

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION:  
MEDICINE, DENTISTRY, LAW, UNIVERSITY TEACHING

BY

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Robert Duane Watson

## ABSTRACT

Two major approaches to occupational choice are found in the literature: the "rational or purposive" and the "adventitious or fortuitous". Utilizing these two approaches as a guiding framework, the researcher set out to investigate factors influencing the choice of a profession; and to determine if the respondents generally followed one of the two approaches in their choice.

Twenty-five respondents pursuing professional careers in Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Science, and English were interviewed. The factors influencing their choices were classified into nine categories. The major finding is that there is a fairly high degree of consensus across the five groups for two factors that were important in their choice of an occupation. These were: "Interest", and "Job Security, Flexibility, Independence". Data are presented which indicate that, in general, the manner in which the respondents chose their professions follows the "rational or purposive" approach.

Robert Duane Watson

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"One of the most enduring questions in the sociology of occupations and professions concerns the processes by which persons select a career. When social norms allow relative freedom to choose any occupation, it is a matter of some urgency to discern the prevailing patterns of choice, for these will illuminate questions of occupational recruitment, of social opportunity and mobility, and, more generally of the relation of the occupational sphere to other parts of the social system."

N. Rogoff

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Numerous research studies focusing on the choice of an occupation have attempted to describe the so-called "process of choice," and to determine the factors which operate in the choice of an occupation particularly as it pertains to high prestige occupations and professions. Developments in this research have generally been addressed to one of two approaches to the study of occupational choice. The research of Ginzberg et al., 1951; Blau et al., 1956; and Slocum, 1966, is representative of the first approach which stresses the purposive or rational nature of occupational careers; conceiving of the final choice as contingent upon a sequence of previous choices. This approach generally views occupational choice as a compromise between preferences for certain types of rewards and opportunities for access to specific occupations. The research of Katz and Martin, 1962; Caplow, 1954; Stecklein and Eckert, 1958; and Gustad, 1960, is representative of the second approach in which occupational choice is conceived of as essentially adventitious or fortuitous in nature. This approach characterizes occupational choice as non-rational, spontaneous, and based upon situational pressures. The essence of this approach is that career choice is made because of situational contingencies.

Studies of occupational choice which have used a sociocultural perspective involve identifying and explaining a variety of social

characteristics related to the types and status of occupations which people with different social characteristics aspire to or achieve. Research of this type has also assisted in developing an awareness of the context in which the choice of an occupation occurs and the kinds of social influences operating on an individual.

The literature on the subject indicates that both the purposive or rational and the adventitious or fortuitous approaches appear to have some degree of empirical validity. Pavalko notes, however, that:

It is possible that one of these alternative explanations applies more to some types of occupations and individuals than it does the others. For example, work requiring extensive formal preparation that must be obtained according to a prescribed pattern or sequence requires or forces upon individuals a great deal of deliberate planning. In general work at what has been referred to as the "professional" end of the continuum tends to be of this kind. However, most semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations present a very different picture. Here individuals may enter and leave occupations without much planning and elaborate decision-making because such planning is unnecessary. (Pavalko, 1971:50).

As entry into a professional occupation requires a substantial investment of both time and money, it seems reasonable to assume that "rational planning" will apply to individuals who aspire to this type of occupation. Previous research has focused on "student plans" for entering a particular professional or graduate program, or the reasons for their decision to enter training in a non-professional occupational field. There have, however, been wide disparities in the nature of the research, and the types of findings in previous studies without an adequate analysis of the factors influencing the choice of a specific profession.

Pavalko (1971:45) has observed that "despite the importance of occupational choice for both individuals and society, an adequate

testable theory of occupational choice has yet to be developed." In a recent paper "Towards a Sociological Theory of Occupational Choice", Musgrave (1967) states that "there is at present no sociological theory of occupational choice." The sociological, psychological, and vocational guidance literature does, however, indicate numerous attempts to conceptualize, theorize, and investigate the process of occupational choice (Blau et al., 1956; Ford and Box, 1967; Ginzberg et al., 1951; Ginzberg, 1972; Super, 1957; Katz and Martin, 1962; Musgrave, 1967; Phillips, 1964; Sherlock and Cohen, 1966; Stecklein and Eckert, 1958; and others).

The relatively small body of theoretical research which has been directed to the choice of a particular occupation or profession generally indicates that individual choice follows either a "purposive-rational" or "adventitious-fortuitous" pattern.

Ford and Box are of the opinion that

those who have been described as adhering to the adventitious view do not in practice maintain it. Neither Katz and Martin (1962) nor Caplow (1954) argue that all career choice behavior is determined by situational contingencies, but merely that such behavior is sometimes fortuitous and that a conscious decision is not always made (Ford and Box, 1967:289).

Apart from those studies which are nomothetic in implication on the one hand, and those on the other hand which are concerned with the correlates of differential socialization into occupational orientations, there is relatively general agreement in the literature that the choice of an occupation is to be viewed as a "process."

Whilst considerable differences are to be expected in individual

knowledge of professions in general, we may speculate that individuals whose choices have converged or are near to converging upon a particular profession (or range of similarly perceived professions) will mostly perceive these professions in terms of common attributes, and will largely agree in judgments about the relative similarity of the professions. This supposition defines the context for the questions which brought the present research into focus:

1. What factors do individuals perceive as most relevant and salient in their choice of a specific profession?
2. Are there common factors influencing the choice of a profession within as well as between the groups of medicine, dentistry, law, and university teaching?

The Problem:

As a result of the previous considerations, this research will address itself to the following types of questions:

1. Are there differences in factors involved in the choice of a profession between individuals, within groups, (i.e. law) and between groups (medicine, dentistry, law, and university professors)?
2. Does the choice of a profession reflect a personal compromise between an individual's preferences for certain types of satisfactions (which they perceive the profession has the potential to offer) and their expectations of being able to gain access to professional training?

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To explore the factors perceived by the respondents as

influencing the choice of their specific profession.

2. To investigate similarities and differences in these factors across professions.

3. To explore whether the "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approach describes the manner in which the choice of a profession is made.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Having stated that the purpose of this thesis is that of exploring the factors influencing the choice of a profession, consideration was given in Chapter I, to a brief overview of the nature of the problem. In this chapter the results of a more intensive examination of major previous research efforts on the choice of an occupation will be reported. Whilst the discussion to follow is not based upon an "exhaustive" review of all the available literature in the area, it does discuss the results of the major research on the subjects available to the author.

In reading the literature on the choice of an occupation, it became apparent that the term "occupational choice" is used ambiguously. Kuvlesky and Bealer (1966) define occupational choice to mean

. . . only the psychological preferences or desires that the individual has regarding work statuses. . . . It is generally equatable to the term 'aspiration' and it should be clear that this phenomenon is but a part of the total process of occupational choice (Kuvlesky and Bealer, 1966:266).

A more common usage equates "occupational choice" to the total developmental process involved in occupational attainment. Ginzberg (1951) utilizes it in this manner. Burchinal uses the term "occupational choice" to mean "the psychological preferences of an individual for a work status" (Burchinal, 1962:142). The two different meanings for the

same term are not always carefully distinguished.

In order to summarize the 'ways' in which occupational choice has been viewed in the literature, two main and frequently overlapping approaches, as well as sociocultural perspectives used in the study of occupational choice may be identified. They are:

1. Purposive or Rational approach - which is characterized by a tendency to specify "stages" or "periods" of occupational interest or activity which parallel stages in the life cycle of the individual; it stresses a purposive planning approach to occupational choice in which occupations are explicitly chosen.

2. Adventitious or Fortuitous approach - which stresses a less structured, less purposive, and less rational approach to occupational choice; spontaneous behavior and situational contingencies are important in this type of choice.

3. Sociocultural perspective - which involves identifying and explaining a variety of social characteristics related to the types and status of occupations to which people with different social characteristics aspire. (A substantial effort on the part of sociologists has been directed towards identifying and examining a variety of social characteristics related to occupational choice. The major importance of the sociocultural influences in this study was to make the researcher aware of their constraining effects on occupational choice.)

These categories are not meant to be mutually exclusive. Rather they have been used for convenience of distinction.

## PURPOSIVE OR RATIONAL APPROACH

A distinguishing characteristic of the purposive or rational approach is the tendency to specify various "stages" or "periods" of occupational interest or activity which parallel stages in the life cycle of individuals, conceiving of the final choice as contingent upon a series of previous choices. The best known examples of this approach are the studies of Ginzberg and his associates (1951), Super (1957), and Blau et al. (1956). The following statement succinctly expresses the theme of this approach.

There seems to be an element of flexibility in occupational desires which bends to the toughness of reality. If entry into an occupation is considered easy then the aspirations hold sway, but if it is perceived as difficult, then the individual tends to modify his aspirations in terms of what he believes the external situation will enable him to get (Rosenberg, 1957:76).

Eli Ginzberg has done pioneering work in the study of decision-making processes involved in career choice. In his Occupational Choice, he took as his point of departure Lazarsfeld's admonition to seek a genetic approach to the topic. Ginzberg and his colleagues built a theory based on an evolution of increasing self-determination as well as increasingly realistic attunement of the individual to his environment as he matures.

Ginzberg et al. (1951) were of the opinion that the process of occupational choice could not be studied without recourse to psychological postulates that can help to explain individual behavior. They noted that

. . . while a statistical approach to the study of occupational decision-making may be important, it would eliminate only certain facets of the problem. It can contribute little if anything to

an explanation of how a particular individual decides upon an occupation (Ginzberg, 1951:27).

The basic assumption that Ginzberg works from is

. . . that an individual never reaches the ultimate decision at a single point in time, but through a series of decisions over a period of many years; the cumulative impact is the determining factor (Ginzberg, 1951:27).

Convinced that the problem of occupational choice could be understood only as a developmental process in which past behavior exercises the major influence upon present and future decisions, Ginzberg et al. constructed a framework to facilitate the recognition and evaluation of the significant factors that determine the actions of the individual while he is deciding about his occupational choice.

They divided the process of occupational decision-making into three periods which represent phases roughly corresponding to maturational stages, biological and social. These are as follows:

- 1) Fantasy choice - dominated by the pleasure principal; the child wishes to have an exciting occupation such as policeman, cowboy, railroad engineer, or physician. (It is a period in which the individual cannot assess his capacities.)
- 2) Tentative choice - choices are made with no attempt to implement them. The stages of interest, capacity, value, and transition are involved in this period. (The individual is able to weigh various satisfactions.)
- 3) Realistic choice - made in early adulthood, comes to an end when the individual completes his formal preparation and enters his first job. (In this period the individual makes compromises between his wants and the actual opportunities which exist for him.) (Ginzberg et al., 1951:186-88).

Movement through these phases is defined as being "irreversible" and represents a bringing into line of capacities, anticipated satisfactions and available opportunities. The ultimate "choice" is held to be the result of a compromise, rationally determined.

According to Ginzberg (1951) there are three distinct though related types of satisfactions to be derived from work.

- 1) The return in the form of monetary rewards and prestige.
- 2) The intrinsic satisfactions - the pleasure in a specific activity and in the accomplishment of specific ends.
- 3) Concomitant satisfactions such as those which certain people derive from working in a certain physical environment or with a certain group.

The basic elements of the 1951 theory of Ginzberg et al. are:

First, occupational choice is a decision-making process that extends from pre-puberty until the late teens or early 20's when the individual makes a definitive occupational commitment.

Second, many educational and other preparatory and exploratory decisions along the way have the quality of irreversibility: A student who is pursuing a pre-law curriculum cannot suddenly shift back and seek admission to medical school, for example.

Third, the resolution of the choice process always ends in a compromise, since the individual seeks to find an optimal fit between his interests, capacities, and values, and the world (Ginzberg, 1951:186-98).

Ginzberg (1972) made a fundamental restatement of his earlier position. He states that he

. . . no longer considers the process of occupational decision-making as limited to a decade; we now believe that the process is open-ended, that it can coexist with the individual's working life (Ginzberg, 1972:169).

In identifying the principal factors that lead to a lifelong dynamizing of the choice process, Ginzberg stresses the following three:

The first and most important is the feedback mechanism that exists between a man's original career choice and his work experience. If the satisfactions that he sought originally are not forthcoming, or if as a result of his working he becomes aware of new career possibilities that promise greater satisfactions, it is likely that he will endeavour to make a new choice. The probability of his venturing the attempt and

succeeding in carrying it out will be affected by two related factors: a) the degrees of freedom that he has as a result of changing family circumstances, ie. if his children are grown and his savings allow him to take a year off to explore a new field; and b) the pressures or options arising out of his job situation that force him to look for new employment or which enable him to accept early retirement (Ginzberg, 1972:170).

With respect to the second critical element of irreversibility, Ginzberg points out that his later research underscored the need for modification. He states that

. . . while we still feel that the multiple educational and occupational decisions that a young person makes between his childhood and his 21st or 25th year have a cumulative effect on his occupational prospects, we now feel that it is wrong to see these decisions as having an irreversible impact on his career.

Little is left of our original emphasis on irreversibility. The principal challenge that young people face during their teens is to develop a strategy that will keep their options open, at least to the extent of assuring their admission to college or getting a job with a preferred employer (Ginzberg, 1972:171).

This brings us to a reconsideration of the third element of Ginzberg's original theory that held that the individual, in crystalizing his original choice, must compromise between his preferences and the constraints of the world of work. Ginzberg states:

While we believe that no one ever makes an occupational choice that satisfies all of his principal needs and desires, therefore giving validity to the concept of compromise, we now believe that a more relevant formulation would be that of 'optimization'. Men and women seek to find the best occupational fit between their changing desires and their changing circumstances. Their search is a continuing one. As long as they entertain the prospect of shifting their work and career, they must consider a new balance in which they weigh the punitive gains against the probable costs (Ginzberg, 1972:171).

Ginzberg's reformulated theory is that:

Occupational choice is a lifelong process of decision-making in which the individual seeks to find the optimal fit between his career preparation and goals and the realities of the world of work (Ginzberg, 1972:172).

Ginzberg (1972) notes that if the process of occupational choice determination is lifelong, it is necessary to distinguish between the individual's latent and overt occupational behavior if the critical elements of continuity and change in his career development are to be isolated and evaluated. Also important in this connection is the fact that the passage of time is a critically important factor. On the one hand, the passage of the years implies that the individual is undergoing important changes: he is accumulating skill and work experience; his interests and values are likely to shift; his personal and family circumstances will not remain the same. Moreover, prospective employers look differently at a young adult just out of school, at a man in his working prime, and at a middle-aged person who is entering the last third of his working life.

Ginzberg's (1972) efforts in his restatement appear to have been to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the ways in which critical reality factors such as income, sex, and race - especially in their institutionalized forms - operate to constrict and limit the occupational choices of large numbers of the population.

While Ginzberg's (1951) formulation was based on a developmental approach, his reformulated theory (1972) stands on sociopsychological formulations. He has endeavoured to make room for the individual as the principal actor in the decision-making process as well as the reality factors, past and present, that set the parameters within which he must resolve his choice.

Ginzberg states that

. . . our greater sensitivity to reality factors in our present formulation of a theory of occupational choice does not obscure

our conviction that the individual remains the prime mover in the decision-making process (Ginzberg, 1972:173).

While inequalities based on sex, race, income, and intelligence are pervasive in American society of the 1970's, and while such inequalities may have a crippling impact on the career and life choices of many people, the fact remains that most Americans have career options. The existence of options is a precondition for successful resolution of one's occupational choice. But more than options is required. The individual must be willing to make the investment required to realize these options.

Although Ginzberg et al. (1951) include in their discussion of factors which influence occupational choice, reality factors (social and economic environment, educational structures, emotional conditions, and the impact of values), this is from some perspectives an insufficient analysis (Ginzberg, 1951:11-12). The insufficiencies include an absence of the impact of the values of reference group members of the so-called chooser; and considerations from the point of view of role theory are largely ignored.

A second criticism of this approach is that it is time bound. Ginzberg's age periods (particularly age 18 for the period of realistic choice) makes sense if age 18 or shortly thereafter represents a point at which taking a full-time work is a modal pattern. However, a high proportion of high school graduates are postponing a "realistic" occupational choice while attending college. For many college graduates, a "realistic" choice is postponed until further graduate or professional training.

Finally, this theory of occupational choice generally fails to

present an explanation of the decision-making process. It is variously asserted that the decision-making process is one of continual compromise, but this is by assertion rather than by description and analysis of the compromises.

In his evaluation of Ginzberg's study, Super felt that

. . . the word "choice" had different meanings at different levels, and that the concept of choice itself had not been subjected to more detailed description and analysis . . . [and that] Psychological considerations concerning the nature, development, and predictive value of interests are largely ignored (Super, 1957:185-90).

It is this choice process, particularly at the compromise phase, which Super contends represents the core of the problem of occupational choice.

Despite many criticisms, the work of Ginzberg is a significant contribution both substantively and in terms of the intellectual attention it brought to focus on the problem. Much of his material has served as a basis for later studies. Even in research refuting parts of Ginzberg's theory, the authors have usually been able to utilize certain of his insights and findings.

The theory of occupational choice put forth by psychologist Super (1957) is one of the viable and constructive responses to the Ginzberg (1951) occupational choice theory. The Super formulation is, however, more comprehensive than that of Ginzberg. The following ten propositions constitute the Super theory:

- 1) People differ in their abilities, interests and personalities.
- 2) They are qualified by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
- 3) Each of these occupations requires a characteristic pattern of abilities, interests and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough, however, to allow both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation.

- 4) Vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and hence their self-concepts, change with time and experience, making choice and adjustment a continuous process.
- 5) This process may be summed up in a series of life stages characterized as those of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into a) the fantasy, tentative and realistic phases of the exploratory stage, and b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage.
- 6) The nature of the career pattern (that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs) is determined by the individual's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, and personality characteristics, and by the opportunities to which he is exposed.
- 7) Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of the self-concept.
- 8) The process of vocational development is essentially that of developing and implementing a self-concept: it is a compromise process in which the self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, neural and endocrine makeup, opportunity to play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows.
- 9) The process of compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concept and reality, is one of role playing, whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counselling interview, or in real life activities such as school classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs.
- 10) Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend upon the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for his abilities, interests, personality traits, and values; they depend upon his establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and a way of life in which he can play the kind of role which his growth and exploratory experiences have led him to consider congenial and appropriate (Super, 1953:189-90).

For Super, choice is in fact a process rather than an event.

The term should denote a whole series of choices, generally resulting in the elimination of some alternatives and the retention of others, until in due course, the narrowing down process results in what might perhaps be called an occupational choice.

While conceptualizing occupational choice as purposive, Super underscores the importance of the individual's self-concept in the

decision-making process. Super views occupational choice outcomes as an attempt to attain an equilibrium between self-concept and the context of work roles.

Super's theory may be criticized on the following points:

1) little analysis of decision-making as such; 2) only limited reference to the importance of occupational opportunities as factors in vocational development; and 3) only parental socioeconomic level is referred to as a reference group situation determining the nature of the career pattern.

Both the Ginzberg (1951), (1972) and Super (1957) conceptual formulations are basic contributions to the literature on occupational choice. They form the basis for the delineation of the situation and focus attention for further research and analysis on the subject.

The next contribution to the literature on occupational choice in chronological order was that of Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes, and Wilcock (1956) who developed a variant of the "rational or purposive" approach. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, they include biologically conditioned characteristics of the economy, level of technological development, etc., in explaining why people enter the occupations they do. The many, varied factors influencing an individual's selection of an occupation are related in a conceptual framework in their article. They endeavour to tie together in a meaningful pattern, the economic, psychological, and sociological aspects of the choice of an occupation.

Blau et al. (1956) believe that the social structure - the more or less institutionalized patterns of activities, interactions, and ideas among various groups - has a dual significance for occupational choice:

- 1) It influences the personality development of the choosers.
- 2) It defines the socioeconomic conditions in which selection takes place. These two effects, however, do not occur simultaneously. At any choice point in their careers, the interest and skills in terms of which individuals make their decisions have been affected by past social structure, whereas occupational opportunities and requirements for entry are determined by the present structure.

With reference to the process of choice and selection, Blau et al. are of the opinion that a choice between various courses of action can be conceptualized as motivated by two interrelated sets of factors: the individual's valuation of the rewards offered by different alternatives, and his appraisal of his chances of being able to realize each of the alternatives. These valuations and appraisals of chances are acquired through and modified by social experience, and both are conceived to be roughly ordered in hierarchical fashion for each person - a hierarchy of preferences (valuations) and a hierarchy of expectancies (appraisals). The course of action upon which an individual decides will reflect a compromise between his preferences and his expectations (an attempt to maximize expected value) (Blau et al., 1956:537).

Blau et al. noted that the process of occupational selection involves a regression from ideal standards (or an increase of rewards), the limits of which are defined by the occupational choices of potential workers. Correspondingly, the process of occupational choice involves a descent in a hierarchy of preferences (or the acquisition of new qualifications) which comes to an end, at least temporarily, by being selected for an occupation.

Eight factors, four pertaining to occupations and four characterizing individuals, determine occupational entry according to Blau et al. (1956). They are as follows:

First, the demand for new members in an occupation is indicated by the number of vacancies that exist at any one time, . . . [as well as] the size of the occupational group, its tendency to expand, and its turnover rate.

The second factor, functional requirements, refers to the technical qualifications needed for optimum performance of occupational tasks.

The third one, non-functional requirements, refers to those criteria affecting selection that are not relevant to actual performance, such as veteran status, good looks, or the "proper" religion.

Fourth, rewards include not only income, prestige and power, but also opportunities for advancement, congenial fellow workers, emotional gratifications, and indeed, all employment conditions that are defined as desirable.

Turning now from the attributes of occupations to those of potential workers, a fifth factor that influences occupational entry is the information people have about an occupation - their knowledge about the requirements for entry, the rewards offered, and the opportunities for employment and advancement. Two characteristics of individuals are complementary to the two types of occupational requirements, namely, their technical skills to perform various occupational duties, and their other social characteristics that influence hiring decisions such as Harvard accent or skin color.

Finally, people's value orientations determine the relative significance of different kinds of rewards and thus the attractive force exerted by them (Blau et al., 1956:536-37).

In the Blau et al. framework, unless a social experience or attribute affects the information individuals have about occupations, their technical or social qualifications for entry, or their evaluation of occupations, it is not expected to influence their careers. Similarly, whereas many aspects of the socioeconomic organization must be examined to explain the four characteristics of occupations, it is these four (plus the four directly relevant characteristics of individuals) that directly account for occupational entry, according to the hypothesis

advanced here.

Blau et al. reach several conclusions. The two most noteworthy are the following:

- 1) Occupational choice is conceived of as a compromise process between preferences for and expectations of being able to get into various occupations. This compromise is continually modified, since the experiences of the individual in the course of searching for suitable careers affect their expectations and often also their preferences.
- 2) Lest the complicated and extended developmental process that culminates in occupational choice be oversimplified, it is necessary to consider occupational choice as a series of interrelated decisions rather than as a single choice. The repeated application of the suggested framework for analysis at crucial timing points in the lives of individuals makes it possible to trace the development and show how earlier decisions, by narrowing the range of future possibilities, influence the final choice of occupations (Blau et al., 1956:542-43).

The Blau et al. conceptual framework consists of the following three major points: 1) an investigation of occupations for (a) their psychological characteristics, (b) their economic structures, (c) their social structures; and 2) social structural influences including (a) the personality development of the chooser and (b) the socioeconomic conditions within which selection takes place; and 3) the conceptual view of occupational choice as a process of compromise between the preferences for and expectations of being able to get into various occupations.

In the Blau et al. framework, an emphasis is placed on the differentiation between preference and expectation, and they assert that choosing an occupation is sharply restricted by a lack of information concerning real opportunities. Their scheme emphasizes the interaction of individual characteristics and decisions with characteristics

of the occupational structure, with the latter seen as "selecting" people for different occupations.

As a conceptual framework, this schema provides an outline which may be used in the study of occupational choice. It clearly shows the belief of Blau et al. that individual choice is a process involving a series of decisions and that selection, referring to decisions of employers or other selectors, is a similarly complex process of decisions which affect the chances that the choice of an occupational entrant can be realized. The labor market must also be considered since existing opportunities and knowledge, or lack of knowledge concerning these enter into the individual's consideration.

Blau et al. take care to elaborate the interrelation of psychological and sociological factors but also note that their conceptual scheme should not be interpreted as a theory of occupational choice and selection. It is intended as a framework for systematic analysis.

This conceptualization of occupational choice fits the "rational or purposive" approach in two ways. First, from the individual's point of view, choice is seen as deliberate. Individuals are assumed to make a reasoned and well-thought out choice that represents a compromise between their "preference hierarchy" (the kind of work they can realistically expect to obtain). Second, there is assumed to be a large measure of rational planning on the part of selection agencies in deciding who to recruit to certain occupations.

Holland's (1959) theory of occupational choice proposes that the congruence between the characteristics of the occupation and the individual's personality must be considered. "Occupational environments" are

defined in terms consistent with his descriptions of "modal personal orientations". These orientations represent a

. . . somewhat distinctive life style which is characterized by preferred methods of dealing with daily problems and includes such variables as values and interests, preferences for playing various roles and avoiding others, interpersonal skills and other personal factors. For every person the orientations may be ranked according to their relative strengths in a quasi-serial order or hierarchy. The life style heading the hierarchy determines the major direction of choice (Holland, 1959:37).

For example, persons with a "motoric orientation" are seen as those who

. . . enjoy activities requiring physical strength, aggressive action, motor coordination and skill . . . prefer dealing with concrete, well-defined problems as opposed to abstract, intangible ones . . . would be most likely to choose among occupations classified under the following heading: "motoric environment - labor, machine operator, aviator, farmer, truck driver, carpenter," etc. (Holland, 1959:38).

One of the strong points of this theory is that it considers the congruence between the characteristics of the occupation and the "mode of orientation" or personality characteristics of the individual. Modes of orientation can be measured according to Holland, by existing vocational interest inventories, level of knowledge, and choice and intelligence by means of other tests. However it is assumed that a modal pattern exists for an occupational environment without considering the range of possible patterns within even one occupation such as nurse (e.g. private duty, surgical, educator, public health). Holland is aware that he has only "sketched" the occupational environments and that a better "portrait" is needed, but he assumes that such a picture is possible.

Both this and Super's approach involve a "chicken-egg" dilemma. While it is possible that individuals may attempt to find work that is compatible with their personalities, it is at least equally possible that

the kinds of work people do may shape the kinds of personality and self-concept they exhibit. There is research on socialization in professional schools to support this alternative explanation.

Slocum's (1959) analysis of occupational choice focuses on what he terms "the process of occupational decision-making". Slocum emphasizes "playing-at" roles in occupational decision-making. In this technique, both the novice and experienced occupational person, when considering new or alternative occupations, imagines the requirements and benefits of the occupation. The process involves the presumption of approval by significant others. The playing at occupational roles may be covert. When it becomes overt, this more sharply articulated process is referred to as "role-playing" (Coutu, 1951:181-82). Slocum views the process of playing at roles as central in the selection of one role from an alternative and, thereby, central in the choice of occupation.

The suggestion of rational decision-making in occupational choosing was apparent in the earlier theories. Slocum submits that occupational decision-making may be rationalistic but need not be so. He reasons that it is in fact doubtful if any occupational decisions are made at a fully rational level.

The arena of information appropriate to ranges of occupations, interests, and abilities, is not systematically brought together in such a way that it is conducive to firm rational occupational decision-making. While the occupational chooser, through vocational counseling, guidance, and other avenues of assistance, may obtain a considerable amount of knowledge about both occupations and his interests and ability, this typically gives the chooser a body of information for little more than a bare minimum of the more than 20,000 occupations (Slocum, 1959:143).

Accordingly, Slocum hypothesizes:

A continuum of rationality, with decisions ranging from those made purely on impulse to those which may be regarded as fully rational (Slocum, 1959:143).

Miller and Form assert that rational occupational choosing is rare. By contrast, accident, they submit, is a deciding factor in most cases (Miller and Form, 1951:651). Although it may be properly concluded that the majority of occupational choices are considerably less than rational, it is the assertion of the Slocum position that a greater degree of rationality could be achieved in the decision-making process.

Slocum's analysis of sociological aspects of occupational choice include playing-at occupational roles, differential rationality, and types of influence factors. While placing more emphasis on the explanation of decision-making than most of his predecessors, Slocum never really comes to grips with the structural situation which leads to such high degrees of irrationality in choosing. His contribution, nevertheless, is a major refinement to the literature in the area of occupational decision-making.

Another version of the purposive approach has been proposed by Sherlock and Cohen (1966) who regard occupational choice as a compromise between reward preferences and expectancies of access to certain occupations. They noted that "self-recruitment" to dentistry provides an excellent case of the purposive or negotiated nature of occupational choice, especially of the skilled and professional occupations. Choices were made as compromises between reward preferences and expectancies of access to specific occupations; both of these career perspectives were developed with reference to familial occupational history, especially the occupational status of the father. Evidence is presented which indicates that dentistry was chosen because it combined high rewards with

a reasonable degree of access, (i.e. what Sherlock and Cohen refer to as a minimax strategy, was employed). Medicine, although possessing greater rewards, was rejected because of difficult access; while law, university teaching, etc., were rejected because of perceived lower rewards.

Using expectancy of access and relative satisfaction, Sherlock and Cohen (1966) developed strategies of occupational choice.

1. A minimax strategy - predicts that an individual will choose that occupation which minimizes the difficulty of access and maximizes the rewards which may be obtained.
2. The individual chooses his occupation by selecting that one which maximizes both the reward and the difficulty of access (an individual using this strategy is more likely to find his occupational career more satisfying, but he will have a more difficult time entering it) (Sherlock and Cohen, 1966:312).

Sherlock and Cohen note that:

The data suggest that both strategies were used during different stages of the occupational choice process. In an early stage, the individual seeks an occupation which maximizes both reward and difficulty of access. When the difficulty of access to medicine proved to be too challenging or insurmountable - the individual at this point will enter the realistic stage in the process and switch to a minimax strategy which will lead to an occupation that is not quite as high in reward but more accessible (Sherlock and Cohen, 1966:312).

As noted at the beginning of Chapter II, this is not an "exhaustive" review of all the available literature in the area. Having discussed the major studies relevant to the purposive approach and the present research, we shall now look at the adventitious approach as well as sociocultural perspectives on the study of occupational choice.

## ADVENTITIOUS OR FORTUITOUS APPROACH

This perspective regards occupational choice as a less structured, less purposive, and less rational approach; it is viewed as essentially adventitious or fortuitous. In this view "occupational choice" is less a purposive, deliberate choice than it is a process wherein alternatives are eliminated. Some writers subscribing to this view have referred to it as "occupational drift". Individuals are seen as drifting into occupations through a process of elimination rather than explicitly choosing them.

As an example of the adventitious approach, Katz and Martin (1962) characterize occupational choice as non-rational, spontaneous, and based upon situational pressures. They see contingencies and influences external to the occupational world bringing about a fortuitous choice of one's life work. In their study of career choice among student nurses, Katz and Martin advance the thesis that

. . . the decisions which underlie embarkation on a nursing career for at least some persons revolve around limited - situational contingencies - in which the matter of nursing as a career, enters only tangentially or not at all (Katz and Martin, 1962:149).

In other words, rational considerations are seen as playing a minor or no role. In their view entry upon a particular occupational career may be the end result of a series of steps which individually, are not teleologically oriented to that course of action. In the adventitious view, individuals are seen as drifting into occupations rather than explicitly choosing them.

Examples of situational contingencies which may be involved in embarkation upon a career are given by Caplow (1954):

The bases for decision are often trivial. A student decides to study law because he has gotten his highest grade in history courses, dislikes the idea of teaching and knows that courses in history are required for entrance to law school. . . . A high school sophomore transfers from the academic sequence to the clerical course to be with her best friend (Caplow, 1954:218).

The essence of the adventitious approach is that occupational choices are made because of situational contingencies and the process or negotiation between aspirations and opportunities is only minimally present. This is expressed in the "getting by" orientation described by Kahl (1963):

. . . the boys who were not aiming toward college occasionally had a specific common man job as their goal, but more often had no firm goal at all; they would 'take anything that comes along' (Kahl, 1963:357).

and further:

. . . many boys looked forward to a job in romantic terms. It symbolized to them an escape from childhood, an end to the school routine, a freedom from dependency on father's pocketbook, a chance to get money for cars and girls (Kahl, 1963:359).

Pavalko (1971) noted that in general the fortuitous perspective:

. . . might be the more appropriate way of viewing entry into work at the "occupation end" of the occupation - profession continuum; while entry into work at the "profession end" might be more accurately described by the "rational decision-making" view. At the profession end of the continuum built in educational hurdles and certification prerequisites make rational planning and explicit decision-making more essential but this is less often the case among occupations (Pavalko, 1971:48).

Notwithstanding Pavalko's statement regarding the difference in the nature of occupational choice on his "occupation profession continuum", several studies indicated that the manner in which people enter university teaching (which would belong at the profession end of the continuum) fits the "fortuitous" perspective more closely than it fits

the rational perspective,

In one study the researchers concluded that

College teachers seem to have entered this field more by accident than by deliberate design. By and large, they did not look forward during their undergraduate years, as young people entering other professions do, to working in the field in which they are currently engaged (Stecklin and Eckert, 1958:44).

Another study by Gustad (1960) concluded that

. . . by and large . . . entry into [college] teaching is the end product of drift. That is the majority do not engage in the kind of career planning that is typical of the aspiring physician or attorney (Gustad, 1960:6).

Since the academic profession is one of the less "visible" careers, however, it is perhaps not surprising that we find its consideration and choice generally to occur at a much later time than for other professions such as medicine, dentistry, and law.

In discussing the choice of the academic profession, Robson notes:

Only one-third of those who have chosen this profession did so before they entered the university, compared to over 80% of those choosing engineering or nursing, for example. Similarly, only about 20% of those who seriously consider the academic profession do so before they enter university, while about one-half of them do not seriously consider this career until the third year of university or later (Robson, 1966:6).

With reference to the educational experience of an individual and the time of career choice, Berelson (1960) in an extensive report of graduate education in the United States states:

The decision to continue graduate study for the doctorate degree was often made late in the educational experience. Only 35% of the in-residence graduate students reported that they had made the decision by the end of their undergraduate college experience. The remaining 65% had made their decision to continue for higher educational study after they had completely terminated their baccalaureate study. Typically, potential doctors and lawyers know early

in their career that they intend to enter a professional school (Berelson, 1960:27).

Ford and Box (1967) claim that studies comprising the adventurous approach

. . . can be readily dismissed as having no relevance to the development of a sociological theory of occupational choice. For characterization of such choices as unique spontaneous behaviors explicable only by reference to the idiosyncrasies of particular choice situations is essentially atheoretical and of no interest to sociologists (Ford and Box, 1967:287).

To what extent does this hold true? The view held by this researcher is that the importance of this approach lies in the idea that it does provide part of the framework within which the choice of an occupation occurs.

#### SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The general concern of the sociocultural perspective is with the level of occupational aspiration or the types and status of occupations to which youth with different social characteristics aspire. This research tradition focuses on the "preferences or desires that the individual has regarding work statuses" and is only part of the total process of occupational choice (Kuvlesky and Bealer, 1966:266). In a very real sense, these characteristics are seen as external influences over which the individual has little or no control. In this way they set limits upon and constrain the kinds of occupational choices and decisions that individuals make.

The emphasis of this perspective is on the extent to which different occupations attract their members from different segments of the social structure and thereby represent at any given time, a distinctive "mix" in terms of the social origins and backgrounds of their members.

Although this study does not specifically investigate the sociocultural perspectives of occupational choice which other studies have, we will look briefly at the types of research in this area in order to develop an awareness of the context in which the choice of an occupation occurs, and the kinds of social influences operating on an individual's choices.

The dynamics of occupational choice can be understood only when there is consideration, not only of individual factors, but also the social influences upon the individual and the interaction between individual and group. As Cottrell (1942) has noted:

. . . any item of social behavior is understood only as it is seen as a functional part of a situation composed of interacting selves; and in functioning in an interactive system, the organism not only develops the response patterns representing its part in such an interaction but actually incorporates the response pattern of the others in its reactive system (Cottrell, 1942:380).

Lewin points out that

. . . it seems impossible to predict group behavior without taking into account group goals, group standards, group values, and the way a group sees its own situation and that of other groups (Lewin, 1947:14).

The main social characteristic that has been studied in relation to occupational choice is social class background, which refers to the social class milieu in which a person is reared, whether measured by family income, parental occupation, or parental education.

Research by Davis (1964) follows this perspective. He found that for each of the three indicators of status used, the higher the status of the student's family, or father, the more likely he/she is to plan to go on to graduate or professional school in the fall following graduation.

In terms of family income and plans, 28.7% of the students from families with less than \$5000 income per year plan to

go on to graduate or professional school the next fall while the percentage is 40.4 for those whose families have annual incomes of \$20,000 and over. In terms of the father's occupation, 21.8% of the students whose fathers are farmers plan on graduate or professional school, but 38.5% of those whose fathers are professionals have such plans. A similar pattern holds for father's education. While 29% of the students whose fathers have an eighth grade education or less plan to go on to graduate or professional school, 44% of those whose fathers hold a graduate or professional degree plan to do so (Davis, 1964:105-6).

In reference to social class as a significant social factor affecting human behavior, Ginzberg et al. (1951) found that boys from low income families went through the same stages of vocational development as did high income boys. There was, however, considerable difference in the choices and the reasons for them.

In the high income group, the boys, even at an early age, tended to assume that they would go to college, and as they entered the realistic state, their choices tended to be limited to the professions. Low income boys on the other hand, thought in terms of a job which would pay more than the father's steady employment, skilled work, and a job without exposure to serious accidents. "For most of this group, to own a business is the outer limit of their expectations" (Ginzberg, 1951:151).

Ginzberg interprets the case material to suggest that one of the major limitations facing the lower income group is their modest level of aspiration.

Their environment obscures the appropriate translations of interests and capacities into realizable occupational choices. . . . Boys with mechanical interests and ability are not able to think beyond becoming mechanics or electricians . . . they believe that there is little they can do beyond selecting a high school where they can pursue an appropriate vocational course (Ginzberg, 1951:155).

Blau and Duncan (1967), in their study The American Occupational Structure, also discuss the sociocultural influences.

The family into which a man is born exerts a significant influence on his occupational life, ascribing a status to him

at birth that influences his chances for achieving any other status later in his career (Blau and Duncan, 1967:295).

and further:

The socioeconomic level of the family defines class origins, whose influence on subsequent educational and occupational attainment is important. . . . To be sure, his family's station in life does not predetermine a man's status as an adult in a class society, such as ours, in which there is a considerable degree of occupational and social mobility. Indeed, it is the very nature of the class structure that a man's status is not ascribed to him completely on the basis of the family into which he was born, as in a caste system, but rests primarily on his achievements. These achievements, however, are strongly influenced by class differences among parental families. Characteristics of the family of orientation other than its socioeconomic status also have implications for occupational life. Thus a man's career chances are affected by the size of his parental family, by his position among his siblings and relations with them, and the educational climate in his home (Blau and Duncan, 1967:296).

#### Home

The demonstrated affection and the social skills of the parents contribute much to the effective capacities and skills of the child, which, in turn, determine the type of environment and the type of job in which he will be comfortable. Many of these elements lie in the field of individual psychology, since they contribute to individual personality, but they are derived from the social influence of the home.

The foundations of goals and motivations are also likely to be developed very early in life. Lipsett states that

Through the example of his parents, a child first learns the values or goals that are considered most important. He quickly senses whether the parents place greatest stress on having a bigger car than the neighbors, on enjoying camping and picnics, on creating and enjoying aesthetic experiences, or

in exemplifying their religious beliefs in their daily lives. He is likely to absorb the values of the parents, but even if he rejects them, he will be deeply influenced by them (Lipsett, 1962:435).

Ginzberg has summarized the role of the family with reference to occupational choice.

The family continues to exercise an important influence on the occupational choices of the younger generation. For it is as a member of a family that the child first learns about the jobs that exist in the adult world; it may be through the family that he actually acquires his first experience at work; and it is through the family that he is encouraged to follow one path and discouraged from following another, even if only indirectly through his absorption of familial attitudes and values (Ginzberg, 1951:234).

In further support of this, Scanzoni states that

. . . the more or less irregular conversations that occur in any home regarding desirable or undesirable occupations and the chances to attain them coupled with the off-hand comments by parents about status and mobility as well as their own occupational behavior and attitudes constitute a form of communication more subtle yet just as effective as direct statements (Scanzoni, 1970:187).

To an even greater extent than in the case of parental influences, however, it is difficult to generalize about sibling influences or to make predictions without knowing the quality of relationships in the particular family. But Lipsett states:

Siblings may also have an important influence on the career plans of each other. The oldest child's success and satisfaction in an occupation may influence his younger brothers in that direction. On the other hand, sibling rivalry may induce a younger brother to make a definite effort to avoid following in an older sibling's footsteps. Older siblings are an important source of information about college and jobs (Lipsett, 1962:436).

### School

The school may often be an important influence on occupational choice. Children who perform favourably in the school environment are likely to be influenced toward higher education and, in turn, toward professions. This is likely to include relationships with peers of a higher social class. The school is usually the medium through which these friendships are initiated.

Super (1957) views the period of adolescence as one of ascertaining and testing the realities of one's own nature and the world of work, and modifying the "tentative" self-concept of childhood in such a way as to bring it into line with these realities. Although the family in most cases continues to be an important reference group during this time, other groups emerge into prominence, such as the peer group. Super presents a clear-cut illustration of this.

The comments of friends, the intimate "bull sessions" in which aspirations are based and evaluations shared, help the individual to clarify his picture of himself and of his roles in relation to others. He may not fully accept or internalize the attitude of his peers, but the tendency is to do so. And when peer attitudes do not prevail, it is often because the attitudes of other groups, such as those of the home or the social status group, are even stronger determinants of behavior. A case in point is the electrician's son who, despite abilities and interests which would have made engineering appropriate and possible, himself becomes an electrician. He had so completely assimilated the values and perspectives of the skilled workers as represented by his father and his father's friends, a white collar job was impossible (Super, 1957:86-87).

In adolescence, the groups influencing an individual's attitudes and behavior - i.e., his reference groups - become increasingly more numerous and diverse. Such groups as age peers or schoolmates, church or recreational groups, and part-time work associates, occupy increasing proportions of time, and assume increasing importance as reference

groups - both as comparison points and sources of values. As a result, the behavior domains in which the family exerts direct reference group influence may become more restricted. However, the family influence is still manifest, partly because attitudes having their basis in the family have undoubtedly been operative in the differential selection of these later reference groups. Attitudes and aspects of self-concept induced by these reference groups usually add their contributions to the course of vocational development, though sometimes their effects are overridden by stronger group influences as in the above illustration.

Overall, the review of the relevant research literature on the choice of an occupation leads to several tentative conclusions. First, whether either the "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approach adequately describes the choice of a profession remains a question. Second, it is apparent that the way in which persons are distributed among occupational roles is the outcome of decisions made by the individual. Third, the important point is that the assumptions made about the nature of the choice of an occupation in previous research have led to asking certain questions and preclude the asking of others. Therefore, it is necessary to approach the problem in such a way that the information obtained does not preclude the possibility of validating one or the other conception.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the nature of the sample, the data collection technique and the type of analysis used in this research will be described.

#### THE SAMPLE

A sample of twenty-five respondents were drawn from five groups of students training for professions in Medicine, Dentistry, Law and University Teaching (English and Science).<sup>1</sup> An equal number was obtained from each group. The sample was drawn from complete lists of students in the Faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, Law, and the English and Science Departments at the University of Manitoba. There were fifteen males and ten females. The respondents were in their first year of professional training: medical, dental, and law school, and the Ph.D. program for English and Science.

At this point we would like to clarify the rationale for the selection of the professions used in this research. Medicine, Dentistry, and Law were chosen for two reasons. First, although the specific educational prerequisites for entry into training for these professions are

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<sup>1</sup>The researcher drew a random sample of ten individuals from each of the five groups. They were contacted in the order that they were drawn, and the first five from each group who agreed to participate were interviewed.

different; they all require formal preparation that must be obtained according to a more or less prescribed sequence, i.e. pre-medicine, and pre-dentistry programs. Second, the "visibility" of these professions as a career is relatively high. Subsequent to consideration of these two points we expected that these three groups would tend to show more support for the "rational-purposive" approach to choice than the other two groups. This was a result of our assumption that these respondents would be familiar with their professions earlier than those in University Teaching; and that the nature of the educational prerequisites would tend to force deliberate planning in the choice.

University Teaching was selected for two reasons. First, the specific educational prerequisites for entry into training in this profession are not strictly defined as they are for Medicine, Dentistry, Law, i.e. they do not have specific pre-professional programs for English as they do for say Medicine. This would seem to give an individual more opportunity to drift into the profession without making a deliberate choice. Second, University Teaching as a career is less "visible" than Medicine, Dentistry or Law. The assumption was that we would find that these people's method of choice tends to support the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach. Science and English were chosen as examples of individuals entering an academic career. We were interested in ascertaining whether there was a difference between those in Science, a relatively well-defined field, and English which we considered less well-defined.

Respondents who were in their first year of professional training were chosen instead of those more advanced. This was done for two reasons. First, it was felt that we would encounter fewer problems of

recall. Second, it is possible that the process of professional socialization as noted by Merton et al. (1957) would influence the individuals' perceptions of the factors influencing their choice, i.e. once they are in the professional training, the socialization process would increasingly distort the reasons which they recalled as being important in their choice.

In support of this rationale with respect to the time of the interviews, Gorden states:

The most significant effect of timing is upon the respondent's ability to remember, accurately and completely, avoiding chronological and inferential confusion. To avoid simple forgetting, the interview should take place as soon after the relevant events and experiences as possible. Much psychological research indicates the distorting effects of fading memories. Specific facts, if remembered, may be quantitatively or qualitatively distorted. Complex events may be retained in an essentially correct pattern with non-essential detail omitted; or the whole gestalt of the event may be distorted, thus reversing its significance. . . . Regardless of the cause of the forgetting, in general, time is an important factor (Gorden 1975:242).

#### DATA COLLECTION

Unstructured interviews were chosen as the data collection technique for three reasons. First, to give the respondents an opportunity to explain in as detailed a manner as possible the way in which they chose their profession, and the factors influencing their choice. Second, to give the researcher the opportunity to probe for, and provide for consideration of factors which may have been forgotten by the respondent, but nevertheless influenced the choice. Third, to investigate in detail the nature of the approach to the choice.

In support of this decision, Gorden states:

Interviewing is most valuable when we are interested in knowing

people's beliefs, attitudes, values, knowledge or any other subjective orientations or mental content. Whether the interview is more valuable than the questionnaire depends upon the degree to which we know what we want to know and what the possible range of answers might be. The exploratory values of the unstructured interview are impossible to attain in a questionnaire where there is no opportunity to formulate new questions or probe for clarifications (Gorden, 1975:317).

In deciding whether a structured or unstructured interview should be used, one argument advanced is that the unstructured interview is dangerous because the interviewer is free to bias the responses. In using the unstructured approach, we recognize that the interviews were not necessarily free from bias. All interviews were conducted personally by the researcher and himself alone. Given the constraints of time, the respondents were all contacted via telephone and the nature and purpose of the study was explained in the following manner:

"Hello, my name is Bob Watson. I'm from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. I'm presently doing research on the "factors influencing the choice of a profession" for my Master's degree. I would like to know if you would be willing to participate in a personal interview on this topic. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be done at a time and place convenient to you."

The interviews were conducted two to three days after contacting the respondents. Once willingness to participate was indicated, the time and the place of the interview was arranged. Then as a method of avoiding chronological confusion and the possibility of receiving ready-made rationalizations in the interview, the purpose of the research was thoroughly explained, with the suggestion that the respondent might think about it before the interview. In support of this technique, Gorden states:

. . . Information on events more than a month in the past is more efficiently obtained by giving the respondent some advance notice of the interview topic. If the topic of the interview is explained when making an appointment (with or without the suggestion that the respondent might like to think it over), and if this is one or two days in advance, it is often easier to obtain more complete detail in the interview (Gorden, 1975:287).

Although the vast majority of interviews are not done with the aid of a tape recorder, the writer felt that it had a unique function in this research. Given the complexity of information, the rapidity of flow, as well as the uncertainty of the types of responses and categories of information, the researcher deemed it important to devote full attention to the respondent,<sup>2</sup> and so we used a tape recorder.

The use of the tape recorder was introduced in the following manner at the time of the interview:

"I hope you have no objection to having the interview tape recorded. As the interview is the main method of data collection in this research, it is necessary for future reference. Your name and the information you give will remain anonymous."

The following introduction to the interview was used for all respondents:

"As I explained previously on the telephone, I'm interested in the factors influencing the choice of your profession. To pursue that topic, I'd like to ask you some brief questions regarding your age, educational background; and the occupation, education, and income of your parents. . . ."

The next point in the interview was to ask the respondent to elaborate in as much detail as possible "What factors influenced your

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<sup>2</sup>One of the most comprehensive and thoughtful treatments of the pros and cons of using the tape recorder is given by Bucher, Fritz, and Quarantelli (1956:359-64).

choice of this profession?" In order to secure a full answer to this question, the researcher considered the various probable factors that may influence this behavior and attempted to provide for consideration of each when not mentioned or discussed by the respondent.<sup>3</sup>

The following types of open-ended questions were utilized when deemed desirable:

- When did you first think of entering this profession?
- Why did you think of it at that time?
- Were any friends or relatives important influences in your choice of this profession?
- Did your evaluation of alternative occupations influence your choice in any way?
- Was your perception of the ease or difficulty of entering alternative occupations an influence in your choice?

As well as using broad questions, at times the researcher specified concrete instances and then asked the respondents if they were typical or atypical of their experiences in choosing the profession. This particular interviewing technique was used to provide the subject with more cues for recall. To further assist recall, an attempt was made to create a feeling of reminiscence for the respondent by encouraging him to relate the explanation of his choice of profession to other relevant events. Some aspects of the interview were returned to several times.

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<sup>3</sup> Broad classes of considerations which seemed likely to enter into the determination of "the factors influencing the choice" are 1) the history of the choice; 2) the characteristics of the profession; 3) the personal interests, desires, or values involved in the choice; 4) the support from others for decisions, and feelings; 5) the specific situations and circumstances in which the choice occurred; 6) the evaluation of alternatives.

In addition to the general types of open-ended questions previously mentioned, probes were used as reminders to the respondent of the possible factors influencing his choice of profession. These probes were generally neutral and non-directive in nature.<sup>4</sup> Therefore the responses were not limited to replies to the probe.

During the interview, notes were taken including key words or phrases to remind the interviewer of what the respondent had said. These notes were used as aids to remind the interviewer which areas had been adequately covered, what points needed further elaboration or clarification, and what words the respondent used in talking about points that needed further probing.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

On the basis of the literature, we found two major approaches to the study of occupational choice; the "rational-purposive" and "adventitious-fortuitous". In this research we set out 1) to explore the factors perceived by the respondent as influencing the choice of their specific profession; 2) to investigate similarities and differences in these factors; and 3) to explore whether the "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approach describes the manner in which the choice of a profession was made. To do this, the researcher used unstructured interviews in which the respondents were asked to explain in as much detail as possible, the factors influencing their choice, and how it was made. In addition to getting at the reasons reported, near

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<sup>4</sup>For a detailed description of the various categories of topic control utilized in the interviews, refer to Gorden, 1975:426-27.

the end of each interview we asked the respondents which one they believed to be 'Primary', and which were 'Important' but not primary for their choice.

Analysis of the reasons reported for the choice of the professions revealed the importance of various factors. To develop a format for summarizing these factors, a three step procedure was used:

- 1) A first listening to the responses in order to become more familiar with each interview.
- 2) A second listening to the responses in order to derive tentative categories of factors related to the choice of a profession.
- 3) A third listening to the responses in order to sort the statements into categories.

All five groups, Medicine, Dentistry, Law, English and Science were analyzed on the basis of the three previously stated objectives. In reference to the criteria for deciding whether an individual followed a "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approach, we may look at the classification. The choices were classified as "rational-purposive" if the final choice was contingent upon previous choices, and generally involved a deliberate choice of a profession which the respondents perceived to offer the attributes that they expected from an occupation. From the respondent's point of view, choice is seen as deliberate. From a subjective point of view, individuals are assumed to make a reasoned and well-thought out choice.

The choices were classified as "adventitious-fortuitous" if the respondents appeared to have drifted into a profession through an elimination of alternatives. Entry upon a particular occupational career in

this approach is the result of previous choices which are not specifically oriented to that course of action. Negotiation between aspirations and opportunities is only minimally present.

A number of reasons were reported by the respondents for their choices. These reasons were categorized as shown in Table I.

TABLE I

## Factors Influencing the Choice of a Profession

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Number of Citations</u>
1. Interest	25
2. Encouragement and Familiarity	19
3. Social Value	18
4. Financial Security	21
5. Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status	16
6. Job Security, Flexibility, Independence	24
7. Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives	21
8. Tradition	2
9. Actualization of Parental Dream	2

In order to clarify the dimensions of each category in terms of the responses, we will discuss the types of responses which were classified in the various categories. Examples of responses that were included in each category will be given to indicate to the reader the consistency of the responses.

The first category is Interest. The responses classified as

such were those which appeared to indicate: a focus on areas of interest relating to the respondent's study of the subject, to its practical applications, or to a mixture of different types of related interests; or that the respondent feels drawn to the profession on some particular basis such as his experiences with it; or a general interest in education. Also included in this category were statements of interest which were qualified by reference to some personal dimension of liking such as the relation of the profession to some other activity that is known and liked. Samples of responses included in this category are:

"I was always interested in things that do with the law."

"I just thought for a job . . . it would be pretty interesting, always dealing with new people."

"The study of law (or some other subjects) is interesting in itself."

"It always interested me I guess you could say."

"I've always thought what I'm going to do for the rest of my life is something that's going to interest me."

"I enjoy reading, and I enjoy literature (or other subject area)."

"I thought it would be a really stimulating environment."

"I always wanted to be a \_\_\_\_\_."

"I was always interested in the biological sciences (or some other subject)."

Responses which were categorized as Encouragement and Familiarity were those which appeared to indicate that the respondent felt influenced in his choice of profession by encouragement and stimulation from others, as well as his personal familiarity with the profession. They include statements which relate to the respondents'

feelings that they were influenced in their choice of profession by people in their own personal milieu such as parents, relatives, marital partners, teachers and professors; relate to the respondents' feelings that reinforcement for their choices was found in these milieux. Also included in this category were responses which seemed to indicate that exposure to and familiarity with the profession may have influenced their choice. Examples of responses included in this category are:

"Peers have an influence on you - that was part of it."

"The strongest factor is family influence."

"The idea came from my marriage relationship (or friends)."

"Familiarity with the profession was a major influence in my decision."

"The support I received from my husband for the idea (or other close relatives or friends) was important in my choice."

"I sort of said to them that's what I wanted to do and they always encouraged me in that respect."

"It's probably just background that got me into medicine - I got interested in what my father did."

The responses which were categorized as Social Value were those which appeared to indicate: the respondents' desire to improve either the world or themselves as a human being in some way; or the respondents' desire or expressed need to do something for others, to be of service to others, or to help people with their problems. Examples of responses included in this category are:

"I saw in it the potential for helping people in general."

"The idea of doing something good, the idealistic ideal of doing something to help people."

"I want to feel like I'm doing something that's good for society."

"I like to do something which is a little bit more of a service to people."

"There's a bit of satisfaction helping people with their problems - I'm concerned with the individual that I'm going to help."

The responses classified in the next three categories were those which seemed to indicate the respondents' consideration of the dimensions of the profession itself, i.e., their assessment of the particular profession, in terms of money, prestige, status, security, independence, and other perceived attributes.

Responses which were categorized as Financial Security appeared to indicate consideration of the level of income, and the relative importance to the respondent of "expected income" as an inducement or deterrent in their choice of a profession. Responses in this category were not necessarily qualified in terms of actual annual income but in terms such as "the desire to be comfortable." Sample responses included in this category are:

"I see the money as an important factor."

"I'm just interested in making enough money so that I can live comfortably."

"It's a relatively high paying position."

"Money is of primary importance."

"The money which I thought I could make was attractive."

"I wanted a certain amount of financial security."

Responses which were categorized as a Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status were those which appeared to express indications of the respondents' consideration of these dimensions of

the profession (i.e., personal desires to be in command, to be thought of as important by society, to be accorded a certain amount of deference), and their influence on his choice. Sample responses included in this category are:

"I would get a certain amount of personal identity."

"I saw a certain amount of respect that I would get myself."

"I took into account the fact that it is a highly regarded profession."

"It's a bit of a status symbol."

"Prestige and status were definitely there."

"The prestige and status of the position appeals to me."

"The power of being in teaching was important."

"People respect lawyers so it certainly helped me choose law as my profession."

Those responses which were categorized under Job Security, Flexibility, Independence appeared to indicate the influence on the respondents' choice of the requirements, the duties connected with it, or the working conditions. Specific statements indicating the influence of job security, flexibility, mobility, and independence are important here. Examples of responses included in this category are:

"I thought I would be my own boss, responsible for my own show."

"Yes, independence and job security were important."

"Hours, flexibility and doing what you want to do were appealing."

"You have quite a bit of freedom in the directions in which you go."

"The working conditions appealed to me."

"I knew that once I finished this course, I'd have a job."

"I like the idea of mobility very much."

"I could have the type of independence I want."

"If you're a doctor, it's sort of a ticket to go any place you want."

Responses which were categorized as Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives were those which appeared to indicate the respondents' assessment of alternatives which were considered, and statements relating to their influence on the choice of profession. Sample responses included in this category are:

"I thought zoology might be a very frustrating thing to do."

"I never wanted to be a fireman or policeman."

"My brother couldn't get a job in arts so I switched my ideas."

"None of the other ideas I had really panned out as well."

"I thought that agriculture was too overcrowded."

"I never really seriously considered any alternatives."

"I didn't want nine to five work, punching the clock."

The effect of Tradition was a minor category derived from the data. Only two responses were classified in this area. They seem to indicate the effect of the respondents' fathers upon their choice of a particular profession when they were engaged in the same profession.

Actualization of a Parental Dream was also a minor category. Only two responses were classified in this area. They indicate that the respondents' actions in choosing a profession were influenced by the fact that their fathers had a dream of entering the same profession but were never able to realize it.

In discussing the factors which they perceived as influencing their choice of a profession, the respondents generally appeared to differ in their appreciation and recognition of the factors. Most believed that three or four strong factors were sufficient to explain the main reasons for their choice. These were sometimes discussed in the form of complex interactional schemas in which one factor tended to be linked to and reinforce the other; the result being the choice of a particular profession. For example, a respondent from the Faculty of Law expressed the factors which he saw as important for his choice in this manner:

"It was where my talents lie, more in English than in scientifically oriented areas. My general desire to be a success, the fact that I thought law could be a good vehicle for that, and the fact that I'm interested in law. These four interact and are number one . . . Next in importance was my desire to please my father and gain approval from him . . . getting approval from society too was closely related . . . status involved too was at least equally important, my perceptions of how a lawyer is, what his job is, seemed interesting to me."

In contrast to this, some individuals believed that one or two strong factors were sufficient to explain their choice. For example, one respondent noted:

"As long as I can remember, I was always interested in chemistry, and research into the area fascinated me. That was the main influence."

In addition to differences in the admitted complexity of factors, there also appeared to be differences in degrees of certainty concerning the inevitability of the outcome. For some respondents, there could not have been any other route or profession than the one they chose. Others pointed out that they had attempted, or at least considered other

alternatives. Evidence of consideration of other alternatives may be seen in statements like that of a dentistry student:

"If I hadn't gone into dentistry I think I would have gone into pharmacy . . . I don't like medicine as much because you never really have any time of your own . . . I first thought I would go into engineering but when I grew older and visited factories, I decided I didn't like working with so many engines . . . Dentistry is not like medicine; dentistry is not based on too much biology, but at least you have the use of mechanical skill, some technical work . . . The point is, first of all I decided to go into engineering because [in country X] there's no dentist training program, so first of all I hadn't planned to come over here, that's why I like to go into engineering instead. Then later my sister sponsored me to come here, and that's why I changed my mind . . . I would have taken dentistry where I came from if it had been offered there."

Evidence of attempting other alternatives and leaving them because of dissatisfaction is expressed in a statement by a respondent in law school:

"I got to the point where I was making all the money I could and the next position was two years away. So I decided if it's going to come this slow and I have to wait, it's not worth it, so I looked around to see where I could make more money, put in as much time and enjoy it. Medicine was out because I don't like it; it didn't appeal to me . . . no other job appealed to me so I chose law."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FINDINGS

The researcher has explained the basis of the categorization of responses and given examples of typical responses to be found in each category.

At this point we will look at each of the five groups separately on the basis of three aspects: 1) the factors which were reported as being of 'primary' importance to the respondents' choice of a profession; 2) the factors which were reported as being 'important' but not primary to their choice; 3) aspects which are of least or minimal influence will be briefly mentioned. Specific quotes from the respondents will be given in these areas of discussion.<sup>1</sup>

#### Medicine

##### 'Primary' Factors

The respondents in the Faculty of Medicine identified three different factors as the 'primary' influences in their choice.

Interest was cited by three of the respondents as being the 'primary' influence. Evidence of this may be seen in the following responses:

"When it really struck me as being an interesting field was about grades eight and nine. I always thought it would be great

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<sup>1</sup>In order to decrease the possibility of identification of the respondents, the pronoun his/he will be used to refer to both males and females throughout the remainder of this study.

if I could audit the courses, just sit in there and listen. Then in grades ten to eleven, I began to focus in and try to get into medicine, and that's when it jelled into a goal. I think a major part of my choice of medicine was just the interest that I developed, as I say, starting about grades eight and nine. I got very interested in biological sciences . . . and the more I learned about biological sciences, the more I enjoyed it. . . . I think I'd have to attribute any direction that my choice had from my interest in biological sciences."

"Gradually my eyes were sort of opened and I realized that there were things about it that I really liked. . . . It was definitely very interesting. . . . Taking a biology course in second year really interested me a lot too because I realized there were a lot of miraculous things that were going on that made perfect sense and yet were really fascinating to study. . . . The feelings I had about the profession itself were important in my choice. . . . I got quite interested with what we deal with in medicine . . . the fact that it's on the verge between science and social sciences. My changing ideas of what the profession was like changed to a more appealing outlook, subsequently greatly increasing my interest in the field of medicine. This was probably the most important point in my decision."

"I sort of always thought of medicine . . . what I hoped to get into eventually is environmental medicine, bringing together my two main interests, in environment and medicine. I was never really channeling toward that one specific area very consciously. My interests were very wide but in the back of my mind, I was always interested in things like medicine. . . . I always had this feeling in the back of my mind that eventually, somehow, someday, I would be in medicine . . . because I guess I had been thinking like that for so long . . . everything just sort of seemed to be a natural progression. . . . I was always interested in the biological sciences . . . and I was interested in zoology, animal behavior and things like that. . . . I've always thought that I'd get into medicine. . . . Somewhere in the health fields was always what I was looking towards and medicine was most attractive."

The fourth respondent viewed Job Security, Flexibility, Independence as 'primary' in influencing the choice. The following response illustrates this:

"I have always felt that a woman should have something to fall back on because there's no guarantee that your husband, if you get married, is going to be able to support you. . . . I had

to have something to fall back on. . . . I decided to give medicine a try because, in a sense, you're very secure in that you're guaranteed a job. . . . You have a job and it's always different - you never become stagnant. One of the reasons was I wanted to leave Canada, and if you're a doctor, it's sort of a ticket to go any place you want because they're always needed all over the place. . . . I thought I would have free time before I got into medicine, that I would be able to take my own holidays off . . . it was a guaranteed job, something to do. . . . I thought it would give you a lot of leeway, it would give you an opportunity to decide what you wanted to do and when you wanted to do it, and you could really organize your life according to your own fashion . . . stability, security."

The fifth respondent indicated that Social Value was the primary influence. This feeling was expressed as:

"When I was little, I thought I was going to be a doctor and work in Africa, but when I got older I thought God wanted me to do it, and that I would have to be ready to go if accepted. . . . I enjoyed people and I like working with people, and in some ways I thought that was what God wanted me to do . . . and I felt that if that's what He wanted me to do, then I would have the capabilities to fulfill it."

#### 'Important' Factors

Several other factors were referred to as being 'important' in influencing the choice, although not 'primary'. They include: Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; and Job Security, Flexibility and Independence; and Interest for the two who had not identified that as the 'primary' reason.

One factor that was previously noted as 'primary' in importance by one respondent was an 'important' influence for the other four respondents in their choice. This was Job Security, Flexibility, Independence. Expressions of this influence were stated as:

"I think I've known for a long time that I didn't want to

work for someone else, be part of a chain of command . . . in the job I had after first year university, I found I didn't like the way the chain of command worked . . . so that emphasized more than anything else finding a profession like medicine where there's a certain amount of independence; cooperation, but then independence, and I wouldn't be just a yes-man trying to please the guys above me so I could keep my job, or get ahead. . . . I liked the idea of being pseudo-independent, not as much of the yes-man type of thing. . . . I could be independent. . . . It offers a certain amount of excitement that you won't get out of other things; it offers a kind of satisfaction that you might not get out of other jobs. . . . I liked the idea of being my own boss."

"There are a lot of possibilities to get interesting work; I could see that medicine was going to be like that. If things are like that, I don't mind putting in the hours. I guess there's a certain amount of glamour. The job is definitely satisfying. Both job mobility and the flexibility of what you can do . . . whatever you want to do in your own life . . . you can get into pretty near anything you want. I guess I still want to leave my options open."

Three respondents referred to Encouragement and Familiarity as an 'important' factor influencing the choice. A response illustrative of this:

"There were a few people that I talked to about it quite a lot. . . . As I talked to different people I realized there were lots of possibilities and became more interested in it because it was not just sitting in an office. . . . Kids always have an influence on you, your peers, that was part of it. Deep down inside you feel that you'd like to do it just to show you can do it you know. . . . This one fellow that I talked to at the end of my first year was important . . . it was really good because a lot of the ideas he had were sort of things I wanted to hear. It was all different things you could do with a medical degree . . . and all the different areas you could get into, and that helped a lot. . . . I think that really started it. . . . As I went around I ran into more people . . . I'd talk about it finding out different things. . . . My mom has always been one to preach about how wonderful the body is, about some of the things that happen. . . . Once in a while she'll hear about someone who's sick with something and she'd look it up to see what it's about. So there's that kind of impact as well. . . . When other

people are sort of doing something, you sort of hop on and follow the leader. . . . I guess probably one of the main things that I sort of underplay was that it was something that other kids were doing, no matter how much you try to be an individual, you still think about what other people are doing. . . . There was a strong feeling inside me to show my peers and my family that I could do this sort of thing."

The influence of Social Value in the choice of medicine was 'important' for three respondents. Illustrative of the influence of this factor is the following response:

"I felt that a lot of the human part of medicine was gone. . . . I know that there's a lot of things in looking after people and caring for people that is based on just their physical needs. . . . I was sort of interested in doing something about the human part of medicine, as far as the relationship to patients. . . . That's one of the major reasons why I was interested in medicine. . . . I think that all professions, medicine included, have to realize that society is this thing where everybody has to cooperate. . . . I think that people in medicine have something to return to society and that they have a service that they have to give out, something they have to provide, and it has to be done. . . . That's one of those things that I really wanted to do. . . . I could really see how somebody in the medical profession can be really effective in society. . . . If they do their proper job, and that appealed to me a lot . . . medicine is looking after and dealing with other people's needs. . . . I want to feel like I'm doing something that's important to society."

With respect to Financial Security, two respondents indicated that it was an 'important' factor in the choice. Its influence was expressed in this way by one respondent:

"I wanted a certain amount of financial security. . . . I knew there were a few things in life that I wanted and I knew I couldn't get them without making some money, so I decided way back then, that I would like to do something that I could make some cash at. There are a few material goals that I've always wanted. . . . I knew I wanted to have money when I was older, it was important in whatever I chose that I would want to get enough to buy the things I wanted when I grew older. . . . I think that getting a good paying job with which I could support any family that I may have in the future was important."

With respect to Interest, two respondents noted this as being an 'important' factor in their choice. Illustrative of this influence is this response:

"Medicine is interesting, you can't deny that, and knowing that you can definitely do something, if you learn it and apply it. In grade twelve I got more interested in sciences. . . . I always was sort of intrigued by hospitals, they seemed very exciting. . . . It was practical and you get involved with people, different types of people, do different types of things, it was always growing, never stagnant. You do get to meet people who have similar interests and its nice to have people around that you have a lot in common with."

#### 'Other' Factors

The other factors discussed by medical students but not ranked as 'primary' or 'important' were Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige and Status; Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives; Tradition; and Actualization of a Parental Dream.

The influence of "Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives" was cited as a factor by three respondents. Its influence may be apparent in the following response:

"There's a lot of things that have sort of challenged medicine and it still comes out as something that I really wanted to do. It was a matter that it was the best alternative, none of the other ideas really panned out as well as medicine."

The type of influence of a "Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, and Status" for two of the respondents may be noted in the following response:

"I took into account the fact that it is a highly regarded profession. . . . you know very well that people are going to think you're really going places. . . . I think probably I was influenced by the whole idea of society towards it. It's a bit of a status symbol . . . but prestige and status weren't the major influence, although it was definitely there."

The effect of "Tradition" as an influence in the choice of medicine was cited by only one respondent, in the following manner:

"It's probably background that helped in going into medicine, having seen my father and what he does, I got interested in it . . . because of my family background I always wanted to do well."

"Actualization of a Parental Dream" was cited by one respondent as a minor influence in this way:

"My father wanted to go into medicine but right after the war he started teaching veterans and never applied."

## Dentistry

### 'Primary' Factors

Respondents in the Faculty of Dentistry cited two different factors which they apparently viewed as 'primary' influences in their choice. These factors included Interest, Job Security, Flexibility, Independence.

Interest was cited by four of the respondents as being of 'primary' importance in their choice. Evidence of this may be seen in the following selected statements:

"I like doing things, something with my hands, carpentry, that type of thing. I think you have to pick some kind of job or profession or whatever that you'll be interested in doing over a prolonged period of time. . . . There are different fields that you can go into in dentistry, and you're always sort of doing something and creating something. . . . I liked some of the courses that you take in high school; I liked the science courses . . . in dentistry you still get involved in the basic sciences type of thing. . . . I like making things so to do reconstructive work or something like this sort of fits in with my interests. I thought I would enjoy working with my hands. Interest in what we do in dentistry was most important to me."

"I like dentistry more than other occupations because it involved some technical work, some mechanical skill, it appealed to me that I would be working with my hands. The most important element in my choice was the interest in dentistry . . . once you get in you must be really sure whether you like it or not."

"I always wanted to go into medicine or dentistry. I had learned that dentistry involved a lot of practical things. It involved a lot of manual dexterity. I knew that I would enjoy working with my hands . . . through hobbies and that I thought working with my hands would really turn me on . . . what I was interested in was having something which I can be happily working at, something I can look forward to every day for the rest of my life."

"I was interested in dentistry because I wanted to become involved in medical services. . . . Interest came first in importance in my choice of dentistry. . . . I liked the idea that you're working, doing something rather than sitting at a desk in an office-type job . . . you're active with your hands . . . you're doing different things . . . but you're not always doing the same thing, there is diversity in it."

The factor cited as being of 'primary' importance by the other respondent was the influence of Job Security, Flexibility, Independence.

Indications of its influence in his choice are included here:

"Basically, security and money appealed to me in dentistry. . . . Security was primary. . . . The point of the independence really appealed to me. In a sense you work on your own hours . . . that's what appealed to me, the independence of being one's own boss . . . I liked the independency of it at the time I was thinking of becoming a dentist . . . as a dentist you have a lot of independency, you take a lot of time off if you want to and that was appealing in a sense too . . . you're doing something which you like and nobody is going to boss you around. That, I think, is a good sign of independency, doing what you like at what you like . . . the independency of being your own boss, being on my own, being able to do the things I want to do."

#### 'Important' Factors

Factors noted as being 'important' but not 'primary' in influencing the choice were as follows: Interest; Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Job Security, Flexibility,

Independence; and Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives. The influence of Social Value in the choice of dentistry was 'important' to four respondents. The following response illustrates the nature of the influence of this factor:

"I was always interested in helping people, like doing something for them . . . what I thought was important in my choice was helping people because I've always wanted to do something like that . . . having a job in an office seems so useless to me . . . it just seems that you're not doing anything for people . . . this way you're directly helping people. You can go out and help them by fixing their teeth . . . it's something directly helping people. . . . I wanted to get into something that would help me before I got interested in dentistry."

With respect to Job Security, Flexibility, and Independence, four respondents in dentistry ranked it as being 'important' in their choice; one saw it as 'primary'. For the four who saw it as 'important' the following response illustrates the nature of its influence:

"The working conditions appealed to me. You're pretty well independent if you do go into your own practice, which I really don't intend to do right away but you always have that chance to be your own boss. . . . If you have your own practice, you're independent and you can take your holidays when you want. You can choose your own hours and I think you're pretty well free. I think a lot of people who go into dentistry like that aspect of it. I knew that once I finished university, once I finished this course, I'd have a job . . . that's another reason. The independence that you have, that you always know that you can go into practice, like you'll have a free choice of what you want to do, and what your hours are, when you want to take your holidays, that you're your own boss, as well as the security of dentistry was very important."

With respect to Financial Security as an 'important' factor in the choice, it was an influence for two respondents. The following response illustrates the nature of the influence:

"There's sort of an income factor and you have an idea of the

type of income that will at least suffice. . . . You can always have that to fall back on. . . . Actually I wasn't just sure how much dentists do make, I thought it was more of a function of how much they want to make and how many patients they want to see and what not . . . a fee for service basis is what appealed to me at the time of my decision to enter dentistry. . . . I wanted something that would give me a standard of income that I expected out of it, that was a strong influence in the decision."

In addition to the four respondents who listed Interest as 'primary', the fifth one mentioned it as 'important'. It was expressed in this way:

"I thought of dentistry and it seemed like a good idea and so I had the intentions of it all along. My objective in first year science was to get a good average to go into dentistry after first year. I used to think of myself as a very creative person . . . but it takes time to develop . . . at the time I thought I would do well working with my hands . . . at the time I thought I could do it. There's a lot of aspects to dentistry. . . . I knew before I came in . . . I wanted to get into this faculty, I wanted to try my best. . . . Dentistry was like the optimum."

One respondent referred to Encouragement and Familiarity as an 'important' factor influencing the choice. It was expressed as follows:

"When I was young I had many tooth troubles, orthodontic problems, and I had many tooth cavities, and I went to the dentist very often. And it's not like here, in [country X] the government servants they have a dental plan so they don't get charged anything, so that I could go to the dentist as often as once a week; and when I had my orthodontic problem, I went there for about three years and I knew very well what the work of a dentist was . . . and besides, my parents both of them lost their whole set of teeth already . . . and they had tooth problems. They wear dentures and this made me want to be a dentist . . . my parents gave some advice and supported my decision to come here."

Although not indicated as 'primary', Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives was indicated as an 'important' influence by one respondent

and was referred to by the other four as a factor in the choice. The respondent for whom it was 'important' expressed it in this way:

"I realized that medicine actually from what I could gather based on information from people in medicine and dentistry, medicine is highly theoretical, it becomes practical when you go out to work with it. Even at that, dentistry, I thought, was twice or three times as practical as medicine . . . in terms of working with your hands, the training throughout and the practice . . . I felt that at this stage of my life, being an older person, that I would not be able to become a specialist in medicine, and I would not want to become an ordinary general practitioner in medicine. Therefore, on those grounds, I decided that I wouldn't want to go into medicine, I would prefer going into dentistry. . . . Medicine at this stage of my life would be another eight years of my life. . . . I felt that I was just lost in a whole world of theoretics in the type of employment I had previously . . . that was a factor which actually sparked me to apply to dentistry."

The factor - "Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige and Status" was discussed in the interviews by dental students. Indications are, however, that it had no influence on their choice. Absent completely were the factors of "Tradition" and "Actualization of a Parental Dream".

#### Law

##### 'Primary' Factors

Respondents from the Faculty of Law expressed three different factors as being 'primary' in their choice of profession. The factors they included were Financial Security; Encouragement and Familiarity; and Interest.

Two respondents indicated Financial Security as being of 'primary' importance in their choice of profession. They expressed their feelings in this way:

"It seemed to me the easiest way to make a lot of money. . . .

I'm just interested in making enough money so that I can live comfortably, and only have to work for eight months of the year. Like I'm not interested in making millions of dollars . . . I don't know how much money it'll be . . . because inflation and everything like that, but you know I don't need to make \$100,000 per year to be able to live the way I want to live . . . the money that comes along with the job makes it interesting . . . primarily my main interest was money."

"Money was of primary importance in my choice of law."

One respondent who viewed Financial Security and Interest as interacting, but viewed Interest as being 'primary' in influencing the choice, expressed it like this:

"If I had a choice to be really rich and have a boring job in some corporation, or to have the old fascinating life in criminal law, which it can be, I'd take the latter. Having a job that is going to interest me and at the same time bring in some good bread was important. Interest in law comes ahead of money with the qualification that I have enough money to be comfortable, having a job that I figured was going to interest me was most important. It was an interesting job as far as I was concerned, from what I had seen . . . it was interesting . . . I've always thought that something that I was going to do for the rest of my life was something that's going to interest me . . . having a job that I figured was going to interest me was important. . . . I used to watch trials in grade twelve, I was interested in how the procedures worked, what went on . . . it always interested me."

Interest was expressed by another respondent as 'primary' although it was verbalized in an interactive scheme with other points of influence. His response was:

"Interest in the field and interest in having a goal was of prime importance . . . it was where my talents lie, more in English than in scientifically oriented areas, and my general desire to be a success, and the fact that I thought law could be a good vehicle for that, and the fact that I'm interested in law. Those four interact and are number one. . . . I was always interested in things that do with the law. . . . I liked police stories and criminal law, I used to like watching Perry Mason, stuff like that . . . I always had it on my mind

I'd go into law especially in grade eleven, twelve, and first year university so I just became more serious since I realized that the time was coming closer . . . all my interests developed in a straight line towards law. . . . I don't know many people who wanted to be a lawyer for as long as I did."

With reference to the factor Encouragement and Familiarity, one respondent referred to encouragement from the spouse as the 'primary' factor influencing the choice. The statement was:

"I must say my spouse encouraged me. I didn't think I could do it . . . he really encouraged me, told me that I should at least try, so that's what I did. He was most important in influencing me to go in. He said this would give me some training that would enable me to stand on my own two feet. He thought it is something I would enjoy and I would like to do. If he hadn't encouraged me, I wouldn't have tried even to do it."

#### 'Important' Factors

Factors which were noted as being 'important' in influencing the choice include: Interests; Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status; and Job Security, Flexibility, Independence.

The category, Job Security, Flexibility, and Independence was cited as 'important' by four of the respondents in law. However they were not as explicit in their verbalizations or the manner in which it had influenced their choice as respondents in medicine and dentistry were. Illustrative of the influence of this factor are these responses:

"Eventually I'm going to go on my own because I don't want to work that much. I'm not too fired up on working twelve months of the year. I'd really like to do a lot of traveling and things like that; and that's what I'd eventually like to do is just build up a name for myself . . . so I could work for six to eight months of the year and travel a

lot. This aspect was important for my choice."

"The job security and independence were very important"

Three respondents indicated that Interest was an 'important' factor in influencing their choice. A response which illustrates the influence of this factor is:

"I figured I would do something that I wanted to do . . . I'll probably work harder on something like law that really interests me . . . with law you have knowledge. I was interested in law because with it you have the ability to solve your own problems, or, if you can't solve them, you know who to go to to solve them for you . . . just knowing what the limits are, knowing what you can write off on income tax, that sort of thing . . . I was very interested in the actual practice of law."

Three respondents referred to the category Encouragement and Familiarity - i.e., encouragement and stimulation from others and familiarity with the profession as being an 'important' influence in their choice of law. This type of influence includes specific encouragement to enter law as well as to get a good education - to try harder in school, etc. A response illustrative of the influence of this factor is:

". . . of course my father was always saying be a professional, you know, regular family influence . . . and my father always thought that I'd be a good law student, he always thought I'd be good in law . . . my father was telling me all the time, be a lawyer, be a lawyer. He never used to bug me about it, he just took it for granted that I'd go to university and was not too worried about it. I wouldn't say there was any pressure but I knew what he wanted; he made it clear in grade seven . . . I guess there's an element of trying to satisfy him in my decision; I'm sure that was definitely involved. Perhaps if he didn't stress to me how important school was and that, maybe I wouldn't have tried harder. Since I began school he was always bugging me to get an education, to try harder in school and I guess there's an element of that in my decision."

Three respondents viewed Financial Security as being an 'important' influence but not 'primary'. Evidence of the influence of this factor on their choice may be seen in the following response:

"I guess I figured somewhere along the line that lawyers made a fairly good income . . . like I knew I'd always be comfortable and I knew I could make as much money as I wanted. . . . I knew I had to get a job where I made money. I wanted to make a decent income. Money is important, but not of primary importance."

The respondents in law also indicated the influence of a Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige and Status. There were three whose responses were classified as 'important'. A related illustrative statement is:

"Perhaps the prestige involved was an influence. People know you're a lawyer and right away you're accorded a certain amount of prestige. I'm sure that's involved. If people would have hated lawyers then I'm sure I wouldn't have wanted to be a lawyer, but people respect lawyers so it certainly helped me choose it as my profession. I was always a competitive guy and I guess I always wanted to be a professional; and I didn't want to be an unsuccessful person, I wanted to become a successful person, and I figured law would be a vehicle for being a success."

Actualization of a Parental Dream was discussed by one respondent:

"I guess there's an element of trying to satisfy him. My father himself always sort of wanted to be a lawyer too and he was sort of frustrated in this . . . his father got sick and he couldn't continue his education . . . he's always sort of wanted to be a lawyer so for his eldest son, he's always wanted that. That probably explains why he kept suggesting law to me."

Social Value was indicated by one respondent as being an 'important' influence in the choice. This influence was expressed as:

"I have to help people. I think I can influence how things

are decided, how the country is run, in a way you really have more influence maybe than if you're doing something else, so making decisions which would help people, especially in politics, was maybe a main reason."

### Other Factors

Indications appear to be that the factor Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives did influence the choice of three respondents, although it was not 'primary' or 'important'. Illustrative of its influence is this response:

"I took this advertising course for two years and I was working as an advertising writer and producer and all that. What started me into law was I had problems with the people I was working with . . . but the thing was, it got to the point where I was making as much money as I could make there and the next step along was about two years. I was offered the directorship with a lower salary . . . and I looked at it and said if its going to come this slow and the rewards are going to be this small, it's not worth it . . . I know the work and if I have to wait, it's not worth it."

### English

#### 'Primary' Factors

Respondents in English all cited Interest as the 'primary' factor influencing their choice. These responses were as follows:

"My first year English course turned me on so I went into honours English . . . an academic career is marvelous and I think it tends to involve you more in it than a lot of other jobs do . . . you work longer hours at it and so much of you is just caught up in it and I don't know how to describe that. I guess it's because of your love for it . . . I think the potential I see in terms of teaching is in terms of the student and my relation to them. . . . I think literature has a lot to offer the students in their lives. . . . I think research and learning are very, very, important parts of society that's not very well recognized except among the group that's involved in it."

"I really took it for granted that I would come to university. It never occurred to me not to go to university; and I have always been very interested in languages and literature, not specifically English . . . I decided to do my professional training, the Ph.D., in English, because I'd rather teach in my own language. . . . I enjoy learning languages; I enjoy reading and I enjoy literature and I guess the only professional extension of that is teaching. . . . the specific university career of English probably came out of my own inclination . . . I think I just went into English because I was good at it and I enjoyed it. I really was extremely keen on literature."

"When I decided to go back to the M.A. year, I also decided to go on to Ph.D. and teaching. . . . I enjoy reading, enjoy literature, so studying and teaching seemed to go hand in hand . . . it involves all of your life . . . in my M.A. year as a T.A., I was teaching people older than the average, I found this very encouraging, found my classes and teaching encouraging. . . . It was as I had hoped it would be, like when I had decided to pursue a university career."

"I had a feeling that I must get good marks, and also I found myself enjoying my English courses. . . . I was very happy with English because I liked it . . . my enjoyment of English made me want to pursue a career in the field . . . I thought it would be pretty neat to be a professor because that sort of fit in with the image of what I wanted to be . . . just liking reading and the thought that you could do it full-time, was, just seemed like heaven . . . the most important influence was my love for books, my enjoyment of literature."

"In university I decided I liked English . . . so I sort of pursued that, and it wasn't until I got into the M.A. program and I got a T.A. that I decided that that was really what I wanted to do. . . . I was very excited at the thought of teaching at university . . . the language is one of the most fundamental tools, so that when you study it you are looking at how the tool is being used . . . it can help to broaden your own thinking . . . literature becomes more than just rhyme scheme . . . most of the writers have been involved in a society and they wrote about a certain type of era. I think the main reason that I wanted to pursue teaching is because of the students and the fact that I get to teach them English literature, the main thing was the kids themselves because I really, really like that age group (1st year) where they're very fresh and vibrant people."

### 'Important' Factors

Several other factors were 'important' but not 'primary' in influencing the choice of English. They are: Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Job Security, Flexibility, Independence; and Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives.

The factor Job Security, Flexibility, Independence was indicated as being 'important' in influencing the choice by all respondents in English. Responses which illustrate the influence of this factor are:

"I think the flexibility of the profession was also important . . . you have more independence in this field than a lot of others, and less supervision . . . the profession has quite a bit of personal freedom . . . it seemed to have that kind of intellectual freedom which was appealing . . . it influenced me that it was an intellectually free atmosphere . . . I thought the idea of a profession that was involved with ideas, sort of putting things together, interpreting things, analyzing things then putting them back together was great."

"I wanted to do something in which my life and my job were all wrapped up together. . . . It's varied, you often teach at night; it has flexible hours which is really kind of nice. Sometimes those hours are long but in a sense you have more freedom to blend it into your own life, your own life style - the world of books and this sort of life style became to be associated in my life. There's the joy of teaching and sharing your interest with other people. . . . I looked at the Ph.D. as a tool to construct the type of life style that I wanted, part of that life style is mobility - to move around . . . I've always thought, with a Ph.D. I would move around and see the world . . . the hours and independence of the position fit in to the life style that I envision."

Four respondents indicated that Encouragement and Familiarity was 'important' in their choice. Illustrative of their responses are the following quotes:

"My family, except for my own parents, everybody was a teacher. . . . I grew up knowing a lot about how a teacher lived and the

kind of work they did and that sort of thing, and I think that was obviously a factor. . . . I thought all through school that I would go into teaching at a public school level . . . particularly two or three of the early professors I had, drew me to English. When I was an undergrad . . . their enthusiasm for the whole thing obviously got me really enthused about studying and doing the work and the subject; and when I thought about it, it really struck me how enthusiastic these people were about what they were doing. . . . I saw the profs talked about something they obviously loved and in about second year . . . I thought how lovely to get a job that you enjoy so much. . . . My mother has been tremendously supportive . . . she's always been supportive in terms of talking about the whole thing . . . and that's an important factor, having somebody there who really thinks that you're right for it, and that you're doing the right thing . . . the fact that my family tends to think highly of somebody who can do things with their head . . . that's been probably a far more important factor than I would realize . . . the more you learn, the better off you are and that's the way my family feels about it."

"The idea germinated in my marriage relationship - there was a lot of support and influence there. . . . I think a lot of influence comes from my mother's side of the family . . . I must have been influenced by them in a positive way. I got a lot of praise for my so-called brilliance, so I got this image of being good at school, and I obviously was going to go on further . . . so I think probably I was influenced and I liked the support that I got. That's what kept it sort of going. . . . It grew out of praise . . . a professor who I had in graduate school very much supported me . . . familiarity with the profession was a major influence in my decision. . . . A friend of mine influenced me to search out the possibilities of a university career . . . the initial conversation with my spouse was a major influence."

Three respondents indicated that an Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives was 'important' in influencing the choice. The following quote is illustrative of their responses:

"I didn't want 9-5 work; I did not want to be doing somebody else's work, working for somebody else, punching the clock or even in business, doing something which I didn't really enjoy. I didn't like the idea of having to separate my own self, my own interests, my own hobbies, from the 9-5 situation. I thought of teaching public school but there's too much of the 9-5, and the thought of having to teach people who don't really want to be there . . . at least in university you don't have that discipline problem."

Two respondents indicated that Financial Security was an 'important' influence in their choice. One of them expressed it in this way:

"I'm sure money was a very important factor. I always thought it was a higher paying job and that I would certainly never be financially dependent on anyone else . . . it's a relatively high paying position . . . I took it for granted there wouldn't be any problem with money."

One respondent indicated that Social Value was 'important' in influencing the choice. The following statement supports this:

". . . I wanted to be able to develop a sense of social consciousness, awareness in the students as a means of helping them solve their problems . . . this would also enable them to contribute better to society."

The factor Actualization of a Parental Dream was absent, but the factor Tradition was expressed by one respondent as:

". . . my father was in a university career so he influenced me, more indirectly than directly, but the fact that he was a professor definitely operated on my decision."

The type of influence of a Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, and Status may be seen in this quote:

". . . that was, to me, a very admirable position . . . the idea that this was a profession which had a certain status . . . probably associated with my image of the profession was that it had a certain status . . . for example, being a waitress didn't have the same kind of appeal in social terms. . . . It's tremendously gratifying to think that you may be influential - in terms of influencing the students."

## Science

### 'Primary' Factors

The respondents in the Sciences all indicated that Interest was the 'primary' factor influencing their choice of profession. Evidence of this may be seen in the following responses:

"My basic interests are in anatomy and functional anatomy . . . I'll be working with the gross body structure, particularly in function and this is where my background will kind of help me. I had always had an interest in anatomy and functional anatomy. I was always very good in anatomy and my anatomical background was always excellent. . . . There are lots of exciting things . . . nothing can develop without research and I was very interested in that . . . research develops an area of science, that kind of thing is important to me . . . so university is where it's at . . . You're with young people at university . . . I think they are more stimulating, particularly the bright ones; they keep you on your toes."

"Teaching is a part of research . . . they're sort of together. I think when I first started university I figured that I'd like to teach because I figured there were a lot of people around that didn't know how. I'm not saying they didn't have the necessary information, a lot of them did, but they couldn't really teach, I didn't think. I mean, as a student I certainly had lots of opportunities to survey them and I thought I could do a lot better job, give the students a break. I like teaching, being in front of groups. I didn't intend to be just a teacher, I liked research as well, but I'd like to instruct . . . I do a lot of teaching in non-academic things, like in sports. Teaching is learning itself, I enjoy that. The most important factor is personal, I like to teach, I like the satisfaction, I like talking about it."

"I never thought I would teach until last year (1st yr. Ph.D.) . . . because you're an anatomist you mainly teach with some research. So I guess I never set out to be a teacher . . . but just because of what I'm in now - the area, teaching is a big part of it, that's all. I assume in university people are taking what they want to . . . therefore they are interested . . . I like anatomy, it's descriptive. . . . Interest in the area is the primary factor in my choice . . . if I'm bored, there's no way I can do anything if I don't enjoy what I'm doing. . . . The main point of appeal was what I'll teach."

"I was interested in chemistry just from the beginning from when I got into high school pretty well, and I always intended to go into chemistry right there and then . . . and in grade twelve I entered a science fair, did a little research project . . . I thought that was pretty good. I won in Manitoba and I ended up going into the Canada science fair. I won third place in the Canada science fair. Then to spur me to more interest in chemistry, I got offered a job here at the university doing research in the summer in chemistry right after grade twelve. Then I entered first year, honours science. I took five sciences and liked

chemistry the best so that I went straight into an honours course. I planned it right from the beginning practically, so nothing swayed my mind. I was interested in chemistry in the elementary grades - grade seven or eight. I got a little bit of chemistry in grade eleven and a chemistry course in grade twelve. I had a real interest in chemistry, which was really developed in elementary, playing with chemistry labs and kits and stuff like that, making bombs. My prime interest has always been in research, not so much in teaching. But in university I think research and teaching are very important and related to each other. I like teaching, I had some experience tutoring when in grade twelve and then in first and second year university . . . So I liked teaching to a certain extent . . . I always liked chemistry and my interest continued to the Ph.D. I'm very interested in analytical chemistry."

"When I started taking courses I found I was more interested in theoretical rather than practical applications. I became more interested in the basis of certain biochemical process so I just went on from there, followed it up. I was mostly interested in research. Personally, I would rather work on something which is of personal interest. If it's of benefit to somebody else, that's fine. Besides the fact that the research would be more interesting at university . . . It was the material itself that interested me the most . . . the summer jobs that I had - working at the university they put me on a project of my own . . . that sort of got me stimulated in doing independent research . . . My interest was sort of a result of the practical end of research but not just that . . . the fact that I ended up being reasonably successful in the projects I did in the summers sort of spurred me on."

### 'Important' Factors

Several other factors were indicated as being 'important' influences in the choice. They include: Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status; Job Security Flexibility, Independence; and Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives."

The common factor expressed by all the respondents as 'important' for their choice although not 'primary' was Job Security, Flexibility and Independence. Responses which are illustrative of the influence of this factor are:

"Hours, flexibility, and doing what you want to do, and not having a nine to five punch was important . . . there's a lot more flexibility, . . . So that is a very attractive thing, there's no doubt about it . . . university work is satisfying."

". . . I thought I would enjoy the people working around me . . . if your surroundings are filled with the types of people you enjoy, you enjoy your work that much more. . . . That's the most important to me, that I work my own hours, I work on whatever I want . . . I didn't think I could work for somebody sort of thing . . . I sort of have to be my own boss at all levels . . . I really like the independence . . . I like to be able to work when I want to work and for as long as I want . . . I'd rather the flexibility than have the schedule of punching cards . . . you have a lot of time off, time to budget your own way the majority of the time."

"An important point of appeal was in the hours and the restrictions imposed in the department, and if I was free to do other things, like if I wanted to do research, things like that. . . . The people in a university setting would be fairly good to work with, they're nice people . . . I think I'd be happy with most of the people I would work with."

"In university you have quite a bit of freedom in the directions in which you go . . . I think university hours and their flexibility were important to me. . . . The most important thing I want to do is research . . . I like to direct myself rather than being directed by some board of industry . . . I think university offers the greatest freedom. . . . Another thing that appeals to me is the tenure system, once you're in, you're in, that's sort of nice . . . it's sort of important too . . . the university offers frontier, independent research possibilities; this is highly important to me."

"At university the research is not so goal-oriented in terms of having practical applications as such . . . I think I would feel stifled if I had to do research for somebody else along their lines of thought and everything else. I would sooner take lesser salary and work somewhere where I could follow up my own interests in research. I think there's a lot less pressure on you in university than there is in a lot of other jobs . . . at university, as long as you're producing some type of results, whether marketable or not, it's acceptable . . . I wanted to have the chance to move around . . . see how other people are doing their research, looking at different areas."

The factor Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives was an

'important' influence in the choice of four of the respondents. Indications of this may be seen in this response:

"I did once consider medicine but I didn't think I had the stomach for it you know . . . most of the doctors I ran into had this Godlike attitude about themselves which didn't help me out too much . . . as far as the physical aspects of it, it seems like it was more in an applied sense . . . I looked at some of the courses in medicine but they didn't interest me at all . . . there's a lot of memorization in medicine and I don't go for that sort of garbage."

Two respondents referred to Financial Security as an 'important' factor in influencing the choice. It was expressed as:

"You've got to have enough money. Money wasn't my prime objective but it was important . . . money was, in a sense, a motivating force . . . in the university I could make enough money to satisfy me."

The factor Desire for Admiration, Power, Respect, Prestige and Status was an 'important' influence in the choice of two respondents.

This response illustrates its influence:

"The prestige and status of the position appealed to me . . . the power of being in teaching . . . The leadership in teaching is important, the idea that you're leading the ideas on, you're leading the people, you're in control, sort of in command."

One respondent referred to Social Value as an 'important' factor in influencing the choice. It was expressed as follows:

"I think that I owe things to other people, like there's no sense gathering and accumulating all this information if you don't pass it on. So I feel that I owe to other people . . . I enjoy sort of helping people out, sort of giving them an insight, explaining it to them, helping them with their problems."

One respondent indicated Encouragement and Familiarity as being 'important' in the choice, in the following manner:

"One professor I was working with on projects during the summers while in undergraduate, was very influential in my decision . . . This is because he assisted me in the projects and I ended up being reasonably successful in them . . . the

result being that I was spurred on to pursue more research as a career."

The factors Tradition and Actualization of a Parental Dream were both absent for this group.

#### COMPARISONS BETWEEN PROFESSIONS

At this point we would like to look briefly at the factors in light of apparent similarities and differences in meaning or influence across groups as indicated by their responses.

First, let's look at Interest. For English, Science and Medicine, the interests were oriented towards the specific subject area of study, i.e. biological sciences for medicine, and from that the choice of a specific career developed which was most attractive for the respondent. For instance, a response from a medical student may illustrate:

"I got interested in the biological sciences . . . and the more I learned about biological sciences, the more I enjoyed it. I think I'd have to attribute any direction that my choice had from my interest in biological sciences."

Somewhat in contrast to this type of subject interest which developed into a career orientation, dentistry and law students were seemingly more focused on the practical aspects of the profession. Dentistry students referred to the technical aspects of working with their hands while law students referred to a general interest in law, in studying law, its practical aspects, and in the actual practice. Dentistry respondents indicated that their knowledge about the type of work they would be doing was an influence in their choice. On the other hand, the respondents in law appeared to be less knowledgeable about what exactly it was that they would be doing in the practice of law.

Dental and law students appeared to be similar to the respondents in Medicine, English and Sciences for the factor Interest in that they all saw the profession as fitting in with, or being an extension of their interests. They differ seemingly in that where the general interests for law was reading cases; studying law; for dentistry it was doing some technical work which involved working with their hands.

The following responses from a dental and a law student may illustrate this point:

"I liked doing something, something with my hands, carpentry - that sort of thing . . . you're always sort of doing something and creating something. . . . I like making things so to do reconstructive work or something like this sort of fits in with my interests. I thought I would enjoy working with my hands."

"I just thought for a job -- it would be pretty interesting . . . and I've read cases and stuff like that; they always are pretty interesting . . . the study of law was interesting in itself."

To summarize, Interest appears to hold a similar guiding orientation in the choice of all respondents. In other words, they become personally interested in a (general) area, and then channel themselves towards the most attractive profession in that area. They appeared to view the particular profession which they chose as being the most attractive extension of their personal interests, be they the subject area, mechanical skills, or interest in the general field. It may be that the superficial view one gets of the seemingly different orientation in the area of "Interest" as an influence is merely a result of the type of study or work in each profession.

Secondly, we will look at the factor Job Security, Flexibility, Independence across groups. This factor was reported as 'important' by

the majority of respondents, 23 out of 25. There appeared, however, to be a stress on different aspects of this category by different groups.

Medical students seemed to stress independence and flexibility of what you can do as well as job security. The following response is illustrative:

"You're very secure in that you're guaranteed a job . . . if you're a doctor it's sort of a ticket to go any place you want because they're always needed all over the place . . . it would give you an opportunity to decide what you wanted to do and when you wanted to do it; and you could really organize your life according to your own fashion."

Dental students tended to emphasize independence and flexibility, but not job security, in contrast to medicine. To illustrate:

". . . the hours that dentists work would be . . . appropriate for me . . . I liked the idea of mobility very much . . . I thought that maybe if I got into dentistry I could have the type of independence I want."

Law students reported independence and security as being important points. It did not appear to be as significant for them, however, as it was for medical students for example. This may be partially related to the profession itself, and the idea that setting up a law practice, i.e. working on your own is more difficult to do without years of practical experience in the field; as well as indications that during their articling year and for several years thereafter, they viewed Job Security, Flexibility and Independence as relatively limited. They noted that they were only guaranteed a job for their articling year and after that they are "on their own". When probed they seemed unwilling or unable to relate the manner in which they had perceived these points when making their choice of law. Illustrative responses are:

"Eventually I'm going to be on my own because I don't want to work that much. I'd eventually like to build up a name for myself . . . so I could work six to eight months of the year and travel a lot."

For respondents pursuing a university career, the aspects of flexibility and independence appeared to be more important to them than job security. (They indicated that they had perceived job security as relatively low.) Illustrative of their point of view is this response:

"It has flexible hours . . . you have more freedom to blend it into your own life . . . I've always thought with a Ph.D. I would move around and see the world . . . the hours and independence of the position fit into the lifestyle that I envision."

#### NATURE OF CHOICE BY PROFESSIONS

We have discussed the reasons reported for the choice by respondents in Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Science, and English, as well as the similarities and differences across groups. Now we would like to look briefly at specific responses from each group which focus on their perceptions of the way in which they made their choice, in light of the criteria for classifying the choices in one of the two approaches.

For Medicine, the respondents seem to show partial support of the "rational-purposive" approach, two respondents appeared to choose medicine as being the most attractive for them. The basis of their choice seemed to be between their preferences - what they wanted from an occupation, and their general interests in an area. Responses that were classified as such are:

"I decided it would be sort of fun to see if I could hack university sciences and get into medicine. The only reason I went into sciences in university was because I wanted to go into medicine."

". . . around grade ten I started thinking about whether I really wanted to do it or not . . . in grade eleven and twelve I guess when I decided to do it, I decided I was going to do it all the way . . . go to university, do my best and if I got in I got in . . . It was just what I felt I should be doing . . . it sort of was something that was always with me."

On the other hand, in support of the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach, three respondents appeared to have at least partially drifted into Medicine. Their responses were:

"I got very interested in biological sciences, I mean I never got along very well with numbers actually and I think I realize very quickly that doing something like actual mathematics would really be an effort for me . . . and the more I learned about biological sciences, the more I enjoyed it . . . So I mean for a while it was kind of like medicine was interesting, you could play with animals, or work with people, and then that kind of focused in when some of the other aspects came in, like independence and monetary goals . . . I almost sort of sifted through and came to the best compromise as far as what I wanted. I had a basic interest in health sciences and I channeled myself into the one eventually . . . I think I have to attribute any direction that my choice had from my interest in biological sciences."

"I was never really channeling toward that one specific area very consciously . . . My interests were very wide but in the back of my mind, I was always interested in things like medicine . . . I always had this feeling that somehow, someday, I would be in medicine . . . I always thought that I'd get into medicine . . . Somewhere in the health fields was always what I was looking towards and medicine was most attractive."

"All the way along in university, I decided that I'd try to keep as many options open as possible because I wasn't certain of what I wanted to do . . . it was sort of something where I slowly decided myself. There were all kinds of little inputs all the way along but it was just sort of, my eyes were sort of opened towards what the possibilities were and so that happened I realized that maybe that was something that I'd like to do . . . at the end of first year or the beginning of second year I kind of decided that it was something that I'd sort of like to do . . . Gradually my eyes were sort of opened and I realized that there were things about it that I really liked . . . I got quite interested with what we deal within medicine . . . My changing ideas of what the profession was like changed to a more appealing outlook, subsequently greatly increasing my interest in the field of medicine. This was probably the most important point in my decision."

For Dentistry, the respondents appear to provide partial support for both approaches. Responses of three respondents that were classified as following the "rational-purposive" approach were:

"Since about grade ten I had the objective that I wanted to get a good job . . . when I came to university, first year science, I thought of dentistry and it seemed like a good idea, and so I had the intentions of it all along. My objective in first year science was to get a good average to go into dentistry after first year . . . I knew before I came in . . . I wanted to get into this faculty; I wanted to try my best . . . Dentistry was like the optimum."

"I was interested in the area in high school but I wasn't sure until maybe last (1st year science) year that I wanted to go into dentistry. I liked the idea that you're working doing something rather than sitting at a desk in an office-type job. I made the decision for sure in first year, but I didn't think I'd get through."

"I always wanted to go into medicine or dentistry . . . I had learned that dentistry involved a lot of practical things . . . I decided that since the type of satisfactions which I am looking for are in dentistry, and in addition my working hours are such that I would be able to spend time with my family, on those bases I decided to go for dentistry and dock medicine."

In support of the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach, two respondents did not appear to view their choice as deliberate, and they seemed to indicate a certain amount of drifting into dentistry. Illustrative of this are responses like:

"I wasn't sure so I went into economics . . . I guess the final decision came pretty well when I finished fourth year economics and I said . . . 'I'm going to go and cut myself off for a year, take the course and see if I would get in'."

The responses that were classified as "adventitious-fortuitous" are:

"I think you have to pick some kind of job or profession or whatever that you'll be interested in doing over a prolonged period of time. . . . The first idea came in high school and it was just sort of an idea . . . I liked doing things,

something with my hands, carpentry, that sort of thing . . . I liked some of the courses that you take in high school . . . I wasn't sure so I went into economics . . . I guess the final decision came pretty well when I finished fourth year economics and I said well look I'm going to go on and do graduate work or I'm going to go and cut myself off for a year, take the courses, and see if I could get in . . . in dentistry you still get involved in the basic sciences type of thing . . . I thought I would enjoy working with my hands."

"The point is first of all, I decided to go into engineering because in Hong Kong there's no dentist training program. So first of all I hadn't planned to come over here, that's why I like to go into engineering instead. Then later my sister sponsored me to come here, and that's why I changed my mind . . . I would have taken dentistry in Hong Kong if it had been offered there.

The respondents in law appeared to provide support for only the "rational-purposive" approach. The responses which were classified as such are:

"I thought right from grade ten, I always thought I wanted to be a lawyer. I've always had it in my mind I'd go into law especially in grade eleven, twelve, and first year university, so I just did the work and got in . . . as the time got closer I just sort of valued my goal more. I don't know many people who wanted to be a lawyer for as long as I did. . . . In grade twelve I made a definite commitment. I wanted a goal and I wanted law as my goal."

"Long, long time ago, that's what I wanted to be was a lawyer - about grade seven or eight. I made a definite choice of law while in grade twelve."

"I was working as an                      and all that. It got to the point when I was making all the money I could and the next position was two years away. So I decided if it's going to come this slow and I have to wait, it's not worth it. So I looked around to see where I could make more money, put in as much time and enjoy it. Medicine was out because I don't like it, it did not appeal to me . . . no other job appealed to me so I chose law . . . I decided one year prior to entering law school."

"I wanted to go on and study. There isn't too much choice, either you take up a profession of some sort or you can try and become a university professor. My spouse wasn't very enthusiastic about it, and he discouraged me from going on to study for

study's sake . . . so I thought about law . . . a year before entry to law school I wanted to go to law . . . and I just gave it a try."

"Through grade twelve I really didn't think much of anything but it was always in the back of my mind. Then when I came to first year I had it in my mind, then in second year I worked hard to get into law school. But all along I was pretty sure that was where I wanted to go . . . I guess you could say I always wanted to be, whenever I thought about occupations, that's what I thought about primarily."

For English, there appears to be partial support for both approaches to occupational choice. Four respondents seemed to provide at least some support for the "rational-purposive" approach. The responses that were classified as such are:

"My first year English course turned me on so I went into honours English. . . . I think in about second year I really realized that I was going to want to continue past my B.A. honours. I thought in terms of graduate school before I thought of teaching for myself. It was in my master's year that I decided to pursue teaching."

"When I decided to go back to the M.A. year, I also decided to go on to Ph.D., and teaching . . . it was the only thing I wanted to do which met all of my desires . . . the enjoyment of studying, reading, and teaching, the amenability of the profession to my lifestyle . . . you can have human contact in the profession."

"A friend of mine was in the M.A. program, so I decided if she could do it so could I . . . my enjoyment of English made me want to pursue a career in the field. I decided at the beginning of my M.A. year after B.A. honours and one year of theology, that I would go on to the Ph.D. and teaching at university."

"In university I decided I liked English better so I sort of pursued that, and it wasn't until I got into the M.A. year in the program and I got that T.A. that I decided that that was really what I wanted to do . . . I decided in the latter half of the M.A. year that I would pursue a university career."

The fifth respondent appeared to indicate at least some support for the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach. His response was:

"Without giving it too much consideration I decided to go into a graduate program. I more or less took that for granted."

I wasn't necessarily thinking that professionally, although I probably took it for granted that I would end up teaching in a university, I decided to do my professional training, the Ph.D., in English, because I'd rather teach in my own language. I had no specific professional goal and I continued partly because no specific professional opportunity presented itself, and I was still interested. I kept going not because I said when I get to this point I'll do this; rather than a strong professional goal . . . I never remember making a conscious decision to teach at university - I always took it for granted I would teach English or German at university."

The respondents in Science appear to provide partial support for both approaches. Four respondents seemed to indicate that they followed the "rational-purposive" approach. The responses classified as such are:

"I can do exactly what chiropractors do with as good results although I was earning only one quarter or twenty percent of what they earn . . . In that sense it was dissatisfying . . . things began to be not that much of a challenge . . . so I decided in 1973, two years ago this past August, that I would do the Ph.D. in anatomy and get a joint appointment that's certainly with the university."

"When I first started university I was very interested. I figured that I'd like to teach and I just pursued that goal. I didn't intend just to be a teacher; I like research and I will pursue it as well."

"I was interested in Chemistry just from the beginning from when I got into high school . . . I always intended to go into chemistry right then and there . . . I planned it right from the beginning practically, so nothing swayed my mind. In grade ten or eleven I had decided to go to honours chemistry, and to go on from there to Ph.D., and doing research at university."

"I was mostly interested in research, and I made a definite decision to go on to Ph.D. and research at university while in second year of honours degree."

The fifth respondent appeared to indicate at least some support for the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach. His response was:

"I never thought I would teach until last year . . . I did enjoy the research . . . when I decided I was going to be an anatomist, that's when I realized I'd also be teaching. So

I guess I never set out to be a teacher because I didn't want to be a high school teacher or anything like that, but just because of what I'm in right now, the area, teaching is a big part of it, that's all . . . the only place I could possibly teach anatomy is the university or in a higher education setting. I got into the Ph.D. in anatomy in a very round about route. . . . I went into anatomy to use it and go back into anthropology . . . but anthropologists aren't scientific and I don't think I want to go back to that."

### THE DATA

In order to give the reader an indication of how the quoted examples fit together for any one respondent, we refer to Table 2 which shows the 'primary' and 'important' reasons reported by each respondent for his choice.

TABLE 2

'PRIMARY' AND 'IMPORTANT' REASONS FOR  
SELECTION OF A PROFESSION BY PROFESSIONS

<u>Case</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Important*</u>
1	Medicine	Interest	4, 3, 6
2	Medicine	Interest	2, 3, 6
3	Medicine	Job Security, Flexibility, Independence	4, 1, 2
4	Medicine	Social Value	2, 1, 6
5	Medicine	Interest	3, 2, 6
6	Dentistry	Interest	4, 6, 3
7	Dentistry	Interest	6, 3, 2
8	Dentistry	Job Security, Flexibility, Independence	4, 1, 6
9	Dentistry	Interest	6, 4, 3
10	Dentistry	Interest	7, 6, 3
11	Law	Financial Security	2, 5, 6
12	Law	Financial Security	1, 6, 2
13	Law	Encouragement and Familiarity	1, 6, 5
14	Law	Interest	1, 3, 5
15	Law	Interest	4, 2, 6
16	English	Interest	6, 2, 4
17	English	Interest	2, 6, 4

TABLE 2 (cont'd)

<u>Case</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Important*</u>
18	English	Interest	2, 6, 7
19	English	Interest	6, 2, 7
20	English	Interest	6, 3, 7
21	Science	Interest	6, 7, 4
22	Science	Interest	6, 3, 5
23	Science	Interest	6, 4, 7
24	Science	Interest	6, 5, 7
25	Science	Interest	6, 2, 7

\* The numbers found under 'Important' designate the Factors reported in Table I. They are as follows: 1) Interest; 2) Encouragement and Familiarity; 3) Social Value; 4) Financial Security; 5) Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status; 6) Job Security, Flexibility, Independence; 7) Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives.

The major findings of this research with respect to the reasons reported for the choice of profession is that there appears to be a fairly high degree of concensus across groups for two factors:

Interest, and Job Security, Flexibility, Independence (Table 3).

As Table 3 indicates, Interest was reported as a 'primary' reason for nineteen respondents, and as 'important' for the other six, and Job Security, Flexibility, Independence was reported as 'important' reasons for twenty-three respondents and 'primary' for two. Table 3 also indicates the reasons reported for the choice across professions.

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF 'PRIMARY' AND 'IMPORTANT'  
REASONS FOR SELECTION OF A PROFESSION

	Medicine		Dentistry		Law		English		Science	
	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I
Interest	3	2	4	1	2	3	5		5	
Encouragement and Familiarity		3		1	1	3		4		1

TABLE 3 (cont'd)

	Medicine		Dentistry		Law		English		Science	
	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I
Social Value	1	3		4		1		1		1
Financial Security		2		2	2	3		2		2
Desire for Admiration etc.						3				2
Job Security, Flexibility, Independence	1	4		5	1	4		5		5
Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives								3		4
Tradition		1						1		
Actualization of Parental Dream		1				1				

Table 4 indicates the findings with respect to the question of whether the "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approach describes the manner in which the choice of a profession was made. The data tend to provide support for the "rational-purposive" as the more common approach to the choice. Although seemingly minimal, there is evidence of the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach being followed by some respondents.

Somewhat contrary to our expectations, Law, English and Science appear to show the most support for the "rational-purposive" approach to the choice. Although we expected Law to follow this approach, it was expected that entry to English and Science would be more "adventitious-fortuitous" in nature.

TABLE 4  
FREQUENCY OF "RATIONAL-PURPOSIVE" AND  
"ADVENTITIOUS-FORTUITOUS" RATED RESPONSES TO  
CHOICE BY PROFESSIONS

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>"Rational-Purposive"</u>	<u>"Adventitious-Fortuitous"</u>
Medicine	2	3
Dentistry	3	2
Law	5	-
English	4	1
Science	4	1

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There are two major approaches to the study of occupational choice found in previous research; the "rational or purposive" and "adventitious or fortuitous". The "rational or purposive" approach stresses a purposive planning approach to occupational choice in which occupations are explicitly chosen. The final choice is conceived of as contingent upon a series of previous choices (Ginzberg et al., 1951; Blau et al., 1956; Slocum, 1959). The "adventitious or fortuitous" approach stresses a less structured, less purposive, and less rational type of occupational choice. In this view, entry upon a particular occupational career may be the end result of a series of steps which are not consistently oriented to that course of action. In the adventitious view individuals are seen as drifting into occupations rather than explicitly choosing them (Katz and Martin, 1962; Caplow, 1957; Stecklein and Eckert, 1958; Gustad, 1960). In addition to these approaches, a number of studies have utilized a sociocultural perspective in researching sociocultural correlates of occupational choice. We have not, however, included this perspective in the present research.

Utilizing the two major approaches as a guiding framework, the present study set out (1) to explore the factors perceived by the respondents as influencing the choice of their specific professions;

(2) to investigate similarities and differences in the factors across professions; and (3) to explore whether the "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approach describes the manner in which the choice of a profession is made.

The respondents in the Faculty of Medicine identified three different factors as the 'primary' influences in their choice. They include: Interest (three respondents); Job Security, Flexibility, Independence, of profession (one respondent); and Social Value (one respondent). Several other factors were identified as being 'important' in influencing the choice. They include: Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Job Security, Flexibility, Independence; and Interest for the two who had not identified that as the 'primary' reason.

The respondents in the Faculty of Dentistry cited two different factors as 'primary' influences in their choice of profession. Interest was identified as 'primary' by four respondents; and Job Security, Flexibility and Independence by the other respondent. Other factors identified as being 'important' but not 'primary' in influencing the choice were: Interest; Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Job Security, Flexibility, Independence; and Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives.

Respondents from the Faculty of Law identified three different factors as 'primary' influences in their choice of profession. Two respondents identified Financial Security, two cited Interest, and one respondent cited Encouragement and Familiarity as 'primary'. Factors which were identified as being 'important' factors influencing the

choice include Interest; Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status; and Job Security, Flexibility, Independence.

The respondents in English all identified Interest as the 'primary' influence in their choice of profession. They also identified several factors as 'important' in their choices. These include: Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Job Security, Flexibility, Independence; and Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives.

Interest was also identified as the 'primary' influence by all respondents in Science. 'Important' factors identified were: Encouragement and Familiarity; Social Value; Financial Security; Desire for Admiration, Respect, Power, Prestige, Status; Job Security, Flexibility, Independence; and Unfavourable Evaluation of Alternatives.

The major finding of this research with respect to the factors influencing the choice of a profession is that there appears to be a fairly high degree of concensus across the five groups for two factors: Interest and Job Security, Flexibility, Independence. Interest was identified as a 'primary' factor for nineteen respondents and 'important' for the other six. Job Security, Flexibility, Independence was identified as 'important' for twenty-three respondents and 'primary' for two.

In general for Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Science, and English, the data appear to indicate that the manner in which the majority of respondents choose their professions follows the "purposive-rational" approach most closely. There seemed to be limited evidence to support

the "adventitious-fortuitous" approach. Although there were differences in the number of years prior to entry to a professional program at which the choice was made,<sup>1</sup> most of the respondents appeared to have chosen the profession which they believed was the most favourable, satisfying, or attractive in terms of the characteristics which they had looked for in an occupation, and in light of their general interest in a subject area or field of study. For example, in English the respondents appeared to be generally interested in the subject area, and they seemed to perceive university teaching as the most attractive occupational extension of that interest. For the groups of Medicine, Dentistry, Science, and English, there seemed to be, particularly in the early stages, a degree of drift into the profession wherein they had arrived at a choice through elimination of alternatives rather than explicit choices.

With reference to the respondents who chose a university career, the students in English reported that they made their choice much later in their study than did the Science students. For English, the choices were made approximately one year before entry to the Ph.D. program, while those respondents in Science reported choice points ranging from one to six years prior to entry to the Ph.D. The respondents in Science indicated that they had developed an interest in the subject area earlier than those in English. Whereas the respondents in English did

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<sup>1</sup>The number of years prior to entry to professional training at which the choice was made was: Medicine - one to two; Dentistry - one to two; Law - one to three; English - one; and Science - one to six.

not appear to have developed an interest sufficient to carry them through to the Ph.D. until their M.A. year, those in Science generally seemed to have an interest of this nature either in high school or in their undergraduate years. For the respondents in English there may be what we refer to as "drift", i.e. not making any choice until the M.A. year, when they appeared to follow a "rational-purposive" approach more closely.

In conclusion, it is important to note the limitations of the research design employed for the purposes of this study. The major limitation is probably the use of post-facto type of information. We relied heavily on the respondent's accurate recall of the factors influencing the choice of his profession and the events surrounding it. It is possible that the respondents offered rationalizations for their choice, although we attempted to minimize the probability of this occurring. Second, the fact that all the categorization of the data was performed by the researcher, leaves something to be desired. Third, the limited sample used for this research may not provide adequate basis from which to generalize accurately. Fourth, it must be pointed out that we did not include those students who may have wanted to follow any one of the professions, but who for any reason failed to carry through on their plans. They may have been influenced by different factors than the respondents in this research. Fifth, we are not certain of the degree to which the reasons given were rational decisions made prior to the decision, as opposed to rationalizations for action that they had already taken.

Nevertheless, the study has at least confirmed the need for further, more rigorous research into the manner in which the choice of an occupation is made. The factors operative in occupational choice are apparently more dynamic than those encompassed by the "rational-purposive" or "adventitious-fortuitous" approaches characteristic of previous research. With reference to the contribution that this study makes toward theory, some support was found for Ginzberg's (1972) reformulated theory:

Occupational choice is a lifelong process of decision-making in which the individual seeks to find the optimal fit between his career preparation and goals and the realities of the world of work (Ginzberg, 1972:172).

We would like to put forth two suggestions for future research attempting to provide a sociological explanation of occupational choice. First, the way in which individuals learn occupational preferences as they pass through the social structure should be analyzed. Second, the manner in which preference becomes choice must be analyzed more intensively.

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