

# **EFFECTS OF CAREER JOB IN A LARGE FACTORY UPON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN OLD AGE: SENIOR MEN LIVING IN A LOCAL CITY**

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Senior men, especially those who live in urban area and who used to be employees, are said to have small social networks and to suffer serious lack of social contact with others. The purpose of this study is to test a common notion that senior men who used to be employees are likely to have small social networks, through exploring the effects of career job in a large factory upon social relationships in old age.

The survey was carried out, in 2001, with home-visit interviews, in Nakatsugawa City, Gifu Prefecture. The population of the city was about 55,000, and 21.1% of them were 65 years of age or older (2000 Population Census). The subjects were (a) 478 retired employees of the Nakatsugawa Factory of M Electric Company, Inc., living in Nakatsugawa City and neighbor cities or villages ("retired employees"), and (b) randomly selected 1,000 seniors, ranging in age from 60 to 79 years, living in Nakatsugawa City ("general population"). The factory has been the largest company in Nakatsugawa City since its establishment in 1949 and has enjoyed high prestige.

The response rate was 88.1% for retired employees and 79.1% for general population. In the present study, the data of 686 senior men (316 retired employees and 370 general population) were used for analyses. The average age of respondents was 69.4 years for retired employees and 68.5 years for general population. No significant difference was found for marital status, educational attainment, and years of residence. The average length of service of retired employees at the factory was 40.2 years.

The respondents were asked to name up to seven persons, other than co-resident family members and children living apart, to whom the respondents had intimate relationships. In this study, the number of others described as "person who makes me relaxed" by the respondents was used as the criterion variable indicating the size of social network.

The number of others indicated by the respondents ranged from 0 to 7. The average number

was significantly higher in retired employees (2.61) than in general population (1.95), though the residence of others spread more widely in retired employees. While the number of others acquainted at workplace was significantly higher in retired employees (1.18) than in general population (0.40), no significant difference was found for the number of others acquainted in neighborhood and school. The results of analysis of covariance revealed that the differences between retired employees and general population were still significant for the total number of others and the number of others acquainted at workplace when the effects of age, functional capacity, income, educational attainment, current occupational status, and birth place were controlled.

For the retired employees of M Electric Company, career job at the Nakatsugawa Factory seems to be a factor contributing to the enlargement of social networks, through becoming acquainted with fellow workers, and their career job does not reduce the number of intimate others acquainted in neighborhood and school. These results throw doubt on the common notion that senior men who used to be employees have small social networks. The small network size of senior men might be explained by the urban lifestyle, which is characterized by high geographical mobility and long-distance commute in younger age, rather than the career job itself.



# Effects of Career Job in a Large Factory upon Social Relationships in Old Age: Senior Men Living in a Local City

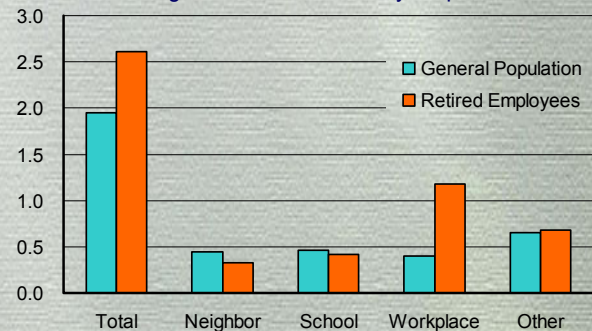
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Tatsuto Asakawa<sup>5</sup>, Takatoshi Ando<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the present study is to test a common notion that senior men who used to be employees are likely to have small social networks, through exploring the effects of career job in a large factory upon social relationships in old age.

The survey was carried out, in 2001, in Nakatsugawa City, Gifu Prefecture, Japan. The subjects were (a) retired employees of the Nakatsugawa Factory of M Electric Company, Inc. ("retired employees") and (b) randomly selected seniors, aged 60 to 79 years, living in Nakatsugawa City ("general population"). The factory is the largest company in Nakatsugawa City. In the present study, the data of 686 senior men (316 retired employees and 370 general population) were used for analyses. The average age of respondents was 69.4 years for the retired employees and 68.5 years for the general population. The respondents were asked to name up to seven persons, other than co-resident family members and children living apart, to whom the respondents had intimate relationships. In this study, the number of others described as "person who makes me relaxed" by the respondents was used as the criterion variable indicating network size.

The average number of others indicated by the respondents was significantly higher in the retired employees (2.61) than in the general population (1.95), though the residence of others spread more widely in the retired employees. While the number of others acquainted at workplace was significantly higher in the retired employees (1.18) than in the general population (0.40), no significant difference was found for the number of others acquainted in neighborhood and school. The results of analysis of covariance revealed

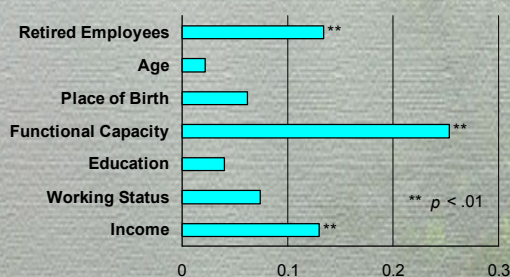
Average Number of Others by Acquaintance



that the differences between the retired employees and the general population were still significant for the total number of others and the number of others acquainted at workplace when the effects of age, functional capacity, income, educational attainment, current occupational status, and birth place were controlled.

For the retired employees of M Electric Company, career job in the Nakatsugawa Factory seems to contribute to the enlargement of social networks, through becoming acquainted with fellow workers, and their career job does not reduce the number of intimate others acquainted in neighborhood. These results throw doubt on the common notion that senior men who used to be employees have small social networks. The small network size of senior men might be explained by the urban lifestyle, which is characterized by high geographical mobility and long-distance commute in younger age, rather than the career job itself.

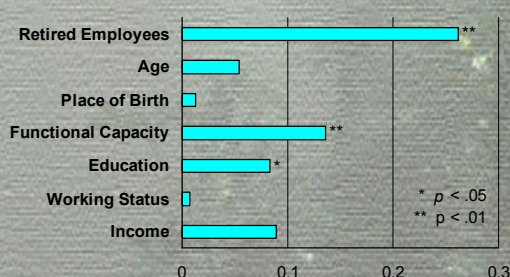
Effects on the Total Number of Others ( $\eta$ )



Effects on the Number of Others Acquainted in Neighborhood



Effects on the Number of Others Acquainted at Workplace



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