Past and present in work life
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10 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this analysis was to study multivariate relations between the mobility experiences of immigrant workers and their present work attitudes and behavior. The review of existing research evidence, of the intricate mobility structure and of work attitudes and behavior found in the data, showed that simple hypotheses regarding their interrelations were not feasible. The social context of the worker's life has been constantly changing and the limitations of the sample made the hypotheses even more specific. Two approaches have been taken.

(a) Directional hypotheses were brought forward, specifying and differentiating concepts that have been raised in the literature. One line of thinking suggests that upward mobility links the worker to his work, makes him more satisfied, a better performer, while downward mobility (or lack of vertical mobility) has opposite and disruptive effects. Another poses that instability, work histories interrupted by employment or geographic transition (horizontal mobility), loosens attachment to work, may cause dissatisfaction, disrupt social ties, and is not likely to improve work performance or other work behavior. It has been argued that such general hypotheses cannot be applied unconditionally, and the results have shown that associations are likely to vary according to type of mobility or dependent variable under consideration, by background or situational characteristics.

(b) A structure of the mobility experiences and work attitudes and behavior has been predicted on the basis of a facet design of the variables. The structure suggested was a circular order, defined by three facets: Mode of Relation (with elements: experience, attitude and action), Time (past to present, and present), and Dynamics (change or state). The worker's background, the mobility experience he reported, his subjective experience of mobility, his attitudes toward and actions in the present work situation and his achieved position were ranked in this order according to their definition in terms of these facets. Major facets further characterizing mobility were hypothesized to be: the social setting in which it occurs (geo-cultural, employment, occupational and organizational) and its various aspects (quality, frequency and sequence). Attitudes were specified into elements of the work situation: the work position in its totality, rewards and conditions of the job and its immediate surroundings, relevant other people in the situation, and the work requirements.

Details of the results have been examined. Here a few thoughts, particularly regarding the overall picture and the methodology (as was pointed out in Chapter One, this has been used in a rather explorative manner) will be discussed.

Variation has been found in the strength of the relationships between independent and dependent variables, variation that is not without meaning or plausibility. Yet in their totality the associations between the mobility experiences of these workers and their work attitudes and behavior are not strong. This suggests that, generally speaking, the present situation is of more importance for these workers than what they experienced in the past. Such a global statement needs further qualification.
(a) Results over the total sample may have blurred stronger relationships in subgroups. Comparison of the configuration of variables for the three age groups revealed, for example, stronger associations between occupational and employment mobility and work attitudes and actions for the older workers than for the younger ones. This sustains the contention made by Wilensky and Edwards (1959) that the influence of intrageneration mobility is stronger for the older worker.

(b) Attitudinal and behavioral items have been combined into scales which because of the procedure followed, lowered their intercorrelations. Nevertheless, the correlations between dependent variables mutually are still higher than between these and the mobility variables. In the SSA-I configuration the regions were distinct; in SSA-II also there is a fair amount of distinction between regions containing primarily attitudinal or primarily mobility variables.

(c) Another possible explanation is that the movements experienced by these workers occurred in a social setting in which mobility is no exception. Generally it is claimed that mobility is no unusual event for the manual worker (cf. Chapter Two), nor is it always a sudden or fateful experience (Faunce 1960). Nevertheless, for these immigrant workers it may have been a crucial experience. The transition to Israel for many implied a complete new scene of work and life; however, they shared it with their referents, their countrymen and peers. The relative homogeneity of the sample and the limited range of occupations (in itself reducing mobility possibilities) contribute to the commonness of experience.

(d) All the sample population have jobs, have succeeded in finding work in a situation in which stable employment is quite an asset. The relative importance of the present occupation and employment in the total work history has been discussed. This also may equalize attitudes (cf. Chapters Six and Seven, Inkeles and Smith 1970).

(e) Not independent of the nature of the (physically heavy) work is the fact that the sample population is relatively young. The work histories of many are possibly too short to reveal much difference or to lead to clearly crystallized attitudes, as was shown by the SSA-I comparison of age groups and SSA-II.

(f) Globally, the actual amount of change in work life may not have been as extensive, its sequence not so disorderly or unusual as might be expected on the basis of the general description of the social setting. Some of the work histories showed stability and continuity.

(g) Nevertheless, the transition, especially for older workers, may have been so large as to wipe out the past, causing a "tabula rasa" effect (Bonne 1956). Life in Israel may have been experienced subjectively as a completely new start, for the older worker as well as for the worker who came at a younger age and was socialized mainly in Israel. Such erasure of the past may make earlier transitions of less relevance. This issue is refuted by Jackson who also rejects the "progressive idea" (1969, p. 3) of giving prior attention to the present situation of the immigrant when studying his life experience.

(h) A reason for the lack of pronounced relations between mobility and other variables might be sought in the possibly more powerful effect of positions of origin or of destination, of their interactive effect, rather than in the experience of change as such (Blau and Duncan 1967). Age, education/skill level, occupational level, have at certain points shown strong associations with attitudinal and behavioral variables, sometimes stronger than the mobility variables revealed. This possibility has been indicated; however,
Despite these and other qualifications of the study (the data were gathered in 1966, and things may have changed since then), an overall structure has been found, providing a relative framework in which mobility experiences and work attitudes and behavior of the workers form specific regions. Together the variables form a structure more or less as predicted. A circular order is distinguishable of experiences, attitudes and actions, concurring with a temporal ordering of change in the past to the present more 'static' situation (cf. Chapter Nine), each region of mode of relation subpartitioned into more specific regions, reflecting also in further detail the prediction on the basis of the facet design.

Such a structure is not without suggestive power; at the same time, a few questions regarding the validity of the results might be raised.

One concerns the degree to which the empirical structure is an artifact of the phrasing of the variables and the facet design. No definite answer can be given to such a question. However, the revealed structure is not in complete disagreement with models of work-life behavior or development suggested in literature, even though the same concepts or variables have not been used.

An example is a model designed by Locke (1968) who hypothesizes a sequence in work life of: environmental events - cognitions - evaluation - goal setting intentions - performance. Another is the model that Berling and De Sitter (1971, p. 140) offer analysing work behavior, which they conceive as resulting from congruence or conflict between value orientations (and valences) and characteristics of the social position, leading to a certain degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, in turn influencing motivation and choice of behavior. Dawis et al. (1968, p. 5) define work adjustment as "the continuous and dynamic process by which the individual seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence with his work environment", and include tenure as a "function of correspondence between the individual and his work environment" indicated by 'satisfactoriness' and 'satisfaction', which, if they attain the right degree of correspondence for individual and organization, lead to tenure.

Secondly, the order found is relative, not implying or proving any causality. The circular order is not perfect, not all variables follow the pattern. The low dimensionality chosen for representation and the negative correlations have caused distortions. The pattern is not final and may be given a different interpretation. It may vary, although it also showed a certain constancy in subgroups of the sample. It certainly is suggestive. Variables not included could be added, other deleted, and the stability of the structure might be tested, in other situations or for other groups. It might also be compared with different methods, such as path analysis or other regression methods. The internal comparison used in this analysis between SSA-I and SSA-II proved a fruitful addition.

The application of facet design raises questions which are easier to formulate than to answer; further application on more material would be necessary for such answers.

(a) Mapping variables in sentence form often helps to clarify thought and allows flexibility in conceptualization. It entails the danger, however, of drawing attention to semantic rather than to theoretical specification of the concepts and variables which are sometimes difficult to express into the rationale of the sentence or of the facets and their

elements. As in our case, the prediction of a structure may require far-reaching simplification of complicated and compound concepts, such as 'attitudes' or 'actions'.

(b) In Chapter Five the problem of the relative weight given to facets and elements or combinations of elements has been discussed. Is semantic proximity or contiguity the theoretical proximity sought for? The proximity principle is perhaps only applicable in cases where semantics concur with clear theoretical concepts. This touches a more basic problem: in how far sociological concepts lend themselves to this type of formalization and specification?

(c) A third group of problems (related to the other two) concerns the relation between the structure found in the empiry and the theoretical structure. Apart from technical error, are deviations from the predicted structures meaningful, or are they due to erroneous definition or operationalization of the concepts in mapping form, to inadequate classification of variables, facets or elements?

To elaborate such issues in full detail would extend beyond the scope of this discussion. Deviations in the structure found did not seem so far-reaching or extreme in content as to necessitate drastic revision of the facet design, at least not on the basis of the research material available. As such, the approach proved a challenging way of developing a model to test the SSA-I method.

The scope of the analysis does not allow more than tentative conclusions without undeniable implications. A few selected findings have nevertheless drawn attention and will be briefly reviewed. As has been noted at several points, they are not independent of each other.

The present position revealed itself as of considerable importance for the worker. However, the actual measure of tenure in the plant shows a positive association only with occupational attachment; it is thus likely that the crucial factor is continuation in occupation, in the present occupation in particular. Otherwise, there is a remarkable absence of relations between tenure and other variables, such as satisfaction with rewards or performance, which one might expect to increase or improve with longer tenure. On the contrary, in some instances tenure leads to negative feelings as regards transportation conditions or the orientation toward the supervisor. It also does not improve co-worker relations.

The negative association with transportation conditions might hint at feelings of frustration about the location of the plant, rather than about working conditions as such. The supervisor, a rather ambiguous figure in the Israeli plant, has been mentioned more as an ambivalent referent (Bar Yosef 1967*, Bonné 1956). Perhaps the lack of relations indicates the retreat from work of the non-mobile worker into localism and neighborhood, suggested by Wilensky (1960). A finding in contrast to results of other studies is that tenure apparently does not commit the worker to his job, given the lack of association with mobility intentions or with job involvement. The ‘permanency’ factor thought so important and remunerated in payment, does not seem to have much effect in this case, whether positive or negative. Only SSA-II shows that there is apparently a subgroup of workers with very long tenure who have reached supervisory status and who are more positive toward their work.

There is another indication that living rather than working conditions play a role: the period of immigration, little associated with most dependent variables, reveals some negative association with feelings of relative deprivation. It appears that the longer the stay in the country (related to tenure in the plant) the stronger feelings of relative deprivation.

Intra-plant mobility appeared not particularly attractive to the workers; it makes feelings about working conditions negative, does not promote work-group relations or work...

performance. It has been suggested that this possibly results from the rotational rather than vertical character of the changes. Vertical mobility in the form of the rise to supervisory status makes the worker more job-involved, integrates him into the work group and improves his work performance; it does not commit him to the organization, or make him much more satisfied about rewards or job conditions, more positively oriented toward his own supervisor, neither does it improve his absenteeism behavior. The latter has been ascribed to greater security felt by the upward mobile, skilled worker (Bonné 1956, Bar Yosef 1967). Yet as such it seems to be experienced as a more positive form of intra-plant mobility than mere rotation.

Generally the experience with supervisory status is practically the only vertical mobility measure showing associations in this group of workers. Of course, vertical mobility is difficult to measure in its full importance within this low status group. Even if the worker made the move from 'nonmanual' to manual work, it did not differentiate feelings about the present status. Either it was subjectively not such a large move, or all had similar feelings of decline in status in general. Another possibility is that work in industry is not evaluated as low as is sometimes thought; it offers security and advantages over other manual jobs or poorly paid nonmanual occupations. Or perhaps status is not so directly connected with work as expressed in life style elsewhere (Ellemers 1967, p. 294). Direct trace of the 'status-dislocation' effect of migration, noticed by Richmond (1967, p. 118), was not found. The positive relation between upward mobility and work-group integration reinforces the impression of functionality of such relations for the upward mobile, even in the rather informal atmosphere of the Israeli plant. This might point to formalization of such relations.

Another striking finding was the importance of age at immigration as opposed to the much more minor role of the length of stay in Israel. Many theories of post-migration adjustment start from the viewpoint that, over time, certain disruptions or other effects disappear. In the present study it seems that recency of immigration is not of importance, but that the age at immigration is crucial; in particular, the distinction between those who came when young and those who came after a work life abroad. This contrast confirms views that the most decisive socialization in work life takes place in earlier stages of life and career (Becker and Carper 1956, Wilensky and Edwards 1959, Super 1963, Brim 1968, Hall 1971).

The more topical approach shows that this contention cannot be extended unconditionally since there are intermediate types and a whole scala of mobility experiences and attitudes intermingling in an intricate pattern. The younger worker is typically one with different potentialities. He is yet very unstable in his mobility pattern, not committed except socially to his job; but he can be influenced by what happens at the plant since his is involved in his work. This can lead to positive attitudes and behavior. However, there is also a (border) type, the better educated in particular who arrived in the country when young and grew up there, who tends to negative attitudes and is inclined to quit his job. This orientation is revealed by a worker who is relatively better skilled, but who did not reach supervisory status or particularly high salary level, usually North African of origin. He gives the impression of being oriented toward other possibilities in the country, actual or imagined, which he does not see fulfilled in his present job. Also Paldi (1965) finds younger, higher educated workers more dissatisfied and North-African-born skilled workers in particular more inclined to mobility. Shuval (1963-a) reports highest occupational aspirations among actively oriented workers of non-European origin. This type of worker perhaps grew up aspiring toward a nonmanual job; such aspirations are reinforced by his education in Israel (he probably has better possibilities than others elsewhere) but he feels frustrated in his present job and its location. It is the older, least educated worker, whose coming to Israel meant a break in his occupational and work life, who is most committed and inclined to stay. Although he does not lack positive attitudes and in his behavior conforms to the requirements, his links to the plant
seem more due to limited possibilities of other employment, or limited knowledge about them, than to real interest. Probably he remains at the plant because of the security it offers him, grateful to have found such a job that pays well, maybe better than he ever had in his life. Interestingly enough, this group shows most clearly the influence of occupational stability, which leads to better performance and lower absenteeism; the more stability experienced, the better the integration in the work group; the more committed, the more socialized the role. There is another stable core of workers, established in country and in the plant, who despite a variety of mobility experiences, are now settled in the job, positively oriented toward it and their occupation. These are relatively young workers, mostly in the thirties, European born workers among them. At the same time, at this most productive life stage, the worker can be neutral and uninvolved. Perhaps domestic circumstances are of primary importance for this type of worker. SSA-I showed that interpersonal relations, in particular those with the family, are of importance for this group, and also conditions of domicile (natural for the expanding family with children). The skilled worker in the plant does not appear to be particularly positively oriented toward his work, yet he seems relatively stable (except the younger).

This rather complicated differentiation within the workers' group should not divert attention from the fact that only do mobility experiences not show strong relations to work attitudes and behavior, but also some background characteristics lack association with the dependent variables. Among the mobility variables, striking in its lack of association is the frequency of movements in the past. The frequency with which a worker changed jobs or occupation before coming to the plant does not tell very much about how he feels at present or will behave. Of more importance seem education/skill level, occupational continuity, long-term stability (of the older workers). Intergeneration mobility, although considerable, also does not show clear associations that are directly measurable, though it may influence the aspirations of the younger worker. The minor effect of the ethnic factor at this level of work, noted by others (cf. Chapter Two), reappears in this study. Perhaps this is a real lack of association, but certainly the fact that the majority of workers came from one region does not allow the appearance of strong relations.

The material shows that there is sufficient room for further research, not only methodological: research into the development of work life, including various changes (which are clearly not unrelated to each other); the search for connections between home and work, in mobility, attitudes and actions. Investigation of the attraction of channels of intra-plant mobility versus alternatives that the worker has or sees elsewhere, particularly outstanding in this situation of relative isolation of home and work and limited opportunities in more attractive centers, deserves further attention. Of major significance is the influence on work orientation of age and age at immigration, which proved of greater importance than year of immigration in its connection with the problems of early versus later socialization. There is the interplay of motivation and aspiration with the real life situation as perceived by the worker, with all its opportunities or the blocking-up of mobility channels. The results also draw attention to problems of values and norms regarding mobility versus stability of the worker, in the plant and on the labor market, not only the norms of the worker, but those of the employer and policy maker. How much and which form of mobility is desirable, for the economy, for the plant, and primarily for the worker and his family? What is the role of education in its various forms or of promotion herein? The results do not clarify whether promotion or education make the worker more dependable or less inclined to move. Perhaps this is not even desirable, since it could lead to frustration. The data make only clear that such questions cannot easily be answered, uniformly for all workers, but that meaningful patterns can indicate certain regularities.