You Can't Always Get What You Want: Inequality in Subjective Labor Market Success at Mid-Life[1]

Jonathan K. Daw[2]
Jessica Halliday Hardie[2]

September 22, 2008

Abstract

How should we define labor market success? Standard labor force attainment models assume that income, educational levels, occupational prestige, etc. in various combinations are the best evaluations of success. Yet researchers typically assume the existence of compensating differentials in the labor market, in which lifestyle and work fulfillment advantages make up for lower pay than one's productivity merits. In this paper, we evaluate labor market success subjectively, using data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) to weight several achieved job characteristics using prospective job preferences measured 17 years beforehand. Using this new lens on labor force achievement and inequality, we explore what it means to have labor force success at the individual level.

1: This paper reports on research in progress. Please contact the authors at jondaw@unc.edu if you would like to cite this research for academic purposes.

2: Department of Sociology and Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Authors are listed in alphabetical order to indicate equality of contribution.

Introduction

Success in the labor market is an important factor in overall satisfaction, mental health, and family stability (Wottiez and Theeuwes 1998, Tzeng and Mare 1995). Yet measures of labor market success have traditionally relied upon earnings and job prestige as markers of "making it," which classify jobs one-dimensionally. The theory of compensating differentials suggests that this approach is flawed; pay and prestige are not the only factors that make a job "good" or "bad." Other factors, such as job security, autonomy, and lack of pressure may compensate for low pay or prestige. A good measure of labor market success takes account of numerous job characteristics. In addition, such a measure needs to take account of individuals' own preferences. While some people may seek safe, reliable jobs over high pay, others may prefer to make a "quick buck." Thus, the definition of success is not only multi-dimensional, but varies by the preferences of the observer. A true measure of labor market success must take account of both factors.

This paper proposes a new method for measuring labor force success – through a subjective lens. We consider individuals' preferences for job characteristics along several dimensions: job security, pay, fringe benefits, how interesting the work is, cleanliness, how tiring a job is, hours worked, how people perceive the job, freedom, lack of pressure, opportunity for promotion, and whether an individual has the chance to use his or her abilities. We first present descriptive statistics showing aggregate preferences for each of these dimensions, as well as how these dimensions tend to cluster together. We then introduce permutations of a measure for subjective success, which compares the characteristics of jobs held in later middle-age to the job characteristic preferences individuals stated at about age 35. Finally, we test the relationship between our measure of subjective success and job satisfaction. Our study focuses on job

preferences and success in middle age, rather than many prior studies that evaluate aspirations in adolescence. We argue that adults who have worked within the labor force for several years are in a better position to evaluate their experiences and set goals for the future.

Labor Market Success

Economists have traditionally defined labor market success in relation to earnings, while sociologists have used indicators of occupational prestige. These measures do tell us something about the objective "worth" of a job. Individuals' earnings offer a glimpse into how their work is rewarded, and the kind of lifestyle it affords. Yet this measure is one-dimensional. As a basis on which to evaluate the worth of jobs, it ignores other information about a job, such as how safe it is or to what degree it allows a worker the freedom to set his or her own hours, which may have an impact on the worker's well-being and satisfaction.

Job prestige has also been used to evaluate labor market success. This measure groups occupations by similarities in job responsibilities and creates a ranking based on aggregate ratings of prestige or "social standing" (Nakao and Treas 1994). Remarkably consistent, this scale does a good job of ranking occupational groups. Furthermore, prestige appears to map onto earnings differences while taking account of differences in the power and respect afforded to job occupants. However, it suffers from two flaws. First, it does not take into account several other potentially attractive job characteristics. Second, it groups often dissimilar occupational titles into categories, which allows for only a rough approximation of prestige.

These measures ignore the role of compensating differentials in evaluating job desirability (Duncan and Holmlund 1983). Compensating differentials are non-monetary characteristics of a job that can make up for low pay, if the worker has a preference for them. For

example, preferences for a clean work environment, job security, safety, and other characteristics may make a job with lower pay more desirable than another which offers a higher wage but fewer amenities. While prestige is one example of a compensating differential, it does not encompass all possible characteristics of a job that an individual may find desirable.

Jencks, Perman, and Rainwater (1988) proposed one solution for ranking jobs in a manner that would take compensating differentials into account. They used aggregate-level preferences for 13 monetary and non-monetary job characteristics to create a ranking of occupations. However, their approach focused on population-averaged, rather than subjective, rankings in order to construct a measure of good jobs in population perspective. Our method is different, as we focus on individual evaluations of job characteristics as a tool for evaluating their success. Jencks et al. (1988), in fact, envisioned a similar approach, writing that evaluating jobs based on respondents' personal evaluations of their own jobs "makes sense for certain purposes" (1330), though the example they gave of such an approach did not measure such preferences subjectively and did not break down success by job characteristics.

The Importance of Subjective Success

Our proposal for a new method of measuring labor market success rests on the assumption that individual preferences are important, and that well-being, to some extent, depends on the distance between what one wants and what one has. This is a core foundation of multiple discrepancy theory, which suggests that satisfaction is related to both objective measures of success (economic or social) and to subjective measures (the discrepancy between what one wants and what one has). Prior literature on occupational aspirations has relied on the importance of individual preferences, arguing that it is people's own goals that matter in

measuring later success. One such study demonstrated that women who achieve their occupational goals in mid-life have better mental well-being, over and above objective measures of attainment (Carr 1997). Most prior measures of success, as reviewed above, have focused only on the first component of satisfaction, however.

To summarize, our goal in this paper is to propose and test a measure of labor market success. We argue that success of any kind is subjective, and this is particularly true in the labor market. A measure of success should take into account individuals' own preferences for a wide range of job characteristics. Our intent is not to develop a universal ranking of jobs that allows success to be measured externally. Rather, we wish to understand how preferences for job characteristics are distributed, to what degree they match achieved job characteristics, and how this impacts job satisfaction. Lastly and most importantly, we explore the nature of labor force inequality generally in the United States through a subjective lens. Our approach could be implemented in future studies, and with age- and race-diverse samples to better measure labor market success.

Research Questions

The theoretical tradition of compensating differentials suggests that individuals place premiums on different job characteristics. This may include pay or prestige, but these are not the only factors to consider. In order to take account of individuals' own preferences, we propose a new measure of subjective success. Our first task is to discuss what job characteristics individuals find most important, and whether these ratings are influenced by respondent satisfaction with their present achieved job characteristics and demographic background. We then ask whether, and how, preferences for a wide range of job characteristics cluster together.

Next, we explore how well expressed preferences predict later achieved job characteristics. Informed by the answers to these questions, we then construct measures of subjective labor market success by weighting achieved occupational characteristics with prospective respondent job preferences. Lastly, having constructed our measures, we test the relationship between subjective success, job satisfaction, and alternative measures of labor market success.

Data and Measures

We use the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) to evaluate subjective labor market success and its correlates. The WLS is a longitudinal study of 10,317 White men and women who graduated from Wisconsin high schools in 1957. The respondents were interviewed four times: when they graduated from high school in 1957, at about age 18; in 1975 when they were about age 36; in 1992 to 1993 when they were ages 52 to 53 years old; and in 2004 when they were about age 65. This dataset offers a comprehensive set of questions on job preferences in 1975 and current job characteristics and job satisfaction measures in each survey round.

Like most large-scale telephone surveys, the WLS suffers from moderate rates of item-level missingness. Although multiple imputation or direct maximum likelihood missing data strategies would be ideal for future, regression-based analyses, for our present, descriptive purposes we elect to follow a listwise deletion approach in order to preserve the face validity of our conclusions. This leaves the analytical sample for most analyses at 3,412, the number of observations for which all measures included in the subjective success measure were available. The actual number for specific analyses may be somewhat lower, depending on the missingness rate for variables besides subjective success included in the analysis in question. Variable-level

missing rates for variables used in the construction of subjective success measures are listed in Appendix B.

In order to create a measure of subjective success, we first needed to create a baseline measure of people's job characteristic preferences. In 1975, the WLS survey collected respondent ratings of the importance of several job characteristics: pay, fringe benefits, how interesting a job is, the supervisor of the job, the co-workers of the job, cleanliness, hours, how tiring the job is, how highly people regard the job, job security, amount of freedom, chance to help people, not being under too much pressure, the chance to get ahead, and the chance to use one's abilities. Each job characteristic was rated: (1) Not very important, (2) Fairly important, or (3) Very important. Similarly, in 1975 the WLS asked respondents how satisified they were with each of these job characteristics, scaled 1-4. We include all of these measures in our analysis of subjective labor force success except the ratings of importance of the supervisor, co-workers, and helping people. We do not include these questions because we do not have plausible outcome measures of these job characteristics.

We then use measures of current job characteristics in 1992 to match the measures of job preferences obtained in 1975. Exact coding for each of these variables is listed in Appendix A. First, we measure *job security* using a measure asking respondents to indicate on a scale from 0 to 10 the likelihood that they will lose their job in the next two years. Second, we measure *pay* by the respondents' hourly wage (or wage equivalent if salaried). Third, we measure *fringe benefits* in 1992 as an additive measure (ranging from 0 to 3) of whether they indicated their job offered retirement, health care, and paid vacation days. Fourth, in order to measure the extent to which a *job is interesting*, we took the inverse of the percentage of time the respondent spends doing rote work at their job. This percentage was calculated by taking the number of hours a

respondent reports doing the same thing over and over, divided by the number of hours the respondent reports working. Fifth, we measure *cleanliness* of a job by reverse-coding a question asking respondents how dirty they got on the job. Sixth, we measured how *tiring* a job was using variables indicating how often the respondent's job required physical effort and how often the respondent's job required intense concentration. We took the higher reported value of these two measures as our indicator. Seventh, we measured the *hours* respondents spent working using a measure of the number of hours the respondent worked per week, top-coded at 50. Eighth, we measured *others' perceptions* of the respondent's job using the Nakao-Treas scale of occupational prestige[1]. Ninth, we measure *freedom* with an indicator of how often the respondent is supervised at his or her job. Tenth, we measured the *pressure* the respondent was under with a question asking how often the respondent feels under time pressure at his or her job. Eleventh, we measured the respondent's chance to get ahead with a question asking whether a person in their job could learn skills to get ahead. Finally, we used three measures for the respondent's chances to use abilities in his or her job. We considered the educational requirements of a job as a proxy for this concept. To capture this, we used a measure of the percentage of people in the 1970 census who held a similar job (matched by occupational census codes) and had completed at least one year of college.

In addition the characteristic-specific measures of success discussed above, WLS also measures respondent satisfaction with jobs overall in 1975 and 1992, as well as respondents' sense of their success in the realms of education, work, and finance in 1992. The overall job satisfaction measures are scaled 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 4 ("very satisfied"). The education, work, and finance success measures are scaled similarly, 1 ("not at all successful") to 4 ("very

[1] The Nakao-Treas scale is based upon a nationally representative survey of adults who are polled regarding their opinion of about 90 occupational titles. The prestige scores resulting from these surveys is then assigned to similar occupations.

successful"). Rather than approach these outcomes as a basis for validation for our own measure of labor market success, we treat the connection between that measure and these as a substantive, empirical question.

Subjective Success

Our measure of subjective success combines prospective job characteristic preferences (from 1975) with achieved occupational characteristics (in 1992), treating the former as a type of weights for the latter, then combining the resultant products together. However, there are at least two ambiguities involved in this process.

First, it is very unclear what true differences in preferences the three values ("not particularly important," "fairly important," and "very important") of the 'importance' variables represented to respondents. Quantitatively, how much more important is "very important" compared to "fairly" and "not particularly?" Perceiving no evident answer, we tackled this problem multiple ways, assigning these responses values of 1, 2, and 3 in order of ascending "importance," then performing the square root, identity, and square transformations, such that the weights assume three forms: a) 1, sqrt(2), sqrt(3); b) 1, 2, 3; c) 1, 4, 9. Although we cannot know the correct approach, we view a) and c) as reasonable lower and upper bounds to the most likely true ratios. In other words, we suspect that respondents consider "very important" characteristics to be somewhere beween ~1.7 and 9 times more important than "not particularly important" characteristics when it comes to evaluating jobs.

The second ambiguity concerns the proper form of the achieved job characteristics themselves. As measured in this dataset, these indicators assume a huge variety of ranges, which if combined without transformation would result in the domination of the measure by the wage

term, even if respondents assigned equal importance to other measures. Therefore, we elected to standardize all of the outcomes measures using the familiar z-transformation.

Thus, our subjective success measures are constructed in three ways:

(1) $SS1 = \sum w_k * c_k$

(2) $SS2 = \sum (w_k)^2 * c_k$

(3) $SS3 = \sum (w_k)^{-1/2} * c_k$,

where k indexes job characteristics, w_k is the 'importance' variable for that job characteristic in 1975, and c_k is the z-transform of achieved job characteristic k in 1992.

Methods

The aim of this paper is exploratory, guided by key questions: What is the distribution of job preferences, achieved job characteristics, and their combinations? How is our measure of subjective success associated with other indicators of success like job satisfaction, self-rated success? And how does the degree of inequality in subjective success compare to that for socioeconomic indices (SEIs), occupational prestige scores, and wages? Therefore, the methods in this paper are simple, involving means, variances, correlations, ratios, and summary measures only.[2]

Results

Tables 1A and 1B provide some descriptive statistics for key variables in this analysis. All descriptive statistics apply for all non-missing observations of that variable.

[2] In future analyses on this topic we envision more complex analytical strategies. But of course this is a work in progress, and at this point our chief focus is on the properties of our measure of subjective success.

A crucial question when conducting such an analysis as this concerns the relationship between labor force achievement and evaluations of the importance of key job characteristics. If, for instance, individuals earning high wages tend to report that pay is very unimportant because they earn high wages, and if such individuals tend to continue to earn high wages in the future, this would result in serious problems of interpretation of results. We have only one direct measure of this association, reported in the upper portion of Table 2, which shows that respondent evaluations of the importance of pay in judging jobs is relatively unrelated to how much pay one in fact earns. Satisfaction with one's pay, however, is somewhat more related to the amount thereof.

A second, related question concerns the degree to which ratings of the importance of job characteristics predict later achievement of those characteristics. Here, as shown in Table 2, the relationships are somewhat stronger than the concurrent ones, but there is still no relationship between the 'importance' and achievement of pay. However, there is some appreciable relationship between the importance and achievement variables for how interesting the work is, hours worked, how tiring the work is, and how much chance one has to use one's abilities.

Next, we examine the relationship between our measures of subjective success (SS), self-reported job satisfaction (JS), and and self-reported success (SRS) in education, finance, and work, all of which is reported in Table 3. As can be seen, all three measures of subjective success are negligibly related to job satisfaction in 1975, and weakly related to 1992 job satisfaction. The relationships are much stronger for the SRS variables, particularly for education. Now, the occupational education requirements for a job are a portion of our measure of subjective labor market success, and could therefore potentially explain why the SRS_Educ measure is more strongly related to the SS measures than the other SRS measures. Regardless, it

is apparent that our measure of subjective labor market success is related to respondents senses of their own success 17 years after the preferences measurements, but relatively unrelated to their satisfaction with their present job.

Our last two tables explore the degree of inequality present in the study population, using a variety of metrics. The first, Table 4, displays the mean value for SS1, SS2, SS3, a Duncan SEI measure, the Nakao-Treas prestige scale, and respondent wages by major Census occupational group, gender, and parental education, which we interpret as an indicator of class origins.

The occupational section of the table reveals wide agreement among the measures that self-employed professionals are the best-off occupation, measured subjectively or otherwise. Similarly, farm laborers are considered the among the lowest occupational groups for all indicators except wages (which, here, we suspect results from the exceptionally small 1992 cell sizes for this occupation). In general, the SS measures rank occupations much as SEI and prestige scales do. All three tend to diverge in their rankings from that for wages.

The divide between our measures and previous measures, however, is especially stark when one examines gender inequality using this metric. As seen in Table 4, women receive higher subjective success scores than men in all three permutations thereof, whereas their labor market success is ranked lower than men's, on average, for the SEI, prestige, and wage scales. This could result either because women weight their successes higher, or achieve higher values on job characteristics unmeasured by SEI, prestige, and wage scales. The answer, it turns out, is both. Supplementary analyses (not shown) reveal that women tend to report that characteristics on which they will later achieve lower than men (wages, fringe benefits, interesting work, prestige, chance to get ahead, chance to use abilities) are less important in judging jobs than men do. Similarly, they tend to rate as more important those characteristics on which they will later achieve higher than men, on average. The two exceptions to this rule are how interesting the job is, which women weight higher and achieve lower than men; and the amount of freedom one has, which women weight lower and achieve higher than men.

Lastly, in Table 4 sees that achieved job characteristics are well-ordered by social class of origin for all four metrics, as all three subjective success measures, SEI, and prestige scales all rank the mean achievement of individuals in the order of the education of their parents. Wages are the sole exception here, as the children of parents who only graduated high school earn slightly higher wages than the children of those who attended some college but did not graduate.

Table 5 computes five summary measures of the distributional degree of inequality in the six measures we are comparing (SS1, SS2, SS3, SEI, Prestige, and Wages). Beginning with the gini coefficient on the right hand side of the table, we see that the wage distribution is the most unequal, followed by the three measures of subjective success, then SEI, and then prestige. The overall inequality for the subjective success measures is much higher than that computed for SEI and prestige measures, and far closer to that computed for wages. Lastly, there is a substantial gap in the level of inequality between SEI and occupational prestige rankings. However, the relatively low degree of inequality suggested by the SEI and prestige measures could be explainable by the limited range of their constituent variables. However, the same is true for the subjective success measures, which reveal a far higher degree of overall inequality.

The 90/10 ratio gives us some hint of the reasons for the high degree of gini inequality observed for wages – evidently, this extra inequality is present in the tails of this population, not the middle 80% of the distribution, because the wage distribution only reveals the fourth highest degree of 90/10 inequality among these measures. The subjective success measures show the highest levels of inequality, followed by wages, SEI (very close to the wage level of 90/10 inequality), and prestige, which here and for all other inequality measures shows the lowest overall level of inequality.

The 90/50 inequality comparisons between the six measures gives an additional hint concerning the relative properties of the wage and subjective success distributions: here, once again, the wage distribution displays the highest level of inequality, suggesting that the ‘extra’ wage inequality unmeasured by the other indicators is present in the upper half of the distribution, and perhaps in the

lower tail. Lastly, 50/10 inequality ratio comparisons show that subjective success measures capture the most inequality in this portion of the distribution, followed by SEI, wages, and prestige.

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the near impossibility of proving their existence, compensating differentials in labor market rewards remain a powerful idea due to its close adherence to that which we observe around us – an in ourselves. Indeed, there could hardly be demographers in the world if something like compensating differentials were not at work. Therefore, making serious attempts to measure the contribution of non-pecuniary rewards of jobs to labor market success deserves priority in the study of inequality and the well-being of persons. Our present efforts toward this end reveal that one's conclusions on the degree of inequality in a population, distributionally and categorically, hinges closely on the measure of success one selects.

Although there can be no test of the relative worth of measures of success, we argue that our approach, or something like it, is crucial for understanding the overall degree of inequality in a population in which relatively low proportions of individuals are impoverished. Admittedly, in populations like developing or war-torn nations in which access to resources strongly structures one's likelihood of mortality, disease, and hopes for the future, more straightforward measures of success centered on material resources, are likely most appropriate. However, for populations like that of Wisconsin in 1975 and the United States today, wherein basic material survival is relatively assured, we contend that more holistic measures are required in order to evaluate individual labor market success. Therefore one should measure a diversity of job characteristics when evaluating labor market outcomes if possible.

We also took the additional step of incorporating prospective evaluations of the importance of job characteristics in judging jobs. Measured well before our chosen labor market outcome window, this approach reduces the likelihood that individuals will evalute the desirability of job characteristics based on whether theirs has them. Therefore labor market success, in this strategy, is more straightforwardly interpretable as the achievement of one's ambitions, rather than the rationalization thereof.

Nonetheless, some problems remain with our approach which we will attempt to correct in future work. Most obviously, the distributions of the 'importance' variables are somewhat implausible. It stretches credulity, for instance, to suppose that more than twice as many individuals find how interesting the work is to be "very important" than do so for the job's pay. Future work on this topic will endeavor to account for this probable social desirability effect when modelling labor force attainment processes. Furthermore, in future work we intend to expand upon the range of achieved characteristic indicators used for those which we now measure relatively poorly, such as how well a job enables one to use one's abilities.

Finally, our future efforts on this project will branch further into topics related to subjective labor force success beyond the measure itself. For instance, we intend to explore the determinants and consequences of over- and under-achievement of job characteristics relative to one's desires. We then plan to explore work-family tradeoffs for men and women in terms of subjective success. We expect that the utility of this approach will extend far beyond these examples, however.

Back to the present, however, we conclude that the advantages of utilizing a multidimensional, subjectively weighted metric of labor market success are large. This allows one to examine inequality through the lens of the individuals' preferences with a high degree of face validity, stepping far closer than log wages could toward the core concept of individual utility. And this permits one to explore how individuals navigate the tradeoffs between desirable job characteristics. In summary, it gives one a more complete measure of success, well-being, and inequality for the present social world.

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Table 1A: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean/Percentage	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Demographics				
Female	51.62%	--	--	--
Parental Educ.				
<HS	39.91%	--	--	--
HS	26.48%	--	--	--
Sm. College	19.33%	--	--	--
>=College	14.27%	--	--	--
Job Sat.				
1975	3.50	0.67	1.00	4.00
1992	3.41	0.71	1.00	4.00
1992 Job Characteristics				
Pay (Wage)	16.77	20.65	0.00	200.00
Benefits	2.08	1.17	0.00	3.00
Interesting	45.50	39.48	0.00	100.00
Clean	3.28	0.83	1.00	4.00
Tiring	4.43	0.64	1.00	5.00
Prestige	445.66	136.79	141.00	812.00
Job Security	1.74	2.44	0.00	10.00
Freedom	5.86	2.99	0.00	10.00
Pressure	3.94	0.99	1.00	5.00
Get Ahead	5.08	2.15	1.00	7.00
Use Abilities. (% College)	-0.58	1.57	-3.64	4.20
Hours (Inversed from 50)	10.09	9.81	0.00	50.00
1975 Job Characteristics Importance				
Pay	2.16	0.62	1.00	3.00
Benefits	2.30	0.69	1.00	3.00
Interesting	2.82	0.43	1.00	3.00
Clean	1.75	0.74	1.00	3.00
Tiring	1.84	0.73	1.00	3.00
Prestige	2.13	0.78	1.00	3.00
Job Security	2.50	0.68	1.00	3.00
Freedom	2.41	0.65	1.00	3.00
Pressure	1.97	0.76	1.00	3.00
Get Ahead	2.49	0.66	1.00	3.00
Use Abilities	2.84	0.39	1.00	3.00
Not too Many Hrs	2.10	0.78	1.00	3.00
Job Characteristics Satisfaction				
Pay	3.25	0.75	1.00	4.00
Benefits	3.34	0.79	1.00	4.00
Interesting	3.61	0.64	1.00	4.00

Clean	3.61	0.58	1.00	4.00
Tiring	3.43	0.63	1.00	4.00
Prestige	3.46	0.66	1.00	4.00
Job Security	3.54	0.70	1.00	4.00
Freedom	3.64	0.60	1.00	4.00
Pressure	3.40	0.67	1.00	4.00
Get Ahead	3.28	0.82	1.00	4.00
Use Abilities	3.57	0.70	1.00	4.00
Not too Many Hrs	3.52	0.69	1.00	4.00
Subj. Success				
Untransformed Weights (SS1)	1.70	10.05	-34.56	36.39
Squared Weights (SS2)	5.00	27.07	-103.22	102.88
Square Rooted Weights (SS3)	0.98	6.36	-20.29	22.49

Table 1B: Descriptive Statistics, Occupational Structure

Major Occupations	1975	1992	Change
Prof., Self-Empd.	1.94%	2.72%	0.78%
Profs., Salaried	21.54%	19.88%	-1.66%
Mangs./Admins., Salaried	10.61%	14.93%	4.32%
Mangs./Admins., Self-Empd.	4.06%	4.59%	0.53%
Sales, Non-Ret.	3.58%	4.23%	0.65%
Sales, Ret.	3.26%	2.62%	-0.64%
Clerical	17.91%	19.65%	1.74%
Craftsmen, Mfg.	5.06%	4.20%	-0.86%
Craftsmen, Constr.	2.32%	2.03%	-0.29%
Craftsmen, Oth.	3.36%	3.24%	-0.12%
Operatives, Mfg.	8.44%	5.84%	-2.60%
Operatives, Oth.	3.41%	2.84%	-0.57%
Service	9.13%	9.06%	-0.07%
Laborer, Mfg.	0.67%	0.53%	-0.14%
Laborer, Oth.	1.00%	1.12%	0.12%
Farmers, ManagS.	2.67%	2.19%	-0.48%
Farm Laborers	1.05%	0.32%	-0.73%

Table 2: The Correlation of 'Importance' Variables and Job Characteristics

1975	Correlation
Import. Pay	0.0418
Satisf. Pay	0.1449
1992	
Pay	--
Benefits	0.056
Interesting	0.112
Clean	0.034
Hours	0.224
Tiring	0.224
Prestige	--
Security	--
Freedom	0.036
Pressure	-0.053
Get Ahead	0.066
Use Abils.	0.119

NOTE: Correlations insignificant at the p<=.05 level are omitted.

Table 3: Intercorrelations of Subjective Success (SS), Job Satisfaction (JS), and Self-Rated Success (SRS_[topic])

	SS1	SS2	SS3	JS '75	JS '92	SRS_Educ	SRS_Finance
SS2	0.988						
SS3	0.994	0.966					
JS '75	0.006	0.002	0.010				
JS '92	0.089	0.086	0.090	0.206			
SRS_Educ	0.301	0.288	0.306	0.097	0.152		
SRS_Finance	0.151	0.146	0.152	0.147	0.205	0.241	
SRS_Work	0.167	0.157	0.173	0.179	0.304	0.367	0.385

Table 4: Subjective Success (SS), Socioeconomic Index (SEI), Occupational Prestige (Prestige), and Wage Inequality by Occupation, Gender, and Parental Education

	SS1	Rank	SS2	Rank	SS3	Rank	SEI	Rank	Prestige	Rank	Wage	Rank
Occupation												
Prof., Self-Empd.	17.43	1	48.34	1	10.69	1	758.75	1	598.31	1	35.22	1
Profs., Salaried	9.82	2	26.51	2	6.12	2	684.32	3	583.59	2	20.27	5
Mangs./Admins., Salaried	7.65	3	20.27	3	4.82	3	717.10	2	559.93	3	22.13	4
Mangs./Admins., Self-Empd.	2.70	4	-8.29	6	-2.21	6	574.99	5	27.04	17	27.04	2
Sales, Non-Ret.	0.04	5	7.67	4	1.61	4	623.74	4	438.33	4	24.33	3
Sales, Ret.	-3.36	6	-15.30	9	-4.00	9	379.76	8	284.36	12	10.58	15
Clerical	-3.71	7	0.15	5	0.02	5	502.94	6	407.06	6	10.94	14
Craftsmen, Mfg.	-4.26	8	-8.71	7	-2.55	7	405.89	7	407.01	7	16.12	8
Craftsmen, Constr.	-6.08	9	-17.85	11	-4.81	11	276.96	10	384.22	8	18.16	7
Craftsmen, Oth.	-6.68	10	-9.82	8	-2.98	8	336.71	9	382.11	9	14.84	9
Operatives, Mfg.	-7.21	11	-23.64	12	-6.03	12	187.31	13	291.81	11	11.48	13
Operatives, Oth.	-9.27	12	-25.22	14	-6.04	13	215.33	11	298.21	10	12.92	10
Service	-9.51	13	-16.85	10	-4.38	10	188.98	12	280.48	13	8.43	17
Laborer, Mfg.	-10.46	14	-31.20	15	-8.31	16	91.84	17	195.26	16	12.10	11
Laborer, Oth.	-12.25	15	-25.13	13	-7.10	14	115.16	15	200.54	14	9.98	16
Farmers, ManagS.	-12.54	16	-31.79	16	-7.77	15	153.60	14	408.85	5	11.83	12
Farm Laborers	-14.92	17	-35.16	17	-10.46	17	111.35	16	196.50	15	20.15	6
Gender												
Females	2.06	1	5.65	1	1.27	1	483.33	2	431.94	2	11.06	2
Males	1.39	2	4.45	2	0.73	2	514.74	1	460.13	1	22.74	1
Parental Education												
<HS	0.10	4	0.78	4	-0.03	4	447.05	4	417.58	4	14.42	4
HS	1.72	3	4.97	3	1.01	3	506.65	3	447.96	3	17.37	2
Sm. College	2.90	2	8.35	2	1.72	2	540.58	2	468.05	2	17.12	3
>=College	5.73	1	15.54	1	3.55	1	588.15	1	500.71	1	21.97	1

Table 5: 90/10, 90/50, 50/10, and Gini Indicators of Inequality for Subjective Success (SS), Socioeconomic Indices (SEI), Occupational Prestige (Prestige), and Wages

	90/10	Rank	90/50	Rank	50/10	Rank	Gini	Rank
SS1	9.222	3	2.047	3	4.505	3	0.369	4
SS2	10.571	1	2.121	2	4.975	2	0.381	2
SS3	10.500	2	2.038	4	5.155	1	0.371	3
SEI	4.938	5	1.555	5	3.175	4	0.262	5
Prestige	2.292	6	1.341	6	1.709	6	0.175	6
Wage	5.245	4	2.273	1	2.309	5	0.419	1

Appendix A: Data Measurement for Job Characteristics Held in 1992

Job security	Likelihood respondent will lose job in next 2 years	Scale from 0 to 10
Pay	Hourly wage	$0 to $200 per hour
Fringe benefits	Retirement, health and vacation days	0 to 3 (additive scale)
	Number of vacation days per year	1 = No paid vacations 2 = 1 to 4 days 3 = 5 to 9 days 4 = 10 to 14 days 5 = 15 to 19 days 6 = 20 or more days
Interesting job	100 minus the percentage of time respondent spends doing same thing over and over (rote work).	0 to 100%
Cleanliness	How dirty respondent gets in job (reverse-coded)	1 = Very dirty 2 = Fairly dirty 3 = A little dirty 4 = Not at all dirty
Tiring	Highest value of: How often job requires physical effort / intense concentration	1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Frequently 5 = Always
Hours	Hours worked per week	0 to 50
Others' perceptions of job	Nakao-Treas prestige scale	126 to 996
Freedom	How often respondent supervised	0 = Never 1 = once per year 2 = several times per year 3 = once per month 4 = several times per month 5 = once per week 6 = several times per week 7 = once per day 8 = several times per day 9 = once per hour 10 = several times per hour
Pressure	How frequently respondent is under time pressure	1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Frequently 5 = Always
Chance to get ahead	Person in job could learn skills to help get themselves ahead	1 = Disagree strongly 2 = disagree moderately 3 = disagree slightly 4 = neither agree nor disagree 5 = agree slightly 6 = agree moderately

		7 = agree strongly
Chance to use abilities	Standardized score: ln((X + 1)/(100 – X + 1)) Where X = the percentage of people in the 1970 census employed in the same occupation/industry/class of worker category as the respondent, who completed at least one year of college.	-3.6 to 4.2

Appendix B: Rates of Missingness in Constituent Variables for Subjective Success

Variable	Rate of Missingness
Wages, 1992	25.18%
Benefits, 1992	22.27%
Interesting, 1992	25.78%
Clean, 1992	21.64%
Tiring, 1992	21.40%
Prestige, 1992	21.27%
Job Security, 1992	31.40%
Freedom, 1992	49.93%
Pressure, 1992	21.59%
Get Ahead, 1992	22.24%
Use Abilities, 1992	21.27%
Hours, 1992	21.74%
Import. Pay	24.54%
Import. Benefits	24.51%
Import. Interesting	24.52%
Import. Clean	24.60%
Import. Tiring	24.62%
Import. Prestige	24.59%
Import. Job Security	24.56%
Import. Freedom	24.62%
Import. Pressure	24.61%
Import. Get Ahead	24.54%
Import. Use Abils.	24.60%
Import. Hours	24.67%

Appendix C: Intercorrelations for Importance and Satisfaction Indicators

Importance	Pay	Benefits	Interesting	Clean	Hours	Tiring	Prestige	Security	Freedom	Pressure	Get Ahead
Benefits	0.42										
Interesting	-0.06	0.00									
Clean	0.13	0.13	0.05								
Hours	0.12	0.11	0.02	0.35							
Tiring	0.13	0.16	0.03	0.37	0.46						
Prestige	0.09	0.13	0.11	0.26	0.10	0.21					
Security	0.20	0.40	-0.01	0.16	0.13	0.20	0.25				
Freedom	0.01	-0.02	0.20	0.09	0.05	0.08	0.15	-0.02			
Pressure	0.09	0.16	0.00	0.28	0.33	0.42	0.15	0.23	0.07		
Get Ahead	0.24	0.24	0.09	0.13	-0.01	0.09	0.28	0.29	0.07	0.07	
Use Abils.	0.02	0.06	0.31	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.19	0.11	0.19	0.02	0.36
Average Corr.	0.15										
Satisfaction	**Pay**	**Benefits**	**Interesting**	**Clean**	**Hours**	**Tiring**	**Prestige**	**Security**	**Freedom**	**Pressure**	**Get Ahead**
Benefits	0.46										
Interesting	0.23	0.15									
Clean	0.16	0.13	0.27								
Hours	0.17	0.16	0.17	0.27							
Tiring	0.19	0.16	0.23	0.37	0.40						
Prestige	0.28	0.19	0.34	0.27	0.19	0.31					
Security	0.25	0.28	0.23	0.18	0.20	0.22	0.29				
Freedom	0.21	0.18	0.35	0.26	0.22	0.29	0.33	0.31			
Pressure	0.19	0.14	0.17	0.23	0.33	0.44	0.28	0.26	0.36		
Get Ahead	0.36	0.27	0.40	0.21	0.17	0.25	0.35	0.38	0.38	0.30	
Use Abils.	0.29	0.20	0.57	0.24	0.19	0.21	0.37	0.30	0.45	0.27	0.58
Avg.	0.27										