

RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL  
AND INDUSTRIAL EVALUATIONS OF OCCUPATIONS  
BY JAPANESE ADOLESCENT BOYS

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# RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL AND INDUSTRIAL EVALUATIONS OF OCCUPATIONS BY JAPANESE ADOLESCENT BOYS<sup>1</sup>

Numerous studies of the prestige of occupations have been conducted in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In recent years considerable attention has been directed toward such research in non-Western societies, including Japan.<sup>3</sup> One basic problem of these studies has been to explain why most available data appear to show that there are substantial similarities in the occupational prestige hierarchies of various societies. Inkeles and Rossi,<sup>4</sup> among others,<sup>5</sup> take for granted the notion that the prestige hierarchies of many different societies are similar, despite the fact that the evidence is not wholly convincing;<sup>6</sup> then they go on to explain the similarities by means of what they call a "structural" hypothesis. Specifically, they hold that industrialization produces its own characteristic occupational prestige hierarchy, regardless of the cultural milieu in which it is located. Elsewhere it has been shown that industrialization *per se* cannot be responsible for much of the observed intersocietal similarity in prestige hierarchies; part of the observation is probably an artifact of the research design, and part of it is probably due to "structural similarities" (similarities in the role organization and societal evaluation of specific activities) in social systems with complex divisions of labor, whether industrial or not.<sup>7</sup> Also, Thomas, showing that an urban sample of people in a non-industrial country rate occupational titles very much as do people in indus-

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<sup>2</sup> See Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959, pp. 14 and 270 for a summary of most of these publications. Also, see Albert J. Reiss, Jr., *et al.*, *Occupations and Social Status*, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, for an exhaustive review of the most comprehensive of these projects.

<sup>3</sup> Alex Inkeles and Peter H. Rossi, "National Comparisons of Occupational Prestige," *American Journal of Sociology*, 61 (January, 1956), pp. 329-339; Edward A. Tiryakian, "The Prestige Evaluation of Occupations in an Underdeveloped Country," *American Journal of Sociology*, 63 (January, 1958), pp. 390-399; Charles E. Ramsey and Robert J. Smith, "Japanese and American Perceptions of Occupations," *American Journal of Sociology*, 65 (March, 1960), pp. 475-482; E. Murray Thomas, "Reinspecting a Structural Position on Occupation Prestige," *American Journal of Sociology*, 67 (March, 1962), pp. 561-565; and Kaare Svalastoga, *Prestige Class and Mobility*, Toronto: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1959, pp. 62-67 and 79-108, esp. the tables on pp. 91 and 108.

<sup>4</sup> Inkeles and Rossi, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Lipset and Bendix, *op. cit.*, for example.

<sup>6</sup> Archibald O. Haller, David M. Lewis, and Iwao Ishino, "The Hypothesis of Intersocietal Similarity in Occupational Prestige Hierarchies," Paper to be presented at the 1964 meetings of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, September, 1964. This paper points out that the samples of occupational titles tend to be biased in ways which probably lead to overestimating the intersocietal correlations in the prestige of occupations.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

trial nations, has noted that pre-industrial factors may well influence both the similarities and differences in the standing of occupations.<sup>8</sup> Thomas's paper, together with the above findings on the probable influence of complexity of the division of labor (an important aspect of rural-urban differences) on occupational evaluation, raises the question of other possible sources of rural-urban differences.

It is commonplace in sociology to recognize that changes ordinarily originate in cities, and spread to the countryside. Moreover, the pre-industrial Tokagawa view of stratification, which emphasized the virtues of rural life, would more likely appeal to rural people than to urban people. Hence it stands to reason that residues of the traditional stratification system are more likely to be found in rural than in urban Japan. It is, thus, reasonable to look for persistence of the Tokagawa view of stratification as a possible source of rural-urban differences in the evaluation of occupations.

Recent sociological publications on Japan do not, however, give much encouragement to such speculations. Inkeles and Rossi used Odaka's data to show a correlation of +.93 between Japanese and American views of the prestige of 25 occupations which had equivalents in the United States NORC study.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Ramsey and Smith claimed that they could find little evidence of rural-urban differences in the evaluation of occupations by Japanese third-year high school students.<sup>10</sup> They report a correlation of +.80 between rural and urban youth evaluations. (This is a dubious comparison because the smallest city in their research had a population of about 20,000 people.) If these generalizations are safe, they suggest that the Tokagawa view of stratification has simply passed out of existence, and has been replaced by views quite similar to those characteristic of the United States.

In this paper data will be presented which show that traditional evaluations of occupations, stemming at least from the Tokagawa era, still exist in Japan, especially in rural areas. A pair of alternative types, the traditional (pre-industrial) Tokagawa and the modern (industrial), are used as bases against which to compare contemporary rural and urban Japanese evaluations of a set of occupational titles. That is, deviations from these types are used as rough estimates of the degree to which the traditional view has persisted in, and the modern view has penetrated into, rural and urban areas. All specific occupational titles used in the types were drawn from the NORC list.<sup>11</sup>

*The Traditional (Pre-Industrial) Type.* In the initial period of the Tokagawa era (1815-1868) of Japan, the government passed a series of laws which delineated a legal status structure. This structure reflected the prestige attributed to various categories of occupations in the agrarian-feudalistic-militaristic economy and society which had evolved in Japan prior to the

<sup>8</sup> E. Murray Thomas, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Inkeles and Rossi, *op. cit.* Curiously, Matsumoto has inspected Odaka's data and has reported that it supports the belief that traditional class evaluations are still important even in urban Japan. This view is obviously in conflict with the Inkeles and Rossi findings, and for that matter, it is in conflict with the findings presented in this paper. See Yoshiharu Scott Matsumoto, *Contemporary Japan: The Individual and the Group*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, New Series, Vol. 50, Pt. 1, 1960, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ramsey and Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Reiss *et al.*, *op. cit.*

Tokagawa period. The Tokagawa rulers were concerned with the possibility of disruptive changes in the Japanese social structure, and through these laws, attempted to establish a stratification system which would guarantee the enduring stability of Japanese society. The ordering of occupations according to this system represents the Tokagawa rulers' conception of the most desirable ordering of occupations according to prestige. Their official conception is employed in developing an ordering which stands for the prestige rank of preindustrial occupations.<sup>12</sup>

The Tokagawa occupational categories which comprised the various statuses were ordered as below, from those of highest prestige to those of lowest prestige:

1. Warriors (highest prestige)
2. Farmers
3. Artisans
4. Merchants (lowest prestige)

Two NORC occupational titles fitting each of the four Tokagawa categories have been selected to represent the type as it would be manifested today if, indeed, the traditional view of the stratification system persists. Thus, there is a total of eight occupations whose rank-order should theoretically be the modern-day expression of the Tokagawa system. These are as follows:

1. Captain in the army (highest prestige)
2. Corporal in the army
3. Farm owner-operator
4. Sharecropper
5. Architect
6. Carpenter
7. Manager of a small store in a city
8. Traveling salesman for a wholesale concern (lowest prestige)

It is not to be expected that any sample of respondents will evaluate these occupations in exact accordance with their pre-industrial ordering. However, rank correlation coefficients can indicate the extent to which the ranks of occupations, as viewed by the various samples, approximate the ranks predicted by the type.

*The Modern (Industrial) Type.* The basic approach outlined above may also be used in developing a type which represents the evaluation of selected modern industrial occupations by members of a highly industrialized society. Here it is assumed that the appropriate typical rank-order of industrial occupations is represented by the NORC ranks assigned them by Americans in 1947.<sup>13</sup>

The occupations chosen for this type and their modern-industrial ranks are given below. As before, those with the highest scores are placed at the top of the hierarchical ordering and those with the lowest scores are placed at the bottom.

<sup>12</sup> George B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1943, pp. 455-463; George B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1950, p. 189; and John F. Embree, *The Japanese Nation: A Social Survey*, New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1945, pp. 20-25.

<sup>13</sup> Reiss et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 54-57.

1. Member of the Board of Directors of a Large Corporation (highest prestige)
2. Owner of a Factory Employing About 100 People
3. Accountant for a Large Business
4. Railroad Engineer
5. Garage Mechanic
6. Machine Operator in a Factory
7. Filling Station Attendant
8. Railroad Section Hand (lowest prestige)

Thus, the above ordering is considered a constructed type representing an appropriate ordering of these industrial occupations for an industrial society. That is, we are assuming that the United State is a good empirical instance of the industrial society and that the North-Hatt rank ordering of occupations provides an adequate basis for rank-ordering occupations in industrial social systems.

Again, it is not necessarily expected that any sample or category of Japanese respondents will evaluate these occupations in exact accordance with their "typical" industrial ranks. As before, the rank order correlation of this type with the Japanese evaluations yields rough estimates of the degree to which samples of Japanese agree with the type.

Clearly, the two views of the hierarchy of occupation types are not necessarily polar opposites. Whether they are at all similar is a question which cannot be answered directly. However, the correlation of United States ranks for the occupation used in the operationalization of the Tokagawa view can be calculated. It is  $r = +.10$ , which seems to indicate that the two views are practically unrelated to each other.

The data used in this analysis were obtained by means of questionnaires administered to male students in Japanese schools mostly near Tokyo during the period 1958-1959. Among other items, the questionnaire included a list of occupational titles which the respondents were asked to evaluate as excellent, good, average, below average, or poor, by writing the numbers 1, for excellent, to 5, for poor, in front of each title. The standard practice of assigning ranks to occupations on the basis of the means of these evaluations has been employed in this study. Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient  $\rho$  is used to test hypotheses.

The samples were chosen to secure male respondents whose answers could be expected to reflect the differential influence of rural and urban environments. Data were collected in schools in five localities. The sample taken in the city of Sendai Shi (population 250,000, prefecture of Miyagi) consists of 28 third-year high school students. The sample of Noda Shi (population 25,000, prefecture of Chiba) consists of an equal number of second-year high school students. All students in the samples of the remaining three localities were third-year, junior high school boys. All these localities (population 3,000 each) are in Chiba prefecture. In Futomi Mura the sample size is 38; in Emi Machi it is 23; in Soro Aza it is 24. A check on occupations of the fathers of sample members shows that rural work (farming, fishing, and forestry) predominates for those in the small places: Futomi Mura, 72 percent; Emi Machi, 56 percent; and Sora Aza, 83 percent. Rural occupations are much less common in the larger places: Sendai Shi, 21 percent; and Noda

Shi, 29 percent. It should be noted that the urban samples do not exactly match the rural samples on the variables of age and education, the rural being two to three grades in school behind the urban. Thus, we could not control for the separate influence of these variables.

Table 1 presents the rank-order correlation coefficients ( $\rho$ ) for each comparison. The responses of the combined urban samples from the cities of Sendai Shi and Noda Shi produce a ranking of occupations which correlates .00 with the set of eight occupations in the traditional (pre-industrial) type, and .78 with the set of eight occupations in the modern (industrial) type. The responses of the combined rural samples from three rural villages of

*Table 1.* Rank order correlation coefficients between two ideal views of the Japanese occupational prestige hierarchy and the mean rank of evaluations of occupational titles representing them by urban and rural samples of Japanese boys

View of the occupational prestige hierarchy	Total urban	Total rural	Sendai Shi (most urban)	Noda Shi	Emi Machi	Futomi Mura	Soro Aza (most rural)
Traditional (pre-industrial)							
$\rho =$	.00	.45	.12	-.02	.45	.45	.61
Modern (industrial)							
$\rho =$	.78	.38	.95	.88	.78	.50	-.15

Futomi Mura, Emi Machi, and Soro Aza produce a ranking of occupations which correlates .45 with the pre-industrial type and .38 with the industrial type. The correlations of the rankings of the individual samples with the traditional and modern rankings of the same occupations are also presented in the Table. The samples are placed from left to right according to degree of rurality (as measured by the percent who are from families engaged in rural occupations), from Sendai Shi, the most urban, to Soro Aza, the most rural. Looking first at the upper row, we see that as the rurality of the sample increases, the evaluation of the occupations tends to become increasingly like that of the traditional view. This change is from a correlation ( $\rho$ ) of just about zero for the urban groups to  $\rho = +.61$  for the most rural group. In the second row we see that as the rurality of the sample increases, the evaluation of the occupations tends to become decreasingly like that of the modern (industrial) view. This change is more dramatic than the former, beginning with  $\rho = +.95$  and decreasing monotonically to  $\rho = -.15$ .

It would be a mistake to take the absolute values of these coefficients very seriously. Nevertheless the fact that both vary systematically and predictably with rurality indicates that, in all likelihood, there is still a traditional (pre-industrial) component, stemming at least from the Tokagawa era, in the evaluation of occupations by the more rural Japanese. This does not seem to be true in the urban samples. On the other hand, the urban samples agree substantially with the modern (industrial) type, with disagreement increasing with rurality to the point where the most rural do not agree at all with

the modern type. The fact that the correlations become a good deal higher with the industrial type than with the traditional type may mean, in part, that the persistence of the traditional type in rural communities is less pervasive than is the penetration of the modern industrial type in the urban areas.

*Conclusion.* There are several important limitations to this research. (1) The sample communities were selected in a way which makes it difficult to be certain of the universes to which we are generalizing. (2) Because samples were taken in only five communities, there is a possibility that the correlations reported here are misleading, although this seems quite unlikely. (3) Moreover, there is a remote possibility that variations in the age and education of the respondents may have influenced the conclusions. Rural respondents used were younger and less educated than the urban respondents. These factors might have made the rural youth more ignorant of the modern (industrial) occupational order, and thus would account for part of the rural-urban variation in evaluations of the occupations in this type. It is unlikely, however, that the same argument could apply to rural-urban variations in evaluations of the occupations in the traditional type: this would say younger and less-well educated youth tend to agree more with the earlier stratification system, and this seems absurd. (4) The size of the samples in each community may have been too small to estimate accurately the mean ratings of the occupational titles. (5) The selection of occupational titles may have some unknown bias. (6) The use of only eight occupations to stand for each type of occupational stratification system may influence the correlation coefficients.

Despite these difficulties it seems reasonable to conclude that the data support the hypothesis that pre-industrial Tokagawa stratification criteria are still used to some degree by at least some rural Japanese boys. There is, however, no evidence that these criteria persist among the more urban boys studied here.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, urban youth seem to use criteria typical of persons in other urban-industrial societies. Moreover the problem of different occupational prestige hierarchies existing simultaneously in the same social system doubtless occurs in societies other than Japan. The technique used here could be easily modified to facilitate similar research under such conditions.

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<sup>14</sup> If the types and data are reasonably accurate, the boys of rural Soro Aza neither use industrial criteria nor conform wholly to the preindustrial type. As is shown elsewhere, one explanation for this may lie in the fact that persons in simple occupational structures do not share in whatever basis exists for the inter-social similarity in the evaluation of translatable occupations by persons in complex occupational structures. See Haller, Lewis, and Ishino, *op. cit.*