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Canada

OCCUPATIONISM: OCCUPATIONAL DISCRIMINATION IN RELATION TO FUNERAL DIRECTORS

by

F. ÖZGE AKÇALI

Department of
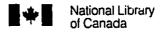Educational and Counselling Psychology
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F. Özge Akçalı

Abstract

Occupationism recently has been introduced and defined as discrimination on the basis of one's occupation (Carson, 1992; Krumboltz, 1991, 1992). In this qualitative study, the existence of occupationism is investigated through the examination of the results of interviews with six funeral directors. The statements of the participants describing occupationist acts (either positive or negative) were classified into a number of categories at both fine-grained and more superordinate levels. Implications of the results for the proposed occupationism construct and suggestions for future research and career interventions are discussed.

Résumé

L'"occupationism" (discrimination professionnelle) a été introduit et défini comme étant la discrimination selon l'occupation professionnelle de quelqu'un (Carson, 1992; Krumboltz, 1991, 1992). Dans cette étude qualitative, l'existence de l'"occupationism" est étudiée par l'examination des résultats de six entrevues d'entrepreneurs de pompes funèbres. Les déclarations des participants décrivant des actes discriminatoires (soit positifs, soit négatifs) ont été classifiées en catégories générales et en sous catégories. Les implications des résultats pour le concept proposé ainsi que certaines suggestions pour l'avenir de ces recherches et pour la consultation en intervention de carriére sont discutés.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A central area of concern in the social sciences has been the nature of discrimination against individuals on the basis of subject characteristics, including sex, race, religion, and age. We continue to witness the often horrific consequences of systematic and widespread discrimination, such as the Holocaust in Nazi Germany and "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia (religious and racial persecution), the Tailhook scandal in the United States Military (sex based discrimination), and the frequent reports of elder-abuse and neglect in nursing homes (age-based abuse), just to name a few. Though research on discrimination has been conducted across many of the social sciences (and in both 'pure' and 'applied' fields), counselling psychologists have taken special interests in the nature of discrimination (especially that related to race, ethnicity, and gender), its consequences, and related forms of intervention (Davenport & Yurich, 1991; DeVoe, 1990; Hill, 1993; Ponterotto, 1991; Priest, 1991; Skillings & Dobbins, 1991; Tomlinson-Clarke & Cheatham, 1993). Some counselling psychologists have recently suggested that one of the most widespread and systematic forms of discrimination on the basis of subject characteristics is discrimination on the basis of occupation (Carson, 1992, 1993; Krumboltz,

1991, 1992), termed "occupationism." However, this emerging literature on occupationism is purely theoretical and not yet built on data. Hence, the purpose of this investigation was to test the hypothesis, "Occupationism does not exist" against real data, and to identify features which would permit a more data-based discussion of the nature of the construct. Specifically, I tested the existence of occupationism through the examination of the results of interviews with a small sample of members of a single occupation, using a qualitative methodology (the long-interview; McCracken, 1988), which appeared to suited for uncovering themes associated occupationist actions. Given that no investigation has searched systematically for the existence of occupationism, and given that one must begin somewhere, it only makes sense to begin with an occupation likely to "trigger" occupationist acts. Based on my experience, there is an occupation that has been a target of negative occupationist actions: namely, the funeral director. However, I cannot cite the specific events or facts on which this belief is founded; it is simply something I have "picked up" from my experience with North American society.

Review of the Literature

The following review of the literature will focus on five major areas: occupationism (definitional disputes and related research); discrimination and discriminability; perception, memory, and occupational stereotyping; occupational prestige and social status; and the occupation of funeral director. Thus, the literature will be organized into what is known (or more properly,

speculated) about occupationism, then will explore in some depth those psychological processes assumed to be related to it, and it will turn finally to an exploration of the target occupation of interest.

Occupationism

Definitional Issues

Even when one skims the literature related to occupationism, it is apparent that the main issue in this literature is the definition of the construct. Krumboltz (1991) defined occupationism as "discrimination on the basis of membership in an occupation" (p. 310). He compared occupationism to racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, and he suggested that it is just as widespread and harmful as any kind of prejudiced behaviour. Following his preliminary definition, Krumboltz (1992) proposed a revised definition: "Occupationism consists of judgments made about the characteristics and worth of individuals based on their past, present, or future occupations" (p. 512). By giving considerable emphasis to the prestige levels associated with particular occupations, Carson (1992) reconceptualized the term as follows: "Occupationism .... refers to consequential acts of occupational discrimination on the basis of prestige" (p. 493). Contrary to Krumboltz (1991, 1992), Carson claims that not all forms of occupationism are necessarily harmful. Instead, he proposes two types of occupationist acts: desirable and undesirable.

According to Krumboltz (1992), one distinction between his and Carson's (1992) views of occupationism may be the authors' emphases on discrimina-

tion between <u>occupations</u> versus between <u>individuals</u>. Where Krumboltz argues that discrimination is applied against individuals, he suggests that Carson emphasizes discrimination between occupations. However, Carson (1993) argues that his definition instead focuses on the (justifiability of) <u>actions</u> affecting individuals based on the worth of the <u>work behaviour</u> they have contributed to the commonweal.

Another difference between these two approaches to the definition of occupationism is the acceptance of its "desirability." While Krumboltz (1992) insists on the unjustifiability of all forms of occupationist behaviours, Carson (1992) argues that occupationism has both desirable and undesirable forms. Moreover, Carson claims that some occupations are unworthy of society's esteem; according to him, some examples of these occupations might be marketers and advertisers of cigarettes. Conversely to Krumboltz's idea of every occupation's contribution to society, Carson argues that some occupations might be populated by individuals whose vocational behaviour could positively harm society, e.g., tobacco farmers.

In his effort to clarify Krumboltz's (1991) discussion of occupationism, Carson (1992) proposes "consequentiality" as an additional dimension of occupationism. Consequential acts are those performed by any person which are harmful or beneficial to some individual's interests, depending on the circumstances (p. 492). Carson might argue that the requirement that occupationist acts be consequential could entail that certain "private" forms of occupational discrimination on the basis of prestige may occur, but might not constitute occupationism <u>per</u> <u>se</u> (e.g., privately thinking ill of someone because of his/her

job, but not acting on such thoughts). However, one might still argue that our behaviours are guided by our thinking process, and that privately thinking ill of someone because of his/her job might well insidiously and unconsciously affect over behaviour, resulting in occupationism.

Additionally, Carson (1992) suggests that occupations may differ in the level of social consensus for their relative desirability, adding another dimension to occupationism: degree of consensuality. The degree of consensuality refers to the collective opinion and/or debate about the desirability of occupations from the perspective of the society (p. 496). Carson suggests that the justifiability of specific occupationist behaviours could be challenged by opponents when the evaluation of such behaviours is not consensual, e.g., some people might question the severity of restrictions against individuals engaged in "criminal" occupations, or they might dispute the wisdom of directing certain benefits towards individuals who have a history in an "honorable" occupation.

Research Related to Occupationism

Although the concept of occupationism has been introduced only recently, the possibility that individuals might be discriminated against on the basis of the work they do has been taken into consideration before. Fraser (1968) edited a book in which twenty men and women in a wide variety of occupations had written about their feelings, satisfactions, and frustrations related to performing their jobs. One can find several examples of statements by Fraser's subjects' which might suggest the existence of occupationism. For example, a croupier reports that "I dream of the time when I shall be loved and rewarded

for being myself: for making a contribution to other people's life in doing what I really want to do" (p. 255). The sentences of this croupier imply that he had not been treated fairly, and also a desire to be accepted as an individual, not simply as a member of certain occupation, who really enjoys what he is doing. In another example, a clerk cites reactions towards him from the members of different occupations with whom he works: "The worker today, with his more powerful union, his feeling of importance, looks on the clerk with a mixture of incomprehension, contempt, and distrust....The professional engineer, for his part, sees a clerk as a batman: useful, but definitely not an equal" (p. 61). Although we all find it convenient to "place" people by the work they do, we can seldom fully enter into the experiential world of other peoples' occupations. Thus, Fraser tacitly raised the question of the justifiability of our acts of "placing" people by their work.

In perhaps the most widely read account of peoples' experiences of their jobs, Terkel (1972/1975) interviewed workers from a wide variety of occupations. During these interviews, people talked about "what they did all day and how they feel about what they did" (p. xiv). As with Fraser (1968), Terkel's intention was not to demonstrate the existence of occupationism. Nevertheless, a close examination of the texts suggests examples of how people were disdained by others just because of their occupations. For example, one of the Terkel's clerks reports occupationist insults: "I've had people talk to me just like I was some sort of dog, that I was a ditchdigger" (p. 332). Also, a truck driver reports that "We're an outcast, illegitimate, a gypsy, a fella that everybody looks down on" (p. 284).

I would suggest that the time has come to move beyond merely academic disputes of definition. While both Fraser (1968) and Terkel (1972/1975) present qualitative data bearing on the possible existence of occupationism, no investigators have reported the results of research specifically testing the existence of the construct.

In the remainder of this discussion, I will outline the various cognitive and social precursors that I assume would be required for the existence of occupationism. As should be concluded from the review on the occupationism literature, discrimination is an important component of occupationism. Therefore, I will first examine discrimination as a psychological construct. Second, I will review (briefly) the relevant literature on perception, memory and occupational stereotyping. Finally, I will provide a summary review of the literature on occupational prestige and social status.

Precursors of Occupationism

For occupationism to exist, certain "precursors" (or components) would appear to be required. Perhaps among the most prominent of these components of occupationism would be perceiving and judging, and related concepts such as discrimination, memory, stereotyping, and prestige.

Discrimination and Discriminability

Relations between human beings are not always peaceful and friendly. On the contrary, there is frequently suspicion, hostility, unfair competition, and even ruthless behaviour (United Nations, 1949). Such behaviours may lead to

discriminatory acts towards certain individuals or groups. Given that occupationism is proposed as one form of discrimination, I will provide a broader treatment of discrimination in order to discuss that feature of the concept of occupationism.

According to an early theoretical report on the nature of discrimination (United Nations, 1949, p. 26), discrimination might be defined as a detrimental distinction based on grounds which may not be attributed to the individual and which have no justified consequences in social, political or legal relations (colour, race, sex, etc.), or on grounds of membership in social categories (cultural, religious, social origin, social class, property, birth or other status). Allport (1954/1979), whose book is considered as a classic on prejudice, suggested that discrimination involves denying "individuals or groups of people equality of treatment which they may wish" (p. 51). Jones (1972) defines discrimination as "those actions designed to maintain own-group characteristics and favored position at the expense of the comparison group" (p. 4).

According to Katz (1991), Allport's discussion of the relation between prejudice and discrimination was sketchy at best. Katz states that Allport's frequent use of the juxtaposing phrase "prejudice and discrimination" reflects the belief that the two phenomena were intimately connected. Indeed, discriminatory customs considerably reinforce prejudice; discrimination breeds prejudice just as prejudice breeds discrimination (United Nations, 1949). Nevertheless, Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) suggested that prejudice does not always lead to discrimination and discrimination may have causes other than prejudice.

Historically, the development and perpetuation of stereotypes has been

conceptualized from within three models or orientations: sociocultural, psychodynamic, and cognitive (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). The sociocultural orientation has focused on the role of social learning processes by which stereotypic beliefs are acquired through social rewards and punishments and are maintained by social reinforcements obtained from significant others and important reference groups (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986). Ashmore and Del Boca suggested that the psychodynamic orientation emphasizes the role of motivational processes in which stereotypes are viewed as serving the intrapsychic needs of the perceiver. Finally, the cognitive orientation assumes that the human capacity for processing information is limited, and that such limitations make humans susceptible to systematic biases in processing information about people and events. These biases then contribute significantly to the formation and main- tenance of stereotypes regarding social groups. The cognitive analysis of prejudice (and presumably discrimination) has traditionally centered up on the concept of stereotype (Pettigrew, 1979). If we consider the huge number of different occupations and the overwhelming information related to them, it seems that the cognitive orientation of the development and perpetuation of stereotypes might be quite helpful in conceptualizing occupationism. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the two other models cited above do not also have something to contribute to the understanding of the psychology of stereotypes, but simply that the cognitive approach appears to offer the greatest initial promise.

Most research on stereotypes and discrimination has concentrated on national, ethnic and gender stereotypes (McCauley, Stitt & Segal, 1980). While

little research has touched on discrimination on the basis of occupation per se, there does exist a large literature on the nature of job-related stereotypes, to which I will next turn (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). I will link this discussion to an overview of the relevant literature on perception.

Perception, Memory and Occupational Stereotyping

As human beings, we are not omnipotent. Our sensory system, for instance, is limited. Our entire sensory apparatus seems to be designed to limit stimulation and to restrict our range of experiences (Schneider, Hastorf, & Ellsworth, 1979). Further, our sensory organs simplify the physical environment, just as our cognitive apparatus helps us to simplify and organize our social environment and experiences (Goldstein, 1980). We always select and interpret our impressions of the surrounding world and respond to a representation of the environment which to a lesser or greater degree we ourselves construct (Allport, 1954/1979; Lippmann, 1922; Mahoney, 1991; Tajfel, 1969). However, this organizing process sometimes leads to an exaggerated belief associated with a category and may even turn to ill thoughts of certain people. It seems likely that such efforts to reduce the complexity of the "occupational" environment undergird any occupationist behaviour.

Perception and memory. I assume that perception is an active process in which the raw sensory data are coded, organized, and given meanings derived from our unique personal experiences (Smith, Sarason, & Sarason, 1982). In other words, perception is more than a physical phenomenon; it is a psychic

function from which we may draw the most far-going conclusions concerning the inner life (Allport, 1954/1979). The early Gestalt psychologists stressed the idea that people interpret, organize, and assess stimuli before they are fully perceived. In particular, Gestalt psychologists proposed that stimuli are perceived in terms of the perceiver's past experiences, needs, and expectations, and also the context in which they are presented (Goldstein, 1980; Schneider et al. (1979).

According to Schneider et al. (1979), most of us unconsciously give verbal labels to what we see; we put them into meaningful categories. Categorical thinking is a natural and inevitable tendency of the human mind (Allport, 1954/1979). Allport defines a category as "....an accessible cluster of associated ideas which as a whole has the property of guiding daily adjustments" (p. 171). According to him, the process of categorization (a) forms large classes and clusters for guiding our daily adjustments; (b) assimilates as much as it can to the cluster; (c) enables us quickly to identify a related object; (d) saturates all that it contains with the same ideational and emotional flavour; and (e) may be more or less rational. Pettigrew (1979) supports Allport's category-based perspective and, with an application from attribution theory, he extends Allport's cognitive analysis of prejudice by proposing a systematic patterning of intergroup misattributions shaped in part by prejudice.

The categories we use are derived from our past history and are largely dependent on our language and our cultural background (Schneider et al., 1979). Allport (1954/1979) argues that categories help us to identify a new object or person, and to expect from it (him/her) a certain kind of behaviour

in accordance with our preconceptions, as this helps to "structure" our world.

As already noted, the human mind must think with the aid of categories (Allport, 1954/1979; Schneider et al., 1979). However, categories may well contain erroneous information, and may be learned so early in life that they may reflect as much the constraints of the child's mind and imagination as any real-world references. According to Allport, a rational category is built around the essential or defining attributes of the object or person. However, nonessentials and "noisy" attributes (secondary ones which are not as important to remember) may also enter into the category, lessening its correspondence to the real world. Bruner (1956) posited that the main function of categorization is to reduce the complex object world to a more simple and manageable structure, consistent with the cognitive orientation to stereotyping discussed earlier. He suggested that the primary basis for categorization is perceived similarity-dissimilarity (e.g., objects are grouped on the basis of similarity of function or appearance). Thus, cognitive categories are abstractions of reality and may contain nonessential or even erroneous information.

Relation to stereotyping and memory. Fundamental to the process of stereotyping is the act of categorization (Taylor, 1981). Viewing stereotyping as a categorization process has a tradition dating back at least to Allport (1954/1979). According to Allport, a stereotype, whether favorable or unfavorable, is an exaggerated belief associated with a category, its function to justify our conduct in relation to that category. Allport argues that, once formed, categories are the basis for "normal prejudgement," a process that it appears we cannot pos-

sibly avoid. Allport states that such prejudgements become prejudices only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge. According to him, the difference between normal prejudgements and prejudice is that one can discuss and rectify a prejudgement without emotional resistance. As Allport made clear, rubrics and categories are essential to mental life, and their operation results inevitably in prejudgements which in turn may shade into prejudice.

As noted above, stereotyping may be viewed as a form of cognitive information processing. The stereotype acts both as a justificatory device for categorical acceptance or rejection of a group and as a screening or selective device to maintain simplicity in perception and in thinking (Allport, 1954/1979). In fact, our impressions of another person are a form of stereotype; we abstract certain aspects of his/her behaviour, organize them around certain dispositions, and develop a picture of the person (Schneider et al., 1979). Schneider et al. proposed that this process permits the development of meaning in our experience of other persons. However, it can also restrict our awareness of another's behaviour. Therefore, group and individual stereotypes do create stability and meaning, but they may well do so at the risk of inaccuracy.

Stereotypes also affect our memory (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, & Hilgard, 1987). Atkinson et al. state that our schemata (mental representations of a class of people, objects, events, or situations) consist of many stereotypes. Perceiving and thinking in terms of schemata permits us to filter, organize, and process large amounts of information swiftly and economically. Instead of having to perceive and remember all the details of each new person, object, or event we encounter, we can simply note that it is like a schema already

in memory and encode and remember only its most distinctive features. The price we pay for such cognitive economy, however, is that an object or event can be distorted if the schema used to encode it does not quite fit to the real characteristics of the object or the event at hand. According to Atkinson et al., memory distortions, much like those which occur when we fit people into stereotypes, also can occur when we attempt to fit stories into schemata. On the other hand, they also suggested that our schemata are often a great aid to memory.

An occupational stereotype is one form of stereotyping. Shinar (1975) defined it as a preconceived attitude or prejudice about a particular occupation, about people who are employed in that occupation, or about one's own suitability for that occupation.

In summary, human beings have a propensity towards prejudice. This propensity lies in a normal and natural tendency to form generalizations, concepts, and categories whose contents represent oversimplifications of one's world of experience (Allport, 1954/1979; Lippmann, 1922). Although stereotyping behaviour is natural and often useful, it may also serve as a foundation for prejudice.

Research related to occupational stereotyping. Investigations of occupational stereotypes have usually focused on the context of discrimination based on gender and ethnicity (Albrecht, 1976; Hurd & Allred, 1978; Mitchack, 1978; Vincenzi, 1977; Wilson & Daniel, 1981). An exception to this focus was Bedeian, Mossholder, Tomliatos, and Barkman's (1986) study examining

the accountant's stereotype in the context of vocational counselling. Bedeian et al. addressed the question of whether the stereotyped, negative image of the accountant is reflected in the accountants' own responses on the California Personality Inventory (Gough, 1975). The results suggested that the image commonly painted of the bookkeeper-accountant as being orderly, methodical, introverted, and unsociable seemed to be inaccurate, or at any rate an overplayed generalization. The contrast between the empirically based profile developed in that study and that of the traditional stereotypic public image of accountants may be an example of the inaccuracy of the general image which might eventually lead to occupationist acts. Of course, there is nothing in the definition of occupationism that requires that it be based on inaccurate stereotypes; however, wildly inaccurate stereotypes (especially negative ones) might be a common adjunct of negative occupationist acts.

Lukens (1964) conducted research on needs, general values and occupational values of medical-surgical and psychiatric nursing students. He proposed that nurses in different areas of specializations exhibit different personality traits. While the findings cannot be generalized to all graduate students in nursing, significant differences were found in the needs, general values, and occupational values of two nursing groups specializing in divergent clinical fields. Therefore, making judgements according to the average characteristics of a given occupation's members may lead us to form inaccurate assessments of them; perhaps such inaccuracies are fertile grounds for the development of occupationist behaviour.

Occupational Prestige and Social Status

It is likely that across all societies, some occupations command great respect, some moderate respect, and still others fall almost in disdain (Carson, 1992; Chartrand, Dohm, Dawis, & Lofquist, 1978). People probably draw inferences about individuals based on their occupational standing and may choose to engage in discriminatory reactions according to those inferences.

Work is a major arena of adult behaviour because individuals' livelihoods are so directly dependent on their work. As much as half of each day during pre-retirement adulthood may be devoted to it. One's standard of living, security, and social status typically are tied closely to one's work (Smith et al., 1982).

Social statuses locate people in groups, organizations, and, more generally, in society at large. The social statuses are ranked by the different amounts of prestige accorded to them by members of society (Curtis & Lambert, 1983). The prestige of an occupation reflects the approval or disapproval that society attaches to the different forms of occupational service, and that approval may be one of the basic forms of social control (Hakel, Hollmann, & Dunnette, 1968)

The rewards of an occupation with higher prestige are substantial, not only in terms of the esteem accorded to the individual by others, but also due to the material benefits that typically accrue to individuals holding such positions (Thomas & O'Brien, 1984). According to Gottfredson (1981), the esteem or social status that the general population accords occupations is one

important factor affecting occupational choice. Krumboltz (1991) suggested that people are often dissuaded from going into occupations in which they would be quite successful and happy because of the lower prestige rankings of these occupations. These and other considerations have helped to maintain an ongoing interest in the relative prestige standing of occupations throughout much of this century.

According to Treiman (1977), occupational status hierarchies are inevitable in complex societies. Treiman and others (e.g., Krumboltz, 1992) hold that all modern societies have fundamentally similar occupational prestige hierarchies. He proposed a structural theory of occupational prestige, arguing that occupational systems are essentially similar in all complex societies because the division of labour creates characteristic differences among occupations in the extent of power exercised. Treiman suggested that differences in power give rise to differences in privilege and prestige; thus, intersocietal prestige similarities reflect intersocietal similarities in occupational power and privilege.

Counts (1925) conducted the first study on the relative prestige rankings of occupations. From high school and college students and school teachers, he collected the prestige rankings of 45 occupations. Counts found that various occupations such as lawyer and banker ranked near the top while janitor and ditchdigger ranked near the bottom. Following Counts, Deeg, and Peterson (1947), Hakel et al. (1968) and Braun and Bayer (1973) replicated Counts' original study using different samples; they found little overall change from the rankings reported by Counts.

Recently, Fredrickson, Gisela, and Xing (1992) compared college students'

rankings of social status of 24 different occupations in three different countries. The countries included in this study (i.e., People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and the United States) were living under different economic and political systems. Although there were very few exceptions in the middle section of the 24 ranks, students in these three countries were more similar than dissimilar in their rankings of social status for the 24 occupations. The occupations physician and lawyer were ranked consistently in the highest group, with civil engineer close behind. The three consistently lowest ranked occupations were janitor, hod carrier and ditchdigger. It would appear that particular cultures and political systems do not influence the relative social status ranking of a number of skilled service and production occupations.

All of the above studies are similar because they examine differences in occupational status rankings across occupations. In addition, prestige hierarchies may apply <u>within</u> the various subdivisions of the same general occupational category. Hartmann (1934) examined the possibility of the prestige hierarchy within the various specializations of the medical field. Subjects were asked to rank a list of 25 careers related to the "healing profession." Subjects were chosen from a wide range of occupations, but housewives constituted the largest single group. Results indicated that the easily understood and well-recognized occupations stand either near the top or the bottom of the list. Greater acquaintance with an occupation led to a sounder appraisal of its comparative level and, so it would seem, with a polarized judgement as to the occupation's relative prestige. In a similar but more recent study, Rosoff and Leone (1991) investigated the relative social prestige of various medical specialties in a sam-

ple of 400 subjects. The results were consistent with those of Hartmann's earlier investigation, and affirmed that a prestige hierarchy exists among medical specialties. Surgery and cardiology consistently ranked at the top, and dermatology and psychiatry remained at the bottom. A specialty's relative standing in perceived income and assigned social value were the best predictors of its hierarchical position, with income being the single best predictor

In conclusion, previous research suggests that a stable occupational prestige hierarchy exists across occupations, within work settings, and within professional fields. On the other hand, there are numerous limitations in this research, such as the restrictions on types of stimuli in lists of occupations (they are not sampled equally across the world of work), the specific form of the question (e.g., level of prestige an occupation "actually has" versus "should have"), and in the sources of individual differences in prestige ratings considered (e.g., historical period, major occupational group, and nationality).

Funeral Directors

In this section, I will examine aspects of the occupation of funeral director, both in reference to its history and contemporary features. I will limit my scope to the funeral directors in Anglo-French North America (i.e., The United States and Canada) primarily because of the existence of at least somewhat adequate occupational information for the occupation there (e.g., Mitford, 1963/1980; Reynolds & Kalish, 1974; Schell & Zinger, 1985). This section will also review the literature on North American society's perception of funeral directors and its attitudes towards this occupation.

Historical Background

The largest determinant in modern North American funerary practice stems from the Western European Christian tradition, which in turn derived primarily from Hebrew and to a lesser extent Roman religious and ethical concepts, which were themselves possibly influenced by the death beliefs and mortuary practices of the early Egyptians and other ancient civilizations (Habenstein & Lamers, 1955). According to Habenstein and Lamers, funeral undertaking (or undertaking; these were the first conventionally recognized names of the modern funeral director by the first half of the 19th century) emerged as a clear-cut distinct secular occupation in Europe by the 17th century. Embalming had developed as a medical specialty much earlier and quite independently of undertaking. Until the late 19th century, the North American funeral was primarily a family affair, in the sense that the family and close friends performed most of the duties in connection with the dead body itself (Mitford, 1963/1980). The military, of course, has always dealt with funerals on a larger scale. It seems that "funeral undertaking" emerged as a distinct (civilian) occupational specialty in America in the first quarter of the 19th century. Mitford states that the first undertakers were drawn mainly from three occupations: The stable keeper of the dead body, the carpenter or cabinetmaker, and the sexton. According to Habenstein and Lambers, before 1859 undertaking had taken on the characteristics of a service occupation with a set of tasks and functions organized into a pattern of behaviour towards the dead that basically included the laying out, the coffining, and the transporting of the body

to the grave. Around these central functions, certain auxiliary services, such as the furnishing of paraphernalia of mourning (e.g., clothing, emblems, and remembrances) may also have been included.

During the early stages of the development of the occupation, the role of undertakers in rural areas was minimal. In the cities, on the other hand, their work revolved around the deceased's home, the church of their choice and the cemetery, and most likely embalming (when offered) would have taken place in the home of the deceased (Habenstein & Lamers, 1955). When it was performed in the home of the deceased, it was almost mandatory for some relative to stay by the embalmer's side hand witness the procedure (Mitford, 1963/1980). As Habenstein and Lamers stated, there had been a line of kinship relation running through the operation of the coffin-shop-turned-undertaking-turned-funeral directing establishment for the early developmental stages of this occupation. That is, undertaking ran in families.

The close of 19th century witnessed major changes in the role of the undertaker (Habenstein & Lamers, 1955). According to them, the undertaker's role expanded into administration. In carrying out this new role, they were called upon to exercise not only technical skills in preparing the bodies of the dead, but also administrative skills in the direction and organization of funeral proceedings, as well as logistical skills in arranging the order and sequence in the transport of both the living and the dead. Coincident with this new role around the turn of the century, undertakers began to replace their old job title with that of funeral director (Mitford, 1963/1980). In summary, in the past century and a half, the funeral directing occupation has grown from the side-

line occupation of the tradesman undertaker to the established, mainstream enterprise of today. The occupation of funeral director also has been included in official government listings of occupations, as well as in major measures of occupational interests developed in this century, such as those developed by Strong (Hansen & Campbell, 1985).

Funeral Director: Current Description

While the discussion will focus on Canadian funeral directors, it should also apply to American funeral directors. The Canadian government recognizes funeral directors as an integral part of the health care team (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1987). Hansen (1987, p. 193) states the duties of funeral directors (although they may change depending on various factors, including the size of the funeral home) are as follows: interview the family to arrange details, such as the preparation of the obituary notice; ensure the selection of the urn or casket; arrange the location and time of cremation or burial; organize the selection of the pallbearers; procure an official for the religious or remembrance rites (if there are to be any); and plan for the transportation of the mourners and remains. In the absence of clergy, they may conduct services at the funeral home or at the graveside. They may also prepare the body for burial according to provincial or state laws related to preparation for burial. They dress the body and apply make-up, and when the body is damaged by disease or accident, they may mask the injury with special procedures. Finally, they may help the family file claims for social security, insurance, and other benefits, such as "grief counselling" (this latter item being perhaps of

special interest to the funeral director, who might double as a provider of such services).

According to Employment and Immigration Canada (1987, p. 239), the educational preparation for a funeral director and an embalmer (who prepares bodies for viewing and interment) is virtually the same, although in practice their on-the-job functions differ. Most funeral directors complete high school diplomas or Associate Arts degrees in mortuary science along with on-the-job training (Hansen, 1987, p. 193). In most places in North America, licensure is a mandatory condition of employment and is awarded to those who pass a provincial or statewide examination (Employment and Immigration Canada; Hansen). Licensees then begin their career as embalmers, and with experience, or as employment opportunities arise, they may attain a position as a funeral director. Many funeral directors are self-employed and, in some settings, they supervise embalmers (Employment and Immigration Canada, p. 239).

Attitudes Towards Funeral Directors

Bowman (1959) states that funerals in North America are the objects of a wide variety of emotional reactions, varying widely across individuals, and often inconsistent for the same individual on different occasions. He suggested that reactions to funerals often reflect attitudes towards death, which are themselves as diverse as horror and amusement. In particular, aversion to human remains may be linked to the negative reactions to funerals. Bowman proposed that this aversion is transferred in some measure to the person who has taken charge of them. He also suggested that cultural influences work to lessen

or increase the acceptability of the funeral director. He stated that any discrimination shown then varies greatly in different localities and circumstances; therefore, in different contexts, funeral directors may be derided, avoided, or even thrust into leadership roles.

According to Reynolds and Kalish (1974), those whose work involves dealing with the dead, the dying, and the bereaved are avoided, laughed at, pitied, scorned, and isolated; their motives and their (psychological) stability are questioned; they usually serve as handy scapegoats for the guilt and anger of the still-living, especially if they are seen as making an "undue" profit. Bowman (1959) also states that nearly half of his sample of funeral directors told of experiences in which, because of their occupation, they were not as readily accepted as other people. His subjects also spoke of the persistent tendency of their acquaintances to joke about the undertaker's connection with dead bodies. Reynolds and Kalish provide examples of how funeral directors sometimes hesitate to disclose the specific nature of their work, and when they do reveal their occupation, they are prepared for reactions of curiosity, revulsion, and teasing.

Mitford (1963/1980) questioned the justifiability and necessity of funeral practices common in North America, and therefore of the profession engaged in those practices. She provides many examples of how funeral directors profit from emotionally vulnerable clients. She suggests that "funeral men" seek to justify the style and cost of their production the basis of "tradition," and on the basis of their implicit beliefs that current funeral practices are a reflection of characteristically (and appropriately, in their eyes) high American standards.

However, she continues, "...the funeral men live very largely in a dream world of their own making about the 'acceptance' of their product in the public mind....But the public goes merrily on its way, thinking that moneymaking is the foundation of the funeral trade" (p. 225). Mitford's critique of the occupation is the most damning in print, and presents a thorough and relentless attack on the entire industry. However, the work is three decades old, and even if her account is an accurate portrayal of the industry then, there is no guarantee that the portrayal remains an accurate representation of today's funeral industry. Nevertheless, her book was read very widely, casting a kleig light into a normally dark corner of the occupational world.

In another study of the same period, Fulton (1965) sought to determine the nature of the public's attitude towards the funeral ceremony and the funeral director. His sample included three types of respondents: a memorial group, which consisted of the participants from eleven memorial societies; householders, whose names were chosen randomly from the most recent telephone directories; and an interview group, formed by the graduate students and the faculty of various departments of sociology throughout the country. The majority of the memorial group reported that the funeral had failed in its function and purpose; more than three-quarters of this group believed changes were needed in the funeral ceremony. As compared to the householders and the interview group, the memorial group was unfavourably inclined towards both the funeral and the funeral directors. Fulton's results suggest that some people think funeral directors exploit or take advantage of a family's grief; many people believe that a sacred ceremony is out of date, and that it is empty, artificial, and a

waste of time and money.

Whatever the reason for the negative attitudes towards funeral directors, it appears that the negative behaviours may offend the funeral directors, regardless of the personal attributes of particular members of the occupation. According to Reynolds and Kalish (1974), many people whose work brought them in contact with the dead had attempted to suppress anger directed at a community that had failed to appreciate the particular psychological tensions and social tightrope walk required of them. It appears that these feelings affect their work performance, their self-concepts, and their family relationships. In order to determine funeral directors' degree of commitment to their profession, Schell and Zinger (1985) analyzed data that indicated that funeral directors appear to have low levels of career preference for their occupation, perceived other members of their profession as having low work-related productivity, and (as a group) evinced only moderate job satisfaction and job commitment. In order to discuss the effect of the funeral business on family life, Bowman (1959) reported several examples showing the impact of having a parent who works as a funeral director on children. One of Bowman's funeral directors wanted to set up a business in another city in order to protect his son's career as a lawyer. Bowman also reports the case of a woman who had been taunted by her peers because of her father's occupation as a funeral director, despite the high level of respect her father commanded (among the adults) in the community.

Thus, there appears to exist some anecdotal evidence that funeral directors have been the targets of negative occupationist acts by all available definitions.

However, none of these previous investigations examined occupationism per se in relation to the occupation of funeral director.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Interviewers

There were two female one male interviewers. All of the interviewers were members of the Occupationism Project at McGill University. One week of training was provided for each of the two graduate student interviewers (the third interviewer was a member of the McGill Counselling Psychology Program faculty). The training of the two student interviewers included the following: reading the extant literature on occupationism (Carson, 1992; Krumboltz, 1991, 1992); practicing an administration of semi-structured interviews using a predetermined format; conducting a trial interview and discussing the process with other Project members. The mean age of the interviewers was 27.6 years (SD = 3.8). One interviewer was Canadian, the second Turkish, and the third one was American. Most of the interviews were conducted by the Turkish and American interviewers.

Participants

Two female and four male funeral directors practicing in Montreal, Quebec, volunteered to participate in the study; they received no monetary compensation but were offered the opportunity to receive the results. The mean age of

the sample was 44.5 years ($\underline{SD} = 12.36$). The participants had completed formal education at the level of high school or above. Four of the participants had learnt their occupation through their family (i.e., intergenerational transmission of occupational skills). Members of the Occupationism Project contacted potential participants by phone; leads were drawn from the yellow pages under the category "funeral homes." The resulting sample drew from three of the four major ethnic-linguistic categories in Montreal (as used by the Quebec government): Francophone ($n = 1$), Anglophone ($n = 4$), and "Allophone" (that is, anyone descended from any other ethnic community, other than Natives; $n = 1$). No Native (e.g., Mohawk) subjects participated. The participants agreed to be interviewed on condition that the researcher would make efforts to maintain their anonymity. In reporting data, I therefore deleted (or slightly modified) information which might serve to identify the participants. However, interviewers also discussed with the participants the possibility that some demographic data might serve to reveal their participation in the study (there are only a limited number of funeral directors in some demographic groups in Montreal); all participants agreed to complete interviews despite this risk.

Procedure

Data Collection

All interviews were conducted in the participants' places of employment during 1992, and all were individual interviews. Interviewers used a semi-structured interview format which included questions in the following areas:

identification of demographic information (including, age, sex, ethnicity, marital status, education, and income); description of the job and the activities that it involves; description of how others (i.e., parents, spouse, close friends, and all others) differentially react(ed) to the participant simply because of his/her occupation, either positively or negatively; and the evaluation of the acceptability of treating people differently because of their occupation (i.e., to judge whether or not occupationism is ever justifiable, see Appendix B). Results bearing on all but the final question will be reported in this study. Although the general order was followed by all interviewers, the participants varied substantially in the amount of time they discussed the different sources of occupationist acts. Interviews generally were completed within 30 minutes and were audiotaped.

Transcription and Translation

The six tapes were transcribed verbatim. The single interview conducted in French was translated into English by a bilingual member of the Project.

Identification of Themes and Units of Text

Analyses involved the examination of complete transcripts. I read all transcripts five times in order to identify general themes reflected in particular statements which themselves appeared to report on either positive or negative occupationist acts. In the first reading, I just read the text in order to familiarize myself with the material. In the next reading, I identified numerous "fine-grained" category nominations; that is, I proposed specific categories

(and labels for the categories) reflecting homogeneous groupings of occupationist acts. I did not predetermine any particular number of categories for this fine-grained level. Next, these category nominations were reviewed with a member of the Occupationism Project, and from these fine-grained categories of occupationist acts the more general categories were derived by a consensus. In subsequent readings (third through fifth), I identified every statement or units of discussion that appeared to fit these superordinate categories, placing them also within the fine-grained categories where warranted. This method resulted in the identification of a large number of statements or units of text from each of the participants which were classifiable into the general categories of occupationist acts. In addition, each statement was allowed to be linked to a maximum of only one category (that is, one superordinate category, and, if warranted, at most one fine-grained category within the superordinate category). This served to force raters to select the single best-fitting category for each statement or text unit. Though the length of the text units was not predetermined, priority was given to ensuring that each quotation was understandable as a single unit.

Superordinate-level classification of material proceeded in two steps: first, a search for either positive or negative behaviours in general; second, a classification of material into either work-related or nonwork-related superordinate categories. By work-related versus nonwork-related, I refer to how the reactions towards the participants could be divided into two categories. The reactions which were shown at the participants' places of employment were considered as work-related acts, while those that were shown at parties, clubs,

or in other social environments were considered as nonwork-related acts (see Figure 1).

Another member of the Occupationism Project reviewed the investigator's assignments of text units to fine-grained categories. Out of 73 units originally classified, the second rater agreed (independently) with 56 assignments, for a 77% agreement. The statements or units of text for which there was disagreement across raters were excluded from further analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will report the results of the classification ot the statements from the interviews into general themes (i.e., into a classification schema of both superordinate and fine-grained categories), along with related discussion. During the presentation of the results, the positive occupationist acts will be presented before the negative ones (See Figure 1), and demographic data for each of the participants will be provided when I introduce them for the first time. A list of all the statements of each participant that are reported in this chapter is provided in Appendix C, along with the demographic data.

Themes

As shown in Figure 1, I identified two general themes and four subthemes around the behaviours which are classified as occupationist. The two major themes classified behaviours according to their relevance to the work or to the social environment of the participants, and they delineated the "work-related feedback" and "nonwork-related feedback" categories, respectively. These two general themes were further divided into subthemes in light of the behaviours which were either positive or negative. The subthemes are as follows: work-related positive feedback; work-related negative feedback; nonwork-related ap-

VALENCE OF ACTS

	POSITIVE (APPROACH)	NEGATIVE (AVOIDANCE)
WORK	−Reactions of customers −Reactions of close relatives	−Reactions of customers −Reactions of close relatives
TYPE OF SETTING NONWORK	Approach Behaviour (No subcategories)	Avoidance Behaviour −Physical Distance −Jokes −Stereotypes and misinformation −Avoiding dates −Negative halo to other family members −Using an out of date or a lower prestige job title

Figure 1: General classification of occupationist acts towards funeral directors

proach behaviour; and nonwork-related avoidance behaviour. Except for the nonwork approach behaviour, all of the other general themes had additional subthemes.

Work-Related Feedback

The reactions, both positive and negative, that the participants received from others because of their occupation or while simply doing their duties were classified as "work-related feedback." These reactions were further differentiated into two categories: those coming from customers and those coming from close relatives.

Positive Reactions of Customers

When the interviewers asked the participants whether or not they had ever received any positive reactions simply because of their occupation, almost all of the participants gave examples of how the families that they had served were appreciative of the job they were doing. Except for this, none of the participants reported other incidents that could be considered as a positive reaction towards them. For example, Mr. Q noted that he receives respect only after the family sees his service; "Any family that I serve, their attitude of me changes. I get respected afterwards. They may not come in respecting me, but when they see the job I have to do with their family, when I straighten out perhaps a small family feud between a son and his youngest sister or something...I do get respected."[Q.1] Mr. Q is an English Canadian. He is 52 years old and married, and operates his own funeral home, which he inherited from his father.

Mr. X is a funeral director of a home that belongs to a corporation; he is 56 years old and divorced. He grew up in a funeral home and learnt his occupation from his father. Mr. X performed some other jobs when he was young, but he missed the occupation that he inherited from his father. His mother was French Canadian and his father was an English Canadian. Mr. X finds that, in general, people are very respectful when it comes to death. The following statements of Mr. X are consistent with that from Mr. Q (Q. 1), namely that people do respect him after they see their service. In a similar vein, Mr. Y notes that people thank him at the end of the funeral. Mr. Y is

English Canadian, married and 42 years old. Apart from his occupation as a funeral director, he has a diploma in agriculture. As with Mr. X, he is a funeral director of a home that belongs to a corporation. Mr. Y comes from a family that operated a funeral home.

> Mr. X: When people visit a funeral home, they are very courteous ....People are appreciative....We get letters from families....They appreciate any little thing that you do for them pertaining to the funeral service. [X.1]

> Mr. Y: They [his customers] more often than not are very appreciative of what we do....They will say thank you for looking after the funeral; most people would say thank you at the end of the funeral, "Thank you very much for all your help."[Y.1]

Instead of directly emphasizing examples of how the families are thankful for her service, Ms. D talks about the satisfaction she derives from doing something good for others. She is 49 years old and married. Her mother is French, and her father is English Canadian. She was a secretary at the same funeral home before she was promoted to a funeral director.

> Ms. D The idea that I am helping people...I get a very, very good satisfaction knowing when a person goes out, they will say thank you, and it really is a good feeling, you know, "it's not as hard as I thought it was going to be," you know, and actually, they'll come in crying, and they'll leave and they're not. It's as if I've taken

a load off their shoulders, and they're at peace with themselves, which is really a fantastic feeling.[D.1]

Perhaps the most striking comment in this category comes from Ms. Ω. She is an ethnic Chinese and operates her own funeral home. She is a married 32 year old who was a fashion designer before she established this business. With regards to the respect she receives from customers, she indicated, "I think when they need the service, they pretty much respect you, but besides, like if they do not need it, they do not want to mention or even want to sit with you."[Ω.1]

Thus, the participants of this study reported some positive occupationist behaviours from customers, albeit contingent on the quality of the professional services rendered.

Positive Reactions of Close Relatives

For most of the participants, the reactions of their parents or other close relatives to their choice of occupation were quite affirmative. Four of the participants had learnt their occupation through their family. They had grown up and lived in the funeral home since an early age. Their decisions to continue in the traditional job of their family were received very happily. The other two participants had either positive or negative reactions from their close relatives. In reference to positive reactions, Ms. D, whose family members had no connection with the occupation of funeral director, said, "My husband is very proud of me, and he'll say, you know, 'guess what she does?'"[D.2] Similarly,

Ms. Ω's father, who is not a funeral director, was quite supportive to her; "My father was...he agreed. In fact, he encouraged me to do it when he first heard because, he knows that it's a big business."[Ω.2]

Negative Reactions of Customers

The participants also reported negative treatment from customers because of their occupation (at least, they attributed the source of negative actions to their occupation and not to other variables). To some extent, the negative reactions from their customers might have been triggered by customer reactions to the deaths of loved ones. Mr. Q said that "when a family member dies, it is a really emotional time, so that a little mistake is no longer a little mistake, it is a horrendous mistake. You have to be careful how you handle families."[Q.2] When Mr. X discussed how picky and careful a funeral director should be, he stated, "It's very important before the final decision is made that you don't overlook or forget something because, if we do forget something, we cannot come back like another types of services."[X.2] Mr. Q provided an example of how a family can often be difficult to please: "The family [might] be offended very easily, such as I'm supposed to know that there's two 't's in their name and not one 't', and when you ask if there's two 't's, then you feel challenged (laughs)."[Q.3] Other examples of the negative reactions include the following:

> Mr. Q: He will give me bad information to put in the newspaper notice and when the aunt calls and then says, "Look, I'm very much alive and you've got me in the newspaper as being dead," you

know, then he blames me, and says, "Well, it's not my fault, the funeral director did it." We become the punching bag, you know, justifiably, you know, I should not say justifiably, but I understand them, you know, it's easy to blame us for anything that goes wrong, and sometimes it is our fault, we are not squeaky clean, and I mean we're only human, we will make mistakes....Unfortunately it is not a small mistake at the time of the funeral, it's a big mistake."[Q.4]

Mr. Y: On occasion you will...see a family sort of taking it out on the funeral director, in other words becoming very aggressive. If we make a mistake, which we [will sometimes] do with the newspaper notice, let's say, or we make a mistake in sending a car 10 minutes too late to pick them up for the funeral, some people, very seldom but it does happen, and they really....Sometimes we take a lot of abuse and it is not really justified for the event that happened.[Y.2]

Ms. D: People come in, they're angry at you and they're bitter and everything, but you just have to take it, you know, because, you're the last one that [has] to deal with their loved ones.[D.3]

In response to the question about the possible reasons that people may have a negative or less positive feeling about what a funeral director does, Mr. Q reported: "The biggest one that comes is that they're being forced into some financial expense they did not dream about."[Q.5] Similarly, according to Mr. Y, the main reason for the negative behaviours is: "If there is any negativism, it

is not necessarily because of the occupation, but [because of] the money that it costs to [have] a funeral."[Y.3]

According to Mr. Q, the media helps people to be suspicious; "When the family sits down with us, they are very suspicious, because they have been listening to the T.V. or reading articles that funeral homes are taking advantage of weeping widows."[Q.6] When he was talking about the effects of the media on the families, Mr. X shared one of his stories:

> Mr. X: I remember [in] the 60's when Jessica Mitford [see 1963/1978] wrote a book called "The High Cost of Dying", and there was one particular family that I sat down with, this lady who came in with her two sons, it was her husband, their father who had died, and I was talking with the lady, making arrangements, and one of the sons had started making very rude remarks and just not being very nice, saying that "funeral directors are a bunch of thieves" and so forth, and I just got to a point where I said well, I am sorry, I have been very respectful to you and I expect the same thing in return. If you feel this way, I would rather you go to another funeral home.[X.3] (After the funeral, the son came and apologized to Mr. X for the rude comments he had said before.)

In fact, "The High Cost of Dying" was not written by Mitford (1963/1978) as Mr. X indicated, but by Davidson (cited in Mitford). It appears that funeral directors are still "haunted" by the ghosts of previous critics, though they might not be perfectly familiar with the exact sources of these criticisms. Per-

haps funeral directors might find it useful to become more knowledgeable with the sources of criticisms of their occupation in order to anticipate and develop effective responses to such criticisms.

Funeral directors may receive some aggressive and abusive behaviours from their customers. However, contrary to many other occupations, they typically have to tolerate the situation without "lashing" back. They have to "forgive" because of the vulnerability of the families. Despite their best efforts of understanding and care, there will still be negative or less positive reactions towards funeral directors. As Ms. D put it, "You will get people who are unsatisfied no matter how hard you try, you know, people are looking for mistakes, [and] they're going to find one."[D.4]

Negative Reactions of Close Relatives

Since most of the participants inherited their job from their family, most of them did not have any negative reactions from their close relatives. Only a few of the participants provided examples for this theme. Mr. Q implied at different points in the interview that his wife does not like the job very much. He noted that she "has no involvement in the funeral business, which is contrary to the norm."[Q.7] Ms. D's father and one of her children were disturbed by the idea of dealing with death. Ms. D reported her father's dislike of speaking about her occupation; "My father will not talk about it, my father is...well, he...you know, he doesn't like to talk about death."[D.5] She described her child's feelings towards her occupation as: "My children, one of them...she doesn't mind what I do, but she doesn't like the idea that I deal with actual death or anything

like that."[D.6]

Ms. Ω appeared to have a rather difficult time convincing her close relatives of the appropriateness of her career decision. Not only did she have to deal with occupationist attitudes per se, but also with superstitious beliefs.

> Ms. Ω: My husband's side...they had so much against me at first, when they heard that we are going to open a funeral home, my mother in law...she was very upset and she purposely gave me a phone call and talked with me over the phone to try and convince me not to do it because of all the superstitious reasons, she said we were too young to do this kind of business because of spiritual problems....She said that it might affect my family, my children."[Ω.3]

Ms. Ω's mother was more concerned about other people's attitudes towards her daughter. According to Ms. Ω, her mother "reacted not because she disliked this occupation, what she was worried about was how other people would look at me....Not a lot of Chinese people like doing this kind of job."[Ω.4]

Perhaps "superstition" should be its own fine-grained category. However, superstitious considerations were reported by only one participant, whose cultural background (Chinese) differed significantly from that of the other participants. Perhaps superstition-linked occupationism is more common among some ethnic groups (e.g., Chinese) than others. In any event, I chose to not create a separate fine-grained category for superstition.

Nonwork-Related Feedback

This theme included reactions which the participants had received from people in any kind of social environment. The positive reactions appeared more specifically classifiable as "approach behaviour" and the negative ones as "avoidance behaviour."

Approach Behaviour

When the interviewers asked the participants whether or not they had ever received any positive behaviours from people that they had never known, or had only known causally, such as those met at the parties, both Mr. Q and Ms. Ω mentioned instances in which people showed them respect. According to Mr. Q, "Funeral directors are being more respected not as undertakers but as business people."[Q.8] For Ms. Ω, reactions from other people appear to fall into two categories; the first comes from Canadians and the second from Chinese people. With Canadians (non-ethnic Chinese), "When I tell the Canadian that I am a funeral director and I operate the funeral home, they say, 'Oh, it is good.' The first thing they think is you make good money."[Ω.5] Among ethnic Chinese, she reported that she had found funeral directors were fairly well respected, but she qualified this, saying that "although the Chinese people are scared [based on superstition], they know it [the job] requires a lot of professionalism; not everybody can do it." [Ω.6]

According to Mr. Q, lack of relevant occupational information leads to disrespect; "We are dealing with unknowns and the public really didn't look

up to us that much, but as people become more knowledgeable and know what we do in our profession, the respect comes naturally."[Q.9] Ms. D would have concurred, and described her standard approach to ignorance on the nature of the occupation: "First, when I'll tell them I work in the funeral home, they'll have this, 'Oh, how can you do something like that?' sort of attitude, but then when I'll tell them, they'll say, you know, 'That's challenging' and I will say, 'Yes, it is.' "[D.7]

According to Ms. Ω, another type of approach reaction (although it "cuts both ways") was jealousy for the stability of her financial status. She reported that her friends mentioned their financial struggles to her. "They always come to me," she reported, "saying, 'Oh, I am having hard time, unlike you, you are O.K., I am sure you are O.K.,' things like that, you know. They admire the kind of work that we do."[Ω.7]

Avoidance Behaviour

This theme included negative behaviours which were shown by the people with whom the participants had no relationship at all or had relatively less contact. In order to cluster the participants' statements under this theme, the investigator made an effort to choose the instances in accordance with the typical appropriateness (more or less using "standard etiquette") of those examples within a given social content (that is, the behaviours that were shown at parties, gatherings, meetings, and so on).

Unlike the other themes discussed above, there appeared to exist a number of discrete forms of avoidance behaviours. Therefore, I prefer to present these

types of reactions in separate subcategories.

Physical distance.   Ms. Ω reported the most striking example of physical distance-seeking behaviours from others. She explained how far people would go to show their disapproval:

> Ms. Ω: Most of the Chinese people or most of the Oriental people, they don't like it [the idea of dealing with the dead people], they don't want to talk about it, they don't even want to shake my hand sometimes....They will maybe turn away, you know, they will not just tell directly to you, "Oh, I don't like you", they will not do that, but they'll just avoid....If they don't need it [the service of a funeral director], they just don't want to mention it or even want you sit with you.[Ω.8]

Mr. Q also mentioned that he had experienced physical distance from others, especially those times when people escape after malevolent comments.

> Mr. Q: Well, [people will say that] you're "nothing but a bunch of vultures," you know, "only looking after your wallet, nothing more than that, ha, ha, ha." And they off they go, sort of thing. I mean, they run out of the room and I don't have the chance to make a rebuttal....I mean, he does all the nasty comments and moves off into the next room, don't allow you to...you know."[Q.10]

Of course, in the example provided by Mr. Q, the physical distance is sought following an attack behaviour.

Jokes. Probably one of the most common negative reaction to a funeral director is telling jokes about their jobs or about death in general. Ms. D reported that "You'll always have jokes, no matter what you do, they'll always have jokes with me here to a certain point but, no matter what you do, you will get jokes....You are going to get jokes, you go to a party, things happen, not [that] you want them to happen but things do happen."[D.8]

Although Mr. Z was still new in the occupation, and though he had not (yet) received many strongly negative behaviours, his occupational choice had served as a spur to jokes. Mr. Z is a 26 years old, single French Canadian. He and his uncle operate their own funeral home. For him, meeting with a new person typically included that person making the joke: "Every time I meet someone I have never seen before, and I say I work in a funeral parlour, and often people, their first reaction, they'll crack a joke most of the time, they'll tell me a joke."[Z.1] He reported some examples of the jokes he received (The jokes quoted below were translated from the French, and might have lost something in the translation. The original French versions of these jokes are presented in Appendix C):

> Mr. Z: They'll say, "Do you know what the slogan of funeral par-
> lours is? One service attracts another"....There's another one, "Do
> you know where funeral parlours fill their hearses with gas? At Ul-
> tramar"....If there is an old person on the corner of the street, they
> [his friends] may say, we can all be a bit mean, you know, they'll
> say, "Hey, you'd better give him your card", stuff like that. [Z.2]

Even in spite of his general tendency to see everything through "rose-coloured glasses" in terms of the reactions he received from others, Mr. X did admit that he would sometimes meet people who make off-putting jokes: "Most people are very respectful, but you have the odd person who will make a joke and so forth."[X.4]

One possible reason for the large number of jokes or gentle cynicism might be that they could serve as peoples' way of mastering their suppressed anxieties related to death (Becker, 1973). According to Reynolds and Kalish (1974), one way of distancing oneself from death anxiety is through humour. The humour provides a release whenever people face death or meet an individual whose work is related to death or dying. Hence, as Ms. D (D. 8) mentioned, funeral directors will most likely continue being the targets of occupationist actions in the form of cynicism and jokes.

Stereotypes and misinformation. As with jokes, stereotypes were another commonly reported reaction. The lack of knowledge about this occupation appears to lead to a lot of negative or restrictive stereotypic images and attitudes. For example, Mr. Q said: "When one is brought into this business, most people think you're going to become an embalmer."[Q.11] Similarly, Mr. Z also encountered with people who thought that his job was embalming: "Sometimes people, say half of them, will tell a joke, and the others will ask me right away, seriously, 'Do you embalm them?'....Sometimes people say, 'Is it you who plays with them?' or they ask, 'What do you do, do you touch them?'"[Z.3]

Mr. X reported a common stereotype about funeral directors: "Sometimes

people have their certain image of a funeral director, so they are surprised
when they meet [me], because I am a very happy person, I smile a lot, and
sometimes people say, '[Mr. X], you are a funeral director, I thought you people
are very sad and very depressing-looking, and very negative.'"[X.5] According
to Mr. Q, the media help people to form these kinds of images:

> Mr. Q: They [people] come in with the idea I really like to get
> off the dollar, because they relate us as being vultures, looking for
> the last dollar they may have. I know where this is coming from,
> because we do get a lot of bad publicity that comes from T.V.,
> movies, and one thing and another....[People will say] you are a
> bunch of bastards, you cost me over $ 12,000 to bury my old lady,
> you know. [Q.12]

In another example, in response to a family who did not take his advice on
not going to court for their family matters, Mr. Q said, "They have to find
out themselves, I mean, who am I? I'm just the undertaker, what do I know?
(laughs). The only thing they didn't know is I've been there before [that is,
he had seen similar examples before]."[Q.13] It turned out that Mr. Q was right
on his advice.

Both Mr. X and Ms. D mentioned that they had been asked by some people,
"How can you do it?,"[X.6] or "How can you touch a [dead] person?"[D.9] When
the interviewers asked to Ms. D if she had ever had positive reactions towards
her occupation, she responded, "Not really. No, I have never had that. No,
I find that everybody...it's a job where they will say, I guess, that somebody

has to do it, [that] sort of thing, that is about the comment that at least that they will say to me."[D.10]

Ms. Ω reported another kind of misinterpretation of the occupation: "What they [people] think is that funeral directors, they are low class people, they have nothing to do, they could not get a job, they could not get into any other business,...that's why they started this business, and I think it's not fair."[Ω.9] On the other hand, Ms. Ω tapped into the issue which may be an important cause for many of the negative attitudes against this occupation, reporting that "the Oriental people scare a little bit because they think that we touch a lot of deads, we contact a lot of spirits because of the dead person."[Ω.10] Ms. Ω also mentioned lack of trust some people have in funeral directors; "We are not here to cheat people, but often they think once somebody died, who's going to check what you put into the casket, because sometimes they put [in] jewellery."[Ω.11]

Avoiding dates.   Another type of avoidance behaviour reported by the funeral directors was some reluctance on the part of others to go out on dates with them:

> Mr. Q: Sometimes it was hard getting a date when they knew what your occupation was....My own wife told her mother that she would never marry anybody in the funeral business because she had a cousin who was in the funeral business and unfortunately, the poor guy looked like death warmed up. [Q.14]

This example triggers the question of whether or not cultural norms respecting courtship rituals may include warrants for occupationist actions.

Negative halo to other family members. Becoming a funeral director has an impact on the entire family. The impact may be either advantageous or disadvantageous to family members. Despite the relatively few number of examples derived from this investigation, it seems that members of the family of a funeral director may also receive unpleasant reactions from others (see Bowman, 1959).

Mr. Q shared his early childhood experiences (his father had also been a funeral director): "When I was young, I was always introduced, not by my name, but as the 'undertaker's son'. I never had a name and...(laughing) till I got older I was always the undertaker's son."[Q.15] Mr. Q's own daughter had also encountered some of the negative attitudes towards the occupation: "I have one child, a daughter, and before she was even conceived, my wife told me that no matter if we have any children, they're not going to be in the funeral business."[Q.16]

Mr. Q's childhood experiences are similar to those which Bowman (1959) reported. The negative occupationist actions towards family members, especially those towards children, might conceivably lead to any of a number of negative outcomes, such as a loss of self-esteem. The study of the effects of prejudice on the self-esteem of children has, of course, been an active area in psychology for some time (see Aboud, 1988; Dodge & Feldman, 1990); perhaps findings from this large literature might be extended to the study of the effects

of occupationism on children.

Using an out of date or a lower prestige job title. A final type of negative

reaction that one of the participants mentioned was the usage of an out of date

and perhaps disparaging job title. For example, an historically earlier job title

for the work today performed by funeral directors was "undertaker." While

Mr. Q admitted that he was sometimes called an undertaker, he suggested that:

"We do get called undertakers but really and truly, a name I like to be called

is a funeral counsellor, because people come to us with a thousand problems

and we have to take them one by one and straighten them out for them."[Q.17]

It appears that Mr. Q was not pleased with his occupation's title. He would

prefer to be called funeral counsellor, which might sound more prestigious for

some people. It is likely that some people might well try to build up their

job prestige by using more prestigious sounding job titles. This issue might be

examined further in future studies.

Resulting Feelings or Behaviours

Negative behaviours, such as those described above, might well annoy fu-

neral directors. The participants of this study expressed this annoyance rather

eloquently. They reported various strategies for coping with the avoidance

behaviours in general and jokes in particular.

Reynolds and Kalish (1974) indicated that outside social relationships can

provide some problems for professionals, such as funeral directors, morgue

attendants, deputy coroners, and so on. According to Reynolds and Kalish,

funeral directors sometimes hesitate to disclose the specific nature of their work; they are prepared for the common reactions of revulsion and teasing when they reveal their occupation to others. In a similar vein, both Mr. Q and Mr. Y preferred not to declare their occupations in public because, as Mr. Q reported, such disclosures might lead to unpleasantness:

> Mr. Q: Anyone who knows me as being in the funeral business, they have exhausted their jokes on me and everything else, but that is behind us and we are going to enjoy ourselves that evening....But if the word does get out, I spent a lot of the part of the defending my profession....It's important to me that people understand...important to me that people don't make these, shall we say, brash statements, and lead other people to feel that it is the truth, you know.[Q.18]

Mr. X described his displeasure with jokes: "Jokes...it doesn't make me feel bad but,...there is something in bad taste....I will not tolerate people making jokes."[X.7] In the course of his discussion of his attitudes towards jokes, he reported that usually he would discourage the individual from continuing the unwanted behaviour by accepting his/her "offense" calmly.

> Mr. X: I try to say, why is this individual saying this, is it just to attract attention, or is he trying to be funny, sometimes they try to be funny, so I just don't let him get to me....If there is an individual who makes a joke, I will listen, smile, but will not join in and make fun. So, more or less, it discourages the person; he'll

just make a joke, 'well, a business is dead' and I'll just smile, and let it go at that.[X.8]

However, Mr. Y said that jokes did not bother him; "As long as they're made in the right place and if they are standard jokes and fairly good"[Y.4] He found that most of the jokes were reasonable. Apart from jokes, Mr. Y reported his feelings when he receives a negative feedback from his customers: "Sometimes I get angry, particularly if it is something that we didn't do or was not our fault."[Y.5]

Ms. Ω said that she had been "really" discriminated against by some people. "The younger generation...like me, I mean because it is a very interesting occupation, but with the old folk, they really ˙ ˙criminate [against] me, but I do not mind."[Ω.12] She reported that before she had started her career in the funeral business, she was well aware of the fact that some people would have disdained her because of the occupation. Despite of this realization, she indicated that "When I first started, I felt a little angry, although I expected that....I didn't expect to that much[i.e., to feel _that_ angry]...but, now I am fine." [Ω.13]

The resulting feelings or behaviours of the participants of this study suggested that funeral directors may attempt to suppress their anger towards a wider community that fails to appreciate the nature of their work. According to Reynolds and Kalish (1974), the suppressed feelings affect funeral directors' work performance, their self-concepts, and their self-esteem. In a study conducted by Schell and Zinger (1985), results indicated that the Canadian funeral

directors were only a moderately satisfied and job-committed group. Initially, the participants' preferences for the occupation of funeral director were moderately low, leading to perceived low productivity. The results of Schell and Zinger's study spur the question: could one of the reasons for the low preferences in the choice of this occupation (i.e., low occupational interests in the general population) be endemic, negative occupationist acts towards funeral directors?

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Overview

In this investigation, I described self-reports by funeral directors of particular types of behaviours directed towards them by others. Specifically, I examined self-reports of occupationist behaviours, of which the participants reported ample instances. Several specific types of occupationist behaviours were identified, including jokes, stereotypic images and attitudes, avoiding dates, physical distance, and evaluations of financial status.

Occupationism Exists

The instances reported by the participants of this study suggest that there are several types of occupationist behaviours which might be directed to funeral directors. Hence, I concluded that "occupationism exists." The participants gave examples of both positive and negative occupationist reactions. However, this study cannot determine the extensiveness of these occupationist acts among different populations (i.e., funeral directors outside the sample of this study or any members of occupations other than funeral directors).

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Occupationism Has Consequences

Krumboltz (1991, 1992) suggested that occupationism is just as harmful as any kind of prejudiced behaviour. On the other hand, Carson (1992) proposed that occupationist behaviours can be potentially either helpful or harmful to another individual's interests (consequentiality). The participants in this study reported several instances which appear to be consistent with what Krumboltz and Carson proposed, that is, occupationist behaviours can have harmful consequences. One of the instances provided by the participants was an urge to defend one's occupation against unpleasant and perhaps incorrect rumours about funeral directors (Q. 17). Another one was suppressed anger towards the community that failed to appreciate the work of funeral director (Y. 5; Ω. 13). Still another one was an objection to inappropriate stereotypic images of this occupation (Ω. 9). A final example was a desire for a job title that might sound more prestigious to some people (Q. 17). Therefore, I conclude that occupationist behaviours may lead to undesirable consequences for the affected individuals.

Implications for Theories of Occupationism

As they are consistent with both extant conceptualizations of occupationism (Carson, 1992; Krumboltz, 1991, 1992), the results of this study confirmed that occupationism exists. The participants' experiences (Q. 8; Q. 9; Q. 13; Q. 14; X. 5; Y. 3; Ω. 1; Ω. 4; Ω. 5; Ω. 8; Ω. 9 Ω. 12) were consistent with Krumboltz's definition of the construct, "occupationism consists of judgments

made about the characteristics and worth of individuals based on their past, present, or future occupations" (1992; p. 512).

The examples of Mr. Q, Ms. D and Ms. Ω (Q. 9; D. 10; Ω. 1; Ω. 9) appeared to support Carson's (1992) definition of occupationism as "consequential acts of occupational discrimination on the basis of prestige" (p. 493). According to Carson, consequentiality entails that an act must be potentially either helpful or harmful to another individual's interests. However, in this study, the participants reported only harmful instances.

Implications for Career Development and Other Theories

The results of this study suggest implications for theories of career development, stereotyping and prejudice, and death anxiety. These implications will be discussed in turn.

Implications for Career Development Theories

Although I did not provide a review of major theories of career development in the literature review, the results appeared to have implications for some of these theories. I will focus my discussion on the implications of this study for two theories in particular: Mitchell and Krumboltz's (1990) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM), and Super's (1990) developmental theory.

Some of the participants reported (Q. 6; Q. 10; X. 3; X. 5) that people have learnt some images about funeral directors in their social environments and have developed stereotypic attitudes (e.g., funeral directors are depressing-

looking, or they are bunch of vultures). According to SLTCDM, genetic predisposition, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and cognitive, emotional, and performance responses and skills play a part in all career decision-making. Therefore, an exposition of identified occupationist behaviours in this study, such as stereotypes, jokes, physical distance, avoiding dates, and consequences of these reactions might be seen as potential "associative learning experiences" for an individual, having a dissuasive impact on career decision-making processes.

As I discussed above, occupationist behaviours have consequences. It appears that both forms of occupationist behaviours may affect individuals' conceptions of themselves. In Super's (1990) developmental theory of career decision-making, self-concept is an important factor in decision-making processes. According to Super, psychological and social/economic factors combine in the development of the self. During this process, occupationist acts (positive and negative) might conceivably play a role in the development of the self-concept, as well as of interests in some occupations and a lack of interest in others.

Implications for Other Theories

Implications of stereotypes. In order to maintain simplicity in perception and thinking, the human mind functions with the aid of categorization (Allport, 1954/1979). However, stereotypes and generalizations can also restrict our awareness of others. Bruner (1956) proposed that the primary basis for categorization is perceived similarity-dissimilarity. I have found evidence

for the effects of such occupational stereotypes in participants' reports. Mr. X and Mr. Q had shared similar experiences (X. 5), in that they reported that others, upon meeting them, were very surprised because they did not confirm to preconceptions and stereotypes.

Implications for a theory of death anxiety. Becker (1973) suggested that human beings are literally split in two: they have an awareness of their own uniqueness in that they stick out of nature with a towering majesty, and yet they go back into the ground a few feet in order to rot and disappear forever. According to Becker, it is a terrifying dilemma to be in and to have to live with. Reynolds and Kalish (1974) proposed that one way of distancing one-self from the anxiety of thinking about death is through humour. Indeed, I found evidence in Ms. Ω's experiences (Ω. 9) of how death anxiety could pro-voke avoidance behaviours, such as humour, gentle cynicism, physical distance, curiosity, revulsion, and so on.

Research Methodology

Qualitative Methods in Career Psychology

Several authors (Borgen & Amundson, 1990; Cochran, 1990; Goldman, 1976; Mahrer, 1988; McCracken, 1988; Polkinghorne, 1991; Young & Friesen, 1990) have identified some limitations to "traditional," "mainstream," quanti-tative investigations in the social sciences (with some of the authors focusing on the case of career psychology in particular). Advocates of methodological diversity contend that career psychology should add qualitative methods to its

present repertoire of quantitatively based methods. The primary reason given for the need for diversity is that there are questions about human experience and action whose answers remain inaccessible to traditional methods. In other words, supporters of methodological diversity suggest that the traditional approaches provide an incomplete account of human experience. Qualitative data gives us the opportunity to "step into the mind" of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves. The above-mentioned authors proposed that without qualitative understanding, our vision of social scientific data would be "monocular" when it could be "binocular"; the qualitative approach might help us to "situate" the numbers (obtained through quantitative research) in their fuller social and cultural context.

As this study was the first effort to collect data on occupationism, and as the "types" of occupationist actions had not heretofore been specified, the qualitative approach (the long interview) seemed the most compelling method for the descriptive purpose (i.e., to gain access to the different types of occupationist acts) of this inquiry. In order to study occupationism at this stage, to paraphrase McCracken (1988), it was more important to mine the characteristics of occupationist experiences than to discover how many, and what kinds of, people share these experiences.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Research

One might argue that nontraditional (qualitative) methods have several pitfalls. One major failing of these methods is the reporting of studies based on small sample sizes; it may be difficult to generalize such results to larger

populations. Indeed, the number of participants in this study was, in all likelihood, insufficient to identify all forms of occupationist actions towards funeral directors. Although the number of the participants included in the study is in line with qualitative studies of this sort (see McCracken, 1988), I make no claim to having discovered all "species of occupationism. However, the extent to which the results "extend" to ei. the general or specific (e.g., specific ethnic groups) cannot be determined froi his study, both for reasons of the sample's size and demographic limitatio For example, different ethnic groups may react differently towards funeral directors. Thus, in future research, it seems prudent to sample sufficiently from different ethnic groups.

Additionally, this study makes attempts neither to determine levels of extensiveness of occupationist results among any population, nor to compare the relative magnitude (in terms of perceived impact) of occupationist acts compared to other forms of social discrimination (e.g., sexism, racism). It would be useful to conduct both forms of research. How common are different types of occupationist reactions both within and across occupations? What is the relative (subjective) magnitude of different forms of social discrimination? These issues are thorny ones and might lead to situations in which "advocates" of the theoretical importance of some forms of discrimination (e.g., racism) might argue that their forms of discrimination are more "important" and worthy of research attention than are others (e.g., occupationism).

Implications for Career Interventions and Training

Work with Current and Prospective Funeral Directors

The results of this study have implications for helping professionals whose practice includes career interventions (Spokane, 1991). First, the results suggest that there are several types of negative occupationist acts which might be directed towards funeral directors. The client's awareness of the likelihood for being a target for such occupationist behaviours, if he/she were to choose that occupation, might well lead to an alternate career choice. Therefore, some familiarity with typical occupationist acts may help practitioners to detect whether or not exposure to, or knowledge, of such acts might trigger a reluctance to consider embarking on a career as a funeral director.

Familiarity with the nature of occupationist reactions towards funeral directors may assist the practitioner in designing unique career intervention strategies for individuals already in that occupation. For example, in such a career intervention, priority might be given to disclosure of the consequences of occupationist reactions (i.e., those feelings or behaviours resulting from the experience of occupationist acts). Following this "ventilation" process, several coping strategies might be suggested or taught. Possibly, role-playing techniques might be used to test the appropriateness of these strategies. In a similar vein, this kind of intervention may be used for individuals considering a career as funeral director, along the lines of a "realistic job preview."

Counsellor Training

An understanding of clients in the context of the social settings in which they live can add to the value of the services counsellors provide. Therefore, the long interview method as used in this study may be advantageous in the training of novice counsellors. It could provide an opportunity for emerging practitioners to experience occupational information first-hand rather than through the abstractions of printed reference materials. This method could also help neophyte counsellors to practice building therapeutic rapport, obtaining information, to use prompts and probes, and so on.

Conclusion

The data collected in this investigation were inconsistent with the hypothesis that "occupationism does not exist." Using a qualitative method (the long interview), a number of occupationist acts (both positive and negative) which had been directed towards funeral directors were identified. The results provide additional evidence suggesting that there _may_ exist some differences in the _types_ of occupationist behaviours generated by members of different ethnic groups (and possibly in how such acts are interpreted, that is, the phenomenological experience of occupationism). However, the nature of the method used in this study does not permit interpretations of the extensiveness of the variables studied across populations. It is also suggested that future investigations examine this and other issues related to the extensiveness of occupationist acts.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form (English and French)

McGill

Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling

Faculty of Education	3700 McTavish Street	Tel (514) 398-4240
McGill University	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	Fax (514) 398-6968
	H3A 1Y2	Telex 05 268510

Consent Form: Job Perception Study A

Welcome to the Job Perception Study! You will be asked to participate in a brief interview, centering on others' reactions to your choice of occupation and your experience of these reactions. If it is an individual interview, it will last approximately 25 minutes, while group interviews may run somewhat longer, up to 45 minutes. In either case, you are free to end at any time. Your participation is voluntary and will not influence your standing with your employer or any other organization.

<u>Confidentiality of Results</u>: We will keep the results of this study as confidential and anonymous as possible. In the reporting of your actual statements during the interviews, we will disguise any identifying information so as to protect your anonymity. You may obtain a report of the results of this study by contacting the investigator, Professor Andrew Carson, about one year from now (call [514] 398-4240).

Thank you, and if you have any questions, feel free to ask. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and date in the spaces provided below. You will be offered a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT:
RECHERCHE SUR LA DISCRIMINATION OCCUPATIONNELLE

Bienvenue à notre étude portant sur la discrimination occupationnelle. Vous avez été invités pour une brève entrevue de groupe regroupant cinq professionnels de votre champs d'occupation. Nous désirons étudier les réactions que vous recevez des gens en fonction de votre profession.

Cette rencontre d'une durée de 45 minutes vous donne entière liberté de quitter à n'importe quel moment, si vous le jugez à propos, et ceci sans conséquences négatives pour vous, face à votre employeur ou tout autre organisme.

CONFIDENTIALITE DES RESULTATS

Les résultats seront traités, analysés et conservés afin d'éviter tout accroc à la confidentialité et de préserver l'anonymat des participants. Toute information qui serait susceptible de vous identifier sera masquée préalablement à la publication de la présente recherche.

Une copie des résultats sera mise à votre disposition en vous adressant au responsable de cette recherche: Andrew Carson, Ph.D., (514) 398-4240. Cette documentation devrait être disponible d'ici septembre 1993.

Merci encore une fois de votre aimable collaboration à la présente recherche et n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous afin que nous puissions répondre à toute question supplémentaire de votre part.

Veuillez s'il-vous-plait apposer votre signature et inscrire la date aux endroits prévus à cet effet si vous acceptez toujours de participer à la recherche.

Merci!

_____   _____

SIGNATURE   **DATE**

APPENDIX B

Questions Asked During Interviews

In every interview, the participants were asked the following questions, usually in the order outlined below. Some participants spontaneously anticipated subsequent questions; when this occurred, the interviewer advanced to that question, returning to the original order afterward (a separate list of questions in French [not reproduced here] was constructed by a bilingual Project member.)

1. Identification of demographic information including, age, sex, ethnicity, marital status, education, and income.

2. Could you please describe what you do in your job, what sorts of activities it involves?

3. Think about others' reactions to your occupation, how others act towards you because of your occupation. For example, when people first learn what you do, how do they respond?

4. How have your parents reacted to your choice of occupation, to what you do for a living?

5. How have other family members, including your spouse (if applicable), responded to your choice of occupation? (The interviewer

would have determined participant's marital status already, and would tailor the question appropriately.)

6. How do others react or treat you because of your occupation?

7. Is it ever justifiable to treat people differently simply because of their occupation? If so, why?

8. What does it mean to say that one job has more prestige than another?

APPENDIX C

List of the Quotations

In this appendix, all statements cited in Chapter III are presented, separately for each participant (Mr. Q, Mr. X, Mr. Y, Mr. Z, Ms. D, and Ms. Ω).

List of Mr. Q's statements

Mr. Q is an English Canadian. He is 52 years old and married, and he operates his own funeral home, inherited from his father.

Q.1: Any family that I serve, their attitude of me changes. I get respected afterwards. They may not come in respecting me, but when they see the job I have to do with their family, when I straighten out perhaps a small family feud between a son and his youngest sister or something...I do get respected (p. 35).

Q.2: when a family member dies, it is a really emotional time, so that a little mistake is no longer a little mistake, it is a horrendous mistake. You have to be careful how you handle families (p. 38).

Q.3: The family [might] be offended very easily, such as I'm supposed to know that there's two 't's in their name and not one 't', and

when you ask if there's two 't's, then you feel challenged (laughs) (p. 38).

Q.4: He will give me bad information to put in the newspaper notice and when the aunt calls and then says, "Look, I'm very much alive and you've got me in the newspaper as being dead," you know, then he blames me, and says, "Well, it's not my fault, the funeral director did it." We become the punching bag, you know, justifiably, you know, I should not say justifiably, but I understand them, you know, it's easy to blame us for anything that goes wrong, and sometimes it is our fault, we are not squeaky clean, and I mean we're only human, we will make mistakes....Unfortunately it is not a small mistake at the time of the funeral, it's a big mistake. (p. 39).

Q.5: The biggest one that comes is that they're being forced into some financial expense they did not dream about (p. 39).

Q.6: When the family sits down with us, they are very suspicious, be-cause they have been listening to the T.V. or reading articles that funeral homes are taking advantage of weeping widows (p. 40).

Q.7: has no involvement in the funeral business, which is contrary to the norm (p. 41).

Q.8: Funeral directors are being more respected not as undertakers but as business people (p. 43).

Q.9: We are dealing with unknowns and the public really didn't look up to us that much, but as people become more knowledgeable and know what we do in our profession, the respect comes naturally (p. 44).

Q.10: Well, [people will say that] you're "nothing but a bunch of vultures", you know, "only looking after your wallet, nothing more than that, ha, ha, ha." And they off they go, sort of thing. I mean, they run out of the room and I don't have the chance to make a rebuttal....I mean, he does all the nasty comments and moves off into the next room, don't allow you to...you know. (p. 45)

Q.11: When one is brought into this business, most people think you're going to become an embalmer (p. 47).

Q.12: They [people] come in with the idea I really like to get off the dollar, because they relate us as being vultures, looking for the last dollar they may have. I know where this is coming from, because we do get a lot of bad publicity that comes from T.V., movies, and one thing and another....[People will say] you are a bunch of bastards, you cost me over $ 12,000 to bury my old lady, you know. (p. 48).

Q.13: They have to find out themselves, I mean, who am I? I'm just the undertaker, what do I know? (laughs). The only thing they didn't know is I've been there before [that is, he had seen similar examples

before] (p. 48).

Q.14: Sometimes it was hard getting a date when they knew what your occupation was....my own wife told her mother that she would never marry anybody in the funeral business because she had a cousin who was in the funeral business and unfortunately, the poor guy looked like death warmed up (p. 49).

Q.15: When I was young, I was always introduced, not by my name, but as the 'undertaker's son'. I never had a name and...(laughing) till I got older I was always the undertaker's son (p. 50).

Q.16: I have one child, a daughter, and before she was even conceived, my wife told me that no matter if we have any children, they're not going to be in the funeral business (p. 50).

Q.17: We do get called undertakers but really and truly, a name I like to be called is a <u>funeral counsellor</u>, because people come to us with a thousand problems and we have to take them one by one and straighten them out for them (p. 51).

Q.18: Anyone who knows me as being in the funeral business, they have exhausted their jokes on me and everything else, but that is behind us and we are going to enjoy ourselves that evening....But if the word does get out, I spent a lot of the part of the defending my profession....It's important to me that people understand...important

to me that people don't make these, shall we say, brash statements,
and lead other people to feel that it is the truth, you know. (p. 52)

List of Mr. X's statements

Mr. X is a director of a funeral home that belongs to a large corporation.
He grew up in a funeral home and, like Mr. Q, learnt his occupation from his
father. He did some other jobs when he was young, but he missed the Funeral
work, to which he subsequently returned. His mother was French Canadian
and his father was an English Canadian. Mr. X is 56 years old and divorced.

X.1: When people visit a funeral home, they are very courteous ....People
are appreciative....We get letters from families....They appreciate
any little thing that you do for them pertaining to the funeral ser-
vice (p. 36).

X.2: It's very important before the final decision is made that you don't
overlook or forget something because, if we do forget something,
we cannot come back like another types of services (p. 38).

X.3: I remember [in] the 60's when Jessica Mitford [see 1963/1978] wrote
a book called "The High Cost of Dying", and there was one par-
ticular family that I sat down with, this lady who came in with
her two sons, it was her husband, their father who had died, and
I was talking with the lady, making arrangements, and one of the
sons had started making very rude remarks and just not being very

nice, saying that "funeral directors are a bunch of thieves" and so forth, and I just got to a point where I said well, I am sorry, I have been very respectful to you and I expect the same thing in return. If you feel this way, I would rather you go to another funeral home (p. 40).

X.4: Most people are very respectful, but you have the odd person who will make a joke and so forth (p. 47).

X.5: Sometimes people have their certain image of a funeral director, so they are surprised when they meet [me], because I am a very happy person, I smile a lot, and sometimes people say, '[Mr. X], you are a funeral director, I thought you people are very sad and very depressing-looking, and very negative' (p. 48).

X.6: How can you do it? (p. 48)

X.7: Jokes...it doesn't make me feel bad but,...there is something in bad taste....I will not tolerate people making jokes (p. 52).

X.8: I try to say, why is this individual saying this, is it just to attract attention, or is he trying to be funny, sometimes they try to be funny, so I just don't let him get to me....if there is an individual who makes a joke, I will listen, smile, but will not join in and make fun. So, more or less, it discourages the person; he'll just make a joke, 'well, a business is dead' and I'll just smile, and let it go at that (p. 53).

List of Mr. Y's statements

Mr. Y is English Canadian, married and 52 years old. Apart from his occupation as a funeral director, he has a diploma in agriculture. He is a funeral director of a home that belongs to a corporation. Mr. Y comes from a family that operated a funeral home.

Y.1: They [his customers] more often than not are very appreciative of what we do....They will say thank you for looking after the funeral; most people would say thank you at the end of the funeral, "Thank you very much for all your help." (p. 36).

Y.2: On occasion you will...see a family sort of taking it out on the funeral director, in other words becoming very aggressive. If we make a mistake. which we [will sometimes] do with the newspaper notice, let's say, or we make a mistake in sending a car 10 minutes too late to pick them up for the funeral, some people, very seldom but it does happen, and they really....Sometimes we take a lot of abuse and it is not really justified for the event that happened (p. 39).

Y.3: If there is any negativism, it is not necessarily because of the occupation, but [because of] the money that it costs to [have] a funeral (p. 40).

Y.4: As long as they're made in the right place and if they are standard jokes and fairly good (p. 53).

Y.5: Sometimes I get angry, particularly if it is something that we didn't do or was not our fault (p. 53).

List of Mr. Z's statements

Mr. Z is 26 years old, single, and French Canadian. He and his uncle operate their own fune, ' home.

Z.1: Every time I meet ...meone I have never seen before, and I say I work in a funeral parlour, and often people, their first reaction, they'll crack a joke most of the time, they'll tell me a joke (p. 46).

Z.2: They'll say, "Do you know what the slogan of funeral parlours is? One service attracts another"....There's another one, "Do you know where funeral parlours fill their hearses with gas? At Ultramar"....If there is an old person on the corner of the street, they [his friends] may say, we can all be a bit mean, you know, they'll say, "Hey, you'd better give him your card", stuff like that (p. 46).

Il vont dire, "Sais-tu c'est quoi le devise des salons funéraires, un service en attire un autre."....Il y en a un autre aussi, "Sais-tu où est-ce que les salons funéraires remplissent leurs corbillards de gaz? Chez Ultramar"....Bon il y a une personne âgée sur le bord de la rue, t'sais ils vont dire, t'sais on est tous un peu méchant quand même, t'sais ils vont dire, "Tu devrais y donner ta carte t'sais",je sais pas de affaire de même.

Z.3: Sometimes people, say half of them, will tell a joke, and the others will ask me right away, seriously, 'Do you embalm them?'....sometimes people say, 'Is it you who plays with them?' or they ask, 'What do you do, do you touch them?' (p. 47)

List of Ms. D's statements

Ms. D is 49 years old and married. Her mother is French, and her father is English Canadian. She has advanced from the position of secretary to funeral director, all at the same funeral home, which is a member of a large corporate chain.

D.1: The idea that I am helping people...I get a very, very good satisfaction knowing when a person goes out, they will say thank you, and it really is a good feeling, you know, "it's not as hard as I thought it was going to be," you know, and actually, they'll come in crying, and they'll leave and they're not. It's as if I've taken a load off their shoulders, and they're at peace with themselves, which is really a fantastic feeling (p. 37).

D.2: My husband is very proud of me, and he'll say, you know, 'guess what she does?' (p. 37)

D.3: People come in, they're angry at you and they're bitter and everything, but you just have to take it, you know, because, you're the last one that to deal with their loved ones (p. 39).

D.4: You will get people who are unsatisfied no matter how hard you try, you know, people are looking for mistakes, [and] they're going to find one (p. 41).

D.5: My father will not talk about it, my father is...well, he...you know, he doesn't like to talk about death. (p. 41)

D.6: My children, one of them...she doesn't mind what I do, but she doesn't like the idea that I deal with actually death or anything like that (p. 42).

D.7: First, when I'll tell them I work in the funeral home, they'll have this, 'Oh, how can you do something like that?' sort of attitude, but then when I'll tell them, they'll say, you know, 'That's challenging' and I will say, 'Yes, it is.' (p. 44)

D.8: You'll always have jokes, no matter what you do, they'll always have jokes with me here to a certain point but, no matter what you do, you will get jokes....You are going to get jokes, you go to a party, things happen, not [that] you want them to happen but things do happen (p. 46).

D.9: How can you touch a [dead] person? (p. 48)

D.10: Not really. No, I have never had that. No, I find that everybody...it's a job where they will say, I guess, that somebody has to do it, [that] sort of thing, that is about the comment that at least that they will say to me (p. 49).

List of Ms. Ω's statements

Ms. Ω is an ethnic Chinese and operates her own funeral home. She is married and 32 years old. Before she established this business she was a designer.

Ω.1: I think when they need the service, they pretty much respect you, but besides, lik if they do not need it, they do not want to mention or even want to sit with you (p. 37).

Ω.2: My father was...he agreed. In fact, he encouraged me to do it when he first heard because, he knows that it's a big business (p. 38).

Ω.3: My husband's side...they had so much against me at first, when they heard that we are going to open a funeral home, my mother in law...she was very upset and she purposely gave me a phone call and talked with me over the phone to try and convince me not to do it because of all the superstitious reasons, she said we were too young to do this kind of business because of spiritual problems....She said that it might affect my family, my children (p. 42).

Ω.4: reacted not because she disliked this occupation, what she was worried about was how other people would look at me....Not a lot of Chinese people like doing this kind of job (p. 42).

Ω.5: When I tell the Canadian that I am a funeral director and I operate in the funeral home, they say, 'Oh, it is good.' The first thing they think is <u>you make good money</u> (p. 43).

Ω.6: although the Chinese people are scared [based on superstition], they know it [the job] requires a lot of professionalism; not everybody can do it (p. 43).

Ω.7: They always come to me saying, 'Oh, I am having hard time, unlike you, you are O.K., I am sure you are O.K.' things like that, you know. They admire the kind of work that we do (p. 44).

Ω.8: Most of the Chinese people or most of the Oriental people, they don't like it [the idea of dealing with the dead people], they don't want to talk about it, they don't even want to shake my hand sometimes....They will maybe turn away, you know, they will not just tell directly to you, "Oh, I don't like you", they will not do that, but they'll just avoid....If they don't need it [the service of a funeral director], they just don't want to mention it or even want you sit with you (p. 45).

Ω.9: What they [people] think is that funeral directors, they are low class people, they have nothing to do, they could not get a job, they could not get into any other business,...that's why they started this business, and I think it's not fair (p. 49).

Ω.10: the Oriental people scare a little bit because they think that we

touch a lot of deads, we contact a lot of spirits because of the dead person (p. 49).

Ω.11: We are not here to cheat people, but often they think once somebody died, who's going to check what you put into the casket, because sometimes they put [in] jewellery. (p. 49)

Ω.12: The younger generation...like me, I mean because it is a very interesting occupation, but with the old folk, they really discriminate [against] me, but I do not mind (p. 53).

Ω.13: When I first started, I felt a little angry, although I expected that....I didn't expect to that much[i.e., to feel _that_ angry]...but, now I am fine (p. 53).