AGE AND SEX AS INDICATORS OF SOCIAL STATUS: PERCEPTIONS OF MATURE VICTORIANS

by

Ian Douglas Graham

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

[redacted]
Professor Paul Baker

[redacted]
Professor Richard Ogmundson

[redacted]
Professor Eike-Henner Kluge

[redacted]
Professor Marilyn Jackson

University of Victoria

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Supervisor: Professor Paul M. Baker

ABSTRACT

In the theoretical writing in social gerontology, little has been written from a lifespan perspective on the nature and extent to which the age and sex of individuals influence the amount of social status accorded to them by others. With the exception of Baker's recent research on age, sex and social status, this theoretical writing in the literature has yet to be subjected to empirical testing.

This study is a replication of Baker's 1983 and 1985 studies. However, where Baker examined the amount of social status university students accorded stimulus profiles of various ages and sex, this research examined the amount of social status mature individuals accorded Baker's stimulus profiles.

In keeping with Baker's work, a factorial survey analysis (FSA) methodology was employed to measure the "status" respondents accorded the stimulus profiles. Baker's interview schedule along with additional questions concerned with respondents' demographic characteristics was administered to a convenience sample of 201 mature Victorians ranging in age from 45 to 92. The data were gathered by means of face-to-face structured interviews. The statistical analysis for this study consisted of

performing either T-tests or one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the mean status ratings of the various stimulus profiles.

The major findings of this study suggest that of those mature people studied, accorded social class was perceived to increase from childhood through middle age and then decline until age 80 whereupon the decline in status stopped and reversed, leaving the 100-year-old profiles with higher status than the 80-year-old profiles. The sample also believed there to be significant gender differences in accorded status. In fact, they perceived status over the lifespan to take the shape of two inverted "U" curves, with a curve for males significantly higher in status than the curve for females at ages 50, 65, and 70. Further analysis indicated that the respondent characteristics of sex, age, marital status, and social status were not related to respondents' perceptions of status.

In so far as two so very diverse samples (mature Victorians and Baker's university students) displayed similar perceptions of status, it was concluded that this study also provided additional support for Baker's claim that status perceptions based on age and sex universal in our culture.

Examiners: [redacted]

Professor Paul Baker

[redacted]

Professor Richard Ogmundson

[redacted]

Professor Eike-Henner Kluge

[redacted]

Professor Marilyn Jackson

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CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 WHY STUDY THE STATUS OF AGE AND SEX ?

For some time, sociologists have studied how, and under what conditions, external characteristics of individuals affect their face to face interaction. "Expectation States Theory" (Berger et al,1966; 1972; 1974; 1977) has been concerned with two general processess: social conditions affecting an individual's formation of performance expectations, and the effects of these expectations on subsequent interaction with others (Webster and Driskell,1978:221). In this research tradition, the assumption is made that characteristics of individuals such as age, sex, race, occupation, and education are evaluated or ranked in terms of status. The thrust of the research is on application of status expectation theory to explain how individual characteristics affect interaction patterns rather than examining whether people differentially evaluate these characteristics in terms of status. For example, it is widely asserted that "woman" is evaluated lower than "man" in our culture but researchers in this tradition have not quantified how sex is evaluated in society. While researchers have examined how the age and sex of an individual affect what others expect of him and how others interact with him, they have yet to establish precisely how age and sex are evaluated in terms

of status.

Other sociological research has for some time exclusively examined how people evaluate others in terms of social characteristics such as occupation, level of income, and years of education (for example, Counts,1925; Smith,1943; NORC,1947; Reiss,1961; Hodge et al.,1964; Hamblin and Smith,1966; Shinn,1969; Jones and Shorter,1972; Rossi et al.,1974; Baker,1977; Treiman,1977; Nock and Rossi,1978). This research is concerned with the amount of status or prestige that is accorded to various objective positions or attributes which individuals may possess. To date, with the exception of Baker's recent studies (1983; 1985) on the status of age, the characteristics of age and sex have not been subjected to rigorous empirical study. Little is known about how much status is accorded to individuals simply based on their chronological age and sex.

Social gerontologists have on the other hand, conducted research on the effects of societal modernization on the objective status or position of the aged, but few have considered the dimension of social status that involves the status or prestige that is accorded the old simply because of their age. Even the theoretical writing in gerontology on social status across the lifespan (Dowd,1975; Williamson et al.,1980) has yet to be subjected to empirical testing

with the exception of Baker's (1983; 1985) studies. In the conclusion of the 1983 paper, Baker encouraged others to replicate his study with other types of respondents, especially older ones, in order to establish whether or not the perceptions of his young respondents are indicative of a general consciousness of status found in our society.

This study explores two neglected areas of social reality. It examines the universality of people's perceptions of the social status accorded the characteristics of age and sex from a lifespan perspective. It also investigates mature people's perceptions of the amount of status accorded the old in our society.

The review of the literature on social status that follows is divided into two sections. The first section deals in a general way with the theoretical writings on status across the lifespan. The second section deals more specifically with the research that has been conducted on perceptions of status across the lifespan. The review of the status literature is followed by a statement of the purpose of this study. The chapter concludes with a presentation of this study's hypotheses along with their rationales.

1.2 SOCIAL STATUS

Before continuing, it is necessary to define the term social status. Every major perspective in sociology has produced some statement on the nature of social stratification and the meaning of social status (Baker, 1980:2). Regardless of the minor conceptual differences among various status related terms, all of the terms relate to the ranking of individuals (or positions) in a social hierarchy. For the purpose of this study, the term "social status" refers to this general ranking of individuals.

Lipset (1972) in his discussion of the dimensions of stratification noted that social status is conceptualized by most contemporary sociologists in multidimensional terms. He went on to state that the dimensions may be grouped into three categories: 1) objective status, or aspects of stratification that structure environments differently enough to evoke differences in behavior; 2) accorded status, or the prestige accorded to individuals and groups by others; 3) subjective status, or the personal sense of location within the social hierarchy felt by various individuals (Lipset,1972:310).

Objective social status involves no subjective or personal evaluation or judgment; it refers to a measurable quantity that exists in reality. Methodologically, objective status is most frequently measured by such things as annual income,

years of education, and type of occupation. Accorded status is usually measured by asking an individual to rank others of the same social system, in other words, accorded status is the result of the felt perceptions of others. Subjective status is usually measured by asking individuals which of several social classes they feel they belong to. This concept of status centers on the self-identification of the individual within the stratification hierarchy.

The second conceptualization of status, "accorded status," is the focus of this research. Lipset (1972:311) wrote that accorded status involves the amount of status, honor, or deference that a given position commands in society. He stated that various methods are used to study accorded status but the location of individuals or groups in the status system depends on the opinion of the individuals who go to make up the system rather than the sociologist who observes it. In other words, accorded status reflects society's evaluation of various positions or attributes which individuals may possess. Throughout this study the terms "accorded" and "perceived" social status are used interchangeably.

1.3 SOCIAL STATUS AND THE LIFESPAN

Among North American investigators, comments specific to

the standing of the elderly in society probably began with statements by Linton. In Linton's paper (1942) on age and sex categories, he noted that a commonality of all social systems appeared to be that societies classify and organize their members by age and sex.

> For our present purpose these two characteristics (age and sex) may be treated as a unit since membership in a particular age-sex category, or in one of a clearly delimited group of such categories, will be found to be a prerequisite for the occupation of practically any status within a given social system (Linton,1942:589-90).

Linton also pointed out that there were a minimum of 7 groups that were basic to all age-sex classification which were determined culturally and physiologically: infant, boy, girl, adult male, adult female, old male, and old female. He also stated that regardless of the system of age classification employed by a particular society, the categories established by the system of age classification would be ranked in a prestige series. Linton used the term prestige to mean social influence or social status. While he believed the prestige order of age groups to be clearly defined for each sex, he felt that ranking particular categories in one sex relative to the other was difficult to establish. Considering the prestige ranking of adults and the aged, Linton wrote,

> There are certain societies in which adult status is, theoretically as well

> as actually, the high point in the life cycle, loss of physical powers being attenuated by immediate loss of prestige. In others, the prestige of the individual theoretically increases steadily with age (Linton,1942:597).

Parsons (1942) noted that age grading occurred in U.S. society and, in combination with sex greatly influenced the status of an individual. The initial status of every normal individual was seen by Parsons to be that of child. In early childhood the sexes were not sharply differentiated in terms of status. At the time of transition from childhood to adolescence the sexes became more differentiated with the male's status derived from athletic prowess and the female's status derived from attractiveness. Parsons believed the status of the adult male was fundamentally based on the man's occupational role while the adult female derived status from the role of wife of the breadwinner. He believed the elderly had a lower status which was the result of their extreme position of isolation and their inability to participate in important social structures. In this same vein he also argued that the nuclear family of modern society left the old without any attachment to a continuous kinship group while retirement stripped the important occupational status from the man leaving him in a functionless situation.

Both Linton (1942) and Parsons (1942) theorized that age-sex categories initially determined the status of

individuals within society. They also reported that from childhood to middle age, an individual's status rose peaking in the middle years of the lifespan and then declined in old age. For Linton, the lowered status of the elderly resulted from the loss of physical powers that accompanied old age. Parsons on the other hand, saw the loss of the occupational role along with the isolation resulting from the structure of the nuclear family as reducing the status of the aged.

Dowd (1975) applying exchange theory to explain the disengagement from or involvement in society by older people, suggested that problems of aging should be seen as problems of decreasing power resources. Dowd argued that as the power resources of the elderly become depleted their bargaining position weakens. He suggested that their activity in or disengagement from society is an attempt to balance an inbalanced relation. One of two basic propositions which Dowd developed from the exchange theory analysis of aging in contemporary society was that the relationship between chronological age and degree of power resources is curvilinear. He viewed the possession of power resources to be limited in youth, increasing through late middle age, and then sharply decreasing in old age. He used Abarbanel's (1974) analysis of ethnographic data from 47 societies to support his claim. In the preindustrial, non urban societies studied, Abarbanel reported that:

> control over most resources began before or immediately after marriage; peaked at the time termed middle family phase, that is when children are adolescents and the family labor force is most productive; and declined either in the latter part of the middle phase or in the late phase of the family cycle, when children marry and leave home (Dowd,1975:592).

Dowd considering industrial society, stated that the curvilinear relationship between age and power resources reflected current realities and that the phenomenon of retirement more than any other social event is directly responsible for the decline of power resources beyond middle age. Dowd also specified that socio-economic status (SES) and ethnicity would slightly modify the relationship between age and power resources with increased SES providing an individual with greater power resources. Dowd's discussion of power resources fits well into this literature review since social status may be equated with possession of power resources, indeed possession of power resources promotes social status.

Williamson, Evans, and Munley (1980), devoted one chapter of their book to the issues of status, power, and politics of the aged. They stated that the information on status and transitions in people's status and power throughout the lifespan could be plotted as a trajectory of social status and inferred power. They suggested the trajectory of social status by age and sex would take the form of inverted "U"

curves across the lifespan. They further believed that the schematic representation of the trajectory of social status by age would differ for the sexes. The social status or prestige of men would be higher than the social status for women at any given life stage. In other words, the trajectory of social status could be thought of as two inverted "U" curves, a curve higher in status representing males, and a curve lower in status representing females.

1.4 PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL STATUS ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

The following studies have investigated the accorded status of individuals at different stages of the life cycle. In studying the perceptions of status, each study uses slightly different indicators of social status. The studies are now presented in chronological order.

Cameron (1970) using a sample of 317 white Detroit residents, studied their perceptions of power and wealth. The sample was equally divided in terms of age into three categories: young, middle, and old age. Respondents were asked to assess their individual beliefs about their own wealth and power. They were also asked how generations compared in terms of wealth and power. All groups agreed that the middle aged generation was the most powerful and wealthy and the young generation the least powerful or

wealthy. Men believed themselves more wealthy and powerful than women and, respondents of higher SES believed themselves more wealthy than respondents of lower SES. Cameron concluded that the respondents perceptions of status were accurate when it was considered that according to census statistics, the middle aged as a group possessed the greatest wealth followed by the old and then the young.

Youmans (1971) conducted a study investigating the differences in perceptions of two generations (the "young" and the "old" generation). The young generation consisted of respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 and the old generation consisted of respondents over 65 years of age. The sample of 805 respondents was drawn from a rural and an urban area of Kentucky. One part of the study involved questions about stages of the life cycle. Respondents were asked to state at what age a person was most respected, most influential, least respected, and least influential. The respondents were given 4 life stages from which to choose- young (0-21 years), early middle age (22-44), late middle age (45-64), and old age (65 and over).

Youmans found no significant difference between the two generations in their perceptions of the most respected and influential stages of life. Of the urban respondents, both generations stated that late middle age was the most

respected and influential time of life while both generations of the rural respondents felt that early middle age was the most respected and influential life stage. When questioned about the age group that was least respected, both generations from the urban setting stated the young life stage. Interestingly, among the rural respondents the young generation felt youth was the least respected life stage while the older respondents stated old age was least respected. On the question of which life stage was the least influential, among both the rural and urban respondents, the young generation felt they were least influential and the old generation saw themselves as having the least influence.

Putting aside rural/urban differences in perceptions, when the results of this study are considered in terms of the continuum of life stages ranging from young through middle age to old age, it would seem that both youth and old age were not perceived to be very influential or powerful life stages. Middle age however, was seen to be the most respected and influential life stage.

Cutler (1972) was the first to conduct direct empirical research that demonstrated the existence of prestige loss among the aged. Aware of the significance of retirement and its particular evocation of the status of the aged, Cutler's

measure of prestige was constructed centering around this event (Cutler,1972:186) Using a random sample of 170 respondents aged 65 and over, Cutler had the respondents evaluate the general standing of nine occupations. He also had the respondents evaluate the general standing of nine comparable occupational categories prefaced by the age status designation "retired" (Cutler,1972:291). The nine occupations were selected from the NORC (1953) and Duncan (1961) lists to represent a range of socio-economic and prestige levels. The prestige scores for each of the eighteen categories was computed according to the standard NORC procedure. Cutler found that the occupational categories prefaced by "retired" were rated significantly lower in prestige scores than the general occupational categories not prefaced by "retired." Cutler concluded that his study provided evidence supporting the view that the aged suffer prestige loss. He also concluded that the prestige loss in old age was recognized by the aged themselves.

Rubin and Brown (1975) examined students' perceptions of intellectual ability of seven target age groups and then went on to investigate how these perceptions affected students' interactions with each age group. For the first part of the study they had 243 university students rate seven target persons ranging in age from infant to elderly adult on their ability to perform a number of tasks. Rubin

and Brown found that the subjects believed that intellectual ability over time increased from infancy to middle age and then declined in the later years of life. The elderly were perceived as less competent than both young and middle aged adults.

While Rubin and Brown's study did not deal specifically with social status, it does not seem unreasonable to think that since intellectual ability over the lifespan was perceived to be curvilinear, social status might also be perceived in a similar way.

Feinman and Coon (1983) studied the effect of status on the evaluation of behavior. They were interested in assessing how people would respond when age related expectations were violated. In order for the 96 undergraduate students to provide approval ratings of either appropriate or cross-age-role behaviors, Feinman and Coon had them first establish that age was differentially evaluated for the three age levels of interest. To assure that the age conditions were differentially evaluated, the students were asked to assign prestige on a 0-100 scale to one of three groups: (1) children between 5 and 10; (2) adult between 20 and 50; (3) elderly persons 65 years and older (Feinman and Coon,1983:123). Greater prestige was found to be assigned to adults ($\bar{x}$=74.94) and least to children ($\bar{x}$=29.80), with

elderly persons assigned an intermediate level ($\bar{x}$=63) (Feinman and Coon,1983:119). The remainder of the study examined the specific expectations that were associated with age. Feinman and Coon concluded that as long as persons of various ages received differential prestige, a status theory would be useful in predicting how age related behavior would be evaluated.

The prestige rating of age found in this study corresponds with the previous research and writings on the social status of age. The relationship between prestige and age was found to be curvilinear with prestige increasing from childhood to adulthood and then decreasing in old age.

Most recently, Baker (1983) used a factorial survey methodology to directly study the general perceptions of the status of age. Baker had his sample of 256 university students rate 14 age by sex profiles in terms of social status. The age by sex profiles consisted of all possible combinations of sex with ages 5, 10, 20, 30, 50, 70, and 90. The respondents were asked to rate the prestige or status of the profiles on a 7 point scale that ran from far below average status through to average status on up to far above average status.

Baker found that perception of status across the lifespan

took the shape of an inverted "U" curve. Status rose from the young ages until age 30 and then declined until age 90. The results indicated that only in midlife (30-65) was sex an important determinant of the amount of status the stimulus persons were accorded.

Conducting a multiple regression analysis, Baker established that together, respondents' age and sex explained only 5 percent of the variance in the pooled status ratings of the 70 and 90-year-old profiles. Age was the most significant factor. Baker noted that this was striking considering the age homogeneous nature of the sample. Higher ratings were associated with the older respondents in the sample.

Continuing his research into the status perceptions of age and sex, Baker (1985) surveyed another 78 university students using the same procedure as the 1983 study. This time the stimulus profiles consisted of all possible combinations of sex with ages 15, 25, 40, 65, 80, and 100. Combining the data of the 1983 study with the data from this 1985 study, Baker analized the 26 age by sex profiles. Again, Baker found the perceptions of status across the lifespan took the shape of an inverted "U" curve with status peaking at age 30 and then declining until age 90. The only exception to the declining status of the older profiles were the 100-year-old profiles. These profiles were accorded

higher status, on average, than even the 65-year-old profiles. Once again, in mid-life (30-65) women were accorded lower status than men of the same ages. Where Linton (1942) and Williamson et al (1980) speculated that females always have lower status than men, Baker's sample perceived that this gender difference in status only occured in mid-life and that for the very young and very old, males and females were perceived to have similar status.

In an attempt to explain the relatively high variability in the status ratings of the very old profiles (80, 90, 100-year-olds), Baker conducted an analysis of variance using the respondent's age, sex, and beliefs about older people as predictors. He found that the age and sex of the respondent made no significant difference in status ratings. He did find that two items tapping beliefs about older people were associated with higher status ratings for the oldest profiles. Those respondents who agreed that the old are productive or healthy, gave significantly higher status ratings to the 80, 90, and 100-year-old profiles (Baker,1985:10).

These studies on perceptions across the lifespan have examined respondents' perceptions of power and wealth (Cameron,1970), respect and influence (Youmans,1971), intellectual ability (Rubin and Brown,1975), and prestige

(Feinman and Coon,1983). The results of these studies correspond with the theoretical writing on the social status of age. In each study, the middle aged categories were evaluated by respondents as having the greatest prestige or social status and the younger categories the least social status; the old age categories were perceived to have an intermediate status somewhere between that of the middle aged and young life stages. For each study, had the relationship between accorded status and age been plotted it would have taken the shape of an inverted "U" curve increasing from childhood or youth, peaking in the midlife period of the life cycle, and then decreasing in old age.

1.5 THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Since there are few studies which have directly assessed the accorded or perceived status of age and sex and none that have specifically studied older people's perceptions of status, the purpose of this study was to use a mature sample and attempt to replicate Baker's (1983;1985) research into the perceptions of the amount of status accorded stimulus persons of different ages and sex. Baker contends that the methodology he used (factorial survey analysis, or FSA) is well suited for this task because he believes FSA taps a general consciousness about status rather than specific

individuals' inclinations. He therefore claims that his findings are representative of the status perceptions of age and sex of other age groups within our society. Claiming that the status perceptions of age and sex are universal, Baker also predicts that status perceptions are unaffected by other respondent characteristics such as social class, education, etc.

Again, when discussing perceptions of status, social status, or prestige, these terms refer to the status that is accorded to a stimulus profile by the respondent. Social status refers to a person's position within the social hierarchy, where one position confers more or less value, honor, or prestige upon its occupant than another position, in this case, the occupant of a position was defined by age and sex.

1.6 THE HYPOTHESES

Nine hypotheses are proposed which have been suggested in the literature on status across the lifespan. The first 6 hypotheses deal with the shape or function of the status curve, and the remaining 3 hypotheses deal exclusively with the perceived status of the very old profiles (the 80 and 100-year-old profiles). The following is a presentation of the hypotheses along with their rationales.

HYPOTHESIS 1

Perceived status over the lifespan will take the form of an inverted "U" curve.

The literature presenting the theoretical curves of status or power across the life cycle suggests that social status peaks in mid-life and then declines with advanced age (Dowd,1975; Linton,1942; Williamson et al.,1980). The studies that have investigated perceptions of status at different stages of the life cycle have also supported this and shown the relationship between age and accorded status to be curvilinear (Cameron,1970; Youmans,1971; Cutler,1972; Rubin and Brown,1975; Feinman and Coon,1983; Baker,1983; Baker,1985).

The gerontological literature on modernization suggests that the aged in modern society suffer from reduced status as a result of the process of modernization (Cowgill and Holmes,1972; Cowgill,1974). Implicit in the modernization thesis is the idea that the highest status will be accorded to persons in mid-life. The research that has used objective indicators of status such as levels of education, levels of income, employment, and occupational status has also supported the contention that the aged in modern

society have lower levels of objective status than do the non aged (Palmore and Manton,1974; Palmore,1976; Palmore and Whittingham,1971).

Based on the research cited, it is reasonable to hypothesize that status across the lifespan will be perceived to be curvilinear peaking in mid-life and declining with old age. Just as Baker's young sample perceived status across the lifespan to take the shape of an inverted "U" curve, it is predicted that the mature sample will equally perceive status to be curvilinear.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Male profiles will be rated higher in status than the female profiles and the discrepancy will be the most noticeable among the 30, 40, 50, and 65 year-old profiles.

Differences in gender evaluation has been the focus of some research (Deaux and Taynor,1973; McKee and Sherriffs,1957; O'Connell and Rotter,1979; Walsh and Connor,1979). In all cases, male stimuli were rated more highly than female stimuli by both sexes. Other research has shown that women evaluated accomplishments of women less favorably than those

of men (Gekoski,1984; Goldberg,1968; Pheterson,1971). McKee and Sherriffs (1957) explained this phenomenon by stating that men and women had accepted cultural stereotypes about the sexes, where men were seen as superior to women. The notion that women suffer from sexism and have lower degrees of prestige because they have less access to power may be perpetuated by the socialization process found in patriarchal society. Linton (1942), commented that in patriarchal societies , even male infants were said to outrank any female. Parsons (1942) claimed that the status of males was derived from their occupational role while the status of females was derived from their beauty and from their role as wife of the breadwinner. Neugarten et al's (1965) study of age norms provided some support for Parsons' claims. They found that men were perceived to accomplish most between the ages of 40 and 50, hold their top jobs between the ages of 45 and 50, and be at their prime between 35 and 50 years of age. Women on the other hand, were perceived to accomplish most between the ages of 30 and 45 and be good-looking between 20 and 35.

Baker (1983:179) explained the lower status of females in mid-life by our cultural definitions of sex roles. In adulthood, males are viewed as performing valuable occupational roles but females are seen as having less prestigious occupations. Williamson et al (1980) and Baker (1983) also alluded to the notion that women are accorded

status based on their physical attractiveness which peaks between 20 and 30 years of age and then declines in the later years. While not being able to explain this phenomenon of gender differences in status at mid-life, there is no obvious reason NOT to expect the mature sample to hold similar views of the differences in status between women and men.

HYPOTHESIS 3

There will be no significant relationship between sex of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

HYPOTHESIS 4

There will be no significant relationship between age of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

HYPOTHESIS 5

There will be no significant relationship between marital status of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

HYPOTHESIS 6

There will be no significant relationship between social class of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

The rationale for hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6 is derived from Baker's argument that the cultural conception of the age-status system is indeed "real" and people's perceptions of status take the shape of an inverted "U" curve over the lifespan independent of respondent characteristics such as age, sex or marital status (Baker,1985). Also, research using FSA to investigate the social standing of families or family prestige has reported that the respondent characteristics of sex, race, age, education, occupation, and socio-economic class were not related to the status evaluations (Nock,1982; Liker,1982; Rossi et al.,1974).

HYPOTHESIS 7

The oldest profiles (ages 80, 100) will be rated higher in status by the mature sample than they were by Baker's sample of university students.

Older respondents will accord the older profiles higher status as a form of collective-aggrandizement. Being closer in age to the older profiles than were Baker's respondents,

the older respondents will tend to present the older profiles in a more favorable light. For the older respondents to greatly devalue the older profiles in terms of status (ratings below average status), might be equivalent to admitting that status declines substantially with age which might result in negative self-esteem. To avoid reduction in self-esteem, as a result of belonging to the older age group, mature respondents will rate the older profiles more favorably than did the university students.

HYPOTHESIS 8

The 100 year-old profiles will be accorded a higher status rating than the 80 year-old profiles.

This hypothesis was directly derived from Baker's results which showed that the students perceived the 100-year-old profiles to have higher status than the 80-year-old profiles. The higher status of the centenarians may be explained by their longevity. Cumming and Henry (1961:201) noted that there was evidence that living beyond eighty was associated with being a member of a biological, and possibly psychological elite. In 1977, the Canadian life expectancy at birth was 70.2 years for men and 77.5 years for women (Canada,1983:48). Given the fact that the human lifespan is

limited, to be a centenarian may well be considered a unique and rare phenomenon. As Baker (1985:7) put it so well, like four-life clovers or quintuplets, centenarians are rare, and therefore have prestige or status.

Researchers in social psychology (Taylor and Fiske,1980) dealing with small groups have found that novel individuals within a small group become salient to observers and are subsequently perceived as disproportionately causal in the group. In effect, what happens to or within the group is attributed to the novel individual's presence. In group experiments , Langer and Taylor (1976) found that individuals who were visual rarities or statistical novelties were more positively evaluated than others in the group. While this research deals with small groups and face to face interaction it would seem to lend support to the hypothesis that a very old man or woman (100-years-old), if, because of their advanced age they are considered rare they will be accorded slightly higher status than the 80-year-old profiles.

HYPOTHESIS 9

Respondents who express more negative beliefs about older people will accord the oldest profiles (ages 80 and 100) less status.

Researchers have reported that many negative stereotypes and attitudes about the elderly exist in society (Bennett and Eckman,1973; Brubaker and Powers,1976; Nardi,1973; McTavish,1971). Ageism, which has been seen as at the root of these stereotypes and attitudes allows people to see the elderly as some how different from themselves(Butler, 1969,1975; Hendricks and Hendricks,1981; Levin and Levin,1980; Neussel,1982). If some of the older respondents are ageist and view the elderly in a pejorative way as measured by adherence to negative stereotypes about people over 65, they will accord the oldest profiles low status.

This chapter has discussed the reasons for studying the status of age and sex. The theoretical literature on social status and the lifespan has been reviewed. In addition, a review of the research on perceptions of social status across the lifespan was presented. Also, the purpose of this research was discussed. The final section of the chapter presented the hypotheses of the study and their rationales.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

The focus of this chapter is on the research methods that were employed for this study. First, there is a discussion of the research design and the sample. This is followed by a detailed description of the data and sampling processes. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the dependent and independent variables used in the measurement process.

2.1 Research Design

The research design for this study consisted of replicating Baker's 1985 research into students' perceptions of the amount of social status accorded the social characteristics of age and sex. A factorial survey methodology was used to assess social status. This study however, differed in one major aspect from Baker's: in place of university students, a sample of mature adults living in Victoria was used. For a discussion of the importance of replication in social research refer to Appendix A.

2.2 The Sample

Ideally, a true random sample of aged respondents (where each member of the older population has an equal opportunity of being selected) would have been preferred because the

results from such a sample could legitimately be generalized to all older people in Victoria. However, certain aspects of the older population must be considered when sampling older people. For example, there are no systematic lists that provide the names of all members of the elderly population.

> In selecting an elderly sample from the total population, a researcher must realize that it would be very difficult to obtain a totally random sample through normal procedures. There is no textbook method for selecting an elderly sample (Fowler,1984: 37).

Also, a random sample of the entire population often does not provide sufficient numbers of elderly with the characteristics that a researcher is interested in studying and so combinations of different procedures must be used in selecting an older sample.

Due to cost and time restraints, the selection of a random sample would have been impractical. The theoretical writing on social status suggest that perceptions of social status are universal in our culture, and the available data show that these perceptions do not vary greatly according to one's age, sex, social class or marital status. Therefore, the use of a non-random older sample was rendered acceptable for the purpose of this study. The type of sample that was sought for this study is what is known as a convenience sample (Cook and Campbell,1979:71).

From May 17 to June 7 and from July 5 to August 24, 1984 a total sample of 201 respondents were interviewed. The only requirements for prospective respondents were that they be English speakers and preferably over the age of 50. There were however, three exceptions to the age requirement. These respondents were in their mid or late forties and very eager to participate and were therefore included in the sample. Respondents were contacted through Victoria area seniors' organizations and associations and through posters and by word of mouth. The organizations approached are located in different socio-economic areas of Victoria as it was hoped their members would reflect the different socio-economic classes of people living in Victoria.

The age, sex, nationality, marital status, education, and family income characteristics of the sample are compared with 1981 Census of Canada data on Victoria's population 45 years and over (Table 2-1). The age distribution of respondents reflects the census statistics for the population 45 and over with the exceptions that the age categories under age 55 are slightly under-represented and the age categories 65 through 74 are slightly over-represented. Considering aged respondents were sought and the flyers distributed asked for individuals over 50 years of age, these discrepancies were not surprising. The distribution of sex in the sample favors females, with women over-represented by 16 percent as compared to the

census data. The marital status and nationality characteristics of the sample closely resemble the Victoria census distributions for the population over 45, with one difference. Canadians are slightly over-represented and Europeans under-represented in the sample. The distributions for level of high school and post secondary education are unrepresentative when compared with the census data. The sample consists of more highly educated individuals. This was not unexpected considering the sample selection process was non-random and included seniors taking part in a summer course at university. Also, it has been reported that volunteers for research projects often possess higher education than non-participators (Crano and Brewer,1973:53). The distribution of family income is also unrepresentative when compared with the income distribution of all economic families in Victoria. The higher income categories are over represented in the sample.

TABLE 2-1

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS WITH CENSUS DATA FOR VICTORIA (1981)

Characteristics	Sample N=201	Census Breakdown for The Population 45 and Over N=90,025
Age		
45-49	1.49	12.29
50-54	7.96	13.36
55-59	15.92	15.45
60-64	15.42	14.87
65-69	19.40	14.37
70-74	20.90	11.13
75-79	11.44	8.17
80-84	3.98	5.18
85-89	1.99	3.23
90+	1.00	1.95
	100.00	100.00 (1)
Sex		
Male	27.36	43.93
Female	72.64	56.07
	100.00	100.00 (1)
Nationality		
Canadian	70.50	61.92
U.K.	21.00	22.72
U.S.	3.50	2.39
Europe	2.50	6.64
Other	2.50	6.32
	100.00	100.00 (2)
Marital Status		
Married (including separated)	69.70	71.56
Widowed	20.40	18.03
Never Married	6.50	5.69
Divorced	3.50	4.72
	100.00	100.00 (3)

Secondary Education			
Less Than Grade 9	12.18	17.10	
Grades 9-13	87.82	82.90	
	100.00	100.00	(4)
Post Secondary Education			
Yes	72.59	38.65	
No	27.41	61.35	
	100.00	100.00	(4)
Type of Post Secondary Education			
none	27.41	61.35	
Technical School	14.72	15.14	
Some College	31.47	9.58	
1 or More Degrees	26.40	13.93	
	100.00	100.00	(4)

Highest Family Income		Census Breakdown For all Economic Families	
$ 0- 9,999	9.39	22.40	
$ 10-19,999	17.68	26.87	
$ 20-34,999	38.67	29.98	
$ 35,000+	34.25	20.75	
	99.99	100.00	(5)

REFERENCES

1- Canada. Statistics Canada. 1981. Population: Occupied Private Dwellings, Private Households, Census Families in Private Households. Cat. No. 93-922. Table 1.

2- Canada. Statistics Canada. 1981. Population: Language, Ethnic Origins, Religion, Place of Birth, Schooling. Cat. No. 93-934. Table 10.

3- Canada. Statistics Canada. 1981. Population: Occupied Private Dwellings, Private Households, Census Families in Private Households. Cat. No. 93-922. Table 4.

4- Canada. Statistics Canada. 1981. Population: Language, Ethnic Origins, Religion, Place of Birth, Schooling. Cat. No. 93-934. Table 13.

5- Canada. Statistics Canada. 1981. Population: Private Households, Census Families in Private Households. Cat. No. 93-958. Table 6.

2.3 Data Collection

2.3.1 The Sampling Process

A snowball sampling technique most appropriately describes the sampling procedure that was used (Sudman,1976; Babbie,1979). University of Victoria intersession sociology courses were canvassed and students were asked to provide the names and phone numbers of any older individuals they knew who might be willing to participate in the survey. Seniors' groups and associations from the Victoria area were contacted to seek permission to address their members in order to elicit volunteers. The Esquimalt Silver Threads, Victoria Silver Threads, Fairfield New Horizons, James Bay New Horizons, and Autumn Glo Club provided access to their members during their scheduled activities. The Victoria Gerontology Association , Victoria Skills Exchange and Victoria Hospitality Club graciously made available their membership lists.

Posters describing the study and calling for volunteers were posted at the Victoria Institute of Gerontology, Victoria YM-YWCA and several locations on the University of Victoria campus (Appendix B). Flyers were also handed out to participants of UVIC's Seniors' Residential Programs (Senior Summer Studies Program). An advertisement was placed on the local cablevision channel describing the study and invited mature individuals to volunteer. All respondents

interviewed were given a flyer describing the research and urged to enlist their family, friends and neighbours to partake in the study (Appendix B).

2.3.2 The Interviews

In all cases the initial contact with the respondents was made over the telephone. The caller identified himself as a University of Victoria graduate student in Sociology conducting research for his master's thesis. Prospective respondents were then explained the topic of the research and asked if they would be willing to volunteer as a participant in a structured interview. If they agreed, an appointment was set up at a mutually convenient time. Interviews took place at the University of Victoria, the Victoria Institute of Gerontology or the respondent's own home. The interviews on average took 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Prior to the interview, respondents were informed of their right to refuse to answer any or all of the questions and their right to withdraw from the interview at any time. They were also instructed that all the information they provided would be treated as completely confidential. The interview itself consisted of reading the questionnaire to the respondents and then coding their responses onto

optical scanning cards (refer to Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire). Spontaneous comments made by the respondents about the questionnaire or the answers they provided were taken down verbatim on a separate sheet of paper. At the conclusion of the interview all respondents received a written pledge of confidentiality indicating the researcher's credibility and offering a guarantee of confidentiality (Appendix D).

2.4 Measurement

2.4.1 The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable social status was measured by using a factorial survey methodology (for a discussion of factorial survey analysis refer to Rossi and Nock (1982) and Appendix E). The methodology involved presenting respondents with 18 age by sex stimulus profiles and requesting that they to rate each profile in terms of the amount of social status they felt the profile was accorded by most people their own age in our society. The profiles consisted of both genders of the ages 5, 20, 30, 40, 50, 65, 70, 80, and 100 in randomized order (eg."40-year-old man", "5-year-old boy"). Respondents rated the profiles on a 7 point scale of status consisting of: 1) far below, 2) below, 3) slightly below, 4) average status 5) slightly above, 6) above, 7) far above average status.

2.4.2 The Independent Variables

The independent variables for the first two hypotheses were the age and sex of the stimulus profiles. For hypotheses 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 the respondent's sex, age, marital status, social class, and attitudes about "most" older people were used as predictor or independent variables. Hypotheses 7, and 8 did not involve independent variables, they simply presented predictions on which profiles would be rated higher in status.

The independent variables dealing with respondents' social characteristics were defined as follows:

Age- Age was divided into the following 5 age categories: 44-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, and 75 and over.

Marital Status- Respondents provided information on their present marital status (married, widowed, separated, divorced, or never married).

Social Class- The social class variable was derived from the respondents' subjective evaluation of their socio-economic position: lower class, working class, lower-middle class, upper-middle class, upper class, or other (Centers,1961).

Attitudes About Most Older People- Respondents'

attitudes about older people were assessed by their agreement or disagreement to the following statements, most older people are: a) set in their ways, b) in good health, c) conservative, d) lonely, e) live in poverty, f) wise from experience, g) warm and friendly, h) forgetful, and i) productive (questions 45 through 53 of the questionnaire).

These nine questions were directly taken from Baker's (1983) questionnaire. Baker adapted the questions from Harris and Associates (1975) and Tuckman and Lorge (1953). From the nine questions, the nature of the respondent's beliefs about older people was calculated by assigning a value of 1 to each negative belief and a value of 0 to each positive belief held by the respondent. The scores were then summed and divided by 9 to give an average score on beliefs for each respondent. A high score (eg. a score of 1) indicated that the respondent agreed with all the negative beliefs about older people. A score of 0, on the other hand, indicated the respondent disagreed with all the negative beliefs about the old.

This chapter has reviewed in detail the research methodology used for gathering the data for this study. Also,

descriptions of the dependent and independent variables were given. The next chapter presents a review of the data analysis procedures and the results of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

To better understand the findings presented in this chapter, a brief review of the statistics used to test the hypotheses is provided. This is followed by a presentation of the hypotheses along with the specific methods and criteria used for testing them. The results are then presented and explained with accompanying tables and figures.

3.1 A Review of the Data Analysis

The statistic that was chosen as a representative measure of the central tendency of the dependent variable social status was the mean or average of the status ratings of each stimulus profile. For a discussion of why the mean was selected to represent the perceptions of the sample, refer to Appendix F.

The statistical procedures used to test the majority of the hypotheses consisted of conducting either T-tests or one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the mean status ratings of the profiles. T-tests are used to test for statistically significant differences between the means of two subsamples or groups (Loether and McTavish,1980:535). The Student's t

is the statistic used in calculating the probability associated with the null hypothesis that the two group means are equal. The degrees of freedom associated with the t-distribution is calculated by n-1 (Nie et al.,1975:268). One-way ANOVA is a test that makes possible a simultaneous comparison of more than two sample means, it can be seen as a simple extension of the T-test for the difference between two means (Loether and McTavish,1980:542). The null hypothesis tested is that the group means are NOT significantly different from each other. The actual testing is done by comparing the computed F-ratio (F = between-groups mean square/within-groups mean square) with the known sampling distribution of the F-ratio (Nie et al.,1975:259). The degrees of freedom associated with the numerator is calculated by K-1 (where K=the number of groups) and the degrees of freedom associated with the denominator is calculated by n-K.

With both tests (T-test and ANOVA), the level of significance for rejecting the null hypothesis that the means are equal was set at prob. = 0.05. By convention in the social sciences, to call a difference "statistically significant" it should be possible to obtain a difference as big as the observed difference by chance at most five time out of a hundred (Kidder, 1981:340). In the tables referred to in this chapter, the level of significance associated with the t-value or the F-ratio is given. Those t-values or

F-ratios that are not significant at the 0.05 level are indicated by NS (not significant).

The SPSS subprogram BREAKDOWN was used to obtain the means of the status ratings for the groups of interest specified by the hypotheses. For example, with hypothesis 3, the breakdown command provided the mean status ratings for each profile by sex of respondent. T-tests were performed by the SPSS subprogram T-TEST, while ANOVA was performed as part of the breakdown command.

The only other statistic used that requires some explanation is the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient indicates both the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables. It is used to determine the extent to which variation in one variable is linked to variation in another. The sign of r indicates the direction of the relationship, a negative r denotes an inverse or negative relationship- as X becomes larger Y becomes smaller (Nie et al.,1975:279). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ranges from -1 through 0 to +1. When the two variables are perfectly correlated with each other, r takes on the value of either +1 or -1, while an r=0 or close to 0 denotes the variation in the two variables is not correlated with each other.

Because the tables displaying the results referred to in this chapter are so voluminous, it was decided for the sake of convenience to place them all together in Appendix G. The number of each table is prefaced by "G" which stands for Appendix G.

3.2 The Findings

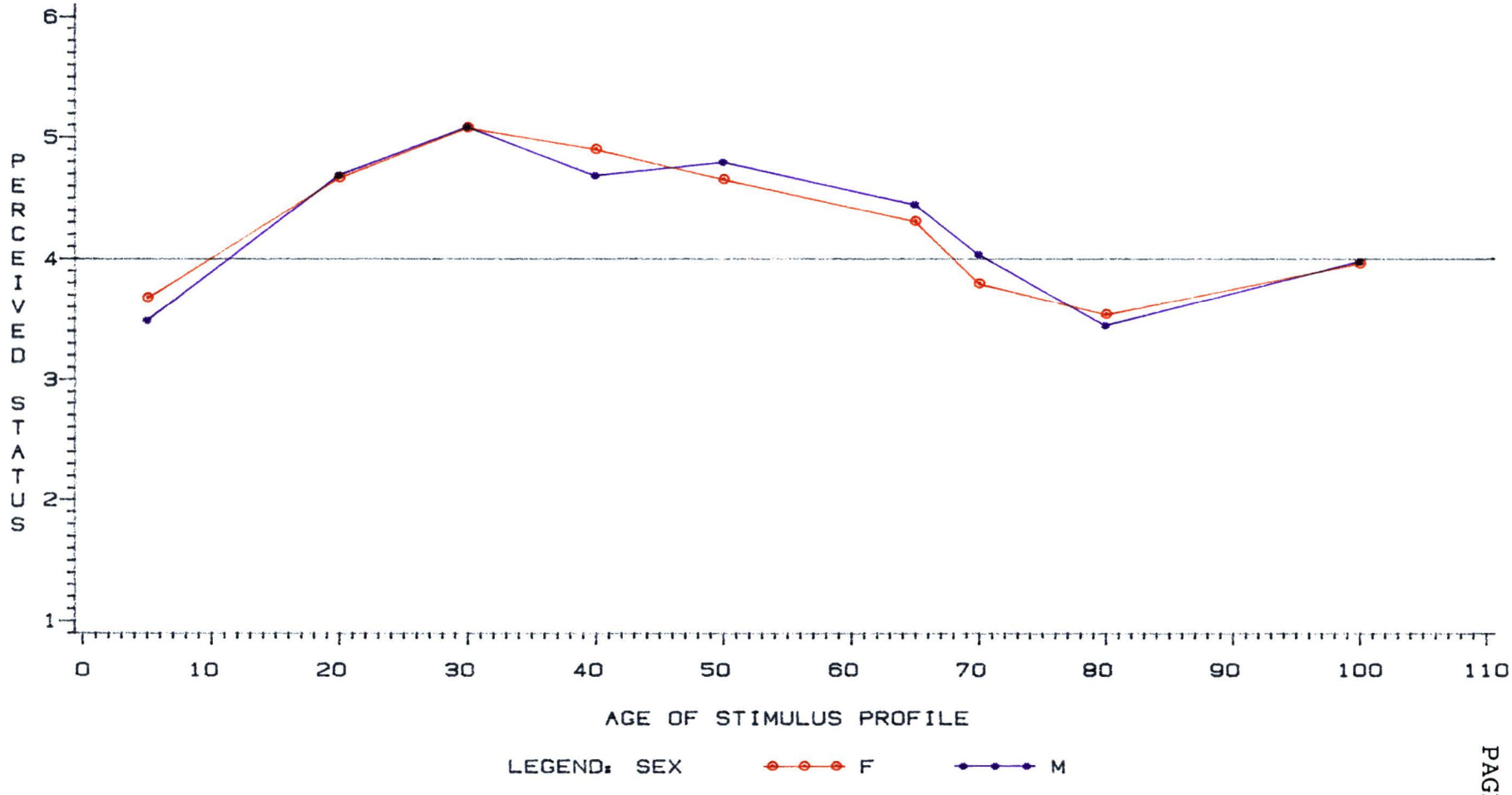
HYPOTHESIS 1

Perceived status over the lifespan will take the form of an inverted "U" curve.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by inspection of the graphic representation of the amount of status accorded the different age by sex profiles. As shown by the results in Table G3-1 and Figure 3-1, perceived status over the lifespan took the form of an inverted "U" curve thus providing support for hypothesis one. Perceived status rapidly rose from age 5 to age 30 and then slowly declined until age 65 where upon status declined sharply until age 80. At age 80 the decline in status stopped and reversed itself and again rose until age 100.

FIGURE 3-1

PERCEIVED STATUS BY AGE AND SEX OF STIMULUS PROFILES



FEMALE PROFILES MALE PROFILES

Spontaneous comments made by respondents also provided qualitative evidence supporting hypothesis one. Some respondents stated that they rated the 5-year-old boy below or far below average because they "haven't got anything yet," while others rated the 5-year-old profiles average or slightly above because they felt they were "pretty smart for their age."

Rating the 20-year-old man, statements such as "he still has a lot to learn" and "he has a heck of a lot in front of him" accompanied average or slightly above average status ratings. One respondent justified an average rating by noting that "a 20-year-old may think he can cut the mustard but he still has a way to go yet." Before rating the 20-year-old woman many men jokingly asked, "What does she look like?" Women respondents also stated that they felt the status rating depended on her looks. This interest in the appearance of the profile only occurred with the 20-year-old female profile. One woman explained the high rating she gave the profile by saying "she (20-year-old woman) should have brains by then to know what was what."

The most frequent comment that followed the above average status rating of the 30-year-old man was "he is in his prime." This may help explain why the curve of status peaks at age 30. Thinking of a 30-year-old woman, one person

thought she deserved high status because at that age, "she is stepping along pretty good." Other respondents noted that a 30-year-old woman should have above average status because she is "busy with her family."

For the 40-year-old man, many respondents felt his status depended on his experience, his job, and his family life. The notion of occupational prestige came up most often with this profile with such comments as "he is in his most productive years." Some respondents expressed the view that status started to decline noticeably at age 40 for women. This comment best illustrates that view: "at 40 a woman has had it, the marriage starts breaking down and HE starts looking around at younger girls." Other respondents however, were less willing to assign the 40-year-old woman low status because they believed that at that age "she is getting pretty sharp, the kids are raised and she has time to do other things with her life."

Comments associated with declining status ratings for the 50-year-old profiles centered around the idea that at 50, "a man should be where he wants to go" and "he's gone whole hog and is on the way out." Many respondents stated that at 65 "status falls off by a fair bit for men especially; simply because of retirement," others stated that by 65 a person was "over the hump." This last statement supports the

notion of status peaking in mid-life.

Many respondents felt the status of 70-year-olds depended on their health. They said that 70-year-olds had average status unless they were in poor health and then they had below average status. Indicating that the old have less status, one man commented that 70-year-old women were "treated pretty groaty in today's world." Again, for the 80-year-old profiles, respondents felt the person's state of health greatly influenced their status but thought that without knowing the person's health most 80-year-olds had less status than the younger profiles.

Consistent with Baker's (1985) results, the ratings of the 100-year-old profiles differed drastically from all other profiles. The distribution of the ratings for these profiles was distinctly bimodal: 40 percent of respondents rated the 100-year-old profiles either "far above average" or "above average," while another 40 percent rated them "below average" or "far below average." Those respondents who accorded the profiles very high status commented on the rarity of people that age or stated they knew someone who was 100 and was still very much "with it." A few people said they gave the centenarians high ratings simply because of their "longevity." Respondents who rated the profiles very low in status often stated either they did not know

anyone that old or they did know someone but they were "pretty much a vegetable" or "out to lunch."

HYPOTHESIS 2

Male profiles will be rated higher in status than the female profiles and the discrepancy will be the most noticeable among the 30, 40, 50, and 65 year-old profiles.

Hypothesis 2 was also tested by inspection of the graphic representation of the amount of status accorded the profiles of both sexes (Figure 3-1). T-tests for the differences in means were used to locate those ages where the mean status ratings were significantly different for both sexes. The second hypothesis was also supported: in mid-life, (with the exception of ages 30, and 40), females were perceived to have significantly lower status than their male counterparts. As can be seen in Table G3-2, at age 30 both males and females were not rated significantly different from each other. At age 40, in contradiction with the hypothesis, females were rated higher than males. One explanation for this anomaly has to do with the fact that the first stimulus profile presented to the respondents was the 40-year-old man. Respondents were very cautious in rating this first profile and many of them requested a second explanation of the task required. A large percentage of respondents (47 percent) rated the first profile average

in status as a result of the uncertainty associated with rating the stimulus profiles which in turn may have resulted in the status of the 40-year-old man being artificially depressed. At both ages 50 and 65 males were rated significantly higher in status than females. Even at age 70, this difference in gender evaluation persisted.

Several women were sensitive to gender differences in status and made statements such as, "women are second class citizens and have always had less status than men," and "women don't lose status as quickly as men but then again they never got as much status to begin with." Other women minimized the differences in status between men and women by arguing that additional dimensions other than simply the sex and age of the profile had to be considered. This comment illustrates that point, "if a woman is a great actress, age does not go against her." Many respondents expressed, that it was not the person's age or sex but their accomplishments which affected how much status they are accorded by others.

In order to test hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6 the stimulus profiles were divided into the male profiles and the female profiles. The status ratings of the male and female profiles were then examined separately in order to establish whether or not the characteristics of the respondents influenced the status ratings.

HYPOTHESIS 3

There will be no significant relationship between sex of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by T-tests which compared the mean status ratings of the male respondents with the mean status ratings of the female respondents. Tables G3-3 and G3-4 present the results of the T-tests for the difference in means of the profiles by sex of the respondent. In complete accordance with the hypothesis, not one stimulus profile was rated statistically different when the sex of respondent was considered, in other words, absolutely no relationship was found to exist between sex of respondent and status accorded the profiles.

HYPOTHESIS 4

There will be no significant relationship between age of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

To establish whether or not the mean status ratings differed by age of respondent, an ANOVA was performed using the 5 categories of age. When examining the relationship between age of respondent and status accorded to the profiles, it was found that for the 20-year-old male profile, one of the respondent age categories rated the profile significantly

different from the other respondent age categories (Table G3-5). Table G3-6 shows that for the female profiles, the 5, 20, 65, and 70-year-old profiles were found to be rated significantly different by one of the respondent age categories. As can be seen in Table G3-5 and G3-6, only 5 of the 18 profiles showed any significant differences in the status ratings by age of the respondent. Overall, it would seem that hypothesis four was supported: there was no significant relationship between age of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

HYPOTHESIS 5

There will be no significant relationship between marital status of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

With hypothesis 5, an ANOVA was performed on the mean status ratings of each category of marital status. This hypothesis was also supported, no significant relationship was found between marital status of respondent and status accorded to the profiles. Tables G3-7 and G3-8 present the results of the computed F-ratio for this hypothesis. With the exception of the 65 and 70-year-old female profiles, the remaining 16 profiles showed no significant difference in status ratings by marital status of respondent.

HYPOTHESIS 6

There will be no significant relationship between social class of respondent and status accorded to the profiles.

An ANOVA was again performed, this time on the 4 categories of social class. Similar to the results found with hypotheses 4 and 5, hypothesis 6 was also supported. This time, with the exception of the male and female 70-year-old profiles, no significant relationship was found between class of respondent and status accorded to the profiles. Tables G3-9 and G3-10 present the results of the computed F-ratio for the differences in mean status ratings by class of respondent.

HYPOTHESIS 7

The oldest profiles (ages 80, 100) will be rated higher in status by the mature sample than they were by Baker's sample of university students.

Hypothesis 7 was tested by a T-test which compared the mean status rating of the mature sample on the two oldest profiles (80, 100) ($\bar{X}$=3.62) with the mean status rating of the same profiles from Baker's sample ($\bar{X}$=3.41). The mean of the 80 and 100-year-old profiles was calculated by pooling the status ratings of the 80-year-old male and female

profiles with the 100-year-old male and female profiles and computing an average status rating to represent these four profiles. No support was found for the seventh hypothesis. As presented in Table G3-11, while the status rating of the 80 and 100-year-old profiles of the mature sample was slightly higher than the status rating of Baker's sample, the difference was not found to be significant.

HYPOTHESIS 8

The 100 year-old profiles will be accorded a higher status rating than the 80 year-old profiles.

Hypothesis 8 was tested by conducting a T-test on the mean status rating of the pooled 100 and 80-year-old profiles from the mature sample. As was predicted by the eighth hypothesis and can be seen graphically in Figure 3-1, the 100-year-old profiles were accorded a higher status rating ($\bar{X}$=3.83) than the 80-year-old profiles ($\bar{X}$=3.41). As presented in Table G3-12, the T-test for the difference between the mean of the status ratings of the 100 and 80-year-old profiles was found to be significantly different with a probability of 0.0015.

Verbal comments made by some respondents echoed this increased status for the 100-year-old profiles. One

respondent said of the 80-year-old male profile, "by that age, he has gone past the despised stage and his status is starting to come back up." Concerning the status of the 100-year-old profiles, many respondents stated that there were "not many around at that age" or that they were "very rare" and then proceeded to give them above or far above average ratings. Others commented that centenarians were actually given higher status in society, "after all, they get a birthday card from the Queen, the Prime Minister, and the Governor General."

HYPOTHESIS 9

Respondents who express more negative beliefs about older people will accord the oldest profiles (ages 80 and 100) less status.

To test hypothesis 9, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess how well correlated beliefs about older people were with respondent's status ratings of the oldest profiles. Contrary to hypothesis nine, there was no evidence to suggest that respondents who expressed negative beliefs about older people accorded the oldest profiles (80 and 100) less status. The average score on the belief variable was .53/1 or approximately 50 percent indicating that respondents accepted only half of the negative beliefs about older people. In this case an r =

-0.066 suggested an almost non-existent negative association between the two variables. This did not come as a surprise since most respondents had voiced concerns about the questions dealing with beliefs about older people. Three percent of the sample refused outright to answer any of the questions dealing with their beliefs about older people because they felt the questions forced them to either agree or disagree with statements they believed were misleading. For a discussion of some of the comments, opinions, and complaints made by respondents about the attitude questions, refer to Appendix H.

Overall, support was found for seven of the nine hypotheses. The predictions about the shape of the curve were supported as were the predictions of how the respondent characteristics of sex, age, marital status, and social class were related to status ratings. The two hypotheses which were not supported were 7 and 9. Hypothesis 7 stated that the mature sample would rate the status of the 80 and 100-year-old profiles higher in status than Baker's sample. Hypothesis 9 stated that respondents' negative beliefs about older people would be correlated with low status ratings for the oldest profiles. The significance of these findings are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter commences with a summary of the conclusions of the nine hypotheses tested in this study. This is followed by a discussion of the findings. Methodological difficulties encountered throughout the study are also presented.

4.1 Conclusions

The major findings of this study suggest that, of those mature people studied, accorded status over the lifespan was perceived to take the shape of two inverted "U" curves, with a curve for males significantly higher in status than the curve for females at ages 50, 65, and 70. The results from T-tests and ANOVA indicate that the respondent characteristics of sex, age, marital status, and social class had little or no effect on how respondents rated the stimulus profiles. Respondent beliefs about older people established by their responses to 9 attitude questions was not found to be correlated with the status ratings of the two oldest profiles. Focussing specifically on the oldest profiles, it was found that the 100-year-old profiles were perceived to have higher status than the 80-year-old profiles suggesting the general decline of status in old age reverses itself for the very old. When the mean status

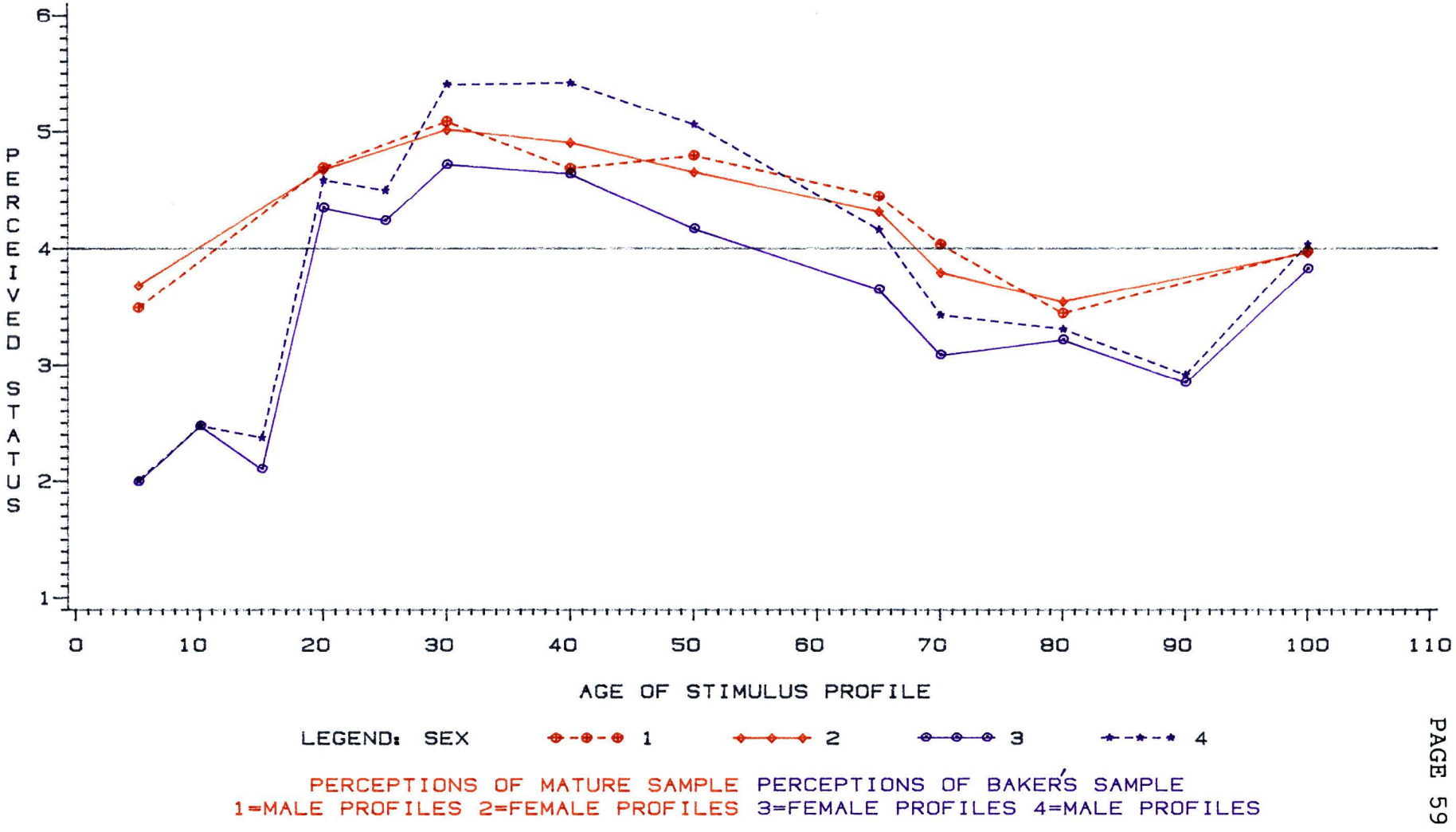
rating of the pooled 80 and 100-year-old profiles was compared with the mean status rating of the same profiles from Baker's sample, the mature sample rated the profiles slightly higher than the young sample but the difference was not found to be significant. As the results indicated, both Baker's young sample and the mature sample studied here accorded the 80 and 100-year-old profiles similar status.

4.2 Discussion

Because this study was a replication of Baker's (1985) study, the results of the first two hypotheses which dealt with the shape of the status curve are compared with Baker's findings. Even though the data supported the first hypothesis that perceived status over the lifespan would take the form of an inverted "U" curve, when this finding is compared with the results from Baker's university sample, some minor discrepancies appear. The perceptions of status of the mature sample were much less extreme than the perceptions of the university sample. Figure 4-1 illustrates the overall differences in status perceptions of the stimulus profiles. As can be seen in Figure 4-1, the slope of the status curve of the mature sample is gentler and the curve more rounded compared with the shape or contour of Baker's curve.

FIGURE 4–1

COMPARISON OF STATUS PERCEPTIONS OF TWO SAMPLES



Interestingly, the life-cycle presented in Figure 4-1 can be divided into 3 parts to show the contrast between the perceptions of the two samples. For both the young (5-25) and the older (65-100) ages, the mature sample rated these profiles higher in status than did the university students. As was reported, the results of hypothesis 7 indicated that although the 80 and 100-year-old profiles were rated slightly higher by the mature sample, the difference was not statistically significant.

For the ages 30 through 65, the perceptions of the mature sample neither rise as high nor fall as low as the perceptions of the students. Back and Bourque (1970) conducted research that investigated individuals' perceptions of "their life" across the lifespan. They had respondents assume they would live to 80 and then had them draw on a piece of paper how they visualized what their life would look like with all its ups and downs. Back and Bourque used a random sample and among their many findings found a significant interaction between age of respondent and the shape of their curve of life. They found that respondents rated their life higher in anticipation than in retrospect. Possibly the students' perceptions of very high status in mid-life for men may be the result of anticipating good times ahead.

The most striking difference between the perceptions of the two samples involved the status ratings of the middle-aged profiles. The second hypothesis stated that the male profiles at mid-life (30-65) would be rated higher in status than the female profiles of the same ages. As was discussed in the previous chapter, only at ages, 50, 65, and 70 were the male profiles rated significantly higher in status than the female profiles. At age 30, there was no significant difference in the status ratings while oddly enough, at age 40, the female profile received significantly higher status than the male profile. As was pointed out earlier, one explanation for the lower status of the 40-year-old male profile was the fact that this profile was the first one to be presented to the respondents. It was believed that because of the novelty and uncertainty of the task of rating the profiles many respondents simply rated the profile as having average status. To avoid this problem in the future, researchers should alternate the first profile that is presented to the respondents.

Comparing the status ratings of the middle-aged profiles with the status ratings of Baker's sample as in Figure 4-1, it is obvious that the young sample, much more than the mature sample, perceived sex to greatly influence the status accorded to these profiles. In fact, the young sample perceived the difference in status between men and women at mid-life to be several times greater than the gender

difference in status perceived by the mature sample.

It seems plausible to suggest that the differences in status perceptions of the two samples concerning gender differences in social status might be the result of a cohort or generational effect. Because of social conditions and educational socialization, Baker's sample may have been overly sensitized to sexual inequality. University students of the 1980's find themselves both in an historical era and a collegiate environment which is very sensitive to women's issues and sexual inequality in general. Therefore, it should not be surprising that Baker's university students perceived stronger sex differences in status in mid-life than the mature sample.

Turning to the mature respondents (all of whom had experienced middle age), their less extreme perceptions of sex differences in social status may be the result of their lifetime of experience. As was reported in the last chapter, many of the mature female respondents stated that women had less status than men but many also stated that things were better today than they were in the past. Several women made comments similar to this one, "since the women's lib movement things have improved so much." Possibly, where the young sample was sensitive to present sexual inequality, the mature sample was more sensitive to

historical reductions in sexual inequality. Since this study is cross-sectional in design there is no way to know if these possible explanations are accurate or not.

Taking into consideration all these differences in how the two samples perceived status, there can be little doubt that the respondents from both samples had similar perceptions of how age and sex influence social status. When the findings of two such diverse samples (university students with a median age of 20.4 and mature Victorians with a median age of 66.7) are similar, greater confidence can be put in the results that they are not simply artifacts of sampling. It is when results are replicated time after time that the reliablity of the results can be assessed. Also, it is only through the process of replication with all kinds of samples, even nonrandom ones, that it can be said with greater confidence that perceptions of status based on age and sex are universal in our culture as claimed by Baker (1985).

In addition to replicating the general shape of the status curve presented by Baker (1985), this study for the first time examined the relationship between certain respondent characteristics and status perceptions. The results from the mature sample also showed that status ratings were not related to the respondent characteristics studied. While

this by itself does not prove that perceptions of status due to age are anything more than specific individuals' inclinations it does provide some evidence that for the mature respondents interviewed, status perceptions were homogeneous and not systematically related to respondents' sex, age, marital status, or social class.

4.3 Methodological Issues

To the extent that the factorial survey methodology measured respondents' perceptions of social status over the lifespan, some difficulties or weaknesses with the approach became apparent during the interview process. A small number of respondents found the notion of ranking people distasteful. These respondents made clear that either they did not like having to rank the stimulus profiles or they did not agree with what they were asked to do.

Other respondents felt that people should not or could not be ranked simply in terms of age and sex. Because they had never before consciously ranked individuals based solely on age and sex, they thought the idea of rating the different profiles was a "silly," "crazy," and "dumb" thing to do. Never having thought of status only in terms of a person's age and sex, it is no wonder that this research seemed obscure and ambiguous to many of the respondents. This

comment by one woman puts the problem into perspective, "This is terrible, it is absurd to force someone to make a judgement based only on age." These respondents were bothered by the fact the stimulus profiles were "a-contextual" or not anchored in any social context. The following comments were made about the 40-year-old male profile:

- "It depends on circumstances, everyone is different, Is he married? Does he have kids? What kind of job does he have? How much education does he have?"

- "It's too hard to get an overall measure of status, you've got to consider the individual and his experiences as well as his circumstances."

- "These are funny questions, status depends on what the person is like."

- "You should not clump all the 40-year-olds together, I don't think about people in terms of averages, I consider the individual."

- "These are the silliest questions, age alone should not make a difference, you need to consider what the person does or has done."

A far greater number of respondents were willing to rank the profiles but stated they were not sure of what was meant by "social status." Repeatedly respondents asked for a definition of status and commented that there were so many ways to think about status. Respondents also inquired if by "status" the researcher meant such things as, money, education, occupation, potential, social worth, mentality, or worth to the community. Since this study was a replication of Baker's study, the identical wording was

used to describe to respondents what was expected of them. These were the instructions that were read to the respondents.

> The following section is concerned with perceptions of status. Some people in our society have more status or prestige than others. Using the following scale, indicate how most people your age would rate the categories of people you are about to hear in terms of their status in our society.

Because Baker provided no definition of status in the original study, to avoid creating bias in the results of this study, no definition of status was given to the respondents. The instructions were, however, reread to each respondent who had requested any clarification of the term "status".

For those respondents who were unclear as to the meaning of social status, another issue sometimes became salient. These respondents found it difficult to rate profiles of different ages. This comment makes that point, "How can you compare the status of a 5-year-old with a 40-year-old or an 80-year-old? The measuring stick changes. The 5-year-old has got great potential, the 40-year-old is at the peak of his working life, and the 80-year-old has a lifetime of skill and experience to offer but there is no demand for it." The notion that the "measuring stick" changes depending on whether the young, middle-aged, or old are being rated may help explain the increased variability of the status ratings

of the young (5-year-old) and the older (70, 80, and 100 year-old) profiles. Possibly the respondents' perceptions were more homogeneous for the 20 through 65-year-old profiles because the popular or cultural notion of status is most easily applied to individuals of these ages.

Since no definition of status was given to the respondents and since respondents' own notions of status were not investigated, it is suggested that this cultural notion of status entailed a combination of such things as income, occupation, and to a much lesser extent, education. When status is thought of in this way, ranking the young and old using the criterion of income, occupation and education may have become meaningless and other interpretations of status may have been entertained by the respondents. Many respondents said that the status of the 5-year-old had to be considered in terms of potential while others equated the "smartness" of 5-year-olds with status. Along the same lines, respondents stated the older ages had to be considered in light of experience, skill, past achievements and contributions to the community.

In summary, the use of a factoral survey methodology to study the status of age and sex as presented in this study appears to have some inherent problems. While these observations may be specific to the sample studied here,

they are still worth noting. A few respondents took exception to the idea of rating or judging others, even when the others were stimulus profiles. Some respondents found that because the methodology did not provide any additional information on the social context in which real people find themselves, the process of rating the profiles held absolutely no meaning for them. For these respondents social status was a broad concept and to accurately accord status to the profiles they needed more information about the profile than age and sex. Lastly, the lack of one clear definition of social status or the abundancy of respondents' definitions of status caused many respondents problems.

It is interesting that the factorial survey methodology employed in this study revealed that the sample gave consistent ratings even though the respondents' underlying notions of what social status meant may have varied considerably. The lack of large variation in the status ratings of the profiles indicates the factorial survey analysis is an effective methodology which taps generalized notions of something but in this case that "something" is not clear. Additional research is required using FSA to find out what actually is being tapped when respondents rate age and sex in this way.

The results of this study are but one link in the overall process of investigating the nature and extent of status perceptions based on age and sex. Hopefully, when the results of this study are considered in the light of the results of previous studies, more confidence can be placed in these findings that they are reliable and not simply idionsyncratic or artifacts of sampling. It is also hoped that these results have tested the extent to which Baker's findings are generalizable to mature Victorians. The next step in the accumulation of knowledge dealing with our understanding of how individuals perceive social status should be the continued research into this matter. Future researchers should concern themselves with improving research methods so as to circumvent those methodological difficulties encountered here.

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APPENDIX A

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPLICATION

Unlike scientists in the physical sciences, social scientists who have repeated or replicated research have seldom been encouraged or rewarded for their work (Kidder,1981:8). This seems surprising considering the two important functions that replication serves in the social sciences. The two functions revolve around the reliability of the results and the generalizability of the results to other samples.

Replication or repetition of a particular research design or measuring instruments at different points in time and within different settings and with different groups of subjects tests the durability of the original findings and therefore checks their validity (Blalock and Blalock,1982:81). Exact replications of procedures and results demonstrate that the results are reliable because reliable research findings are repeatable.

To the extent that research results are reproduced with different types of persons, generalizations across all persons become more convincing. Failure to replicate findings with different populations add to our understanding

of the phenomenon being investigated by identifying the limitations of the effects of the variables under study (Crano and Brewer, 1973:46). Indeed, replication tests the breadth and limits of research generalizations and provides a safeguard against the danger of generalizing results beyond the specific observations upon which the results were based (Babbie,1979:26).

Considering the importance of replication in the social sciences, repeating Baker's study with an chronologically older sample tests the reliability of his results. The results of this study will also help to determine the extent to which Baker's results can be generalized to other groups in society.

APPENDIX B

Pledge of Confidentiality

We guarantee that all the information you have provided will be used solely for the purpose of the research in question. Your responses will be kept confidential and your identity will not be revealed to anyone. Our research projects have been approved by the University of Victoria's Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (Project Nos. 59-84, 60-84).

Should you have any questions concerning our research you may contact our Theses advisor, Dr. Paul Baker, Professor of Sociology, University of Victoria (721-7576).

Dawn Fowler-Graham
Ian Graham

MA Candidates
Department of Sociology
University of Victoria

APPENDIX C

THE QUESTIONNAIRE*

Hello, I am _____.

My husband/wife and I are conducting research for our MA theses in Sociology. We are studying language attitudes and perceptions of social status. We would like to ask you some questions on these topics. This is not a test, we are only interested in your answers and there are no right or wrong answers. The interview should take about 15 minutes. All the information you will give us will be kept completely confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of our theses. Please keep in mind that at any time you have the RIGHT to withdraw from the survey. Also, please feel free to ask any questions you may have. Your name and address will not be kept anywhere or used for any purpose other than this research.

SECTION A

This section deals with language attitudes. You will hear two pronunciations of the same word. After hearing both pronunciations, you will be asked which pronunciation is correct. You will then be asked which pronunciation you

commonly use.

1.	lever	(1)	lever	(2)	both (3)
2.	lever	(1)	lever	(2)	
3.	student	(1)	student	(2)	both (3)
4.	student	(1)	student	(2)	
5.	apricot	(1)	apricot	(2)	both (3)
6.	apricot	(1)	apricot	(2)	
7.	schedule	(1)	schedule	(2)	both (3)
8.	schedule	(1)	schedule	(2)	
9.	genuine	(1)	genuine	(2)	both (3)
10.	genuine	(1)	genuine	(2)	
11.	anti	(1)	anti	(2)	both (3)
12.	anti	(1)	anti	(2)	
13.	bury	(1)	bury	(2)	both (3)
14.	bury	(1)	bury	(2)	
15.	arctic	(1)	arctic	(2)	both (3)
16.	arctic	(1)	arctic	(2)	
17.	butter	(1)	butter	(2)	both (3)
18.	butter	(1)	butter	(2)	
19.	caramel	(1)	caramel	(2)	both (3)
20.	caramel	(1)	caramel	(2)	
21.	lieutenant	(1)	lieutenant	(2)	both (3)
22.	lieutenant	(1)	lieutenant	(2)	
23.	leisure	(1)	leisure	(2)	both (3)
24.	leisure	(1)	leisure	(2)	
25.	either	(1)	either	(2)	both (3)
26.	either	(1)	either	(2)	
27.	cot	(1)	cot	(2)	both (3)

28. cot	(1)	cot	(2)	
29. missile	(1)	missile	(2)	both (3)
30. missile	(1)	missile	(2)	
31. film	(1)	film	(2)	both (3)
32. film	(1)	film	(2)	
33. almond	(1)	almond	(2)	both (3)
34. almond	(1)	almond	(2)	
35. progress	(1)	progress	(2)	both (3)
36. progress	(1)	progress	(2)	
37. route	(1)	route	(2)	both (3)
38. route	(1)	route	(2)	
39. congratulate	(1)	congratulate	(2)	both (3)
40. congratulate	(1)	congratulate	(2)	
41. ration	(1)	ration	(2)	both (3)
42. ration	(1)	ration	(2)	
43. whine	(1)	whine	(2)	both (3)
44. whine	(1)	whine	(2)	

SECTION B

This next section will deal with attitudes about older people. Generally speaking, would you (1) agree or (2) disagree that the following terms apply to most older people?

MOST OLDER PEOPLE ARE ---

45.	set in their ways.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
46.	in good health.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
47.	conservative.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
48.	lonely.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
49.	live in poverty.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
50.	wise from experience.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
51.	warm and friendly.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
52.	forgetful.	(1)agree	(2)disagree
53.	productive.	(1)agree	(2)disagree

SECTION C

The following section is concerned with perceptions of status. Some people in our society have more status or prestige than others. Using this scale, indicate how most people your age would rate the categories of people you are about to hear in terms of their status in our society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Far below average	Below average	Slightly below average	Average	Slightly above average	Above average	Far above average

Hand respondents card A.

Do not spend a lot of time thinking about each question. We are only looking for you first impression or immediate feeling.

54. A 40-year-old man.

55. A 5-year-old boy.

56. A 20-year-old woman.

57. An 80-year-old man.

58. A 70-year-old woman.

59. A 100-year-old man.

60. A 65-year-old woman.

61. A 30-year-old man.

62. A 50-year-old woman.

63. A 40-year-old woman.

64. A 65-year-old man.

65. A 100-year-old woman.

66. A 50-year-old man.

67. An 80-year-old woman.

68. A 5-year-old girl.

69. A 20-year-old man.

70. A 30-year-old woman.

71. A 70-year-old man.

72. Would you say the respect that people over 65 in general receive from younger people is:

(1) more than enough

(2) enough or

(3) too little

73. How much respect do you personally receive from younger people?

(1) more than enough

(2) enough or

(3) too little

74. Do you feel you have sufficient education for today's world?

(1) yes

(2) no

If yes, go to question 76.

75. Is not having enough education:

(1) a very serious problem for you

(2) a somewhat serious problem for you

(3) hardly a problem at all for you, or

(4) not a problem for you.

76. For most people over 65 would you say that not having enough education is:

(1) a very serious problem for them

(2) a somewhat serious problem for them

(3) hardly a problem for them, or

(4) not a problem for them.

SECTION D

This last section deals with demographic characteristics.

77. What is your mother tongue?

(1) English

(2) French

(3) other

If English, go to question 79.

78. How many years have you spoken English?

(1) 0-20

(2) 21-40

(3) 41-60

(4) 61+

79. What is your nationality of birth?

(1) Canadian

(2) American

(3) U.K.

(4) European

(5) Middle Eastern

(6) Oriental

(7) other

80. What is your present marital status?

(1) married

(2) widowed

(3) never married

(4) separated

(5) divorced

81. Do you have any university, college or technical school

training?

(1) yes

(2) no

82 If yes, how many years have you completed?

(1) some college

(2) undergrad degree (B.A., R.N, etc)

(3) grad school

(4) tech school

(5) more than 1 degree

83. What was the highest grade of public school which you have completed?

(1) 11

(2) 12, 13

(3) 1, 2, 3

(4) 4

(5) 5

(6) 6

(7) 7

(8) 8

(9) 9

(10) 10

84. Have you retired from a lifetime career or occupation?

(1) yes

(2) no

If no, go to question 90.

85-86. In what year did you retire?

87. What was your major occupation at time of retirement?

(1) operatives, service workers, laborers (unskilled)

(2) craftsmen and foremen (skilled/semi-skilled)

(3) clerks and sales personnel

(4) professionals, managers, and officials

(5) other

88. Approximately, could you tell me the number of the category that corresponds with your total family income at the time of retirement?

Hand respondent card B.

(1) up to 4,999

(2) 5-9,999

(3) 10-14,999

(4) 15-19,999

(5) 20-24,999

(6) 25-34,999

(7) 35-49,999

(8) over 50,000

(10) missing

89. What is/was your spouse's major lifetime occupation?

(1) operatives, service workers, laborers (unskilled)

(2) craftsmen and foremen (skilled/semi-skilled)

(3) clerks and sales personnel

(4) professionals, managers, and officials

(5) other

Go to question 97.

90. Do you presently work for pay?

(1) yes

(2) no

IF yes, go to question 92.

91. Have you ever worked outside the home?

(1) yes

(2) no

If no, go to question 93.

92. What is/was your major lifetime occupation?

(1) operatives, service workers, laborers (unskilled)

(2) craftsmen and foremen (skilled/semi-skilled)

(3) clerks and sales personnel

(4) professionals, managers, and officials

(5) other

93. Approximately, could you tell me the number of the category that corresponds to your highest ever family income?

Hand respondent card B.

(1) up to 4,999

(2) 5-9,999

(3) 10-14,999

(4) 15-19,999

(5) 20-24,999

(6) 25-34,999

(7) 35-49,999

(8) over 50,000

(10) missing

94-95. In what year would that have been?

96. What is/was your spouse's major lifetime occupation?

(1) operatives, service workers, laborers (unskilled)

(2) craftsmen and foremen (skilled/semi-skilled)

(3) clerks and sales personnel

(4) professionals, managers, and officials

(5) other

97. If you had to choose, which social class would you say you belong to?

(1) lower class

(2) working class

(3) lower-middle class

(4) upper-middle class

(5) upper class

(6) something other than those

(10) missing

98-99. In what year were you born?

100. Sex:
(1) male

(2) female

101. Presence of a British accent?
(1) yes

(2) no

Thank you for your time, effort and cooperation. Do you have any questions you would like to ask?

* Questions 1 through 44 were part of my wife's independent research into language attitudes.

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

VICTORIA INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY

IF YOU ARE OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We are two University of Victoria students working on our masters theses in Sociology. Our research involves studying mature people's views on the topics of LANGUAGE ATTITUDES and SOCIAL STATUS.

We need a large sample of volunteers who would be willing to be interviewed. The interview takes only about 20 minutes to complete. We think you may find the experience interesting and thought provoking.

If you or any of your friends would like to volunteer, you would not only be helping us with our research and theses, you would also be playing a part in the advancement of gerontological research.

We are conducting interviews both at the Institute of Gerontology-Rm. 208 at 841 Fairfield (formerly the Victoria General Hospital Nurse's residence) and at the University of Victoria. If it is more convenient for you, we can come to you.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

To contact us call: weekdays after 6pm - 721-4683
or during the day leave a message with
the Sociology office - 721-7572

Dawn Fowler- Graham

Ian Graham

M.A. students - UVIC

APPENDIX E

Factorial Survey Analysis

This research tradition originated in psychophysics with S.S. Stevens' research into and later establishment of "psychophysical laws" (Stevens,1975). Stevens correlated subjects' responses, for example, electric shock , perceived sound intensities and light intensities to the physical stimuli administered to the subjects (volts or decibels). The ratio measurement made possible by such methods enabled Stevens to formulate precise mathematical functions expressing the relationship between objective physical stimuli and human perceptions of those physical stimuli in terms of subjective responses (Stevens,1957). Social scientists adopted psychophysical methods to examine the relationship between social stimuli and their perceptual counterparts. Factorial survey analysis (FSA) as it is now called is an empirical methodology that is applied to the study of human judgments or evaluations. According to Rossi and Nock (1982:15), the term factorial survey is appropriate for this methodology because the technique combines ideas from balanced multivariate experimental designs and sample survey procedures.

FSA is used to measure the "value" that respondents implicitly or explicitly accord actions, objects, other

persons, other groups, institutions, and ideas. For example, this technique has been used in studying perceptions of the amount of status accorded to people on the basis of social characteristics such as age, sex, race, income, education, and occupation. More recently, such topics as household social standing, sexual harassment, child abuse, and prison reform have also been examined using this approach (Rossi and Nock,1982: chapters 1 through 8)

The basic factorial survey measurement procedure, in the social sciences, is to present the respondent with a set of stimuli. The stimuli may consist of a list of educational levels, occupational titles, or income levels. Stimuli may also consist of vignettes describing stimuli persons interms of several social characteristics (eg. age, sex, income and education) or vignettes describing a certain situation (eg. situations describing different types of sexual harassment). After the respondent has been presented with the stimuli, he is then asked to rate or evaluate each stimulus on a subjective scale. The scale corresponds to the stimuli being evaluated, for example in stratification research the scale would deal with perceived levels of social status, while with research on sexual harassment, the scale would measure the perceived amount of harassment the stimulus person was subjected too.

The scale itself may consist of a set of categories (eg. "above average", "average", "below average") or may be a more quantitative scale ranging from 0 ("no status") through 100 ("average") to some unspecified maximum. This technique of having respondents rate the "value" they accord to the stimulus person or situation provides the researcher with a precise quantification of the socio-psychological phenomenon under study.

APPENDIX F

THE USE OF THE MEAN AND STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENT OF RELATIVE VARIATION

The mean was considered representative of the perceptions of the sample for the following reasons:

1) As presented in Table F, with the exception of the ratings of the 100-year-old profiles which were bimodal, the mean and median status ratings of the remaining profiles were very similar to each other indicating the distribution of status ratings were not badly skewed (Loether and McTavish,1980:137). The mean is considered to be an acceptable measure of central tendency when the mean and median values are the same or similar (Mueller, Schuessler, and Costner,1977:155).

2) To establish how representative the mean was of the distribution of status ratings, or put another way, to compare the extent of heterogeneity or homogeneity in perceptions of social status, the standardized coefficient of relative variation [S(CRV)] was calculated for each profile. The S(CRV) is a normed measure of the amount of variation relative to the mean, it measures the relative scatter of data. Because the S(CRV) takes into account sample size, its minimum and maximum are fixed at zero and one (Martin and Gray,1971; Loether and McTavish,1980:162).

TABLE F

MEAN AND MEDIAN STATUS RATINGS OF STIMULUS PROFILES

PROFILE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD	S(CRV)	N
5-year-old boy	3.49	3.49	1.59	0.033	197
5-year-old girl	3.68	3.65	1.67	0.032	198
20-year-old man	4.69	4.56	1.18	0.018	195
20-year-old woman	4.67	4.65	1.07	0.016	198
30-year-old man	5.08	5.13	1.05	0.015	198
30-year-old woman	5.08	5.09	0.92	0.013	196
40-year-old man	4.68	4.49	0.92	0.014	198
40-year-old woman	4.90	4.83	0.94	0.014	198
50-year-old man	4.79	4.77	0.86	0.013	198
50-year-old woman	4.65	4.56	1.02	0.016	198
65-year-old man	4.44	4.38	1.05	0.017	198
65-year-old woman	4.31	4.25	1.09	0.018	197
70-year-old man	4.03	3.96	1.30	0.023	198
70-year-old woman	3.79	3.78	1.40	0.026	198
80-year-old man	3.44	3.13	1.52	0.031	198
80-year-old woman	3.54	3.15	1.61	0.032	197
100-year-old man	3.97	3.63	2.31	0.042	194
100-year-old woman	3.96	3.47	2.35	0.042	197

SCALE OF STATUS

1) FAR BELOW AVERAGE 2) BELOW AVERAGE 3) SLIGHTLY BELOW AVERAGE
4) AVERAGE STATUS
5) SLIGHTLY ABOVE AVERAGE 6)ABOVE AVERAGE 7) FAR ABOVE AVERAGE

A S(CRV) close to 0 indicates very little variation about the mean or homogeneity in status perceptions, while an S(CRV) of 1 indicates excessive variation or heterogeneity of status perceptions. The S(CRV) is calculated by dividing the coefficient of variation (CRV) by the square root of n-1 [(standard deviation/mean)/$\sqrt{n-1}$] (Martin and Gray, 1971). The CRV is calculated by dividing the standard deviation by the mean. As shown in Table F, the S(CRV) for all the profiles is less than 0.045 implying homogeneity in the status perceptions of the sample.

Baker in recent articles (1983; 1985) preferred to use the coefficient of variation (CRV) over the S(CRV). Contrary to Baker's claim that; the CRV is a normed measure of the amount of variation relative to the average (Baker,1983:179), the CRV (standard deviation/mean) is NOT normed because it does not have defined maximum and minimum limits. Because the maximum the CRV can reach depends on the sample size, its possible values are infinite. (Martin and Gray,1971:496; Loether and McTavish,1980:161). In other words, comparison of CRVs from different size samples may lead to erroneous conclusions about the homogeneity of the data since the CRVs are not directly comparable. As has been discussed, the S(CRV) does not have this limitation, it has defined limits ranging from zero to one and can be compared even when sample sizes differ.

APPENDIX G

TABLE G3-1

STATUS RATINGS OF STIMULUS PROFILES

PROFILE	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD	N
5-year-old boy	3.49	3.49	1.59	197
5-year-old girl	3.68	3.65	1.67	198
20-year-old man	4.69	4.56	1.18	195
20-year-old woman	4.67	4.65	1.07	198
30-year-old man	5.08	5.13	1.05	198
30-year-old woman	5.08	5.09	0.92	196
40-year-old man	4.68	4.49	0.92	198
40-year-old woman	4.90	4.83	0.94	198
50-year-old man	4.79	4.77	0.86	198
50-year-old woman	4.65	4.56	1.02	198
65-year-old man	4.44	4.38	1.05	198
65-year-old woman	4.31	4.25	1.09	197
70-year-old man	4.03	3.96	1.30	198
70-year-old woman	3.79	3.78	1.40	198
80-year-old man	3.44	3.13	1.52	198
80-year-old woman	3.54	3.15	1.61	197
100-year-old man	3.97	3.63	2.31	194
100-year-old woman	3.96	3.47	2.35	197

SCALE OF STATUS

1) FAR BELOW AVERAGE 2) BELOW AVERAGE 3) SLIGHTLY BELOW AVERAGE
4) AVERAGE STATUS
5) SLIGHTLY ABOVE AVERAGE 6)ABOVE AVERAGE 7) FAR ABOVE AVERAGE

TABLE G3-2

COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED STATUS OF MALE AND FEMALE STIMULUS PROFILES OF THE SAME AGE

Age of Profile	Sex of Profile	Mean
5-year-old	male	3.49
	female	3.69
	T-value=-2.77 df=196 prob=0.003	
20-year-old	male	4.69
	female	4.68
	T-value=0.06 df=194 prob=NS	
30-year-old	male	5.09
	female	5.08
	T-value=0.17 df=195 prob=NS	
40-year-old	male	4.68
	female	4.90
	T-value=-2.51 df=197 prob=0.007	
50-year-old	male	4.79
	female	4.65
	T-value=1.79 df=197 prob=0.038	
65-year-old	male	4.46
	female	4.31

T-value=1.87 df=196 prob=0.032

70-year-old	male	4.03
	female	3.79

T-value=2.84 df=197 prob=0.003

80-year-old	male	3.43
	female	3.54

T-value=-1.12 df=196 prob=NS

100-year-old	male	3.97
	female	3.97

T-value=0.00 df=193 prob=NS

TABLE G3-3

PERCEIVED STATUS OF MALE PROFILES BY SEX OF RESPONDENT

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.49**
	(1)male	3.50
	(2)female	3.48
	T-value=0.07 df=195 prob=NS	
20		**4.69**
	(1)male	4.67
	(2)female	4.70
	T-value=-0.15 df=193 prob=NS	
30		**5.08**
	(1)male	5.11
	(2)female	5.07
	T-value=0.23 df=196 prob=NS	
40		**4.68**
	(1)male	4.67
	(2)female	4.69
	T-value=-0.09 df=196 prob=NS	
50		**4.79**
	(1)male	4.80
	(2)female	4.79
	T-value=0.07 df=196 prob=NS	
65		**4.44**
	(1)male	4.46

(2)female 4.44

T-value=0.08 df=196 prob=NS

70 **4.03**

(1)male 4.20
(2)female 3.97

T-value=1.14 df=196 prob=NS

80 **3.44**

(1)male 3.40
(2)female 3.46

T-value=-0.25 df=196 prob=NS

100 **3.97**

(1)male 4.11
(2)female 3.92

T-value=0.51 df=192 prob=NS

TABLE G3-4

PERCEIVED STATUS OF FEMALE PROFILES BY SEX OF RESPONDENT

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.68**
	(1)male	3.71
	(2)female	3.66
	T-value=0.17 df=196 prob=NS	
20		**4.67**
	(1)male	4.80
	(2)female	4.62
	T-value=1.09 df=196 prob=NS	
30		**5.08**
	(1)male	5.09
	(2)female	5.07
	T-value=0.15 df=194 prob=NS	
40		**4.90**
	(1)male	4.82
	(2)female	4.93
	T-value=-0.75 df=196 prob=NS	
50		**4.65**
	(1)male	4.69
	(2)female	4.64
	T-value=0.34 df=196 prob=NS	
65		**4.31**
	(1)male	4.29

(2)female 4.31

T-value=-0.11 df=195 prob=NS

70 **3.79**

(1)male 3.84
(2)female 3.78

T-value=0.27 df=196 prob=NS

80 **3.54**

(1)male 3.63
(2)female 3.50

T-value=0.49 df=195 prob=NS

100 **3.96**

(1)male 4.07
(2)female 3.92

T-value=0.42 df=195 prob=NS

TABLE G3-5

PERCEIVED STATUS OF MALE PROFILES BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.49**
	(1)45-59 years	3.14
	(2)60-64 years	3.36
	(3)65-69 years	3.55
	(4)70-74 years	3.49
	(5)75+ years	4.03
	F-ratio=1.755 df=4,192 prob=NS	
20		**4.69**
	(1)45-59 years	4.47
	(2)60-64 years	4.30
	(3)65-69 years	4.87
	(4)70-74 years	4.74
	(5)75+ years	5.06
	F-ratio=2.467 df=4,190 prob=0.046	
30		**5.08**
	(1)45-59 years	4.92
	(2)60-64 years	4.87
	(3)65-69 years	5.15
	(4)70-74 years	5.20
	(5)75+ years	5.28
	F-ratio=1.093 df=4,193 prob=NS	
40		**4.68**
	(1)45-59 years	4.71
	(2)60-64 years	4.84
	(3)65-69 years	4.85
	(4)70-74 years	4.61
	(5)75+ years	4.42
	F-ratio=1.364 df=4,193 prob=NS	

50 **4.79**

(1)45-59 years	4.69
(2)60-64 years	4.94
(3)65-69 years	4.72
(4)70-74 years	4.81
(5)75+ years	4.90

F-ratio=0.589 df=4,193 prob=NS

65 **4.44**

(1)45-59 years	4.18
(2)60-64 years	4.39
(3)65-69 years	4.56
(4)70-74 years	4.66
(5)75+ years	4.50

F-ratio=1.433 df=4,193 prob=NS

70 **4.03**

(1)45-59 years	3.92
(2)60-64 years	4.07
(3)65-69 years	3.97
(4)70-74 years	4.15
(5)75+ years	4.08

F-ratio=0.207 df=4,193 prob=NS

80 **3.44**

(1)45-59 years	3.41
(2)60-64 years	3.29
(3)65-69 years	3.51
(4)70-74 years	3.76
(5)75+ years	3.19

F-ratio=0.773 df=4,193 prob=NS

100 **3.97**

(1)45-59 years	4.36
(2)60-64 years	3.81
(3)65-69 years	4.18
(4)70-74 years	4.05
(5)75+ years	3.24

F-ratio=1.358 df=4,189 prob=NS

TABLE G3-6

PERCEIVED STATUS OF FEMALE PROFILES BY AGE OF RESPONDENT

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.68**
	(1)45-59 years	3.18
	(2)60-64 years	3.58
	(3)65-69 years	3.80
	(4)70-74 years	3.73
	(5)75+ years	4.28
	F-ratio=2.458 df=4,193 prob=0.047	
20		**4.67**
	(1)45-59 years	4.37
	(2)60-64 years	4.55
	(3)65-69 years	4.92
	(4)70-74 years	4.54
	(5)75+ years	5.06
	F-ratio=3.077 df=4,193 prob=0.017	
30		**5.08**
	(1)45-59 years	4.90
	(2)60-64 years	4.94
	(3)65-69 years	5.08
	(4)70-74 years	5.23
	(5)75+ years	5.28
	F-ratio=1.366 df=4,191 prob=NS	
40		**4.90**
	(1)45-59 years	4.71
	(2)60-64 years	4.97
	(3)65-69 years	4.95
	(4)70-74 years	4.88
	(5)75+ years	5.08
	F-ratio=0.958 df=4,193 prob=NS	

50 **4.65**

(1)45-59 years	4.41
(2)60-64 years	4.74
(3)65-69 years	4.46
(4)70-74 years	4.81
(5)75+ years	4.94

F-ratio=2.147 df=4.193 prob=NS

65 **4.31**

(1)45-59 years	3.92
(2)60-64 years	4.48
(3)65-69 years	4.23
(4)70-74 years	4.32
(5)75+ years	4.75

F-ratio=3.501 df=4,192 prob=0.009

70 **3.79**

(1)45-59 years	3.47
(2)60-64 years	3.42
(3)65-69 years	3.69
(4)70-74 years	4.12
(5)75+ years	4.31

F-ratio=3.165 df=4,193 prob=0.015

80 **3.54**

(1)45-59 years	3.53
(2)60-64 years	3.42
(3)65-69 years	3.56
(4)70-74 years	3.45
(5)75+ years	3.72

F-ratio=0.191 df=4,192 prob=NS

100 **3.96**

(1)45-59 years	4.26
(2)60-64 years	3.71
(3)65-69 years	4.39
(4)70-74 years	4.05
(5)75+ years	3.19

F-ratio=1.603 df=4,192 prob=NS

TABLE G3-7

PERCEIVED STATUS OF MALE PROFILES BY MARITAL STATUS

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.49**
	(1)married	3.50
	(2)widowed	3.45
	(3)never married	3.54
	(4)divorced-separated	3.40
	F-ratio=0.031 df=3,193 prob=NS	
20		**4.69**
	(1)married	4.72
	(2)widowed	4.63
	(3)never married	4.62
	(4)divorced-separated	4.67
	F-ratio=0.080 df=3,191 prob=NS	
30		**5.08**
	(1)married	5.14
	(2)widowed	5.00
	(3)never married	4.77
	(4)divorced-separated	5.07
	F-ratio=0.590 df=3,194 prob=NS	
40		**4.68**
	(1)married	4.69
	(2)widowed	4.60
	(3)never married	4.77
	(4)divorced-separated	4.80
	F-ratio=0.225 df=3,194 prob=NS	
50		**4.79**
	(1)married	4.76

(2)widowed	4.95
(3)never married	4.77
(4)divorced-separated	4.67

F-ratio=0.607 df=3,194 prob=NS

65 **4.44**

(1)married	4.44
(2)widowed	4.40
(3)never married	4.46
(4)divorced-separated	4.60

F-ratio=0.133 df=3,194 prob=NS

70 **4.03**

(1)married	3.99
(2)widowed	3.83
(3)never married	4.39
(4)divorced-separated	4.60

F-ratio=1.670 df=3,194 prob=NS

80 **3.44**

(1)married	3.33
(2)widowed	3.53
(3)never married	3.54
(4)divorced-separated	4.13

F-ratio=1.325 df=3,194 prob=NS

100 **3.97**

(1)married	3.99
(2)widowed	3.53
(3)never married	3.92
(4)divorced-separated	5.00

F-ratio=1.479 df=3,190 prob=NS

TABLE G3-8

PERCEIVED STATUS OF FEMALE PROFILES BY MARITAL STATUS

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.68**
	(1)married	3.62
	(2)widowed	3.80
	(3)never married	3.92
	(4)divorced-separated	3.60
	F-ratio=0.219 df=3,194 prob=NS	
20		**4.67**
	(1)married	4.69
	(2)widowed	4.70
	(3)never married	4.62
	(4)divorced-separated	4.40
	F-ratio=0.354 df=3,192 prob=NS	
30		**5.08**
	(1)married	5.11
	(2)widowed	4.98
	(3)never married	4.77
	(4)divorced-separated	5.33
	F-ratio=1.099 df=3,192 prob=NS	
40		**4.90**
	(1)married	4.89
	(2)widowed	4.83
	(3)never married	4.92
	(4)divorced-separated	5.13
	F-ratio=0.395 df=3,194 prob=NS	
50		**4.65**
	(1)married	4.56

(2)widowed	4.83
(3)never married	4.69
(4)divorced-separated	4.93

F-ratio=1.125 df=3,194 prob=NS

65 **4.31**

(1)married	4.16
(2)widowed	4.50
(3)never married	4.62
(4)divorced-separated	4.80

F-ratio=2.705 df=3,193 prob=0.047

70 **3.79**

(1)married	3.59
(2)widowed	4.00
(3)never married	4.69
(4)divorced-separated	4.20

F-ratio=3.500 df=3,194 prob=0.017

80 **3.54**

(1)married	3.42
(2)widowed	3.50
(3)never married	4.00
(4)divorced-separated	4.27

F-ratio=1.651 df=3,193 prob=NS

100 **3.96**

(1)married	3.99
(2)widowed	3.43
(3)never married	4.00
(4)divorced-separated	5.13

F-ratio=1.981 df=3,193 prob=NS

TABLE G3-9

PERCEIVED STATUS OF MALE PROFILES BY CLASS OF RESPONDENT

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.49**
	(1)working class	3.25
	(2)lower middle class	3.47
	(3)upper middle class	3.41
	(4)other	4.19
	F-ratio=1.657 df=3,187 prob=NS	
20		**4.69**
	(1)working class	4.89
	(2)lower middle class	4.73
	(3)upper middle class	4.62
	(4)other	4.67
	F-ratio=0.396 df=3,187 prob=NS	
30		**5.09**
	(1)working class	5.29
	(2)lower middle class	5.09
	(3)upper middle class	5.06
	(4)other	5.00
	F-ratio=0.389 df=3,188 prob=NS	
40		**4.69**
	(1)working class	4.61
	(2)lower middle class	4.78
	(3)upper middle class	4.68
	(4)other	4.67
	F-ratio=0.211 df=3,188 prob=NS	
50		**4.79**
	(1)working class	4.64

(2)lower middle class 4.82
(3)upper middle class 4.83
(4)other 4.76

F-ratio=0.351 df=3,188 prob=NS

65 **4.43**

(1)working class 4.50
(2)lower middle class 4.64
(3)upper middle class 4.37
(4)other 4.14

F-ratio=1.285 df=3,188 prob=NS

70 **4.01**

(1)working class 3.36
(2)lower middle class 4.27
(3)upper middle class 4.07
(4)other 4.00

F-ratio=3.192 df=3,188 prob=0.025

80 **3.40**

(1)working class 3.14
(2)lower middle class 3.80
(3)upper middle class 3.42
(4)other 2.81

F-ratio=2.438 df=3,188 prob=NS

100 **3.92**

(1)working class 3.89
(2)lower middle class 4.02
(3)upper middle class 3.88
(4)other 3.91

F-ratio=0.038 df=3,185 prob=NS

TABLE G3-10

PERCEIVED STATUS OF FEMALE PROFILES BY CLASS OF RESPONDENT

Age of profile	Respondent Characteristic	Mean
5		**3.69**
	(1)working class	3.64
	(2)lower middle class	3.58
	(3)upper middle class	3.61
	(4)other	4.38
	F-ratio=1.321 df=3,188 prob=NS	
20		**4.68**
	(1)working class	4.82
	(2)lower middle class	4.67
	(3)upper middle class	4.63
	(4)other	4.76
	F-ratio=0.263 df=3,188 prob=NS	
30		**5.08**
	(1)working class	5.36
	(2)lower middle class	5.02
	(3)upper middle class	5.03
	(4)other	5.10
	F-ratio=1.008 df=3,188 prob=NS	
40		**4.90**
	(1)working class	4.93
	(2)lower middle class	5.00
	(3)upper middle class	4.84
	(4)other	4.95
	F-ratio=0.356 df=3,188 prob=NS	
50		**4.66**
	(1)working class	4.54

(2)lower middle class	4.69
(3)upper middle class	4.60
(4)other	5.05

F-ratio=1.270 df=3,188 prob=NS

65 **4.32**

(1)working class	4.00
(2)lower middle class	4.56
(3)upper middle class	4.33
(4)other	4.19

F-ratio=1.595 df=3,187 prob=NS

70 **3.77**

(1)working class	3.21
(2)lower middle class	4.22
(3)upper middle class	3.75
(4)other	3.67

F-ratio=3.141 df=3,188 prob=0.027

80 **3.51**

(1)working class	3.00
(2)lower middle class	3.82
(3)upper middle class	3.49
(4)other	3.57

F-ratio=1.544 df=3,188 prob=NS

100 **3.92**

(1)working class	3.86
(2)lower middle class	3.90
(3)upper middle class	3.89
(4)other	4.19

F-ratio=0.107 df=3,188 prob=NS

TABLE G3-11

COMPARISON OF MEAN STATUS RATINGS OF THE TWO OLDEST PROFILES OF TWO SAMPLES

	Mean Status Rating Of The Two Oldest Profiles	T Value	df	Prob
Mature Sample	3.62			
		0.144	268	NS
Baker's Sample	3.59			

TABLE G3-12

MEAN STATUS RATINGS OF THE 80 AND 100-YEAR-OLD PROFILES WITH T-TEST FOR DIFFERENCE IN MEANS

Profile	Mean Status Rating	T Value	df	Prob
100-year-olds	3.83			
		3.04	200	0.0015
80-year-olds	3.41			

APPENDIX H

Difficulties with the Attitude Questions

A very common complaint about the 9 attitude questions was that these types of questions (most older people are X) and the possible responses (agree or disagree) forced the respondent to stereotype when they would rather not. The term "most older people" caused many respondents problems as seen by this comment, "everything is true of some old people just as everything is true of some young people; but "most" is another question." In trying to decide if statements applied to most older people, comments such as, "depends on who the people are and what is wrong with them," and "depends on the individual" were also frequently made. A few respondents even came out and said the questions forced them to make generalizations about older people while others said the statements were sweeping and difficult to answer.

Green (1981:100) studying perceptions and stereotypes of old people, reported that because instructions generally ask respondents to describe old people in general, they are forced to rely on generalized, stereotypical information because there is a minimum of detail in the situation that can be used to influence judgements. It would seem that this occurred with the mature respondents studied here as well.

The majority of respondents were also aware of the diversity of people, especially older ones, and felt very uneasy answering the questions "agree or disagree" when they believed the answers depended on many other facts. These comments were relatively common, "these are stupid questions, you can't slot people into agree and disagree, all people are different," "people are not 100 percent one way or the other, it depends on many things," "these are not black and white questions, there's lots of gray." This same problem has also been reported by Green (1981:100), she reported that this procedure (asking respondents to identify characteristics of the elderly) may artificially force individuals into thinking in terms of categories provided by the experimenter rather than employing dimensions that they might normally use.

Some respondents questioned the usefulness of the nine "attitude" questions. These respondents felt the questions (with the exception of the health and poverty questions) dealt with personality traits that applied to individuals and not to the old as a group. Because they believed the statements referred to personality traits of individuals they stated the answers to the questions depended on what the person was like throughout his lifetime and not his age. They thought that being asked if they agreed/disagreed that personality traits (for example, set in their ways) applied to most older people was silly since there is no true answer

to the questions.

Other respondents felt that the terms used in many of the questions were ambiguous and definitions should have been given to clarify the situation. For example, some respondents found the word "older" troublesome and commented that there were different age groups within the "old" category and that people of 65 were different from people who were 95. The following is a selection of respondents' comments about each of the questions.

RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS ON ATTITUDE QUESTIONS

Most older people are set in their ways.

- depends on your definition of set in their ways

- it may be natural for them, what were they like when they were young?

- generally yes, but there are lots of exceptions; does that mean I agree or disagree? I'm not sure

- those people who were intolerant were always intolerant

Most older people are in good health.

- it depends on what you mean

- I guess so, they do live longer today; their health is better than years ago

- health is relative; can you be healthy if you need to take drugs? A lot of older people take drugs you know.

- depends on the age bracket you're taking about, health is pretty good until you reach about 80, then its down hill

- there are two groups, yes for people 60 to 70, no after age 85

- it is not something black and white, it varies with the individuals involved

- depends on the stage, yes if they are not in a nursing home

Most older people are conservative.

- if conservative means cautious, then yes they are conservative because of experience

- depends on what they were like when they were young

- no, if you don't change with the times there is something wrong, you can't use the thoughts of the 20's in the 1980's

Most older people are lonely.

- that is a hard to put into perspective

- many old are widows/ers and therefore are alone, but alone does not always mean lonely

- what is your definition of lonely?

- depends on their age, at 90 - yes; if their wife is O.K. and their friends are alive and their kids visit then no

- it depends, for the very old; the spouse and friends die and that makes them feel lonely

- I can only guess, there are a great many either way

Most older people live in poverty.

- officially or perceived? Can be officially poor yet don't think you're poor

- depends on your definition of poverty

- you need to give me a measuring stick before I can decide if they live in poverty

- yes, they live below the poverty line but no concerning their mental state

- statistics probably say yes; that's a hard one; depends on the class of people you are talking about

- yes, if the person is a woman and widowed

- if they only have a pension; yes

- not in Victoria

Most older people are wise from experience.

- depends on your interpretation of wise

- it depends, maybe they have lived in the same small town all their life and don't have any experience.

- its not a matter of age, some are, some aren't

- if they were before, they'll be wise when they're old

- some people never learn, could be 100 and still not be wise

- they may not use their experience and so they are not wise

Most older people are warm and friendly.

- it is not a matter of age, some are, some aren't

- if horrible when young then horrible when old

- if friendly at 40, why expect a person to be grouchy at 80?

- will be at 75 how they were at 30

- need to know the person first

- if they are not healthy then they may not be friendly

Most older people are forgetful.

- doesn't apply only to old people

- so are the young you know

- forgetful? in what sense do you mean?

- old people are no more forgetful than the young until they go "balmy"

Most older people are productive.

- how? economically? socially? keeping busy?

- what do you mean by productive?

- depends on the meaning of productive, there are lots of nuances

- that puts words in people's mouthes with that one; people are as productive as they are allowed to be

- many are if they are well; depends on their health I guess

- depends, do you consider being independant to be productive?

- yes, if they are 90 and get up and dressed by themselves

VITA

Surname: GRAHAM Given Names: IAN DOUGLAS

Place of Birth: MONTREAL, QUE. Date of Birth: March 22, 1961

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

VANIER COLLEGE, MONTREAL 1978 to 1980

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL 1980 to 1983

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, VICTORIA 1983 to 1985

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

D.E.C. 1980 Vanier College

B.A. (Honors) 1983 McGill University

Honors and Awards:

Faculty Scholar, 1980/81 and 1981/82

James McGill Award, 1982/83

University Scholar, 1982/83

University of Victoria Fellowship, 1983/84 and 1984/85

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Author [redacted]

Ian Douglas Graham

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