18,000 prestige ratings: 6,000 prestige ratings for male incumbents, 6,000 for female incumbents, and 6,000 for general prestige.

The instructions stated "For each occupation, please indicate your opinion of the general standing of the occupation, from one to nine." On those forms which specified the sex of the hypothetical jobholder, the question read "Please indicate your opinion of the general standing that a man (woman) in such an occupation would have." Respondents rated each occupation on a scale of 1 to 9. The responses were averaged and then transformed to a scale of 0 to 100 in order to facilitate comparisons with the NORC prestige scores.

RESULTS

Our analysis closely follows that of Balkwell, Bates and Garbin. We initially focus on two issues: the level of person to person agreement, and the level of person

to aggregate consensus. The former is operationalized by correlating each individual's ratings with each other individual's ratings. The latter is operationalized by correlating each individual's ratings with an aggregate prestige scale, constructed by averaging the prestige ratings of all respondents. We also examine the standard deviation of ratings of individual occupations.

Person to Person Agreement

Balkwell, Bates and Garbin note that a small to moderate sample size is appropriate for this type of analysis. Since the number of person to person correlations is $n(n-1)/2$, a sample comparable in size to the original North-Hatt study (National Opinion Research Center, 1947) respondents would yield 1,842,240 correlations, an unnecessarily large and impractical number. We present here the level of agreement for 148 respondents who received List A. We have conducted the same analysis for the 177 respondents who received List B, and the results are substantially the same as those reported here.⁴

Table 1 - Distribution of Person-to-Person Correlations, by Sex Type of Rating Question and by Sex of Respondent.

	General Prestige (n=3828)	Prestige of Male Incumbents (n=5151)	Prestige of Female Incumbents (n=5565)
<u>All Pairs</u>			
Median	.486	.456	.339
3rd Quartile	.611	.613	.609
1st Quartile	.320	.328	.017
Percent below +.00	3.0%	2.3%	23.8%
Mean	.454	.460	.306
Standard Deviation	.207	.207	.330
Range	-.464/+ .899	-.286/+ .875	-.543/+ .920
<u>Male vs. Male Pairs</u>	(n=1485)	(n=2415)	(n=2556)
Median	.467	.445	.356
Mean	.450	.438	.323
<u>Female vs. Female Pairs</u>	(n=528)	(n=496)	(n=561)
Median	.538	.513	.353
Mean	.488	.507	.348
<u>Male vs. Female Pairs</u>	(n=1815)	(n=2240)	(n=2448)
Median	.499	.466	.322
Mean	.641	.459	.276

Table 1 summarizes the observed distribution of pair-wise correlation coefficients. The first column represents the ratings of occupations for general prestige

(the sex of the incumbent unspecified); the second column represents results for ratings of male incumbents; and the last column represents ratings of female incumbents. The level of agreement among males, among females and between male and female respondents was also examined.

For general prestige, the median of the 3,828 person to person correlations obtained is .486⁵ The mean correlation for general prestige, .454, is quite similar to the findings of Goldthorpe and Hope (.46) on a British sample (1974), and lower, as expected, than the artificially inflated level of consensus reported by Balkwell et al. Agreement is somewhat higher among female respondents than among male respondents (median of .538 vs .467). This finding is consistent with earlier research demonstrating higher levels of agreement among women than among men (Meyer, 1978). Agreement between men and women closely approximates the sample as a whole (median of .499 vs .486). Thus there is a moderate amount of person to person agreement for general prestige, when the sex of the incumbent is not specified.

If the sex of the incumbent were irrelevant, then the distribution of pair-wise agreements found for male or female incumbents should closely resemble those found for general prestige. The level of consensus when male incumbents are specified closely matches that of general prestige. The median of the 5,151 correlations specifying male incumbents is .456 (vs .486 for general prestige); the first quartile is .613 (vs .611 for general prestige); and the last quartile is at .328 (vs .328 for general prestige). Agreement is again somewhat higher among female respondents. The level of agreement between men and women closely matches the overall average. In sum, the level of person to person agreement seems virtually the same for the prestige of male incumbents and for general prestige.

In contrast, and as expected, the level of pair-wise agreement when female incumbents are specified is much more varied. The top quartile of the 5,565 correlations is about the same (.609); but the median (.339) and the bottom quartile (.017) are considerably lower. For female incumbents, the level of agreement is virtually the same among male respondents, among female respondents, and between male and female respondents; 23.8 percent of the person to person correlations are negative. This substantial minority of individuals disagree on the ratings of female incumbents to the extent that the overall ordering of occupations is slightly reversed. Thus, respondents volunteer quite diverse evaluations of women in occupations.

Person to Aggregate Consensus

The second issue is the extent to which individuals agree with the ranking of occupations represented in the prestige scale. The number of correlations here equals the number of respondents. Table 2 presents the observed distribution of correlations between individuals and the prestige scale constructed by averaging the ratings of all respondents. As on Table 1, the first column represents the responses for general prestige; the middle column is for male incumbents; and the final column is for female incumbents. The responses for male respondents were subsequently correlated with the mean occupational prestige scores for male respondents; the same analysis was performed for female respondents. These results are also presented on Table 2.

Table 2 - Distribution of Person to Aggregate Correlations by Sex Type of Rating Question and by Sex of Respondents

	General Prestige	Prestige of Male Incumbents	Prestige of Female Incumbents
<u>All Respondents</u>	(n=88)	(n=102)	(n=106)
Median	.723	.686	.637
3rd Quartile	.815	.785	.735
1st Quartile	.594	.602	.339
Percent below +.00	3.4%	2.0%	7.5%
Mean	.674	.673	.522
Standard Deviation	.209	.170	.389
Range	-.081/+ .945	-.121/+ .938	-.319/+ .929
<u>Male Respondents</u>	(n=55)	(n=70)	(n=72)
Median	.725	.683	.649
Mean	.675	.631	.544
<u>Female Respondents</u>	(n=33)	(n=32)	(n=34)
Median	.766	.743	.607
Mean	.702	.723	.544

The median value for the 88 responses for general prestige is .723; the top quartile is .815 and the bottom quartile is .594. The mean, .673, is quite close to that reported by Jencks (.694) and by Kraus, Schild and Hodge (.699), and is lower than those of Balkwell, Bates and Garbin. As before, agreement among female respondents is somewhat higher than among male respondents (.766 vs .725). A moderately high level of agreement between the ratings of individual respondents and the average prestige score for each occupation is found.

For male incumbents, the distribution of the 102 correlations closely follows the pattern for general prestige. The median level of agreement of individuals with the average is .686, the top quartile is .785, the bottom quartile is .602, and the mean is .673. Again, the level of agreement among female respondents was slightly higher (.743 vs .683). Thus, as earlier, general prestige and the prestige of male incumbents exhibit similar patterns of agreement.

The person to aggregate results for female incumbents again are much lower. The median is .637, the top quartile is .735, and the bottom quartile is a strikingly low .339. The mean for female incumbents (.522) is considerably lower than for male incumbents and for general prestige. For female incumbents, the level of agreement among female respondents was slightly lower than among male respondents. The person to aggregate correlations indicate that a substantial minority disagrees with the overall ordering of occupations for female incumbents.

Variation by Occupation

We can shed additional light on these relationships by examining the level of variation in ratings of individual occupations, the other main approach to studying

consensus in occupational prestige. Using occupations as the unit of analysis, we can utilize the standard deviation of ratings as a measure of the level of disagreement. Disagreement was higher for female incumbents throughout the occupations we examined. There was greater disagreement over the rating of women incumbents in jobs than of men incumbents both for occupations in which women predominate and in jobs in which men predominate.

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of the ratings for each occupation of the 29 occupations on List A for general prestige, and for the prestige of male and female incumbents.

It should be noted that the mean ratings of men and women differ within a substantial number of the occupations. Individuals in sex-atypical positions — men in occupations typically held by women, and women in occupations typically held by men — receive lower prestige ratings than their sex-typical counterparts. This important finding is consistent with the results of Nilson, Walker and Bradley, Olson, Powell and Jacobs, and Guppy and Siltanen.⁶

In 25 of the 29 occupations examined, the standard deviation for female incumbents was greater than the standard deviation of the ratings of male incumbents. The difference was statistically significant in 18 of the cases. The standard deviation of male ratings was greater in four cases, only one of which was statistically significant. The standard deviation for female incumbents was greater than that of general prestige in 28 of 29 cases; this difference was statistically significant for 22 occupations. In contrast, the standard deviation for male incumbents is quite similar to that of general prestige. The standard deviation of each exceeds the other in approximately half of the cases, and few of the differences are statistically significant. In sum, the variation in the ratings of female incumbents is greater than those of male incumbents and general prestige throughout the great majority of occupations examined.

DISCUSSION

The tentative nature of the present findings needs to be emphasized. The research presented here relied on a modest-sized college sample. Several considerations, however, suggest that these tentative results may well be corroborated by further research. First, previous investigations have indicated that occupational prestige ratings do not vary significantly by age, race, sex or region of the respondents (Hodge, Siegel and Rossi; 1964). Balkwell, Bates and Garbin suggest that this reason by itself justifies the use of college samples for occupational prestige studies. Moreover, the results of the present sample closely match those of previous occupational prestige studies in the relevant areas of overlap. The 56 occupational titles from lists A and B which matched occupational titles found in NORC prestige investigations correlated +.94 with the NORC results (Siegel, 1971). This strong correlation adds a degree of confidence to our finding that there are marked differences in the level of agreement concerning men's and women's prestige. Finally, if the sample is unrepresentative, the bias induced is likely to be toward minimizing the level of dissensus. If a college sample is relatively homogeneous, the result may be slightly more consensus than would be found in a random sample. And since level of consensus increases with education (Guppy 1982; Kraus, Schild and Hodge, 1982), a college sample would

Table 3 - Means and Standard Deviations by Sex Type of Rating

	General Prestige		Prestige of Male Incumbents		Prestige of Female Incumbents		Percent Male
	n=88		n=102		n=106		
	\bar{x}^a	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	
army captain	60.6	27.1	73.9	25.5	41.2	34.8 ^{b,c}	--
automobile mechanic	41.2	36.1	57.1	29.0	31.6	27.3	99
baker	39.1	23.4	48.5	25.9	53.6	29.4 ^c	77
banker	77.1	19.4	84.9	17.7	75.4	25.6 ^{b,c}	83
building superintendent	43.6	26.4	53.3	28.6	39.6	29.0	59
bus driver	28.8	23.6	37.5	27.9	40.2	31.2 ^c	72
cashier	27.8	24.5	30.7	22.7	56.5	36.0 ^{b,c}	16
chemist	82.8	20.1 ^f	87.6	14.7	67.0	30.8 ^{b,c}	88
child care worker	56.0	24.6	44.6	22.2	72.4	28.2 ^b	7
dentist	88.5	16.2 ^f	90.8	13.2	70.5	20.8 ^{b,c}	97
dressmaker	39.6	25.7	27.9	23.1	69.7	32.3 ^{b,c}	4
electrical engineer	83.1	20.6	87.3	17.2	60.1	32.4 ^{b,c}	98
farm-laborer	27.4	26.2	48.6	35.2 ^{d,e}	29.5	28.3	92
firefighter	50.3	24.3	74.0	23.4	38.7	32.1 ^{b,c}	99
hairstylist	35.1	22.0	35.9	26.1	65.9	33.7 ^{b,c}	10
high school teacher	55.1	19.9	59.5	20.0	69.9	24.3 ^{b,c}	52
insurance agent	58.5	23.3	62.0	22.2	58.0	25.1	87
librarian	39.5	25.0	32.3	24.3	67.5	32.5 ^{b,c}	19
mayor	84.2	21.9	89.4	18.1	63.8	34.5 ^{b,c}	--
miner	28.1	26.2	47.3	33.9 ^e	22.5	29.9	97
plumber	54.6	24.6	64.9	25.9	39.6	30.9 ^c	99
psychologist	73.7	28.2 ^f	76.5	22.2	74.3	25.4	64
registered nurse	79.0	18.3	49.9	32.0 ^e	81.0	26.6 ^c	3
sales clerk	36.8	23.2	40.0	21.3	60.9	31.7 ^{b,c}	35
secretary	53.0	20.9	32.6	24.8	74.2	29.4 ^c	2
social worker	54.9	23.1	47.8	21.8	67.8	29.5 ^{b,c}	37
stenographer	46.4	21.1	43.6	25.1	65.9	31.9 ^{b,c}	7
telephone operator	32.7	22.5	30.9	22.4	64.9	34.6 ^{b,c}	6
waiter/waitress	31.8	26.4	42.6	27.1	48.5	34.0 ^{b,c}	11

- a. Means can range from 0 to 100.
- b. The standard deviation for the female incumbent is greater than the standard deviation for the male incumbent, $p < .05$.
- c. The standard deviation for the female incumbent is greater than the standard deviation for general prestige, $p < .05$.
- d. The standard deviation for the male incumbent is greater than the standard deviation for the female incumbent, $p < .05$.
- e. The standard deviation for the male incumbent is greater than the standard deviation for general prestige, $p < .05$.
- f. The standard deviation for general prestige is greater than the standard deviation for the male incumbent, $p < .05$.
- g. Percentages are based on 1970 Census data. The occupations mayor and army captain are not census occupational categories.

tend to have relatively high levels of agreement. The results thus may understate the overall level of disagreement.

Our results indicate a moderate to high level of agreement for general occupational prestige, a level of consensus in line with previous research on random samples and lower, as expected, than that reported by Balkwell et al. Balkwell et al., suggest that a moderate level of agreement indicates that prestige scores have high 'phenomenological validity' and that society is "well integrated with respect to beliefs and sentiments about occupations" (1980:878). We do not believe this evidence proves the existence of a high level of social integration. Various explanations, including Marxist notions of ideological hegemony, have been posited to explain high levels of social consensus (Burawoy, 1979). Further, the meaning of prestige in terms of personal esteem, overall social desirability, moral evaluation, and personal motivation is not directly measured by the rating task discussed here (Hope, 1982; Horan, 1980). The relatively high level of agreement for general occupational prestige does indicate that measurement error for this particular dimension of social stratification is not unacceptably low. When a move between two occupations is represented as a positive change by an occupational prestige scale, one can be reasonably assured that a random individual will probably agree that the move is properly measured as upward mobility.

In contrast, the level of consensus regarding female incumbents in occupations is much lower than that found for either general prestige or for male jobholders. This lower level of agreement is found across a broad spectrum of jobs and is not merely restricted to women in occupations traditionally held by men. Further, disagreement on the evaluation of female incumbents in occupations is found among men and among women and is not simply a product of different evaluations by men and women.⁷

We interpret these results to indicate that values regarding women's labor force roles are still in flux. We feel they may indicate there is far from general acceptance of women in male-dominated jobs, even while a minority views such choices as especially praiseworthy. These results may also suggest a good deal of disagreement over the rating of women in jobs in which women predominate. This may reflect the fact that a minority of respondents rated these jobs as having quite low social standing, perhaps because of their routine nature and lack of opportunities for advancement. This view of jobs held predominantly by women coexists with the traditional view that women's jobs have moderately high social standing, because they are safe, clean, quiet and do not involve a great deal of responsibility. The result is a reduced level of consensus in the rating of jobs traditionally held by women, as well as increased disagreement about the rating of women in jobs typically held by men. Future replications of this approach may provide important evidence on changes in attitudes regarding women's occupational roles.

These results also indicate the problematic applicability of prestige measures to women. Prestige and socio-economic measures have been applied to women under the assumption that they apply equally to both sexes. Prestige as a measure of social standing requires the strong assumption that most people will evaluate occupational positions in the same way. Without evaluative consensus, a move between two occupations may be evaluated in very different ways by different people. Evidence

presented here suggests there is sufficient variation in views of women's occupational standing that use of these measures as indicators of women's labor force position may be problematic. Although the level of agreement for general prestige still might be viewed as sufficiently high to meet the assumption of consensus, the level of agreement for female incumbents presented in this paper is low enough to raise serious questions about the applicability of prestige measures to women.

FOOTNOTES

¹An important difficulty in the results presented by Balkwell et al. lies in the selection of the sample of occupations included in the study. The level of consensus one would expect varies as a function of how 'distant' occupations are from one another. For example, while most people might agree that architects have higher social standing than plumbers, one would expect far less agreement about the ordering of occupations such as bartender and file clerk, which are not as distant in social standing. In order to test the degree of consensus for the entire occupational prestige scale, the sample of occupations should have the same standard deviation in prestige scores as the entire scale. Balkwell et al.'s list of 17 occupations has a standard deviation of 22.4; whereas the National Opinion Research Center's prestige scale for 423 three-digit occupational titles has a standard deviation of 16.0 (NORC prestige data from Hauser and Featherman, Appendix B). Thus, the variance in Balkwell et al.'s list is nearly twice as great as for the university of occupations for which prestige scores are available (502 vs 256). Balkwell et al., indicate that the sample was chosen to 'represent the full range of occupational status, from low to high' (1980: 882). Too full a range, we would argue. That is the primary reason, in our opinion, that Balkwell et al., find a higher degree of consensus than was found for a random sample of occupations (average individual-aggregate agreement of .886 vs .694 conducted by Paul Siegel, reported by Jencks et al., 1972:199). Balkwell et al., acknowledge this consideration in a subsequent commentary (1982:1188).

²It should be noted that the prevailing view is that differences in the ratings of men and women in the same occupation have not been substantiated (Treiman and Terrell, 1975; England, 1979).

³Similar reasoning would predict a divergence of views on the ratings of men in jobs in which women predominate. However, we do not expect the variation in ratings of men to be as great as for women, since we expect relatively few respondents view the movement of men into women's jobs as an important achievement.

⁴The list of occupations for which results are reported included the following titles: mayor, automobile mechanic, social worker, cashier, army captain, insurance agent, high school teacher, miner, psychologist, child care worker, bus driver, electrical engineer, plumber, building superintendant, hairdresser, farm laborer, chemist, secretary, banker, dentist, registered nurse, telephone operator, sales clerk, librarian, baker, stenographer, firefighter, waiter, and dressmaker.

⁵The median is the preferred statistic in this case because of the skewed distribution. We also report the mean to facilitate comparisons with other research.

⁶A lengthier discussion of this issue is found in Jacobs and Powell, 1982.

⁷One notable exception is the "occupation" housewife. Men rate housewife quite high, while female respondents rate housewife substantially lower (76.2 vs. 65.8). Both male and female respondents rate househusband quite low (28.4 and 31.7), respectively. These data may reflect some conflict between the sexes over whether women should work or not. But this case is an exception to the general pattern that there was as much disagreement among men and among women as there was between the sexes.

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