RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE FAMILY BACKGROUND

AND JOB ATTITUDES

by

Josephine S. Mann

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts at the
University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan

May, 1952.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was directed by Dr. Robert O. Angell and Dr. Ronald Freedman of the Department of Sociology. The data were obtained from two large organizational studies conducted by the Human Relations Program of the Survey Research Center. The author is indebted to the members of her committee for suggestions and guidance in the development of this analysis, and to Robert Kahn and Floyd O. Mann for their willingness to have some of the basic data from their studies in a tractor company and public utility explored further. The machine work for this study was made possible by the use of the IBM installation at the Rackham Statistical Research Laboratory.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Family Occupational Status: the Independent Variables</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Employee Attitudes Toward Their Jobs: the Dependent Variables</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hypotheses</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Methods</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Findings</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interpretations and Conclusions</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A number of recent studies have demonstrated the effect of the families' social and economic position upon the values and attitudinal systems which children acquire. It appears that the family, the neighborhood, and the educational system combine forces to give children from different backgrounds markedly different motivational patterns, expectations concerning their probable roles in society, and ways of relating themselves to others. As adults, are these differences in background associated with the attitudes that people have toward their work situations? It is the objective of this thesis to derive some tentative answers to this question. This is an exploratory study to determine what employee attitudes and perceptions are related to differences in family backgrounds.

Theoretical Background

Warner, Davis, and others, in their studies of social classes in the United States, have pointed to many differences between persons in the upper, middle, and lower classes (particularly between middle and lower classes). One important area of
difference is the training and treatment of children by their family. Another area of difference is the reaction of society (through the school system, for example) to the social class of the child's family.

1. Training and Treatment of Children in the Family.

A quantitative study by Ericson (7) involved interviewing 48 middle class and 52 lower class mothers about their training procedures of young children. In middle class families she found that cleanliness training was generally begun earlier, that more emphasis was placed upon early assumption of responsibility for the self and on individual achievement, and that there was closer supervision of children's activities. From the analysis of these data she concluded: "this investigation bears out the general theory that membership in a social class is an important influence on personality development and that there are numerous significant differences in social class groups with reference to child-rearing practices." (P. 501)

In Children of Bondage (5), Allison Davis and John Dollard presented case studies of seven children to illustrate the different types of child training, childhood experiences and the resulting personalities which occur in lower, middle, and upper class Negroes and whites in the South. They concluded that "the most basic differences in habit formation between adjacent social classes are those between lower class and lower middle class.
The patterns of behavior in these two groups, in either the white or the Negro population, are...widely different..." (p. 264)

This difference was related to the stimuli and goals of the "respectable, status-bound lower-middle class and those of the recalcitrant, impulsive, and physically aggressive lower class." (p. 264) The lower-middle class parent was found to restrain sexual, aggressive and school behavior by constant and detailed supervision and by threat of loss of status if the child was not "good". Supervision of the child appeared to be more constant and detailed in the upper class families.

Davis developed these ideas further -- and with more direct relevance for this study -- as a part of a lecture series on Human Relations in Industry (15) given at the University of Chicago in 1945. His lecture on "The Motivation of the Underprivileged Worker" suggested how the pressure for survival in average working-class families has meant that children do not learn the ambition, the drive for high skills and educational achievement that middle-class children learn in their families. In the middle class or skilled working class, attitudes toward and standards for work behavior were considered the result of powerful motivation and a long process of training from early childhood through adult life which these children received from their families, everyday associations, and social class.
Davis, in *Father of the Man* (5), generalized from his experience with families of upper, middle, and lower social class as follows:

"The usual parent in each social class is preparing his child for the kind of life (the types of manners, of work, of sexual controls, and of education) which is approved and desired by that social class. From birth, therefore, the preparation of the middle class child is more systematic and more complex, because his parents are seeking to prepare him for a more highly skilled and organized world.... In working-class families, however, the child learns to seek other pleasures and to want other types of prestige.... Thus, by the time the underprivileged child has become fourteen or fifteen he has learned a deep cultural motivation, which differs at many points from that of middle class adolescents." (p. 24-26)

Evelyn Millis Duvall (6) found greater differences in the ideology of child training between highest and lowest class levels for Jews and Gentiles, Negroes and whites, than she found between the two races or the two creeds.

2. Reaction of Society to Social Class of Family.—
Warner's work in Yankee City led him to state (in speaking of the class system in the United States):

"Children are always born to their families' position." (13, p. 10)

"...class values are of the utmost importance in the training of children from the moment of birth throughout...their lives." (13, p. 87)

Warner has demonstrated how the schools reinforce the class standards of the community. The curriculum chosen by the child usually corresponds to his class position. In addition,
most teachers are from the middle class; they reward and punish according to their class values; consequently, the children who understand these rewards and achieve them are the ones who like school and who complete the most grades.

A study by Moursing (11) supported Warner's contention that schooling is a more pleasant experience for middle class children than lower class ones. She found that children wanted higher class children for their friends, and selected high class children as the good-looking ones in their rooms.

Importance of Problem

Those writings point up the influence of social environment (the demands of the home, the neighborhood, and the school) upon personality development. Persons with radically different backgrounds appear to have different expectations, attitudes, and life goals. In this study we are not interested in these differences in the total life of the individual, but only in how these differences affect the needs, perceptions, and feelings of each individual in his work life.

The writings cited above suggest that we should be concerned with the effects that different family backgrounds have on: the amount of ambition the person has, his goals, his feelings about the importance of education and use of skills, and the extent to which a person expects to be controlled or supervised by others.
If it is found that the family background of an employee can be related to the occurrence of differences in employee attitudes, the effect of sociological factors on workers' motivations and feelings will have been demonstrated quantitatively. Age, sex, education, and various on-the-job conditions are major factors in determining workers' attitudes and perceptions (8). But they do not account for all of the variability. Institutional backgrounds and memberships must also be recognized as contributing to worker motivation and morale.
Chapter 2

FAMILY OCCUPATIONAL STATUS: THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

This study proposes to use occupation of the father of an employee as an index of that individual's family background. Occupation of father is admittedly only a crude index of family background; there are a number of other factors which could be used singularly or in combination. For example, occupation of father does not give an exact measure of the family's position in the economic structure as income, nor does it indicate the important social fact of whether the family is moving up or down in the class hierarchy. Because it is an objective measure it, of course, provides no information as to which social class the members of the family feel they belong.

On the other hand, occupation of father as an index of family background has several merits. It is an objective fact which can be answered easily by the respondent in an interview or questionnaire. The occupation of father does determine to a certain extent where the family lives and with whom they associate. Its value for the researcher has been pragmatically demonstrated: several studies have shown some significant attitudinal differences between occupational groups.

One of these studies was done by Kornhauser (9) in Chicago. He found differences between occupational groups in their attitudes toward pay, job security, chances to get ahead,
opportunity to enjoy life, and children's opportunities. In addition, Kornhauoer showed that large differences occurred between occupational groups on important social and political issues such as distribution of wealth and influence, the control of economic affairs, and the desirability of changes in a "New Deal" direction.

Centers (1) found "striking contrasts between occupational strata" on his conservatism-radicalism scale. He interviewed a representative cross-section of adult white males and rated them as Ultraconservative, Conservative, Indeterminate, Radical, and Ultraradical on the basis of their answers to six questions. He then looked at the occupations of these people and found that persons in large business (particularly), professions, and small business were the staunchest supporters of our economic order and that "laboring groups are...the most radical of all the groups in the whole array."

In Michigan a study (12) based upon a representative sample of 10th and 12th grade students found differences in attitudes among the children from families in various occupational groups. For example, if a deserved wage increase were refused, more children of white collar workers chose the alternative "work still harder to persuade the boss to give him a raise," while more children of manual workers selected the response "help organize a union." Children of manual workers favored compulsory
union membership or the union shop while children of proprietors, managers, officials, professionals, and clerical workers more often wanted jobs where there was no union. Sons of manual workers expected higher starting wages than sons of white collar workers, and sons of farmers had the lowest conception of a good starting wage.

These three studies indicate that there are significant attitudinal differences between occupational groups. A basic operational assumption of this study is that the occupation of a worker's father while the worker was growing up is a useful measure of the total complex of forces determining a person's work aspirations and goals. Consequently, in the present study occupation of father will be used as the independent variable. The terms "white-collar-family-background" and "blue-collar-family-background" will be used to distinguish between the two groups of employees because we wish to convey the idea that it is not the occupation of father in itself which is important, but its implication of class status and environment as discussed in Chapter 1.

Those employees whose fathers were managers, buyers, department heads, in business, professions, clerical and sales work will constitute the white-collar-family-background group. The blue-collar-family-background group will consist of those employees whose fathers were factory and service workers, minors, laborers, and skilled and semi-skilled craftsmen. Those employees with farm background will be omitted from this study because the
Michigan study (12) indicated definitely that students from farms have expectations and attitudes that differ from the urban students.

In the two surveys from which the data for this study were secured, the information regarding occupation of father came from these respective questions: "What is the occupation of your father?" and "What was your father's occupation while you were growing up?" The latter question was preferable for the purposes of this study because we were interested in the major occupation of the father throughout the employee's childhood years. This way of phrasing the question also reduced the number of respondents giving no answer and responses such as "retired" or "deceased".

Attitudes of employees toward their jobs and the work situation are known to be related to age, amount of education, wages, and job grade (8). Consequently, these factors have been held constant as much as possible in this study. This study included only those employees who were under 30 years of age because they had felt most recently the influence of their homes. Only those employees who had a high school education or more were included; those who were 29 years of age or less and who had had less than a high school education were too few in number to permit a significant analysis of their attitudes. To take into consideration the effect that different kinds of work have on attitudes, the employees were divided first into blue-collar workers and white-collar workers, and secondly into either job grades or wage groups.
Chapter 3

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR JOBS: THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Some attitudes of employees toward their jobs are probably influenced slightly or not at all by family background, while other attitudes may be based largely upon motivations and expectations acquired in the home. For instance, feelings toward people in the work group probably are influenced more by the type of people in the work group than by systematic factors in the family background.

The preceding chapters have suggested that an employee's background may affect his feelings about the importance of getting ahead, about the opportunities his job affords for self-expression, and his orientation in general to the economic order.

The specific verbal responses of employees which could be investigated in this study were determined to a large extent by the availability of data. This analysis is based on data taken from two surveys made in 1950 in the Human Relations Program of the Survey Research Center. These were surveys of employee attitudes in a large public utility and a factory; a fuller description of these studies will be given in the next chapter.

There were twenty-one questions in these two surveys which were similar and could therefore be considered for use in this investigation. Six of these questions appeared to be
particularly relevant as dependent variables for this study. The exact wordings of these six questions for both studies are given below.

1. How important is it to you to be promoted? (check one)

   (Alternatives on utility questionnaire)
   - Very important
   - Fairly important
   - Of some importance
   - Of little importance
   - Of no importance

   (Alternatives on factory questionnaire)
   - Most important thing on the job
   - Very important but a few other things are just as important
   - About as important as many other things on the job
   - Not very important
   - Don't want to be promoted

2. (utility questionnaire)
   How much chance do you think you have of being promoted?
   (Check only one answer)
   - No chance at all of being promoted
   - Very little chance of being promoted
   - Some chance of being promoted
   - A fairly good chance of being promoted
   - A very good chance of being promoted

   (factory questionnaire)
   How do you feel about your chances for promotion? (check one)
   - Almost certain to be promoted
   - Will probably be promoted
   - May be promoted
   - Probably won't be promoted
   - Won't be promoted
3. (identical in both studies)
How much chance does your job give you to do the things you are best at? (check one)

- Very good chance
- Fairly good chance
- Some chance
- Very little chance
- No chance at all

4. (utility questionnaire)
Taking things as a whole, how satisfied are you? (Check only one answer)

- I'm very satisfied with the Company and my job and would not want to see them make any changes
- I'm very satisfied, but I know of some things that could be changed
- I'm quite satisfied with the company but there certainly are many things that could be changed
- I'm not very satisfied but I can see no way things could be changed
- I'm not satisfied and there are a great many things that could be changed

(factory questionnaire)
All in all, what do you think of (company) as a place to work? (check one)

- It's a very good place - wouldn't change anything
- It's a good place but there are a few things that should be changed
- It's a fairly good place, but quite a few things should be changed
- It's all right, but there are many things that should be changed
- It's not a very good place to work

5. (utility questionnaire)
How satisfied are you with your present wages? (Check only one answer)

- Completely satisfied
- Very well satisfied
- Fairly well satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied a little
- Quite dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
(factory questionnaire)
All in all, how do you feel about your own pay? (check one)

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Rather dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

6. (utility questionnaire)
How satisfied are you with the retirement plan? (Check only one answer)

Very well satisfied
Fairly well satisfied
Satisfied in some ways, dissatisfied in others
Somewhat dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
I don't know anything about the retirement plan

(factory questionnaire)
What are the things you like best about working at (company)?
(This is not a question to check. Put the number 1 in front of the thing you like best. Put the number 2 in front of the thing you like next best. Put the number 3 in front of the thing you like third best.)

9. The insurance and pension plan
Chapter 4

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. More employees of white-collar-family-background than of blue-collar-family-background will feel it is important to be promoted. This is expected because drive to get ahead is thought to be stronger in white-collar groups.

2. More employees of blue-collar-family-background than of white-collar-family-background will be satisfied with their chances for promotion. If employees of blue-collar-family-background think promotions are less important, then it would be easier for them to be satisfied with their chances for promotion.

3. More employees of blue-collar-family-background than of white-collar-family-background will be satisfied with the chance their job gives them to do things they are best at. This hypothesis is based upon the assumption that, since the learning of skills is usually stressed in the middle class, we would expect to find more employees of white-collar-family-background than of blue-collar-family-background saying that it is important to them to have a job which uses their skills. If employees from blue-collar families have less need in this area, then their jobs are more likely to satisfy their need.

4. More employees of white-collar-family-background than of blue-collar-family-background will be satisfied with the com-
pany. This is based upon Conters' findings with his conservation-radicalism scale that more persons in business and professions supported our economic order.

5. More employees of white-collar-family-background than of blue-collar-family-background will be satisfied with their wages. The Michigan study (12) found that sons of manual workers expected higher starting wages than sons of white-collar workers.

6. More employees of blue-collar-family-background than of white-collar-family-background will be satisfied with the retirement plan, or will select insurance and pension plans as one thing they like about working for this company. A person who wants security (the study of Michigan high school students found sons of manual workers to be more security-minded than sons of white-collar workers) probably takes this into consideration when seeking employment and consequently is pleased to be working in a company where retirement and pension plans are available.
Chapter 5

METHODS

Research Design

The foregoing hypotheses were tested on two sets of data: (1) information from a survey of a group of accounting departments in a large utility; and (2) information from a study of a company which manufactures tractors and earth-moving equipment. The data were collected by paper-and-pencil questionnaires administered by Survey Research Center personnel during working hours. Fuller statements concerning the construction, administration, and straight-run processing of these surveys are available in publications of the Human Relations Program at the Institute for Social Research Research.

Only non-supervisory employees were included in this study. There were 344 of these workers in the utility survey. The data used from the tractor company survey were from all 2207 weekly white-collar employees and a random sample of 5700 hourly blue-collar employees.

The effect of family background upon their attitudes was determined by comparing the answers of employees from white-collar- and blue-collar-family-backgrounds after other known factors which affect attitudes (age, education, sex, wages, job grade, length of service) were held constant as far as possible.
Differences which occurred between two groups which were similar except for family background were tested for their statistical significance. If more differences in a particular direction were found than would occur by chance alone, family background was said to be related to that employee attitude.

Data

The data presented in the following chapter are from workers who were 17 to 50 years of age and who had had at least a high school education. Those workers who were in blue-collar jobs were analyzed separately from those in white-collar jobs. Within these two broad categories of type of work, wages or job grade had to be held constant as far as possible. In the utility company most jobs are graded (on the basis of kind of work involved, and amount of education and experience required), and a specific range of pay is designated for each job grade. Therefore, the employees in white-collar jobs in the utility were divided into two groups: those in job grades 1 to 7 (wages ranging from $33.50 to $55.50 per week), and those in job grades 8 to 15 (wages ranging from $44.00 to $95.50 per week). The number of workers in blue-collar jobs was too small to allow this division.

With the tractor company data it was planned to make a similar division of employees by job grade. However, information on this questionnaire gave only job title, not job grade. When
the job titles of those white-collar workers were fitted to the job-grade classifications of the utility company, the resulting wage distributions for the tractor company employees were not similar to the wage distribution for the other group. Therefore, the tractor company employees were divided into two wage groups within the broad job classification of blue-collar job and white-collar job: \$0.80 to \$1.19 an hour, and \$1.20 to \$2.90 an hour. (In the blue-collar jobs, no wages were higher than \$1.80 per hour.) Hereafter, those will be called the low wage group and the high wage group.

The large number of employees in the factory survey allowed us to analyze the responses of men and women separately for workers in white-collar jobs. Workers on blue-collar jobs were not separated by sex because there were so few women in these jobs. There were no women from white-collar-background in the low-wage group, and only one woman out of 50 cases in the high-wage group. From blue-collar-background there was only one woman out of 54 workers in the low-wage group, and four women out of 142 workers in the high-wage group.

In addition, an analysis was made using only those employees whose fathers were in the upper white-collar occupations (professional, semi-professionals, managers and officials) and the lower blue-collar occupations (laborers, waiters, service and construction workers). By eliminating in this way employees whose backgrounds might be similar, sharper results were expected.
Results from Utility Company

Table 1 gives the percentage of employees in each job-grade group who checked a certain response to those questions which are pertinent to this study. These employees are between the ages of 17 and 30 years and have completed high school.

The differences between percentages of the two family-backgrounds in each job grade ranged from -12 to 25, but no difference was statistically significant. Although fourteen out of twenty-one differences were in the expected direction, and in one case the percentages were equal, the occurrence of fourteen differences in one direction from a total of twenty-one differences may be expected to occur by chance one out of ten times.

Results from Tractor Company

How important is it to you to be promoted?

Two responses were combined for this question: "Most important thing on the job" and "Very important but a few other things are just as important". Table 2 shows the percentages of employees in each category who give these responses and the differences between the percentage of employees in the two family-background groups. Table 3 shows the number of cases in each category which appears in Table 2 and the following tables.
Table 1

Per Cent of Employees from Each Job Grade Who Checked the Specified Responses to the Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Question</th>
<th>Blue-Collar Job Grades</th>
<th>White-Collar Job Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 to 7</td>
<td>8 to 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White-Collar Family</td>
<td>White-Collar Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collar</td>
<td>Collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chance to use skills:
- Very good chance, and fairly good chance to do the things I'm best at

*Importance of promotions:
- Very important, and fairly important to be promoted

*Chances for promotions:
- Some chance, a fairly good chance, and a very good chance of being promoted

*Think of company:
- I'm very satisfied with company and my job and would not want to see than make any changes

*Wages:
- Completely satisfied, very well satisfied, fairly well satisfied with present wages.
- Dissatisfied a little, quite dissatisfied, very dissatisfied.

*Retirement plan:
- Very well satisfied, fairly well satisfied

(Number of cases): (15), (37), (67), (64), (27), (45)

*Higher percentages for employees of blue-collar-family-background were expected in these areas.

**The difference between the two percentages is in the expected direction.
Table 2

Percentage of Employees in Each Category Who Answer "Most Important Thing on the Job" or "Very Important but a Few Other Things are Just as Important" to the Question "How Important is it to You to be Promoted?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or Sex</th>
<th>White-Collar Family Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar Family Background</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3
Number of Cases in Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or Sex</th>
<th>White-Collar-Family-Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar-Family-Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Lower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The differences range from -4 (the only negative difference) to 29 percentage points. Those which are statistically significant are as follows: (a) among workers in the high wage groups, there are significantly more from white-collar backgrounds than from blue-collar backgrounds (10 points difference in white-collar jobs, 5% level of confidence; 13 points in blue-collar jobs, 4% level of confidence). When the white-collar workers are divided by sex, the differences are no longer significant.

(b) Among men who are working on blue-collar jobs and who come from either professional and managerial backgrounds or from construction, service and laborer backgrounds, 29% more from the upper white-collar-family-backgrounds give the two responses indicated above (5% level of confidence). For similar men in white-collar jobs the difference is 10 percentage points, significant at the 10% level. For similar women in white-collar jobs the 10-point difference is not significant, but the difference of 10 points between the two groups for the single response "Most important thing on the job" is significant at the 6% level.

When the composite figures for men and women in white-collar jobs are eliminated, we have nine differences to consider. Eight of these nine differences are in the predicted direction which would happen by chance only two times in 100. Thus it can be said that promotions tend to be more important to people of white-collar backgrounds than to people of blue-collar backgrounds.
How do you feel about your chances for promotion?

For the responses "Almost certain to be promoted" and "Will probably be promoted", the percentages of employees in each family-background group and the differences between them are shown in Table 4.

In most cases more employees from white-collar families than from blue-collar families felt that they had good chances for promotions, which is the opposite of the prediction. Three differences are significant: for workers in high-wage white-collar jobs, the difference of 13 points is significant at the 1% level (when those men and women are considered separately the differences between the family backgrounds is contributed mainly by the men; 14 points, significant at 1% level); for men in white-collar jobs whose fathers were in the upper white-collar or lower blue-collar occupations, the difference of 21 points is significant at the 5% level. By eliminating the composite figures for men and women in white-collar jobs, we have nine differences to consider, of which eight are in one direction.

Therefore, we are forced to say that even though more workers of white-collar-backgrounds think promotions are important, this does not make it easier for the workers from blue-collar families to feel that they have good chances for promotions. It still may be, as was predicted, that those workers from blue-collar families are satisfied with their chances for promotions.
Table 4

Percentage of Employees in each Category Who Answer "Almost Certain to be Promoted" and "Will Probably be Promoted" to the Question, "How do you Feel about your Chances for Promotion?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or Sex</th>
<th>White-Collar-Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar-Background</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upper Lower
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White-Collar-Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar-Background</th>
<th>White-Collar Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
even though they do not perceive their chances to be as good as people from white-collar-family-backgrounds. There appears to be something operating to make employees from white-collar-families feel that their chances for promotions are good. For instance, these employees may be working harder for promotions; and it may be easier for a person with high socio-economic background to get promotions (similar to Warner's findings in our school system).

In conclusion, this evidence points strongly to the hypothesis: more workers from white-collar-family-backgrounds will feel that they have good chances for promotions. The data do not permit us to answer the question of whether people from one kind of family background will feel more or less satisfaction with chances for promotions than people from another type of background.

How much does your job give you a chance to do the things you are best at?

The percentages of employees who answer "very good chance" and "fairly good chance" were combined. It was predicted that more employees from blue-collar-background would give these answers. Table 5 shows the percentages for each family-background and the difference between them.

The range of percentage point differences is from -27 to 12. Three are statistically significant: (a) more men (12%,
Table 5

Percentage of Employees in each Category who Respond "Very Good Chance" or "Fairly Good Chance" to the Question "How Much Does your Job Give you a Chance to do the Things You are Best at?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or Sex</th>
<th>White-Collar Jobs</th>
<th>Blue-Collar Jobs</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White-Collar Family Background</td>
<td>Blue-Collar Family Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-22</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-27</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5% level of confidence) in white-collar jobs of the upper wage group and who come from blue-collar backgrounds say they have a very good chance or fairly good chance to do things at which they are best. (b) But for women it is just the opposite: significantly more women (22%, 5% level) are from white-collar backgrounds. (c) Another significant negative difference (at 10% level of confidence) occurs between blue-collar workers in the low wage group. Eighty per cent from white-collar families and 53% from blue-collar families say they have very or fairly good chances to use their skills.

In summary, it appears that family background does not have a consistent effect upon attitudes toward the use of skills. Directionally the differences are equally divided. For men there are three positive and one large negative difference. This large negative difference seems peculiar, especially since 8 out of 10 men from white-collar-family-background who are in low-wage blue-collar jobs say they have good chances to do things they are best at. All other per cents are at least ten points lower than this. It is very likely that these eight men are unusual in some way.

All in all, what do you think of (occupany) as a place to work?

For those responding "It's a very good place - wouldn't change anything", and "It's a good place but there are a few
things that should be changed", all differences are in the expected direction (see Table 6). The range is from 5 to 23 points. The significant ones are: (a) among workers in high-wage blue-collar jobs, 13% more from white-collar backgrounds than from blue-collar ones think the company is a good or very good place to work. This is significant at the 8% level. (b) The 23-point difference between men of the two backgrounds who work in low-wage white-collar jobs is significant at the 8% level. (c) Among men on white-collar jobs whose fathers were in either the top or the bottom occupational categories, there is a difference of 23 points favoring the white-collar background (significant at 5% level). For women with similar jobs the difference of 12 points is not significant.

In summary, all of the differences between percentages in this area are in the expected direction and three of these are significant at the 8% level or better. Therefore, the hypothesis that more employees of white-collar-family-background than of blue-collar-family-background will be satisfied with the company is supported by these data.

How do you feel about your own pay?

For those who respond that they are "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" on this question, the percentages and differences between percentages for the two family-background groups are given in Table 7. The prediction was that more employees of white-
Table 6

Percentage of Employees in each Category who Gave the Specified Responses to the Question, "All in all, what do you think of (Company) as a Place to Work?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or Sex</th>
<th>White-Collar Family- Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar Family- Background</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White-Collar Jobs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue-Collar Jobs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper White-Collar Family- Background</th>
<th>Lower Blue-Collar Family- Background</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Percentage of Employees in Each Category Who Answer "Very Satisfied" or "Fairly Satisfied" on the Question, "How do you feel about your own Pay?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or sex</th>
<th>White-Collar-Family-Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar-Family-Background</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance Level*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White-Collar Jobs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue-Collar Jobs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upper Lower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White-Collar-Family-Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar-Family-Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No differences were significant.
collar-family-background would be satisfied with their wages. Three negative differences occur (not including the composite figures for men and women in white-collar jobs); these three instances concern men in white-collar jobs, while men on blue-collar jobs and women in white-collar jobs have higher percentages favoring the white-collar-family-background group. None of the differences were statistically significant.

Therefore, these data indicate that family background is probably one factor affecting attitudes toward wages, but that its effect upon men in white-collar jobs is different from its effect upon men in blue-collar jobs. For women, we cannot make this comparison; we can only say that for women in white-collar jobs more from white-collar families feel satisfied with their pay.

Insurance and pension plans.

"Insurance and pension plans" was one of eleven alternatives to the question, "What are the things you like best about working at (company)? Put the number 1 in front of the thing you like best. Put the number 2 in front of the thing you like next best. Put the number 3 in front of the thing you like third best." The ratings 1, 2, and 3 were disregarded in this question for this study because very few workers chose insurance and pension plans as one of the three things they liked best.
Table 8 shows the percentage of employees in each category who selected insurance and pension plans as one of the three things they liked best about the company, and shows the difference between the percentages for the two family backgrounds.

Significantly more women (10 points, 5% level) in low-wage white-collar jobs who come from blue-collar backgrounds select insurance and pension plans. For men who work in blue-collar jobs, 15 percentage points more of those whose fathers are service and construction workers, waiters, and laborers select insurance and pension plans as one of the three things they like best about the company, than those whose fathers are professionals (or semi-), managers, and officials. This difference is significant at the 6% level.

However, four of the nine differences are negative. Therefore, the data point to no significant findings. Few employees selected insurance and pension plans as one of the three things they liked best about working at this company, and these few employees are not distributed in significant patterns by family background or by job grade; in every case more women than men of each job level have selected insurance and pension plans.
Table 8

Percentage of Employees in Each Category Who Mention Insurance and Pension Plans as One of Three Things They Like About the Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages and/or Sex</th>
<th>White-Collar-Background</th>
<th>Blue-Collar-Background</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low wage group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High wage group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper White-Collar Family Background</td>
<td>Lower Blue-Collar Family Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The interpretations and conclusions are based entirely upon findings from the tractor company data, since no reliability can be placed in the results from the utility data.

Family background appears to have affected attitudes of workers in the following areas: importance of promotions, feelings about chances for promotions, and satisfaction with the company. More employees from white-collar-family-background are at the satisfied end of the scale in these three areas. That is, more employees from white-collar-family-backgrounds feel that promotions are important, that they have good chances for promotions, and feel satisfied with the company.

Satisfaction with chances to do the things they are best at does not appear to be related to family background in this study. If the learning of skills is stressed more in the middle class than in the lower class, it was not reflected by those workers in their feelings about their chances to do the things at which they are best. Possibly this would be reflected in the realism of the worker's perception of how well the company makes use of his abilities and experience.

The group which contained the highest percentage (80%) of workers who thought they had good chances to use their skills
is composed of ten men in low-wage blue-collar jobs who are from white-collar-family-backgrounds. These few men may be peculiar. Most of them are in jobs rated at the lowest skill level, which makes our figures surprising until one finds that most of these men are 21 years of age or under. Therefore, it is possible that they are even more realistic than their counterparts from blue-collar-family-backgrounds in their evaluation of their own skills and the skills required for the various jobs in this company. A realistic evaluation of their skills and experience combined with a feeling that they have good chances for promotions (because they come from white-collar-family-backgrounds, page 26) would explain why these workers say they have a good chance to do the things they are best at.

It may be that skills learned in a school are put to use directly only for a short period of time while one gains experience of a more subtle kind with which to rise in the economic system. Therefore, two people on the same job and from similar family-backgrounds might answer this question from two different points of view: one on the basis of motor skills or specialized information learned in school; the other on the basis of his developing ability to handle situations and individuals. Or, one person might answer this question in terms of the chances available in this job as compared to other jobs in this company, while another might be comparing the chances on his job with
chances to do things at which he is best in another company or another line of work.

About attitudes toward wages, the results are not conclusive. There are no significant differences in this area, but directionally there is some consistency. For women in white-collar jobs and men in blue-collar jobs, more employees from white-collar families are satisfied with their pay. For men in white-collar jobs the small differences which are found result from higher percentages for the men from blue-collar-family-background. Examination of other characteristics of these workers (education, number of people they support, feelings about whether or not a person usually gets a pay increase when it is deserved, and perception of whether or not people who do the same kind of work receive the same pay) sheds no light on reasons why men in white-collar jobs feel differently about their wages than other workers.

Possibly these workers from blue-collar-family-background expected higher starting wages (as was found in a study of 10th and 12th grade students in Michigan) when they began, but the effect of being in a white-collar job soon increased their satisfaction with their wages.

The last area of this study, feelings about insurance and pension plans, was based upon indications that sons of manual
workers are more security-minded than other people. More workers of blue-collar-family-background than from white-collar-family-background did not consistently choose insurance and pension plans as something they like about the company. Rather, men in blue-collar jobs (regardless of family background) select insurance and pensions more often than men in white-collar jobs.

Thus, it appears that more people who go into blue-collar jobs are interested in the security aspects of their jobs, and that the family-background of these workers has not consistently influenced their feelings in this area as measured in this study.

The relationship of family background to job attitudes in this study shows that there is a tendency for workers from white-collar families to feel more need for promotions. Since these workers perceive their chances for getting promotions to be good, this would account, in part at least, for their feeling of satisfaction with the company. Family background showed no consistent influence upon the attitudes of these workers, as the questions were asked of and answered by them, in the areas of satisfaction with wages, chances their job gives them to do things at which they are best, and selection of insurance and pension plans as one of three things they like best about working at this company.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


