The Quality of American Life

THE QUALITY OF AMERICAN LIFE

Perceptions, Evaluations, and Satisfactions

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Preface

In the early months of 1967 Russell Sage Foundation asked the two senior authors of this book to organize a collection of essays concerning the "human meaning of social change." An earlier Russell Sage Foundation publication, *Indicators of Social Change,* had reviewed the structural and institutional changes in American life, and the new book was viewed as a companion piece that would explore the possibility of developing indicators that would document the subjective quality of life in this country.

In 1970, as the *Human Meaning of Social Change* was nearing completion, Dr. Orville G. Brim, Jr., and Dr. Eleanor Bernert Sheldon, then at Russell Sage Foundation, initiated conversations with us concerning the feasibility of a program of research following the main lines of inquiry suggested in our book. As an outgrowth of these discussions we drew up a specific proposal entitled "Monitoring the Quality of American Life," and this was approved by the Foundation in February 1970.

It was understood from the beginning that this first study would have to concern itself with many problems of definitions and methods since earlier research in this area had not developed to the stage of establishing standardized measures that would fulfill our needs. On the other hand, we wanted this first study to provide bench mark data against which subsequent measurements could be compared. Our readers will judge for themselves as to how well we achieved these somewhat contradictory objectives.

Most of the data presented in this volume come from the national sample survey that the grant from Russell Sage Foundation supported. Fortunately, however, with aid of funds from the National Science Foundation we were able to return to 285 of the original respondents some eight months after the original interview. Data from this small reinterview sample appear at various points in the following pages, particularly in Chapter 6.

In recognizing the numerous contributors to this volume we must begin by emphasizing the fact that it was Orville G. Brim, Jr. and Eleanor Bernert Sheldon whose interest in social change produced the distinguished series of books and monographs on this subject that Russell Sage Foundation has published. It was their initiative that led to the study reported herein.

We are pleased to acknowledge our debt to three of our colleagues who contributed directly to the completion of this manuscript. Dr. Aubrey C. McKennell, professor in the Methodology of Attitude Surveys at the University of Southampton, was a visiting scholar at the Institute for Social Research during the year 1972-1973 and the summer of 1974. Although his monograph, "Cognition and Affect in Judgments of Well-being," will be published independently of this book, his thinking was of great value to us in clarifying our own thinking regarding the components of life experience. Dr. Robert W. Marans, program director at the Institute, collaborated in the writing of Chapter 7, "The Residential Environment." Mr. James H. Bracy, assistant study director at the Institute carried out the analysis and wrote up the data presented in Chapter 13, "The Quality of Life Experience of Black People." Others of our associates contributed to our efforts in less direct ways, particularly Dr. Frank M. Andrews and Dr. Stephen B. Withey.

A national interview survey is only possible if the technical capabilities required by such an enterprise are at hand. These services were provided us by the various units of the Institute for Social Research and we wish to acknowledge their assistance. The probability sample on which the study was based was designed and selected by Miss Irene Hess, who wrote the description of the sample that appears in the Appendix. Dr. John C. Scott assisted in the development of the questionnaire and supervised the field staff who used it to conduct interviews throughout the country. Mrs. Joan Scheffler was in charge of the content analysis that converted the interviews into punched cards and ultimately computer tapes. Mr. Duane Thomas was in charge of the institute's computer facility where the data were submitted to extensive and elaborate manipulation. Linda Winter, Vivian Moore, Gregory Rodd, and Marita di Lorenzi assisted in our communication with the computer. All of these people, along with interviewers, coders, and computer technicians who are too numerous to name, made indispensable contributions to the completion of this study.

The final preparation of this volume depended on the talents and energies of Mrs. Betty Jennings at the Institute for Social Research and Jean C. Yoder at Russell Sage Foundation. Mrs. Jennings served as administrative assistant to the project, took responsibility for the repeated typing of the manuscript, prepared the bibliography and the index, proofread the galleys, and in general did all the countless essential things that need to be done in an enterprise of this kind. Ms. Yoder received the manuscript from the authors, subjected it to the gentle type of massage that successful editors practice and transformed it from typed page into letterpress type. Both of these people contributed substantially to the completion of this volume and we are grateful for their assistance.

In order to avoid extension of an already lengthy volume we have omitted a number of methodological notes. Scholars who wish detailed information regarding specific measures or analyses presented in this book may obtain it by writing the authors at the Institute for Social Research.

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The Quality of American Life

Chapter 1
Introduction

In 1932 Herbert Hoover campaigned for the presidency promising "a car in every garage and a chicken in every pot." How innocent this statement of national aspirations seems in the 1970s and how inappropriate it would seem to any aspirant to high office today. A nation which has been known, and criticized, for its materialistic values is now asking itself whether in fact the good life can be measured in terms of consumer goods, and those who presume to define the national goals increasingly speak of quality of life rather than of further material possessions. Quality of life is seldom precisely defined in these statements, but the implication is typically given that the nation must change from its fixation on goals which are basically economic to goals which are essentially psychological, from a concentration on being well-off to a concern with a sense of well-being.

In this new rhetoric "well-being" seems to take for granted the basic essentials of life—adequate food, housing, and other material goods—and places its emphasis on less tangible values—a sense of achievement in one's work, an appreciation of beauty in nature and the arts, a feeling of identification with one's community, a sense of fulfillment of one's potential. It is no longer enough for the nation to aspire to material wealth; the experience of life must be stimulating, rewarding, and secure.

For the past hundred years, scholars and governments alike have placed their faith in the elimination of poverty as the ultimate solution to society's ills. Welfare has come to be defined in terms of the resources an individual can command (Titmuss, 1958) and countless governmental programs have been instituted with the intention of broadening and increasing the supply of resources in the hands of the citizenry. Seldom have these policies been more successful than in the United States where the proportion of families below the officially defined poverty line is now in the range of one in eight, and the average family income is visibly higher than that of most international competitors. Many economic indicators document the ways in which this affluence is translated into increasing rates of home ownership, possession of consumer durables, expenditures on travel, health and education, and investment in individual savings. If we take standard of living as the crucial criterion of quality of life, then the excellence of life in the United States in the 1970s surely has few parallels.

This conclusion, alas, would be greeted with derision in many parts of the world and with a sense of despair by Americans themselves. For the dazzling spiral of rising affluence since 1945 has been accompanied by painful increases in crime, drug addiction, civil disorder and violence, and a steady deterioration of confidence in public authority. The ordinary citizen is far more likely to feel that life in the United States is getting worse than he is to feel it is getting better. The bright promise of economic prosperity has proved illusory and the naïve faith that national affluence would produce national well-being has been severely shaken.

Affluence has not lifted American society to utopian levels of social harmony and personal fulfillment but it has helped raise national aspirations to the attainment of those goals. In the language of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954), it can be said that the United States surpasses the world in the degree to which it has been able to gratify the elemental needs of its people for food and shelter. In this achievement it has freed its people to concern themselves with the higher-order needs for social esteem, recognition, and self-actualization. No doubt individual members of the population differ greatly in the extent to which they have moved up this scale of needs but the general movement upward is unmistakable. The quality of life has taken on new dimensions, and the national concern has turned increasingly from its focus on the needs of the "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished" to the needs of all the people for equity, participation, respect, challenge, and personal growth. The "revolution of rising expectations" is not simply a desire for a larger house and a second car but a growing demand for the fulfillment of needs which are not basically material but are primarily needs of the "spirit," needs for a larger and more satisfying life experience.

Recognition of the nature of this revolution is now widespread within governmental, business, and scholarly communities, and we are at present in a phase of search for means of documenting the quality of life with measures other than the established economic ones. Prominent among those alternatives which currently engage the attention of social scientists are the so-called "social indicators." Interest in a broad program of social reporting to describe the changing status of society goes back at least to 1933 with the publication of *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (President's Research Committee on Social Trends, 1933), and many individual measures, drawn mainly from the decennial census or other forms of governmental reporting, have become established parts of the sociologist's repertoire of data. The current social indicators "movement" is pressing for an extension and refinement of these measures and a more comprehensive program of documenting social change on a national scale and through time (Bauer, 1966; Sheldon and Moore, 1968; Duncan, 1969). Federal agencies have begun to think about the contents of a "social report" which might eventually be prepared as a parallel to the *Economic Report to the President* (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970), and the Statistical Office of the Office of Management and Budget has issued its first comprehensive report on social indicators (Executive Office of the President: Office of Management and Budget, 1973).

The measures which make up the contents of these social reports have a familiar ring. They deal with population growth and movement, marital status, unemployment and labor-force participation, health and health care, housing, education, leisure time, crime, and the administration of justice. These measures might all be called "objective" in the sense that they are relatively easily defined, they depend on easily counted units, and they do not require a personal evaluation from the reporting individual. They are not all equally satisfactory—the underreporting of crime is notorious, for example, and unemployment gives problems of definition—but in general they have the great virtue of appearing finite and valid. They also have the valuable quality of relevance to social norms, and they are commonly taken as measures of the achievements and well-being of a society. Thus it is typically assumed that as the levels of housing, education, and health care go up, the lives of the people are thereby enhanced, and as crime and unemployment increase, the quality of their lives declines. In other words, these measures of the objective conditions of life are taken as surrogates for the subjective experience of life. We take a measure of rooms per person as a substitute for the feeling of pleasure and satisfaction a person gets from his housing; we take a measure of occupational status as an indicator of the sense of fulfillment a person gets from his work; we take the crime rate in a neighborhood as a measure of the sense of insecurity the people who live there feel. These translations all appear eminently reasonable but the fact is that we do not know how well objective measures like these represent underlying psychological states or how well social indicators can be taken to represent the quality of life experience.

The research with which this book is concerned derives from the conviction that the relationship between objective conditions and psychological states is very imperfect and that in order to know the quality of life experience it will be necessary to go directly to the individual himself for his description of how his life feels to him. This obviously will take us into the subjective world of perceptions, expectations, feelings, and values and will involve us in excruciating problems of definition and measurement. We regard this undertaking as an expedition into a land which is only partly known, an expedition in which we will proceed with a very rough map, devising new variables and inventing new measures as we go.

We set out on this journey of exploration with two major objectives in mind. We believe in the first place that the development of the kinds of psychological data we seek is essential to the ultimate understanding of the nature of social change. We are currently in a period of profound structural and institutional change in American society. As social scientists we have devoted much energy to documenting these changes, but we have given relatively little attention to their human meaning. In 1954 the Supreme Court of the United States reversed a decision on racial segregation laid down by the Court fifty-eight years earlier. Since there was no relevant change in the Constitution in the intervening years, it is evident that the nine justices in 1954 saw the issue differently than their predecessors had in 1896. If we are asked to explain how this came about, we are reduced to the platitude that the idea of racial integration had "reached its time." We do not have a record of the changes in public attitudes which must have taken place during these years which made possible a decision in 1954 which was impossible in 1896. We know very little about the way a new idea is germinated in some segment of society, how it is influenced by passing events, how it diffuses through the population generally, or how it moves from a public idea to an institutional act. We are equally ill-informed as to the impact on public thinking and behavior of such an institutional act once it is taken. We must assume that the many dramatic judicial and legislative decisions and the equally important structural changes which characterize these times have far-reaching implications for the life experience of all members of society, but we have very little understanding of the nature of this influence or of the factors which facilitate or diminish its effects on the population.

It will not be possible to develop a sense of the regularities of the interaction between psychological change and social change until we have established a system of reporting of psychological data which parallels our current repertoire of social indicators. Repeated measurements of the perceptions and attitudes of the component parts of the population, through periods both preceding and following major social changes should progressively increase our understanding of the nature of this interaction. It will undoubtedly require many limited efforts like the present one before a full-blown program of monitoring the quality of life experience is attained, but this ultimate objective is at present, and will remain, an important item on the agenda of social science.

The second objective of a program of research on psychological change is more short-term and more practical. It derives from the same rationale which supports the demand for more adequate social indicators, the belief that society needs to be well-informed about itself in order that it may function more wisely. One of the most indispensable of the current social indicators, the unemployment index, was developed during the late 1930s, because it was so imperative to have a more accurate estimate of the amount and distribution of unemployment than was available up to that time. It was necessary to invent probability sampling in order to make this new measure feasible but the national estimates of unemployment in use at the time were so variable and the demand for accurate information so great that new measures had to be found. Although the practical value of the kinds of subjective measures we are now concerned with is not as obvious as that of the employment index, nor the demand for them so great, we believe these measures will prove their worth in providing an array of psychological data parallel to the more familiar economic and social indicators. A creative integration of these different kinds of information should provide a fuller and truer representation of the state of society to those people who are responsible for social decisions.

BACKGROUND

Over the years psychologists have devoted much effort to assessing the quality of individual experience, both in the clinic and in the experimental laboratory. These studies have typically involved small numbers of subjects, and it is difficult to project their findings directly to larger populations. There have been, however, a small number of national studies on which we have been able to draw in developing the research which is reported in this volume.

The first major study of the quality of life experience, based on a probability sample of the American population, was carried out in 1957 by Gurin, Veroff, and Feld of the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research (Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960). This national survey, requested by the National Commission on Mental Illness and Health, defined its major objectives in the following terms:

> a survey of the mental health of the nation, designed to investigate the level at which people are living with themselves—their fears and anxieties, their strengths and resources, the problems they face and the ways they cope with them.

This study clearly had a mental-health orientation, and the measures used reflected the authors' attempt to assess the psychological health of their respondents. Their questionnaire asked for a report of any previous "breakdown" or need for psychological counseling, it presented a checklist of "psychiatric symptoms," it inquired into various forms of "worry," and it included a single question asking the respondent to report how "happy" he was—very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy. The report of the study analyzes the interrelations of these various measures and documents their distribution through the major segments of the population.

This study has been followed by a number of others similarly concerned with the epidemiology of mental health, most of them based on limited samples and not as directly related to our present interests. In 1961, however, Norman Bradburn at the National Opinion Research Center initiated a program of research "intended to establish trend lines and national norms for mental health-related behavior by means of periodic national surveys." The first publication of his work, entitled *Reports on Happiness: A Pilot Study of Behavior Related to Mental Health* (Bradburn and Caplovitz, 1965) and based on population samples in four midwestern communities, took as its basic measure of well-being the Gurin-Veroff-Feld question "Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy these days?" Position on this measure was found to be related to the "relative balance of two independent conditions: positive and negative feeling states." His second volume pursued this theme and extended the concept of positive and negative affect into the realms of marriage and work (Bradburn, 1969). The Bradburn theory of psychological well-being is based "on a notion of emotional balance . . . rather than on differences in the type of needs an individual has."

The third major study of which we must take note is that of Hadley Cantril, published under the title of *The Pattern of Human Concerns* (Cantril, 1965). This was a massive study, comparing data assembled in thirteen different nations (including the United States) by use of a device Cantril called the "self-anchoring striving scale." Cantril's technique was to ask the individual to think of "the best life" and "the worst life" he could imagine and to place himself at the point he thought he presently stood on a scale ranging between these extremes. The level at which the person placed himself is Cantril's critical measure. At another point in his research he comes at this measure more directly with the following question:

> Suppose that a person who is entirely satisfied with his life would be at the top of the ladder, and a person who is extremely dissatisfied with his life would be at the bottom of the ladder. Where would you put yourself on the ladder at the present stage of your life in terms of how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your own personal life?

The interviewers were encouraged to draw out their respondents as to their hopes and fears regarding the future, and these free-answer comments were used to identify their concerns. Although Cantril tends to use the terms "happiness" and "satisfaction" interchangeably in his report, his emphasis is not on affective states as Bradburn's was but on aspirations, needs, and satisfactions. His book is primarily devoted to a comparison of the concerns and satisfaction levels of the people in the various countries which he sampled.

THE PRESENT STUDY

In our application to the Russell Sage Foundation for support for the research we are now reporting we proposed to "monitor the quality of American life." As stated, this objective immediately defined two basic aspects of our study design: it specified that our universe of interest would be the national population, and it implied that this study should be planned as the first in a continuing series of comparable measurements. The third term in our stated objective, quality of life, was much less specific, and our first problem in planning this study was to decide how we would begin to identify this elusive concept.

We were clear from the beginning that our concern was with the experience of life rather than the conditions of life. We expected to ask about the conditions of our respondents' lives, but this was important only to help account for the differences in the quality of experience which they reported. We were also clear that our scope should be broader than that implied by the mental health focus which had animated a good many earlier studies. The epidemiology of mental health inevitably concentrates on the negative "maladjusted" aspects of experience; positive mental health is commonly defined in residual terms, the absence of negative symptoms. Our concept of life quality was at least as concerned with positive experiences as negative, and it was essential that our procedures allow full scope for the expression of both.

The choice between the "happiness" approach of Bradburn and the "satisfaction" approach of Cantril was resolved on the basis of several major considerations. The first problem was one of definition. Although the concept of happiness was prominent in the writings of the Greek philosophers, it was recognized by them as difficult to define. It seems likely, moreover, that as we move from language to language, the connotations of the most common terms for "happiness" or the adjective "happy" show somewhat greater variation than is true of the most common terms for "satisfied" and "satisfaction," a matter of some concern as we contemplate cross-national extensions of these inquiries in the future.

Even in present English usage, "happiness" has quite a variety of meanings, often being used, as we have seen, as a synonym for satisfaction. It is clear, however, that happiness has rather central connotations involving short-term moods of gaiety and elation that are quite different from the core meaning of satisfaction. Also, the opposite of happiness is sadness or depression, whereas the opposite of satisfaction includes a strong flavor of frustration. Empirically, there is an obvious overlap between the two concepts, as we would expect. If we ask people how happy they are about their lives "taking all things together," people who report fullest happiness tend to be the same people who say that they are relatively satisfied with their lives "as a whole." However, the correlation between the two reports is far from perfect—normally about .50 for a cross-section of the population. This means that there is some significant minority of persons who report relative happiness along with relative dissatisfaction with their lives, and the converse. Moreover, as we shall explore later in this volume, measures of happiness and satisfaction do not always behave in the same way. Young people, for example, are more likely to describe their lives as happy than older people, but are less likely to say that they are satisfied with life.

In Bradburn's terminology, happiness is taken to be a product of the presence of positive feelings and the absence of negative feelings, and this "affect-balance" definition, which partials out the satisfaction component that is implicit in the common use of the term, is perhaps the conceptually cleanest statement describing happiness available. The concept of satisfaction, on the other hand, has been the subject of much theory and research, both in the level of aspiration tradition of Kurt Lewin and the relative deprivation theme of Robert Merton. Level of satisfaction can be precisely defined as the perceived discrepancy between aspiration and achievement, ranging from the perception of fulfillment to that of deprivation. Satisfaction implies a judgmental or cognitive experience, while happiness suggests an experience of feeling or affect. We will note later certain difficulties which inhere in the concept of satisfaction as a measure of quality of life experience, but its clarity of definition and substantial background of relevant research recommended its use.

The second consideration which recommended the use of satisfaction as our basic concept was our concern that our data have relevance to public policy and our conviction that measures of affect would seem less realistic to practically minded people than measures of satisfaction. Legislators and decision-makers are well accustomed to thinking in terms of satisfying public needs. Indeed, as Erik Allardt has noted, "The whole concept of public welfare can be defined in terms of need-satisfaction. Social development is judged with reference to . . . states of satisfaction of needs" (Allardt, 1972). Allardt argues that the outputs of a society must be assessed in terms of the needs of the individual citizens. Although policy-makers are more familiar with dealing with economic needs than psychological needs, it seems probable that they will find the fulfillment of these needs a more congenial and realistic objective than that of creating happiness. Thus they are likely to find measures of satisfaction-dissatisfaction easier to translate into policy terms than measures of positive or negative affect.

Finally, the concept of satisfaction was attractive because of its adaptability to a study design which sought a series of measures from separate domains of life rather than a single global measure. Most of the previous studies of life experience had asked their subjects to describe their "life as a whole" without attempting to assess specific areas of life individually. Our focus was on these individual domains, their relationship to each other and their respective contributions to the overall quality of life. Although Bradburn has used his affect-balance technique in the areas of marriage and work, it did not seem practical to try to apply it to the twelve domains in which we were interested. It would also have been more difficult to compare affect-balance scores from one domain to another than it would be with a standard scale of satisfaction-dissatisfaction.

In deciding to define the quality of life experience mainly in terms of satisfaction of needs, we had to recognize a series of problems which attach to the concept of satisfaction. There is in the first place the obvious fact that individual needs differ greatly from one person to another and that what will satisfy one will be totally unsatisfactory to the other. Indeed, the same individual may find the same circumstances thoroughly unsatisfactory at one stage of his life but quite acceptable at a later stage. Differences in level of need undoubtedly differ from person to person and from time to time, but this does not invalidate the meaning of satisfaction as a measure of a fulfilled need. A person with a small appetite may require much less food to satisfy his hunger than a person with a large appetite, but when he has eaten his fill his experience of satisfaction is just as complete as that of the other person who must eat much more to assuage his hunger. A bottle which is full cannot be more or less full and the size of the bottle is irrelevant to its fullness. Because we are accustomed to evaluating people's lives in terms of their material possessions, we tend to forget that satisfaction is a psychological experience and that the quality of this experience may not correspond very closely to these external conditions of life. If there were a close and universal relationship between the level of material possessions and the quality of life experience, there would, of course, be little point in undertaking a study of the kind in which we are here engaged.

Sense of satisfaction is undoubtedly a highly personal experience, heavily influenced by the individual's past experience and current expectations. It may be necessary to distinguish between a satisfaction which is associated with an experience of rising expectations and one which is associated with declining expectations. An individual who has achieved an aspiration toward which he has been moving may be said to experience the satisfaction of success. Another person may have lowered his aspiration level to the point which he can achieve, and he might be said to experience the satisfaction of resignation. The two individuals might be equally satisfied in the sense of fulfilled needs, but the affective content associated with success and resignation may well differ. In experiences of dissatisfaction, we might expect the affective content of disappointment and frustration to accompany any failure to achieve one's expectations.

Finally, we must confront the question of whether it is legitimate to define the quality of life of a society or of a segment of society by the extent to which its overall needs are satisfied. We encounter here the familiar philosophical concern with the "divine discontent" which is supposed to have stimulated gifted individuals to their most creative achievements. One remembers John Stuart Mill's injunction, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." We need not concern ourselves with determining the precise level of satisfaction-dissatisfaction which is optimal for the individual's well-being (the level might be quite different for Socrates than for ordinary people) since we are not going to attempt any individual analysis. But we must consider this question at the level of populations and segments of populations.

Although, as Allardt observes, it is scarcely "possible to envisage a society that would satisfy every man's every need," the goal of society "is to satisfy the individual needs and a good society does so" (Allardt, 1972). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has defined the level of living of a society as "the extent to which all the overall needs of the population are satisfied" (Social Affairs Division of OECD, 1973). Modern governments have become accustomed to the concept of a "minimum standard of living," and they have become sensitive to the fact that a fraction of the population falls below this level or that one part of the population is further below it than another. To be sure they are more likely to make these comparisons in economic terms than in terms of satisfied or dissatisfied people; the essential fact is that they are concerned with creating conditions which are satisfying and do not give rise to expressions of discontent. There are different levels of need to which governments must respond, and we may assume that as the more primitive needs are generally met, more sophisticated ones will come to the fore. Thus those modern states which have dealt most effectively with needs for food and shelter are now beginning to be concerned with the "higher-order" needs for satisfaction with work, social recognition, and self-actualization. It is unlikely that any government will find itself with a citizenry so satisfied that no challenge remains.

It might be objected that a government which takes as its ultimate objective the fulfillment of immediate and pressing public needs is inherently conservative and resistant to change. It is responding only so far as it is compelled to by public dissatisfaction, and it is taking no initiative in attempting to raise public aspirations. Its policies are merely palliative; they are intended to pacify rather than to expand the public vision. It is apparent, however, as Brian Barry has pointed out (Barry, 1965), that public policy is typically based not only on the principle of fulfilling public needs but also on the principle of fulfilling societal ideals. Public needs may fall well short of societal ideals and they may in fact be in conflict with them. The American government, for example, attempts to meet the public need for a sustaining diet by various programs of food supplement; it is concerned, however, not only with eliminating hunger but with providing a nutritionally adequate diet, an ideal which a good part of the public has not been educated to understand or to aspire to. On the other hand, the Congress and the Supreme Court have set aside the demand of the white majority for racial segregation on the grounds that it conflicts with the ideals of equal rights as set down in the Constitution. Public needs are always of vital concern to policy-makers, but they are not the only basis of public policy, and they are not always the sovereign basis.

The program of research which our present study anticipates is intended to monitor public needs as indicators of quality of life. While this program will undertake to represent the state of public satisfactions and dissatisfactions as they exist at a particular point in time, there is nothing in its orientation which implies a lack of concern with raising the level of public aspirations or a lack of interest in policies directed toward the attainment of political and social ideals which go beyond or are in conflict with prevailing public aspirations.

The Study Design

As we have noted earlier, most attempts to measure sense of well-being —or happiness or general satisfaction—have been based on the assumption that well-being is a pervasive quality of experience which can be represented by a single measure. This is true of the various studies of self-avowed happiness and is also implicit in Cantril's self-anchoring scale of life satisfaction. Our decision was to place our emphasis on satisfaction in a variety of specific domains of life, and this choice was based on two major considerations.

We were not prepared to reject the assumption that there may be a general factor of well-being which distinguishes one individual from another, but we knew that there are also specific elements of the life experience on which a person may feel more or less rewarded. Previous research on satisfaction with work, leisure-time activities, housing, neighborhood, family, and other domains of life have made it clear that these specific areas can be considered as separate aspects of experience. A design which undertook to obtain data on a range of the major areas of experience would clearly provide more detailed information on the quality of the life experience than would be forthcoming from any single measure. It would also permit us to do what had not been done before, to examine the patterns of relationships between the specific measures of satisfaction and the contribution of each specific measure to an overall measure of life satisfaction.

We were also influenced by the conviction that it would be much more difficult to bring a general measure of well-being or satisfaction to bear on questions of public policy than it would be in the case of more specific measures. Even if it were possible to devise a fully valid measure of general satisfaction which could be reported year after year, the question of what contributed to its rises and falls would be left unanswered. In contrast, a measure of dissatisfaction with work, for example, would provide a reading on a specific area of experience and more ready translation into social policy. The Gross National Product would not be as useful an indicator as it is if we did not know the components which make it up. A gross score of public satisfaction would certainly have interest, but its value would be limited if we were not able to disaggregate it into its components.

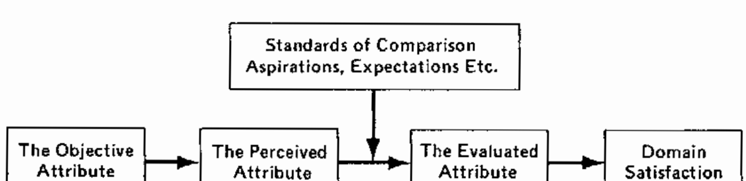
The decision to emphasize the specific needs and satisfactions which contribute to the experience of life compelled a further decision as to which of the numerous human needs we would include in our inquiry. As we have reported elsewhere, we were originally attracted by Abraham Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of needs and we would have liked to have developed our study directly around his system of classification (Campbell and Converse, 1972). It became apparent, however, that some of the abstractions of Maslow's theory, self-actualization for example, are difficult to convert directly into language which is suitable for a national survey, and we were forced to seek a medium which was closer to everyday experience. We chose to develop our inquiry around what we will call "domains" of life, the areas of experience which have significance for all or most people and which may be assumed to contribute in some degree to the general quality of life experience. The selection of the twelve specific domains which became the core of our inquiry was based in part on the presence of earlier research, in part on their relevance to questions of public policy, and in part on our intuitive sense of their importance in the lives of the general population.

We have noted earlier that in placing our emphasis on domain satisfaction we did not abandon interest in the concept of a general sense of satisfaction with life. It is not unlikely that people evaluate their lives in general terms and it seems very possible that this overall evaluation may not be a simple sum of the domain evaluations. We felt it important therefore to include in our inquiry measures of general satisfaction and general affect. In order to accomplish this, at least on a minimum basis, we repeated a question on satisfaction "with life in general" similar to those which had been used in earlier Survey Research Center studies and the question on "happiness" from the Gurin-Veroff-Feld and Bradburn studies. We also developed a series of descriptive adjectives in the semantic differential format by which we asked our respondents to describe their lives, producing therefrom a measure which we will call the "Index of General Affect." None of these three measures makes any direct reference to any of the twelve specific domains, and they all appear to be free of any specific domain content. These three measures will serve as the basis of our analysis of the relationship between general satisfaction and domain satisfaction.

The Conceptual Model

This study was originally conceived as the first step in a program of research intended to document and provide understanding of certain experiences which might be said to describe the quality of people's lives. We assumed, following Kurt Lewin, that experience (and behavior) derives from the interaction of the person and his environment. People live in an objectively defined environment, but they perceive a subjectively defined environment, and it is to this psychological "life space" that they respond (French, Rodgers, and Cobb, 1974). In Figure 1-1, we see the basic ele-

Figure 1-1: Basic Model of the Relationship Between Objective Environmental Characteristics and the Experienced Level of Satisfaction with a Domain



ments of the conceptual model we will follow in analyzing the linkages between the attributes of the objective environments and the experiences of satisfaction which we are attempting to explain.

Satisfaction with a domain of life as expressed by an individual is seen as dependent on his evaluations or assessments of various attributes of that domain. Which attributes are most relevant to satisfaction is an empirical question. For the job domain, it may be the physical character of the work, the convenience of the trip to work, the social relationships in the work place, or the amount of variety in the work routine. For the community domain, it might include population density and composition, police protection and other services, the amount of open space, or the responsiveness of local government officials to citizen complaints. The attributes of each domain are obviously specific to that domain, and our study design called not only for measurements of general satisfaction with each domain, but also some explicit assessments of these component features of most domains.

How a person assesses a particular attribute of a specific domain is considered to be dependent on two things: how he perceives the attribute and the standard against which he judges that attribute. The concept of a standard of comparison or a frame of reference for such judgments is admittedly difficult to define and probably depends on multiple criteria at once. The individual's assessment may derive from any or all of the following bases of evaluation: *aspiration levels,* or the situation that a person hopes eventually to attain, where a given domain is concerned; *expectation levels,* or the situation he feels he is likely to attain in the fairly immediate future; *equity levels,* or what he thinks should be true of his situation if perfect justice prevails, given how much he invests in it relative to others; *reference group levels,* or what he believes to be true of the situations of others with whom he identifies, such as friends and family or others of his income, race, or occupation; *personal needs,* or the amount of a particular reward he may require, such as how much savings to feel secure, how much housing to be comfortable, how much police protection to feel safe; and *personal values,* concerning such intangibles as freedom, equality, and the like. This list, which could be lengthened still further, emphasizes the fact that the concept of a reference level or standard of comparison is a complex one.

As we have said, the model presented in Figure 1-1 is based on the assumption that a person's evaluation of a particular domain characteristic or attribute depends upon his perception of that attribute in relation to internal standards against which he measures that perception. Moving back one step in the model, a person's perception of any domain attribute is shown as dependent on, but distinct from, the objective environment. The way in which a person perceives the environment is not necessarily identical to the environment as it actually is; the likelihood of idiosyncrasy in perception, and hence variation from one individual to another in the way the same objective environment is seen, is recognized explicitly. The same filter of personal perception would be expected to apply in one degree or another whether the objective environment being considered at the moment were defined in physical, social, organizational, economic, or fiscal terms.

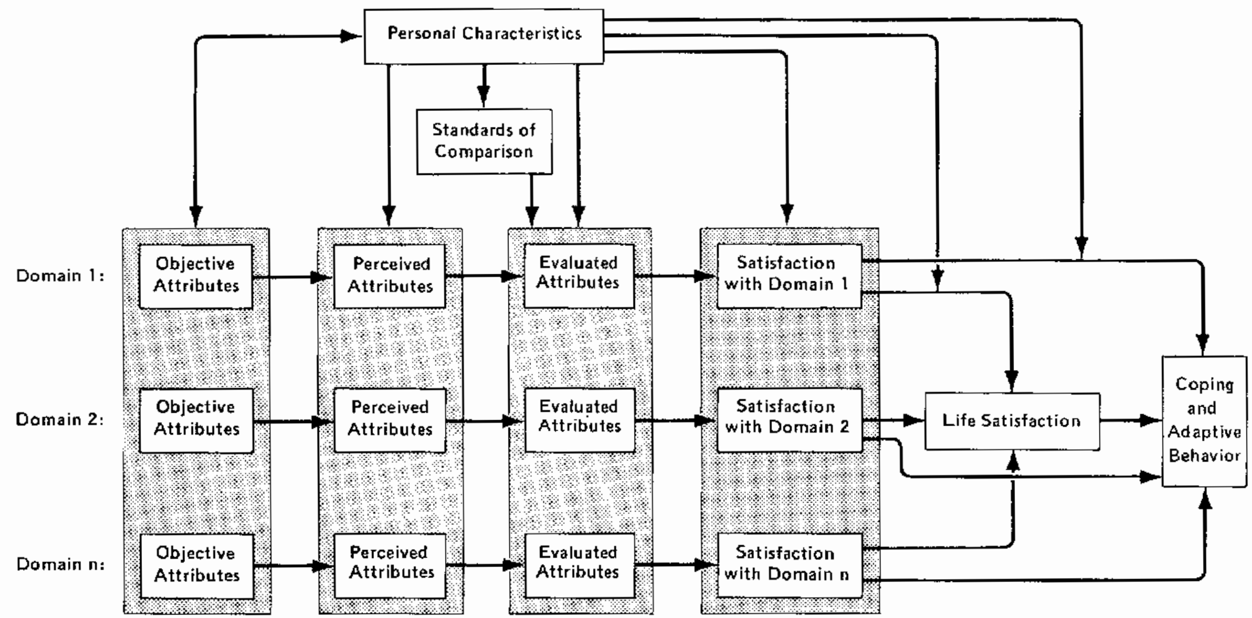
While Figure 1-1 presents the skeletal features of the basic conceptual model on which we will depend over the course of this volume, we shall elaborate on this model in several directions, two of which are central enough to deserve introduction at this point.

The first of these involves the likely role which is played by the personal characteristics of the individual, or those demographic characteristics that summarize his social location and past experience, as well as other variables describing his personality. While our basic model (Figure 1-1) leaves room for idiosyncrasies of perception and evaluation, it seems likely much variation in viewpoints from individual to individual is in fact patterned along lines defined by experience, social location, and personality. For example, persons of different ages, races, income, or urban-rural residence may have characteristically different ways of evaluating the same objective situations, in no small measure because they bring different standards of comparison to bear upon these evaluations. Similarly, people may be characterized by a general optimism or pessimism, and such inclinations to see the best or the worst side of things, along with other attributes of personality, may be expected to influence the way they perceive the world around them. Therefore in an elaborated model, we would want to recognize that personal characteristics have a significant bearing on every step of our basic model. This is true even of the objective environment, since people of different personalities and social backgrounds select themselves into different types of jobs, housing, and other features of the objective environment, while participation in any given objective environment creates characteristic life experiences summarized by such demographic variables.

The second elaboration broadens our view from factors bearing on feelings of satisfaction within any specific domain, to encompass the probability that a more general sense of well-being is somehow compounded from satisfactions and dissatisfactions experienced across all of the more specific domains of life. Figure 1-2 summarizes this more elaborated model, showing the general path of relationships that we might expect.

Figure 1-2 also suggests that global levels of satisfaction have effects on various forms of coping and adaptive behavior. Although we are very much concerned with this link between psychological states and consequent behavior, the limitations of this study precluded any serious investment in inquiry regarding the specific acts which our respondents had taken or intended to take. Our colleague, Burkhard Strumpel, in his study of the

Figure 1-2: Extension of the Model in Figure 1-1 to Show Interrelationships Among Domain Satisfaction Levels and the Relationships to General Life Satisfaction and to Behaviors



economic components of well-being, has devoted some attention to the connections between economic perceptions and evaluations and the relevant behaviors they appear to influence. His analyses provide an illustration of the way in which our model might be extended (Strumpel, 1974).

We have designed this study to provide data which are representative of the national population of people 18 years of age and older, and much of the analysis to be presented will be based on this total sample. It is self-evident, however, that in monitoring the quality of life of the total population, we are also recording data which describe the various components which make up this total. It will not be possible in this volume to isolate all of these groups and describe them as discrete populations, interesting as such comparisons might be. We will use the major social characteristics of class, age, education, income, and the like throughout in our effort to explain variance in satisfactions, but only in the case of women and blacks will we present detailed data from isolated segments of the total population. Many intriguing possibilities remain for the detailed analysis of groups having special interest (retired people, farmers, churchgoers, youth, college graduates), but these will have to be deferred for later publication.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The text which follows is divided into three major parts. In the opening part, we will be mainly concerned to become familiar with the way in which many of our central measures behave and the sense of the structure of experience that they convey. We will, for example, pay some attention to empirical differences in the performance of the more general measures of life satisfaction that provide clues as to differences in their underlying meaning. We will also consider some of the properties of our full portfolio of domain satisfaction measures that indicate both their strengths as well as limitations that must be placed on interpretations from them. And we will consider in an initial way the larger contours of the data: the manner in which satisfactions with particular domains seem to combine to produce a more global sense of well-being.

The organization of the second part will be strongly informed by some of the results reported in the initial section. The purpose of this part will be to engage in several kinds of disaggregation of the global results. In particular, we shall take most of our domains one by one and consider the way in which assessments of more specific features of these domains seem to cumulate to an overall feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the domain. We shall also want to ask what kinds of personal characteristics appear to produce the greatest differences in satisfaction where each successive domain is concerned.

Part III consists of two chapters which disaggregate the overall results in another direction, when we examine in particular the status of women and of blacks with respect to the quality of life experience as we have measured it.

The concluding chapter will be devoted to a summing-up of our enterprise. It will draw together again the various threads of the inquiry, attempting to provide a more polished description of what we have come to think of as "the structure of gratifications." It will also yield an opportunity to confront some of the broadest issues which this body of research begins to address. These issues include such things as the nature of the fit between perceptual assessments and objective conditions, as well as the policy relevance of subjective social indicators of the quality of life.

Part I

Introduction

As we have seen, the focus of our research in this volume is upon the sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that persons in our national sample say they draw from the several critical domains of their lives, such as their marriages, their jobs, and their housing. However, since this kind of investigation is relatively novel, most of the measurements involved must be exploratory. In such a situation, it is important that we pay attention to the meaning that can reasonably be attributed to what people say. Can these reports of satisfaction be taken at face value, or are there limits to their significance that we must keep in mind as we proceed?

There are diverse ways in which the meaning of any set of measurements can be probed. Few of these, taken alone, seem conclusive to the wary. Yet as we examine the way in which our measurements behave in a great variety of situations, we can arrive at a view which is increasingly compelling as to what they can be trusted to mean and, as perhaps is more important, the points at which they must be distrusted.

One attractive test of meaning is foreclosed to us in this volume. Since we are interested in the possibility of more regular monitoring of these reports of satisfaction in the future, we would naturally learn a great deal about the usefulness of these measurements by watching their response to events over longer periods of time. As young couples move with their burgeoning families from cramped quarters into more capacious homes, do their reports of satisfaction with their housing turn more favorable, as we would suppose, or are there other dynamics that intervene to leave their reports about as they were before? Or, at a more crucial macrocosmic level, if a nation's housing plant is left to deteriorate over a decade or so, either because of disequilibria in economic incentives affecting the housing industry, or because of the intrusion of more pressing business like the conduct of wars, does this deterioration register in a rising tide of dissatisfaction in reports of the kind we have collected?

Unfortunately, at the close of a first study we have no way of knowing how these measures might behave in the long run. However, even within a single study there are a variety of tests and cross-checks to be examined that do provide a preliminary assessment concerning the meaningfulness of this form of measurement.

Our purpose in this part is to introduce the major measures on which our subsequent results will depend, to show how they go together in ways which increase our confidence as to their meaning, and to lay out some of the reasons why at points they must be interpreted with care. Chapter 2 will be devoted to the various modes by which a general sense of well-being might be assessed, documenting these forms of measurement and asking how they fit together empirically. In Chapter 3, we shall turn directly to our portfolio of measures of satisfaction with more specific domains of experience, and among other things will provide some initial answers to one of the central questions of our inquiry: is it reasonable to imagine that an individual's general sense of well-being is some kind of compound of his satisfactions and dissatisfactions with many of the more specific facets of his life?

The last three chapters of this part attempt to illuminate the question of measurement meaning still further. In Chapter 4 we deal with common forms of bias which seem to arise because of the artificial nature of the interview situation. We develop there an illustration of a relationship involving a domain satisfaction measure that is at first glance perplexing, and which could be quite misleading without further understanding. While a recognition of interview bias helps to clarify the relationship in some degree, it is clear that there are further general effects in the data that are less superficial, in the sense that they probably reflect real if unexpected states of mind that must be understood in interpreting our results. Chapter 5 is given over to an effort at diagnosing some of the most noteworthy of these effects.

Chapter 6 concludes the part with an investigation of the ways in which domain satisfactions appear to hinge in part upon levels of aspiration, expectations, and other frames of reference provided by the individual's experience. This discussion provides fodder for a consideration of the utility of domain satisfaction measures as a tool for monitoring the perceived quality of life over time in a large population.

Chapter 2
The General Sense of Well-Being

While our main focus in this volume will be upon expressions of satisfaction with specific domains of life experience, we have a natural interest in the way such specific satisfactions may cumulate to produce more global feelings of satisfaction with life or some general sense of well-being. As we have noted, our study contained a number of measures aimed at such overall assessments. Some of these measures have been drawn from earlier studies, and hence provide some time perspective on the way in which population samples tend to respond to such items. Other measures, including some on which we will come to depend most heavily after this chapter, were newly devised to fit comfortably with our interest in a range of domain-specific satisfactions.

Our purpose at the outset, then, is to introduce the several measures which, each in its own way, involve some global assessment of the nature and quality of life experience as a whole, as the individual may view it at the time of his interview. In making these introductions, it will be important to keep asking about the adequacy of such global reports, as well as how neatly or poorly these responses to different key concepts like "happiness" or "satisfaction" fit together empirically. Are we measuring more or less the same affective states whatever global terms may be used in the questions, or are response patterns somewhat distinctive according to the particular feeling-state about "life in general" that is being tapped?

While all of these questions have in common the referent of "life in general," they can vary not only in the feeling-state designated, but also in the time frame expressed or implied in the question itself. Thus, for example, when Bradburn asked his respondents to report positive and negative feeling-states such as "being on top of the world," he carefully limited the time frame to the experiencing of such feelings "during the past few weeks."[1] Questions might be worded with a still shorter time frame, such as "how happy do you feel about life right at this minute?" At the opposite extreme, one could ask the respondent to stand back and judge how happy or satisfying a life he has led in general, a question which would presumably draw into view his childhood as well as his more recent past.

The important point is that we would expect such assessments to be somewhat distinctive from one another, particularly with respect to their dynamic behavior over time. The more brief and immediate the time frame involved, the more sensitive a measure should be to short-term situations such as an uncommonly "bad day at the office" or other shifts in mood. If, on the other hand, the frame is that of lifelong perspective, the exceptionally bad day should color assessments very little, and such a measure should be more stable over time.

While the several general assessments of life included in our study showed some variation in time frame, our general strategy was to avoid either extreme of time perspective. We sought to avoid measurements of immediate mood, since we wanted a somewhat more stable and generalized assessment of the individual's reaction to his current situation. On the other hand, we did want a clearly "current" flavor to the time perspective, so that responses to the situation as it stood in the immediate period would be captured, and we would have a measure sensitive to that situation. This dimension of time frame is one which is useful to keep in mind as we review the performances of various measures of global sense of well-being.

"HAPPINESS" AS A SOCIAL INDICATOR

While, as we have seen, our own investments lay more heavily in the direction of the concept of satisfaction than that of happiness, to intersect with other literature we included in the questionnaire a major item from the 1957 mental health study (Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960) and Bradburn's work of the early 1960s. This item reads as follows: "Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" Here the time perspective is the kind of "generalized nowadays" which was the target of our own study.

[1] This limitation was quite functional for the immediate aims of the Bradburn research, which was focused in no small measure upon the responsiveness of "reports of happiness" to immediate changes in the environments of the communities being studied (see Bradburn, 1969, pp. 55ff).

This item has particular interest, because it is almost the only generalized assessment of life quality for which we enjoy long-term trend data for the American population.

Different national studies employing this item show occasional minor discrepancies in their patterns of results. There are, however, many features of these responses which seem to recur with perfect regularity. One of these is that rather few people choose to describe themselves as "not too happy": usually some 85 to 90 percent of the adult population put themselves in one of the two higher alternatives, creating the sense of a public which is on balance reasonably happy, or at least unwilling to confess to much unhappiness. Indeed, when investigators have tried adding a final category such as "not happy at all," less than one person in one hundred has been willing to describe his current feelings about life in that way.

Nevertheless, there remain enough differences in responses to ask what types of people are more or less likely to claim unqualified happiness. Here again, several patterns persist over enough varied studies to have become quite expected. Usually the strongest single correlate of these happiness reports involves the individual's marital status. Persons who are divorced or separated, or males who remain single after the customary period for marriage, are especially distinctive in their willingness to confess limitations on their happiness. Such findings carry some hint of validation for these verbal reports of happiness, as they are strongly reminiscent of Durkheim's classic early work showing that propensity to suicide was uncommonly high among people, especially males, living in isolation from the most intimate social relationships of marriage and family. Surely suicide can be read as a behavioral indicator of extreme personal unhappiness, and the match of findings at this point lends some confidence that the happiness item has at least a crude claim to validity.

Other patterns are typically found across these studies as well, although they are usually less marked than those associated with marital status. Generally, reports of happiness become less and less qualified the higher the socioeconomic status of the respondent, whether that status is measured by income, occupation, education, or any other conventional indicator. The differences are usually not overwhelming, but large enough to be unmistakable. Similarly, younger people seem more likely to report unqualified happiness than older people. Finally, some tendency has been discerned for happiness reports to run at relatively high levels in smaller towns and rural areas, and somewhat lower than the average in the central cities of large metropolitan areas, even when other status differences are controlled (Gurin, Veroff and Feld, 1960).

Patterns of this sort are one of the prime concerns of this volume and will be examined in far greater detail as we proceed. For the moment, however, we summarize some of these results from earlier work with the happiness item, reconfirmed in our own study, to provide at least a rough and preliminary sense of what is known about its performance and apparent validity. Our chief concern in this section, beyond the introduction of the measure, is to ask whether applications of such an item to the American population over a period of fifteen years or so have detected any shifts in the subjective quality of life.

Trends in "Happiness" Reports

Table 2-1 presents the overall distributions of responses to the happiness item in a series of studies both before and after the survey reported in this book. There appears to be a gradual but consistent trend, which may have accelerated in the years 1971–1972, for Americans at declining rates to report that they are "very happy." Over one-third of the respondents in the 1957 survey described themselves as "very happy," compared to one-fourth or less of the respondents in the two 1972 surveys (26 percent and 22 percent in spring and fall of that year). The shift only appears in the use of the high end of the three possible responses: there is no consistent pattern of change over time for the proportion of people who say they are "not too happy."

This is an intriguing trend, and it exemplifies one of the main reasons for an interest in developing social indicators of this kind: to detect changes in the way life is experienced at different points in time. Nevertheless, these data raise many questions that cannot be properly answered without a good deal more examination and, perhaps, observation over still longer periods of time. Of primary interest is the question whether this trend represents a

Table 2-1: Trends in Reported Levels of Happiness over Selected Studies

	Very happy	*Pretty happy*	*Not too happy*	*Total*	*N*
1957–Nationwide probability sample[a]	35%	54	11	100%	2460
1963–Nationwide quota sample[b]	32%	52	16	100%	1501
1965–Nationwide quota sample[c]	30%	53	17	100%	1469
1971–Nationwide probability sample[d]	29%	61	10	100%	2147
1972–Spring–Nationwide probability sample[e]	26%	65	9	100%	1254
1972–Fall–Nationwide probability sample[f]	22%	68	10	100%	947

[a] Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960.
[b] NORC, Study SRS 120; cf. Bradburn (1969), p. 40.
[c] Bradburn (1969), p. 45.
[d] Present study.
[e] SRC unpublished data.
[f] SRC unpublished data.

real decline in the perceived quality of life in the United States or something less significant, such as a change in the meaning of the term "happiness" or a decreased willingness of people to enthuse that they are "very happy." If it does mirror, at least in part, a real change in the subjective quality of life, what has produced such a change? Does it reflect some deterioration in the objective quality of life? If so, on what dimensions? Or does it represent an onward march of aspirations and expectations that are outrunning conditions of life which are improving too slowly?

Over the course of this volume we hope to bring at least partial answers to questions of this sort into some focus. For the moment, it is worth noting a few preliminary clues as to the dynamics underlying such a trend, represented by segments of the population for whom the overall trend seems most marked.

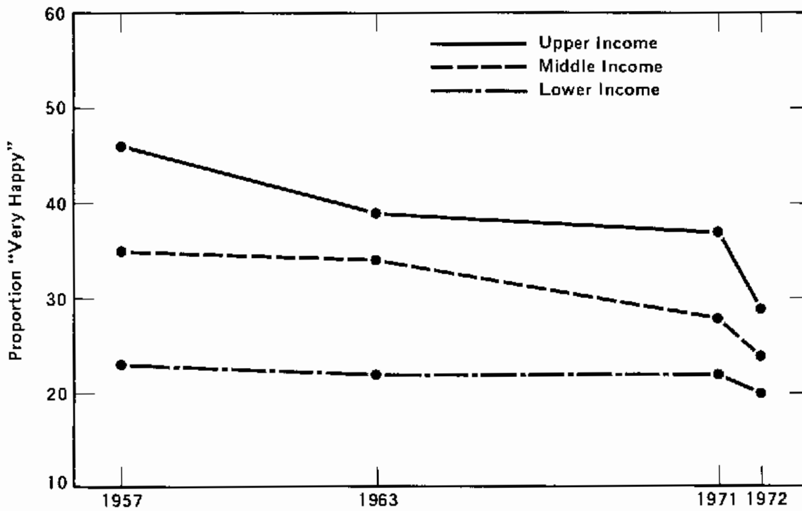
For example, if we divide samples from various points in time into different age cohorts, we discover that trends toward fewer "very happy" responses are confined almost entirely to people under 60 years of age.[2] In the young and middle-aged cohorts, there are declines ranging from 9 percent to 17 percent in such responses between 1957 and 1972, but no comparable change for the old. In the same period the proportion of those age 21 to 39 who say they are "not too happy" doubles, whereas those over 60 show a marked decline in the use of this answer.

Of course, some partitions of the population show rather uniform decline. There are no differences in these trends, for example, between the sexes or the races. They are also quite uniform across categories of work status or marital status, save for the retired persons and the widowed, who like other older people, fail to register the decline.

Perhaps the most interesting difference of this type, however, arises in connection with income. Naturally, family incomes in absolute dollar amounts have themselves shown a sharp upward trend over the past fifteen years, in an interesting counterpoint to the happiness reports. However, if we organize respondents from each survey into three roughly parallel strata of lower, medium, and higher incomes, we find that differences in these responses by income, which were very marked as of 1957, have been progressively decreasing in the intervening period (Figure 2-1). The lower income segments of the population have shown almost no decline in their limited proportions of "very happy" responses. However, the higher income groups have shown a marked decline converging toward the original low income levels of response. Moreover, this decline appears to have been set in motion first (by 1963) in the highest income level and to have

[2] These comparisons are based on data drawn from the 1957, 1963, 1971, and 1972 surveys.

Figure 2-1: Trends in Proportion "Very Happy," by Three Income Levels



slumped the most dramatically there. Both in terms of the degree and the timing of the change, middle income people form an intermediate case.

Since there are significant and persistent relationships between age and income, with the very young and the old tending to concentrate in some degree at the low income level, it is worth asking how the happiness trend has behaved within groups defined by income and age jointly. Such an analysis reveals that the decline has been confined almost entirely to persons in the upper two-thirds of the income distribution who are less than 50 years old and is especially prominent among those in their twenties and thirties. The greatest shift has occurred for younger people in their twenties in the upper income bracket: about half (50 percent) of such respondents in that age range as of 1957 considered themselves "very happy," but this proportion had dropped to about one-third (33 percent) for people in that age range as of 1971. Among those in the same age range but in the lower third of the income distributions, there was little change in the proportion who called themselves "very happy" (actually a slight increase, from 24 percent in 1957 to 27 percent in 1971), so the difference associated with income level had almost disappeared among young respondents in 1971. The difference associated with income level has not diminished among older respondents, however. In 1957, among those aged 50 or older and with incomes in the upper third of the distribution, 45 percent said that they were "very happy," compared to 24 percent for those with incomes in the lower third of the distribution. The proportions in 1971 were almost identical (45 percent and

23 percent, respectively) for the comparable income groups among older respondents. Thus the income-happiness relationship has changed quite dramatically between 1957, when a clear positive relationship existed for all cohorts, and 1971, when this relationship had considerably weakened among young respondents but remained intact among older respondents.

It is useful to make several observations about these currents and countercurrents of change. First, while the preceding paragraphs may make it appear that during the 1960s a disgruntled younger generation was in the process of replacing a happier older generation, the total picture is a bit more complex than this. It is surely true, if we limit our attention to higher income levels, that the youngest cohorts entering the adult population in the later 1960s were more reserved about their happiness than cohorts that had preceded them with an entry ten and fifteen years before. While this effect is less dramatic, of course, when we look at the young of all income levels, it is present nonetheless and must be accounted as one major source of the overall declining trend in these reports for the total population.

We should not forget, however, that at any point in time there seems to be a declining level of happiness reported by people of advancing years. And while this relationship is somewhat attenuated in the early 1970s, it remains true in our 1971 data that older people as a whole are less likely to describe themselves as "very happy" than younger people. Without a longer span of time to observe, it may be premature to surmise that there is an aging or "life cycle" effect involving a progressive decline in reported happiness, whatever the specifics of a period or generation. However, at this moment, such would seem to be a reasonable guess. Thus it is a bit oversimplified to imagine that the total trend is being produced by the disgruntled young replacing the happy old, which would imply that the young are less happy than the old. They do not appear to be, and we must think in terms of a general decline in reported happiness with advancing age which in this period seems to be overlaid with a generational effect whereby the well-to-do young are, relative to early periods, uncommonly disgruntled.

Moreover, it cannot be argued that the overall trend is due purely to entering cohorts for still another reason: people of middle age as of 1971 or 1972, who were already in the adult population as of 1957, have shown a more active decline in reported happiness relative to the earlier reports of others in their own cohort. In other words, they seem to be responding with changed sentiments to the same period or generation effects that are producing less ebullient entering cohorts. In fact, the impact of this period seems to conform very nicely with patterns found in other cohort analyses of quite different types of change: "period" effects show their deepest imprint on the very young, significant but somewhat reduced effects in the same direction for persons of middle age, and almost no effect whatever for cohorts of advanced years.[3] However, none of this should obscure the fact that in general, reports of happiness are less enthusiastic among the elderly than among the young.

The second broad observation involves the identification of just what these period effects might be. In view of their main locus among persons who are both young and relatively well-to-do, the diagnosis seems to lie rather close to the surface. The period of the 1960s, with the darkening shadow of the Vietnam war and its draft, an extraordinary sequence of assassinations, outbreaks of urban violence, and other extreme forms of political turmoil, has left its mark on a variety of public attitudes now under examination. For example, trend data available from the Center for Political Studies have shown a dramatic deterioration of public trust in the rectitude, competence, and responsiveness of the national government which was underway as early as 1964 and has continued downward through the present writing (1973).

The particular disillusionment of the well-to-do stratum among the young has, of course, been particularly evident in the college campus development of a "counterculture" rebelling against parental assumptions that wealth and the accumulation of material goods are important to the preservation of personal happiness. Indeed, it is ironically true that, as we observed in our Introduction, the rather widespread disenchantment with purely economic measurements as indicators of national progress produced by national disasters of the 1960s was very much a part of our own original motivation to conduct a study of the perceived quality of life.

Other features of the declining trend in happiness reports would seem to point in about the same direction. Just as the change has been most marked for the young and well-to-do, so it has tended to focus among the younger people of higher educational levels who largely overlap with them. Moreover, there is some evidence that the decline is an urban phenomenon. While the trend appears in fairly uniform fashion across communities of quite different sizes, it is absent for residents of rural areas and the smallest towns remote from urban agglomerations and, at the other extreme, has been most dramatic in the dozen largest cities of the United States. Once again, such findings fit nicely with other obvious facts concerning the loci of discontent in the 1960s and the spiraling problems of the nation's largest metropolises.

In sum, then, the simple happiness measure seems to have shown some

[3] Such are the patterns observable, for example, in the declining willingness of the American public to register a sense of abiding loyalty to one or another political party, a change which began quite abruptly in 1966 and has continued to date. Carlsson and Karlsson (1970), noting this characteristic imprint in still other cohort data, have suggested a formalization which would fit the happiness changes quite well.

responsiveness to many objective and subjective changes in the character of American life over the fifteen-year period for which measurements have been available and in at least this gross sense can lay claim to some face validity.

CANTRIL'S SELF-ANCHORING SCALE

One other type of measurement bearing on a general sense of well-being has been repeated on several national samples for the United States over a slightly shorter period of time. The general format is one in which the respondent is asked to imagine a "best possible . . ." as forming one end of an 11-point scale, and a "worst possible . . ." as he personally envisions the matter at the other extreme. Then, with the scale meaning "self-anchored" in this manner, he is asked to locate his estimate of the current situation somewhere along the scale between these poles. Obviously, a variety of objects or situations can be evaluated in this format, including best or worst possible governments under which to live, and the like. The central item which interests us here, of course, is one in which the respondent describes the "best possible life" (for him) which he can imagine, as well as the "worst possible," and then chooses a ladder step or scale point that best describes his current life. Such a measurement is an alternate way of assessing an individual's general sense of well-being (Cantril, 1965).

This Cantril ladder measure of satisfaction with life has not shown any particular decline between the first time it was employed for a national sample in the United States in 1959 and measurements repeated in 1964, 1971, 1972, and 1974. We naturally have a keen interest as to why such measures do not respond to the same trends reflected in the happiness item, since one of our first orders of business in this volume is to arrive at some understanding of the different facets of a generalized sense of well-being which are tapped by different key concepts (such as "happiness" vs. "satisfaction") and different modes of measurement.

We observed earlier that a term like "happiness" seems to evoke chiefly an absolute emotional state, whereas "satisfaction" implies a more cognitive judgment of a current situation laid against external standards of comparison such as "other people I know" or more private levels of aspiration. In this sense, a statement of satisfaction or dissatisfaction may be somewhat more relative than are happiness responses, although it is naturally true that some element of relativism must enter the latter as well ("how happy I was yesterday or last year"). Of course the Cantril format tends to accentuate the relative aspects, since the respondent quite consciously frames his assessments relative to his own conceptions of "best" and "worst." Since these extremes are entirely personal and situational, the frames of reference used can be expected to differ quite markedly from individual to individual, a fact which puts interpersonal comparisons of ratings in a somewhat odd light, although it is likely that similar oddities are present but left implicit in items directed at "happiness." And it would be surprising if any given individual did not adjust the boundaries of his expectations upward or downward from time to time in response to gross changes in his life situation.

In fact, in another measure used by studies of the Cantril tradition, respondents have been asked to rate "national life" on the same type of ladder scales used to rate their own lives. The average ratings for the United States by national samples have declined from 6.7 (where 10 represents the "best possible") in 1959 to 5.4 as of 1971, and down to 4.8 as of 1974 (Watts and Free, 1974, p. 15, Table 2). This is a rather substantial shift which has moved in tandem with both the happiness trend and other attitudinal measures that have shown apparent deterioration in the 1960s. Perhaps Americans are rating their own lives relative to standards of comparison or levels of aspiration which have been forced downward in this period, leaving their relative positions about the same.

An argument that reports of life satisfaction taken in the Cantril format are *purely* relative to standards set by the immediate social milieu ("compared to other people I know . . .") or even by the broader frame of reference of "national life" as experienced by its citizenry, cannot be sustained, as Cantril has reported rich differences in aggregate ratings across countries of vastly different histories and current economic conditions. If the individual's own situation were always judged in a way which was strictly relative to the extremes he observes in his locality or nation, as opposed to extremes which are either absolute or represented empirically worldwide, such major differences should not emerge, although smaller ones might be understood in terms of differences in local or national inequalities. In other words, just as there are some relativistic overtones to items on happiness, so it seems likely that satisfaction ratings in the Cantril format are not strictly relative to narrow frames of reference.

However, the issue of relativism will pursue us over the course of this volume, and as a first approximation, it is worth venturing the suggestion that the ingredients underlying statements of satisfaction are somewhat more cognitive and relativistic than those underlying reports of happiness.

OUR MEASURE OF OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION

Now that we have reviewed some features of the performance of past efforts to measure a general sense of well-being, we shall turn to a series of additional measures designed specifically for use in the current study. We have no way of assessing how these measures will behave over longer periods of time, but we shall be able to lay them against earlier measures, such as the happiness item, in order to judge what facets of well-being they appear to tap.

As we indicated at the outset, while we included the conventional happiness item in our interview schedule, our primary investment was made in a portfolio of measures involving "satisfaction" as a key word. Some of the theoretical reasons for this choice have been reviewed earlier. There were practical reasons for the choice as well.

It should be recalled that the primary thrust of our study involves the way in which people assess specific domains of their life, such as their jobs, their marriages, their health, their housing, and the like. Moreover, within most of these domains, we were interested in measuring reactions to still more specific features of the domain. Thus, for example, where housing is concerned, we were interested to know how respondents evaluated such things as the way their homes were heated, the amount of space available, the quality of the structure, and the convenience of its location, as well as what the respondent might think of his housing situation more generally.

As we move down the ladder of abstraction from global feelings to these more specific assessments, the concept of "happiness" becomes increasingly awkward, while the concept of satisfaction becomes more natural. To be sure, it would not be unintelligible if a person were asked how "happy" or "unhappy" he is about the way in which his house heats in the winter. But at this level of concreteness, satisfaction or dissatisfaction seems a more appropriate concept and in any event is probably the way in which such an item would be translated in the respondent's mind. Similarly, we would not be likely to ask how much happiness or unhappiness his neighborhood brings him, but it is quite natural to ask how satisfied or dissatisfied he may be with it.

Thus as we explored our respondent's feelings about various domains of life, we asked him to summarize his assessments of each on a 7-point scale, marked off between the extremes of "completely satisfied" and "completely dissatisfied." Given such a portfolio of domain-specific measures kept in constant format to yield comparability, it was of interest to measure reactions to life more generally in exactly the same format. Therefore, near the end of the interview, a question read: "We have talked about various parts of your life, now I want to ask you about your life as a whole. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?" The informant was asked to respond in terms of the same 7-point scale used for the more specific domains. We shall refer to this measure subsequently as "overall life satisfaction."

At a superficial level, such a measure does not seem to depart radically from either the happiness item or the Cantril ladder measure of life satisfaction. In all of these cases, the ultimate referent is one's life in general. Moreover, the time frame in all cases is a sort of "generalized nowadays." However, this item does diverge from the happiness question because the key concept is satisfaction.

In the long run, we shall be particularly intrigued by the ways in which the measure of overall life satisfaction and that of happiness behave differently, for differential performance of this sort is the best source of clues as to the unique facets of a general state of well-being that each measure is equipped to reflect. However, the fact remains that they are rather similar measures, and it is not surprising that at many points they behave in highly similar ways. For the moment, then, we shall stress these points of similarity, reserving the occasional interesting differences for later consideration.

Just as most persons claim that they are at least "pretty happy" if not "very happy," so there is a marked tendency for our informants to indicate a basic satisfaction with their lives "as a whole." In fact, only 7 percent of the sample chose ratings that lay below the midpoint, within the dissatisfied side of the scale. On the other hand, almost 22 percent of the sample described themselves at the extreme positive, or "completely satisfied" point of the scale, and another 39 percent put themselves in the adjacent category.[4] Thus if these data are interpreted quite literally, the portrait of a generally contented population which emerges from the overall life satisfaction item is very similar to the impression conveyed by the responses to the happiness item.

Moreover, as Figure 2-2 suggests, there is a fairly marked tendency for people who locate themselves at the "very happy" extreme of the happiness scale to locate themselves toward the most satisfied extreme of the life satisfaction scale, with considerable overlap as well between the "not too happy" and the unsatisfied. The correlation between the two measures is .50 in our 1971 study, where a value of .00 would mean that the two responses are completely unrelated, and a value of 1.00 would mean a perfect correspondence or overlap between the two sets of responses.[5] Such a middling value is itself intriguing. If it were considerably lower than .50, it would be easy to conclude that the two items were measuring largely different states of mind. If it were considerably greater than .50, it would be easy to conclude that with some inevitable imperfections we were measuring the same state of mind. The middling value of the correlation implies that the truth lies

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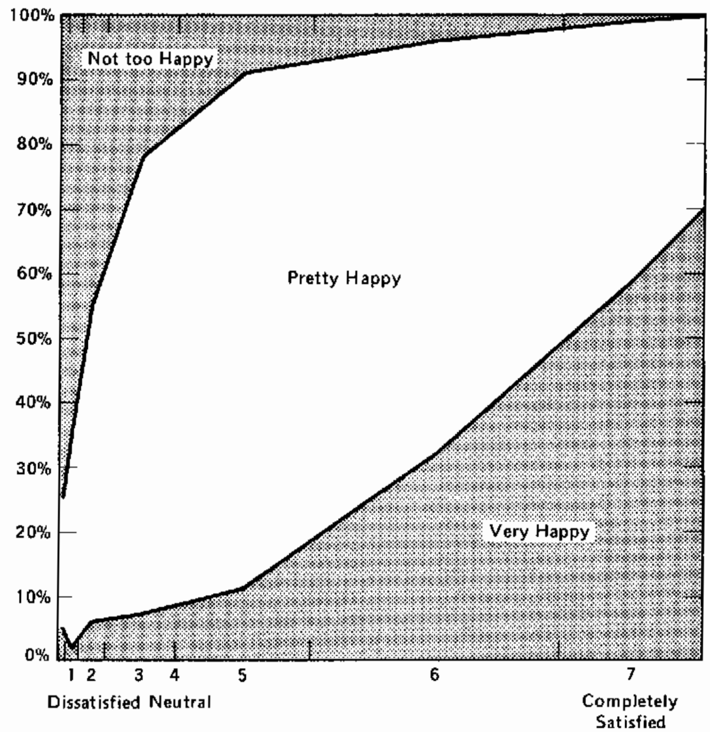
[4] The complete distribution of answers to this item is given in Table 2-4.

[5] It would be more accurate to say that the upper limit of the correlation between those two measures, given their marginal distributions, is $r = .82$; and to conclude that the shared variance is 37 percent of the maximum possible ($.50^2/.82^2 = .37$; cf. Leik and Gove, 1971).

Figure 2-2: Reports of Happiness by Degree of Overall Satisfaction with Life[a]

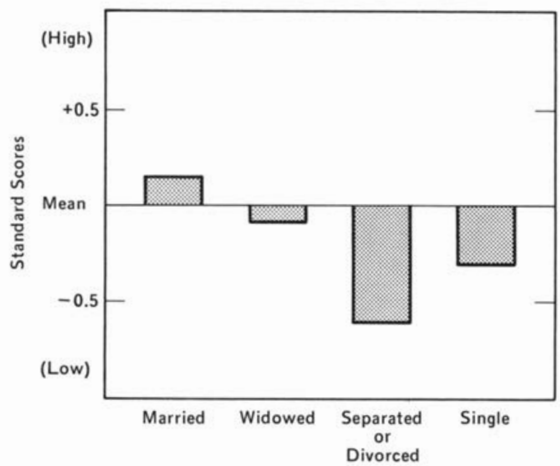


[a] The figure shows the distribution of responses to the happiness item for respondents at each level on the overall satisfaction item; e.g., of those who said they were "completely satisfied," 59 percent were "very happy," 40 percent were "pretty happy," and 1 percent were "not too happy." (For the record, the numbers used in the interviews for each level of satisfaction were the reverse of those shown here, but in this book we have followed the convention of letting high scores refer to high satisfaction levels.) The length of the ordinate associated with each level of satisfaction is in proportion to the frequency with which that level was expressed by respondents. Thus, the areas in the two-dimensional figure can be interpreted as directly proportional to the number of respondents who gave each combination of answers to the two items.

somewhere in between: the two items appear to be tapping somewhat the same state of mind, but at least moderately different facets of this state.

Nevertheless, the correlation between the two items is sufficiently large that we can expect with some confidence to find these measures often behaving in about the same way. This certainly turns out to be true where demographic correlates of the two sets of responses are concerned. For example, we noted earlier that most studies have shown happiness responses to differ about as sharply among groups defined by marital status as can be found

Figure 2-3: Average Levels of Life Satisfaction for Respondents of Different Marital Status[a]

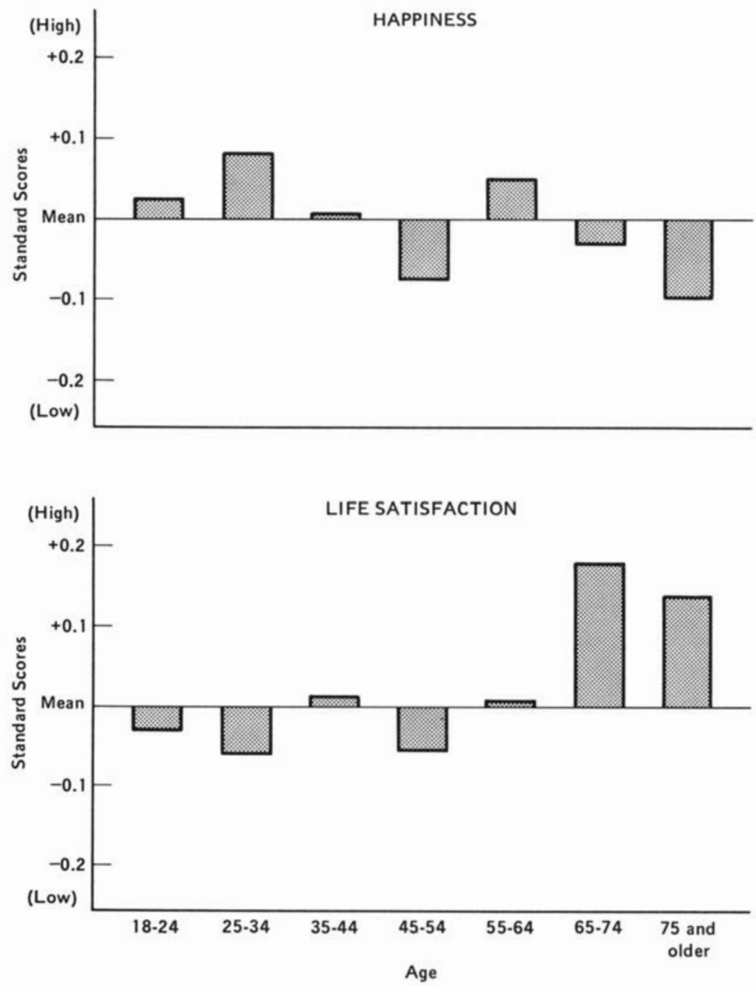


[a] In this and in subsequent figures, group means are shown in standardized form; that is, as deviations from the overall mean, in standard deviation units. The overall mean on the 7-point life satisfaction scale is 5.54, and the standard deviation is 1.25.

for any commonly defined segments of the population. This is also characteristic of our measure of overall life satisfaction, as Figure 2-3 indicates. Persons who are currently single generally report a good deal less satisfaction with life than do married persons, and the lack of satisfaction shown by women and men who are divorced or separated is quite remarkable indeed.

Most of the relationships between other demographic characteristics and the life satisfaction measure are also quite similar to those observed for the happiness item. There is, however, one intriguing point at which these relationships diverge. We noted earlier that younger people show some tendency to report higher levels of happiness than older people. However, as we see in Figure 2-4, the reverse, if anything, is true where our measure of overall life satisfaction is concerned. The youngest cohorts are generally below the population mean in their expressions of life satisfaction. Young people seem able to couple feelings of happiness with some relative dissatisfaction about life, whereas the elderly report considerable satisfaction with their lives despite rather limited expressions of happiness. This is a good example of a point at which these two facets of a generalized sense of well-being show contrasting relationships. We shall explore these contrasts at a later point, with an eye to arriving at some diagnosis of the differential meaning of the "happiness" and "satisfaction" concepts.

Figure 2-4: Average Levels of Happiness and Life Satisfaction, by Age (Standardized Scores)



Our single-item measure of overall life satisfaction is only one of quite a number of ways in which we attempted to gauge our respondents' sense of well-being. Since the measurement format directly fits our many measures of satisfaction with more specific domains of life, it is one of the most important measures for us to introduce. However, several other types of measurement must be surveyed here as well, and we shall use these in concert to focus progressively on the notion of perceived well-being.

WAYS OF CHARACTERIZING "LIFE IN GENERAL"

A rather different way of approaching the measurement of the perceived quality of life is to ask people how they would characterize their lives at present. Osgood and his colleagues have developed a technique called the "semantic differential" as a mode of exploring the connotative meaning which any concept, object, or situation may have for the individuals being studied. This technique involves a battery of opposite or "polar" adjectives placed at the extremes of a 7-point rating scale, with respondents being asked to check a point on the scale that best represents their description of the concept or object. For example, if the concept were "big business," one of the adjective pairs might be "good" vs. "bad," another might be "strong" vs. "weak," etc. For each pair of adjectives, the individual would check the location between extremes that he thought best described his conception of "big business" (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957).

In our interview, respondents were asked to describe their "present life" by using a set of ten such semantic differential items. The specific adjective pairs that we selected, along with the distributions of answers within each scale for the total sample, are shown in Table 2-2. Once again, we

Table 2-2: Distribution of Responses to the Ten Semantic Differential Scales[a]

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*Total*		*Mean*[b]	*N*
Boring	2%	2	6	16	17	21	36	100%	Interesting	5.52	2151
Miserable[c]	1%	1	4	13	16	27	38	100%	Enjoyable	5.74	2147
Hard[c]	8%	7	11	29	15	13	17	100%	Easy	4.43	2149
Useless	2%	2	3	10	13	24	46	100%	Worthwhile	5.87	2146
Lonely[c]	3%	2	4	10	11	21	49	100%	Friendly	5.85	2144
Empty[c]	1%	2	4	12	15	22	44	100%	Full	5.79	2143
Discouraging	3%	2	3	11	13	23	45	100%	Hopeful	5.77	2146
Tied-down	5%	4	6	17	12	20	36	100%	Free	5.31	2148
Disappointing	3%	2	4	13	16	25	37	100%	Rewarding	5.60	2148
Doesn't give me much chance[c]	3%	3	6	21	18	23	26	100%	Brings out the best in me	5.18	2147

[a] The instructions to the respondent were as follows: "Here are some words and phrases which we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your present life. For example, if you think your present life is very boring, put an *X* in the box right next to the word 'boring.' If you think it is very interesting, put an *X* in the box right next to the word 'interesting.' If you think it is somewhere in between, put an *X* where you think it belongs. Put an *X* in one box on every line." There was a row of seven boxes between each adjective pair.

[b] Means were calculated by assigning the value 1 to the least favorable response, 7 to the most favorable, and 2-6 to intervening responses.

[c] These items were reversed in the interview schedules to minimize the effect of any tendency simply to check boxes down a column, ignoring distinctions among the adjective pairs.

note that there is a substantial piling up of responses toward the ends of the scales that would normally be considered positive, just as was the case with the global items on life satisfaction and on happiness. The only slight exception is the "easy" vs. "hard" scale, where respondents still remain more positive than not.

Compared to our first global questions on life satisfaction or happiness, these ten descriptive items are helpful in providing more qualitative detail as to the way in which our respondents view their lives. On the face of the matter, most of the adjectives deal with a sense of gratification or disappointment in life, and it would be surprising if people who tend to describe their lives with the less pleasurable adjectives were not by and large the same people who report dissatisfaction or unhappiness on the more global items. In the degree such correlations exist and are of fair magnitude, these semantic differential items can be viewed as giving us a more differentiated picture of the meaning underlying our global responses. A prior question, however, has to do with the way in which these ten items, taken as a set of life descriptions, fit together among themselves.

The Internal Structure of Life Characterizations

When we examine the intercorrelations between responses to the ten semantic differential scales, we find, as might be expected, that there are substantial relationships between most of the items. Two adjective pairs do not, however, seem to fit as tightly within the same cluster as do the other eight. These are the contrasts "easy" vs. "hard" and "free" vs. "tied-down." Intercorrelations for the other eight items range from .40 to .61 and average over .50. Such relationships suggest again that these scales are tapping slightly different nuances of the same general perspectives toward the more or less pleasurable features of life. However, the two odd items only show an average correlation with the other eight of about .27, suggesting that they have something in common with the other items but are too differentiated from them to be put together with them comfortably.[6]

We can shed some light on the atypical behavior of the easy/hard and free/tied-down scales if we consider the manner in which different segments of the population are responding to various of these adjectives. The other

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[6] Principal components analysis of the correlations among these ten adjective pairs reveals that the first principal component explains half (48.7 percent) of the total variance of the ten items, and the first two components explain 59.4 percent. Following varimax rotation of these two components, eight of the pairs have loadings on one factor in the range from .65 to .79, while the "hard" vs. "easy" pair has a loading of .07 and the "tied down" vs. "free" pair has a loading of .24. On the second rotated factor, the latter two items have loadings of .85 and .71, respectively, while the loadings of the eight other items range from .00 to .39.

eight adjective pairs show relationships with demographic categories which parallel those of the single-item global evaluations of life. For example, higher-status persons, whether defined by income, education, or occupation, tend to describe their lives with more positive adjectives than lower-status persons, just as they claim greater overall satisfaction or happiness. There are modest differences in this regard for specific adjectives. Perhaps the single scale that shows the sharpest variation by social status is that which is bounded by the extremes "Brings out the best in me" and "Doesn't give me much chance." However, such differences between the eight scales are not large and their general association with status is roughly the same as for the global items. Similarly, more pleasurable descriptions of life come from small towns and rural areas than from residents of the largest cities, with suburbanites at an intermediate position. Divorced and separated persons match their expressions of relative dissatisfaction with life by leaning much more than normal toward descriptions of life as "boring," "miserable," "lonely," "empty," and "disappointing."

All of these relationships are congruent with those found for both overall life satisfaction and happiness. We may take a special interest, however, in the way these adjective ratings behave where age is concerned, since we have noted that there is some tendency for life satisfaction to increase with age, while reports of happiness decline somewhat from young to old. We find that in general, where the major cluster of eight adjective pairs is concerned, these responses look somewhat more like the satisfaction pattern than the happiness pattern, with a trend toward more positive adjective choices as age increases. There is a significant discrepancy, however, inasmuch as overall life satisfaction rises to a peak among the very elderly, whereas all eight of the life descriptions turn downward after age 65. This deterioration is most notable for the scales running from "full" to "empty" and from "worthwhile" to "useless." In cohorts characterized by retirement from lifework as well as frequent widowhood, such changes make perfect intuitive sense. However, the same drop takes place among the very old for *all* items in the major cluster of eight and fits with the declining reports of happiness among the aged, even if the earlier gains in these pleasurable views do not. At the same time, such patterns do run across the grain of the strong expressions of increased life satisfaction in the oldest cohorts, a matter that should be kept in mind as we proceed to disentangle the meaning of these measures.

Meanwhile, the behavior of the two deviant scales—"easy" vs. "hard" and "free" vs. "tied-down"—often stands in rather sharp contrast to the other eight items where population groupings are concerned. This is particularly true of age cohorts. Instead of starting at a relatively low level and gaining ground toward a more pleasurable view of life until the deterioration after retirement age, these two measures plunge downward to their absolute low during the early middle years of life, turn upward in the vicinity of age 40, and then climb precipitously throughout the remainder of life. In other words, cohorts in their seventies and eighties are more likely by quite a margin to regard their lives as "free" and "easy" than is true of any other of the age cohorts. These differences find some reflection when the sample is partitioned in other ways as well. For example, in place of the general tendency for the other eight life descriptions to become more pleasurable with higher income, the lowest quarter of the income distribution describes life as more "free" than the highest quarter, and it is the middle half of the income distribution that is most likely to describe itself as "tied-down." Similarly, the lowest quarter of the income distribution also refers to life as easier than the middle half, although not quite as easy as the upper quarter. Since it is the lowest quarter of the income distribution that is most heavily populated by the very young and the old, these findings are largely of the same cloth.

None of the deviant patterns associated with the "free" and "tied-down" dichotomy seem at all obscure in their meaning. The sense of being tied down is closely associated with the advent of a young family and mounting work responsibilities. Before that time, "free" might well be translated as "footloose." In later years, this translation might not seem so appropriate, although it probably is in some cases, and in any event, the lack of social encumbrances and responsibilities, even when productive of nostalgia, remains a kind of freedom. The fact that the very old as well as persons on pinched incomes also describe life as "easy" rather than "hard" may seem somewhat more perplexing. However, it should be remembered that these same people tend to regard life as "lonely," "discouraging," "empty," and "useless" at the same time that it is considered "easy." Quite clearly the term is evoking some aspects of life other than the presence of vital social relationships.

This perception of a free and easy quality of life despite other difficulties for the aged might appear to provide some clues as to why the elderly are at the same time relatively satisfied but relatively unhappy. Nevertheless, we cannot put too much weight upon such a diagnosis without first asking in more detail how these descriptions of life fit with our other pair of global measures, life satisfaction and happiness.

The Semantic Differential Scales, Life Satisfaction, and Happiness

One convenient way of expressing the degree to which each of the ten life descriptions is related to responses to other items involves the proportion of total variance in the answers that overlaps with, or is shared in common

Table 2-3: Overlap Between Ten Life Characterizations and Global Reports of Life Satisfaction and Happiness

	Proportion of variance (r^2) explained in:	
	Life satisfaction	*Happiness*
Enjoyable vs. miserable	22	20
Full vs. empty	21	19
Rewarding vs. disappointing	19	18
Brings out the best in me vs. Doesn't give me much chance	19	15
Interesting vs. boring	18	18
Hopeful vs. discouraging	15	12
Friendly vs. lonely	15	12
Worthwhile vs. useless	12	10
Free vs. tied-down	8	6
Easy vs. hard	7	5

with, any one of such other items.[7] In Table 2-3 we display the proportions of overlap of each adjective scale with the two global items of life satisfaction and happiness. It is clear that there are very marked differences between specific scales in the variance shared in common with the global items. In particular, we may note that the two adjective pairs that did not seem to fit well with the major cluster of eight items also are least related to the two global items. The overall pattern of relationship between adjective sets is about the same with happiness as it is with life satisfaction, although the amounts of overlap turn out to be rather consistently lower where happiness is concerned. In the degree that life satisfaction and happiness are indeed tapping somewhat distinctive facets of a general sense of well-being despite substantial overlap within themselves, then, we conclude

[7] The total variance of a measure refers here to the amount by which individuals differ from one another in their responses. Another way of stating the same thing is to say that total variance indicates by how much we would be wrong, on the average, if we assumed that any given individual could be represented by the overall average of responses. In this latter sense, the variance is a measure of uncertainty as to what response any individual has given. With any pair of measures, the proportion of variance "accounted for" in one measurement by another is simply the percentage by which such uncertainty is reduced from guesswork about individual positions, once we have information as to how that individual has responded to the latter measure. If two items were perfectly correlated, knowledge of position on one item would suffice to remove all uncertainty—100 percent of the variance—as to where any individual stood on the other item. If two items were totally unrelated to each other, or "independent" of one another, then such knowledge for one item would provide no help whatever in predicting where the individual stood on the other item. Thus no uncertainty would be reduced by such knowledge, and the proportion of variance accounted for would be zero.

that the life descriptions represented by the adjective pairs provide a somewhat better sense of the meanings underlying the life satisfaction statement than they do for the happiness reports.

If we add up all the proportions of overlapping variance registered by the ten life descriptions for either of the global items, we would have a figure which exceeds 100 percent. This is, of course, not an appropriate operation, since the life descriptions are quite highly correlated among themselves. This means that a fair amount of the variance that each adjective pair shares with the global items is also shared with other life descriptions, such that a straight addition of these shares becomes highly redundant. We can, however, use the technique of multiple regression to find out how much of the total variance in the global items is held in common with the ten semantic differential scales taken together as a set, with the redundancy between them statistically removed. Taking account of all ten scales simultaneously in this fashion, we find that 33 percent of the variance in life satisfaction is explained, equivalent to a multiple correlation of .57. The comparable statistic linking the ten items with the happiness measure is 29 percent of the variance in common, or a multiple correlation of .54.

Like the partially filled glass of water, such values can be viewed in two rather different lights. On the one hand, the ten life descriptions captured by the semantic differential scales do seem to explain a rather significant proportion of the differences between people in the way they choose to locate themselves in response to the more global single items. On the other hand, about twice as much of the variance is left unexplained by these terms, even for the life satisfaction item. Does this mean that the concept of life satisfaction conveys meanings that are not captured by the set of scales we included in our interview? This is certainly a strong possibility and with a larger set of scales, or a better set, we might indeed have been able to specify the meaning of life satisfaction more exactly.

However, there are several effects that might intervene to limit the amount of variance in a global item, such as life satisfaction, that could be explained by any set of semantic differential scales. For example, up to this point our data analyses have presumed that different life descriptions are related to summary statements in the same way for all members of the population. Yet it would not be at all surprising if the notion of life satisfaction conveyed somewhat different meanings to different types of people. Perhaps if we measured the fit between the ten scales and life satisfaction within more homogeneous segments of the population, the level of relationships group by group would increase.

We have examined this possibility at some length for subgroups defined by sex, age, education, income, size of community, race, and marital status. The number of possible comparisons across ten scales and so many subgroups is of course voluminous, and differences large enough to be statistically reliable are quite few. A disproportionate number of these differences seem to involve the "easy-hard" scale which has attracted our attention before. For example, how easy or hard life is perceived to be seems to matter more for women than for men, in the sense that it is more predictive of overall life satisfaction responses: that scale accounts for 10 percent of the variance in life satisfaction for both working women and housewives, but only 2 percent for working men. Or again, such a distinction only accounts for 3 percent of the variance for young people aged 18-24, but shows values of about 10 percent for middle-aged and elderly groups. Finally, the differences by income are quite impressive indeed. Whether life is described as "easy" or "hard" only accounts for 1 percent of the variance in life satisfaction among well-to-do respondents reporting 1970 family incomes over $12,000. But for those with low incomes under $5,000, this scale accounts for 14 percent of the variance in life satisfaction responses.

Such patterns are at least suggestive where the deviant behavior of the "easy-hard" scale is concerned. Certainly the labels "easy" and "hard," when applied to a person's current life, are quite ambiguous, although it is probably true that the most common connotations are economic. As we have seen earlier, low income people are less likely to describe their lives as "hard" than middle income respondents. However, there is a greater range to their responses on this scale than is found for high income people, whose descriptions cluster more heavily on the "easy" side. It seems that whereas some low income respondents–especially the aged and retired or the very young–have financial obligations limited enough that they can describe their lives as "easy" and their general perspectives on life as satisfied despite their rather limited revenues, other low income people do face large family responsibilities and other severe financial pressures, so that life is indeed "hard," and the ceiling on life satisfaction is correspondingly low. Such a mixture of low income people would produce a correlation which is uncommonly high between the "easy-hard" scale and life satisfaction. At relatively affluent income levels, however, the brute pressures of economic necessities are greatly relieved and the "easy-hard" distinction loses much of its relevance for general evaluations of life.

Across the eight semantic differential scales that form our major cluster of items, however, such differences in patterns of subgroup response are very few and scattered. Hence for this set of items, which taken alone account for almost all of our 33 percent of the variance in life satisfaction, we cannot conclude that group differences in the weights placed on various life descriptions have much responsibility for the fact that our prediction does not reach higher levels. For the most part, these weights are remarkably homogeneous over the eight items for the types of groups isolated.

Index of General Affect

We have seen that eight of the semantic differential scales are intercorrelated at a rather high level, and that these correlations are quite stable among various subgroups of the total sample. For these reasons, much of the information obtained from all eight items can probably be captured in a single variable which is calculated from those items. Such a variable, which we have labeled "Index of General Affect," was calculated by simply taking the mean of each individual's scores on the eight semantic differential items.[8] The distribution of scores on this index is shown in Table 2-4. The correlation of this index with the overall life satisfaction item ($r = .55$) is almost as large as the multiple correlation ($R = .57$) between all ten semantic differential items and overall life satisfaction. Similarly, the correlation of the index with the happiness item is .52 (r), compared to the multiple correlation (R) of .54. At least with respect to these global items, we have indeed lost little or no information by going from eight separate items to a single summary index.

Reliability of the Measurements

Another obvious reason for the fact that the set of ten life descriptions only accounts for one-third of the variance in overall life satisfaction, and less still for the global happiness item, is the fact that a significant portion of the variance in all of these measurements is "error variance" arising due to imperfections in the measurement process. The sources of such error are multitudinous, even though any single form of error may occur only rarely. A respondent may misunderstand a question; an interviewer may misunderstand a response; or somewhere in the sequence of transpositions between the marked interview schedule and tabulations printed out by the computer some other error occurs. Most frequently, perhaps, the respondent understands the question but could give any one of several responses with some truthfulness, and his actual choice between plausible responses at any moment is governed by whim, the context set by surrounding questions, and the like. All of these factors add to a certain portion of the variance which must be thought of as error, in the sense that a repetition of the same measurement after enough delay that the first response is forgotten but quickly enough to avoid "real change" would show a variation in response that is illusory, involving no real change in the state of mind of the respondent. The important point is that we cannot expect any other vari-

[8] Scores were calculated for respondents with missing data on one or two of the eight scales by taking the mean score on the six or seven scales with nonmissing data. Respondents with missing data on three or more of the eight scales were assigned missing data on the index as well.

Table 2-4: Distribution of Scores on Global Satisfaction Item and Indices

Overall Life Satisfaction

1. Completely dissatisfied	0.9%
2.	2.1
3.	3.7
4. Neutral	11.3
5.	20.7
6.	39.6
7. Completely satisfied	21.7
Total	100.0%
Mean	5.545
Standard Deviation	1.250
N	2134

Index of General Affect		*Index of Well-Being*	
1.00-1.94	0.6%	2.10- 7.04	3.9%
1.95-2.94	1.6	7.05- 9.04	7.4
2.95-3.94	5.6	9.05-10.04	7.7
3.95-4.44	6.8	10.05-10.54	5.2
4.45-4.94	8.6	10.55-11.04	7.2
4.95-5.24	6.1	11.05-11.54	7.1
5.25-5.44	6.2	11.55-12.04	7.9
5.45-5.74	7.3	12.05-12.54	11.1
5.75-5.94	8.7	12.55-13.04	11.5
5.95-6.24	9.7	13.05-13.54	10.2
6.25-6.44	9.7	13.55-14.04	6.9
6.45-6.74	9.9	14.05-14.54	5.8
6.75-7.00	19.2	14.55-14.70	8.1
Total	100.0%	Total	100.0%
Mean	5.675	Mean	11.768
Standard Deviation	1.115	Standard Deviation	2.207
N	2147	N	2160

ables to account for the portion of the variance that is simply error in a particular measurement. Thus, for example, if 20 percent of the observed variance in our life satisfaction measure were error, then we could only anticipate accounting for 80 percent of that observed variance even with combinations of measures that (error aside) would account completely for such satisfaction reports.

Any estimate of unreliability requires that we have at least two measures which we are willing to consider indicators of the same concept. One example in which this is true is the concept we have labeled "general affect" and which we measured by combining answers to eight items. The construction of this index implies that we are willing to consider each of the eight items as an indicator of the same underlying concept. We estimate that the reliability of this Index of General Affect is about .89.[9]

We do not have any incisive estimates of the unreliability of most of the other measures we have used. We can be absolutely certain that they suffer some margin of unreliability, since all measurement does, and it is possible that they are sufficiently unreliable that we could not hope to account for more than 40 or 50 percent of the variance in life satisfaction even if we had a much larger or more deftly selected series of semantic differential scales. Therefore, the relationship between the underlying concepts may be considerably larger than would first appear from the multiple correlation ($R = .57$) between the life descriptions and the measure of overall life satisfaction.

Nevertheless, we do have some data which are suggestive as to the relative reliabilities of most of the measurements used in this study. About eight months after the main interview, we went back to repeat much of the interview with a small subsample of 285 of our respondents. For this group, therefore, we can calculate stability correlations, showing the degree to which individuals tended to give the same types of responses in two measurements with the same items. Correlations of this sort are not unlike estimates of reliability drawn from "test-retest" or repeated measurement. Nonetheless, they depart from such conventional estimates because the interval between the measurements is long enough to have permitted a good deal of real change in the experiences and states of mind of our respondents. Indeed, one of the reasons for the repeated measurement was to see whether our portfolio of satisfaction measures was adequately responsive to changes in life situations. At a later point we shall report on this portion of our work and shall see that over the eight-month interval there were changes in situations that register in a changed sense of well-being or satisfaction with a particular life domain. At the same time, these stability correlations do have some relevance for the question of reliability, since they establish a kind of floor or minimum for the reliability of the various items. Whatever else

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[9] This estimate is based on the correlations among the eight items. Both Cronbach's *alpha* (cf. Cronbach, 1951) and *omega* (a reliability measure developed by Heise and Bohrnstedt, 1970) were calculated and found to be equal to .89. From this, we might conclude that the correlation of the index with the "true" score is very high. One procedure would be to take the square root of the reliability coefficient as a measure of the "validity" of the measure, and the square root of .89 is a very respectable .94. However, this is probably an overestimate of the validity, since some of the strength of the correlations among the items can probably be attributed to a "methods factor"; all eight items were similar in format, and there may be a tendency to use particular points on a scale regardless of the content of the questions.

is true about the mixture of true change and error change, the actual reliability of these measures should not fall below the limits set by the stability correlations.[10]

The stability correlation for our measure of overall life satisfaction over the lapse of about eight months was .43. If interpreted as a pure measure of unreliability, this figure would be precariously low. Since we can demonstrate that some true change was involved for some respondents between interviews, the actual reliability of the item is surely somewhat greater than .43. Unfortunately, we cannot say exactly how much greater, and we must live with the likelihood that the measurement involved suffers considerable imperfection.

The happiness question was also repeated, and the correlation between the answers at the two points in time was a still lower .38. While this value is only slightly below that for the global item on life satisfaction, the difference fits our intuitive expectations, as we would assume the happiness concept to be even more subject to momentary moods than the more cognitively based expressions of satisfaction.[11]

The ten semantic differential scales show stability correlations which fall in the same rough range as the satisfaction and happiness items. The two most stable of these responses ("friendly" vs. "lonely" and "easy" vs. "hard") slightly exceed the value for life satisfaction. Two more of these items lie within the interval bounded by the two global items, and the other six are less stable than even the happiness report.

While we have emphasized that these stability correlations cannot be interpreted as test-retest reliability estimates, they nonetheless suggest rather strongly that a significant portion of the variance in all of these single items is due to error of one sort or another. Therefore, when we observe that a combination of the ten semantic differential items accounts for only 33 percent of the observed variance in the measure of overall life satisfaction, it is worth keeping in mind that if we could purge these measurements of

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[10] In one case, we can compare the stability of a measure over the eight-month period with an independent measure of reliability. This is for the Index of General Affect, for which we earlier reported a reliability coefficient of .89. The stability of this index is only .56, indicating that at least for this measure, the stability is a gross underestimate of the reliability. We suspect that this is generally the case for the stabilities of the measures reported from this study.

[11] Bradburn (1969) displays the results of repeated measurement of the happiness item which would yield a modestly greater stability correlation of .48 (derived from Table 5.5, p. 86). His sample is much larger than ours, but the respondents do not constitute a national sample, nor indeed a sample of any easily defined population. The time lapse between measurements of six or seven months was also slightly shorter than ours, although his data indicate little systematic difference in the size of the stability correlations as a function of the time lapse between measures.

error, the life descriptions would probably account for a much greater portion of the true variance in life satisfaction, and hence can be taken as one useful way of probing the more qualitative meaning of such global reports. At the same time, we have raised the troublesome issue of unreliability in these items, a subject to which we will return in the following section.

OUR COMPOSITE INDEX OF WELL-BEING

When a variety of single items, all devoted to one or another aspect of the sense of well-being, fit together empirically with rather substantial correlations among themselves as well as highly repetitious relationships with other variables, as we have found to be the case for at least some of the measurements we have discussed up to this point, there is a good deal to be said for amalgamating them into a composite measure or index.

One reason for this tactic is purely practical. It would be cumbersome indeed if in ensuing chapters we were to attempt to keep track of the behavior of ten different life descriptions as well as two global measures of well-being, in addition to our whole portfolio of domain satisfaction measurements. Moreover, it would be tediously redundant, since most of these single-item measures behave in about the same way when confronted with other variables. Therefore it is a major economy if we summarize those which go together empirically in the form of a single variable representing a rather global sense of well-being.

Another important reason for this tactic springs from the problem of unreliability of single-item measurements. The conventional way to increase the reliability of psychological measurement is by a kind of triangulation which attempts to measure the same underlying entity by a variety of means, cumulating the result to form a more stable single estimate. In our case, this means compounding a number of items that appear to be measuring the same thing. Thus a broader and more reliable measurement base is established.

There remains some element of the arbitrary in decisions as to what should be included or excluded from such a composite measure. If, across the twelve variables that we have treated up to this point, six or eight showed very high intercorrelations of .70 or more, whereas the remaining items were almost uncorrelated with such a core set, the decision would be easy. However, the intercorrelations between these measures are scattered in continuous fashion from the .20s to the .60s, a fact which leaves us without neat boundaries.

However, we have reviewed a good deal of evidence to suggest that two of the ten life descriptions—the easy/hard and free/tied-down scales—fail to fit very clearly with the other eight items. This does not mean that they lack interest in and of themselves, or that they have no relationship to a generalized sense of well-being. But as they behave rather distinctively, it is useful to keep them separate from any composite measure involving the other eight highly intercorrelated items.

There are similar grounds for keeping the happiness item out of a composite measure. The evidence is that our measure of overall life satisfaction fits the major cluster of eight semantic differential items somewhat more neatly than is true of the happiness reports. Part of this difference may arise simply because the happiness reports seem slightly less reliable than the expressions of life satisfaction. But in any event, the nuances of difference between measurements invoking the concept of satisfaction and those referring to happiness are conceptually intriguing, and it seems worth keeping these key measures separate so that we may progressively fill in details as to their points of differentiation.

In short, then, it seems convenient at this point to compound the eight life descriptions forming the major cluster of semantic differential items, along with the single-item measure of overall life satisfaction, into a single index bearing on the generalized sense of well-being with life as currently experienced or, as we shall call it for brevity's sake, the Index of Well-Being.[12] The distribution of scores on this index is shown in Table 2-4.

The fact that we have commissioned such a compound measure need not mean that we lose sight completely hereafter of its separate components. From time to time in the pages that follow we will be interested in the fact that, for example, the "full-empty" scale is more sensitized to a particular relationship than the polar opposites "Brings out the best in me" vs. "Doesn't give me much chance." We shall also depend rather heavily at some points on the overall life satisfaction measure taken alone. But in all of these cases, we shall return to the single-item measures chiefly in order

[12] The Index of Well-Being is computed basically as the mean of the single question concerning overall life satisfaction, and of the Index of General Affect. Thus the Index of Well-Being gives considerably more weight to the overall life satisfaction item than to any of the semantic differential items taken alone.

Specifically, scores on the Index of Well-Being were calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Index} = 1.1\,x\ (\text{overall life satisfaction item}) + 1.0\,x\ (\text{Index of General Affect})$$

The constant factor of 1.1 used to multiply the life satisfaction item was derived from a canonical correlation analysis, not reported here, and from the standard deviations of the two components. If there were missing data for one component but not the other, the index was derived by supplying the expected score on the missing item, given the nonmissing score.

The estimated reliability of this index is .89 (Cronbach's *alpha* and Heise and Bohrnstedt's *omega;* cf. footnote 9); these estimates were calculated as if the index were an equally weighted mean of the nine items, so may be overestimates.

to highlight the meaning of certain relationships. When there is no particular differential behavior of the component items, the index will provide a highly effective tool for summarization.

In addition to the space saved, the Index of Well-Being also lays claim to somewhat greater reliability than any of its single-item components taken separately. If we compose the same index for the reinterview data, we find that the stability correlation has risen to .53. Remembering as always that the reliability of the measure must exceed this value by some significant amount, and that in the case of the Index of General Affect the reliability coefficient did exceed the stability correlation by a very wide margin, it seems likely that the Index of Well-Being has at least a respectable reliability, although further improvement would always be possible.

The Index of Well-Being in Different Population Groupings

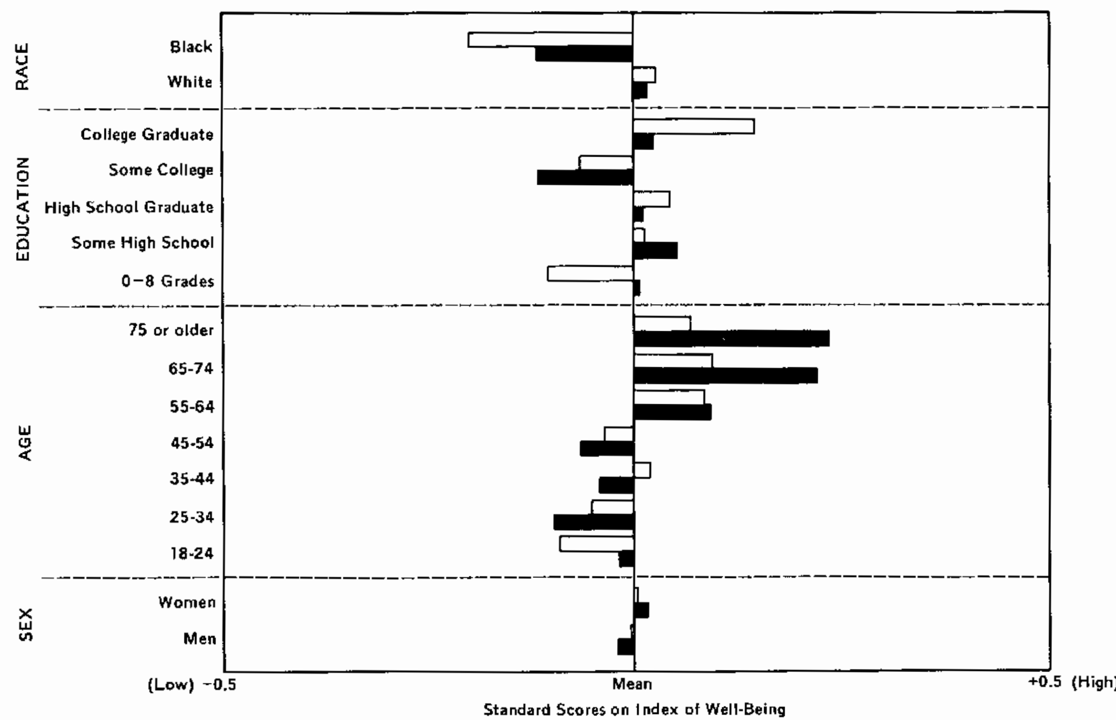
In the solid lines of Figure 2-5, we summarize the way in which the Index of Well-Being varies by common demographic categories. While we shall shortly begin to probe the meaning of these relationships more analytically, the figure helps to further our sense of initial bearings, where these global measures of well-being are concerned.

Some of the differences between the various subgroups of respondents are rather substantial: in particular, the unemployed and divorced are conspicuously low in their scores on the Index of Well-Being. Other differences are considerably smaller and indeed in some cases, such as men and women, are entirely trivial.

Nevertheless, a number of relationships familiar from studies of the happiness item are apparent. Blacks are less likely to register high scores on the index than whites. There is a substantial gradient of increasing sense of well-being with life as one moves from the inhabitants of the nation's twelve largest cities to those of more sparsely settled areas. Similarly, there is evidence of greater sense of well-being at higher status levels. The relationship is considerably clearer when income is used as an indicator of status than when education is used to provide the definition. In the latter case, the lack of sense of well-being expressed by people privileged enough to have had some college training, but a training which was left incomplete, is especially noteworthy. However this may be, the general correlation between sense of well-being and status seems present, although it is hardly overpowering in its strength.

What a display in this form ignores is the fact that there are background relationships between many of these demographic variables, so that we may be looking at something of the same patterning of the sense of well-being over several sections of Figure 2-5, although each time in a different guise. For example, the figure shows a rather strong and regular relationship be-

Figure 2-5: Average Standardized Scores on the Index of Well-Being, by Demograhic Categories, Before and After Adjustment for Income[a]



[a] The open bars show the average standard scores for the designated subgroups on the Index of Well-Being. The solid bars show these scores adjusted to remove the effects of income differences between the subgroups.

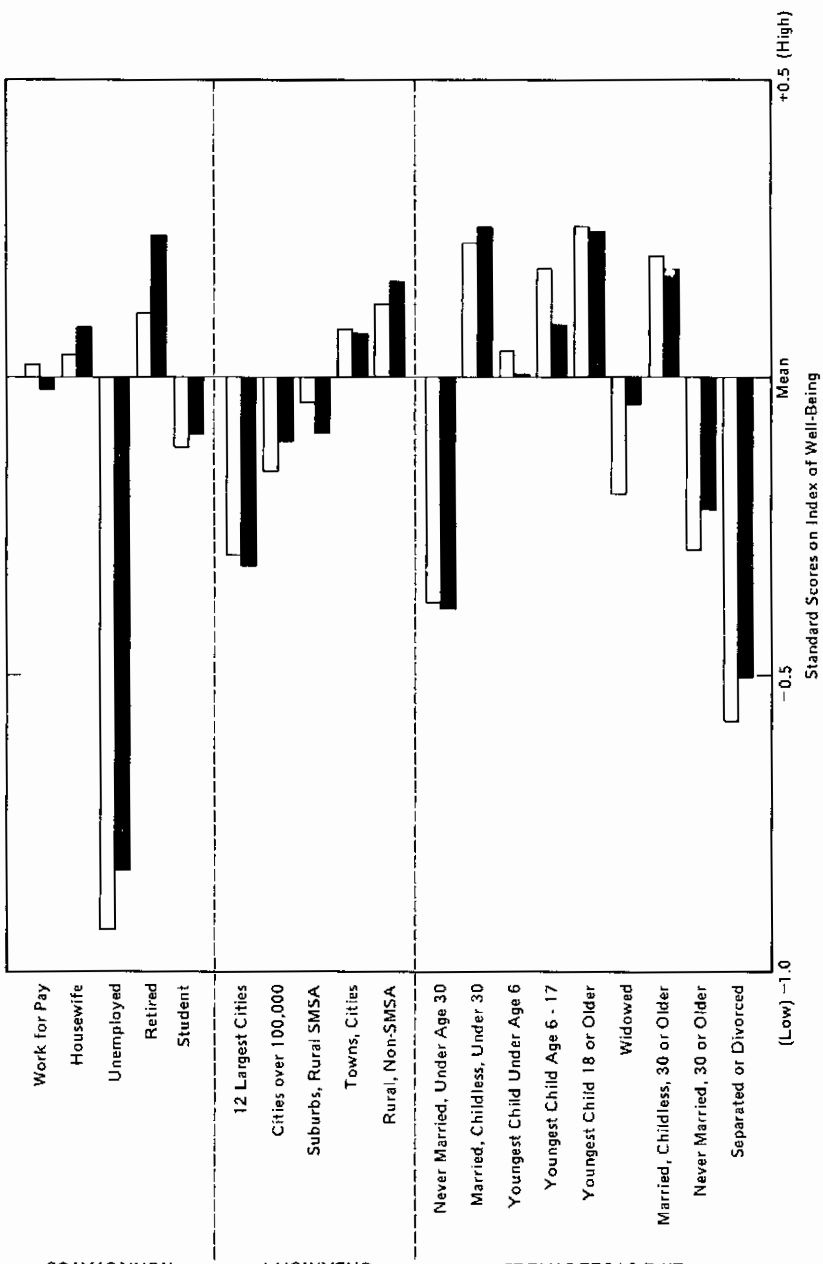
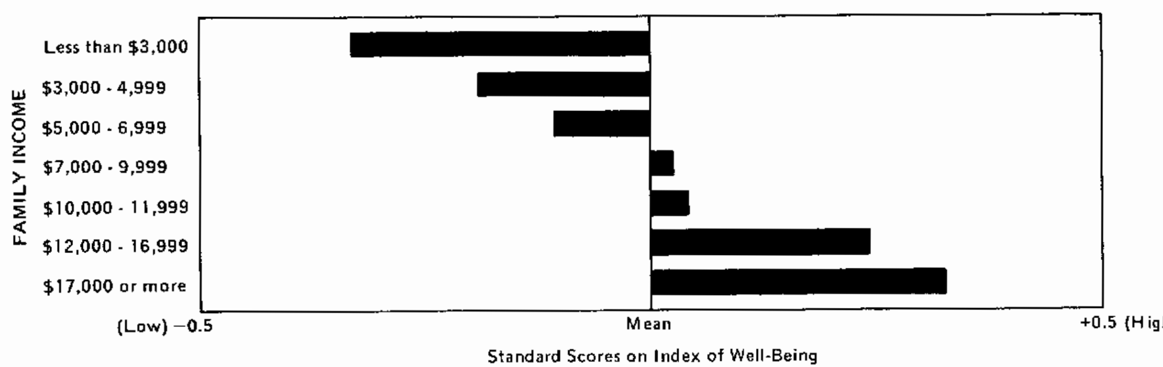

WORK STATUS
Work for Pay
Housewife
Unemployed
Retired
Student
URBANICITY
12 Largest Cities
Cities over 100,000
Suburbs, Rural SMSA
Towns, Cities
Rural, Non-SMSA
LIFE CYCLE STAGES
Never Married, Under Age 30
Married, Childless, Under 30
Youngest Child Under Age 6
Youngest Child Age 6 - 17
Youngest Child 18 or Older
Widowed
Married, Childless, 30 or Older
Never Married, 30 or Older
Separated or Divorced
(Low) −1.0
−0.5
Mean
+0.5 (High)
Standard Scores on Index of Well-Being

Figure 2-5: Average Standardized Scores on the Index of Well-Being, by Demographic Categories, Before and After Adjustment for Income (Cont.)



tween income and sense of well-being. How much of the somewhat more diluted and ragged relationship between the index and educational background arises simply because people of low education tend to have low incomes and college graduates tend to have high incomes? Or again, younger people on the average have lower incomes than older people prior to retirement. Do these income differences account for the lower index values of the young?

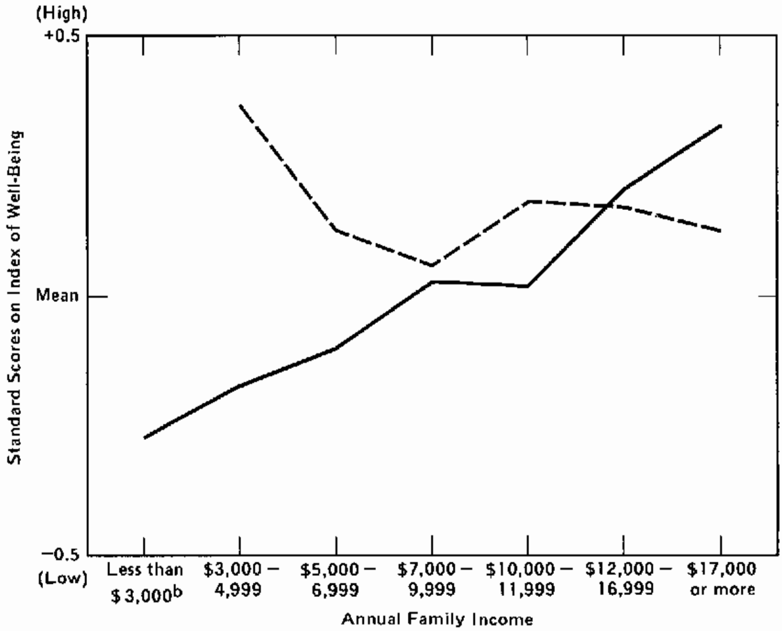
Although a variety of questions of this kind can be asked about the series of simple relationships in Figure 2-5, it is useful to start with income differences as a base, since these seem to form one of the most robust relationships visible here among population segments, and the reasons for such a relationship hardly seem obscure. Therefore we may ask how much of the variation in well-being across some of these groups could be attributable to the fact that some of them differ quite widely in their average incomes.

The solid bars superimposed on Figure 2-5 summarize the relevant data for these groupings. In each segment of the figure, the open bars show the differences in average levels of well-being reported by the subgroups indicated. The solid bars show these differences after each respondent's score on the Index of Well-Being has been adjusted to compensate for his reported family income. In other words, in this latter case each individual's index score is treated as relatively high or low, according to what would be expected at his income level in view of data like those in Figure 2-5. Thus all of the fundamental relationship between income and well-being is statistically removed from the data.

As an example, Figure 2-5 shows differences in the Index of Well-Being between black and white respondents. The open bars indicate that overall, whites register somewhat higher scores than blacks. However, blacks have considerably lower average family incomes than whites ($6,925 vs. $10,440). Therefore, when well-being scores are adjusted for income, the difference between black and white respondents on the Index of Well-Being is reduced by about 40 percent. This suggests that at least part of the apparent difference in the sense of well-being reported by black and white respondents can be explained by the differences in the economic conditions of the two races.

The other relationships in Figure 2-5 can be interpreted in much the same fashion. The relationship between age and a sense of well-being becomes sharper, for example, with the income adjustment. The differences up to the mid-50s have flattened out, suggesting that over this age range, the unadjusted differences portrayed in Figure 2-5 may well be accounted for by the lower incomes of young people relative to the middle-aged. But in older groups there is a heightened trend toward higher sense of well-being, once income differences are controlled. Or again, some of the very limited

Figure 2-6: The Relationship Between Income and Well-Being Scores, Within Education Categories[a]



[a] The broken line represents respondents with one or more college degrees. The solid line shows the remainder of the sample.

[b] There were only five college-educated respondents who reported family incomes of less than $3,000. These were added to the next income category.

sense of well-being reported by unemployed respondents can be explained by their restricted incomes. Even after the income adjustment, their levels on the index remain very low, suggesting that lack of a job itself, apart from the income loss, is forcefully depressing their feelings of basic well-being.

Another question that is worthwhile addressing is whether the relationship between income and well-being is itself a conditional one, present in some segments of the population but absent in others. A handsome example of this kind of pattern is presented in Figure 2-6, and shows that even this rather fundamental relationship is conditional on the level of education of the respondent. The expected relationship is essentially nonexistent among people who have college degrees (dotted line) and is correspondingly even stronger than for the total population when college graduates are removed from the data (solid line).[13] A plausible interpretation for this pattern is not unlike one which we advanced earlier to explain why the differences in an "easy vs. hard" characterization of life was sharply related to overall life satisfaction for low income people, but not for those of high incomes. It seems likely that college graduates have a rather clear option as to the affluence of the careers they choose. Many have chosen service-oriented careers in occupations such as the ministry or public service that are known in advance to enjoy only limited salaries relative to other professions, but which presumably maximize other satisfactions and therefore maintain a sense of well-being about life at relatively high levels. On the other hand, many of those with less than a college degree have not been able to exercise this kind of option: it is easy to imagine that some of them would have been delighted to have embarked on a higher-paying career, but the opportunity was not there, and their general sense of well-being has suffered as a result.

There are many other ways in which the "raw" relationships depicted in Figure 2-5 can be more thoroughly analyzed and hence illuminated. However, many of these illuminations will be developed in later chapters. For the moment, our purpose has been to introduce the Index of Well-Being, explain its construction, and provide preliminary materials that give a first sense of its validity.

OTHER MEASURES OF THE SENSE OF WELL-BEING

While we have now laid out the major measures to be used in this volume to represent an overall sense of well-being with life, our study included a number of other measures that bear quite directly on the individual's assessment of the quality of his life. From time to time, in later pages, we shall invoke these measures for one or another special purpose, and hence it is useful to give them a brief introduction at this point.

Measures of Stress and Anxiety

In addition to our numerous questions addressed to positive feelings of well-being, we also asked our respondents about their worries and concerns, and some of the tensions under which they were living. For example, one of the more general of these items asked: "Is there anything about your life these days that makes you feel frightened or worried?" Forty-four percent of the respondents said that there was, and these people were asked what kinds of things these were.

Most of the qualitative responses involved aspects of the person's own life or his family. Almost one-fifth (18 percent) mentioned their own health, with another 7 percent bringing up concerns as to the health of

[13] Relatively few college graduates have very limited incomes; those that do are very disproportionately the aged and retired. The initial bulge in well-being reports at the lowest end of the income continuum for college graduates in Figure 2-6, which nearly makes the overall relationship appear negative, needs to be understood as the intrusion of the increased sense of well-being that is so marked in the later years of life.

members of their family. Financial problems were also mentioned by one-fifth of the respondents. Other personal concerns, such as the job, education, and so on, were mentioned by about one-fourth of the respondents, and a similar proportion cited other family problems, such as how their children were turning out. On the other hand, a sizable proportion of the respondents, particularly those in higher income categories, mentioned less personal problems, such as the state of the national economy, the moral climate in the United States, and the Vietnam war.

As was true with similar questions posed in the studies by Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960) and by Bradburn (1969), we find modest correlations in the expected direction between such reports of fears or worries and our other measures of the sense of well-being. However, the largest of these relationships occurs with our Index of Well-Being and is only .26.

Worries, such as those which our respondents usually cited, are a normal part of life, and most people are able to cope with the objective problems as well as with their feelings about them. However, some individuals find themselves overwhelmed by problems too big or too numerous to feel able to deal with them adequately. To assess the frequency of such feelings, a question was asked that was similar to one posed in the 1957 Gurin study. At that time almost one-fifth of the respondents (19 percent) said that they had "ever felt that (they) were going to have a nervous breakdown." In 1971, one-eighth of the respondents admitted in response to a direct question that they had worried "that they might have a nervous breakdown" because of facing too many problems. This trend appears to run counter to the trend in happiness reports over the same period, suggesting that concern over a breakdown taps a rather different facet of well-being. Indeed, we find that there are relationships in the expected direction between the experience of possible breakdown and our current measures of well-being. However, they are even lower than for the more generalized question about worries, the largest being no more than .20 with the Index of Well-Being.

Numerous other items in the questionnaire deal with worries within the more specific domains of life being investigated in this study. For example, in connection with reactions of our respondents to the quality of their neighborhood, questions were asked about fear for safety when walking at night and concern over locking doors. Similarly, in discussing the respondent's financial situation, a question was posed about the frequency of worries concerning making ends meet. Questions of this more specific sort will be discussed at appropriate points later in the volume.

One other item does, however, address life's tensions in a rather broad way, although from a slightly different perspective. Respondents were asked, "In general, how do you feel about your time—would you say you always feel rushed even to do the things you have to do, only sometimes feel rushed, or almost never feel rushed?" For those who did not respond that they always felt rushed, a further question was asked: "How often would you say you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with —quite often, just now and then, or almost never?" These questions may be combined in the obvious way to provide an index of the time pressure that the respondent feels. There is some trend for persons at the extremes of such a composite scale—those always rushed and those who often find time on their hands that they do not know what to do with—to express a lesser sense of well-being than those falling closer to the middle positions on the scale. However, these relationships are even weaker than the modest ones cited for the items tapping worries and concerns.

The measures of worry and anxiety over a breakdown show less stability in our reinterview data than any of the other measures introduced in this chapter. From one perspective this is not surprising, since they can be seen as very mood-related and situational. However, the point is important to make, in order to emphasize that they do not seem to pick up much in the way of stable trends in personality structure. Nor are they very tightly related to our primary measures of the sense of well-being. However, they will be useful to us from time to time in elaborating upon the character of life as our respondents perceive it (see especially Chapter 12).

An Index of Personal Competence

It has long been assumed that a very critical component of a sense of well-being is the degree of self-esteem, or how a person feels about himself.[14] One aspect of self-esteem involves the extent to which a person feels that he is in control of his life, rather than subject to control by external forces like society, the government, his superiors, or even sheer fate or luck. This sense of personal competence has been measured in a variety of social science contexts and has turned out to be a surprisingly strong predictor of numerous important social behaviors.[15]

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[14] We use the term "component" to avoid commitment at this point as to whether self-esteem is a cause of satisfaction, an effect of it, or more simply a concomitant of it. In a later chapter, we shall discuss data which suggest that feelings of self-esteem are fixed relatively early in life and thus are more likely to be causative of current satisfaction than produced by it. Nonetheless, there is undoubtedly a major element of reciprocal causation between the two entities.

[15] James S. Coleman, in the well-known "Coleman Report" on the effects of desegregated schooling, found a measure of this type to be a central predictor of school performance, even with other related variables controlled (*Equality of Educational Opportunity*, U.S. Department of HEW, Office of Education, 1966, generally referred to as the Coleman Report, was prepared pursuant to Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Also, Orville G. Brim, Jr., and his colleagues have found a parallel meas-

Our interview included a set of four items directed at measuring such feelings, which have been used at the Survey Research Center for a number of years. These items can be usefully summarized in a single Index of Personal Competence. This index is indeed rather strongly related to most of our measures of well-being, having a correlation of .35 with the Index of Well-Being.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of this chapter we have introduced a number of measurements which bear upon the sense of well-being, and the perceived quality of life from a very general point of view. We have given a basic description of the nature of responses to these items, and have explored in a preliminary way some of their methodological properties and types of gross variations they show across different segments of the national population. We have tried to keep track of the way in which these varied measures fit together empirically, and in particular we have commissioned what seems to be our most useful summary measure, the Index of Well-Being.

It should be obvious that we have no more than scratched the surface of many of these matters. In our ensuing chapters we shall expand considerably on many of the substantive relationships that we have mentioned in cursory fashion in this chapter. We shall also delve more thoroughly into the differential behavior of some of these measures, with particular emphasis on the nuances that separate the concept of satisfaction from that of happiness. Throughout, we shall be attempting to firm up our understanding of what these generic measures can be said to mean.

At the same time, it must be recalled that the primary purpose of our study was less to establish ways of measuring general contentment with life than it was to investigate the satisfactions and dissatisfactions that our respondents experience with respect to the specific domains which, added together, constitute their daily lives: their jobs, their housing, their families and the like.

In the next chapter, then, we shall begin to introduce our full portfolio of measures of satisfaction with the major domains of life, and once this task is completed we can address some of the most basic questions our study was designed to illuminate, and most particularly, the bearing that these more specific assessments and experiences have upon a general sense of well-being.

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ure of "fatalism" to be important in predicting some differences in common beliefs about the nature of "intelligence" and its measurement (*Knowledge Into Action: Improving the Nation's Use of the Social Sciences*, a report of the Special Commission on the Social Sciences of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, 1969).

Chapter 3
Domains of Life Experience

Global measures of the experienced "goodness of life" have a great deal of interest in and of themselves. However, we do not know at this stage how adept people are in stepping back from the specifics of their everyday experiences to make an overall evaluation of their lives. Perhaps the low apparent reliabilities of these measurements stem in part from the fact that "life as a whole" is a concept of such breadth that few people are accustomed to thinking of their situations in such a way. Moreover, the utility of global assessments is somewhat limited, unless they are fleshed out with more detailed information about reactions to more specific domains of life. Common sense would suggest that if a person feels disappointed with his current life situation, it is because certain features of his life—a marriage turning sour, a job below expectations—are particularly dissatisfying. More generally, we might expect that whatever global report an individual gives as to his overall sense of well-being should be some compound of his gratifications and disappointments with more specific features of life: his housing, his financial situation, his friendships, and the like.

The major purpose of our study was to measure satisfactions felt with a substantial number of such domains, in order to test such a hypothesis. In this chapter we shall introduce the portfolio of domain satisfaction measures that much of the rest of this volume is devoted to investigating. We shall first consider how assessments from domain to domain are related to one another and the impressions they create that life is indeed ordered into quite intelligible "regions" of experience. Later in the chapter we shall turn to the very central question as to the way in which these rather specific assessments of life quality combine to produce variations in more global reports of well-being.

THE DOMAIN SATISFACTIONS

The choice of specific domains of life experience to be investigated was naturally somewhat arbitrary. Basically, we attempted to throw as broad a net as possible over the lives of our respondents, so that "coverage," within limits set by time, space, and other study goals, was a basic criterion. Such a stress on coverage also had to take account of the fact that we were dealing with a rather heterogeneous population. Within it, there are certainly facets of experience that are enormously important for small fractions of the public, such as artistic expression, yet which are rarely experienced in such terms by most people most of the time. Therefore, we tended to define a set of domains which would be relevant to a maximal proportion of the population. Indeed, perhaps the only facet of experience examined which is not relevant, strictly speaking, to a quasi-totality of the population, is that of marriage, and this seemed a central enough experience for a majority of the population that it could scarcely be overlooked. A significant portion of the population is also not gainfully employed, but there are few who do no work at all. By the device of parallel questions as to housework among unemployed women, for example, it is possible to operate with "work" as a domain of satisfaction that is relevant for nearly everybody.

We were also guided to some degree in our choices by past studies that have investigated, in a more open-ended way, where most people allocate their time, thought, and emotional energy, as well as the way in which they naturally tend to partition their roles and domains of experience in their volunteered comments about life. In short, while there is something of the arbitrary in the domains selected for investigation, they are rooted as firmly as possible in the commonplaces of everyday life. Moreover, subsequent evidence has shown that the major patterns of experiences to be discussed in this chapter would look very little different even if a much larger set of domains had been assessed (Andrews and Withey, 1974).

The Domain Measures

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with each domain on the same 7-point scale ranging from "completely satisfied" to "completely dissatisfied" that was employed for our measure of overall life satisfaction, described in the preceding chapter.[1] The set of domains used is listed in

[1] The particular format of these general satisfaction scales was chosen because of its relative simplicity, making it suitable for use with a national sample and not re-

Table 3-1: The Domain Satisfaction Measures: Means and Distributions[a]

		Completely dissatisfied					*Completely satisfied*				
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*Total*	*Mean*	*N*
H16.	Marriage[b]	—[c]	1	2	7	7	25	58	100%	6.27	1450
J1.	Family life	1%	2	3	7	13	30	44	100%	5.92	2074
G11.	Health	3%	3	4	9	9	27	45	100%	5.78	2104
A22.	Neighborhood	3%	2	4	11	13	21	46	100%	5.76	2159
H3.	Friendships	1%	1	4	12	15	30	37	100%	5.74	2151
F24/35/46.	Housework[d]	2%	3	4	15	11	21	44	100%	5.71	1128
F19.	Job[e]	2%	2	4	13	13	30	36	100%	5.67	1231
C6.	Life in United States	1%	2	5	13	20	25	34	100%	5.61	2151
A21.	City or county	2%	2	5	16	15	22	38	100%	5.60	2153
G3.	Nonwork	2%	2	5	13	17	27	34	100%	5.59	2152
B11.	Housing	3%	2	5	13	15	26	36	100%	5.57	2152
E5/6.	Usefulness of education	4%	3	5	15	12	17	44	100%	5.53	2135
G15.	Standard of living	3%	4	7	14	19	25	28	100%	5.31	2160
E4.	Amount of education[f]	11%	8	9	16	14	15	27	100%	4.69	1973
G16.	Savings	15%	10	11	15	14	16	19	100%	4.27	2146

[a] The letter and number preceding each item identifies its location in the interview schedule, which is reproduced in Appendix B for the reader who wants the exact wording of the items.

[b] Asked only of married respondents.

[c] Less than .5 percent.

[d] Asked only of women, excluding those who said they were students or retired.

[e] Asked only of those who said they worked for pay.

[f] Not asked of students.

Table 3-1, along with the overall distribution of responses on each scale, as well as the average score values. Most of the labels are self-explanatory, although it might be mentioned that "Nonwork" refers to an item which followed several questions about leisure-time pleasures and frustrations, and then asked:

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quiring much interview time. One alternative given serious consideration was the Cantril self-anchoring scale (see Chapter 2). The primary drawback of that scale for our purposes was the length of time required to administer it, which, when multiplied by the number of domains we wished to explore, became a prohibitive factor. Close consideration was also given to the number of scale points to be used. We knew from pretesting that most respondents would give rather positive responses, so we wished to provide enough alternatives at the positive end of the scale to provide some discrimination. On the other hand, we did not want to impose more alternatives than could be meaningfully distinguished. The 7-point scale, with three gradations of "satisfied" responses, seemed from our pretests to be a good compromise.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways you spend your spare time? Which number [on the 7-point scale presented] comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?

More generally, almost all of the domain satisfaction measures were preceded by some more specific questions about the domain in question. For example, a rather extended series of items was asked about satisfaction with different features of the individual's housing, such as space, dilapidation, convenience of location, and the like. Then such discussions were terminated by the request for an overall evaluation, prefaced by summary phrases, such as "All things considered, how satisfied are you. . . ." At many later points, we shall be considering aspects of these still more concrete and specific "subdomain" assessments.

Among the fifteen domains listed in Table 3-1, the highest average satisfaction level was reported for one's marriage. Almost three out of five married respondents said that they were completely satisfied with their marriages, and only 3 percent said that they felt more dissatisfied than satisfied. The domain with the next highest average satisfaction level is family life, described in the item as "the time you spend and the things you do with members of your family."[2] There follows a group of ten domains for which average satisfaction levels are all quite similar, ranging from 5.53 to 5.78. Then come three domains with average scores that are relatively low. The least satisfaction was expressed with "savings and investments." Satisfaction with another financial item, standard of living, was also low. And finally, respondents tended to express relatively low levels of satisfaction with the amount of education they had received, although a companion item concerning the usefulness of whatever education had been received attracted less dissatisfaction.

In addition to the set of domains listed in Table 3-1, questions were posed in a slightly different format concerning satisfaction with three other domains. Respondents were asked to describe "how much satisfaction" they get from religion, from organizations they belong to, and "from our national government."[3] The distribution of scores on these items is shown in Table 3-2.

We may note across all of these domain satisfaction measures much the same property that we observed earlier for the global measures: re-

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[2] The "family life" of married respondents obviously overlaps with their marriages, especially where they are childless.

[3] As an experimental procedure, respondents were actually asked to describe the amount of satisfaction they drew from each of twelve domains in this secondary format. However, nine of these items overlap with the domains listed in Table 3-1. Since the question format of items in Table 3-1 proved to be superior in several respects to this alternate form, we shall use the Table 3-1 versions wherever possible.

Table 3-2: Domain Satisfaction Items, Secondary Format (Amount of Satisfaction): Means and Distributions[a]

	None *1*	*A little* *2*	*Some* *3*	*A fair amount* *4*	*Quite a bit* *5*	*A great deal* *6*	*A very great deal* *7*	*Total*	*Mean*	*N*
Your religion	7%	7	9	14	12	23	28	100%	4.96	2103
Our national government	2%	6	13	28	23	20	8	100%	4.55	2111
Organizations you belong to	22%	7	9	16	19	17	10	100%	3.96	1780

[a] These are parts of item J3 in the interview schedule (Appendix B).

sponses tend to cluster rather heavily toward the more satisfied end of these scales. In Table 3-1, for example, the lowest levels of satisfaction, reported with regard to savings and investments, still show almost a majority in the first three, or "satisfied," positions, and almost none of the items show more than 10 percent of the sample lying to the dissatisfied side of the scale. Similarly, in Table 3-2, respondents do not in large proportion express sharp qualifications about the amount of satisfaction they draw from the items listed.[4]

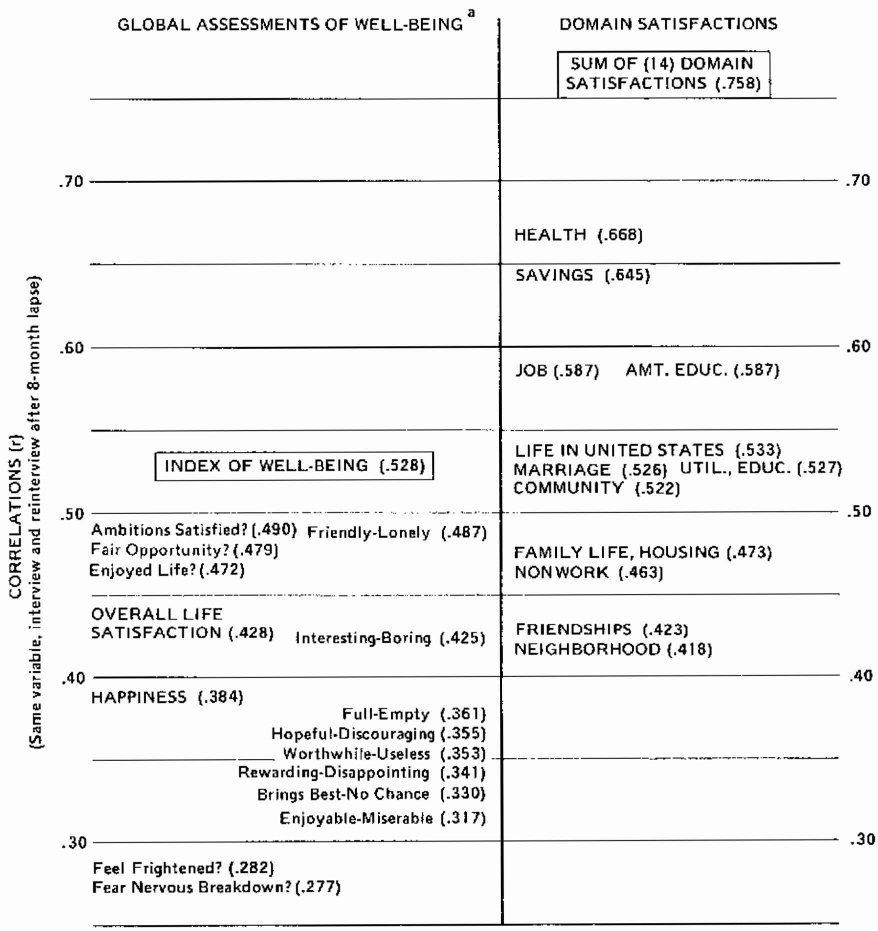
Stability of the Domain Measures

Although each of our domain satisfaction measures is based on no more than a single item, responses to almost all of these scales show a notably greater stability between initial interview and our small reinterview eight months later than the single items requesting the various global assessments of well-being. The actual stability correlations vary by domain over quite a range, from .42 where neighborhood and friendships are concerned to .67 for health. Moreover, nearly half of these single-item measures show a greater stability than even our Index of Well-Being, compounded of nine more global items; and almost all are more stable than our major global reports. Figure 3-1 summarizes our information of these stability correlations, displaying for comparison as well the more global assessments introduced in the preceding chapter.

It is likely, although not certain, that the reliability of these measures

[4] The major exception is the 22 percent of respondents who say that they get no satisfaction from the organizations to which they belong. However, this group includes persons who report no organization memberships.

Figure 3-1: Summary of Stability Correlations for Global Reports and Measure of Domain Satisfaction[a]



[a] Variables in capital letters are major variables; those boxed are composite indices.

at the domain level is correspondingly higher as well. We noted earlier that the time lapse between interviews was long enough to permit a fair amount of true change to have intervened, so that these stability correlations merely form a lower bound for a more proper statement of test-retest reliability. Where the domain satisfactions are concerned, we can demonstrate this intrusion of true change more effectively than before, using other information in the two interviews. For example, one of the less stable domain measures is that involving assessment of one's housing. Yet over even a moderate period of time, residential moves are not uncommon, and these surely rank as "true change" of major proportions: there is not much reason to expect high stability in ratings of satisfaction with housing in cases where the respondents are not even referring to the same dwelling unit at the two time points!

In fact, almost 10 percent of our respondents did change their residences between the two interviews. And when we look at the stability correlations for housing satisfaction among these movers taken alone, we find them still positive but more than .20 lower than the estimates for the sample as a whole. Since this group is not large, the stability correlation for the remainder of nonmovers by themselves does not advance by a corresponding amount. Nevertheless, it does increase from .47 to .51. Moreover, removal of movers also shifts the stabilities of two other residential satisfactions upward as well: community satisfaction advances from .52 to .57, and neighborhood satisfaction from .42 to .48. All of these changes serve to raise our sense of lower bounds for any guesses as to the reliability of these measures, and, of course, residential moves in themselves scarcely exhaust the sources of true change in feelings about housing or the broader environment. Such possibilities for real change are numerous and undoubtedly have occurred over a larger proportion of the sample than the limited number of movers. The important point is that in virtually every case where we have relevant true-change information between interviews, such as a bout of illness where health satisfaction is concerned, the respondents involved show reduced stability correlations—sometimes even interpretable negative ones—and it is clear that such changes should not be confused with the unreliability of measurement.

We cannot say with confidence why the domain assessments are more stable and probably more reliable than the more global reports of well-being. However, as we suggested at the beginning of the chapter, it would not be surprising if evaluations at this familiar and concrete level were more frequently rehearsed and settled upon in the respondent's own mind than the more sweeping evaluations of life as a whole. Furthermore, if as we suspect, domain satisfactions cumulate in a meaningful way to shape the general sense of well-being, it is easy to imagine that the salience of various domains relative to one another may vary rather widely according to the situation at the time of interview, so that different cumulations might arise from the same domain satisfactions at neighboring points in time. In any event, it is comforting to find this apparent increase in the soundness of our measurements at the domain level, where we have concentrated most of our investment in this study.

Given the relative stability of the individual domain satisfaction items, the reader might wonder what would happen if we were to sum them all up as an alternate way of expressing an individual's overall sense of well-being. We have in fact performed such an operation, and the resultant index shows a stability correlation from one interview to the next of .76 (see Figure 3-1). Given that this remains no more than a lower bound for a reliability estimate, we are now into a range of likely reliability which is becoming impressive for this kind of measurement. We shall call this index the "Sum of Domain Satisfactions" and shall have recourse to it from time to time in the remainder of the volume. We shall not, however, use it as the main set of scores reflecting the sense of well-being to be predicted from the domain satisfaction scores, for that would involve a nearly tautological estimate of a whole given full knowledge of its parts. For such a purpose, we shall focus instead upon our Index of Well-Being, which was measured independently of the diverse domain satisfaction measurements. Nevertheless, the Sum of Domain Satisfactions is an interesting measure of well-being, and one which can lay claim to uncommon reliability.

The Organization of Domain Satisfactions

Almost without exception, there are positive correlations between all of the domain satisfaction measures. People who say they are satisfied with one aspect of life are likely to report relatively high satisfaction where other domains are concerned. This pattern, while not totally unexpected, might arise in part if people differed somewhat in the way they use the scales, with some tending to lean toward higher scores to express much the same state of affairs than other persons. We shall later consider the degree to which such "response sets" may be affecting both the domain satisfaction scores and the more global measures of well-being.

However, the positive correlations between different pairs of domain satisfaction measures tend in general to be lower than those which we found linking most of our global measures of well-being. Moreover, they are of very different magnitudes, in patterns which seem quite intelligible. Some pairs of our domains have similar content, and satisfactions in such areas show relatively high intercorrelations. For example, we have already remarked on the similarity of "marriage" and "family life" as domains, and indeed, satisfactions expressed about these two areas show rather high overlap. Reactions to one's education, whether in terms of its amount or its utility, also have an obvious common core and turn out to be highly interrelated. Assessments of satisfaction with one's standard of living and the savings picture similarly fall into a general financial domain, and the intercorrelation of these two items is the highest of any pair of domain reactions. On the other hand, many pairs of domains without any very obvious connections show positive correlations that are quite negligible (under .10).

A complete matrix of these correlations between all pairs of seventeen domain satisfaction scores listed in Tables 3-1 and 3-2 contains 136 values, and it would be difficult to derive much meaning from any casual scanning of this grid.[5] Various data reduction techniques are available to map such items spatially, so that measures which are highly correlated with one another, such as amount and utility of education, or marriage and family life, tend to fall very close together in the space, whereas items that are nearly uncorrelated are located at a considerable distance from one another. One such method is Smallest Space Analysis, as developed by Guttman and Lingoes (cf. Lingoes, 1972), and we have applied this technique to our domain satisfaction measures in order to summarize the proximity relations between all domains in this special sense.[6]

On rare occasion, a batch of items like these can be reasonably represented in a single dimension, as points in one or another order on one continuum. More commonly, two, three, or even more dimensions are necessary to express the proximity relationships between the items without doing considerable violence to the details of their interrelations. In our case, we can arrive at an adequate representation of the distances among the seventeen domain satisfaction scores by using three spatial dimensions.[7] This reduction is portrayed in Figure 3-2.

The mapping of domains in this figure has considerable intuitive appeal and groups the domains into convenient clusters that will be used to organize our discussions of various domains in the next section of this volume. We have included in this analysis the global Index of Well-Being presented in the last chapter, and this variable is placed at the origin in Figure 3-2. The specific domain closest to the global measure in the three-dimensional space (although it is less obvious in a two-dimensional representation) is that which covers satisfaction concerning nonwork activities, including hobbies and other leisure activities. Next closest is a cluster of two financial

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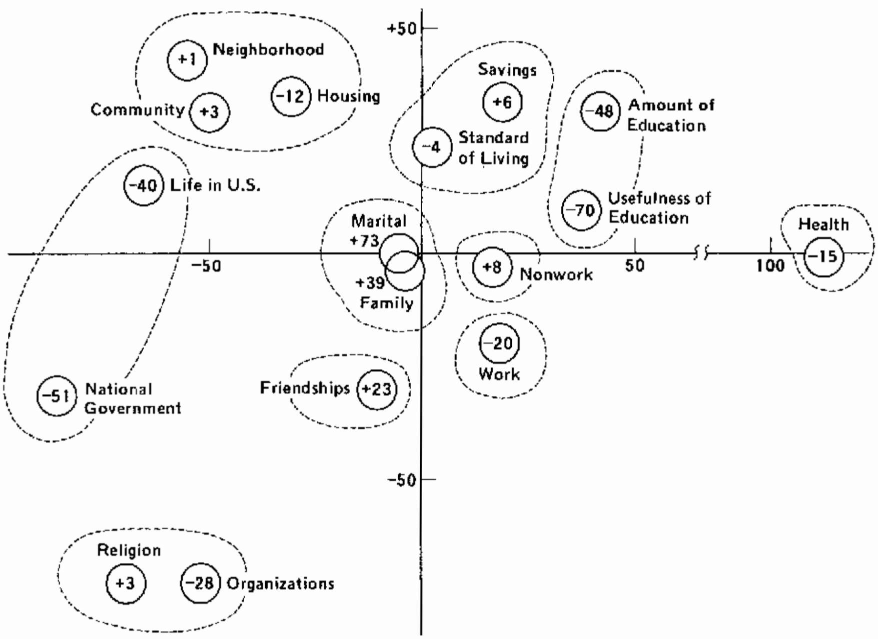
[5] An eighteenth satisfaction score, satisfaction with housework, listed in Table 3-1, is excluded because only women (and not even all women) were asked about this domain.

[6] The particular technique chosen is, fortunately, not crucial to the interpretation of the intercorrelations. Similar conclusions to those we have drawn from Smallest Space Analysis about domain clusters would also be drawn from factor analysis, a technique that was used but is not reported here. However, the loading of the Index of Well-Being on the first factor is higher than that of any of the domains, so that in a plot comparable to Figure 3-2, it would not be centrally located.

[7] The Guttman-Lingoes coefficient of alienation statistic, expressing how well the simple mapping reflects the original configuration of correlations, is a respectable .131 for this three-dimensional solution; Kruskal's stress is .112.

Figure 3-2: Smallest Space Analysis of Seventeen Domain Satisfaction Scores, with the Index of Well-Being at the Origin (In Three Dimensions)[a]



[a] The third dimension is shown as positive or negative values in each domain's circle; these can be visualized as projecting above and below the plane of the paper. The clusters of domains indicated by the dotted lines are discussed in the text.

items: satisfaction with standard of living and savings or investments. Third comes the domain labeled "work," which includes housework for housewives, as well as for those working women who told us their housework was more important to them than their paying job.[8]

A bit more distant is the domain of friendships and things done with friends. Next comes the pair of items concerning family life and marriage or marital status.[9] More distant from overall life satisfaction is a cluster of three items involving one's physical environment: satisfaction with one's housing, neighborhood, and community. Two other items dealing with the environment still more broadly construed—the country as a whole—are somewhat further removed, although they still fall in the general "environ-

[8] For respondents with missing data, including those not working for pay, estimates were supplied from other information about the respondent.

[9] Once again, for respondents with missing data, including those not presently married, estimated values were supplied from other information about the respondent.

mental" region. The scale involving life in the United States is actually linked fairly closely to the first three residential environment items, but it will be treated with the government item as a separate cluster.

Also more remote is the pair of items about the amount and utility of education in one region. Remote and in another region is a pair of items that are more closely related to friendships than to other domains, yet which are much less central to the sense of well-being: one's religion, and the organizations to which one belongs. Farthest away from life satisfaction in the three-dimensional space is the domain of health. Indeed, this latter domain is distant from all of the others.

These two- and three-item clusters make a very sensible configuration even when viewed from a more general perspective. Most of the large region on the left side of the diagram is occupied by domains involving the less personal or intimate features of the external environment, both physical in the residential sense, and the broader social environment, including secondary organizations and religious participation. Apart from health, which is a domain unto itself, the right side of the diagram is by contrast occupied by a set of domains which define the individual's relationships or transactions with the environment or social system. This region draws together status-related terms that are linked more or less directly with the individual's education, occupation, and income. Indeed, if we see the domain of leisure-time activities falling within this group, we are dealing with the facets of experience which are often summarized by sociologists as "life style." However, the spare-time domain is, appropriately enough, very much on the borderline between the right-hand region of individual-environment relationships and the central region made up of the most intimate, microcosmic social environment: the "primary" groups of family, marriage, and friends.

The status of health as an isolated domain in a region of its own is not entirely perplexing, but its location does raise an issue of some interest. It is likely that for the considerable majority of the population free of any history of chronic health impairments or the multiplication of difficulties that occur in old age, the simple fact of adequate health is largely taken for granted. From this point of view, Figure 3-2 is not surprising in its implication that assessments of health are not very centrally related to the general sense of well-being for the adult population as a whole. Nonetheless, where health is a serious problem, it is vitally intrusive, affecting many other aspects of life. In particular, we might wonder if health is not a more central domain for the elderly than it is for other segments of the population. And this question leads to a more general one: might it not be true that the patterns of Figure 3-2 could look quite different if calculated within more homogeneous segments of the population, whether defined by race, social status, age, or any of the other common differentiations?

In one sense, the radiation of the map in Figure 3-2 from a central core of the most intimate microcosm outward to increasingly impersonal features of the environment seems so basic to the structure of human life that it is hard to imagine that it would not be characteristic of any segment of the population or, for that matter, populations outside the United States. In other words, its basic organization, where one side reflects the individual's assessments of his physical and social environment and the other reflects his assessments of his transactions with it, is hard to see as something that is likely to shift around in any dramatic way in response to variation in life situation. Nevertheless, the question of demographic variation is always worth posing.

Comparisons of Domain Mappings Across Populations

Our domain satisfaction scores were cast into the same mappings for the best-fitting three-dimensional space for several subgroups composed of different age cohorts and persons of different incomes and occupations.[10]

Domain maps for three age groups are shown in Figure 3-3. Much as we expected, the gross structure of these domain relationships is indeed quite stable: the general contours of Figure 3-2 are surely a reasonable approximation for any of these more detailed patterns. There are, however, modest internal shifts in the relative proximities of domains, and these tend to conform with our straightforward intuitive expectations. We find, for example, that health as a domain is in fact more central for the oldest respondents than it is for either of the younger groupings. For much of life, health is rather a peripheral concern; in the later years, however, it begins to move center stage.

Another interesting contrast involves the location of the friendship domain by age. In the younger cohorts, this domain lies rather close to the cluster of residential environment domains, especially housing. For older people, the friendship domain falls between the cluster of marriage and family life and those of organizations and religion. Again, these shifts would

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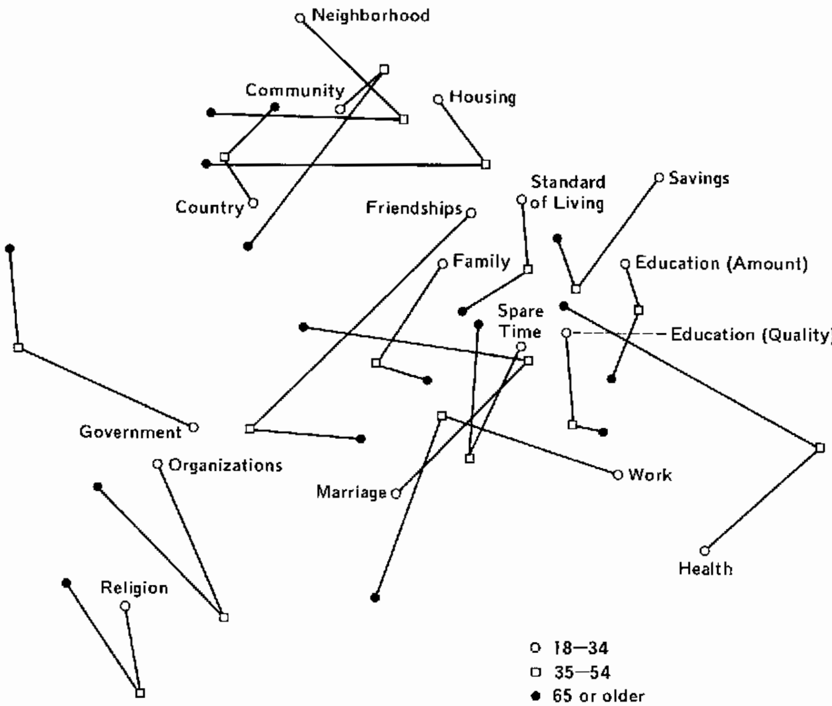
[10] The mapping technique is in principle the same as that described for the total population, which underlies Figure 3-1. Since the orientation of the three dimensions is arbitrary, the dimensions for each subgroup were rotated to match as closely as possible the dimensions shown in that figure for the total sample. This rotation was accomplished with a computer program, COMPARE, developed by Herbert Weisberg and Edward Schneider of the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, using an algorithm proposed by Schönemann and Carroll (1970). The problem matrix (the SSA-derived scores for the subgroup) and the target matrix (the SSA-derived scores for the entire sample) were both centered at zero and the sum of the squared distances from the origin in the problem space was made equal to the sum of squared distances from the origin in the target space. COMPARE allows only orthogonal rotation, a procedure which was in fact seen as the most desirable for this analysis.

Figure 3-3: Smallest Space Analyses of Seventeen Domain Satisfaction Scores for Three Different Age Groups[a]



[a] Analyses for all three groups are superimposed to facilitate comparisons; all three analyses are centered on the Index of Well-Being (not shown), and have been rotated and transformed to maximize correspondence with the mapping for the entire sample (cf. footnote 10). All analyses were in three dimensions, but to avoid further confusion, the third dimension is not shown.

appear to mirror a number of simple facts of social existence that are familiar to any who have ruminated upon them. In early adulthood, friendship patterns are relatively open, and simple determinants like physical proximity are especially potent in determining the shape they may take. If such friendships tend to endure past the shufflings of residential mobility, friendship patterns would gradually diverge from the residential domain cluster. Moreover, new friendships may be initiated at a lower rate after a person develops enough friendships to meet his needs, and whatever new friendships do develop may tend to form along more functional and associational lines, factors which conspire to produce a friendship pattern which conforms less to physical proximity than is true for younger people.

Finally, we note that the domain of work is more central for respondents in a middle age range than it is for either the younger or older cohorts. Such a pattern is consistent with the likelihood that people in the middle years (ages 35-54) are in mid-career and are most caught up in their work.

Domain maps contrasting low income (under $5,000) with high income (over $12,000) respondents display only minor differences (not shown). Work is a more central domain for the higher income group than the lower. On the other hand, spare-time activities are more central among low income people than among the high. The residential environment domain is also closer to the financial situation domains for those with higher incomes.

Maps by type of occupation are based on rather small case numbers and hence suffer more instability. However, among suggestive differences (not shown), the "national government" domain lies at some distance from the cluster of residential environment domains among those in blue collar occupations but is rather close to that cluster for those in professional and managerial occupations. This contrast may well indicate a broader perspective on the life environment for those at higher status levels, either because of greater residential mobility, the higher salience of national-level affairs, or some combination of the two.

Most of these contrasts in the details of the domain mapping from one demographic group to another seem quite interpretable. At the same time, it is worth emphasizing that the broadest features of these maps continue to coincide rather well with the configuration shown for the population as a whole in Figure 3-2, much as we expected they should, given their apparent grounding in basic features of the human experience.

We can check the generality of such a map one step further with some preliminary data from a parallel study conducted in the United Kingdom by the Social Science Research Council (cf. Abrams and Hall, 1972). The sample was smaller (only 593 respondents), but contained nine domains for which satisfaction questions fairly similar to our own were asked. It is interesting to note that British respondents showed somewhat higher average satisfaction scores for the marriage, family life, and job domains. Average scores were quite similar in the two countries for the neighborhood ("district" in Britain), health, and spare-time activities. And respondents in the United States had higher satisfaction scores in the domains of housework (for married housewives only), housing, and the standard of living.

When these more limited domain satisfaction scores from the British study are mapped and matched to the configuration for the United States, the correspondence is fairly close. Education and health appear to be more central domains for British respondents than for Americans. Spare-time activities and work both are more closely linked to the residential environment and financial clusters in the British data than is true for the United States. Overall, however, the general configuration of domains is quite similar for both countries. Once again, we conclude that while differences in concerns and life situations across population groups are potent enough to register in certain shifts of location in the domain mappings, the broad structure remains quite stable across such variation and probably enjoys the more profound roots that we have surmised.

PREDICTING THE GLOBAL SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Now that we have some feel for the organization of domains, as represented by similarities and dissimilarities in their assessments, we can turn to one of the most important questions of all: how well can a person's global reports of well-being be understood simply by knowing what levels of satisfaction he expresses concerning the various more specific domains of his life? Strictly speaking, this is not a single question, but a bundle of questions. On the simplest level, we may first ask how strongly global reports of well-being are related to each of the individual domain assessments. We then can ask how these separate domain assessments appear to be combined or aggregated as a part of the process which gives the individual a greater or lesser sense of overall well-being. And finally, we can use what we have learned about this summation process to ask how well variation in the global reports can be accounted for by the set of domain satisfaction scores taken together.

Relationships of Individual Domain Assessments with Well-Being

The relationship between each domain satisfaction score and our Index of Well-Being is reflected in the distances shown in Figure 3-2, and is summarized in Table 3-3.[11] The domain most strongly related to that global index is that of nonworking, or spare-time activities, very closely followed by the assessments of family life. Both of these domains themselves have a somewhat broader or more nearly global character than many of the subsequent items. Although it will be recalled that the former question read "Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways you spend your spare time?" there is other internal evidence that the question was construed much more broadly than "How satisfied are you with your leisure time and hobbies?" It contained instead a flavor which could be understood as saying "Apart from the hours you have to work, how satisfied are you with the way your life is?" Given such far-ranging overtones, the relative strength of the relationship between assessment of this single domain and the global reports

[11] The correlations of Table 3-3 are roughly comparable to the distances from the central index shown in graphic form from Figure 3-2.

Table 3-3: Proportion of Variance (r²) in Index of Well-Being, Explained by Individual Domain Satisfaction Scores[a]

		Proportion of explained variance (r^2)
G3.	Nonworking activities	29
J1.	Family life	28
G15.	Standard of living	23
	Work	18
	Marriage	16
G16.	Savings and investments	15
H3.	Friendships	13
A21.	City or county	11
B11.	Housing	11
E4.	Amount of education	9
A22.	Neighborhood	8
C6.	Life in United States	8
E5/6.	Usefulness of education	8
G11.	Health	8
	Religion	5
	National government	5
	Organizations	4

[a] The number of cases upon which each estimate of explained variance is based ranges from 2,106 to 2,160, with three exceptions: J1. Family life (2,077 cases); E4. Amount of education (1,975 cases); and Organizations (1,783 cases).

is less hard to understand. Similarly, of course, family life is not only a domain which is extremely vital: it also embraces a great deal of life experience as well.

The third domain, according to strength of association with the Index of Well-Being, involves the reports of satisfaction with standard of living, another item which has rather expansive, "style-of-life" referents. The next two items are the vital but more restricted domains of work and marriage. Then comes another financial item: satisfaction with one's savings and investments. The only other domains that explain as much as one-tenth of the variance in scores on the Index of Well-Being are those of friendships, housing, and place of residence.

As a general rule, then, it seems likely that the strength of relationships between specific domains and the overall Index of Well-Being is jointly governed by two somewhat related factors: the scope of the domain and its apparent centrality in life experience.[12]

[12] While our study included an Index of Personal Competence, described in Chapter 2, we did not conceptualize "the self" as one of our specific domains. If we had done so, however, we would have a domain which would have to be accorded the ultimate value in centrality for the individual, as well as one which is surely broad

In Figure 3-4 we provide some examples of the more detailed form of the relationships that pertain between specific domain satisfaction scores and the Index of Well-Being. These data provide a first-level answer to the question as to how domain satisfactions act to shape a more general sense of well-being. It is always convenient if such relationships show a simple linear form, with gains in satisfaction with a particular domain associated with uniform increments in felt well-being. Figure 3-4 shows that this is the case with our data: apart from minor perturbations that can easily be seen as sampling error, the form of these relationships seems well-behaved and linear.[13]

The Combining of Domain Satisfactions

Granted that satisfactions and dissatisfactions with various important spheres of life must combine in some way to influence global reports of well-being, how do our respondents go about this process of amalgamation and summarization? Obviously, we have no way of putting ourselves in the minds of persons to trace out the process, and it would not be surprising if individuals varied somewhat in the ways they implicitly carry out such an aggregation in any event. We can, however, ask what rules for combining the diverse domain satisfaction scores produce the most effective predictions of the global responses about well-being given by the members of our sample, and it is fair to imagine that such a pattern of combining rules has a bearing, at least in an average sense, on the way people do carry out such a summarization. Unfortunately, the possible patterns of combining rules are extremely numerous.

The most straightforward possibility, and the one which is simplest to deal with statistically, is that a person's sense of well-being with his life as a whole is no more than a sum of his satisfaction scores with the various domains of life. However, this seems so simple as to be improbable: we have already seen that assessments of some domains are much more closely tied to the Index of Well-Being than others, suggesting that they are more important—that is, that they are accorded a greater weight in the overall judgments. But another very manageable possibility is that global well-

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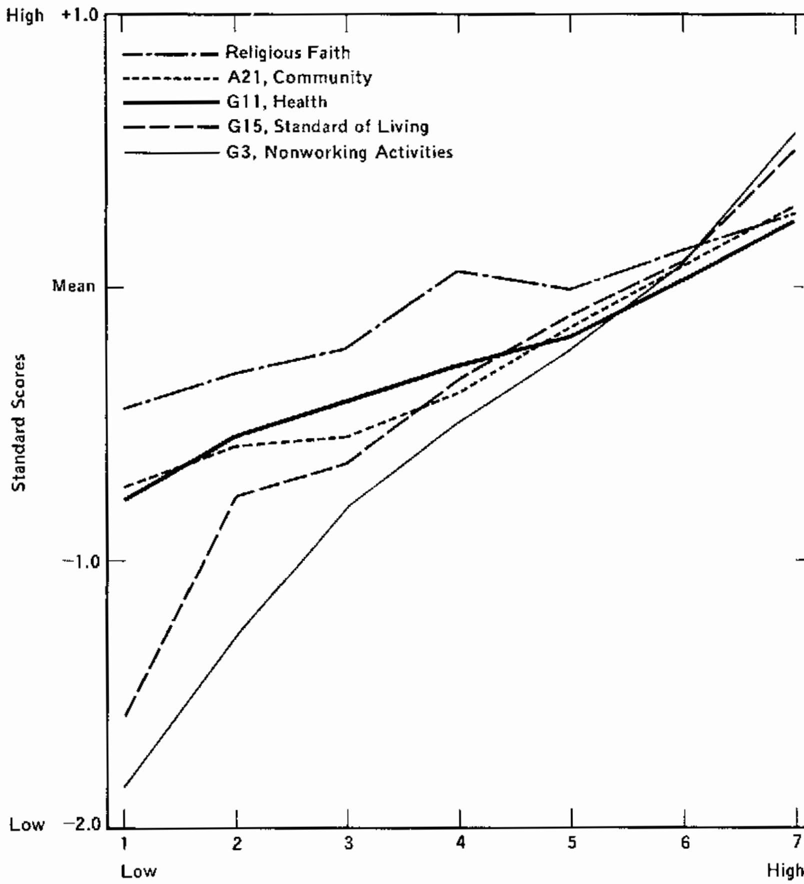
in scope. From this point of view, it is interesting to note that in the Andrews-Withey work on domain satisfactions an index of three items of a self-esteem kind is the most potent predictor of their global measure of life satisfaction. See Andrews and Withey (1974, p. 18 and Exhibit 7).

[13] The linearity of these relationships is also reflected by the high degree of similarity between the values of the correlation coefficient (r), which assumes linearity, and the correlation ratio (η), which does not presume such a restriction. The differences between r^2 and η^2 estimates of explained variance exceeds 1 percent only in the case of marital satisfaction, for which η^2 is 18 percent, while the r^2 is 16 percent.

Figure 3-4: Plots of Average Standard Scores on the Index of Well-Being for Respondents Expressing Different Levels of Satisfaction on Each of Five Domains



being is still no more than a sum of component satisfactions, but a *weighted* sum, with certain domains more crucial than others.

However, this is just a beginning where possible combining rules are concerned. We can imagine quite complex interactions between assessments of our domains without becoming at all implausible. Indeed, one such more complex model is quite familiar. This is the "hierarchy of needs" model, which suggests that certain kinds of needs are more basic than others, such that until those needs are reasonably satisfied, it does not matter much for overall satisfaction whatever else may happen. We can make a fair translation of such a model to our domains. For example, health might be thought of as having this basic governing character: if one's health is poor, the person might feel that his life as a whole is unsatisfactory, more or less regardless of how good his job or marriage or any other aspect of his life happens to be.

Another possible interaction pattern for the domain satisfactions might be that the overall sense of well-being depends on the presence of some threshold number of satisfactions. If there are not at least that number of domains with which a person is satisfied, then he is sure to think of his life as a whole as lacking in rewards. In such a threshold model it may not matter which domains are satisfactory, as long as the minimum is at least met. Or certain rather vital domains might all have to be satisfactory in order for a person to pass the threshold and begin to derive additional pleasures from other domains. Or again, perhaps there is a ceiling number of satisfactions: being satisfied with more domains than such a ceiling number fails to produce any further corresponding gains in the sense of well-being.

Other possible combining rules might focus on complex interactions within specified clusters of our domains. For example, where the residential environment is concerned, housing is geographically most central to the respondent; the neighborhood comes second, the community third, and the nation is least central. Perhaps there are threshold relationships among this set: if a person is dissatisfied with his housing, it might not matter further whether he is satisfied or dissatisfied with his community, at least where his global estimates of his well-being are concerned. One could even imagine high life satisfaction depending upon a rather obtuse combination such as satisfaction with work on one hand, and dissatisfaction with spare-time activities on the other.

Many, if not all, of these complex patterns can be given true intuitive appeal. However, the general conclusion we have arrived at, from a series of analyses too lengthy and intricate to describe here, is that one of the simplest combining rules fits the data well enough that it is quite adequate as a primary model for later analyses. It appears that respondents' assessments of their lives as a whole can best be explained as a weighted summation of their degree of satisfaction with the various specific domains included in our design. In technical terms, a linear additive model is quite sufficient, and dissatisfaction with one aspect of life can apparently be made up for in straightforward fashion with other satisfactions.

There are indeed some traces of interactions between certain specific domains, but none is large enough to be very important or to improve our prediction of the global reports significantly. It is possible, of course, that more dramatic versions of these interaction patterns could be found within certain subsets of the population. For example, perhaps it is only because there were too few people in our national adult sample who have reasons for great dissatisfaction with their health that we failed to find an interaction between health and other satisfaction scores. Thus the conclusion that we wish to draw is not that interactions are totally absent, but only that none appears important enough across this heterogeneous adult sample to warrant taking account of it as we arrive at our final predictions of the global sense of well-being from what we know of satisfactions with the diverse domains.

Despite such minor caveats, the striking success of a simple linear additive model in accounting for reports of life satisfaction may well be one of the most significant findings to emerge from this study. This is in fact one of those unusual situations in which simplicity does not necessarily have the greatest intuitive appeal. Models which spell out hierarchies of needs, such as that proposed by Maslow, have achieved high popularity despite the paucity of systematic empirical support. Our present data, while far from conclusive, certainly fail to find much confirmation for such attractive concepts of need hierarchies in understanding the roots of feelings of satisfaction with life.

Accounting for the Sense of Well-Being from the Set of Domain Satisfactions

Since we need no more than a simple linear additive model, it is an easy matter to apply multiple regression techniques built on such assumptions in order to determine how well the set of domain satisfaction scores taken together can explain differences in individual responses on the Index of Well-Being. It turns out that *the set of seventeen domain satisfaction scores explains 54 percent of the variance in that index.* That is, if we know how a person answers each of the questions about domain satisfactions (as listed in Tables 3-1 and 3-2, excluding satisfaction with housework), we reduce the uncertainty as to his evaluation of his life as a whole by over one-half.[14]

The ability to explain over half of the variance in a measure of such a highly subjective, elusive concept as the global sense of well-being is surely very encouraging. If we keep in mind the limited reliability of the compound index, not to mention some unreliability in the domain satisfaction items, then it may be that the upper limit to the amount of variance in the index

[14] The analysis reported, based on conventional multiple regression, does assume that combining rules are linear and additive. We can relax this assumption by the use of Multiple Classification Analysis (Andrews, Morgan, Sonquist, and Klem, 1974, Rev.). This technique does not make any assumption about the interval or even the ordinal measurement of the variables involved; they are treated as nominal scales. Using MCA, seventeen domain satisfaction scores account for 56 percent of the variance in the Index of Well-Being (adjusted for degrees of freedom) compared to 54 percent explained using multiple regression. The small difference is another testimony to the adequacy of a linear additive model for treating this complex of relationships.

that is explainable by any set of measures has been approached. In short, then, apart from possible limitations of the analysis arising from response biases that we shall consider in the next chapter, our initial hope that global reports as to well-being might be seen as largely some mosaic of reactions to more specific facets of life appears to be quite impressively endorsed by this structure of data. This not only increases our confidence that our various measures have some claim to validity, but also signifies that we have specified meaningful components that undergird such global feelings of greater or lesser well-being. When we begin to deal with conditions under which specific domain satisfactions vary, as we shall in the next part of this volume, we shall now have reason to believe that we are indeed working with terms that can quicken or dampen our respondents' feelings about the overall quality of their lives.

Variations in the Structure of Satisfactions by Subgroups

The preceding analysis was, of course, carried out on the total sample. As always, it is worth asking whether it might differ notably if it were replicated within smaller segments of the population living in distinctive circumstances. Two kinds of contrasts are possible. First, it would be reasonable to expect from our earlier decomposition of the mapping of Figure 3-1 into subgroup maps that we might find signs of somewhat different patterns of concern across groups. If a particular domain were especially important for one group, relative to others, this fact should register in stronger relationships between satisfaction scores for that domain and the general sense of well-being. Secondly, since subgroup analyses could recognize any such variations in weights more incisively, it is possible that we might find a greater proportion of the variance in the Index of Well-Being explained within these groups than can be accounted for with the entire heterogeneous sample.

To check on such possibilities, a total of eighteen demographic subgroups were examined with separate correlation and regression analyses. Some differences, largely expected from analyses cited earlier, emerged in the strength of relationships between certain domain satisfactions and the global index. For example, satisfaction with health has a stronger link to the general sense of well-being for older respondents than for younger. On the other hand, the domain of work seems to matter less for people after age 65 than before. Work is also more important to working men than it is to either housewives or working women. Both marital satisfaction and satisfaction with one's community have more impact on the sense of well-being for housewives than for working women. Assessments of standard of living matter more to those with low incomes than to those who are better off, as seemed likely from other evidence in the preceding chapter. Feelings about the usefulness of one's educational training are more tightly related to the sense of well-being for people with college degrees than among those who did not complete high school. Religion matters more for well-being in rural areas than it does for residents of large cities.

While all of these differences seem quite intelligible and are large enough to be significant in the statistical sense, they remain fairly modest in absolute magnitude. Moreover, they usually render a given subgroup distinctive only with respect to one or two domains, with the other fifteen or sixteen domains looking much like those for the total sample. What this means in turn is that the "average" weights assigned to the respective domains in the total-sample analysis do only very limited violence to patterns within particular groups. Or, alternatively put, we gain very little in our capacity to account for variations in global well-being from the structure of domain satisfactions by such a descent to more homogeneous subgroups. With but one type of exception, the proportions of variance accounted for in the Index of Well-Being across the eighteen subgroups tested scatter around the parent value of 54 percent within a rather narrow range.

The sole exception involves people with college degrees and the overlapping set of people in professional occupations, where the proportions of variance explained climb into the 60 percent range (60 and 63 percent, respectively). Our reinterview data also show that many of our satisfaction measures have higher stability within the more educated half of the population than in the lower half. It seems likely that the higher levels of predictability of the global reports from domain satisfactions arise because our questions are less frequently misunderstood, and hence more reliably answered in this quadrant of the population.

DIRECT RATINGS OF DOMAIN IMPORTANCE

The model used in the preceding section, which aggregated domain satisfactions to predict differences in reports of general well-being, did not assume that all domains were of equal importance. By forming an optimal weighting of the set of domain scores, it recognized that some domains like family life are more vital for feelings of well-being than others, such as organizational memberships. However, this recognition that domain importance can vary was not carried down to the individual level in that model. In effect, the relatively greater weight accorded to family life was given in common to all members of the sample. Later, as we began to divide the sample into demographic groupings to replicate the analysis, we found at least some differences across groups in the strength of relationships between satisfaction scores for certain domains and the Index of Well-Being. For purposes of interpretation, we were willing to assume that large correlations for a given domain meant that this domain was more important, or "mattered more" to the type of people involved in the subgroup. However, this still does not carry all the way to individual differences in the importance of domains, and the inference involved, while surely plausible, remains somewhat indirect.

The original conceptual model around which our interview schedule was designed presumed that individuals might vary quite widely in the importance accorded to various domains. We therefore took direct measures of felt importance for all domains, expecting to use these ratings as weights in computing expected well-being scores from individual to individual. Near the end of the interview, after the respondents had been asked about their satisfaction with the various domains, they were asked in a summary vein how important each of these domains was to them. They rated each one on a scale ranging from "Not at all important" to "Extremely important."

The simple distributions of responses to these scales are shown in Table 3-4. Marriage seems to be considered the most important domain: over one-half of the sample chooses "a happy marriage" out of the set as one of the two most important things to them, and three out of four rate this item as "extremely important." Family life, closely linked to marriage, predictably receives strong importance rankings as well. Good health is another domain seen as very important. Indeed, the average rating for health is the highest of all items in Table 3-4, because almost nobody considers health unimportant while a small proportion of people say they consider marriage unimportant.

At the other end of the spectrum, organizations are viewed as a rather unimportant part of life: hardly anyone selects this area as one of the two most important to him. One's financial affluence is also considered relatively unimportant by most people, as are hobbies and other leisure-time activities. The sharpest diversity in response arises for the importance of "having a strong religious faith."[15] About a quarter of the sample chose this as one of the two most important domains of life, while a similar proportion said it was only "somewhat" or "not at all important."

Direct and Indirect Indicators of Domain Importance

Since the average scores in Table 3-4 provide us with some sense of an ordering of domains by relative importance, it is natural to ask how well this ordering fits the way domains vary in the tightness of their links to more global reports of well-being, as represented by the regression coefficient expressing the amount of change in scores on the global satisfaction question

[15] The standard deviation on the scale for religious faith (1.33) is notably higher than for any other scale. The smallest standard deviation (.66) is found for the health domain.

Table 3-4: Means and Distributions on Importance Ratings of Domains[a]

	Extremely important 1	*Very important* 2	*Quite important* 3	*Somewhat important* 4	*Not at all important* 5	*Total*	*Mean*	*Proportion naming this as one of two most important domains*
Being in good health and in good physical condition	70%	24	5	1	*	100%	1.37	35
A happy marriage	74%	17	3	2	4	100%	1.44	55
A good family life—having family members you can enjoy being with	67%	24	6	2	1	100%	1.46	36
A good country to live in —a country with a good government	62%	26	8	3	1	100%	1.54	17
Having good friends, and the right number of friends	34%	36	19	10	1	100%	2.08	6
A house or apartment that you like to live in	35%	34	19	10	2	100%	2.10	8
An interesting job	38%	32	13	7	10	100%	2.19	9
A city or place where you like to live	28%	40	20	9	3	100%	2.21	3
Having a strong religious faith	38%	22	16	16	8	100%	2.35	23
Things you like to do when you are not working—hobbies, and things like that	14%	28	28	25	5	100%	2.79	2
A large bank account, so that you don't have to worry about money	16%	19	27	30	8	100%	2.94	6
Organizations you want to belong to	3%	8	13	35	41	100%	4.01	*

[a] These ratings were given to item J2 in the interview schedule (Appendix B).

associated with a unit change in satisfaction expressed for each domain. Table 3-5 lists the domains in the order of their average importance ratings, along with the regression coefficients for predicting reports of well-being from each domain satisfaction.

There is a fair degree of correspondence between these direct and indirect measures of what is important to the American people: over the

Table 3-5: Average Importance Ratings of Domains and Regression Coefficients for Predicting Life Satisfaction from Each Domain Satisfaction Score[a] (Domains are listed in order of decreasing average rated importance.)

	Mean importance rating	*Regression coefficient: domain to life satisfaction*	*Rank order of regression coefficients*
Health	1.37	.219	8
Marriage	1.44	.364	2
Family life	1.46	.408	1
National government	1.54	.149	10
Friendships	2.08	.256	6
Housing	2.10	.303	4
Job	2.19	.274	5
Community	2.21	.253	7
Religious faith	2.35	.107	12
Nonwork activities	2.79	.213	9
Financial situation	2.94	.333	3
Organizations	4.01	.123	11

[a] "Life satisfaction" here is simply the question (J4 in the interview schedule) about overall life satisfaction. The domain satisfaction scores are based on item J3 in the interview: the amount of satisfaction derived from each domain. This set was used rather than the usual domain satisfaction scores, because they are more directly parallel in wording to the importance scales (see footnote 16).

twelve domains, the correlation between the two ratings is .41.[16] On a few domains, however, there are marked discrepancies. In average scores, for example, health is rated as the most important domain, whereas it only ranks eighth out of the twelve regression coefficients. Living in a country with a good government is also rated highly important, but satisfaction with our government is only weakly related to the Index of Well-Being. Ap-

[16] To avoid confusion, it is very important to note that the domain satisfaction scores used to compute the regression coefficients of Table 3-5 are not the same as those which have been used heretofore in this chapter (e.g., for Table 3-3), or generally in other parts of this volume. Momentarily, we are using another set gathered *en bloc* toward the end of the interview along with the importance ratings, rather than those posed at the end of each discussion of a particular domain. We used these secondary scores in this isolated instance, despite the fact that they do not appear to be as satisfactory on several counts, because the key phrases being evaluated match the phrases used for the importance ratings more exactly than is true for our primary domain satisfaction scores. A good example of the potential confusion involves the domain of spare-time activities. We saw in Table 3-3 that this "nonwork" domain showed the highest correlation with the Index of Well-Being. Yet in Table 3-5 its regression coefficient is only ninth highest among twelve domains. While correlations and regression coefficients are not equivalent statements of association, they do involve

praisals of health and of the government may not seem to have much in common. Yet in both cases, these domains are hard to rate as unimportant when attention is drawn to them in a hypothetical or abstract sense. Yet when no malfunctions in either domain are vitally intruding on the daily lives of most of our respondents, they are easy to take for granted and hence show very limited impact on the sense of well-being.

On the other hand, having a comfortable financial situation is rated as relatively unimportant, although the indirect assessment suggests that satisfaction with this particular domain is a relatively strong governor of the overall sense of well-being. In view of strong social norms against avarice and any materialism which is too blatant, it is quite possible that the ratings of importance directly accorded to this domain by our respondents are placed down considerably to meet what is seen as socially desirable.

When these deviant cases are put together, we begin to form the impression that the direct ratings of domain importance contain some admixture of the ideal and hypothetical, whereas the indirect assessments lie a little closer to the underlying reality. We must take this merely as a hypothesis, which these materials scarcely confirm in any conclusive way, yet one which is worth keeping in mind as we proceed.

Importance Ratings as Weight Factors

Our next step is to employ these direct ratings of importance as a means of weighting domain satisfaction scores to predict how each individual will score on the Index of Well-Being. If, for example, an individual tells us that whatever job he has is "not important at all" for him, then we might give his satisfaction score in the work domain a weight of zero (meaning that it will not figure in our predictions at all) in estimating his likely sense of well-being. If, on the other hand, another person maintains that the quality of his housing is a matter of supreme importance for him, we might give his assessments of his current housing substantial extra weight in predicting how satisfied he is with his life as a whole. Thus we would be recognizing individual variation in the importance accorded the various domains, and

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a common term and typically covary strongly. However, as we explained earlier, our primary item for the nonwork domain seems to have been construed by some respondents more broadly than intended, almost as "the nature of life when off work." The item used for the regression coefficient of Table 3-5, on the other hand, avoids this misconstruction by referring specifically to "your nonworking activities—hobbies and so on." Thus narrowed, it is not surprising that the satisfaction rating overlaps less fully with responses to the Index of Well-Being. Since the importance rating also narrows the cue with a phrase "hobbies and things like that," the match between the two items is better, as it is for some of the other items as well. Hence we use these J3 domain satisfaction scores in this specific instance.

it would seem reasonable to expect such a recognition to increase our predictive power over the Index of Well-Being still further.

Surprisingly, however, this expectation is not confirmed. Taking account of the direct domain importance ratings provided by our respondents fails to show any detectable increase in the power of the domain satisfaction scores to explain variations in response to the Index of Well-Being. Moreover, it is quite certain that this negative finding is not peculiar to a single scoring system or technique of analysis, since several concerted approaches from rather different perspectives all were driven to the same conclusion.[17]

This impotence of the direct importance ratings is sufficiently counter to any reasonable intuition that we have pondered the problem at length.[18] The obvious surmise, given the strong commonsense basis for the expectation, is that the importance ratings themselves are at fault, being ineffective or flawed in some unknown way. We have already cited suggestive evidence that direct ratings seem to have an element of the ideal or hypothetical in them. Moreover, examination of our reinterview data makes clear that these importance ratings are less stable than most of our other measures. In nine comparisons out of ten, the importance rating of a domain shows a lower stability correlation than its corresponding satisfaction score, and for the one exception (friendships), the difference is trivial. In the modal case, these correlations are a full .10 lower than the modal satisfaction score and as a set do not compare very favorably even with the single-item global

[17] The most exhaustive and definitive analysis of the problem combined the importance ratings with the corresponding satisfaction scores in a set of pattern variables for the domains having such importance ratings. The 7-point satisfaction scales were reduced to four categories, collapsing the neutral and dissatisfied responses (categories 4-7). The 5-point importance scales were reduced to three categories, collapsing the three less important responses. Then all combinations of values of these two variables were treated as separate predictor categories. The explanatory power of this set of pattern variables was then compared to that of the equally collapsed satisfaction measures, using in both cases an analysis of variance that treats the predictors as nominal scales, with no assumptions whatever about the raw scale values or even the ordering of the categories. The pattern variables with satisfaction scores modified by importance explained little or no more variance than the satisfaction scores taken alone. Using Multiple Classification Analysis and adjusting the estimates of explained variance for degrees of freedom in both cases, the set of eight satisfaction scores explained almost the same proportion of variance in the Index of Well-Being (44.6 percent) as the corresponding set of eight pattern variables (45.1 percent). Such results imply that no method of weighting the satisfaction scores by the importance ratings for each respondent would increase their explanatory power more than marginally.

[18] At the same time, it might be noted that there are several instances in the literature where importance ratings have not done the expected job as weighting factors. Most recently, extensive analyses of importance ratings for various facets of the job in predicting job satisfaction have shown a similar lack of positive results (Quinn and Mangione, 1973).

reports of happiness or life satisfaction. Either people change their minds with disconcerting frequency about how important domains are to them, the measurement contains uncommon error, or, as is most likely, some combination of the two is occurring.

In view of such observations, one may wonder whether the direct importance ratings are worth much. If we turn to demographic subgroups, we do find a number of differences in average importance ratings which are quite intelligible and lend a flavor of validity to these measurements. For example, men are more likely to rate "an interesting job" as more important than women, as do younger people relative to the old. "Having a strong religious faith" is described as being more important by women than men, by older people than by younger people, by those with less formal education than by those with more, and by those with low incomes than by those who are better off financially. On the other hand, the differences involved are not striking, and some that might be expected do not appear at all. Thus, for example, no tendency can be found for increasing stress on the importance of health as age increases, despite the fact that we have introduced several pieces of indirect evidence bearing on the heightened centrality of health for the elderly. Indeed, people over 75 show an average importance accorded to good health which is absolutely lower than the averages in any of six younger cohorts. (We cannot, in this context, directly assess the effects of the fact that the ranks of those in the oldest cohorts have been thinned considerably by poor health and consequent deaths.)

Our data do contain a number of clues as to the reasons for the ineffectiveness of these direct importance ratings. One interesting finding is that people who are past the age of 30 but remain unmarried attribute quite limited importance to "a happy marriage" relative to the set of people who are married, most of whom rate the importance as very high. By itself, this finding does not carry a definitive message, since it is subject to varying interpretations. The most straightforward one is that people who do not feel marriage is important do not get married, while those considering it important do. Nonetheless, we may begin to suspect that perhaps some of the downgrading of the importance of marriage among the older people who have never married is an adjustment to a situation, rather than a prior cause of it.

The case becomes somewhat clearer still as we look at those people who have been married in the past, but whose marriages have been terminated by death, divorce, or separation, and for whom remarriage has not occurred. Widows consider marriage less important than still-married people of the same age, and since it would almost never be reasonable to imagine that spouses die sooner in marriages where the other partner does not consider a happy marriage to be important, this effect is almost certainly an adjustment to a situation, rather than its cause. Such reports are not necessarily lacking in validity: many widowed people may be genuinely surprised at their capacity to function in a single state again, so that marriage seems less crucial than they once thought.

The most interesting importance ratings, however, are those from people whose last marriages were terminated by divorce or separation and who are *least* likely to consider marriage important of all the unmarried groups mentioned. The data are particularly interesting if we consider these ratings for women and men as a function of the length of time since their marriage was terminated. In the first five years or so after such a termination, women tend to give ratings of the importance of marriage which are clearly lower than those provided by married women of comparable ages, although not as dramatically so as a few other subgroups. After this period, however, the importance ratings given by such women drop off severely. This pattern remains compatible with a self-selection process, whereby women less likely than average to consider marriage important are more likely to become divorced or separated, and those who do consider marriage most important are more likely to remarry in a shorter period. It is also compatible with the same kind of gradual process of adjustment to an uncomfortable reality that is shown by widowed people. And it is compatible with the possibility that traumatic dissolution of marriage creates a defensiveness which leads to evasion and denial in these direct importance ratings.

The data from men seem much less ambiguous in terms of these several possibilities. Males give direct importance ratings which are extremely low right from the start of the divorce, and remain at this constant extreme however long the lapse of time since the divorce occurred.[19] Indeed, the small numbers of people in Table 3-4 who give less than "very important" ratings to "a happy marriage" are very disproportionately made up of divorced men, along with some women divorced for more than five years. There is no sign whatever here of a gradual adjustment, and it seems highly implausible that self-selection alone could account for even a major portion of the observed differences. Our reinterview sample was taken at too short an interval for many divorces or separations to have occurred in the interim. However, for the few cases available, it is clear that those whose marriages were to become dissolved gave slightly lower direct importance ratings to a happy marriage than other married couples, suggesting some little self-selection effect, although it may also reflect adjustments and denials stemming from marriages already well on the rocks (to be terminated within eight months). But these few cases, particularly the two for men, do show the expected plunge in attributed importance in the reinterview, after

[19] This extreme value is almost three standard deviations below the mean for the total sample of which these divorced men are a small part.

the dissolution. Hence we would conclude that in such extreme cases, at least, there is a rather strong denial effect intruding on these ratings.

That any such admixture of denials would undermine the validity of the direct importance ratings, particularly for use as weight factors in predicting the overall sense of well-being, is not hard to see. We have already noted that divorced people in general, and men in particular, are as distinctively low in their reports of global well-being as any commonly defined set of people in our sample. Apart from the marriage situation, there is little in the satisfaction scores for divorced men on other domains that would predict such overall dissatisfaction with life. Where we have satisfaction ratings available concerning the marriage domain for divorced people, however, these scores are indeed low or just what is needed to predict low global satisfaction with life.[20] However, these respondents in their direct importance ratings greatly minimize the significance of a happy marriage, so that instead of marriage dissatisfaction receiving a heavy weight in any prediction, it receives little or none.

It is hardly our intention to argue that everyone's ratings of marriage importance are distorted in this fashion. Indeed, if they were, we might expect to find systematic influence from their use as weights, even though it would fall in the wrong direction. It seems likely that some people give honest or more insightful answers, while others resort to forms of evasion, denial, or "papering over" of the situation. Unfortunately, we have no direct way of sorting these responses into relevant categories, but it seems likely that such a compensating mixture of valid and distorted answers robs these ratings of the predictive power expected of them.

We can push the inquiry one step further, however, by resorting once again to indirect assessments of the importance of various domains in determining the overall sense of well-being. What we need is an individual-level assessment of how important any given domain is to a person in terms of the way his satisfaction score on that domain fits with his score on the Index of Well-Being. Such an inferential statement of importance can be derived for any individual only relative to the patterns of responses of other people, but within this framework such an estimate can in fact be established for every person in the sample for each domain.[21]

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[20] The standard 7-point marriage satisfaction item was not posed for divorced and separated people who had, in effect, no marriage to refer to. However, the importance rating was asked of everybody, and the secondary satisfaction battery asked in connection with it (J3) picked up a rating of marriage satisfaction for many divorced people.

[21] Basically, these estimates are grounded in the fact that any statement of correlation between two variables over a set of people can be seen as an average of covariance contributions from each person. Working with normalized variables, it is easy to place a value on the contribution that each individual is actually making to

When we examine the relationship between such an indirect measure of importance and the direct importance ratings provided by each individual, the correlations are necessarily very weak indeed. This fact follows from our earlier demonstrations that the direct importance ratings cannot be shown to modify the bonds between domain satisfactions and well-being reports in any impressive way. For the moment, however, we will put up with these weak values in order to ask whether the trace relationships show any interesting variations that might bear on the question of denial as we move from one domain to another. Figure 3-5, which shows the domains with the most telltale differences, suggests that there are. For the financial domains—the standard of living and savings—as well as the community of residence, the relationship between the direct ratings of importance and our indirect assessments of how much the domain matters for the general sense of well-being shows a clear trend in the expected direction. The more important the domain is rated, the higher the covariance between satisfaction with the domain and reported well-being. The neighborhood domain (not shown) also has a positive trend, although the latter is fainter still. The domains of family life and marriage, however, show very clear trends in the opposite direction: the less important the domain is considered in the direct ratings, the more it appears to matter in affecting the sense of well-being. The domain of spare-time activities also shows a negative trend, although it is less sharp. The other domains fall in between these extremes, with either very flat (country) or faint V-shaped patterns (health, job).

There seems no doubt that the clear negative trends are shaped by the phenomenon already discussed: divorced people who say marriage is unimportant, yet who give a good deal of indirect evidence that their troubles in this area greatly diminish their sense of well-being. As might be expected from all of our observations, there is a tendency over almost all domains for the direct importance ratings to show positive correlations with the satisfaction ratings in the total sample, with people who are less satisfied with a domain giving lower ratings of importance. This tendency reaches its maximum where the domain of marriage is concerned, but is also very substan-

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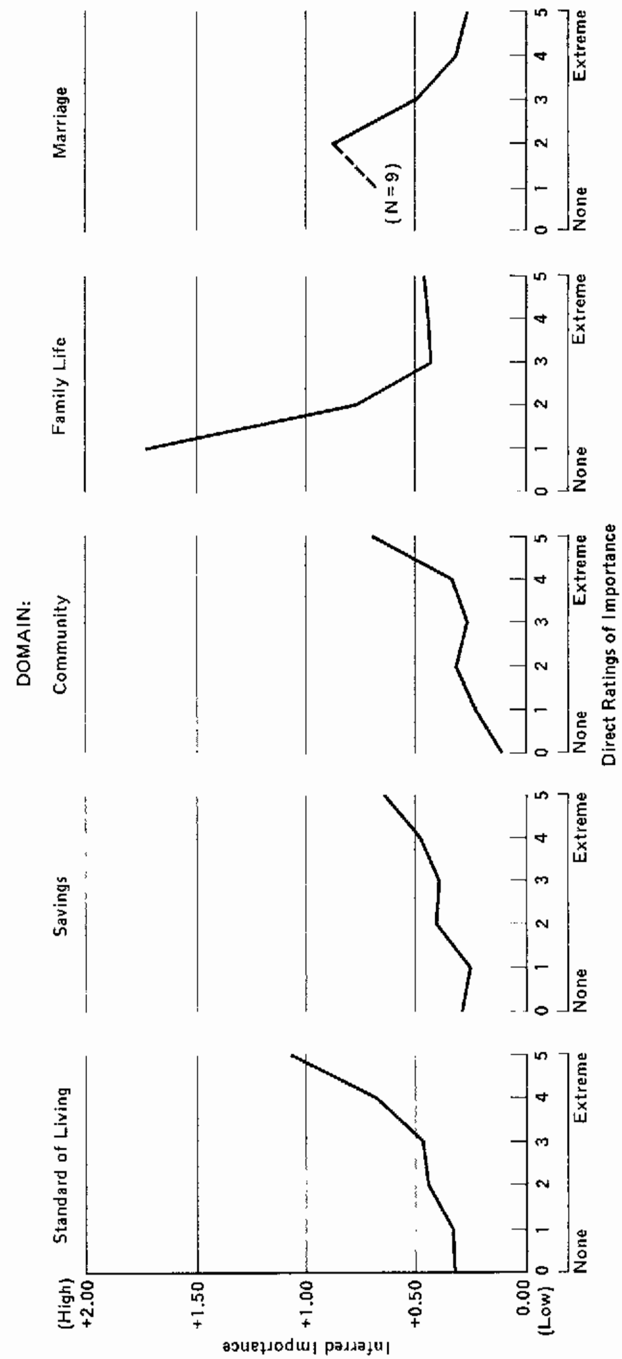
the observed correlation. If, for example, the total-sample covariance between marriage satisfaction and the Index of Well-Being is .26, this value is a composite of some individuals whose covariance product on the two normalized variables is a high positive, others moderately positive, and some close to zero or even negative. It is this array of individual values that we take here as the indirect measure of the importance of given domains to individuals. In Figure 3-5, the mean value of the covariance term from group to group is always positive not because there are no individuals with negative contributions, but because given the overall positive correlations between the variables, positive covariance contributions considerably outweigh negative ones. In the groups graphed, the net or mean values turn out to be consistently positive, although in differing degree.

Figure 3-5: Comarison of Direct Importance Ratings with Those Inferred from Domain Impact on Index of Well-Being Scores, for Selected Domains



tial for family life and friendships. The tendency disappears for the job and actually goes negative for financial situation. In other words, these correlations basically recapitulate the comparative slopes of Figure 3-5.

Let us summarize, then, our diagnosis of the difficulties surrounding the direct importance ratings. We assume that these ratings are not only unduly influenced by the respondent's sense of the ideal for himself, but are also subject in some degree to defensive mechanisms which operate to turn the measure upside down. As we have stressed earlier, the observed responses no doubt contain an admixture of such evasions and denials: some people at some time are more straightforward about their situation, where the importance ratings are concerned. Indeed, it would not be surprising if being straightforward or evasive were very situational, depending in part on such matters as rapport with the interviewer, momentary mood, and the like, a matter which would help account for the uncommonly low stability and reliability of these ratings, as remeasured over time.

What our last data display adds to the discussion is the likelihood that the frequency of such denials itself shows some significant variation by domain. In other words, denials of the importance of bad situations reach their peak in domains that are most personal and vital to the individual, such as marriage and family. They are less prevalent, although still present, as one moves into assessments of the external environment, where a dissatisfying situation casts somewhat less of a shadow on the individual's personal worthiness.

All of these surmises may raise a question as to why, if a domain is personal and the situation is embarrassing, our respondents admit to dissatisfaction that is already obvious before the satisfaction measure is applied. To take an extreme case, for example, it would be hard for a respondent who has already admitted that he is separated from his wife to say that he is completely satisfied with his marriage. It is, however, quite easy for him to say he is the type of person for whom marriage is not very important in any event, and he may in fact believe this at a superficial level of consciousness. This should not blind us to the likelihood that a view of satisfactions is given, particularly in personal domains, which may be somewhat biased toward the rosy side. However, this effect appears to be much less damaging where our domain satisfaction measurements are concerned than for the direct ratings of domain importance.

THE QUESTION OF AFFECT BALANCE

In the preceding section we have dwelt at some length on a type of measurement investment which failed to produce the expected results. We have done so because a substantial community of scholars is interested in subjective measurements of the quality of life, and work is very much in exploratory stages. It seems important, therefore, to publicize the major shortfalls in measurement as well as the successes, diagnosing them as carefully as we can, so that dead ends will not be explored over and over again. We conclude this chapter with another brief account of a measurement effort which did not "pay off."

Bradburn (1969) has provided a provocative and skillfully worked demonstration that it may be necessary to take account of positive and negative affective states independent of one another if we are to put together a proper accounting of the global sense of well-being. Working within a set of data tapping short-term moods of euphoria and depression, he shows that a subscale summarizing recent states of positive affect and another summarizing reports of negative affect in the same way are essentially uncorrelated with each other, and both must be taken into account if the most effective prediction to global reports of overall happiness is to be made.

While our own study focused upon satisfactions with specific domains, rather than happiness, and attempted a broader time frame than Bradburn set for his measurements, his work was sufficiently convincing that it seemed important that we assess the same possibility where domain satisfactions are concerned. It is not hard to think of aspects of human life that are a source of provocation, disappointment, and gratification at more or less the same time. The management of pets is a trivial example; the institution of marriage is a more important one. Therefore in addition to our primary measures of domain satisfaction, posed in bipolar form (completely satisfied to completely dissatisfied), we asked our respondents near the end of the interview to separate the positive and negative aspects of their assessments of each domain. First, the domain was rated in unipolar fashion from "a very great deal" to "none" according to "how much satisfaction you get from the area," and then the operation was repeated, rating "how much dissatisfaction" the domain provoked.

Respondents found this separation somewhat difficult: where domain satisfactions were concerned, an overall, bipolar assessment seemed more natural. Furthermore, analyses of this battery of measures have been quite disappointing. Unlike the Bradburn subscales, the satisfaction and dissatisfaction ratings show considerable correlations by domain. Moreover, neither of these subscales, nor any plausible combination of the two, gives more incisive prediction to the various responses involved in our Index of Well-Being than our simpler, bipolar domain satisfaction measures. Indeed, those compound predictions turn out to be visibly inferior.

We do not conclude from this exercise that anything is wrong with the Bradburn work as reported. In fact, other studies at the Survey Research Center repeating the Bradburn measurements exactly have yielded nice replications of the original results. But it does seem reasonable to imagine that the Bradburn results are more narrowly dependent on the immediate measurement setting than has often been assumed. That is to say, where the focus is upon short-term affective states of a relatively specific nature, the double measurement may be quite important. Thus, for example, if we had asked our respondents whether they had recently felt a sense of joy at the comfort of their homes and independently had asked whether they had felt aggravated at things wearing out or failing to work properly around their houses, we might well have two measurements uncorrelated with one another yet which, when put together, would predict effectively to overall evaluations of housing. However, when questions put stress upon key concepts of evaluation like satisfaction and dissatisfaction to begin with, as was the case in our experiment, it appears that the separation of positive and negative is difficult for respondents to conceive, and that the double measurement is neither necessary nor, for that matter, desirable.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of this chapter we have arrived at one of the more important results that our study was designed to illuminate. This is the simple fact that global reports of a sense of well-being can be meaningfully seen as a composite of feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a variety of more specific domains of life. Measures of such satisfactions with more than a dozen domains show reliabilities that appear to be consistently greater than assessments of "life as a whole," and when these are combined according to a very simple model, they account for an impressive portion of the variation in global reports. It seems likely that a slightly fuller portfolio of such measures could be expected to account for most of the meaningful variation in such global reports, error variation aside.

At one level, this finding is an obvious one. Surely we would expect any overall sense of well-being about life as a whole to be mainly conditioned by reactions to more specific facets of life: a happy or unhappy marriage, a job that is fulfilling or tedious, housing that is a pleasure or a frustration. However, since we are not sure of our ground with measurements in this difficult area, it is reassuring that we can put together such a demonstration. Moreover, the capacity to decompose global reports into more concrete reactions about specific facets of life begins to give us some leverage on what it might take to improve the perceived quality of life: the domains that are more or less potent governors of such feelings.

Nevertheless, we saw toward the end of the chapter that some of our measurements did not in fact perform as we expected intuitively. They were flawed by systematic biases, and we have tried to suggest why they could not be taken at face value, although in one instance we were able to reconstruct what we were looking for by more indirect measurement.

Up to this point, we have stopped short of giving our satisfaction measures a clean bill of health. There has been no dramatic evidence to suggest that they do not mean more or less than what they appear to mean. However, before we put more weight on them, we owe it to ourselves to give them a more searching look. We also have left as unfinished business the questions of variation in the nuances of generalized well-being, according to whether happiness or satisfaction is the prime concept involved in the explicit measurement. The remainder of Part I is devoted to these questions of ultimate meaning.

Chapter 4
Bias in Measurement

One simple way of summarizing the ground we have covered to this point, in reviewing the many forms of measurement our study was intended to explore, is to observe that we are seeing a good deal of reality in these data, but we are seeing it "as through a glass darkly."

The reality is apparent enough. Over and over again we have encountered differences in the data which fit our commonsense expectations, thereby bolstering confidence that our efforts to measure subjective states bearing on the quality of life can lay claim to substantial validity. These glints of reality have been shining through in a boundless variety of stray facts, including the greater centrality of health as a domain for elderly respondents, or the diminished sense of well-being visible among socially isolated people, or the fact that well-being is more tightly tied to variations in an economic situation for those living near the economic margin than it is for those more at financial ease. Such a sense of reality ranges upward from these stray facts to a set of highly architectonic observations concerning the way in which domain assessments are patterned in a structure which is intuitively pleasing, as well as the degree to which this structure accounts for more global reports of well-being and a life which is seen to have, or to lack, true quality.

But if reality is apparent in these data, we have tried to keep in mind the dark glass through which we must observe. The interference of the dark glass means, in effect, that we must put up with a fair amount of measurement error. This has been most evident to date in the modest estimates we have reported concerning the reliability of these measures. Our vision of reality is surely blurred because of imprecisions in our measurement. Critics who contend that there is little point in troubling ourselves with such perceptual assessments of life quality, because precise measurement of these states is impossible, are not entirely wrong. Their contention is exaggerated, for we have seen enough reality through this glass already to have some confidence that a reality can be discerned, be the glass ever so dark. But if such measurement is not impossible, neither is it simple or straightforward.

The vital issue before us in this chapter is less whether the glass through which we observe is clouded, than whether it is a lens which may distort reality more actively. If the glass is no more than merely dark, and not flawed, then what we apprehend on the far side may be mildly blurred, but at least the objects we see show their true shape and stand in their true relationship to one another. It is not difficult, in such a case, to keep in mind that but for the dark glass, our observations would be substantially more vivid than they can be made in any quantitative detail, with the data at hand.

The reasonable fear is, of course, that the glass is not only dark but is flawed as well. This means we might arrive at conclusions about the shape of reality which are at points simply wrong or, in a sense doubly wrong, for their inaccuracy is overlaid with a patina of supposed scientific merit that might not be accorded to less systematic observation.

Such a possibility of more insidious bias in measurement, rather than mere random error, is one to which we have tried to remain sensitive over the course of this study. Indeed, toward the end of the last chapter we discovered that our efforts to measure the differential importance of specific domains for our respondents produced information suspect not only in terms of limited reliability, but also in terms of biases threatening the validity of the results. We already have some confidence that our measures of domain satisfaction and even the global reports of well-being are not as obviously flawed as the importance ratings. Nonetheless, it is worth asking whether these measures might not be subject to smaller edges of bias which, while not troublesome in any extreme sense, might lend some deceptive coloration to various of the results to be reviewed in the next section of this volume.

Such edges of bias are not easy to detect. When suspected, their existence is extremely difficult to prove. And even the way in which we go about detecting them raises a number of thorny philosophical issues about both the character of measurement and the very nature of well-being. We shall not resolve these issues in this chapter nor, in any definitive way, in this volume as a whole. Nonetheless, we feel that our data do bring some worthwhile illumination to such issues and may be helpful in bringing their discussion to a more intelligent focus than often characterizes the debates they foster.

THE POSITIVE AURA OF WELL-BEING

Many of these issues begin to display themselves if we pause to consider a simple property that characterizes all of the central measures we have introduced in preceding chapters, whether these be the relatively global reports of well-being or the more restrictive assessments of satisfaction with specific domains of life. Throughout, we have noted that these measures lean strongly toward positive reports: only a very limited minority of people confess to any general lack of happiness, dissatisfaction with life, or for that matter, dissatisfaction with any of the component domains of life. We are frequently asked whether we really believe that Americans are in fact as satisfied with the terms of their lives as these absolute distributions seem to imply.

This is a very basic question, cutting across all of the major measurements used in this study. From one point of view, the positive aura of these reports comes as no surprise and should hardly be seen as a peculiarity of measurements of satisfaction. Psychologists have long been aware that human subjects, asked to make ratings of almost anything, tend to use the positive side of the rating scale more heavily than the negative side. Since most analytic work tends to treat such ratings in a relative way from person to person, rather than placing any great emphasis on the absolute values, this "positivity bias" is rarely seen as troublesome. Indeed it is not even clear that "bias" is a proper word for the phenomenon, at least in the degree that such a term suggests inaccuracy of measurement. For example, Zajonc (1968) has noted that in massive counts of the frequency of occurrence of words in the English language, positive words such as "approve" and "good" vastly outnumber their negative counterparts such as "disapprove" and "bad." In other words, if the positivity phenomenon is something unreal, it is at least a "bias" that penetrates deeply into common language use, and is a good deal more than some superficial artifact of the psychologist's rating experiments.

In any event, one possibility that surely deserves our consideration is that the satisfaction measurements we have collected are worth taking at face value: perhaps the measurements mean exactly what they appear to, and most Americans most of the time are in fact quite satisfied on balance with most aspects of their lives. This possibility is worth considering not only because it is the simplest answer to the question, but also because some of the principal commonsense reasons for calling this answer into question seem on more careful analysis to rest upon some rather simple "optical illusions" of social perception that are unquestionably fallacious. These illusions vary somewhat in their details, but what they have in common is a property which we might call the exaggerated public visibility of discontent.

This phenomenon emerges in much the same form whether we look toward the more private or the more public domains of life. At the private extreme of marriage, for example, Americans have become accustomed in the last decade or two to the persistent fact of soaring divorce rates. We are aware that the divorce rate in the latter half of twentieth-century America is some ten times greater than the same rate was one hundred or so years before. We are also told that among marriages contracted in the current year, one out of every three or four will terminate in divorce. Against "hard" statistics of this kind, the massive contentment of most Americans with their marriages (see Table 3-1, p. 63) seems obviously suspect. What warrant do we have that such "soft" reports of marital satisfaction are not being vastly overstated by respondents who are embarrassed to admit to our interviewers that their marriages are not proceeding smoothly?

The same natural doubts are salient at the public extreme. In the period leading up to our study, civil disorder in the United States had reached a crescendo rarely matched in American history. Public discontent ran high, whether measured in the frequency of violent ghetto riots or massive influxes of protest marchers into Washington. Moreover, sample surveys over the 1960s and early 1970s showed shocking declines in public trust in the national government. Yet in this period of highest disillusionment, over one-third of our respondents reported "complete satisfaction"—the extreme location on a 7-point scale—with "life in the United States," whereas only one person in one hundred chose the dissatisfied extreme, and less than 8 percent fell anywhere to the dissatisfied side of the scale. Similarly, on other assessments of the "national government," almost 40 percent said they had no dissatisfaction at all, and a clear majority reported at least "quite a bit" of satisfaction with the national government. To be sure, all of these latter distributions show visibly lower levels of satisfaction than the same scales produce for virtually all other domains of life, so that in a very *relative* sense it is not hard to read signs of disenchantment into them. Nevertheless, for the moment we are asking a question about the absolute meaning of these measures, rather than their more relative meaning. And from this point of view, the degree of absolute contentment is imposing, and seems to conflict hopelessly with other things we know about levels of public discontent in the United States during this period. Once again, then, we would seem forced to the conclusion that our measurements suffer an enormous positive bias: our respondents are vastly overstating their levels of satisfaction.

It is worth emphasizing that we scarcely intend to argue that these reports are free of any such gilding, or that the absolute interpretation of these distributions is fully as meaningful as a more modest "relative" interpretation. But it does seem fair to develop the point that some of the apparent marked incompatibility between the positive aura of these reports and such signs of discontent as a high divorce rate or widespread political turmoil can easily be traced to simple fallacies of social perception. Strictly speaking, there need be no conflict whatever between the evidence for discontent and our reports taken entirely at face value.

This kind of optical illusion is easy to demonstrate where high divorce rates are concerned. The observation that some large minority of marriages now being contracted will sooner or later be terminated by divorce is almost impossible to relate logically to our marriage satisfaction distribution. For one thing, much of the dramatic effect of the large proportions cited comes from accumulation over a long period of time. It is surely true that some limited fraction of the marriages we surveyed will terminate five, ten, or fifteen years hence in a divorce. But for very many of such ultimately doomed marriages, we can hardly conclude that our respondents are fudging the truth by giving us rather sanguine *current* reports of their marital situations. It turns out, in our reinterview data, that a few divorces and separations occurred between interviews, and in these instances marital satisfaction reported at the time of the first interview typically runs below the mean for married couples. But these, of course, are instances of impending disruption and not marriages that may drift onto the rocks some years into the future.

Obviously, a better comparison can be drawn with the rate of divorce within much shorter periods of time, such as the conventional annual rate. Rates in this form are, however, minuscule from one point of view, even in the current period when they seem so very large. In any given year, the proportion of married couples who complete a divorce is barely more than 1 percent. As a matter of fact, while it was true that "almost nobody" in our sample reported sharp dissatisfaction with his or her marriage, a tiny proportion did indeed contribute such reports. If we were to assume that most of the few respondents who placed themselves beyond the neutral point to the dissatisfied side of our 7-point scale would end up with a divorce within a year, then we would find ourselves *over*estimating the known divorce rate by a factor of two![1] In other words, rather than a distribution falsely biased

[1] This assumes that *both* partners to a marriage with a divorce impending are aware of the fact and express dissatisfaction. Both common observation and examples from our reinterview material show plainly that with some frequency marriages are brusquely terminated by one dissatisfied partner, with the other not feeling any strong dissatisfaction with the relationship until the news is broken. In the degree such scenarios take place, our hypothetical assumption would overestimate the true divorce rate by a still greater factor.

toward the positive side, a consideration of divorce rates might produce the judgment that our distribution was biased instead toward the gloomy side.

Naturally, any of these latter assumptions or judgments must be taken with a grain of salt where any precise details are concerned. But they are useful in showing that seemingly "mountainous" rates of divorce are not at all incompatible with our distribution of marriage satisfaction, even were we to take it entirely at face value.

A parallel argument pertains for the public sphere. It is well recognized, although all too easily forgotten, that a great deal of civil discontent, as well as a great deal of political power resulting from it, can be wielded by a very small number of people in an open society. This lesson has been brought home to us again and again over the years. In the early 1960s, for example, one cluster of discontent with the way the country was being run surfaced in the form of the John Birch Society, which attained sufficient power in grass roots political organizations all over the country to have had a significant impact on the presidential nomination process in 1964. Scholars came to our election surveys to learn what Birch Society members were like and were absolutely thunderstruck at being told that even if membership figures released by the Birch Society itself were accurate—and typically such figures are markedly inflated—one could not expect more than a single person in a national cross-section sample of the conventional size of 1,500 cases or so to be a Birch Society member. Given the high visibility and unquestioned political influence of such a group, its minuscule size, at least as a fraction of the adult population, seemed almost incomprehensible.

It is likely that the civil rights ferment of the 1960s rested on far fewer shoulders than is commonly understood. Efforts to test and monitor compliance with fair employment practices in Boston made newspaper headlines over many months in that city and seemed to reflect a considerable segment of public opinion, yet later evidence suggested that all of the ferment was provided by a cadre of two dozen dedicated people. Of course all such movements, if they are lucky enough to achieve much resonance in a population, do attract a penumbra of sympathizers much larger in size than the activist core itself. Such a penumbra can, however, outnumber the core by a factor of ten or a hundred and still represent no more than a tiny fraction of the population. It is likely that the peace movement and its protests against the Vietnam war of the late 1960s will be described in history books as "massive"—which in a relative sense, of course, they were. Yet such descriptions should not evoke images of a citizenry generally up in arms. It is unlikely that as much as 2 or 3 percent of the adult population ever had any active part in this movement, or that much more than 10 percent of the population had any particular psychological identification with it. It is quite true that war-weariness struck a much larger proportion of the population, but this was not the same sharp discontent or unruly protest. Indeed, it was to much of this "silent majority" that President Nixon addressed his counteroffensive. They were tired of the war, glad that he was against it too, and quite contented to support him in whatever way he saw fit to terminate it.

Throughout, of course, the important point is that the visibility and even the genuine political influence of public discontent and protest usually registers in psychological magnitudes which vastly outweigh the fractions of a population which are actually feeling the discontent. Our distributions of reactions to the national government do show relatively marked levels of dissatisfaction, and even though the center of gravity of these responses remains on the positive side, these data are simply not, in any certain way, incompatible with a period of profound disillusionment.

Assuming these arguments have merit, then it might be asked what use our measurements might be seen to have for policy purposes. If the country can be hit by a rash of industrial strikes at the same time that a majority of the nation's laborers are expressing more contentment than discontent with their work lives, as may be entirely plausible, is the latter information of much interest? In general, we shall postpone questions of policy relevance until much later in this volume. However, it is worth noting that such a question does not do particular justice to the significance of the measurements. If small nuclei of discontent can have social and political ramifications far beyond their numerical size, then surely we must pay attention to small changes in these nuclei, if we are to have any hope of anticipating such broader events. To be sure, between observations of small percentages of discontent and any predictions of broader ramifications lie a whole series of considerations involving the geographic and social concentration or dispersion of such nuclei, their potential for political organization, and the like. However, the fact remains that small changes in edges of dissatisfaction may have uncommon significance and do deserve monitoring in exactly these terms.

Our samples are not typically large enough to detect very small changes with high reliability. If, for example, our current study shows one-half of 1 percent of married people expressing the most extreme dissatisfaction with their marriages, we cannot be sure that the true population value is not 1½ percent instead. But if we had large enough samples to make such discriminations, and if we found that the proportion of the population expressing such extreme disaffection with their marital status was moving upward from .5 percent to 1.5 percent (or tripling), it might not be entirely fanciful to expect a vast increase in the divorce rate itself, with all of the major societal ramifications such change would have, despite the fact that a very large majority of Americans might be continuing to report themselves as quite satisfied with their marriages at the time of interview. The problem in forming such a prediction, then, is less with the measurements themselves than in knowing where to look more closely among them.

A More Relative Interpretation of Satisfaction Responses

We have argued at some length that most of the commonsense reasons which might lead us to assume that the positive cast of well-being assessments is artificial are probably themselves in gross error. Hence they cannot be seen as constituting any strong argument against the possibility that the measurements mean exactly what they appear to mean.

Nevertheless, our study contains various pieces of evidence to suggest that in fact there is an edge of positive bias in these reports. It seems likely that it is nowhere nearly as large as it may appear at first glance to some observers who are particularly imbued with the kinds of optical illusions we have just discussed. But we are quite willing to agree that these reports are subject to a certain margin of gilding.

We cannot review all of this evidence here. One particularly striking item involves responses to a question which married persons were asked to fill out with paper and pencil, for the sense of further privacy which that operation might convey. They were asked "Has the thought of getting a divorce ever crossed your mind?" Two-thirds of these married respondents checked the box "No, never." We naturally lack any outside reference points as a check on the validity of these responses. Nonetheless, the proportion claiming that divorce has never crossed their minds seems suspiciously high. Perhaps the proportion would have been somewhat lower if the question had merely involved the word "divorce" rather than "getting a divorce," since the latter phrase may suggest a serious consideration of the mechanics involved, such as establishing a relationship with a lawyer, thought as to the terms of settlement, and the like. However this may be, we are not left with any strong sense of reality where these responses are concerned. Between repression of unpleasant past events and a tendency toward denial of difficulty in the intensely personal area of marriage, it would not be surprising if these particular reports were quite strongly biased in a positive direction. Fortunately, however, this is the most blatant point at which such bias seems to emerge.

Acceptance of some general bias in a positive direction in these responses is not in itself very alarming. We have rather little need to interpret our measurements absolutely. We are mainly interested in how people differ from one another in their relative sense of satisfaction with various domains of life or with their lives as a whole. Such assessments can be made quite well even if there is some mild tendency toward gilded or "Pollyanna" responses. Provided such a tendency is truly general, then we can simply add a slight discount for it and proceed with our work. When we view objects from an angle under clear water, there is a very similar absolute displacement. Yet if the surface is calm, we see objects below in essentially their proper shape and proper relationship to one another. This is not the kind of bias which is of particular concern.

As it turns out, we shall put very little weight on the absolute levels of response to our measurements. Virtually all of our conclusions will be based on relative comparisons instead. However, the problem of bias is not so easily solved. If it were true that all persons, regardless of the domains they are assessing or the period in which they make their assessments, were to gild their reports of satisfaction in exactly the same degree, then the relative interpretation of their responses, whether across types of persons, across varying domains, or across time, would suffer no distortion. The difficulty is that we have no assurance as yet that any positive bias is so nicely constant across persons, domains, and times.

In point of fact, we have already seen some evidence that would lead us to suspect that assessments of some domains are more sharply colored with positive bias than others. In dealing with the direct ratings of domains, such as marriage and the family, the tendency to deny the facts of a difficult situation was more intrusive than in other less personal domains. We have also noted that the item which seems to produce the most implausibly biased responses (the question of ever entertaining the possibility of divorce) lies at a most sensitive point in the sensitive domain of marriage. Therefore it seems reasonable to imagine that if we are attempting to discount for any artificial positive bias, we should provide a larger discount in the more intensely personal domains than in areas that are more impersonal.

This means that the domain satisfaction scores which have such an extremely positive cast for areas like marriage and the family are probably not as discrepant as they appear to be from ratings of the country or the family's financial situation. Unfortunately, we do not have any way of judging how large the positive bias is in either case. It seems likely that satisfaction in intensely personal areas might well outrun that for some of the more remote domains, even if we were able to correct the bias accurately. However, this is a problem we cannot solve, and cross-domain comparisons of this particular kind must be handled with caution.[2]

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[2] Not all cross-domain comparisons are disturbed by such a difference in bias. For example, if we observe that marriage satisfaction is more strongly correlated with life satisfaction than is satisfaction with the country or the government, any added positive bias in the marriage reports does not affect the results, since each domain satisfaction is being implicitly centered about its own mean level by the correlation calculation.

The Problems of Response Set

A more insidious problem yet arises from the likelihood that individuals differ from one another in the degree, and perhaps even the direction, in which their responses are biased. A good deal of research on response sets of "acquiescence" or "social desirability" suggests that in the interview situation some people are quite prone toward making responses that they feel are agreeable to the interviewer. The more dramatic illustrations of such effects involve propositions inserted in interviews which are polar opposites of one another; acquiescence is measured by persons who agree with both propositions, rather than agreeing with a proposition but disagreeing with its opposite. It has been shown repeatedly that some types of people are much more prone to this kind of "agreeable" response tendency than others. Similarly, parallel experiments show that people tend to give some edge of favor to responses that seem more, rather than less, socially acceptable, whatever their true situation, and this tendency again seems stronger in some persons than in others. The pressures that some people may feel to deny that they are in a difficult and embarrassing situation, particularly in personal areas where a considerable sense of guilt may be involved, is another manifestation of a similar bias, and one in which people are likely to vary.

Most of these response tendencies seem to predispose people to favor positive responses over negative ones, and it is likely that whatever positive bias is reflected in reports of well-being or assessments of satisfaction is some compound, in unknown proportions, of all of these effects. The most serious problem is that people appear to differ in their susceptibility to these predispositions.

This is a problem for us on several counts. Much of our analysis involves the relative satisfactions and dissatisfactions of various types of people: blacks, women, the affluent, couples whose children have grown up and left the home, people living in rural places, and the like. If some of these groups are saturated with people who are predisposed to agreeable responses, whereas other groups being compared with them are made up of persons relatively free from such response biases, we risk some very faulty comparisons, even if we restrict ourselves to a very relative interpretation of our measurements. For example, one of the clearest findings from work on response sets is that poorly educated people are more likely to give acquiescent or socially desirable responses to an interviewer than those of higher education. If such differences transfer into a higher positive bias on satisfaction reports by the less educated, we might encounter some unexpected and artificial effects in making comparisons among educational groups.

These difficulties can be troublesome as well at another level of analysis. If some individuals are more prone than others to bias their reports in a positive direction, then the structure of correlations among global reports of well-being and assessments of domain satisfactions of the kind we have been reporting in the preceding chapters may be artificially inflated as a result. The person who exaggerates how satisfied he is with his life as a whole may also exaggerate how satisfied he is with more specific facets of his existence, such as his job or his marriage. If other people do not make these exaggerations, the joint result will be an increase in correlations resting on such individual variations in bias.

At this point, however, we may begin to sense that deeper problems are arising. Although the surmise is not impressively documented, it is a common observation that people differ in their inherent optimism or pessimism about things. Some will make light of difficulties and maintain a rosy view of their situation; others will find things to be gloomy about even under the best of circumstances. These alleged differences in personality may also create differences in outlook in various segments of the population and surely will help to enhance observed correlations between various measures of satisfaction or felt well-being. Indeed, they would be enormously difficult to separate from some of the earlier tendencies we have labeled "bias." We meant by the latter term some special flavor to responses that was an artificial product of the interview situation and that would not be duplicated if the respondent were expressing his inner thoughts to his friends. Yet trends which are truly parts of individual personality, such as a tendency to optimism or pessimism, are also legitimate facets of real-world reactions. Even if we knew how to remove their effects from the data, they do not have the same spurious status as many of the tendencies that concern us in this chapter. We shall encounter several points at which the artificial shades into the real in just this manner, without clear demarcations between them.

A Measure of Response Set

One effort we made to deal with the problem of response bias involved the inclusion in the interview schedule of a short set of questions designed to measure one aspect of such bias directly. These six items were selected on empirical grounds from the larger Social Desirability Scale proposed by Crowne and Marlowe (1964) and intended to measure the extent to which individuals describe themselves in "favorable, socially desirable terms, in order to achieve the approval of others." Analyses of the full original scale based on other data have suggested that two subscales are involved, the first being a measure of the tendency to assert something good, but almost certainly untrue, about one's self; the second being a measure of the tendency to deny something bad that is almost certainly true. In our interview, three items each were used from the Assert Good and the Deny Bad subscales.[3]

When these response set measures are laid against our various global reports of well-being and against the more specific domain satisfaction measures, the results generally confirm the overall picture of response bias that we have been building in the preceding pages. In the first instance, many of our suspicions about where bias should be present most clearly, and the type of bias that it is, receive substantiation: whether one deals with the subscales taken separately or with our full version of the Social Desirability Scale, the correlations with other measures run in expected directions and show quite intelligible relative magnitudes, depending on the particular satisfaction scale being used. On the other hand, these correlations are generally very limited in their magnitude, suggesting that biases of this type at least are having far from overpowering effects in shaping the data. In other words, our phrase "edges of bias" is well chosen.

We can briefly summarize some of the more intelligible patterns which emerge, and which reassure us that the response set measure is working as expected. It will be recalled, for example, that in addition to our standard measures of domain satisfaction cast in bipolar form, we also used an alternative measurement suggested by Bradburn (1969) in which respondents were asked to summarize independently the amount of satisfaction and the amount of dissatisfaction obtained from each domain. For most of our satisfaction measures, be they global or domain-specific, the Deny Bad subscale shows higher correlations with them than the Assert Good subscale. However, this difference is greatest for the unipolar domain *dis*satisfaction measures: denial of the bad has its greatest relative weight when people are asked to chronicle their points of disaffection, much as we would expect.

The items which are exceptions to the general rule, showing instead

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[3] The three items "asserting good" were:

No matter who I am talking to, I am always a good listener.
I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.
I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

The three items in the "deny bad" subscale were:

There have been occasions when I felt like smashing something.
On a few occasions I have given up something because I thought too little of my ability.
I sometimes feel resentful when I do not get my way.

In addition to theoretical grounds, the division of the original items into two subscales was indicated by factor analyses conducted on data from a sample of high school boys (cf. Robinson and Shaver, 1969, p. 642).

stronger correlations with the Assert Good subscale than with the Deny Bad subscale, are also instructive. The most noteworthy exception occurs when respondents are asked to state what satisfactions they get from the domain of religion: here the relatively strong correlation with the Assert Good subscale ($r = .18$)—the largest of all where the unipolar satisfaction measures are concerned—seems thoroughly intelligible. Where our primary bipolar domain satisfaction measures are concerned, the only three domains in which correlations with the Assert Good subscale outrun those with the Deny Bad subscale are the neighborhood, the community, and the United States. These are the less personal domains where concern over the denial of the unsatisfactory, as we have earlier argued, is likely to be at a minimum.

When the two response-set subscales are put together in an overall measure of bias, the pattern of correlations with our domain satisfaction items is again intelligible. The largest correlation ($r = .21$) is with the "nonwork time" domain, although this is only true in the version of that item that was construed as "life outside of work"; in the version which stressed "hobbies" and leisure in a more restrictive set, the correlations with the total response bias measure fall to almost the lowest of any domain. The second largest correlation ($r = .20$), as might be expected, is with assessments of marriage satisfaction, and the related family life and work satisfaction items are next in line. All of the other domain satisfaction correlations lie in a narrow range from .12 to .17, with the exception of satisfaction with health, which shows a correlation of essentially zero. Apparently reports of health are simply not vulnerable to the types of response tendency being directly measured here.

Where global reports of well-being are concerned, most of the correlations with the total Social Desirability Scale run in about the same range as for the domain satisfaction measures. The correlation for the happiness item is .14; for the single-item measure of life satisfaction, .17; and for our Index of Well-Being it is almost .20. The latter index is one of the more dramatic examples of the greater influence of the Deny Bad subscale ($r = .29$) relative to the Assert Good subscale ($r = .12$). Apparently the reluctance to say something bad about oneself is the more potent intrusion on these responses. That is, the difficulties which produce dissatisfaction in one or another domain are relatively likely to be papered over in some reports, whereas a tendency to exaggerate satisfaction in a positive situation to enhance social approval is much less important as a predisposition.

We also have lively concern as to whether demographic subgroups that are commonly separated for analytic comparisons differ markedly from one another in terms of these response tendencies. Using the total Social Desirability Scale, quite the clearest relationship emerges where the variable of age is concerned. As age increases, the tendency to provide socially desirable responses increases steadily as well ($r = .26$). Both subscales make nearly an equal contribution to this relationship.

Probably the next strongest relationship emerges for education, a variable which typically shows response-set differences. However, this relationship is hinged almost entirely on the Assert Good subscale: that subscale taken alone actually shows a stronger correlation with education than the total scale of which it is a part, and the relationship of education to the Deny Bad subscale is very weak and irregular. It appears that the need to avoid embarrassment by minimizing difficulties varies little as a function of education differences. At the same time, the poorly educated are much more likely to give uncritical adherence to propositions that portray themselves in unrealistically favorable lights, just as other research shows that less educated persons tend to acquiesce without full attention to item content. A related tendency quite visible in the data is for the less educated to choose the extreme positions on our 7-point scales with uncommon frequency. Of course, any judgment that such disproportionate choice of the extreme categories is an artificial bias, rather than another aspect of reality, rests to some degree on surmise. Given the objectively less pleasant life situations of most poorly educated people, it is not surprising perhaps that they usually are overrepresented in the "completely dissatisfied" position. However, they are also overrepresented at the "completely satisfied" extreme, and it seems likely that people of higher education, in equally satisfactory circumstances, are simply more likely to cloak their assessments with slightly greater reserve. Since most of our measures show distributions with the center of gravity of responses quite to the positive side for people of all educational levels, the tendency of the poorly educated to dominate the extreme category implies that calculations of average satisfaction for them probably receive a mild artificial boost, acting to reduce the apparent relationship between social status and many of these measures.

We have now seen enough detail concerning the main lines of these response biases to stand back and ask what difference they make for the kind of conclusions we would like drawn from this study. The variable of age provides one good test case, since as we have seen it is as strongly correlated with both halves of our social desirability measure as any demographic variable. We also may remember from Chapter 2 (see Figure 2-5) that there was some positive relationship of interest between age and our Index of Well-Being: specifically, people over 65 report visibly higher levels of felt well-being than do younger respondents. However, we now can see that this relationship might be little more than a spurious product of the tendency of older people to give more positive responses. To examine this possibility, the Index of Well-Being scores of each respondent were adjusted for differences on the Social Desirability Scale by age, and then the relationship between age and well-being was reconsidered. The original correlation is, of course, slightly attenuated, but the difference is negligible and would not have affected any of our substantive conclusions.

This outcome has been quite typical of our use of the Social Desirability scores to adjust relationships with central measures such as the Index of Well-Being. As we might expect, the relationships between indicators of social status, such as income and education, show slight gains in their correlation with the Index of Well-Being, since the highest positive response bias was found at the lower status levels that already showed the lowest average satisfaction scores. But the difference is unimpressive, and most other adjustments with other variables less strongly correlated with this measure of response bias have entirely negligible effects.

Another test at a different level of analysis involves the effect that such response bias might have in producing artificially inflated correlations between our various measures of satisfaction and well-being. We have seen that there are small positive correlations between all of these measures and the response bias indicator: if some people tend to give rather rosy answers to all of these measures, while others give more realistic ones, a part of the correlation between well-being measures may be due to such differences alone. However, correction for response bias does not produce any dramatic change. For example, the "raw" correlation between the happiness item and the Index of Well-Being is an *r* of .49. If the contribution by response bias, as measured by the Social Desirability Score, is removed from both the index and the happiness item, this correlation is reduced to an *r* of .48, a trivial difference.

All of these results conform with our general conclusion that while edges of bias are clearly visible in these data, they tend to remain rather marginal effects. However, our evidence remains somewhat incomplete. For one thing, our abbreviated measure of social desirability is somewhat weaker than we would like. The component items are not very strongly correlated with each other. A longer scale would have gained considerably in reliability and, presumably, strength in adjusting or correcting other findings.

More important still, our Social Desirability Scale, while perhaps most relevant for the positive aura to response distributions which we have been addressing up to this point, is not even designed to tap all possible response biases. It remains quite conceivable that there are other influences on our responses that we would want to regard as artificial.

Other Extraneous Influences on Responses

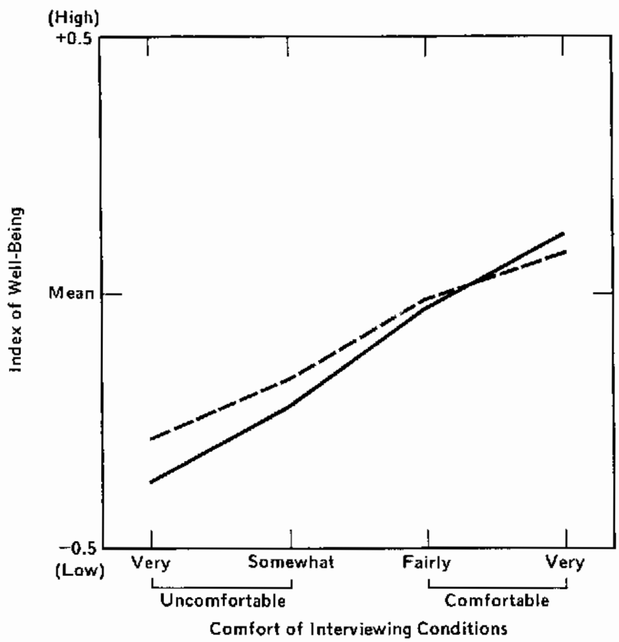
Given the highly subjective nature of the satisfactions we are trying to measure, it would not be surprising if responses were unduly affected by situational feelings created by specific facets of the interview situation, such as the way the individual reacted to the interviewer, his feelings about the interview itself, or even such matters as the weather on the day of the interview. Therefore we collected a variety of data permitting us to reconstruct the conditions of the interview, including the respondent's apparent feelings about the procedure; the fit of race, sex, or social class between the respondent and the interviewer; and other physical conditions surrounding the interview.

Almost none of these factors can be shown to have any important bearing on the character of the subjective responses collected. Two modest exceptions are, however, worth reporting. Interviewers were asked to rate the interest of the respondent in the interview. There is some correlation between these ratings and central measures like the Index of Well-Being: people who found the interview interesting—a considerable majority, as the interviewers saw it—showed higher scores on the Index of Well-Being than those who seemed disinterested in the interview or were suspicious about the situation. Since it is likely that much of the disinterest came from people in difficult situations who found talking about their lives somewhat painful, it seems likely that this finding is largely a recapitulation of earlier findings we have discussed concerning the tendency to deny such difficult situations.

Another finding appears, however, to be quite independent of ground previously covered. Interviewers were asked to record weather conditions on the day of the interview, as well as how comfortable the temperature and humidity were in the place where the interview was taken. It is hard to find any connection between the weather and responses to our central variables. However, the comfort variable, taking account of ventilation and air conditioning as well as the weather outside, does show some relationship with the responses to the Index of Well-Being. Over half of the interviews were taken in places reported to be "very comfortable." However, among the minority of cases reported to be less than "very comfortable," levels of the Index of Well-Being drop off progressively with increasing discomfort. Since most of the interviews were taken during the summer, discomfort typically would mean excessive heat and humidity where the interview was taken—conditions that are likely to create a certain edge of irritability.

In view of the fact that the absence of much ventilation, not to mention air conditioning, is more likely to be found in less affluent homes, the question arises as to whether this observed relationship is simply a reflection of other factors which lead lower status respondents to find less satisfaction with life. Adjusting for income differences does indeed reduce the relationship between the physical comfort of the interview and the well-being responses. However, it falls well short of removing it, as Figure 4-1 suggests.

Figure 4-1: Relationship between Interviewer Ratings of How Comfortable the Conditions of the Interview and the Respondent's Score on the Index of Well-Being[a]



[a] The solid line shows this relationship for uncorrected satisfaction scores, while the broken line shows the relationship after the satisfaction scores have been corrected to remove the correlation with income.

The apparently depressing effects of the physical discomfort of the interview situation does not, of course, contribute to our discussion as to why the general distributions of responses to questions concerning well-being and domain satisfaction tend on balance to show a large measure of contentment. They do, however, provide some insight as to the variety of rather artificial factors that can bear on these responses. They also give some body to our earlier observations that the stability of these responses, as measured by subsequent reinterviewing, is only modest. Variations in the comfort of the interview situation from one time to the next is surely one rather extraneous source of the changes observed.

Summary

Our purpose up to this point has been to discuss some of the artificial influences on responses to our central measurements. Perhaps the most impressive sign of the artificial for some observers is the degree of contentment which our respondents register about their lives. However, we have argued that one main reason why such levels of contentment seem artificial at first glance is because of the high salience of instances of discontent when they occur. We have attempted to show that when quantitative information concerning discontent is laid against these distributions, much of the apparent conflict can readily be resolved.

At the same time, we have recognized that there are some response tendencies which can be expected to produce an apparent upgrading of reported satisfactions. We have argued that these effects are not, in general, very large. Moreover, as long as we restrict our conclusions to rather gross differences involving large segments of the population, we are not likely to be subject to much error because of such biases in reporting.

Nevertheless, much analysis comes to rest with smaller and more extreme segments of the population, particularly when we attempt to search these data for their policy implications. This fact, coupled with the necessary possibility that in some instances multiple sources of bias can compound themselves in nefarious ways, means that rather misleading conclusions could be easily drawn from these materials. In the next section, we will consider such a case at some length.

THE PERILS OF ISOLATED AND UNREFINED RELATIONSHIPS

Whenever one begins to explore unfamiliar terrain with unfamiliar measuring instruments, as is our case with the subjective quality of life, the nearest approach to a guide is commonsense expectation. Of course some expectations seem stronger or more firmly grounded than others. But if we encounter a distribution of responses, or a relationship between two sets of responses, that deeply offends strong expectations, then we are faced with a dilemma. Occasionally we can review the provenience and internal logic of our expectations and discover faults which help to resolve the issue. We have argued one such case at the outset of this chapter. More often, however, we can see nothing wrong with our expectations, and hence come to suspect that something is wrong with our measurements. Some bias or other unsuspected factors are intruding to confound our expectations.

One thing we cannot do at such a point is to sweep strange and unexpected results into oblivion by ignoring them. We must pursue them to lay bare the sources of bias or to arrive at a better understanding as to why the measurements produce the results they do. This is obviously the only way by which we can understand their strengths and weaknesses more fully. In the limiting case, to report results that conform to expectations, while discarding those which do not, would mean that we would learn precisely nothing from our labors.

Of course, in unexplored terrain, it remains worth sober thought as to where our expectations come from. Where an investigation of satisfactions with life and its various facets are concerned, most of the stronger expectations derive in one way or another from the simple proposition that "the better people's situations are, the more satisfied they should be with them." If we go on to ask what we mean by "better," we typically mean "objectively better." In the financial domain of savings and standard of living, for example, a lot of savings are "objectively better" than few or none, and a "high" standard of living, as objectively measured by the bulk of resources available to maintain it, is better as well. When we turn to some other domains, such as marriage or friendships, we may be somewhat harder pressed to say exactly what "objectively better" really means, although we might be able in due time to think of a number of objective indicators. But it is clear at this point that we are moving into something of an impasse, if we carry this reasoning to its logical extreme. If the only data we were to trust were those in which reports of satisfaction were congruent with objective conditions, however defined, then we would have served little purpose in investigating subjective perceptions to begin with. We would have saved much time and money by returning to the more conventional "objective" indicators of the quality of life. Yet if this kind of subjective investigation has any particular inspiration at all, it depends on the observation, rather well documented, that subjective assessments do depart from objective situations in meaningful and important ways, about which all too little is known.

Our dilemma is thereby sharpened. We become most suspicious of bias or measurement inadequacy when subjective assessments come into conflict with objective situations, although such discrepancies taken substantively are almost the principal reason for the conduct of the study. The only route out of the dilemma is to come to grips with the unexpected result with all the analytic tools and side information we can bring to bear, in order to learn what part of the finding, if any, stems from distortions that can be readily understood, and what part seems to reflect something of substantive interest in the real world.

A CASE STUDY OF AN UNEXPECTED RESULT

Given the almost reflexive equation we tend to make between "better objective situations" and "more satisfaction," we probably find some reassurance concerning the adequacy of subjective measurement in learning that life satisfaction increases with social status, whether the latter term is measured by income, occupational level, or education. As a rather global kind of relationship summarizing many domains and many senses of the term "better situation," this is an intuitively satisfying relationship, although if we insist on any tight equation between objective situations and subjective ones, we would have a right to be quite dismayed that the satisfaction-by-status relationship is no stronger than it appears to be empirically. It is rarely more than a weak trend, especially if education is chosen as the indicator of status.

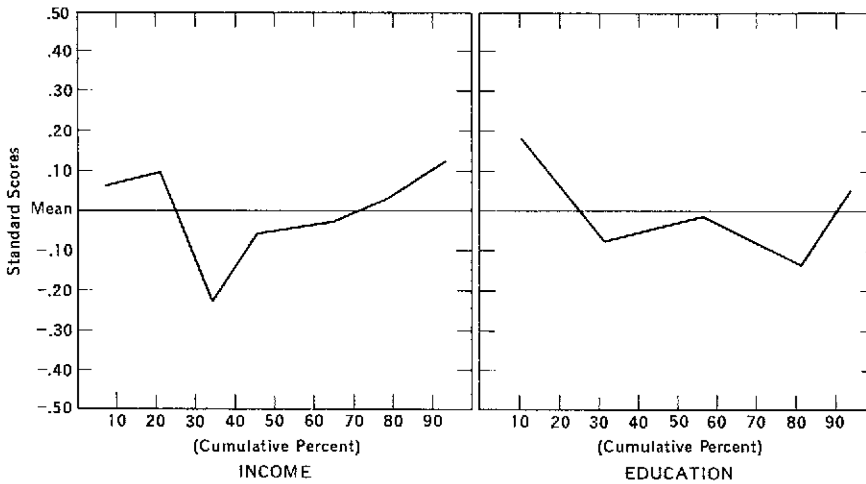
As we move below the global level to more specific satisfactions, some of our strongest expectations—ones which begin to approach tautologies—are handsomely confirmed in our data. For example, we would certainly expect people who enjoy large incomes to report greater satisfaction with their financial situations, whether current standard of living or savings, than people trying to get by with very meager incomes. Such relationships do emerge with great clarity in our data: the correlation between income and assessments of satisfaction with either standard of living ($r = .22$) or savings ($r = .21$) are among the largest that we find in relating demographic characteristics to any of the domain satisfaction measures.

But all of this makes it the more perplexing when we encounter relationships that involve nearly as strong expectations but which show next to no confirming empirical result. A good example within our data is provided by expressions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's housing.

As a rule, we would expect people who live in "objectively" better homes to be more satisfied with them than those who suffer poor housing conditions. Moreover, we know that, generally speaking, well-to-do, higher status people live in quarters that are far better appointed than the poor. These expectations are not quite as direct as, for example, the assumption that people of large incomes will be more satisfied with their financial situations than those with meager revenues. We know that income and objective quality of residence are not perfectly correlated. There are elderly people living on tiny pensions who nonetheless reside in homes of relative quality that they paid for in the stage of life when their incomes were much more substantial. Similarly, there are occasional well-to-do people who, for whatever Bohemian instincts, enjoy living in spartan lodgings. Nevertheless, the correlation between current family income and the objective value of the residence is surely very substantial. Hence, presuming that satisfaction follows such objective quality, we would expect to be able to show quite readily that satisfaction with housing increases as a function of social status, and income in particular.

When we look at these raw relationships as displayed in Figure 4-2, for example, we find virtually nothing of the kind. Beyond a certain minimal income level, there is indeed an orderly upward progression of housing sat-

Figure 4-2: Housing Satisfaction by Status (Total Sample, Unadjusted)



isfaction as income increases. But low income people are astonishingly satisfied with their housing, and if we turn to educational background as an indicator of social status, we actually find that if anything, satisfaction with one's housing *declines* as social status increases!

The mischief that these raw, isolated relationships might produce among the unwary is not hard to imagine if we introduce a context of policy usage for such data. Suppose for the moment we were benevolent dictators dedicated to using the instruments of state to produce the "greatest good for the greatest number," where "good" is defined in terms of these subjective perceptions. Our first response to Figure 4-2 would be to abolish all government low income housing projects. After all, the data show "empirically" that low income people are very satisfied with the housing they have. If the government is to stimulate housing programs at all, then they should be tailored to the needs of middle income people, for this is the segment of the population that registers visible dissatisfaction with its housing. Moreover, if any governmental funds are left over from efforts to improve the housing of middle income people, the rational move would be to pump such remainders into enhancing the housing of the rich, since Figure 4-2 implies that the top quarter of the population, in terms of current income, is absolutely less satisfied with its housing than the very bottom quarter of the income hierarchy!

This scenario is, of course, a travesty in many regards. For one thing, the experienced eye will recognize that the relationships portrayed in Figure 4-2 are no more than vestigial statistically, even though they can be made to look rather impressive. As we shall see when we put other data into the same format as this figure, the slopes are really quite flat. The simple correlation between income and housing satisfaction is only .02, and that involving education is actually −.06. Such correlations tend to understate the amount of covariation, since they force the data into a linear pattern when the true relationships are more nearly V-shaped. Nevertheless, the absolute differences in satisfaction from one status group to another are by almost any frame of reference small and hardly of a magnitude on which discriminatory social policy should be based.

This observation, while apt, fails to resolve much of our problem, however. What we are saying is that housing satisfaction is virtually unrelated to the income or education of the householder. Yet common sense provided us with a rather strong expectation that housing satisfaction would show a very robust positive relationship with indicators of social status.

Clearly at this juncture we must begin to retrace our steps. Either our expectations suffer some fatal flaw in reasoning, or these measures of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are behaving in a rather untoward way. For reasons we outlined earlier, it is crucial in such a situation that we arrive at some clearer understanding as to where the difficulties lie.

Since we have just been discussing several superficial biases that are known to be intruding on these data, at least in a small way, it is reasonable to begin our reconnaissance by casting our eye back over those. This is especially true inasmuch as some of those effects were not across-the-board gilding of responses, but rather appeared to have differential impact as a function of education, a variable also involved in one of our perplexing relationships of Figure 4-1. For example, we noted that less educated people were more likely to "assert good" on the Crowne-Marlowe items than did the better educated. Perhaps this response tendency is one reason why lower status people give such positive reports of satisfaction with their housing in Figure 4-2. Our hopes in this regard must remain somewhat fettered, since we have already seen that these response differentials are not large—no more than an "edge of bias," which, when removed, produced only small changes in our data patterns. Nevertheless, information organized in the form of Figure 4-2 puts a good deal of emphasis on small and extreme groups, and it is possible that the corrections will loom larger where such respondents are concerned.

Figure 4-3 shows the results of adjusting away the effects of response set captured by the Crowne-Marlowe item (broken line).[4] The general outcome, whether we look at income or education as predictors, is as expected:

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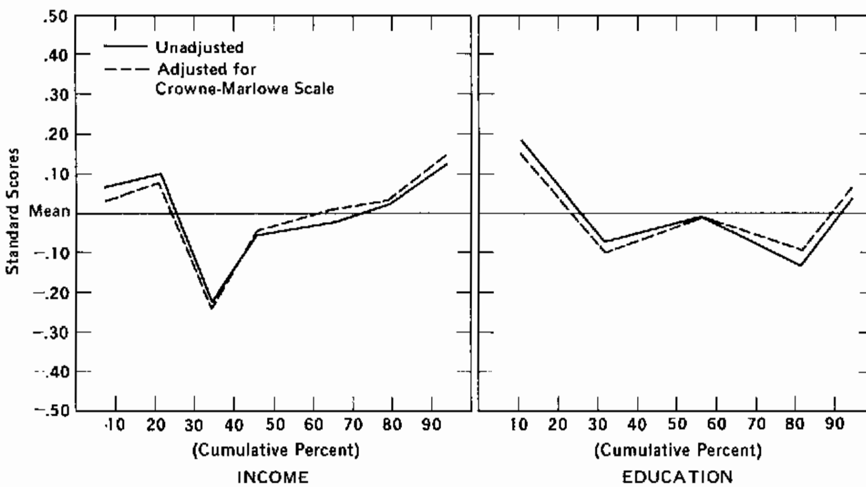
[4] The adjustments of relationships in this section have been accomplished with use of the Multiple Classification Analysis technique described earlier.

Figure 4-3: Housing Satisfaction by Status, with Response Set Controlled

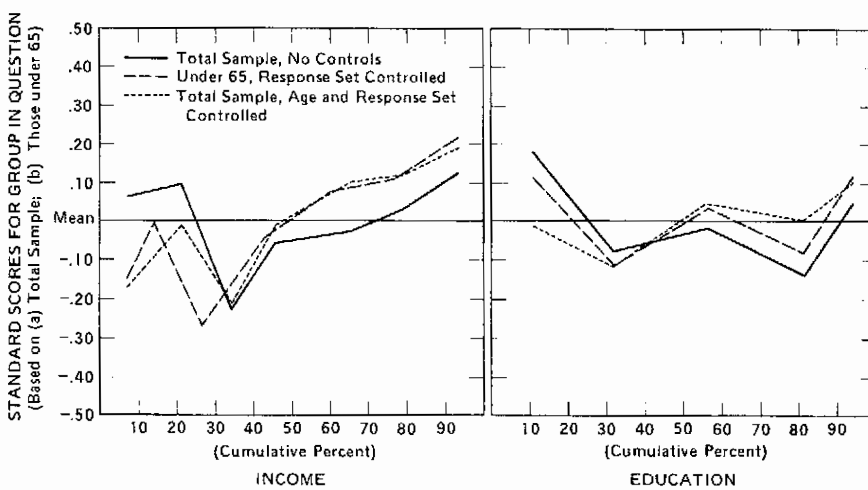


the reported satisfaction of lower status people is somewhat deflated by the adjustment, while that for higher status people is raised. However, fitting our earlier discussion, the effects are indeed slight. At least our well-intentioned but unsophisticated dictator could no longer conclude that people in the lowest income quartile were *more* satisfied with their housing than people in the highest quartile, but the adjusted relationship still falls well short of our commonsense expectations.

The other route of reconnaissance is to reexamine those expectations. We recall that they hinge not only on the assumption that people living in "objectively" better circumstances will be more satisfied with them, but also on the assumption that education and more especially income would be strongly correlated with the objective quality of housing conditions. The latter assumption is most bothersome where older people are concerned, many of whom have much better living quarters relative to their current incomes than younger people. Moreover, we may note that there is a substantial and nearly linear relationship ($r = .26$) between chronological age and satisfaction with housing, such that the very old show remarkably high levels of housing satisfaction. Since the old tend to have lower levels of education and bulk large as well among the very lowest income levels, perhaps the remarkable satisfaction of low income and low education people is largely a reflection of this effect.

There are several ways we might ask how the age factor affects the raw relationship between income and housing satisfaction. We could simply rid ourselves of the ambiguities posed by older people by discarding from our

Figure 4-4: Housing Satisfaction by Status, with Response Set and Age Factors Controlled



calculations all people over 65. Or again, we could continue to keep the entire sample in view but levy a control on age, so that implicitly the statements of housing satisfaction from any given person are being compared with his age peers, whether this means people at the height of their earning power, or some time before or after.

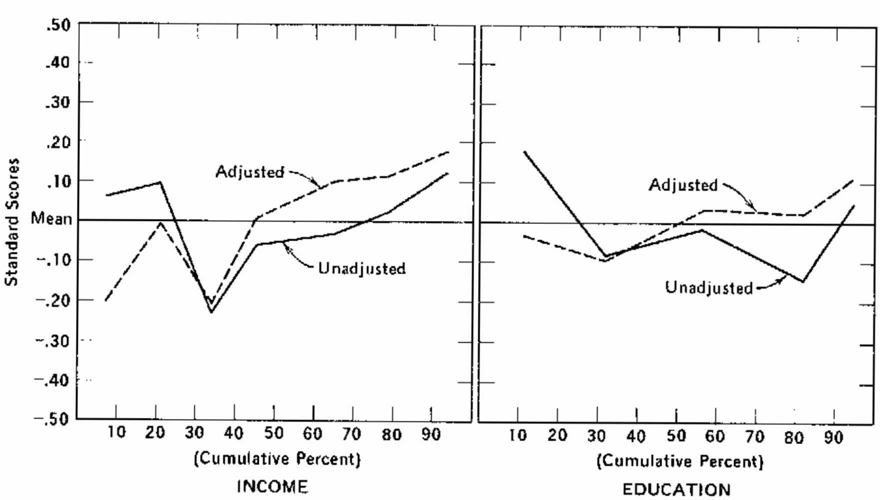
In Figure 4-4 we compare both of these alternatives, continuing to control on response set as well, with the original raw relationship. When some recognition of age is added to controls for response set, the basic relationship is moved quite significantly in the direction of our expectations. The change is greatest at the lowest status levels, where respondents now appear less satisfied than average. Dropping people over 65, or better yet, controlling for age within the total sample, succeeds in rotating the relationship with education from negative to the expected positive and makes the faint positive relationship with income a somewhat stronger one.

We can conclude, then, that a small part of the puzzling quality of the original relationship was due to the response set measured by the Crowne-Marlowe items, and a greater part to confusions stemming from the presence of elderly people in the sample, many of whose current incomes fall well below the nationally defined "poverty level," yet who, without families to support and with homes paid for, live in at least moderate comfort.

Given the effects of such an age adjustment on the relationship between status and housing satisfaction, the next question to be raised is whether additional adjustments for other demographic differences might not brighten this relationship still further. In point of fact, this turns out to be true, even though age remains the most potent single correction. For example, Campbell's (1971) study of racial attitudes in large metropolitan areas of the country shows much more regular gains in housing satisfaction as income increases, even without age controlled, than we have displayed for the current study. The chief difference between these studies is that the racial study did not go outside fifteen of the nation's largest cities, while the current study represents the views of the full adult population, including rural and small-town citizens as well as urban ones. In part because dollars typically stretch farther in rural areas than in urban ones, it would not be surprising if people in less urbanized areas got objectively better housing for the same proportions of their incomes invested than urban people. Our data in fact imply that this is so, and when we add further controls on urban-rural residence to our original relationship, it strengthens by another step (Figure 4-5).

Another factor underlying any of these gains in the strength of our original relationship seems likely to be an element of social comparison in these satisfaction ratings. That is, the housing expectations of aged urban whites are undoubtedly influenced more by the common experiences of aged urban whites in general than they are even by modal national expectations, not to mention the experiences and expectations of young rural blacks in the South, which are probably quite irrelevant for them. As we add demo-

Figure 4-5: Housing Satisfaction by Status, with Response Set, Age, and Urban-Rural Residence Controlled



graphic controls so that more nearly homogeneous groups are being compared, we are accomplishing a certain amount of equating of these expectations. We shall inquire as to these dynamics of social comparison more fully in the course of Chapter 6.

At this point in the argument we have a right to be troubled by at least two remaining facts. One is that despite several controls or adjustments, the relationship between these status indicators and housing satisfaction still remains smaller than we might have supposed. To be sure, the refined relationships of Figure 4-5 would not be subject to the same simplistic misreadings that we imagined our benevolent dictator might give to the original or raw relationships. Even adding quite a number of further demographic controls fails to bring the correlation between income and housing satisfaction as high as .15, or about 2 percent of the variance in these assessments, and the relationship involving education continues to lag further behind. Such marginal levels of association certainly still fall far short of our original expectations.

The second problem involves the very meaning of exercising more and more controls or adjustments on the raw data. How do we know when to stop this process or where reality actually lies in any of these data?

We had a right to be very comfortable in controlling the effects of response set out of these key relationships, since it seemed obvious that such a tactic merely removed a superficial bias associated with the interviewing process. Presumably, persons whose responses were most affected by this correction would have expressed themselves somewhat differently with close friends in more spontaneous communication, and it is obviously desirable to adjust for such differences wherever we can. A variable like age, however, is part of reality and not some mere artifact of the interview itself. Our capacity to remove its effects by statistical legerdemain does not change the reality: a great many low income people, including a disproportionate number of the elderly, express a great deal of satisfaction with their housing. The important point, if we go on to control for age, is that we begin to cross a major watershed between superficial biases that cry for correction and more profound problems of meaning. We should not make that crossing without being quite aware of its implications.

The danger is one of "overcontrol." To overcontrol is to adjust from view some contour of the data which is actually relevant in a substantive way to the more precise question being asked about reality. In the case of age and housing satisfaction, for example, it might well be demonstrable that on balance, older people do live in nicer houses with more space per family member, and that this fact is at least one reason why older people are so much more satisfied with their housing than the young. However, our inquiry at the moment is focused on an expected association between the "niceness" of housing and satisfaction with it. If we control away the effects of age in the broadside fashion represented in Figures 4-4 or 4-5, we are removing some of the differences in "niceness" which are central to our inquiry.

Whether one is overcontrolling in a given situation depends on the nature of the analytic question being asked. For some purposes, in examining a particular relationship, it might be important to control out the effects of a third factor which happens to be irrelevant to the question but which confounds the results. In dealing with exactly the same relationship, but with other purposes in mind, the same control might be quite self-defeating. The judgment thus depends on some conceptual understanding of the meaning of the influence which the third factor has upon the relationship. Without such understanding, the possibility of overcontrol cannot be evaluated.

At the moment, we have developed precious little notion why simple differences in chronological age should account for more than six times the variance in reports of housing satisfaction than are accounted for by simple differences in income. It almost certainly is not *merely* because older people live in nicer houses, and nicer houses bring more satisfaction. Until we have made some progress on this question, we cannot be sure that our controls for age in this instance are particularly appropriate, even if they do bring the relation between income and housing satisfaction notably closer to our expectations. Momentarily, we shall table this question in favor of another set of considerations about the relation of status to housing satisfaction, which in due time will help us return and pursue the age problem more effectively.

BROADENING THE PERSPECTIVE

Up to this point we have focused on the relationship between status indicators and housing satisfaction without looking very far afield. It turns out, however, that we can throw much more light on the matter if we broaden our perspective to include numerous other patterns involving these same variables, using the fuller portfolio of data from our study.

There are at least two other sets of information with which the relationship between status indicators and housing satisfaction can fruitfully be compared. One such set is made up of the numerous more concrete or specific assessments that we drew from our respondents concerning their housing. The other set involves the numerous measures of satisfaction with other domains covered in the study. In short, we propose to provide a richer context for our dissection of the relationship under discussion by looking outward in two directions: "vertically," from general to specific within the same domain of housing, and "horizontally," across all of the domain satisfactions.

Specific Ratings vs. Overall Domain Satisfaction

Our respondents were asked a number of questions about more specific features of their housing. Some of these were purely factual matters, such as how many rooms the dwelling unit contained or how much rent was paid for it. Others, however, involved a stronger tinge of the subjective and evaluative. Thus, for example, our people were asked how well the home tended to heat in the winter, how convenient the location was for them, how "well-built" a structure the housing was in, and so on. There were also questions of an evaluative sort as to the immediate surroundings, such as how safe it was to walk at night in the vicinity or how well kept up the neighborhood was.

Now we know, at least in a stereotypic way, that the poor tend to live in structures which are poorly built, do not heat well, are inconveniently located, and fall in neighborhoods of high crime rates and other dilapidated housing. Indeed, it is all of these stereotypes that led us to be puzzled to find people at the low end of the status ladder expressing more contentment with their housing than the average adult in our sample. The obvious question is, then, whether our lower status respondents give these more specific features of their residential environment relatively high or realistically low grades.

Figure 4-6 gives us a rather unequivocal answer. The relationships shown are not always very strong, but they are in every case positive, and some of them rather substantially so: where specific features of housing are concerned, low status goes with relatively dissatisfied assessments. Moreover, this is true of other items concerning the house or immediate neighborhood not included in this graph.

It is worth stressing that all of the relationships shown in Figure 4-6 are simple or unrefined ones. No controls have been added to take account of response set, age, or any other intrusive factors. Had we happened upon these simple relationships between status indicators and concrete features of housing without a more generalized measure of housing satisfaction, we would not have found them perplexing at all.

What is most striking, of course, is that the measure of overall satisfaction with housing does not appear to fit well with any of the specific assessments, at least as all of these vary by status. The lowest status levels grade the condition of their houses, the convenience of their locations, etc., at levels appropriately below the average for the sample, but then proceed to sum up their feelings of satisfaction with the housing in terms that are more contented than the rest of the sample. Of course it is always possible that there are other specific features of housing that we failed to include in the interview which would in fact have drawn much higher grades from lower status people than for their affluent peers, so that the overall domain satisfaction would appear a more intelligible summation. However, it would seem odd that we could have so neatly missed all of these countervailing aspects of housing, and it is not clear in any event what they would be.

It seems more plausible by far to imagine instead that as we climb the ladder from specific to abstract or generalized in these evaluations, certain systematic effects, only partially captured with detectors like the Crowne-Marlowe items, produce a strain toward positive summary statements of satisfaction among the less privileged. This suspicion is, if anything, reinforced when we consider the behavior of the least specific measure in our battery of housing items. More to structure the ensuing discussion of housing than as a variable of substantive importance, respondents were all asked:

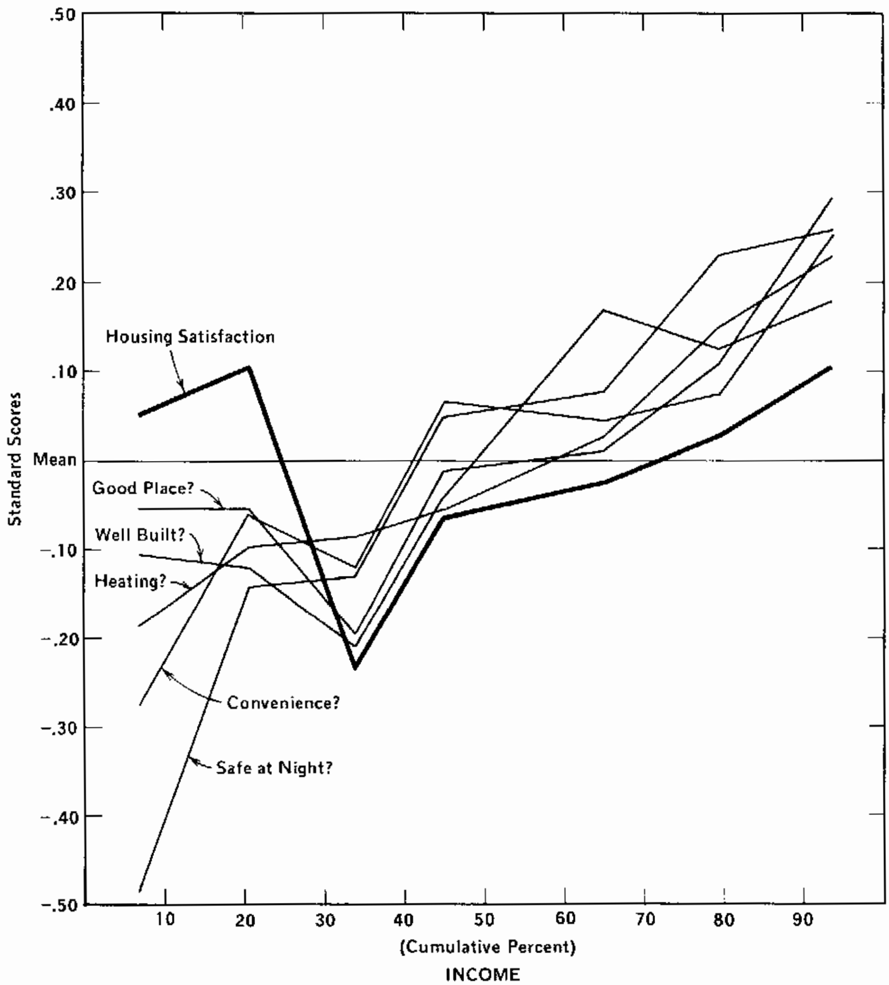
> Would you say that as a place for you (and your family) to live, this (house/apartment) is very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?

This question is the least specific of our more concrete items, and it seems symptomatic that its performance by status (see line titled "Good Place" in Figure 4-6) generally falls between that of the housing satisfaction summary and the ratings of all the other more specific features of housing. Indeed, if we mentally except this semigeneral item from the rest of Figure 4-6, the gap in performance between the generalized measure and the specific items simply becomes more impressive.

This is not the only regularity we have begun to note that seems to follow the global-specific dimension. In the preceding chapter, we pointed out that reports of overall satisfaction with specific domains appeared to be more stable from interview to reinterview than our major measures of global well-being (see Figure 3-1). Thus, for example, the average stability correlation for the report of general happiness and the statement of overall life satisfaction was only about .40. As we descended to statements of satisfaction with more specific domains, the average stability correlation appeared to rise. That correlation for housing satisfaction was one of the lower ones, being .47 for the total reinterview sample, or .51 if movers were excluded, but still notably greater than those for the most global reports. When we descend to the still more specific assessments of housing featured in Figure 4-6, the average stability correlation of .56 (movers excluded) is greater still.

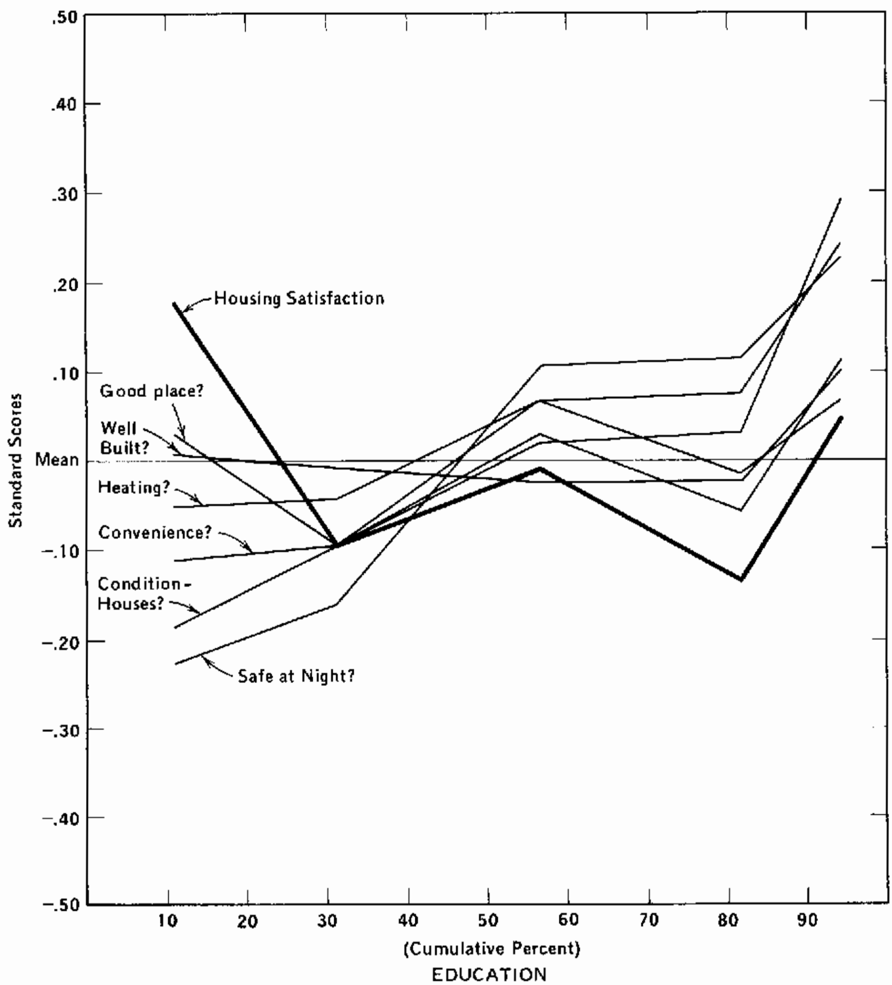
The main message from Figure 4-6 for our immediate purposes, however, has a double edge. On one hand, we may be encouraged that assess-

Figure 4-6: Overall Housing Satisfaction and Relevant Specific Ratings, by Status



ments of specific features of housing are as "realistic" as they are, which simply means that they are more congenial to our expectations than the overall domain satisfaction measure. This is true even when these relationships have not been adjusted for response set, age, or other such factors. Presumably were they to be further adjusted, they would simply increase in strength in the commonsense direction.

On the other hand, there is a sense in which the mystery concerning our



original relationship is deepened. Whatever strain toward the positive may be occurring at lower status levels in the housing domain satisfaction reports does not appear to be a perfectly general phenomenon, but rather one which emerges mainly when summary evaluations of housing are elicited. We are tempted to imagine that there is an important further source of bias in these reports beyond that traced by our response-set measure. At the same time, the term "bias" may be premature, if by that we mean an artificial or misleading influence in the data. One possibility that we must take seriously is that in a very genuine way, at the subjective level, some lower status people are actually more satisfied with less, where housing is concerned.

Status Indicators and Domain Satisfactions

Having clarified one important issue by broadening our perspective downward to encompass more specific housing assessments, let us turn our attention in the other direction, toward the rest of our domain satisfaction measures.

Figure 4-7, summarizing the relationship between education and all of the domain satisfaction measures posed in standard form, is rather startling. In all, the figure deals with fourteen domain measures, including housing. The separation into two panels, with nine domains on the left and five others to the right, is entirely the result of empirical inspection, rather than any prior deduction. The simplest point the figure makes is that patterns of domain satisfaction responses by education groupings seem to fall rather clearly into two gross classes. The five relationships in the right-hand panel all involve substantial positive correlations, which is to say the direction we took for granted we would find, given the assumption that higher status people live under better circumstances and should be more satisfied with them. The other nine relationships all fall in the faintly negative direction that surprised us with the housing domain measure: people in lower statuses express more satisfaction with all of these aspects of their lives than higher status people do.

The five relationships portrayed on the right really involve only three domains. Four of the five are simply two natural pairs. One of these pairs involves questions as to satisfaction with the amount and the utility of the respondent's educational background. The other pair involves the respondent's financial situation: satisfaction with savings and with current standard of living. Both of these domains are tightly tied to major criteria of social status, and it is therefore not at all surprising that people of different statuses respond to them in the natural ways. As we might expect, when income rather than education is the predictor, the relationships with the financial domains increases relative to Figure 4-7, and the relationship with the education items decreases, although it remains clearly positive. The third true domain, showing a strong positive relationship with status, involves satisfaction with health.

One way of summarizing the right-hand panel is to say that lower status people recognize that they are neither healthy, wealthy, nor wise and are willing to express relative dissatisfaction on these scores. What remains striking, of course, is the fact that they express a satisfaction with all other aspects of their life which is relatively higher than that reported by their more privileged counterparts.

Indeed, the strong similarity in the performance of the overall satisfaction measures across all of these other nine domains (the left-hand panel) is most impressive. The relationships are not, to be sure, absolutely identical. But they form such a tight bundle that we have not tried to label them all individually, and they have many features in common in addition to their faint negative slopes.[5] The general characteristic is a "W" form, with high points in the middle and at each extreme, and depressions in between. We shall later attempt an explanation as to why this common form develops.

To be sure, it might well be argued that a negative relationship, albeit faint (r's from $-.06$ to $-.12$ for all nine domains) between education and many of these domains cannot be seen as having the same surprising quality of the findings for housing satisfaction. After all, in none of the other eight domains are objective differences in the material quality of living conditions across class levels as obvious as they are for housing. There is little or no basis for imagining differences of parallel strength in friendships or community of residence, for example; and in a loose sense, at least, the country is objectively the same referent for Americans of all levels. It is clear enough that there should be positive relationships between social status and central status resources, such as money or education, which we do in fact find. But perhaps lower status persons draw compensatory satisfactions out of their families, friends, leisure time, and other facets of their lives, in view of the fact that they have not achieved much in the way of status resources. From such a point of view, some of these negative relationships in the left-hand panel of Figure 4-7 might be seen as quite expected.

While such an argument may have some merit, it is not for several reasons entirely convincing. In addition to housing, there is surely a substantial expectation that poorer people live in poorer neighborhoods and work at poorer jobs, and hence should be less satisfied with them. Yet all three of these domains show roughly the same negative relationships with education and only faint positive ones with income. Moreover, it is conventional sociological lore that lower status families suffer a good deal more social disor-

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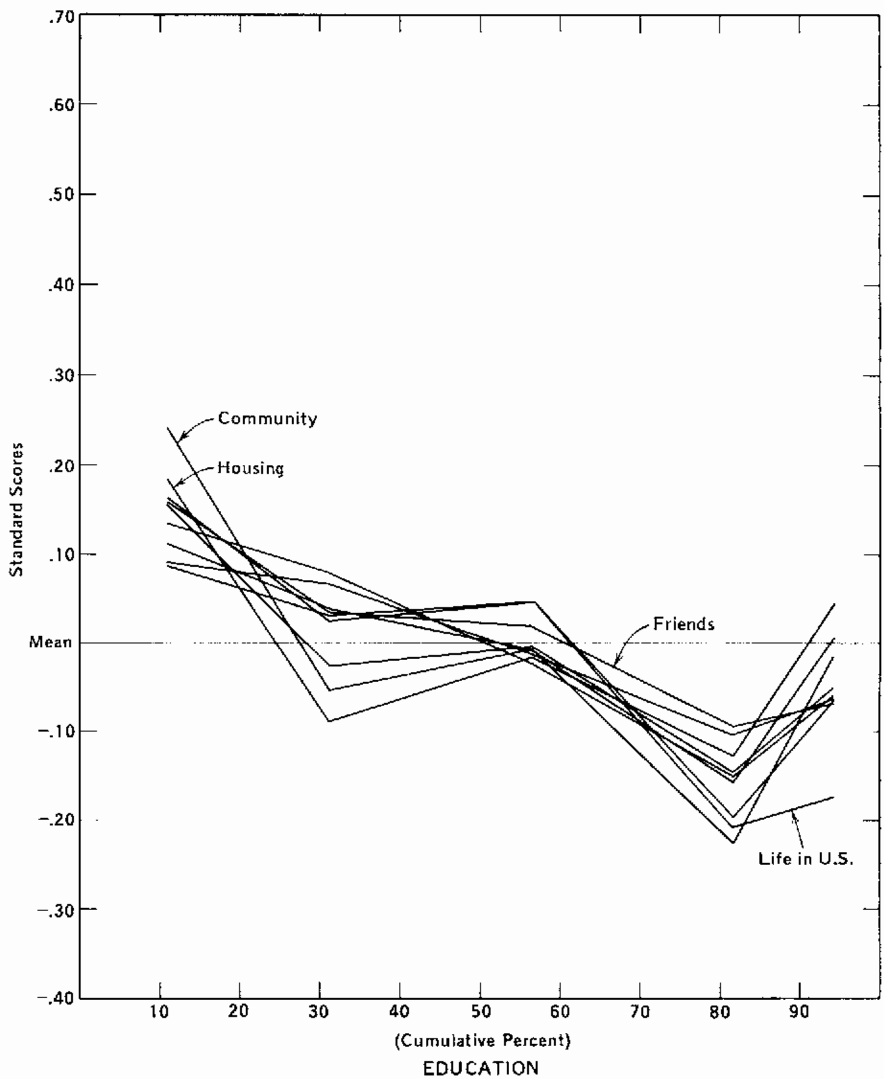
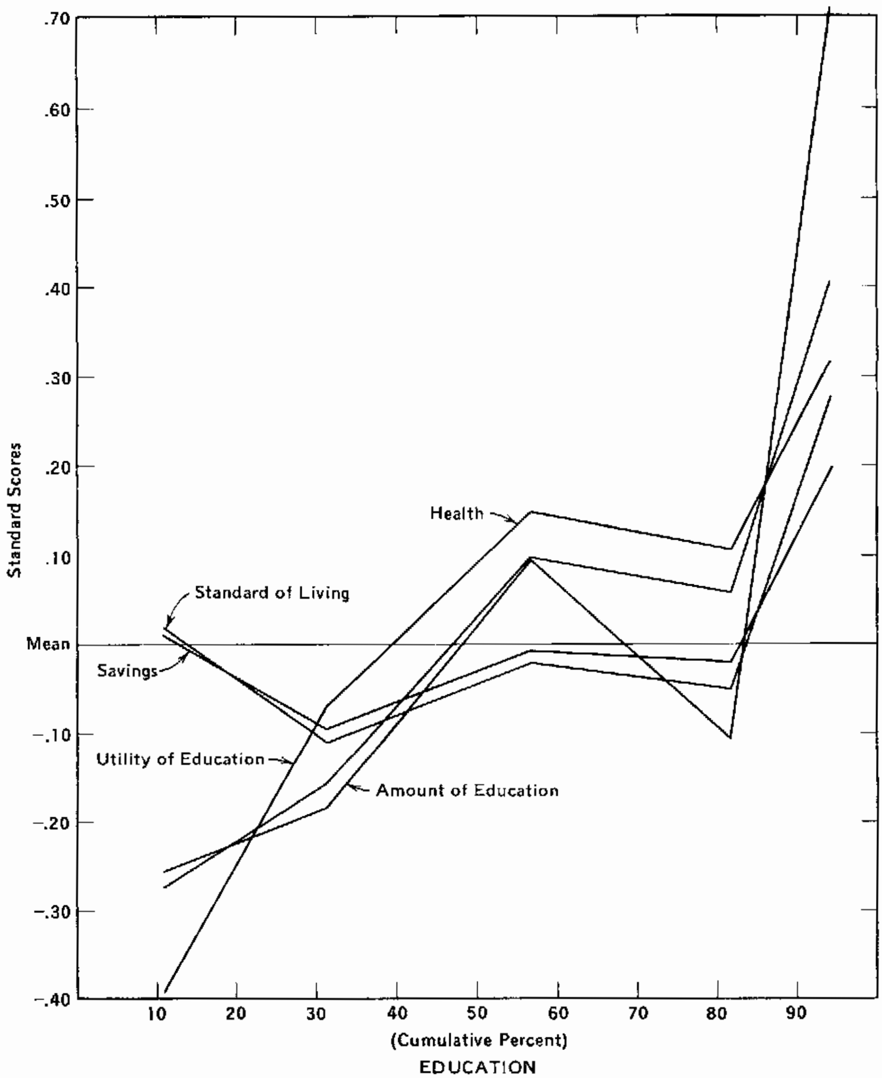
[5] It should be made clear that some of the similarity of these lines is due to the fact that Figure 4-7 presents standard scores, rather than raw scores. For example, one member of the bundle of lines in the left-hand panel of the figure is marriage satisfaction, a variable that generally shows very high raw scores. Save for the fact that the mean of each domain satisfaction variable has been set to zero in preparing the figure, the curve for marriage satisfaction would still parallel the others in the bundle but would fall higher on the page. Similarly, the standard scores equate variances around the mean. In raw score terms, people show much more variance in their ratings of savings satisfaction than in their ratings of marriage satisfaction. However, for purposes of this figure, the variances are standardized as well.

Figure 4-7: Domain Satisfactions, by Education



ganization than middle class ones. Perhaps this lore is incorrect, or perhaps compensatory satisfactions must be drawn even from these allegedly disorganized relationships in order to find a modicum of quality to life. But none of these arguments cope in any direct way with the obvious fact from Figure 4-7 that all of these domains show satisfaction gradients by education that look very much alike. Surely this fact transcends coincidence, and it



leads us to imagine that there are factors associated with education differences themselves, largely although not entirely irrespective of the substantive domain being considered, that are intruding on these relationships.

It will be noted that Figure 4-7 depends on education as a status indicator and sets aside income, despite the fact that income for many purposes should be more strongly associated with "objective" welfare. The reasons for this are simple. The same domains that show faint negative relationships with education generally show fainter positive ones with income (aside from one r of $-.02$, the range is from $+.00$ to $+.04$). In most cases where there are any clear expectations, these values are much lower than one would expect. It seems likely that they are being dragged down, as it were, by the negative correlations by education and the additional truism that education and income are quite strongly correlated. In other words, the epicenter of the peculiarity lies with education; and if we can get to the bottom of that peculiarity, the low income correlations will be explained in the same fell swoop.

Domain Generality and the Global-Specific Dimension

Earlier in this section we saw that assessments of specific features of housing behaved much more as we would expect as a function of status indicators than did the summary statement of overall housing satisfaction. Yet more recently we have seen that the housing satisfaction item behaves in these terms like most other domain satisfaction statements. Does this also mean that the peculiar disjuncture between specific ratings on one hand and generic summaries on the other, which emerges most clearly as a function of education, is also a pattern that replicates itself across the other eight similar-appearing domains?

We cannot give a perfectly general answer to this question for the simple reason that our measures of domain components are rarely as proliferated as they are in the case of housing. However, we can give a rather strong provisional answer where we have data. In such domains, the pattern that appears in the case of housing seems to repeat itself nicely. Where the neighborhood is concerned, for example, lower status people express more overall satisfaction than their bills of particulars would seem to warrant. The less educated rate local streets and roads as poorer, garbage collection as worse, playground facilities as inferior and see local taxes as higher, but express greater satisfaction with their communities than people of higher status. In the domain of work, when assessments of specific facets of work life are combined to predict general work satisfaction, there is more than a negligible tendency for the poorly educated to be underpredicted (to state a level of overall satisfaction higher than would seem warranted) and the well educated to be correspondingly overpredicted. Across all of these domains the same pattern seems to appear.

CONCLUSIONS

These observations complete the case for our contention that where summary statements of domain satisfaction are concerned, there are peculiarities associated with differences in levels of education that leave their impress on these reports. These peculiarities go beyond what is monitored by our response-set measures and from time to time these compound effects push results into patterns that are perplexing from the point of view of commonsense expectations, as when we discover that the poorly educated are more satisfied with their housing than the well educated (Figure 4-3). We are not prepared to say that these further effects represent "bias," if that term means that these reports depart from the genuine feeling states of the people who make them. But we are once again in the same gray area which we encountered in dealing with the systematic effects of age on satisfaction: it would be much to our advantage to understand why these effects occur, so that we might know when it is appropriate to control them away or otherwise take them into account.

Most of the purpose of this chapter has been to ask what our measurements should *not* be taken to mean, in the sense of misleading bias. Generally these effects have been small, but worth knowing about where later substantive results are concerned. The next chapter will be devoted to our best diagnoses of what our measurements *can* be taken to mean. And our first diagnoses will be directed at the systematic effects of education and age differences which have come to light in exploring the relationship between status levels and housing satisfaction.

Chapter 5
Some General Influences on Reports of Satisfaction

The preceding chapter raised a number of questions about details of the performance of our domain satisfaction measures. Why is it, for example, that poorly educated people tend to express more contentment in their summary statements of satisfaction with particular domains of their lives than would be expected given their relatively critical, or "realistic" assessments of specific features of the very same domains? Why do most of the domain satisfactions, when arrayed by education, show the same faint negative slope and more or less the same irregularities? What is the meaning of the rather substantial impact of age differences on measurements like satisfaction with housing?

The purpose of this chapter is to attempt a diagnosis of some of these persistent effects, particularly those associated with education and age. It is probably worth stressing that most of these effects are limited in their magnitude, and even the strongest among them fall well short of overwhelming the data, in the sense of being responsible for virtually all of the patterning which is present. Indeed, in later chapters we shall, for example, assemble numerous assessments of specific facets of housing and neighborhood and show that these evaluations combine to make quite a satisfactory prediction of overall reports of satisfaction in these domains, despite the fact that further analysis shows the satisfaction of poorly educated people to be systematically underpredicted and that of the well educated systematically overpredicted. Nevertheless, when several of these general influences compound with other known forms of superficial bias, as we found to be the case with the raw or simple relationship between status indicators and housing, data patterns can emerge that are at first glance perplexing and often misleading. It is important to understand these influences as thoroughly as we can.

EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND SATISFACTION REPORTS

In Figure 4-7 we saw that the characteristic form for nine of the domain satisfaction reports by education was a kind of "W," flattened somewhat and tilted downward as we read from left to right. Indeed, while the relationships in the right-hand panel of Figure 4-7 are tilted sharply upward instead, traces of the same "W" appear even for these domains, being quite complete where the financial situation is concerned and partial for education and health. Thus we have a sense of something rather general about educational differences in themselves that demands explanation.

If we take commonsense expectations as a point of departure, there are roughly three points of anomaly that require attention:

(1) The relatively low domain satisfactions reported by the next-to-highest educational category;
(2) The relatively high domain satisfactions reported by the lowest education category; and
(3) The general negative tilt of the "W" for the majority of domains.

If we can provide a diagnosis of these three anomalies, then we shall have understood why the relationships are not the kind of modest positive linear ones we might have expected. It would be pleasing if all three of these anomalies could be explained by the same general mechanism, but our best guess is that at least two mechanisms must be recognized. The first is a rather simple matter of only limited theoretical interest. The second, however, is much richer in its implications.

Dissatisfaction Near the Top of the Education Ladder

In the simplified version of the educational achievement variable that we have generally been using for graphic purposes, the top or fifth category is made up of people who have completed a college education. The next lower category is made up of people who attended some college, but failed to have completed a degree at the time of our interview. Some of the youngest of these respondents are either students who are continuing work toward their degree or may well resume such work. The vast majority, however, are likely to be "dropouts" of a more permanent kind. The reasons for such terminations are, of course, enormously various and surely cover a spectrum from complete personal volition to coercion by a variety of life circumstances.

It is not entirely unfamiliar in social research to discover that people whose education terminates at times other than the most conventional school-leaving points differ in systematic ways from those who end their educations at the next higher or next lower conventional points, such as the minimum age required by law, the high school diploma, or the college degree. Thus, for example, turning out to vote in public elections shows a rather strong positive relationship with amount of education, grossly construed. However, when the trend is examined with finer categories, a faint sawtooth effect can usually be discerned: people who dropped out of high school turn out at lower rates than would be expected given the general trend defined by persons completing grammar school to one side and high school to the other, and the same anomaly emerges between other conventional school-leaving points.

Therefore the second low point in the "W" form of the education relationship is not surprising or unintelligible, although its magnitude in the context of diverse domain satisfaction statements is rather impressive. While these college dropouts live under a great diversity of life circumstances, on the average their situations would by normal "objective" standards be deemed significantly better than those of persons completing no more than high school. They tend to hold better jobs, their family incomes are better, and so on. Yet they take a view of most aspects of their lives which is notably dimmer than those below them on the education or more general status ladder. They also are the lowest of all five education categories in reports of overall life satisfaction as well, although on some of the other global reports, including happiness and retrospective measures concerning fulfillment of life ambitions or the adequacy of opportunity enjoyed, they fall more neatly in line between those with high school diplomas and college degrees.

Perhaps the simplest confirmation of our diagnosis for their low reports of satisfaction lies in the fact that their dissatisfactions appear most dramatically anomalous where the item concerning "amount of education" is concerned (cf. Figure 4-7). They have in fact enjoyed more years of education than those with high school diplomas, yet their satisfaction with this objective fact is much lower. Nevertheless, it remains impressive that this relative dissatisfaction is not confined to their assessments of the amount of education; it appears to suffuse through the summaries of satisfaction given for virtually all domains.

The main diagnosis for this set of respondents, then, has to be one of bruised expectations and quirks of social comparison. It seems likely that people in this situation, located on the margins of the college-educated stratum of society, take that stratum to define expectations in a much more vivid way than people who routinely fulfilled the social requirement of a high school diploma. And against those advanced expectations, they are typically on the short side and quite dissatisfied with the fact.

There seems little basis to doubt, moreover, that this relative dissatisfaction is "real." It is almost certainly not some superficial bias arising from the artificialities of the interview situation or the way in which the measurements were designed. Of course it can be argued in a normative vein that those who objectively have "more" have no right to be relatively dissatisfied with it. But such an argument does nothing to alter the reality of such a state of mind, and it is one of our first clear examples of a situation in which subjective evaluations depart in a meaningful way from the simple equation between satisfaction and "goodness of situation," objectively defined.

The High Satisfaction of the Less Educated

The diagnosis we would like to offer for the high satisfaction of the less educated will also be helpful in understanding part of what may underlie the faint negative relationships between many domain satisfactions and education. It does not pretend to be a total explanation. We have already seen that artifacts of response set in the interview situation make some small contribution to the effect, and it is quite plausible to imagine that with more powerful measures of such sets, somewhat more of the anomaly might be understood. Moreover, there may well be other effects of which we are ignorant that produce strains in the same direction. Nevertheless, we feel we can make some further theoretical contribution to an understanding of this kind of phenomenon.

In the course of discussing the community in which the respondent resided, we asked the following question:

> Have you ever lived in a place where life is much different from what it is here?

Almost exactly half of the sample said that they had, with the other half saying they had not. While the question was rather vague and surely invited discrepancies from respondent to respondent as to what "a different life" might mean, in our pretesting we asked for further descriptions of the different place referred to, and they generally followed what we hoped to elicit. People felt they had lived where life was different if they had grown up on farms but were now living in urban metropolises; or had lived in a different region of the country under rather different circumstances; or had been in the service abroad, and the like.

We inserted the question because we thought it might have a bearing on the nature of satisfaction reports. At various times we have casually asked social science colleagues what impact, if any, they think firsthand knowledge of some other place might have on reports that our respondents give us concerning their sense of satisfaction with the place in which they now find themselves. In all of the few and haphazardly selected interchanges we have had of this sort, the reaction was first one of perplexity and then a prediction that people familiar with other places would tend if anything to be more satisfied with their current place of residence. Actually, we inserted the question on the hunch that exactly the reverse would be true.

Clearly this is an instance where we cannot have recourse to "commonsense expectations," since these seem to vary. But we can review the thinking that led to our own expectations. Basically, we suspected that people lacking any vivid conception of alternatives to the situation in which they found themselves would, other things equal, tend to register on our measures as highly satisfied with it. People who have this kind of vivid awareness of alternatives, even if generally rather satisfied to be where they are, are likely to take a more tempered view, with more points of active dissatisfaction. Naturally, the "other things equal" clause is important here, and most important among these "other things" would have to be the attractiveness of the other alternatives of which the person was aware. We would not predict that the man whose sole view of "a place where life was much different" was a traumatic stint in an Asian jungle would thereby be the less satisfied to be home. But assuming that the differences in life experienced elsewhere would for most people be the normal mosaic of pleasures and pains, so that "other things" would in fact be roughly equal in the aggregate, we were willing to predict that awareness of alternatives would indeed curb the most simplistic forms of satisfaction and provide a basis for criticism.

In other words, we asked this question less to know about geographic mobility than as a concrete special case of the very generic variable "salience of alternatives." We asked it in connection with the respondent's place of residence not because the generic variable only had meaning in that context, but because it was one of the easier points at which such a "tracer" might be used. Obviously, the salience of alternatives or lack thereof is a state of cognition relevant in principle to every one of our domains. People can have lived in very different types of houses, worked very different kinds of jobs, and even experienced very different types of marriages or seen close at hand very different kinds of families. At the same time, many people may not have had such diversity of experience. Generally speaking, we were thrusting here at the problem of constricted horizons, or the "satisfied pig" that John Stuart Mill deplored. Our general expectation was that ignorance of alternatives, or low salience thereof, would produce a peculiarly hermetic kind of satisfaction with whatever situation constitutes the *status quo*.

Of course, the relationship between "salience of alternatives" and education differences is utterly straightforward. Some of the relationship has little to do with the educational process *per se*. That is, people in a social position permitting them to carry farther along the educational ladder are also likely to have the resources to experiment with more diverse experiences than is the case for persons of more constricted circumstance. This is quite apparent even from our item concerning different places of residence, as Table 5-1 indicates. Moreover, there are probably amplifying effects

Table 5-1: Proportion Living in Place where "Life Much Different," by Education

	0-8 Grades completed	*Partial high school*	*Completed high school*	*Partial college*	*Completed college*
All. Have you ever lived in a place where life is much different from what it is here?					
Yes	40%	46%	48%	64%	68%
No	60	54	52	36	32
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	470	397	710	334	240

that accompany a diversity of experience. The person familiar with a range of diverse settings moves more comfortably across them, so that he is more likely to be able to profit from whatever particular pleasures they offer, while the less experienced person is likely to be ill at ease and see the outside world as more forbidding and his own microcosm as the more satisfying by comparison.

Nevertheless, some of the same effects must have to do with the educational process as such. After all, one of the major goals of modern education is surely to broaden horizons and enrich the sense of alternatives, even though much of this enrichment is vicarious. However, if the educational process does succeed at all in this goal, and if our general surmise is true that salience of alternatives can make a small but persistent contribution to dissatisfaction with any current situation, then we find ourselves with a prediction that experienced dissatisfactions of the kind we are measuring here should, other things equal, show an *increasing* trend with greater accumulations of education. Any such trend would, of course, run counter-current to the commonsense prediction with which we began, i.e., that higher status people, as educated people generally are, live in more comfortable circumstances and should be more satisfied with them. And if both predictions have some merit, then we might have arrived at some understanding of why there is so little relationship between education and most domain satisfactions, and even why the "W" form of those relationships tilts slightly to the negative, despite removal of the more superficial forms of response set.

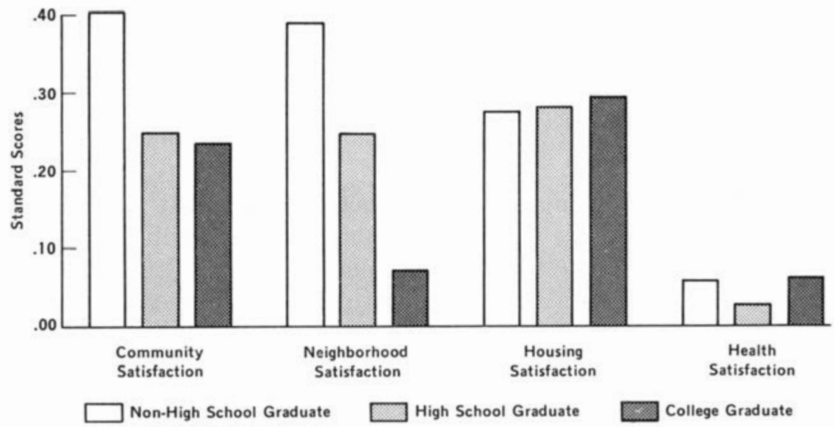
One proof of the pudding—necessary, but not sufficient—is whether such salience of alternatives, as narrowly represented by the attribute of having lived in any place "where life is much different," does in fact show some association with dissatisfaction, as we originally hypothesized, rather than enhancing satisfaction with the current situation, as others have guessed.

In fact, our prediction turns out to be quite nicely sustained. The obvious point of examination involves satisfaction with one's community, where we would expect the main effects of "awareness of other places" to surface. And indeed, it turns out that people who report having lived in places where life differed from that of their current community are systematically less satisfied with their current community of residence than people who have never experienced life in a different kind of place. These effects are not, of course, huge. However, there is no question of their statistical significance, and among demographic attributes of persons that predict to variations in community satisfaction, this item is one of the three or four most important. Moreover, this effect of having lived in a different kind of place seems a persistent coloration in the responses which cannot be removed by any of a number of relevant controls.

The most obvious control to be levied is upon education itself. We have proposed that awareness of alternatives can be accumulated either through formal education or through the diversity of extracurricular experience, but in real life the two are somewhat correlated. Nevertheless, we would assume that for any given level of education, those with more of such diversity of experience would report less satisfaction with their community than those without such diversity of experience. Moreover, a corollary of our general reasoning would be that diversity of experience, as represented by the "lived-anywhere-different" variable, should have its greatest impact among the least educated, since the more educated have already enriched their sense of alternatives through the education process even when they have not experienced any noteworthy diversity in the kind of places in which they have lived.

All of these expected patterns emerge when we look at differences in community satisfaction as a function of having lived in another kind of place, with education controlled (Figure 5-1). We have added to this figure

Figure 5-1: Selected Domain Satisfactions by Similarity of Places Lived, Education Controlled[a]



[a] The bars represent mean differences in the diverse domain satisfactions, as a function of whether or not the respondent reports having lived in some place where "life is much different than it is here." The positive scores in all cases mean that those who have never lived in a different type of place express more satisfaction than those who have had such experience.

data from several other domain satisfaction measures as well as that for the key variable of community satisfaction. For an "adjacent" domain such as the neighborhood, it is not at all surprising that we should find very nearly the same pattern of differences between those who have and have not lived in varied kinds of places that pertains for assessments of the community of residence. It may be somewhat more surprising that strong differences continue to register if we move another step in a microcosmic direction along the environmental continuum to reports of satisfaction with housing. Here the total sample shows marked effects in the direction originally expected for the community domain, but the impact is no longer graded by education.

We have no compelling explanation for the latter fact, although it has suggested to us the possibility that people of *any* given level of education who sought out such varied experiences might be different in basic personality structure from those of comparable training who failed to do so, such that they would respond with more dissatisfaction to *any* scale of this kind, whether it had to do with the residential environment *per se* or not. It is for this reason that we append the seemingly irrelevant domain of health to Figure 5-1. We do see that trace effects continue to show in the direction expected where the environmental domains are concerned, but they are very minimal. Their small magnitude suggests that we have indeed largely probed beyond the bounds of alternatives that refer to cultural milieu, and are probably not dealing in any marked degree with some more basic posture toward the world that produces both a search for varied experience and a generalized tendency toward relative dissatisfaction with any facet of life.

It is important to keep in mind that if our miniature theorizing about the influence of "awareness of alternatives" is correct, then some of the effects of that variable are deliberately hidden from view in the graphs of Figure 5-1. That is, we are presuming that one of the major effects of education itself (apart from varieties of residential experience) is to sharpen the sense of alternatives. Yet this half of the impact of such awareness is controlled from sight since we are comparing differences in the relevant satisfactions of people at equivalent levels of educational attainment. This control is momentarily appropriate, in order to cement the conceptual point that the "salience of alternatives" gauged in a fashion independent of educational differences does in fact tend to produce the increment of dissatisfaction which we expected. But it is reasonable to imagine that further effects of this same sort are tied up with educational differences as well. Therefore the total effect of "salience of alternatives," were we able to muster a more direct and incisive measure of such states of mind, should be considerably stronger than even Figure 5-1 implies.

It should be obvious by now that while we only have a surrogate measure of the salience of alternatives in the special case of the residential milieu, we are preparing to venture a much more general hypothesis. If a broadened awareness of alternatives is associated with education in a variety of other domains as well, and if there is a net trend for people who are most aware of alternatives to be more critical of their current situations, then we may have accounted for the surprising observation of Figure 4-7 that in most domains there is a faint tendency for reported satisfaction to *decline* with advancing education, despite circumstantial evidence that people of better education live in situations which are, from the standard "objective" view, more desirable.

Any such argument must be handled with a good deal of care. As we said at the outset, we would not predict the salience of alternatives to produce dissatisfaction with a current situation if all of the salient alternatives were perceived in a thoroughly negative way. Indeed, we have one domain in which it is likely that most alternatives are seen as unrelievedly bad by any observer. This is the domain of health. Most people are in an adequate state of health most of the time. The most vivid awareness of alternatives where health is concerned should involve people who have personally experienced periods of serious illness or who have witnessed such illness close at hand, with relatives or intimate friends, or perhaps persons in the medical profession more generally. Low salience of alternatives, on the other hand, would, of course, be represented in this context by persons not vividly exposed to serious ill health, who take their own normal health for granted. In this domain it would be foolish to predict that the salience of alternatives would produce an edge of dissatisfaction with a normal state of good health, since the alternate states are unrelievedly bad. However, we note from Figure 4-7 that health is one of the rare domains that fail to show the pervasive negative slope as a function of education, so that this exception does not obviously violate our more general argument.

At the same time, consideration of a domain like health would seem to call for an amendment to our original statement, so that we would talk of "salience of *attractive* alternatives" without modification. Up to a point, we could be satisfied with such an amendment. However, it is much easier to argue that education leads to a broader awareness of alternatives in a variety of domains than it is to argue that these alternatives will on balance be seen as attractive. Moreover—and this is the important point—it is not clear to us that alternatives need even be seen as being, on balance, attractive in order for awareness of them to produce greater dissatisfaction with the current situation. It is surely true that to produce such effects, salient alternate states must not be unrelievedly bad, as in the case of health. But it may be true that if they have even some redeeming qualities, they may provide a reference point for criticism which does not occur to the person for whom any alternatives seem remote.

Perhaps we can clarify this subtle issue by returning to our colleagues who assumed that persons who had lived in different types of places would be *more* satisfied with their current community than persons without such various experience. We have already seen that the data clearly contradict this expectation, so there must be something fundamentally wrong with it. However, it is not hard to reconstruct the implicit reasoning, and this reasoning is surely plausible. People who have passed through a variety of residential milieus are in effect "shoppers." And while various life circumstances can intervene to force an individual to live in a kind of place which is not his preferred one, on balance over a large aggregate, one would expect some majority of such "shoppers" to have come to rest in a place preferred over the other alternatives which they had experienced. Hence, and equally "on balance," one would expect such shoppers to have a special edge of appreciation for the places in which they live which would not be experienced by others who had, for whatever reasons, enjoyed no such shopping alternatives.

Such reasoning is impeccable and mainly serves to make us wonder why the empirical results so thoroughly disconfirm it. However, there is no necessary tension between living in one's preferred place after considerable shopping and having a certain level of criticism of the place which is intrinsically hinged on close experience with alternatives, even alternatives for which net affect is negative. Many of our respondents who report having "lived in places where life is much different" are urbanites who grew up on farms. Other studies we have done make clear that the vast majority of these people would not desire to return to rural places even if jobs and friendship nets could remain intact. On balance, they like living in the city and have recollections of farm life which are a net negative by comparison. Nevertheless, they are less likely to report complete satisfaction with their current urban communities than are people who have never experienced an alternative to it. There are simply some aspects of city life which suffer badly by comparison with rural life, and people sensitized by personal experience to these invidious comparisons have external reference points (awareness of alternatives) which cut into what otherwise might be a blind satisfaction with the residential environment. The grass may not actually seem greener on the other side of the fence, but ignorance that there is another side may be bliss.[1]

Ramifications

We have been busy arguing a general case that the salience of alternatives in very many domains of life has some curbing effect on relatively global expressions of satisfaction with experience in that domain, at least as we have measured such satisfactions. Our immediate purpose has been to arrive at an understanding as to what it is about education that makes for even a slight negative correlation between that variable and most of our domain satisfactions. If there is an underlying association between formal education and awareness of alternatives over many domains of life, then such an intuitively perplexing negative relationship may well be understood at least in part in these terms. Moreover, the astonishingly high levels of satisfaction with most facets of life reported by people of very limited education can be understood in the same terms: the problem is one of constricted horizons that lead to a kind of blind and unquestioning satisfaction

[1] In contemplating these findings, the possibility should be kept open that the lesser satisfaction reported by persons who seem aware of alternatives depends in some degree on the fact discussed in earlier chapters that most of our global and domain satisfaction measures show massively positive response distributions. In other words, the urbanite who grew up on the farm is not necessarily saying that overall he is dissatisfied with city life. In fact, he is likely to be saying that he is at least "quite satisfied" with it, and probably "very satisfied." The point is that he stops short of the "completely satisfied" response more typical of the urban dweller who has never experienced a different style of living.

with the *status quo,* not far off from what Marx called "false consciousness." Assuming that our surmises have some merit, then there are a variety of interesting ramifications, writ both small and large.

Among the small implications, one is that the effect of education in broadening awareness of alternatives and curbing uncritical satisfaction is probably important in understanding why the relationships between income and most of our domain satisfactions are as weak as they are, a puzzle we introduced in the preceding chapter. If we focus on the nine domains in the left-hand panel of Figure 4-7, we find that the correlations with income always outrun those with education in their absolute magnitude. The average difference is about .08, and the range of these differences is very small, with the more "material" environmental satisfactions as a set running slightly higher in their discrepancy, and the more social domains like marriage and friendships showing a slightly lower discrepancy. All of these patterns are very intelligible, of course, since income is likely to be a more central indicator of differences in material comfort than is education. However, education is rather strongly correlated with income, of course, and even the faint negative correlations between these nine domain satisfactions and education can be seen as depressing their correlations with income. If education differences were partialed out, the income correlations would all shift at least slightly in a more positive direction or somewhat closer to what we might have expected them to be on intuitive grounds. On the other hand, if income differences were partialed out, the education correlations would show a small negative shift in a way that would be perplexingly short of our preceding interpretation of education effects.

It is important to note here that our examination of these patterns is itself somewhat heterodox, since most of these correlations are so close to zero that conventional social science analysis would tend to pass them by without more comment than "both education and income are essentially unrelated to any of these nine domains." The strongest absolute correlation of the eighteen is a mere −.12 (between education and satisfaction with life in the United States), and the strongest positive correlation (between income and satisfaction with family) is barely over .04, or less than .2 percent of the variance accounted for![2] However, we are giving close attention to these trifling raw or zero-order relationships because it seems apparent that these correlations are as feeble as they are *not,* because status differences have no bearing on these reports of satisfaction in the nine domains

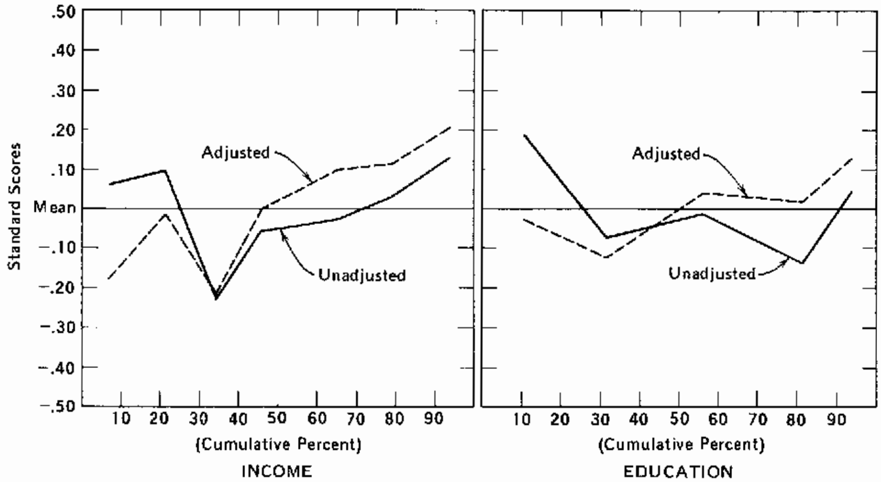
[2] It should be kept in mind that these Pearson coefficients of correlation are somewhat misleading, particularly where education is concerned, since they assume linear relationships, whereas the education-satisfaction associations depart significantly from linearity, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Thus they tend to understate the degree of association somewhat.

beyond health, wealth, and wisdom, as the conventional conclusion would have it, but rather because they are the resultants of two more lively forces that push in conflicting directions. Income is something of a reflector of differences in the objective comfort of situations, and the force represented by the expectation "the better the objective situation, the greater the satisfaction," is weakly mirrored in it. Education is something of a reflector of differences in awareness of alternatives (although not too adequate a reflector given the importance of extracurricular experience as well), which represents a force pushing in just the opposite direction where any particular status-satisfaction relationships are concerned. And since income and education are strongly intercorrelated, the resultant of the two forces leaves correlations between either indicator and most domain satisfactions near to zero. Neither force, if it could be isolated from the other, should be seen as all-determining: both are modest at best in accounting for the nine domain satisfactions apart from health, wealth, and wisdom. But the important point is that they are livelier than cursory analysis would imagine because they confound each other; and failure to grasp their significance produces the kind of puzzle we presented to our hypothetical benevolent dictator, whereby the lowest income stratum of the population was more satisfied with its housing than any other segment.

On a much larger canvas, of course, we are examining here one major reason—the impact of awareness of alternatives—why subjective reports of the quality of experience depart from the conclusions which might be drawn with indicators of objective conditions taken alone. It is surely not the only reason, but it would probably deserve ranking as an important reason on any longer list. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that there is some kinship between our interpretation of the negative relationship between education and many domain satisfactions, and the phenomenon often called "the revolution of rising expectations" on the world stage. This wave of dissatisfaction seems to have spread through the more remote and developing countries of the globe since World War II in the face of small gains many such countries may have achieved in objective welfare. Nor can expanding education systems in these countries account for such growing dissatisfaction, since such expansion has been slow. However, dazzling changes in the reach of the electronic media, as well as increased travel, can be supposed to have acted to produce a dramatic heightening in the salience of alternative ways of life in societies once largely cut off from the world and inward-looking, with little sense of alternatives. As we see with our own data, constricted horizons appear to mean low ceilings on aspirations.

In Figure 5-2 we return to our relationship between status indicators and satisfaction with housing to refine that association one step further, adding variety of residential experience ("lived anywhere different") to our

Figure 5-2: Housing Satisfaction by Status, with Response Set, Age, and Variety of Residence Controlled



earlier controls. The latter variable, as we have seen earlier, does not by any means exhaust the force of "salience of alternatives," since we have posited that further effects of this kind are bound up with educational differences and cannot be removed from other education effects in a figure like 5-2. Nevertheless, the refined relationship bulges a bit further in the expected direction, so that our benevolent dictator of Chapter 4 could hardly misconstrue the slope even where the weaker education predictor is concerned.

However, once again it is important to recognize the possibility of overcontrol. We recall that in the preceding chapter we discovered that controlling away the differential effects of chronological age went a fair distance toward shifting the relationship between status and housing satisfaction from a perplexing to a recognizable one. Yet we were hesitant about the significance of such an adjustment, since we had no diagnosis as to why the relationship between age and housing satisfaction existed in the first place. Was it some simple artifact that obviously should be removed, or would its removal introduce an unwanted bias in our view of the real world? We tabled the issue of age at the time and will resume it momentarily. However, in the degree that adjustments for variety of residential experience or education push the income-housing satisfaction relationship in exactly the same, more positive direction, we are faced with the same type of question. And this time we can address it more squarely, since we have provided a diagnosis of the reasons underlying these intruding patterns: they are affected by differences in the salience of alternatives. Do we show our benevolent dictator the adjusted relationship, or is there something misleading about such a tactic?

We have argued earlier that if certain trends in our data are clearly a product of the artificiality of the interview situation, such as a desire to be agreeable to the interviewer, it is important to remove these effects as best we can. It remains possible that people with less diversity of experience are also more deferential to the interviewer in a degree that the Crowne-Marlowe test fails to cover completely. However, we are inclined to imagine that much of the heightened satisfaction which seems associated with low salience of alternatives involves true psychological states, as they are experienced by our informants. And if this is so, then it is clear that we are thrust into some difficult philosophical rapids, if we are to counsel our dictator wisely.

Let us suppose that he is offended by any adjustments that tamper with real states of mind. He insists that he is interested in maximizing the satisfaction of his subjects as rapidly as possible, and therefore his limited resources should not be used trying to raise satisfaction where it is already nearly maximal, whatever the reasons may be for such high satisfaction. Then we might well respond that if he cares not what the basis for satisfaction may be, he might move more rapidly and at lower cost toward "the greatest satisfaction for the greatest number" by closing down the education system, prohibiting travel, and in other ways cutting his domain off from an outside world. Of course we would have to forewarn that the short-term reaction might be violent discontent, because his subjects would be painfully aware of the alternatives being excluded from view. But if he and his successors could keep the lid on for a generation or two, so that alternatives were forgotten, then he might achieve an astonishing level of "satisfaction" in the realm with only the occasional trouble from stray geniuses in the population who spin alternatives out of their inventive minds and have the discourtesy to publicize them.

At the same time, we would hopefully hasten to add that we do not think much of such a strategy, and that "the greatest satisfaction for the greatest number," at least within the terms of the kinds of data we have collected, is not necessarily identical with "the greatest good for the greatest number," which he wants to make the touchstone of his public policy. In particular, we would argue that satisfaction resting purely on ignorance of alternatives is hardly something about which he should be proud. And we would request that he consider our data in a form which minimizes, as deftly as possible, the intrusions of such ignorance.

In the closing chapter of this volume we shall take stock, in a more sustained way, of the policy relevance of the data collected in our study. However, one issue has risen so close to the surface at this point in our discussion that it should not be postponed. Suppose that our dictator, not entirely mollified, were to retort "Perhaps you are right that perceived satisfaction and objective good are not the same thing. But if that is true, and if at every step we are to correct away perceptions in favor of objective good as the only route to enlightened policy, then why did you advise bothering to collect all of this perceptual information to begin with?"

There are several answers to this question, but one or two observations will suffice for the moment. The first is to reiterate that variation in the salience of alternatives is hardly the *sole* reason why summary reports of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with many domains often diverge from what appear to be "the objective conditions of life." And while the reasons for discounting satisfaction achieved purely through an ignorance of competing possibilities strike us as overpowering, many of the other sources of discrepancy between experienced satisfaction and "objective good" have a much different status and will not be seen as needing correction or adjustment at all.

Secondly, a reminder is probably in order that the effects we have been dissecting in the preceding pages seem to intrude peculiarly when we call for summary or global reports of satisfaction with a particular domain. As we saw in the last chapter, lower status people do give relatively low grades to most of the more concrete features within domains like their housing or jobs. It is clearly within the ken of the poorly educated that their dwelling units could be located more conveniently than they are, or that their heating units give them problems, and the like. Only when questions bearing on satisfaction with the totality of experience in a domain are asked does it seem that competing experiences lack much vividness, so that the overall satisfaction expressed is relatively high. Presumably an exhibit like Figure 4-6, with its eerie disjunction among the lowest status people between overall reports of housing satisfaction and ratings of particular features, would be helpful in communicating to our benevolent dictator that some degree of discounting of the more global assessments is not inappropriate.

AGE AND THE EXPERIENCE OF SATISFACTION

While the effects of education are conceptually intriguing and are pervasive in our domain satisfaction data, we have continued to emphasize that they are not of great strength. The careful reader will have recognized by now that the effects on reports of satisfaction associated with differences in chronological age are considerably stronger, at least where housing satisfaction is concerned. While adjustments related to education did serve to move the relationship between status and housing satisfaction in a more positive direction, the greatest gains toward reconstructing that expected positive relationship emerged when we controlled for age differences. At the time we left the age influence undiagnosed, but now it is important to return to it.

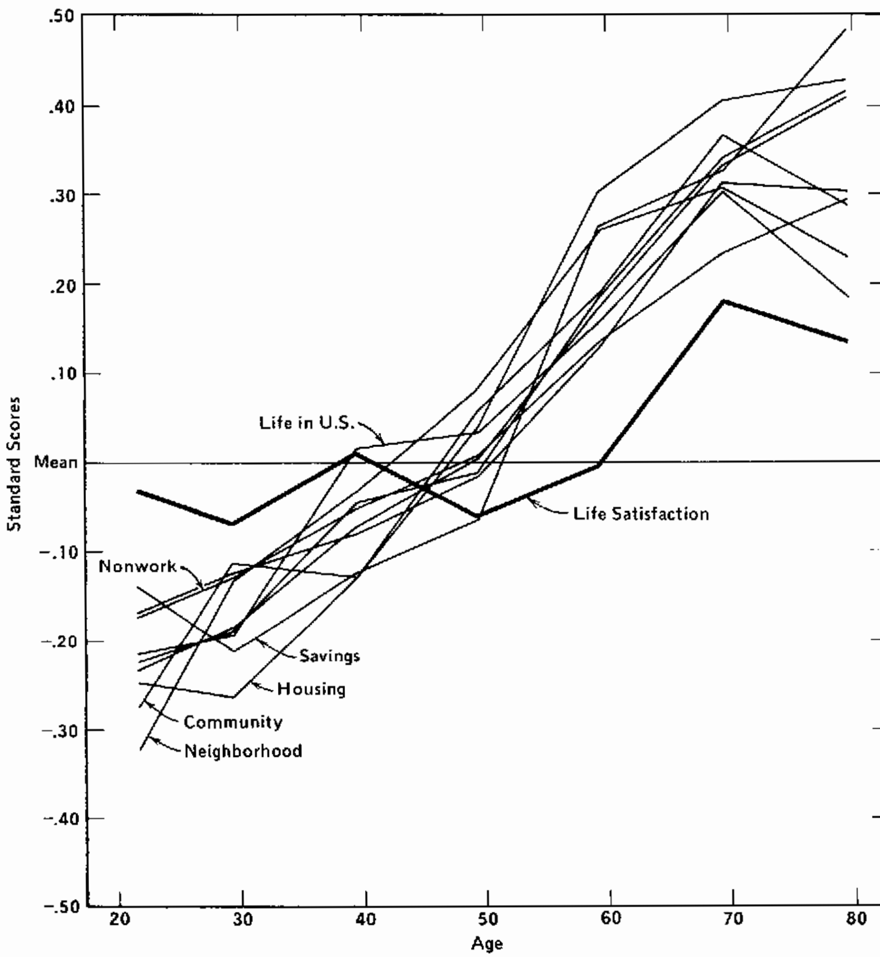
The raw relationship between chronological age and satisfaction with housing is indeed relatively impressive ($r = .26$). The older people are, the more satisfaction they report with their housing. The obvious question is whether this is a relationship which should be elucidated in terms of the way in which people relate to their housing, or whether we are dealing with a far more general class of effects, as we discovered where education was concerned, that spring from changes in the experience of satisfaction as a function of aging.

As before, we can answer this question by examining the relationship between age and satisfaction reported over all of our diverse domains. Figure 5-3 shows the relevant data in a format much like that of Figure 4-7 for education. The relationships of fourteen domain satisfactions with age are divided into two groups by inspection. In the left-hand panel are nine domains which show very similar relationships: so similar, in fact, that we do not try to label them all. The purpose in displaying them is less to invite the reader to trace out the details of the relationship between age and specific domain satisfactions, than to see that there is indeed a highly characteristic tendency for satisfaction with most domains to increase at a roughly equivalent pace with advancing age. Since the relationship between age and housing satisfaction is merely one among a large set of diverse domains showing this characteristic form, the figure advises us that it is worth discussing that relationship in much more general terms having to do with abiding effects of aging, rather than in more specific terms of the housing of the young or the elderly.

The right-hand panel of Figure 5-3 shows five domain satisfaction measures that depart in one degree or another from this characteristic form. As was the case with education, however, these five measures refer to little more than three domains. Health and the two measures of satisfaction with education also showed divergent patterns where the educational backgrounds of respondents were concerned (cf. Figure 4-7). Instead of two measures of financial satisfaction, however, the other pair of measures refers to the adjacent domains of marriage and the family.

Our main interest in this figure is the characteristic form of the majority of the relationships. However, we shall begin the discussion by considering the exceptions to this form, since the reasons for their discrepancy tend to be quite obvious and help to set bounds for our subsequent consid-

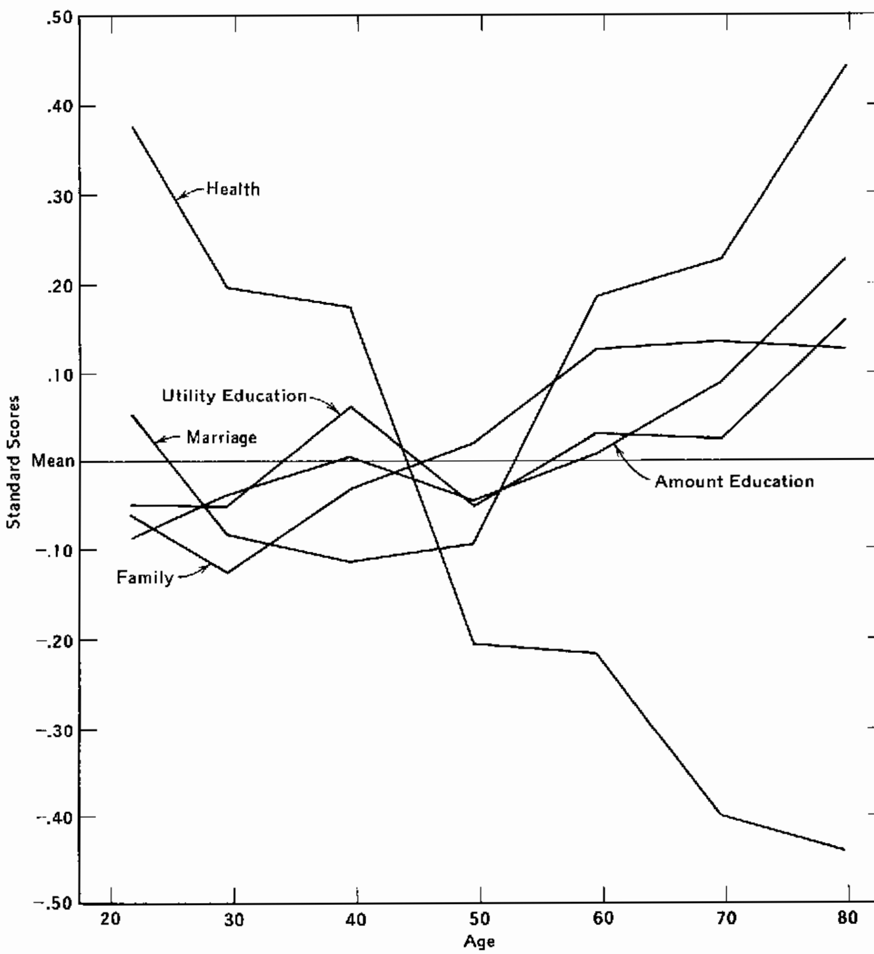
Figure 5-3: Domain Satisfactions, by Age



eration of the less obvious reasons why the characteristic form, involving satisfactions that rise steadily with age, is as nearly pervasive as it appears to be.

Discrepancies from the Characteristic Age Relationship

Actually, there is only one relationship shown in the right-hand panel of Figure 5-3 that departs dramatically from the characteristic form. Four of the five relationships shown there display a positive trend with satisfaction generally increasing with age, just as in the characteristic form. Satis-



faction with one's health, however, declines precipitously with advancing age.

We hardly need to enter into an elaborate discussion of the health function, as its reasons are obvious. We may appropriately be impressed that the decline is as steep as it is, since particularly in the later stages there is a progressive and rather rapid disappearance from the population of people who have greatest cause to be dissatisfied with their health. Presumably, mortality in any given short term would leave a residue of people who are, at least for the moment, less dissatisfied with their health than the departed.

The fact that the decline remains as steep as it does in the face of this progressive winnowing is, however, no more than a tribute to the rate of onset of physical difficulties with aging and the validity of satisfaction reports in this domain. What is surprising about Figure 5-3, then, is less the way in which health reports behave, than the fact that they are so discrepant from virtually everything else.

Indeed, we have cast about outside our domain satisfactions for other types of assessments where greater dissatisfactions among older people might be expected on commonsense grounds. There is probably no other area where that expectation is as clear-cut as it is where health is concerned. Nonetheless, common observation suggests that older people become increasingly bothered by the vagaries of weather in all but the most bland climates in the United States. Since we asked our respondents "how good" the local climate was as far as they were concerned, we can check to see how these responses behave as a function of age. We discover, however, that even reactions to climate are positively correlated with age along with all other domains save health! This correlation is rather weak, being more or less like that for the education assessments in Figure 5-3. It is almost as though satisfaction with climate partakes of the same characteristic form and whatever forces associated with aging may account for it that we see in the left panel of Figure 5-3, but a real touchiness of the old to climate variations also intrudes to flatten out the relationship without, however, being strong enough to change the sign of the association from positive to negative.

Much the same conflict of forces may well account for the somewhat deviant behavior of the two types of satisfaction with education displayed in the right-hand panel of Figure 5-3. We know from the preceding chapter that satisfaction with education in either sense is strongly associated with differences in the amounts of formal education which our respondents have had (Figure 4-7). The greater the formal schooling, the greater the satisfaction registered. At the same time, we also know that due to changes in educational practices over earlier decades, levels of formal education among the old are very much lower than those among the current young. Putting these facts together, we would conclude that if no other factors intervened, older people should be visibly less satisfied with their educations than younger people. However, Figure 5-3 says just the opposite is true. Of course, the relationship seems attenuated relative to the characteristic form. However, it looks very much as though if we were to control away differences in educational background among younger and older people, then functions referring to satisfaction with education in Figure 5-3 would shift into reasonable harmony with that characteristic form. Again, then, this particular discrepancy is easy to see as a compound of the mysterious characteristic form plus an obvious reason for divergence from it.

The other two relationships in the right-hand panel involve satisfaction with marriage and with family life. Neither of these relationships is sharply discrepant from the characteristic form. Indeed, the latter half of the marriage curve fits that form almost perfectly. However, there is a marked trough in the earlier half of the marriage relationship that has no clear counterpart elsewhere in the figure. Perhaps the closest approach to a match lies in the fact that apart from health, which clearly needs to be understood in other terms, there are two domains in addition to marriage and family that show a momentary decline in reported satisfaction between the early and late twenties: these are savings and housing.

Again, this cluster of four small departures from the characteristic form seem to make an intelligible configuration where people passing through the decade of their twenties are concerned. Incipient difficulties with marriage and problems of financing housing adequate for the expanding family are surely characteristic of people in their late twenties, although most persons in their early twenties have not yet been obliged to cope with some of the realities involved. Therefore it is easy to understand why these domains are almost unique in showing satisfaction levels that fail to progress steadily in one direction or the other over all of the life span.

We arrive, then, at the conclusion that virtually all of the departures from the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relationship can be taken as readily interpretable deflections from that form based on obvious age peculiarities of some of these specific domains. What is missing is any understanding of the reasons underlying the characteristic form itself. If most domains showed little or no relationship with age, and the same set of departures from this state of no association occurred in areas like health, education, marriage, family and, to a lesser degree, savings and housing, we would have little further to discuss. But not only is the characteristic form not obvious: it happens to involve a strong set of relationships, ones which are bound to leave a rather heavy imprint on our data whenever we are comparing groups of differing age composition. Therefore it seems imperative that we pay some attention to why such a characteristic association pervades the data.

Moreover, in Chapter 2 we pointed out that when we ask people to provide an overall assessment of their satisfaction with life as a whole, we find a trend whereby older people report greater satisfaction than younger. Actually, this trend is not as sharp as that for the characteristic form in the left panel of Figure 5-3 (a positive correlation of .06 only, as compared to r's ranging between .15 and .26), although it might be seen as a plausible resultant of all of these age-satisfaction relationships, health included. On the other hand, global reports of happiness show a trend in the opposite direction with younger people giving happier responses than the old. It is reasonable to imagine that if we can provide a diagnosis of the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relationship, it may help to throw light on this earlier puzzle that we postponed.

Rising Levels of Satisfaction with Age

Any relationship with age discovered in a single study at a point in time is somewhat ambiguous in its meaning. The age variable introduces considerations of time and process change, but any of several dramatically different interpretations is compatible with such relationships, and the only approach to decoding them properly entails the reexamination of the same relationship with repeated studies over time.[3]

For example, the positive association between age and most domain satisfactions could, strictly speaking, arise from a selective dying out of the more dissatisfied people from the population. We would not take this possibility very seriously, in part because we have no side information that makes it seem plausible and in part because the observed gains in satisfaction represented by the characteristic form are nearly linear over the life-span. If such selective mortality accounted completely for the relationship, the sharpest gains should occur at the latest ages, when depletion is occurring most intensely. However, this is indeed one interpretation which is moderately compatible with the observed data.

Another somewhat livelier possibility is that the age-satisfaction relationship has been fashioned by historical changes in outlook in our time. There is indeed some evidence to suggest that cohorts entering the adult population in the past decade have been far more critical and discontented, particularly concerning previously accepted authority relationships, than many cohorts entering in an earlier period. Perhaps our oldest respondents grew up in a still more placid or acquiescent time in which satisfaction with whatever the *status quo* might be was a more natural reflex. Under such an interpretation, we could expect the American population in future decades to show declining levels of satisfaction on most fronts as the highly satisfied older generation dies out, unless there is a rapid reversal of these outlooks represented in cohorts about to enter the population.

The earlier section of this chapter has already implicitly endorsed part

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[3] Even longitudinal evidence does not suffice to rule out some competing explanations of complex time-process effects, although it usually serves to rule out some possibilities and enhance the plausibility of others (see Mason, Mason, Winsborough, and Poole, 1973).

of this hypothesis, although in somewhat different terms. We have argued that increased education stimulates the salience of alternatives to any given situation, and hence curbs a kind of blind satisfaction associated with lack of salience of options. It is also incontrovertible that levels of education in this country are increasing rapidly in the adult population. Therefore, for these reasons alone we would predict some aggregate decrease in reports of satisfaction in most domains in coming decades. Moreover, it probably has not escaped most readers that high satisfaction associated with the most impoverished education is very disproportionately concentrated in the elderly segments of the population, so that one factor contributing to the characteristic positive association between age and most domain satisfactions has already been covered in our earlier discussion.

However, these education-based effects are quite small in comparison to the overall age relationship and surely do not begin to account for the lion's share of it. And once past this point, the evidence that the remainder of that characteristic form involving age gains in the domain satisfactions is also some historical or generational effect strikes us as weak indeed. For one thing, the impact of historical epochs rarely leaves such a regular linear progression as the characteristic form shows. For another, the sheer scope of these effects across domains does not sit well with the more plausible versions of a historical reading. For example, it can be argued that a degree of discontent about authority relationships not known in recent history has been pervading the younger generation; and such an observation, if granted, might lead to the expectation that dissatisfaction in domains where authority relationships are involved would be greater for the young than for the old. We could thus account perhaps for the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relationship where the job, the United States, the community, and possibly even marriage are concerned. But if this is the case, how do we explain the fact that reports of satisfaction with use of leisure time or savings or the neighborhood show almost exactly the same form? Conceivably it is all a coincidence, with the characteristic form emerging for very different reasons from one specific domain to another, but this would seem to strain our credulity.

On balance we suspect that there are factors associated with the passage of time and the process of aging that have a major, if not exclusive, hand in generating the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relationship. In other words, older people in general have a marked tendency to consider themselves more satisfied with their experience in most domains than younger people do, unless there is a clear and urgent set of influences to the contrary, as there obviously is where declining health is concerned. And although historical changes might intrude on this relationship, now acting to strengthen it, then acting to weaken it, we would expect to find an approximation of the same general age-satisfaction relationship in most populations at most times and places.[4]

Even this hunch, while it may represent a "best guess" as to what manner of beast we are dealing with here, does not really constitute much in the way of a theoretical explanation of the effect. And even if we accept a judgment that most of the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relation is a product of aging as a life process, there remain sharply competing explanations of the mechanisms involved that are not at all easy to choose between without fuller longitudinal data.

Two of the leading competitors carry us squarely back to the earlier discussion of discrepancies between objective conditions and subjective assessments thereof. It is possible, for example, to concoct an account of increasing domain satisfaction with aging which rests exclusively on changes in the objective conditions of life, and assumes that satisfaction reports will be isomorphic with these objective conditions in the commonsense manner. It is also easy to suggest an account of these age effects that is psychologically plausible but in its pure form, at least, intrinsically independent of variations in the objective situation.

The objective hypothesis hinges on the likelihood that the objective situations in which people find themselves tend in any large aggregate to show an absolute improvement as time passes for the same set of people, through the kind of progressive shopping mechanism mentioned earlier in this chapter. Generally, for example, older people have better jobs with greater security, higher pay, and more prestige than younger people. They live in "objectively better" houses. If their first marriages were unsatisfactory, they have typically moved on to better ones, and so on. Hence there are objective reasons to expect that most domain satisfactions will increase with growing age in a pattern fixed by the life cycle rather than currents of historical change.

A more subtle variant on the same hypothesis of progressive shopping or adaptation, and one of particular interest to us in this volume, involves the concept of "person-environment fit." It has special interest in part because it begins to introduce a significant gap between subjective reactions and what would tend to be learned from indicators of objective conditions taken alone. In effect, different individuals have different skills, tastes, and

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[4] It is worthy of note in this regard that the parallel British study of domain satisfactions shows the same general trend toward a positive age-satisfaction relationship that is present in our own study. Given the contemporaneous nature of the two studies, along with the fact that historical impacts on popular outlooks appear to be more and more worldwide, this fact in itself is no very conclusive evidence against a more historical reading. However, it is even less of a challenge to the reading that assumes processes of aging are primary in fashioning most of the relationship.

needs, such that an objective situation which might be very gratifying for one person might be thoroughly oppressive for another. For example, we might imagine three persons in three jobs of rather different objective characteristics, all of whom are desperately unhappy with their work situations on varying idiosyncratic grounds. All are seeking different positions and, as it turns out after a round of musical chairs, they capture the jobs of one of the other people. All three, let us imagine, are then very happy with their new-found situations, because they are well suited for them. This is the kind of situation that most conventional objective indicators are very ill-equipped to recognize: at both time points, there were three jobs and three bodies occupying them, leading to a verdict of "no change" in the objective situation. Yet the aggregate gains in the perceived quality of life would, by hypothesis, be substantial indeed, and unquestionably "real."

On a larger canvas, the model of person-environment fit is admirably equipped to map a process of progressive discovery of appropriate niches in life that in turn would predict aggregate advances in satisfaction with a variety of domains over the life cycle. To some degree, changes in situation would indeed be of a kind that would register as "betterment" even with simplistic objective indicators. Despite stray exceptions, for example, the general flow over the aggregate work history would be from lower to higher status positions, just as before. However, there would be all sorts of "lateral" changes of situation—from one community to another—that would be hard to judge as an "improvement" without more specific knowledge of the particular needs and tastes of the actors themselves. And while some individuals would be lured by misinformation or forced by circumstance into new situations less suited to their needs and capacities than their prior ones, we would surely expect that in a large aggregate, the summary effect of all of this lateral shifting and sorting would be to improve the overall level of person-environment fit, and hence produce gains in satisfaction with most facets of experience as life wears on.

We see no grounds for doubting that progressive movements into better, or better fitting, situations make a substantial contribution to the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relationship. At the same time, there are a few small discrepancies that suggest a mechanism or set of mechanisms is unlikely to account for the full flavor of the characteristic form. For example, most of the objective gains in situations over the life span that we have discussed obviously terminate upon retirement for most people, after which point it is at best a matter of holding one's own, and is usually described as something worse. Yet the characteristic form of the age-satisfaction relationship continues to forge upward even after retirement. Figure 5-3 shows that there is some break in these progressive gains in a few domains among the most elderly (averaging about 80 years of age). But even these eleventh-hour declines in satisfaction center on the more remote features of the residential environment (neighborhood, community, and country); aside from the domain of health, clear advances in satisfaction continue to occur "to the end" for eight of thirteen domains.

Furthermore, most of the grosser changes in situation, be they upward or merely lateral (residential moves, job changes, shifts in friends or marriage partners) show by far their greatest incidence in the earlier years of adulthood. There is in effect an early "age of exploration" which occurs for most people in the late teens and twenties, during which the more adventurous experiment with a range of alternative situations and then begin to settle into what seem the preferred alternatives of those which are accessible. Mistakes are made, so that a certain amount of further shuffling and sorting goes on into the thirties and even the forties, but the incidence of such shifts is falling off markedly throughout this period and is minuscule in most domains by age 45.

If the progressive age gains in satisfaction were solely a product of this welter of shifts into progressively better or better fitting situations, then we would be obliged to expect that most of the advances would occur in the first half of the adult life span and would flatten off considerably in the second half. However, the characteristic form seems very close to linear, and in the degree it departs from linearity, the sharper advances appear to occur in the *latter* half of the span. Therefore, while we continue to imagine that a progressive sorting into better fitting situations does contribute to these age gains, it seems likely that some further mechanism or set of mechanisms must be brought into view as well.

There is in fact another kind of mechanism suggested by certain features of our data that shades off from the simplest assumptions about person-environment fit toward more purely subjective or psychological phenomena and which would surely fail to register with any clarity in objective indicators. The main clues to such a mechanism arise in connection with domains characterized by discrete major choice points, such as the selection of a dwelling unit, or a marriage partner, or a job. None of these choices is in an ultimate sense irrevocable, and many people repeat such choices a number of times during adulthood. The important point is, however, that a major moment of commitment is usually involved that forecloses other alternatives for a significant period of time.

We lack data concerning the length of time that individuals have held their current jobs. We do, however, know how much time has elapsed since our respondents entered their "contract" for their current housing and their current marriages. It is of some interest to ask how their satisfaction with these situations varies as a function of the length of time they have been occupied.

Despite many particular differences, the general form of the curves for housing and for marriage is the same. Both look something like a checkmark with an initial high point registered by those who have been in the arrangement for six months or less, followed by a period of decline in satisfaction, a turning point, and then a long upward sweep. Although the marriage satisfaction curve in Figure 5-3 is graphed by age rather than by the starting time of marriage, and multiple marriages are not distinguished, this general checkmark form is apparent even there; when these further discriminations are made, the form simply becomes sharper, with a clearer V-shaped bottom. The same general form is apparent in Figure 5-4, which shows the conceptually parallel relationship for housing, controlled for the "lived where life is different" variable. There are marked specific differences between the marriage and housing cases: the early trough is shallower and the turning point comes more rapidly with housing (after about five years) than with marriage (after nearly twenty years). Nonetheless, we cannot help but be struck with the similarity of the general form of these two relationships.[5]

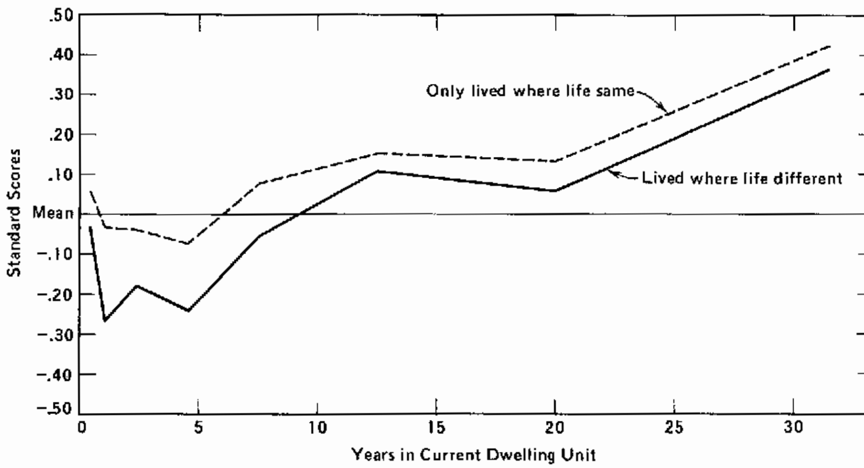
Moreover, such a form seems to have at least some very accessible psychological interpretations. Studies of commitments to major decisions of this kind suggest that once the commitment is made, it is followed by a momentary phase of "dissonance reduction," in which the person who has made the commitment in effect lays away the sense of conflict which often precedes such a choice and enjoys a period of pleasure and self-congratulation at the goodness of his selection. Such a phase should register as a relatively high peak of satisfaction, as it appears to do in these two disparate domains.

Psychologists have not typically pursued their subjects to learn how long before this period of mild unreality dissipates, but it would not be surprising if it were as brief as our data suggest. There follows a period of coming back to earth with progressive discovery of flaws that were unsuspected or at least temporarily repressed, a period enshrined in the folk observation that "familiarity breeds contempt."

The most pronounced feature of the curve, however, is its long upward sweep after the trough is passed, and this feature is less easy to locate in

[5] There are other provocative and somewhat surprising similarities as well. For example, there is faint evidence in Figure 5-4 that the early trough for people who have "lived where life is different" is slightly deeper than it is for people who have had less vivid experience of alternatives. The conceptual parallel where marriage is concerned would seem to be the difference between a single marriage and multiple ones. And we do in fact discover that while the same general "checkmark" form characterizes secondary marriages as well as only marriages, the trough for remarried divorcé(e)s is deeper for subsequent marriages, and in this sensitive domain, by a very wide margin.

Figure 5-4: Variations in Housing Satisfaction, by Length of Occupancy



terms of common psychological mechanisms or folklore observation, although it is obviously very germane to the question as to why domain satisfactions rise so pervasively with age. In other words, it involves something of an unexpected discovery. Moreover, where these two "major commitment" domains are concerned, such data make it hard to argue that anything like a totality of the age gains in satisfaction is accounted for by some fraction of the population that is progressively shifting from poorer to better housing or from less to more satisfying marriages over the life span, since both of these curves involve reactions to a single dwelling unit or marital relationship, as a function of length of contact with it.[6]

[6] It should be noted that these curves are based on measurement at a single point in time, rather than any longitudinal tracing of the same individuals. This means that we are not dealing with the same population from the beginning to the end of the curve: people are dropping out along the way to shift to different houses or different marriage partners. Since these disappearances are likely to involve people most dissatisfied with their situations, it is possible that parallel segments of the curve for the set of people whose marriages last five, ten, or thirty years might be somewhat discrepant. Exactly how these progressive disappearances may affect the aggregate curves at a single point in time depends on such things as how homogeneously dissatisfied the leavers have been for how long before the departure, as well as the way rates of leaving may spurt or decline as a function of length of time in the situation. In general, it is our estimate that the overall "checkmark" form would be preserved even with longitudinal data. Where marriage is concerned, for example, the rates of dropping out in any modest length of time (such as two to five years) are so miniscule that they could not exercise any very strong influence on relevant segments of the curve. The incidence of divorce has in the past peaked rather sharply about the third or fourth year of marriage and then declined quite rapidly and progressively

In short, there seem to be further important psychological mechanisms operative such that beyond a certain initial point of familiarity, *satisfaction with a situation increases as one becomes increasingly accommodated to it,* even though at least the gross features of the situation remain constant. Of course few of our domains involve the kind of mutually exclusive choices and major commitments that characterize the selection of housing, jobs, and marriage partners. Other domains may have rough parallels, such as the choice to dedicate all or most of one's savings to the purchase of a boat for recreational use, and the like. But these are more idiosyncratic matters, and most of the gross situations represented in our other domains probably show a more gradual, evolving change over time, so that the progress of accommodation is not disrupted. In the major commitment domains, this progress is clearly disrupted in the early stages of adjustment to new housing or a new marriage partner. And since changes of this sort are most frequent in the earlier half of the life span, it is not surprising that in these domains the aggregate of age gains in satisfaction are somewhat retarded also and only speed up in the later stages when the incidence of such changes has become vanishingly small, and almost everybody is settling into an increasingly familiar situation. One even becomes progressively accommodated to a climate which is not always pleasant. The point where accommodation does not occur as a simple function of age, of course, is the domain of health, since new and unfamiliar incursions on health occur with increasing frequency in older age.

We naturally cannot say that finer features of a situation are constant simply because the gross situation—a particular residence or marriage partner—remains the same. To some degree, people are surely remodeling and embellishing their residences in ways that increase the fit with their own needs. Similarly, marriage partners are not in one important sense "the same people" in the thirtieth year of their marriage that they were in the tenth year. Presumably, if centrifugal forces have not wrecked the marriage in the interim, there has been some progressive and mutual adjustment to each other's angularities, reducing dissatisfaction as the fit im-

through marriages of 25 years or more. The incidence of housing changes is, of course, much greater, although the rate is highest within the first two years of residence. After that point, such a rate expressed as a proportion of those still residing in the same place from any given point in time is almost a constant: each successive year, about one person out of twelve remaining in the same residence departs. Of course many residential changes arise through other causes than dissatisfaction with the housing itself. However, given the constant rate of loss, if such departures that do involve dissatisfaction represent a dissatisfaction that is not very long-term, nor variable in its length as tenure varies, then a proper longitudinal curve or family of curves should show the same essential features as Figure 5-4.

proves. Hence these habituation effects need not be thought of as purely psychological and utterly independent of the objective situation itself, although there does seem to be a strong subjective quality to them.

It is probably such accommodation effects that help to account for cases on record in which persons living in dilapidated central city housing, and the elderly in particular, have vehemently resisted being relocated in objectively better housing even at short distances from their current residences, in the period before other difficulties in urban renewal projects had become apparent. After all, familiarization with and adaptation to a local microenvironment takes time, and the new learning required to achieve a comparable familiarization with another environment may appear particularly forbidding to the elderly, long past the period when exploration of the new is an intriguing challenge.

Indeed, it is quite possible that the progress of accommodation has some dynamic relationship with the notion of salience of alternatives, developed in the opening section of this chapter. In other words, the progressive settling into a single situation over a long period of time may well be naturally accompanied by a decline in the salience of competing alternatives, even for those persons to whom such alternatives were quite vivid in an earlier period of their lives, which is not always the case.

In sum, then, we have argued that several types of factors appear to combine in producing the strong and pervasive age gains in satisfaction that seem to characterize almost all of the domains we have mapped. These factors include (1) progressive mobility over the life span into situations which are in a clear objective way "better"; (2) the progressive occupancy of niches which are better fitted to the individual's particular needs and tastes, along with continuing modification of and personal adjustment to such niches; and (3) more subjectively based "accommodation effects."

There is evidence that this accounting is not complete. For example, if we compare younger and older people who have been in their current housing for only short and comparable periods, we still find older people expressing satisfaction which is greater by a margin unlikely to be accounted for by the fact that the new housing of older persons tends to be better than that of the young, or effects associated with differential education.[7] Hence we must conclude that there are still further reasons why older people seem predisposed to express higher satisfaction with their situations and experiences than the young. In the next chapter we shall see that age declines in levels of aspiration about housing make such a further contribution to these effects. Indeed, the very strength of these age gains in satisfaction may well

[7] When age differences are controlled, the general checkmark shape of the curve in Figure 5-4 remains, although in weakened form. That shape is most dramatic within the youngest cohorts and appears to blur progressively with age.

depend on the fact that a multiplicity of causes are pushing in the same direction.[8]

Satisfaction and Happiness over the Life Span

We saw in Chapter 2 that reports of overall life satisfaction show some tendency to advance with age also. These advances are small by comparison with the picture for most expressions of domain satisfaction, although the dramatic incursion of dissatisfactions arising from progressively poorer health help us to understand why the overall gains with age may be muted. However, we also pointed out that reports of happiness show a contrasting form. Again, the correlation with chronological age is rather limited, but if anything it seems persistently negative: less happiness is reported among the old than the young. This is surely nothing that our discussion of age and satisfaction would lead us to expect. Yet we may be able to review this discrepant fact in a more enlightened way now that such a discussion has taken place.

There are in fact psychological theories of some pedigree that might be construed as predicting a decline in happiness with age. Psychophysical experiments with the subjective experience of the intensity of stimuli, including pleasure and pain, have long suggested that such intensity is less a function of the absolute level of such stimulation, or the physical intensity as objectively administered, than it is the relationship between that intensity and what the person is accustomed to. Up to some point, the felt intensity increases as the new stimulus input departs from the "adaptation level" which past experience has set for the individual (Helson, 1964). If stimuli experienced as pleasurable are administered with a constant objective intensity, the subjective experience of pleasure will decline, and its felt intensity is only restored by increasing its absolute level. After a time, however, the person becomes adapted to the new level and the intensity of pleasure fades again. In other words, the prediction is that the intensity of experienced pleasure will decline in a relatively fixed situation to which a person becomes habituated, whatever the absolute level of the objective pleasure.

While effects fitting this theory have been replicated many times in the laboratory and scarcely can be considered controversial for that setting, there is of course an enormous leap from the simple circumstance of such psychophysical administrations to the highly complex life situations of our respondents and their summary reports of overall feeling about them. Perhaps these experiments have no relevance whatever for our problem, and

[8] It should not be forgotten that age is also involved in some of the more superficial effects discussed earlier. As we noted, age is about the strongest demographic correlate of the Crowne-Marlowe items with older people both "asserting good" and "denying bad" in a very marked degree.

indeed, our data have already suggested that *satisfaction* at least appears to *increase* with habituation, even if the experience of happiness may not. However, there is an obvious parallel between such experiments with the subjective experience of pleasure and reports of happiness, and other scholars have ventured to presume that the parallel is a meaningful one (Brickman and Campbell, 1971).

The other factual evidence which can be brought to bear from our own study involves an analysis of the circumstances under which reports of overall life satisfaction and those of happiness seem most discrepant. Part of our difficulty in accounting for differences between such summaries of pleasurable feeling when satisfaction is the key concept rather than happiness stems from the fact that the two kinds of responses are, as we have seen, quite highly correlated with one another. However, it is possible to isolate for comparative purposes limited sets of the sample who are (1) happy but relatively dissatisfied with life as a whole; and (2) "completely satisfied" with life but less than "very happy," the high point of the three-step scale. About 16 percent of the total sample falls in the former category, and 9 percent in the latter.

In view of all we have said before, it follows that there are marked age differences between these contrasting discrepant groups. Less than a quarter of the people (23 percent) in the satisfied but unhappy group are under 35, compared to almost one-half (46 percent) among those happy but unsatisfied. Or again, 31 percent of those satisfied but less than fully happy are 65 or older, as compared with but one in ten (10 percent) of the other group.

There are also marked educational differences in the two groups. Almost six of every ten persons (58 percent) who are satisfied but unhappy have not completed high school, as contrasted with only three of ten (30 percent) in the group that is satisfied but less happy. Since there is a rather solid negative correlation between age and level of formal education, differences in these directions are only to be expected, but these exceed in magnitude what would be expected if they were no more than a reflection of the prior differences in age.

There are other kinds of attitude and behavior differences between these two discrepant groups, but all of these seem quite intelligible in terms of their contrast in age and education composition.[9] In other words, the slight overall disjunction between satisfaction and happiness reports seems chiefly bound up with the kinds of education and age effects to which this

[9] For example, widows are remarkably overrepresented in the satisfied-but-unhappy category. However, widows are obviously elderly in the main, and 69 percent of them in our sample have not completed high school, as opposed to less than 20 percent of those under 30.

chapter has been devoted. Persons who are young and well educated are remarkably dissatisfied, in view of the happiness they express.

One other empirical clue to the nature of the discrepancy between satisfaction and happiness may lie in the fact that when age and education are jointly controlled, the tendency for happiness reports to decline with age is most marked among the most poorly educated, is less for those of middling education (high school completion), and least at a college level. This is true both for measurements from 1957 as well as those of the 1971–1972 period, despite some differential trends in happiness reports over this time span (see Chapter 2). Indeed, in the most recent reports, the happiness of college-educated people actually increases with age, much as does overall life satisfaction. Hence the center of the discrepancy appears to lie in the peculiarly high life satisfaction reports of the old and poorly educated, relative to their statements of happiness. We have also seen earlier a parallel tendency for domain satisfaction reports to be strangely high among the poorly educated relative to their assessments of more concrete features of a given domain (cf. Figure 4-6).

Other internal analyses of the intercorrelations of various kinds of global assessments of life mentioned in earlier chapters have suggested that in the degree the happiness and life satisfaction items diverge from one another—and the fact of their strong overlap should be kept in mind—the happiness item seems more strongly related to rather pure measurements of mood or affect, such as Bradburn's request for an indication of the experience of euphoric and depressive feelings in the recent past. The overall life satisfaction measure, on the other hand, seems to involve more cognitive components as to the person's situation relative to his expectation levels, or frames of reference involving social comparison, rather than "absolute" surges of mood, although the two are clearly related.[10]

When Bradburn isolated reports of euphoric experiences from those of a depressive nature (the positive and negative affect scales), he noted that the incidence of negative moods showed little systematic variation by age. However, older people reported significantly fewer euphoric moments than younger people, so that their "affect balance," as measured, did decline with age in the same way as the global reports of happiness do.

If we put all of these observations together, they seem to form a reasonably intelligible picture of changes in the nuances of pleasurable feelings over the life span. It seems likely that young people in their questing period of experimentation enjoy a kind of absolute ebullience about life that loses its "highs" later in life. Indeed, this ebullience may well be integrally

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[10] A worthwhile report of more detailed statistical analyses supporting these observations, carried out on data from our study as well as related ones, is provided by McKennell (1973).

associated with high expectations or levels of aspiration which in turn produce relatively dissatisfied evaluations of the actual youthful situation, particularly when current experience in more specific domains of life is assessed. In other words, *the young may be happier exactly because they are hopeful, while their very hopefulness for the future leads them to more critical or dissatisfied evaluations of their current situations.*[11]

It is probably of some significance that these high expectations have a fair reality base for younger people whose educational background destines them for a relatively high position in the status order later in life. They will in fact move to better and better jobs, finer and finer housing, and the like. In other words, they will progressively narrow the gap between expectations and reality, producing an increased cognitive satisfaction with life, even though the ebullient "highs" of mood tend to flatten out maturationally and probably for the same reasons that the bursts of excited playfulness characterizing kittens fade away almost completely in older cats or, for that matter, the old of most species with which man can achieve much empathy.

For those of more limited status, there is less fulfillment of early high expectations as the life span proceeds. This fact registers in our data in several ways. Presumably it shows up in the clearer declines in happiness among the poorly educated elderly. It is also reflected in responses to two items in the questionnaire asking for retrospective reports concerning whether or not life ambitions up to that point have been fulfilled. These items show not only higher stability of response over time than either the reports of happiness or of life satisfaction, but also are much more strongly associated in the expected direction with social status. Moreover, two of these three measures show their smallest status differences among people under 30, with the gaps widening at later stages.

Nevertheless, reports of current life satisfaction advance with age even among the poorly educated, just as all of their domain satisfactions save health do. Given the cognitive component of relative comparison that appears somewhat more prominent in these satisfaction reports than it does in statements of absolute mood, it seems probable that satisfaction statements rise because aspirations and expectations have been progressively hedged back to fit the realities of the situation. Perhaps the youngest adults of limited education peg their expectations to the circumstances of most non-young adults in the society, as they see them; but as time wears on, they learn to adjust these expectations downward, taking as their reference points for social comparison not all middle-aged and elderly adults, but

[11] Of interest in this regard is the Gould (1972) finding on a more localized sample that agreement with the proposition "I try to be satisfied with what I have and not to think so much about the things I probably won't be able to get" increases steadily after about age 35.

rather "people like me." Alternatives that are progressively recognized as inaccessible lose their salience as reference points for criticism of the present, and the poorly educated generally have a less rich store of such alternatives to work from in any event.

In the next chapter we shall offer considerable additional evidence that supports these surmises as to trends in expectations and social comparisons, particularly among the most poorly educated. For now, however, we can summarize by saying that there are clear signs of limited happiness and retrospective disappointment with life among the elderly of restricted education, yet relative to their reduced expectations, they can express rather high levels of satisfaction both with their current lives as a whole, as well as the more specific situations or domains that make up those lives. They are resigned to their fates, and their high satisfaction reports might be seen, after a term from Simon (1955), as more a matter of "satisficing."

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has been devoted to diagnoses of certain general influences that seem to lend a rather pervasive coloration to reports of satisfaction with life or its domains. The main influences addressed were a peculiarly depressing effect on satisfaction statements that seems to accompany advanced education, and steady gains in reported satisfactions that register with increasing age.

These effects generally represent no more than colorations, rather than strong imprints, in our data. We have singled them out for special discussion not because of their strength, but because of their pervasiveness and because their influence runs in unexpected directions, such that they warrant special explanation. They might be treated as strains of bias in the data, save that the term "bias" is usually reserved for inaccurate or spurious displacements of data patterns, whereas it is our best guess that for the most part these differential response tendencies by age and education reflect true differences in what are real states of mind.

As we proceed in later chapters to discuss factors that appear to cause differences in satisfaction with our various domains, we shall generally be dealing with influences that are stronger and follow more expected lines. Nevertheless, the colorations discussed in this chapter will overlay these patterns as well, and hence should be kept in mind. In a few instances, as we have seen, we dispose of rough measures bearing on such terms as the salience of alternatives or the progress of accommodation to relatively fixed situations. For most domains, however, we do not have such measures, yet it seems fair to assume on the basis of the way domain satisfaction reports vary by crude indicators like age and education that hidden but parallel terms are continuing to affect the data in the same characteristic ways. Failure to be sensitized to this likelihood might lead from time to time to a misunderstanding of our results.

Perhaps the most important piece of unfinished business in our survey of the meaning of these satisfaction reports involves the relationship of such assessments to aspirations or levels of expectation. We have seen that in the modest degree to which summaries of satisfaction depart from reports of happiness, it is apparently because the former contain a greater admixture of relativism, or adjustments made with reference to expectations that are, by one set of mechanisms or another, defined by experience and the social surround. This fact, however, raises an interesting problem with respect to the measurement of satisfactions as one means of monitoring social trends and social change. If it were true that as life or domain situations improve or deteriorate in the eyes of the actor, he merely moves his aspiration level up or down accordingly, leaving his relative satisfaction a constant, then levels of satisfactions in the aggregate would be very inert and insensitive to change. What should be measured in such a case would be the progressive changes in levels of expectation, rather than satisfaction itself.

Of course we already know enough about our satisfaction measurements to have confidence that such a scenario cannot in any strict sense be true. Not only are there very considerable variations from individual to individual in stated levels of satisfaction, but in most if not all instances, groups expected on other grounds to have relative grievances about the character of their lives do show up as more dissatisfied in the aggregate than other groups. However, there remains a fundamental problem concerning the inertia of satisfaction measurements, if expectations are free to vary and are left unmeasured. The final chapter of this section will be devoted to the evidence we can bring to bear on this issue.

Chapter 6
Satisfaction, Aspirations, and Expectations

If we were able to emerge on an English moor or country marketplace of the eleventh century equipped with a modern interview schedule bearing on the quality of life, it seems unlikely that our serf and yeoman respondents would in any great numbers answer to our adjective checklist that life was "nasty," "brutish," or "short." Human life at the time was not short, for example, relative to anything in the collective memory apart from implausible reference points like great oaks or some kinds of turtles. More strictly, human alternatives made available to us from intervening history now make us feel that human life in the twentieth century is impressively long; yet from the perspective of the twenty-second century, it may turn out to be appallingly brief.

In other words, all of such judgments are necessarily formed relative to plausible alternatives, and while the point will surely remain moot, it is quite possible that eleventh-century Englishmen would respond overall to such a questionnaire with satisfaction distributions and characterizations of life not grossly different from that of the British or, for that matter, Americans of today. Indeed, if some of our earlier arguments concerning the salience of alternatives have merit, and if the horizons of the common man were as constricted in medieval times as is often supposed, then conceivably data from earlier times would have actually shown higher levels of satisfaction.

The simple point is, then, that satisfactions are indeed tied to expectations and those available standards of comparison in which such expectations are in turn moored. This may be a very merciful psychological fact, but it raises an inevitable issue concerning the value of hinging any inquiry into changes over time in the perceived quality of life upon measurements of satisfaction. In view of the nature of such satisfactions, which we have seen to have a clearer relative quality than even the measurements of happiness, perhaps we would do better to focus measurements upon the changing aspirations themselves, assuming that in the aggregate, satisfactions will adjust to these changing aspirations in rather constant ways. We shall ultimately find that the weight of our evidence is sufficient to reject this possibility. Nonetheless, it is too important a possibility to be ignored.

In our primary study, we did not make any investment in the measurement of aspirations, and the possibility that satisfaction measures are very inert over intermediate and long terms cannot be definitively examined until our base-line measurements are replicated at some appropriate distance into the future. However, we did some experimentation with aspirations in our small follow-up reinterview. That second interview also permits some preliminary questions to be asked concerning patterns of change in domain satisfactions over time that have some relevance for the problem of inertia, as well as bearing on the question of measurement validity in a more general way. Over the course of this chapter we shall use the reinterview materials to address these topics.

THE NATURE AND BASES OF ASPIRATIONS

Available theory underlying the relationship between the experience of satisfaction and aspirations is rather obvious and straightforward, although not very well developed for the kind of complex case we are treating here. In effect, satisfaction is presumed to decline the greater the gap between relevant aspirations and the individual's assessment of the actual current situation. This time-honored assumption has been central in recent efforts by Davies (1962), Gurr (1970), and others to account for revolution and other forms of civil disorder and has been the focus of some laboratory experimentation over the years as well. Left largely unspecified in either stream of work is the nature of the mental calculus involved in estimating the gap, or more importantly, the standards of comparison that are brought to bear in forming the sense of expectations or aspirations in the first place. Even more obscure are the dynamics whereby such aspiration levels might be adjusted to circumstance over time.

Our lack of major investment in measurement of aspirations arose less because we were unaware of the conceptual importance of such terms, than because standard ways of arriving at their measurement across a variety of life domains were not at all apparent to us. In one or two of our domains where there is a central quantum involved, such as amount of income, savings, or years of education, it would have been possible to inquire as to the levels to which the respondent aspired or thought himself entitled. In most of the domains, it is extremely difficult to imagine how more qualitative expectations and aspirations might be captured in a form that would be reasonably comparable between individuals at one point in time, or for the same individuals across time.

It should be recalled that measurements of the Cantril "self-anchoring" or ladder type, which proved too cumbersome to employ over as many domains as we wished to cover, do not solve the problem in any real way. In that format, respondents are asked to imagine a situation which would be the "best possible" one for them, as well as another which would represent the "worst possible" state of affairs, and then to locate their current situations at one or another point in between. Such measurement explicitly recognizes the relativism of satisfactions as well as their vital link to imaginable alternatives. Yet the most serviceable part of this measurement device—the actual self-locations—would be of no more use in charting changing aspirations or "ideals" over time than our simpler satisfaction measures. While Cantril's respondents were often asked to provide qualitative descriptions of their "best possible" situations once they had been imagined and while catalogs of the kinds of attributes mentioned have a good deal of fascination, the method yields no very clear way of assessing how levels of aspiration vary from individual to individual, or how they may be moving across time.

Standards of Comparison for Domain Satisfactions

In our reinterview schedule we made a particularly large investment in the way in which individuals arrived at overall satisfaction assessments within two domains: housing and the neighborhood. Some of this investment was directed at expanding our portfolio of assessments of specific facets of the dwelling unit and the neighborhood. In addition, a lengthy battery of ratings was requested in a format not unlike the Cantril self-anchoring scale, but with a considerable proliferation of detail.

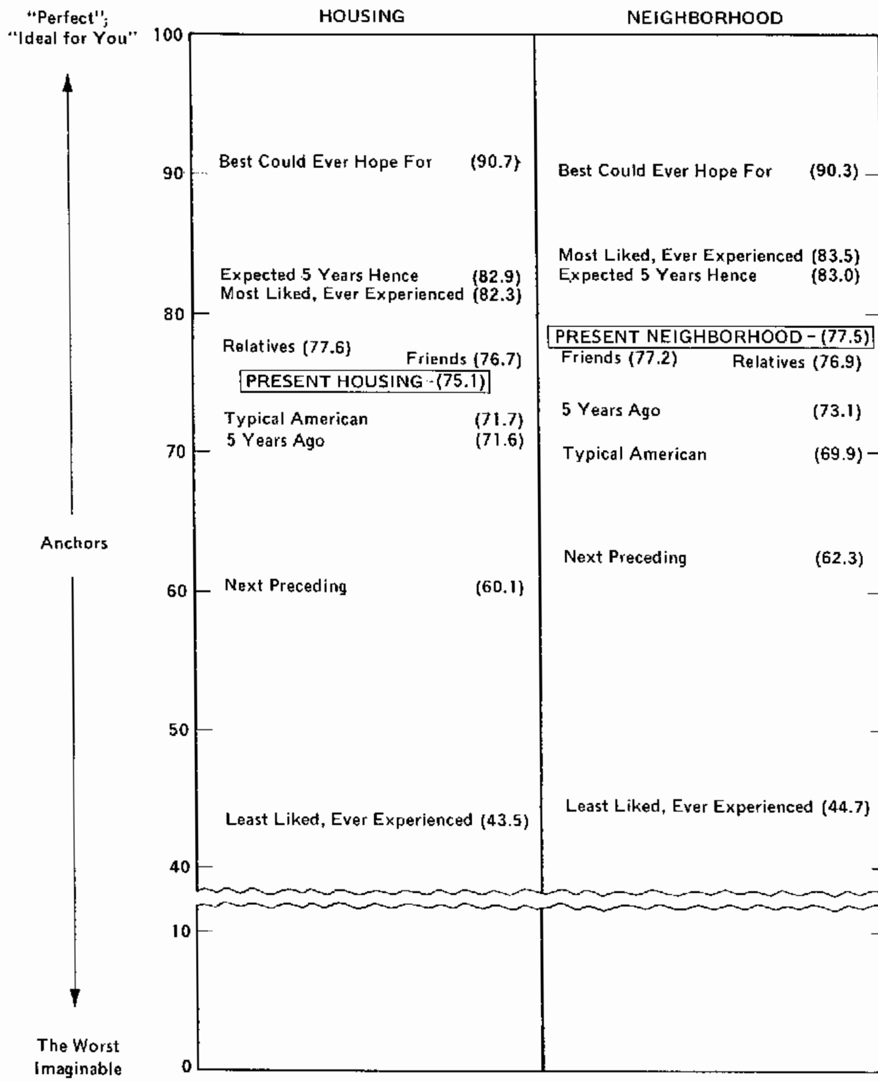
The respondent was first presented with a scale running from zero to one hundred. He was told that on the scale, one hundred would represent his "perfect neighborhood, one that would be ideal for you to live in," whereas zero would represent "the worst possible neighborhood you can imagine." He was then asked to locate his present neighborhood on the scale, a measurement conceptually very close to the main value elicited by the Cantril method, and one which can be construed as a direct reflection of satisfaction with the current neighborhood.

In addition, the respondent was asked to provide further ratings on the same scale, referring to other neighborhoods experienced, observed, or aspired to. Where past experience was concerned, ratings were obtained for whatever neighborhood the individual had lived in just prior to moving into his current neighborhood; whatever neighborhood he might have been living in five years earlier; the neighborhood "liked least of all (he) ever lived in"; as well as the one "liked the most" among neighborhoods ever lived in. Where future expectations and aspirations were concerned, the respondent was also asked to rate the sort of neighborhood he thought he would be living in "five years from now," as well as "the best neighborhood (he) could ever *hope* to live in." And finally, the respondent was asked to rate three types of neighborhood that might be involved in social comparisons: "the sort of neighborhoods most of your friends live in"; "the sort . . . most of the relatives you feel closest to live in"; and "what you consider the typical American neighborhood." The same routine was later repeated, with housing, rather than the neighborhood, as the object of evaluation.

This battery of information does not resolve any problem of providing some absolute and interpersonally comparable measurement of aspiration levels where the two domains are concerned, since the respondent was invited to anchor all of his ratings between the perfect situation for him on the one hand and the worst possible situation he could imagine on the other. Presumably the absolute details of these anchors would vary somewhat from person to person by individual taste and experience. However, it is possible to analyze this information in a way which casts considerable light on the manner in which these summary domain satisfaction judgments are assembled relative to varying standards of comparison.

In Figure 6-1 we show the array of mean values for each type of rating within the two domains, a display which is helpful in seeing how our small group of reinterview respondents ($N = 285$) actually used the 100-point scale. Perhaps the most striking initial feature of the figure is the simple fact that the ratings appear to be almost identical for both domains. There are tiny interchanges in order, but if one pays attention to the metric values it is clear that the correlation of means for parallel ratings across the two domains is well over .90. Moreover, the absolute locations for parallel items never depart from one another by more than 2½ points over the 100-point scale. This implies that across the two domains we are likely to encounter a fair amount of redundancy, and indeed we shall find that virtually all patterns of interest in these data, if found in one domain, are mirrored more or less strongly in the other as well. In one sense this is reassuring, as it suggests a high level of internal consistency in the use of these ratings. On the other hand, the similarities would seem more strongly generalizable if

Figure 6-1: Mean Ratings for Diverse Dwellings and Neighborhoods Experienced, Observed, or Aspired To



instead of these two very similar domains, a more discrepant pair had been used.

If the upper bound of the figure represents to each respondent some state of perfection for him, then it is interesting that "the best home (neighborhood) one could ever hope to live in" is generally rated as falling short of that ideal. The phrase itself already suggests some reality constraints and is a reasonable approximation of what is usually thought of as "aspiration level," or a goal that is worth shooting for, despite the fact that it is at the outer limit of the attainable. The other hypothetical state being rated—the situation five years hence—adds another dose of reality and appropriately falls lower still. This item approximates what one might most appropriately call an "expectation," although the moderately long term of five years surely encourages a degree of wishful thinking. In fact, it is not hard to imagine that for all save perhaps the very old, such an expectation could be predicted to lie closer to the rating of the actual present situation or closer to the aspiration level, according to whether the term of the expectation was shortened or lengthened. In choosing a term of five years, we appear to have found a duration which leaves the expectation in a nicely middling position between the rating of the actual current situation and the aspiration level.

All of the other ratings involve situations that have actually been experienced or observed. The central ratings, of course, are those of the present situation (boxed in Figure 6-1). These are conceptually equivalent to our more standard domain satisfaction variables, although the latter were measured in a different format (the 7-point scale). These central ratings are closely flanked by the three items involving social comparisons: close friends, relatives, and the "typical American." It is interesting that Americans on the average give their own situations and those of friends and relatives higher ratings than they accord "typical American" homes and neighborhoods. We shall encounter an equally interesting reason for this oddity shortly.

Ratings of the current situation are bracketed somewhat more broadly between the situation five years earlier and that expected five years in the future. It is clear that Americans on balance see themselves as having improved their situations in the preceding five years and, perhaps characteristically, see themselves as making a still greater leap forward in the next five. The sense of gain in situation is more dramatic still when the current residence is compared with the one which immediately preceded it. The majority of respondents have not in fact changed their residences in the preceding five years, so they are referring to the same home and neighborhood, although either may have been refurbished or allowed to deteriorate in the interim. The "next preceding" residence naturally involves a babel of time durations, but the sense of advancement, arising from whatever the most recent residential change may have been, remains quite impressive in its degree and of direct relevance to our discussion in the preceding chapter concerning factors contributing to pervasive age gains in domain satisfaction.

Finally, the rating of the current situation is bracketed, more broadly still, between the least and most liked homes and neighborhoods that the respondent has ever experienced. It is of some passing interest that the residential situation which the average respondent considers to have been most unfortunate in his experience departs much more widely from the worst he can imagine than his current situation departs from perfection. It is also of interest that his current situation is located very much closer to the best he has ever had than it is to this worst experience. Both of these facts may bear on the question, discussed in Chapter 4, as to why most satisfaction ratings in our study are massed toward the positive side of the scales employed.

Now that we have taken a survey of the broadest contours of this large battery of ratings, we can proceed in either of two directions. Ultimately, of course, we wish to learn as much as we can concerning the way in which these two domain satisfactions are conditioned by the several standards of comparison which we now have at our disposal. In short, we need to ask how these ratings hang together as a cognitive structure. At the same time, we have inherited a number of hypotheses from preceding chapters concerning likely variations in expectations and aspirations as a function of such differences as those associated with educational background or the process of aging. It is perhaps most useful to approach these latter questions first.

Variations in Expectations and Aspirations: Age

As always, the mean values portrayed in Figure 6-1 conceal a fair degree of interesting variation. We cannot hope to do justice to all of these intriguing points here. However, our earlier discussions may serve to establish a sense of priority which is helpful in selecting a few points to highlight.

Probably the most urgent set of inherited questions involves the nature of expectations and aspirations among the old and poorly educated. Toward the end of the preceding chapter, we were obliged to assume that aspiration levels must have been hedged back among people in these categories, if we are to account at all fully for the remarkable levels of satisfaction reported by these segments of the population. Provisionally, as noted earlier, we are assuming that the "best could hope for" ratings in particular are relevant indicators of such aspiration levels. At the same time we are painfully aware that our means of arriving at such measurements—anchored only in the individual's admittedly idiosyncratic vision of the best and worst imaginable states—is thoroughly relative, without any claim whatever to interpersonal comparability. It is quite possible in such a sea of relativity that, for example, older persons have perspectives and response tendencies disguising a decline in aspiration levels that a more absolute mode of measurement could easily lay bare.

When we examine the behavior of the "best hope" items for housing and neighborhood as a function of chronological age, however, we do in fact find a decline is registered in both domains. Even in the artificial currency of our 100-point scale, older people do assign numerically lower values to the "best" homes and neighborhoods they "could ever hope to live in" than is the case for younger persons. The declining slope is far from dramatic (r's with age of $-.15$ for housing and $-.11$ for neighborhood). But with one notable exception, it is a reasonably regular decline over the life span.[1]

Though the decline in aspiration levels over the life span is faint, the downward progress of these "best hope" ratings is put in significant relief when we go on to note that virtually all of the other ratings in the same battery, whatever the referent in either domain, generally move upward numerically over the life span. Some of these age gains are only to be expected. We have begun to assume, for example, that the ratings of the actual current home and neighborhood in the 100-point format are conceptually equivalent to our standard domain satisfaction ratings on a 7-point scale. If this is an appropriate assumption, then we surely would expect to find that these new ratings would show an advance with age parallel to that observed (Figure 5-3) when the 7-point scale was used. Comfortingly, that is exactly what these new ratings show. For the original 7-point scale of satisfaction with housing, the correlation with age was .26; for the neighborhood, it was .22. For the new 100-point scale, the correlation with age is .27 for housing, and .20 for the neighborhood.

In other words, we have been primed for some time to expect age gains in domain satisfactions where ratings of the current situation are concerned. The important point is that virtually all of these ratings, save for the "best hope" item, show age gains as well, even though in most cases we would have no such expectation, and in at least a case or two, we would expect quite the contrary.

A good example of the contrary expectation is provided by an analysis of the pair of ratings directed at the "most" and "least" liked residential situations ever experienced. Questions including the term "ever" are particularly interesting to analyze in connection with age, because they have certain logical implications. If a 30-year-old person has suffered a "worst ever" residential situation that he rates on our scale as a "30," then he never

[1] The sole major exception involves the single oldest cohort rating the best neighborhood it could hope for. After a progressive decline in these ratings from the thirties onward, this final cohort shows a major upsurge in its aspiration level, returning it close to the levels shown by the young. Yet even this exception is not surprising. since we have noted in Figure 5-3 that the neighborhood is one of the exceptional domains (unlike housing) where reported satisfaction turns *downward* in the oldest cohort after a lifetime of advances. If satisfactions are linked meaningfully to aspiration levels, we should expect just such a major departure from the decline of aspirations with aging at this particular point.

again should be able to rate his "worst ever" situation as something better than a rating of "30." He may encounter a still worse experience and move downward, or not encounter such an experience and remain at "30" with the same experience in mind. But there is little way he can move upward, in the face of the adverb "ever." On a broader canvas, if we can assume that there are no gross changes in the quality of experience from one generation to the next, we would logically expect that the "most liked" ratings would have to remain constant or go up as age progresses, while the "least liked" ratings would have to remain constant in the aggregate or decline with advancing age.

Of course, this is a purely logical analysis, rather than a psychological one. Due to a variety of response tendencies and memory decay mechanisms, these simple logical expectations are almost never fulfilled by empirical data involving "ever" questions. In the case at hand, we find that the "least liked" ratings not only fail to remain constant or decline; they actually rise with age at a rate which is sharper than the "most liked" scores, and this pattern is true, as usual, for both housing and neighborhood domains. Since logical explanations demand something of the contrary, we must either conclude that "worst residential experiences" in the 1960s deserved far lower ratings than those of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s; or alternatively we must conclude that psychological factors are intruding on these rating responses, such that older people tend to accord higher ratings for a given situation than is true of younger people. Since we have no evidence that the former possibility is true and have amassed over the past chapter or two a considerable amount of *prima facie* evidence that the latter is true, it is not difficult to make a choice between these alternatives.

Yet if we grant that there is a pervasive tendency throughout virtually all of these data for more "good-asserting" ratings to be given by older people, then we not only should believe that the absolute declines with age we have found to register in our measurements of aspiration levels are real, but we should also recognize that they are likely to be significantly understated.

Once beyond the "best hoped for" measure of aspiration levels, the only other ratings that approach an exception to the age-gain rule are the anticipatory ratings of the residential situation five years in the future. In the housing case, the age gains do appear, but they are fainter than the gains associated with any of the other housing ratings. For the neighborhood, these expectations actually decline with age, although barely so. However, given a real age shrinkage in aspiration levels, it would not be surprising if there were some lesser shrinkage with aging that affects expectation levels in the same manner. Therefore these other near-exceptions to the age-gain rule simply seem to confirm our earlier reasoning.

The general pattern of these key ratings by age, then, reveals aspiration levels declining over the life span, with ratings of the current situation rising so rapidly as nearly to intersect with them in our final age cohort. This overall pattern not only addresses our earlier arguments concerning a shrinkage of aspirations and expectations with age, but also substantiates our earlier surmise that the very young display both unusually high aspiration levels and an uncommon gap between these expectations and their evaluations of their current situations, hence producing marked dissatisfaction with these situations, despite the natural affective enthusiasms of youth registering in the happiness reports. All of these data combine to support such an interpretation. The key comparisons are summarized for inspection in Table 6-1, showing the absolute differences between aspirations or ex-

Table 6-1: Declining Gaps Between Aspirations and Current Reality, as a Function of Age

	Respondent's age in years						
	18-24	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65-74*	*75-90*
Housing difference							
Aspiration minus Actual[a]	23.7	23.6	14.5	12.7	7.4	8.8	4.2
Expectation minus Actual[b]	12.4	17.8	8.1	4.1	0.7	0.2	0.7
Neighborhood difference							
Aspiration minus Actual[a]	18.0	19.8	11.0	12.0	8.1	1.0	8.6[c]
Expectation minus Actual[b]	10.1	11.7	5.3	3.4	0.9	−2.7	1.2
N[d]	33	51	50	53	33	27	13

[a] The cell entries are the ratings of the present residential situation subtracted from the ratings accorded "the best . . . you could ever hope to live in."

[b] The cell entries are the ratings of the present situation subtracted from the place "you think you will be living in five years from now."

[c] This sole major anomaly is discussed in footnote 1, p. 178.

[d] *N*'s cited are the minimal ones involved in any comparison in the column. Typically, case numbers for most comparisons run 5 to 10 percent higher.

pectations and ratings of the actual current situation across the succession of age cohorts.

All told, then, the key age differences in these patterns of ratings both confirm and supplement our earlier diagnoses of the several factors that must be seen as combining to produce pervasive age gains in satisfaction, particularly where these residential domains are concerned, but probably, by extrapolation, more generally as well. Of course, the few age differences we have explored in detail here do not exhaust the interesting information from these ratings. For example, in Chapter 5 we noted that the one exception to age gains in housing satisfaction was a decline between the first (18-24) and second (25-34) cohorts, an anomaly we associated with the likelihood that the very young were not yet as concerned as those a decade ahead of them about adequate housing for a family. The present battery of ratings amplifies this explanation. By far the sharpest discontinuities in any of these ratings between adjacent cohorts involve deep troughs in ratings of the preceding residence and that of five years before, given not by the first cohort, but by the second youngest one. This remarkable plunge is, however, readily understood: for the majority of people in the 18-24 range, the residence five years earlier was the parental residence, whereas by the time of the 25-34 cohort, the reference is usually to the first independent dwelling unit, which typically is of marginal quality.

Variations in Aspirations: Education

The second major hypothesis from earlier discussions that requires examination is that aspiration levels will be low among the poorly educated, thereby helping us to understand why people of this description—and most particularly those of no more than grade school education—give remarkably high reports of satisfaction in most domains. Once again, we find that this is exactly the case. Over the 80 percent of the population with education beyond the grade school level, further differences in education show virtually no effects whatever on aspiration levels: the average "best hoped for" ratings only vary in a tiny range between 91 and 93 for the neighborhood, and 91 to 92 for housing, with no interpretable pattern across these top four education categories. The bottom 20 percent of grade school people, however, gives ratings of 83 and 86½ to neighborhood and housing, respectively. While these departures from the means associated with the higher education groups may not appear large in an absolute sense, they are considerably greater than any of the age differences in aspiration levels cited earlier and represent the lowest aspiration levels we have found in any of the common demographic categories.[2]

In fact, these ratings for the grade school educated dip low enough that they begin to approach the mean rating which the low-educated give to their actual housing and neighborhoods. For both domains, the least educated

[2] Numerical differences that seem small have unusual importance for the aspiration level measure simply because it shows very restricted variance. Indeed, despite the fact that the top four education categories show almost no variation in means on this measure, the five education categories overall account for nearly 9 percent of the variance (η^2) in the "best hoped for" ratings of the neighborhood, as opposed to less than 5 percent accounted for by the seven age categories. The vast bulk of the education-associated variance is attributable solely to the dramatically low aspiration ratings in the bottom or grade school category.

quartile of the population gives higher ratings on the 100-point scale to their current residential situation than even the top quartile, just as we found to be the case in Chapter 4 when the more standard 7-point domain satisfaction scale was being used. Since the poorly educated have the lowest aspiration levels and the highest current ratings, the gap between the two is less than half as great at the grade school level as it is for any of the four higher education categories in either domain! This fact in itself does not constitute an explanation in the strict sense for the high satisfaction ratings of the poorly educated, since these high ratings are already part of the "gap" computation. For an understanding of these effects, we must have recourse to the discussions of the preceding chapter. But the other half of the gap computation—the low aspiration levels—*is* a new datum, albeit one we had come to suspect on the basis of that earlier discussion.[3]

Once again, beyond substantiation of the hypothesis that concerned us most, the behavior of this full set of ratings as a function of education contains a variety of interesting points. We shall limit ourselves to mention of only one of these, which represents the strongest impact of education on any of these items. We have said nothing to date of the behavior of the ratings of friends, relatives, and the "typical American" residences that make up the social comparison part of the battery. These ratings contain several plausible features, such as the fact that current ratings of own residential situation lag behind that perceived for close friends and relatives mainly among the young, another fact calculated to spur youthful dissatisfaction, but catch up to these reference points after age 40 or so.

The most striking relationship involving these social comparison ratings, however, is that which obtains between education and ratings of the typical American home. Education differences account for over 12 percent of the variance (η^2) in this measure. The form of this relationship is, for the most part, quite intelligible, and it is quite instructive. There is a strong negative relationship between education and ratings of the typical American home *across the top four education categories:* the higher the education, the

[3] Since age and education are correlated, it would naturally be of interest to try to untangle their separate effects where these aspiration levels are concerned. That is, it might be argued that the only reason older people show declining levels of aspiration is because the proportion of grade school people is increasing as we move from younger to older cohorts. Given the small size of the reinterview sample, however, cases are simply too few for any very stable estimate of joint effects. It might be noted, however, that while the hypothesis just mentioned is a possibility, the reverse possibility—that the low aspiration levels of the poorly educated occur because they are disproportionately old—does not appear tenable, both because of the relative forms of the two relationships and because the education difference is much too strong to be accounted for by age. In other words, if age and education do not have joint effects, then the key variable appears to be education rather than age.

lower the absolute rating accorded. This makes a certain sense, since Americans of above average education tend themselves to live in above average homes; and from such different perspectives across the education spectrum, the average American home might look better or worse to the beholders. Yet if this interpretation is correct, it contains an interesting caution. We asked our respondents to provide these social comparison ratings in an effort to understand how such standards of comparison might influence the individual's satisfaction with his own home. In the case of the "typical American" ratings, it is possible that the influence runs in the opposite direction: the values given may be strongly affected by the individual's estimate of his own home laid "against the field." On the other hand, if these ratings simply reflected the objective value of the rater's own home, we would expect still stronger correlations with income than with education. We do not, however, find this. The relationship between income and the typical American ratings is also negative, like that for education, but is significantly weaker. Therefore there seems to be some effect peculiarly associated with the education level of the observer.

We have said that the strong negative relationship between education and ratings of the typical American residence holds over the top four education categories. However, the mean rating within the bottom grade school category breaks the steep trend, dropping off so sharply that the ratings are absolutely lower than those given by anybody but college people. This means, among other things, that the most poorly educated consider their own homes (and neighborhoods) to be superior to the typical American home by a margin which exceeds that for all other education categories save the small top stratum of people with college degrees. While a perception of this kind may be of further help in understanding why the poorly educated exhibit such remarkable satisfaction with their residential situations, the source of the perception itself is likely to be perplexing, particularly as it departs so widely from the strong trend characterizing people of varying educations beyond grade school. We have no compelling explanation as to the basis for this perception. In contrast to the inflated ratings that seem pervasively associated with older ages, there is no generalized trend toward lower ratings that characterizes the poorly educated in other observations. Perhaps the problem of constricted horizons means that people at these lowest levels of education simply have a perception of the typical American home which would deviate significantly from the consensus of the other 80 percent of the observing population.

The Structure of Aspirations and Satisfactions

Save for the last-mentioned fact, all of the patterns shown by these ratings make a good deal of sense, suggesting that the measurements can lay claim to fair face validity. Moreover, they have been helpful in cementing a number of points which were earlier left at surmise. However, our main purpose in commissioning these measurements was to ask what combinations of these standards of comparison might best account for individual differences in reports of domain satisfaction.

As we noted earlier, while most would agree that a level of satisfaction derives from some greater or lesser gap between an estimate of an actual situation and one which the actor prizes or aspires to, there is no dominant conventional wisdom as to the way in which perceptual standards of comparison are combined to form these summary judgments. In our preceding discussion we examined the simple difference or gap between the individual's rating of his actual situation and his rating of the best situation he could hope for. However, a ratio of actuality to aspiration might work as well or better than a difference.

Moreover, if we are trying to account for the formation of satisfactions, there is no necessary reason to assume that the key standard of comparison involves the kind of indicator we have taken as a measure of aspiration level. Perhaps the most potent standard of comparison would be more realistic expectations, rather than wishful aspirations or, for that matter, the individual's perception of the "typical American" situation. Still another possibility is represented by empirical developments associated with theories of adaptation levels, mentioned in the preceding chapter. In such theories, most interesting variations in the experience of pleasure hinge upon the relationship of current experience to past experience. Following such a formulation, we might expect gains in the current situation relative to preceding ones (the previous residence or that of five years prior) to be the primary determinant of current feelings of satisfaction.

Finally, there is no reason to assume that any single-standard model adequately represents the mental comparisons that introduce a relativistic flavor to expressions of satisfaction. A very attractive family of two-standard models could be suggested with a bottom defined by one standard, a top defined by another, with satisfaction being determined according to where the individual sees his own situation as lying between these "brackets." Indeed, one such two-standard model is the essence of the Cantril self-anchoring scale, and our own 100-point scale has almost identical properties. However, we have other more experiential bracketing pairs, including the most and least liked of all that have ever been experienced, or the situation as it was five years earlier and that expected five years later. Moreover, we cannot even be sure that the bracketing standards need be such neat logical pairs. It would not be beyond the realm of the plausible if our respondents were to gauge their level of satisfaction as a function of their own location relative to the space defined by their conception of the typical

American situation and the situation they have most liked of all they have ever experienced.

Fortunately, our data can be brought to bear in principle on all of these possibilities. In practice, of course, it would be a prohibitive chore to investigate all combinations of these frames of reference over a wide range of arithmetic combinations. However, from some rather simple intuitive beginnings we have achieved results of striking enough clarity that it seems unlikely they would be significantly surpassed by any more elaborate manipulations of these ratings.

Basically, then, what we wish to do is ask what combination of items from these batteries of ratings best predicts to housing satisfaction and neighborhood satisfaction. The only further specification which needs to be made is which measure of these domain satisfactions we should use, since there is a choice of several available in the reinterview schedule. The residential domains were discussed early in the reinterview, just as they had been in the original interview. After an initial conversation about each domain covering ground which almost exactly replicated that in the first interview, an overall measure of satisfaction in our conventional seven-step format was collected for both domains. Toward the end of the interview, one-half hour or more later, we returned to the residential domains. A further set of component features of the neighborhood, including such things as presence of trees, open spaces, traffic, noise, and children, were rated, and then the respondent was again asked to rate the neighborhood overall with the 7-point scale. The correlation between these two applications of the same measure is only .71, a rather pure but modest estimate of test-retest reliability.

Moments later, after the notion of an ideal neighborhood had been discussed, the respondent was asked to rate his present neighborhood once again and now in the 100-point scale format that made up the battery of ratings involving aspirations, expectations, social comparisons, and prior residences. Several minutes later, after some irrelevant intervening content, the same 100-point scale was presented for yet another rating of the present neighborhood. We have noted earlier that these two 100-point ratings of the present situation are almost identical in form to the Cantril satisfaction ratings, and they are associated with demographic variables in very nearly the same ways as the parallel 7-point scales.

In all, then, we have four distinct measures of neighborhood satisfaction (if the 100-point scales are included), and three counterpart measures for housing satisfaction.[4] It is clear from these data that the intercorrelations

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[4] The second 7-point measure was not asked in the case of housing. Therefore while we have used the second 7-point neighborhood measure as an aid in assessing

among these related items declines in part as a function of (1) distance of the items from one another in the questionnaire and (2) the shift in form between the 100- and the 7-point scales. The two 100-point scales, asked in fairly rapid succession, show the highest correlations: over .89 for housing, and .83 for neighborhood. When the 7-point neighborhood scale was asked in rather close proximity to the first 100-point scale, the correlation was a lesser .78, presumably due to the change in format. Another item (neighborhood five years ago) was also asked in close proximity, first in the 7-point and then in the 100-point form, with results less than .01 different ($r = .77$). Thus .77 seems a good estimate of the effects of form change, if proximity is kept high. When the 7-point scale is laid against the second administration of the 100-point scale, somewhat less proximate in time, the correlation falls off from .78 to .74. Not surprisingly, then, our 7-point scale asked in the standard sequence, with almost the whole interview intervening before the 100-point scales, correlates only between .62 and .64 for all four possible comparisons with the latter scales (two domains, two 100-point scales).

The most obvious candidates as our key satisfaction measures to be predicted by varying combinations of standards of comparison are either the 100-point scale embedded in the same ratings, or, if we are concerned about incestuous effects, the standard domain satisfaction items in 7-point form at the beginning of the interview. In point of fact, this choice does not turn out to be too critical for our purposes, as we have made numerous comparisons between them. The results do differ, but in a way which has little effect on our conclusions. When we predict to the 100-point scales, thereby keeping format constant and proximity high, the structural correlations are at their brightest. They all shrink noticeably when prediction is to the first administration of the 7-point scale. However, the shrinkage is indeed general, meaning that the *relative* patterns on which our conclusions are based remain perfectly intact. In fact, we shall provide samples of both versions of the prediction.

Earlier in the chapter we formed simple estimates of the gap between the aspiration ("best could hope for") standard of comparison and the ratings of the current situation on the assumption that this was a particularly meaningful calculation. When in Table 6-2 we compare this kind of a simple difference with all other possible simple differences between any of the other standards of comparison and the current situation, we see that this difference term is indeed by some margin the best predictor of current satisfaction, and this is true in both domains for both of the two key esti-

how these measures behave, it is not a good candidate as the term to be predicted from the other frames of reference.

Table 6-2: Predicting Domain Satisfactions with Single-Standard "Gap" Models

	Housing satisfaction				*Neighborhood satisfaction*			
	Predict to: 100-pt. scale		7-pt. scale		*Predict to:* 100-pt. scale		7-pt. scale	
	Diff.[a]	*Ratio*[b]	*Diff.*	*Ratio*	*Diff.*	*Ratio*	*Diff.*	*Ratio*
Frames of reference								
Positive								
Aspirations (best could hope for)	.85	.88	.56	.58	.86	.89	.54	.54
Expectations (five years hence)	.72	.75	.55	.54	.64	.57	.40	.37
Most liked, ever experienced	.71	.68	.43	.43	.70	.60	.51	.46
Social comparison								
Typical American	.70	.65	.45	.43	.65	.56	.42	.50
Most close relatives	.69	.53	.39	.28	.63	.45	.41	.27
Most close friends	.67	.71	.43	.42	.59	.59	.35	.37
Negative, retrospective								
Least liked, ever experienced	.39	.11	.24	.06	.38	.10	.26	.12
Preceding situation	.36	.14	.29	.10	.38	.11	.19	.16
Five years ago	.33	.05	.25	.05	.33	.12	.20	.16

Cell entries are correlations (r) between the difference or ratio involving (1) rating of the current situation (satisfaction) and (2) the frame of reference listed on the left: predicted to the 100-point scale or the standard earlier 7-point domain satisfaction scale.

[a] The predictor in the "difference" case is the rating of the residential frame of reference listed at the left less the rating of the current situation.

[b] The predictor in the "ratio" case is the ratio of the current residential situation to that for the frame of reference listed at the left.

mates of satisfaction. In other words, if we limit ourselves to a single-standard model, it seems very clear that levels of aspiration are simply the dominant standard of comparison for the gauging of satisfactions, at least in these residential domains.[5]

[5] The prediction here is a somewhat incestuous one, particularly where the 100-point scale is concerned, since we are using the *difference* between the aspiration rating and the current rating to predict the current rating. It is therefore of interest to note that the simple correlation between the aspiration and the current rating (no difference formed) is only .39 for housing and .32 for the neighborhood. These may fruitfully be compared with the .85 and .86 for the difference term prediction. More generally, of course, we have a better chance of a strong correlation using a difference where the terms are not highly correlated to begin with. From this point of view, it is worthwhile noting that in both domains, only the "typical American" rating is less strongly correlated with the current rating than is the aspiration level. This is a rea-

Without disturbing this general proposition in the least, Table 6-2 does suggest the minor amendment that a *ratio* between aspirations and the current situation is a still better predictor by a small margin than the *difference* between these ratings. This would be a somewhat more exciting discovery if it turned out to be very generally true, whatever standard of comparison was being employed as a predictor. As we scan over the totality of Table 6-2, however, we see that this greater efficiency of the ratio version to the difference is scarcely general. However, given the dominant role of the aspiration level as a standard of comparison, it may still remain psychologically important that the ratio form gives a stronger performance in this special case.

Table 6-2 contains other messages as well. One is the surprisingly weak performance of any of the negative-affect standards of comparison or the retrospective experiential ones save for the "most liked" ratings. While these experiential standards cannot be called irrelevant to the formation of satisfactions, as we shall see later, they appear to fall short of the central role accorded them in the theory surrounding adaptation-level phenomena. If we add these data to others cited earlier, in which habituation seems to breed contentment after a time, rather than a loss of experienced pleasure, we get the increasingly strong impression that the well documented effects arising in experimentation with adaptation levels have rather little to do with the class of complex satisfactions under discussion here.

More generally, it may be important to keep in mind that the contrasts between aspirations and negative or neutral past experience as key standards of comparison for satisfactions emphasized by Table 6-2 may be somewhat culture-bound. Surely it is true that most impressionistic accounts of American culture stress values of achievement, aspirations, and forward-lookingness. It is at least a possibility that in more "traditional" cultures, with a heavier valuation of precedent and the past, the balance between future-oriented standards and more past-oriented ones for the determination of satisfactions might be significantly redressed.

Other Standards of Comparison

Given the seeming dominance of aspirations in governing satisfactions for Americans, it is natural to wonder what role, if any, is played by the

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sonable configuration, since the "typical American" stimulus is the most fixed and objective for all respondents, and hence least dependent on the details of own situation. Finally, it is important to note that the high correlations between the current ratings and the gap with aspirations is no simple artifact of lack of variance in aspiration levels. It is, of course, true that if there were no individual variation whatever in aspiration levels, then a perfect (1.0) but meaningless correlation between the gap term and the current ratings would emerge. However, the absolute variance of the aspiration ratings is very nearly as great as that for the current ratings.

other standards of comparison. Thus far we have only considered a simple model involving a single external standard. It is possible that a more complex model, utilizing these standards further, would show a still more impressive predictive performance.

The most plausible two-standard model, as suggested earlier, is one in which the current situation is located between a ceiling and a floor fixed by two other standards. The possible pairs to be examined can be limited somewhat since any ceiling term is likely to be some standard typically rated higher than the current situation (such as aspirations, expectations, or the "most liked" past experience), while any floor term should generally run below those ratings. Nevertheless, there still remain a large number of possible floor and ceiling combinations, not all of which we have inspected.

We have tested four or five of what seemed to us the most plausible of these two-standard, or "bracket" models, however, and the outcomes do not encourage us to hunt further. In two cases, the potent aspiration level served as the ceiling, but in others expectation levels or the "most liked" item performed that role. Usually the "least liked" or the "typical American" items have served as floors. In none of these tests is the performance impressive. In all cases, the prediction to current satisfaction is very notably less than what is achieved by taking the more potent of the two standards of comparison as a sole predictor in a single-standard model of either the ratio or difference type. Hence we conclude that more complex organizations of these frames of reference in terms of any static "combining formula" are not very promising. The simplest type of model is clearly the best.

At the same time, this does not mean that the other standards of comparison play no role at all in the determination of these satisfactions. In fact, the evidence is quite to the contrary. After the gap with aspiration levels has exhausted its predictive power in accounting for current satisfactions, gap terms involving ratios or differences with the other standards continue to add significantly to the variance accounted for in these domain satisfactions.[6] Thus while the aspiration frame of reference clearly dominates the scene, and more complex combinatory models do not perform impressively, it appears that all or most of these other standards of comparison do play some independent secondary role in pegging levels of satisfaction.

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[6] For example, if we use the original 7-point housing satisfaction scale as the term being predicted, the current aspirations ratio accounts by itself for 33 percent of the variance in this measure. If, in a step regression mode, we continue to add other predictors involving ratios and differences of the further standards of comparison, eight additional predictors increase the total accounting to 47 percent of the variance. Since our earlier reliability estimates suggest that the total "true variance" to be accounted for in the 7-point scale probably does not exceed 60 percent of the observed variance, this is an impressive summary performance.

Moreover, it would be quite plausible to imagine that some of these other standards have an important causal role themselves in the establishment of aspiration levels. In other words, up to this point we have traced our domain satisfactions back to the gap between two terms: (1) evaluations of the current situation and (2) what is hoped for. Where the first is concerned, in ensuing chapters we shall see some of the components of reality that help to shape the individual's estimate of his current situation. But what perceptions determine the high or limited levels at which his aspirations are pegged? Quite conceivably those aspirations depend in turn on a nexus of the kinds of past experiences and social comparisons that our other standards of comparison were designed to capture, thereby affecting satisfactions indirectly.

Among the other standards of comparison, the one most strongly associated with the aspiration term involves expectations five years hence. While this is a very plausible kind of association, we might well hesitate to say that aspirations are mainly caused by expectations. It would seem more reasonable to argue that aspirations and expectations are highly correlated because they are of the same cloth. Our expectation term, as operationalized, refers to the point where the individual thinks he will be on the road to his aspirations after the next five years' journey. The substantial correlation between the terms simply says that people with higher aspirations also have higher expectations. Therefore, if we are to think in causal terms, it might be more likely that expectations for any prospective period are set with reference to aspirations, rather than the reverse; or at the very least, that aspirations and expectations are jointly determined by some other causally prior perceptions and frames of reference. Therefore we shall take the liberty of setting the expectation term aside before starting our survey of other standards of comparison that might be seen to have a determining influence on the setting of aspiration levels.

This leaves seven other standards (cf. Table 6-2), any of which could quite plausibly be seen as causally affecting the level at which any given individual sets his aspirations. All seven of these ratings are positively correlated with each other in one degree or another. For both the housing and neighborhood domains, the weakest correlation (r) between any pair of these seven standards of comparison is .21 (between the "most liked" and "typical American" ratings of dwelling units). The strongest is .69, between ratings of the neighborhoods of "friends" and those of "relatives." These positive correlations mean that if we are using these other seven standards to predict aspiration levels, there is always some overlap or redundancy between them. And in an extreme case like that of friends and relatives, the overlap is so large if expressed as a proportion of probable true variance in these measures (error variance aside) that we would expect both standards of comparison to predict aspirations in about the same way, and we would not expect either term to add a great deal to any prediction of aspiration levels made by the other.

If at this point we enter into a mode of analysis that uses all seven of these standards of comparison as possible predictors of aspiration levels ("best could hope for" ratings), but which in effect can rate both their absolute influence as well as their relative influence when all overlaps in prediction from the other measures are set aside, then we get a very clear set of principal results.[7] In the first place, the set of seven predictors taken together accounts for a very respectable proportion of the variance in the aspiration measures—about one-third in the case of housing and almost one-half ($R^2 = .48$) for the neighborhood aspirations.

Moreover, for both domains by far the most important single standard of comparison bearing on aspiration levels appears to be the residential situation "liked the most of all" that the respondent has ever lived in. The simple correlation (r) between the "most liked" ratings and aspiration levels is .53 for housing, and .64 for the neighborhood. When the predictive contributions of all of the other six interrelated standards to aspiration levels are removed in advance, the "most liked" ratings still account independently for about 10 percent of the variance in aspirations, or a figure four to five times as great as the corresponding figure for the second most "potent" predictor.

It will be recalled that the expectation ratings for five years hence would have been, in this analysis mode, a slightly stronger predictor still than the "most liked" ratings, yet we set them aside because of the implausibility of their causal status in shaping aspirations. Therefore it may be incumbent on us to review the plausibility of the causal role of the "most liked" ratings in influencing current levels of aspiration. On the face of it, the argument for such a causal role seems quite straightforward. For one thing, the temporal sequence is proper: more often than not, our respondents seem to be referring to some residential situation in the past, since they tend to differentiate between the "most liked" situation and their current ones. Yet the aspiration levels measured are current and hence have typically postdated the "most liked" experience in time. Of course, there are other possibilities that may be of relevance in some degree for a fraction of our respondents. Perhaps aspiration levels are extremely stable for many individuals over long periods of time, such that current differences in aspiration levels between persons are of ancient vintage, antedating the "most liked" residential experience. And perhaps persons who were already high aspirers sought out and enjoyed "better" residential situations than low aspirers, thus con-

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[7] The analysis used was a step regression.

tributing to the correlation between the two ratings. Or again, it is possible that where past residences are being described as "most liked," memory has distorted the recollection along lines biased by aspiration levels.

While either of these competing sequences is possible, it would still seem to remain most plausible that aspirations have some base in personal experience and that optimal experiences are an important standard for the pegging of aspiration levels. Therefore, we would conjecture that the bulk of the "causal flow" for most people is from such optimal experiences to a shaping of aspirations, rather than the reverse.

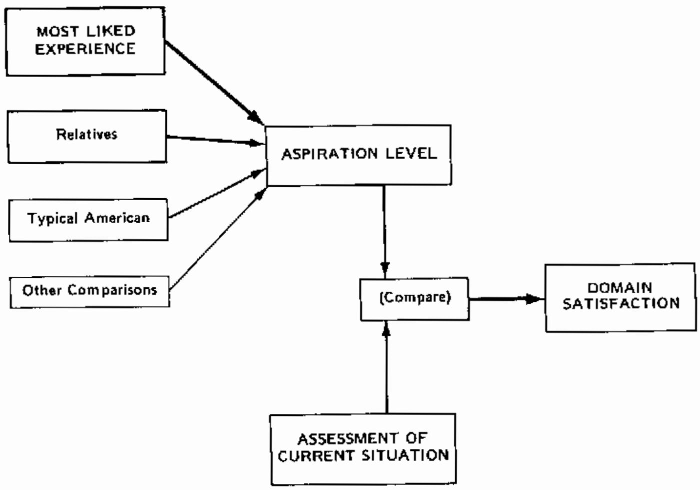
While the "most liked" experience dominates the prediction of aspirations, it is of some interest to note how the other six standards of comparison perform in this regard. It turns out that the second most potent predictor is also the same in both the cases of housing and domain satisfaction. This is the standard suggested by the places most of the respondents' closest relatives live. For many of the younger respondents in particular, there may be some integral tie between their "most liked" residential situation and that of their closest relatives. That is, for many younger people the nicest residence in which they have ever lived may be that of their parents, a situation they aspire to duplicate if not surpass in due time. At the same time, this analysis tells us that the standard set by perceptions of relatives' situations has an influence on aspiration apart from that reflected in the "most liked" ratings.

In some ways it is misleading to single out the "relatives" as the next standard of comparison, however, since statistically this rating stands out much less clearly from the five remaining frames of reference than the "most liked" did from all six. Standards set by the "typical American" residential situation, the situation five years earlier, and that of friends follow very closely in predictive strength, and in an order which varies between these two domains. The "least liked" ratings and the ratings of the preceding residence are least noteworthy in their apparent impact on aspiration levels: about 99 percent of the variance in aspirations explained by all seven standards of comparison is accounted for without them.

While the following section will help to make clear that what we have been discussing up to this point is at best the structure of aspirations, expectations, and satisfactions as it seems to stand for the hypothetical "average American adult" and that there are important variations around these averages, it is nonetheless worth summarizing the view that we have developed as to what this structure is. Figure 6-2 shows what we take to be the most plausible causal sequence producing an ultimate sense of satisfaction with a particular domain or, with proper translations perhaps, a more global sense of well-being.

As the figure implies, statements of domain satisfaction are primarily a

Figure 6-2: A Model of Comparisons Leading to Feelings of Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction with a Domain



reflection of the perceived gap between the individual's sense of his current situation in the domain and his aspirations concerning his position in the domain. Aspirations are in turn shaped by other standards, including most notably the best experience he has had in the domain, but also by perceptions of the social environment, including the situations of relatives, his view of the "typical American" situation, that of friends, and, to a lesser degree, other past experiences.

This figure should be taken both as conjecture and rough approximation. It is at least consistent with our standard of comparison data from two domains, and as it seems to have a high degree of surface plausibility, it is worth surmising that it may be relevant for a variety of other domains as well, although some of the particulars might receive somewhat different emphasis.

Demographic Variation in Structure

We have already seen that there are conceptually significant variations in the absolute levels of aspiration and some of the other standards of comparison as a function of demographic differences like age and education. A parallel but independent question is whether there is also significant variation in the way these standards seem to shape satisfaction in different segments of the population. Thus, for example, Table 6-2 made the important case that the gap between aspirations and current situation was by some margin the most potent simple predictor of current domain satisfaction. However, it is quite possible that the values in Table 6-2, being averages, conceal important variation across more homogeneous portions of the population. As one plausible illustration, perhaps the potency of long-term aspirations in affecting satisfactions is at its peak for the young, but erodes in the later years when such visions of the future decline in relevance.

To investigate such possibilities, we have decomposed much of the data of Table 6-2 by age and by education in particular. Table 6-3 summarizes one of these decompositions pertaining to the first column of Table 6-2, although in this instance it is useful to take the squares of the correlation coefficients (r^2), in order to speak of amounts of variance in domain satisfaction that is accounted for by the various terms in the respective groups. Decompositions of other columns merely tell a comparable tale.

The variation captured in Table 6-3 is of entirely uncommon magni-

Table 6-3: Variation in Predictive Capacity of Single-Standard Models, by Education and by Age[a] (in percentages)

	Education			*Age*		
	Less than high school	*High school completion*	*More than high school*	*17-34*	*35-54*	*55+*
Standards of comparison for housing						
Aspirations	40	82	81	86	71	26
Expectations	12	59	69	66	35	18
Most liked	19	53	62	54	47	16
Typical American	32	59	60	53	52	38
Close relatives	24	50	61	55	41	36
Close friends	25	62	61	59	50	31
Least liked	13	18	20	32	15	4
Preceding housing	10	27	15	27	22	3
Five years ago	6	13	17	15	9	8
Minimal N	92	84	86	77	102	75

[a] Cell entries indicate the proportion of variance (r^2) accounted for in the 100-point rating of current housing by differences between that rating and those accorded the standards of comparison listed on the left (cf. the first column of Table 6-2).

tude. We see that the highly educated always show a greater variance accounted for by these gap terms than the poorly educated, and the young always show a greater variance than the old. With a few minor exceptions, the middle categories for both age and education take an intermediate position. What is most impressive, however, are the magnitudes of the differences. Out of the ten rows of Table 6-3, there is only one instance in which the most strongly predicted group on either education or age fails by even a small margin to account for at least double the variance of the most weakly predicted group. Twice the variance between contrasting groups is already an impressive difference, but most of the differences are well over double and run up as high as eight or nine times the variance accounted for with some of the comparisons.

Before we ask what these large differences mean, it is worth noting that the general trend of these differences is rather complementary between education and age. That is, the proportions of variance accounted for are at their nadir among the old and among the poorly educated. As always, however, since the old are more poorly educated than the rest of the adult population, and the poorly educated tend to be older, we are obviously looking at effects which overlap to some degree between the two panels of the table.

It would naturally be enlightening if we could examine the respective effects of age or education with the other variable controlled. Unfortunately, case numbers in this small reinterview sample are simply too few to encourage such an operation. Nevertheless, with the population divided roughly into thirds in both panels, it is a fairly safe guess that the variable in any row primarily responsible for the observed effects—be it education or age—is the one which shows the sharper differences. Thus, for example, if we look at the "Least liked" row we see that the contrasts associated with age are far more dramatic than those associated with education. Indeed, the education differences in that instance are probably no more than one would expect to find as spurious "pale shadows," if the true differentiating variable were age alone, and education had little to do with the matter save for the fact that the poorly educated are also old. In other cases, the greater contrasts lie on the education side. We have added boxes to Table 6-3 to highlight which side of the row appears to show the greater contrasts, and we shall assume that while both education and age are probably affecting most of these comparisons independently, the greater weight of interpretation should be accorded to the particular variable associated with the boxed effects.

The differences are modestly larger and more pervasive where education is concerned. The tendency for predictive capacity to decline at lower education levels is not at all an unfamiliar finding in survey research. Indeed, we already noted effects of this kind in Chapter 3, in connection with the prediction of global reports of life satisfaction from our portfolio of domain satisfactions, although the sheer magnitude of those effects was considerably less striking than those of Table 6-3. At the time, we tentatively attributed this weakened predictive power to reduced reliability of measurement among the less educated. Since as we have seen the reinterview sample included repetitions of parallel items, it provides more direct estimates of these test-retest reliabilities. They do in fact vary in the expected way as a function of education. For example, the correlations between the two 100-point scales measuring overall assessments of current housing run over .90 for those with a high school education or better, but fall below .80 among those who have not completed high school. Similarly, the correlations between the central 100-point scale and the 7-point scale of overall housing satisfaction lie above .70 in the better educated two-thirds of the population, but fall to .52 for those with less than high school education. There is some tendency for these reliability estimates to decline with age as well, although the effects are less strong and would be largely erased if education were controlled. In sum, then, while these education-based differences are not noteworthy between high school and college people, there is a marked reduction in reliability of measurement for those whose education falls short of high school completion. This reduction in the "true variance" of measurements for the poorly educated means that, other things equal, any prediction structures such as those represented in Table 6-3 will undergo a corresponding attenuation for these segments of the population.

While these differences in measurement reliability by education probably account for some of our earlier observations, the effects portrayed in Table 6-3 appear to outrun by a considerable margin any declines of predictive capacity that might be accounted for by education differences in reliability alone.[8] In other words, while variations in measurement reliability are clearly making a contribution to the education-associated differences in Table 6-3, it seems almost certain that other factors associated with edu-

[8] It is possible to rough in estimates as to what the entries in Table 6-3 would look like if differences in reliability of measurement linked with education were removed. Such an examination is possible because we have test-retest reliability data for one of the two terms figuring in each calculation (ratings of the current situation); the examination remains rough and presumptive because we do not have corresponding reliability data for the various external standards being used. If we assume that the drop-off in reliability among the less educated is about the same for all of the external standards of comparison as it is for the ratings of the current situation, then very substantial differences in predictive capacity remain for most of the rows of Table 6-3 (especially those boxed) even when education differences in reliability are corrected from the calculations. It remains possible, of course, that the drop-off in measurement reliability is much more severe for the other standards than it is for ratings of the current situation, and given the less concrete nature of these other referents involved, some such difference in reliability would not be astonishing. Nevertheless, these reliability differences between ratings of the current situation and the other frames of reference would have to be quite extravagant to account for the full magnitude of education-associated differences observed in many rows of Table 6-3.

cation are having an impact which is pushing with considerable force in the same direction.

Therefore we are obliged to conclude that some of the differences shown in Table 6-3 on the education side stem from the fact that the poorly educated have somewhat more difficulty coping with our quantitative measuring instruments to express their situations than the well educated do, and this fact tinges the age comparisons indirectly as well. At the same time, it is probable that these expectation-satisfaction structures are less tightly or clearly organized in the minds of poorly educated respondents than they are for well educated ones, above and beyond the immediate problems of measurement.[9]

Since we have argued that the dominant standard for the determination of these satisfactions, at least in a proximal sense, appears to be levels of aspiration, it is of particular interest to note that age differences in this regard appear in Table 6-3 to be more crucial than those associated with education. Generally, these differences correspond to our initial expectations that aspiration levels would decline in relevance in the later stages of life. It would make intuitive sense, of course, if this decline were very shallow through the middle years, but became dramatic among the elderly. The data appear to imply exactly this kind of trend.

The other instances in which age appears to be the dominant source of variation in predictive capacity—and again, very strikingly—also seem quite easy to interpret. These instances involve a great decline with age in predictive capacity of the "least liked" and "preceding" housing ratings. In view of the basic fact that residential mobility occurs at a very high rate among the youngest adults and declines precipitously as age advances, it is very clear that the remoteness in time of any different prior residential arrangements is vastly greater among the old than among the young. We have already seen that the ratings of the "least liked" residence of all those ever experienced show an upward progression among older people which smacks of memory decay and the unreal. It is, therefore, not surprising that as these standards of comparison recede in time, their weight in any calculus of aspirations or satisfactions declines accordingly.

In view of the radical variation captured in Table 6-3, it is noteworthy that the general message of the table does little to disturb the main thrust of our argument up to this point. The primary lines of variation in the table involve an overall shrinkage of predictive capacity as one moves from young to old or from high to low education. What does *not* happen, at least to any

[9] Rather parallel differences in the organization of political attitudes have been discussed at length in Converse (1964).

marked degree, is that the relative positions of the various standards of comparison are widely rearranged as we move from one segment of the population to another.

Among all categories of education, for example, the gap involving aspiration levels continues to dominate the scene. The absolute level of that domination is lower for the poorly educated, to be sure, but since the predictive capacity of all the other standards is shrunken in that case as well, the sense of relative domination remains every bit as strong. Exactly the same can be said for the younger two-thirds of the population divided by age. The one major amendment arises among the old, where the term involving aspiration levels falls to fourth place among nine standards of comparison, although it still remains above average as a standard even here. In effect, for the old, the terms of social comparison have not declined as radically as aspiration levels, where the influence on the formation of housing satisfaction is concerned. This phenomenon deserves addition to our growing catalog of factors which bear on the behavior, often surprising, of satisfaction statements among the aged.

Otherwise, there is relatively little reordering of apparent priorities as we move across these population segments defined by age and education. There may be some small tendency for friends to decline in importance as a basis for social comparison as age increases, as compared to the "typical American" standard or that set by close relatives.[10] However, these differences are not imposing, and in general, while the age and education effects may be important to understand, they do remarkably little to alter the rough approximations we had earlier established concerning the general interplay between aspirations and assessments of the current situation in determining satisfactions, with some of the other standards of comparison such as the "most liked" situation operative in the background affecting both terms, but chiefly the pegging of aspiration levels.

Summary

In the course of this section we have developed a set of data which point to the prime role of aspiration levels in serving as a standard whereby the individual's current situation is assessed and feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction develop. These demonstrations of course have a great deal of conceptual interest in and of themselves. Nevertheless, from one point of view they might be seen as exacerbating the nagging problem which we set out at the beginning of the chapter. If we wish to monitor changes in the

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[10] Whether this is a persistent accompaniment of aging or a current generational difference would be hard to determine without a lengthier time series of data. However, at a later point in this volume (Chapter 11), we shall note other observations suggesting a particularly intense importance of friends for the young.

felt quality of life over time, what warrant do we have to assume it is useful to monitor satisfactions? Given the apparently integral relationships between aspirations and personal conclusions about satisfaction with current situations, may it not well be that aspirations are the significant dynamic terms, being expanded upward or contracted downward as the progress of history requires, leaving aggregate levels of satisfaction describing a very inert or stationary trend line across time?

We have no desire to argue that aspiration levels are immutable or fail to show variations of great conceptual importance from one historical period to the next. This dynamism of aspirations seems to us to be a very plausible surmise and one which deserves highest priority attention on the research agenda in this area. On the other hand, a recognition that aspiration levels probably show important dynamic changes does not in itself constitute an argument that satisfaction levels must as a result be inert or constant over time. And while we are not in a position to bring any data to bear on the question of the dynamism or inertia of aspiration levels, our reinterview sample does provide some glimpses as to the empirical responsiveness of our domain satisfaction measures to changes in objective situations. These data will serve as our main basis for rejecting the possibility of greater inertia in our satisfaction responses.

CHANGES IN DOMAIN SATISFACTIONS

In designing our reinterview questionnaire, which in large measure was a repetition of items from the original study, we added a battery of questions concerning recent changes in life situation that would have face relevance for one or another of our domains.[11] In all, some forty-two possible changes were invoked, ranging from marriage and divorce or separation, through death or illness of family members or friends, types of job change, and crime victimization, to financial problems, residential shifts, and completion or resumption of education. For each type of change reported over the preceding two years, further questions were asked to establish the timing of the events involved, so that we would know whether the basic change had occurred before the first interview, or in the interval between the two interviews.

Given the short time lapse of only eight months between the interviews, along with the infrequent incidence of most of the more important events monitored and the small number of cases in the reinterview subsample, we typically dispose of no more than small handfuls of instances in which any given change occurred in the interval. Where marital status is concerned,

[11] This list of life events was adapted from Holmes and Rahe (1967).

for example, there were only eleven reports of such change: two marriages, four separations, three reconciliations from separation, and two formal divorces. Actually, only nine different respondents were involved in these reports, since one respondent was both married and then separated during the interval, and another was separated and then reconciled.

Of course some other events were more common. Twenty-six respondents reported a change in residence; thirty-eight reported the death of a close relative; and almost one hundred reported serious illness or death among family or friends. While all of these numbers remain precariously small, particularly if similar-appearing types of events are not combined, there is enough information present at least to ask, in a somewhat clinical vein, whether our domain satisfaction measures or, for that matter, the more global reports of well-being, appear sensitive to relevant changes in life situation. If we could not find appropriate signs of such sensitivity, then we might be obliged to conclude that these statements of satisfaction were indeed precariously inert, and that perhaps the impacts of life changes registered more vigorously on aspiration levels than upon our central domain satisfaction measures. The important point is that the data should be adequate for this kind of sensitivity test, even though we cannot investigate in any detail the magnitude of impact for very specific events on any of our measurements.

The reinterview data have another interesting use as well. Two common sources of criticism of attitudinal measures such as those we are using to assess the felt quality of experiences in our various domains are (1) that respondents cannot or will not report such states with sufficient accuracy to make such an investigation worthwhile; and (2) even if reasonable reports of attitudes are made, such states of mind are by and large epiphenomenal, in the sense that they have precious little connection with actual behaviors in the complexities of real-life situations. Both of these familiar positions represent legitimate concerns with the validity of such materials. Hopefully we have covered enough pertinent ground in the preceding chapters to suggest that while these reports are clouded with unreliability and edges of bias, they are far from meaningless as representations of our respondents' states of mind and, if a modicum of care is exercised, can be readily interpreted. The second possibility is, of course, more difficult to treat in a single survey. However, the reinterview materials, with their record of intervening events, do provide us with at least an initial purchase on the problem.

Of course, certain of the objective changes occurring to our respondents between interviews involve events impinging willy-nilly from the environment, such as victimization in a crime or the death of a friend. While we would anticipate that the intrusion of such events would produce changes in a number of relevant states of mind, we would have no very strong expectations that the respondent should show attitudes that distinguished him from the total sample *prior* to the event. Other events monitored, however, have a rather clear component of choice or commitment, two of the most obvious being decisions to change residence or marital status. Even here, we must keep in mind that in some instances the environment forces change against any intention of the actor. Some residential moves are, for example, regretted concomitants of job displacements; and some marriage partners are brought to divorce both unexpectedly and very much against their wills. Nevertheless, as a trend in a large aggregate, we would have a right to expect that satisfaction with housing or marriage expressed in the original interview should have some capacity to predict which of our respondents would subsequently change their marital situations or their residences. Alternatively put, if our measures are to claim any "behavioral" validity, we would expect that persons actually choosing to engage in such changes would have been less satisfied than average with their situations at the time of the initial interview.

Given the limited number of "change" cases available to us, there is some question as to how we may best go about addressing these interrelated problems of validity and change. It is useful to begin with a microcosmic case study or two.

Change in Marital Status

It would be a natural tactic, where changes in marital status are concerned, to examine how such changes register in reports of marital satisfaction. The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that persons not married were not asked a marital satisfaction question. This means that in cases of new marriage or of divorce between the interviews, there are not two measures of marital satisfaction to compare. However, other comparisons involving more general life satisfaction or happiness are available and of interest to us.

Our comparisons must, however, be drawn on a very narrow base, since of the nine persons reporting change in marital status between interviews, only a fraction are of analytic use. Several of the other respondents reporting marital changes were involved in multiple marriages and separations in the general period of the two interviews, thereby reducing the clarity of any expectations concerning attitude change. For example, both of the two reported "new" marriages were in fact second marriages. In one of these cases, the respondent not only was subsequently separated again before the second interview, but to complicate matters had been in a state of recent separation from the preceding marriage at the time of the first interview, so that although two measures of marital satisfaction are present, they refer to different marriages, both under seemingly parallel duress.

After such complex instances are removed, we find there are only three clear cases in which either divorce or separation had intruded on an intact marriage between the interviews. Yet these three cases are instructive.

The first question we may ask of these cases involves the attitude-behavior linkage. Could we have predicted, on the basis of marital satisfaction reports in the first interview, that these respondents were under a high risk of divorce or separation? Strictly speaking, the answer is yes: the average marital satisfaction provided by these three respondents in the first interview lay about one and one-half standard deviations below the mean for the rest of the married population. These respondents taken as a set, then, were well into the 10 percent of the population most dissatisfied with marriage before their disruptions had occurred. However, the matter is slightly more complicated, since this low average rating across the three cases depends almost entirely upon one woman who had expressed the most extreme possible dissatisfaction with her marriage in the first interview and had achieved a separation in the interim.

This case is of particular interest, since the woman involved had also given extremely low responses in both her ratings of overall life satisfaction and of happiness. Her characterizations of life on the semantic differential measures were also extremely bitter and depressed. In her second interview, however, she was a changed person. Her statement of overall life satisfaction had moved from a position almost three standard deviations below the population mean in the first interview to a location moderately above that mean in the second interview. On the happiness report, she moved from the lowest category involving the most unhappy 10 percent of the population to the top category, inhabited by only one-quarter to one-third of the population. This vast change in sense of well-being seems to have resulted in the most direct way from her escape from an intolerable marriage.

The other two cases appear to give much less support to the expectation that low marriage satisfaction scores in the first interview should tend to precede such dissolutions. However, closer inspection of the dynamics involved rapidly restores our faith in the data. One man, who had originally given an evaluation of his marriage which was only a step below the population mean, was discovered by the second interviewer in a state of some shock because his wife had walked out on him a few days before. He obviously had had no expectation of this performance and was perplexed and crushed by it. In other words, if our prediction runs from prior attitudes to behavior *choices*, then this case should be excepted, since the separation event was in no sense his choice or expectation.

It is more than incidental that this man showed a change in his evaluations of life in general which were about as dramatic as those of the preceding woman, although of course in the opposite direction. His overall life satisfaction fell from a position slightly above average in the original interview to the lowest possible category in the second interview, one inhabited by less than 1 percent of the original population. His reported happiness also fell from the modal category to the bottom one. His marital satisfaction dropped from the modal position to the next-to-last category as well.

The third man appeared somewhat casual about his recent divorce. It was his second marriage and had endured only a few months. He was only moderately happy and satisfied with life in the original interview and showed no particular change in these measures at the time of the second one.

These few cases make several suggestive points. One is that even in an instance of marital dissolution, predictions from attitudes to behavior may well be weakened by the presence of situations in which the respondent has apparently "acted"—separated from his wife—but in reality was entirely "acted upon." Another is that predictions as to the impact of life events upon relevant domain satisfaction or the sense of well-being more generally cannot be deduced with any certainty simply from knowledge of the gross character of the event itself. In general, we would think of marital dissolution as a traumatic event and one which would touch off a decline in happiness or felt well-being. However, we have seen a case in which dissolution produced a great restoration of happiness, and there is nothing whatever mystifying about the reactions involved.

The final point is perhaps the most important one. The cases examined give little support to any contention that satisfactions adapt to situations and remain relatively constant for individuals over time, with adjustments being taken at the level of expectations or aspirations. In the instance where two measures of marital satisfaction are available, the change touched off by the intervening event is dramatic and in a perfectly appropriate direction for the situation involved. More impressive still, in two cases of three, the event registers not only in the relevant domain satisfaction, but also has an impact which is almost violent upon more global reports of well-being. If our demonstrations of Chapter 3 concerning the nature of these global reports as a distillate of felt well-being compounded over a wide variety of life domains has any merit, then we would have little cause to expect an impact of this magnitude from most isolated domain-specific events on such overall assessments of life. Of course, given the centrality of the marriage domain for most people, and the high-key nature of its dissolution, the overall amount of change in life feelings that appears associated with this event (even if the returns from the third, apparently blasé, respondent are averaged in, as they should be) is not entirely surprising. Hence these reports seem appropriately sensitive to events.

Change in Residence

A change of residence is probably a less central event for most people than a change in marital status. Therefore we should expect weaker effects, particularly where the global sense of well-being is concerned. On the other hand, for this class of event, we have somewhat more cases to examine.

As our attitude-behavior expectation would require, the set of twenty-six people who shifted their residences between the two interviews had expressed less satisfaction with their housing at the time of the first interview than people who were not to change. The difference is moderately large—about one-half of a standard deviation on the housing satisfaction measure. The pattern comes into still clearer relief however, if we separate men and women. Men who would soon move are almost a full standard deviation less satisfied with their housing in the original interview than the vast majority of men who would remain in the same housing. Women soon to move are also less satisfied than nonmoving women, although the differences are much smaller in magnitude. Since the choice to move is probably more often dictated by the husband's needs and preferences than by the wife's, these variations are very much what we would expect if our housing satisfaction measures had an appropriate degree of validity. Males soon to move are also almost a standard deviation less satisfied with their neighborhoods at the time of the initial interview than are nonmoving males; women soon to move, however, are indistinguishable in their reports of neighborhood satisfaction from women who will remain in the same residence.

When we turn to changes in housing satisfaction as a function of the residential shift, they continue to conform well to expectations. The set of men who have moved register a rather large gain in housing satisfaction, although it is not enough to bring them up to par with the nonmoving men.[12] Women who have moved show a smaller gain, appropriate to their lesser original dissatisfaction. Males also show about the same large gain in satisfaction with their neighborhoods after the move. Women, however, who had originally reported average satisfaction with their neighborhoods, show a considerable *decline* in satisfaction where their new neighborhoods are concerned. These latter results seem to fit smoothly with conventional wisdom concerning sex roles and residential changes. That is, it seems safe to assume that fewer women than men are moving because of active dissatisfaction with their residential situations. Women are also assumed to be more

[12] It should be kept in mind that most movers are young, and as we saw in the preceding chapter, younger people are generally less satisfied with their housing by a substantial margin than are older people. It might also be noted that the gain in housing satisfaction among men who moved remains quite substantial even when their expected "regression (upward) toward the mean" is taken into account.

dependent upon informal neighborhood social life than are their husbands. On balance, moving women do show gains in housing satisfaction, despite the fact that some portion was probably not eager to move. However, establishment in the social life of a new neighborhood is a slower process, and one not likely to have progressed very far in the few weeks or months since the new house was occupied. The lack of such establishment would presumably be much more keenly felt by a woman than by a man.

Finally, the set of movers as a whole show slight gains in their global reports of life satisfaction and happiness. These gains are, of course, much smaller than the changes which registered in these variables in connection with marital shifts and in one comparison is surely not large enough to be statistically significant with the small number of cases available. But the trend remains in the expected direction.

All told, then, the changes registered by our measurements relevant to shifts in residence seem highly appropriate, as do the predictions from prior attitudes as to who is most likely to engage in the behavior of moving.[13] Once again, there seems little basis to allege that the domain satisfactions and more global reports of happiness are insensitive or unresponsive to major changes in life situation.

A More General Survey of Satisfaction Change

Up to this point we have confined ourselves to two case studies involving very limited numbers of respondents. It is important to take a broader view of these reinterview data before resting our case. Among other things we have learned from these prefatory case studies, however, one is the nature of the questions to be asked on such a broader scale.

One kind of question which is rather treacherous involves a coding of these diverse life events into "good things" and "bad things" and then asking whether people encountering "good" events show gains in relevant satisfactions, while people encountering "bad" events show declines in satisfaction. Such an operation can be carried out, and the trend of results is clearly in the expected direction, although it remains weak unless a considerable majority of events is set aside as being ambiguous in affective connotations without more detailed information as to the special case. We have seen a fine illustration of a case in which the intrusion of a "bad" event–the marital separation–sent spirits skyrocketing in a way that, once the context was understood, turned out to be more a validation of our measurements than an invalidation of them.

In truth, almost none of our intervening life events are entirely unam-

[13] In Chapter 3, we cited data indicating the greater instability of housing, community, and neighborhood satisfactions among respondents changing their residences between the two interviews (see p. 66).

biguous in their connotations without more specification. Even the death of a family member, in instances of protracted and painful terminal illness, can reasonably produce a sense of blessing and relief. Expectations are further clouded by the fact that multiple events are occurring to the same persons. Some of the most common intersections arise as almost a logical matter because parts of a process, such as being arrested and going to jail or being laid off and having trouble finding a job, were distinguished as separate events. In these cases, the affective implications of the overlapping events are similar in direction and pose no problem. There are, however, empirical intersections in this subsample pairing seemingly good and bad events. For example, there is a correlation of .39 between having a marital reconciliation and encountering special difficulties with children and a correlation of .35 between getting a promotion and suffering a divorce.[14]

Despite all these confounding difficulties, if we examine the dozen or so events that seem to have straightforward good or bad implications beyond the marriage and residential matters already discussed, the expected patterns of change emerge in the great majority of instances, even when we look at global reports of well-being as well as the most immediately relevant domain satisfactions. Thus events such as "considerable improvement in financial situation," "job promotion," and improvement in working conditions all register clearly in enhanced life satisfaction and happiness. On the other hand, disturbing troubles with a spouse, "serious illness or behavior changes of an immediate family member," "considerable problems in financial situation," or deterioration of working conditions are associated with declines in life satisfaction and happiness. One of the most unconditionally negative events—serious injury or illness to the respondent himself—produces one of the largest drops in life satisfaction, but does not seem to register comparably in the happiness report.[15] Gains and losses in happiness and

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[14] Indeed, our instance of divorce in which the male seemed to show no loss in life satisfaction or happiness is one which also involved a job promotion in the same interval. The surprisingly high correlation between the two events is probably in some degree a sampling peculiarity, although the fact that younger people are both more likely to report divorce and to report promotion builds in a certain level of correlation in any event.

[15] Across the dozen or so events deemed to have the clearest affective implications, there is only one striking anomaly where the global reports are concerned. Respondents reporting having been assaulted or robbed between the interviews register a modest gain in both life satisfaction and happiness, although their neighborhood satisfactions, perhaps a more thoroughly relevant datum, do show a slight absolute decline. There are, however, only fifteen relevant cases. Mildly puzzling as well is the essential lack of decline in either measure associated with the death of a close family member.

overall life satisfaction are, of course, highly correlated, but in the degree a general verdict can be drawn, the life satisfaction measure seems slightly more elastic or responsive to events than is the happiness item. While there are occasional puzzling exceptions, most of the relevant domain satisfaction measures also move in the expected direction as a function of events.

All of the preceding is focused, however, on the limited subset of change events that seem to have a relatively clear affective connotation of either "good" or "bad" for the person encountering them. A more general hypothesis, permitting us to cover a still wider range of these data, is the simple one that people encountering events that change their life situations in a particular domain are more likely to show change in their relevant domain satisfactions and more global reports than are people whose situation has remained stable in these regards. Such a hypothesis has the advantage of dealing with relative change in any direction, rather than requiring it to be in a particular direction in accord with prior assumptions as to likely effects.

To complete this final examination, we have collapsed substantial numbers of reported events into a limited number of domain-specific classes, such as "all work events" and "all marriage or family events." This kind of collapsing permits us to designate one or two most relevant domain satisfaction measures for inspection for each set of events, and we have also kept track of the behavior of the global reports from domain grouping to domain grouping. Most of the event reports are thereby recognized at one point or another, although a few sparsely populated types of events that do not fit well substantively with a major grouping have been ignored.

We find that where the most relevant domain satisfactions are concerned, people who have not encountered major events in the area show stability correlations between repetitions of the two satisfaction reports which, across group comparisons, have a median value of .10 greater, and an average of .21 greater, than the same reports among people who have encountered some relevant change. Where the global reports are concerned, the parallel figures are a median difference of .04, and an average difference of .08. Thus it is true that people whose life situations have changed in one or another of these major particulars between the two interviews are also more likely to provide changed reports of their satisfactions.

To summarize, then, the evidence introduced in this section attests to the validity of the measurements on which we have depended and to the fact that they tend to show the appropriate changes in response to events which impinge on the individual. Now and again, at stray points, the results are somewhat clouded, although most of these instances take on reassuring clarity when closer examination takes into account the multifarious complexities of individual lives.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this chapter we recognized that if satisfactions reflect the gap between estimates of a current situation and aspiration levels, and if aspiration levels themselves are expanded upward in prosperity and constricted in adversity, then satisfactions might remain quite constant or inert. And in such an event, they would be a poor tool for detecting important changes in the subjective quality of life. Variations in aspiration levels would instead represent the more sensitive indicator of the types of change we wish to monitor.

Over the course of this chapter we have developed evidence that some of these premises are correct, although others are not. Feelings of satisfaction in the domains intensively examined (housing and neighborhood) do appear quite tightly bound to the gap between estimates of the current situation and aspiration levels. Moreover, we have offered at least presumptive testimony that aspirations do in fact become adjusted to reality, as witnessed by the low aspiration levels of the poorly educated and the progressive shrinkage of aspirations with aging. At the same time, however, we have shown that statements of satisfaction in all of the domains investigated, as well as the more global reports of happiness and overall satisfaction with life, appear quite responsive in the expected ways to benign and adverse changes in life situations.

In one sense, of course, any doctrine that aspiration levels serve as perfect "shock absorbers" to cope with change and maintain satisfactions at a constant level has implications which fly in the face of enormous amounts of individual and aggregative evidence. Pushed to an extreme, such a position would have to argue that variations in satisfaction do not exist, yet the historical record is replete with the waxings and wanings of felt discontents. To be sure, some of the fluxes of manifest discontent probably rest on the presence or absence of other social mechanisms, since communication and organization are often necessary to catalyze individual dismay and amplify it into the movements of grievance that make history as visible protest. Nonetheless, any contention of the constancy of satisfactions seems totally counter to much else that we know, and our data strongly suggest that satisfactions *as reported to us* are far from inert from person to person and situation to situation.

However this may be, the scattering of indications from our own data, along with a variety of impressionistic evidence, suggests that aspiration levels are mutable as well. And in the degree this is the case, we would be obliged to argue that *some part* of the temporal variation in satisfactions would be correspondingly muted or dampened. Hence the degree to which aspiration levels are malleable and the circumstances under which they change are of vital interest to us.

If we have rather little evidence of a systematic sort concerning temporal change in satisfactions, we have none whatever for aspiration levels. Recent history seems to make the important point that aspiration levels can show net shifts within large populations without much change in overall circumstances of everyday life. Education and communication can serve to enlarge horizons, heighten the salience of alternatives, and, if the conditions of life remain constant, produce an erosion of satisfaction as a result.

What few impressions can be gleaned from our data concerning the adjustments of aspiration levels to actual changes in life conditions seems largely bound up with the process of aging. And yet the time frames involved in these observations—periods of thirty to fifty years—are of a totally different order than the eight-month lapse over which we observed rather lively responses of our satisfaction reports to changes in life situation. Thus while the proper research remains to be done, these data may well be suggesting that whereas aspiration levels are scarcely immutable and do adjust to changed life conditions, *they only do so slowly and in the rather long term.*

This possibility is reinforced by what little we were able to learn with regard to standards of comparison generating aspiration levels in the first place. In the degree that such levels depend on the individual's perception as to how well relatives, friends, and other Americans are doing, gross changes in the conditions of American life with respect to one domain or another might well touch off movements upward or downward in absolute levels of aspirations, thereby cushioning the impact on satisfactions. At the same time, however, we noted that the influence of these social standards of comparison on aspiration levels seemed relatively limited compared with effects associated with "the most liked" experience in the domain. The latter frame of reference is a factor which would have the effect of leaving aspiration levels at the same absolute point for the same individuals in periods of deteriorating conditions, thereby permitting relevant dissatisfactions to grow. After a period of time and population turnover served to change the population mix of "most liked" experiences, one could expect the absolute level of aspirations in the aggregate, were it measurable, to have changed downward in such an instance of permanent deterioration. But there would be an intervening period of some duration in which dissatisfaction should register clearly. When conditions in a domain are secularly improving, on the other hand, we might expect aspiration levels to advance in the absolute sense more briskly, since presumably the quality of "most liked experiences" would be rising, along with the situation of relatives, friends, and countrymen.

In short, then, putting together what little we know, it can be argued that the initial response to deterioration in the terms of life which is more or less unexpected (as opposed to change like job retirement, which individuals can anticipate with some clarity) may register almost entirely with measurable declines in satisfaction and little cushioning adjustment in the levels of aspiration. In due time, if the adverse circumstances persist and seem likely to continue, then aspiration levels probably begin to drift downward gradually in response, progressively removing some of the original decline in feelings of satisfaction.

If such a model of relative change in aspirations and satisfactions is appropriate, it would still remain important to complement satisfaction measures with attempts to measure aspiration levels in as absolute a manner as possible, even in short-term studies. Different segments of a population might well be in different stages of adaptation to new conditions, a matter important to know for purposes of interpretation of the satisfaction data. Nevertheless, the key tool for monitoring disruptions in the perceived quality of life, as well as for the decoding of apparent shrinkages in aspiration levels, would remain the measurement of satisfactions.

Part II

Introduction

Toward the close of Part I we showed that statements of satisfaction with various domains seem to be produced by a sense of gap between the perceived realities of the individual's current situation and his aspirations concerning the domain. Where the understanding of aspiration levels is concerned, we were able to conduct an initial inquiry into some of the standards of comparison created by past experience and social comparison that seem to be important determinants of these hopes. In Part II we shall turn our attention to the impact of perceived realities of the existing situation upon these statements of domain satisfaction.

This involves some change of pace, for if we are to consider the more detailed features of particular arenas of life, such as work and marriage, it seems wise to proceed by taking domains one at a time. Of course, Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrated that some aspects of our domain satisfaction responses do not seem particularly domain-specific, but instead pervaded patterns of relationships across all or most of our domains. However, we have discussed what seem to be the most important of these general influences, so that with this information in hand we are now free to enter into more intensive treatments of individual domains and their peculiarities.

Just as Chapter 3 suggested that global reports of the individual's general sense of well-being could fruitfully be decomposed into a mosaic of reactions to more specific domains of life, so it is reasonable to imagine that any given domain satisfaction or dissatisfaction rests in turn upon assessments of still more concrete features of the domain. Where housing is concerned, for example, we have solicited the respondent's overall feelings concerning his residence. But these feelings must rest in no small degree on a composite of reactions as to whether or not the house is well-built and well-appointed, is conveniently located relative to his needs, represents a cost which is reasonable for the benefits derived, and so on. Since we have measured many of these more specific reactions to features of the housing arrangement, it is natural to ask how well these reactions predict to more general reports of overall housing satisfaction in exactly the same way as we predicted from the set of domain satisfactions to more global reports of felt well-being.

What each chapter in this part has in common, then, is an effort to understand the contributions made by these specific elements of a current situation to the summary report represented by each domain satisfaction. Actually, our interview schedule probed more thoroughly into the details of some domains than it did for others. Within one or two of the residential domains, nearly a dozen more specific assessments were captured along with a further sprinkling of information about "objective" characteristics of the situation. For domains, such as friendship or health, however, only a small investment of one or two subsidiary questions was made. Therefore our treatment of the respective domains necessarily varies rather widely in its intensity, and some of the less thoroughly investigated domains will be drawn into the discussions of this part in a secondary way where they are most appropriate.

We saw in Chapter 3 that it was possible to use the interrelations between our domain satisfaction responses to organize a coherent mapping of the life space of our respondents. In addition to the emergence of several natural clusters of domains like marriage and the family, or housing and the neighborhood, we noted that there seemed to be a general axis running from the relatively impersonal domains defining the public environment or secondary organizations to the most personal microcosms of the intimate family and friends. We shall take these observations as a convenient point of departure for the organization of topics in this part.

We shall begin with the relatively impersonal domains and move toward the more personal ones. In Chapter 7 we shall focus upon the nature of satisfactions with a natural cluster of three domains defining the individual's immediate residential environment: his home, his neighborhood, and his community. These three domains lend themselves particularly well to the development of a general model depicting the way in which objective features of the current situation are differentially perceived and evaluated to produce overall feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a domain or, in this case, a set of closely related domains. Much of the chapter will be devoted to testing features of this model with the specific assessments within these three domains. In Chapter 8 we examine data from the final and most global of our environmental domains: reactions to the United States as a cultural and political unit.

Chapter 9 turns its attention to the principal domain linking individuals and family units to the broader environment: the world of work. Chapter 10 moves into the private domains of marriage and family life. The final chapter in this section, "Personal Resources and Personal Competence," deals with several remaining domains of experience for which only limited data were obtained in our interview and with certain personal characteristics which may be thought to influence the individual's level of pleasure and satisfaction in life.

Chapter 7
The Residential Environment[1]

INTRODUCTION

The environment within which we live may be described in many different terms. When a person is asked to evaluate the world around him he may respond in terms of its natural beauty, its physical configuration, its man-made artifacts, its social characteristics, its economic opportunities, or its political functioning. In our approach to the external domains of life we chose to divide the surrounding environment into concentric areal circles: the nation, the community (city or county), the neighborhood, and the residence; and we assume that in varying degrees all of the frames of reference we have just noted came into the assessments our respondents gave us of one or another of these different layers of their environment.

We have seen in Figure 3-2 that the last three of these domains form a rather tight cluster in the levels of satisfaction expressed, and "life in the United States" stands at some remove. Because of this structure we will proceed in this chapter with community, neighborhood, and housing, deferring the national domain to separate treatment in Chapter 8. Our purpose in this chapter is to examine data at a more specific level than in the preceding chapters in an attempt to account for *the differences* we find in the degree of satisfaction expressed by different individuals in each of these residential domains. Up to this point we have been treating these domains from the

[1] This chapter was coauthored by Robert Marans, Program Director in the Survey Research Center. It is derived to a large extent from a previously published paper (Marans and Rodgers, 1974).

"outside," examining their contribution to the general measures of sense of well-being; we propose now to move "inside," searching for personal or environmental factors which contribute to individual differences in satisfaction.

Recent Research

During the past decade, there have been a number of empirical studies which dealt with people's attitudes toward the communities and residential environments in which they live. Attitudes about present living situations have either been determined indirectly by asking people about their residential preferences and inferring from the responses their feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction; or they have been determined directly by asking people how they feel or what they like and dislike about their home, neighborhood, or community.

Two phenomena have played a catalytic role in fostering much of this research. First, the postwar housing boom of the 1950s and early 1960s and the concomitant growth of suburban developments have created new residential environments and living patterns for many Americans—environments and living patterns which heretofore have not been experienced. During the same period, an active program of slum clearance and central city rebuilding has focused attention on the plight of central city residents with particular emphasis on their housing and established ways of life. How people respond to these environments and the patterns of living associated with them have been the subject of inquiry by social scientists and policymakers interested in factors affecting the quality of people's lives and more specifically in the environmental conditions under which this quality is viewed favorably or unfavorably.

The most salient conclusions that can be drawn from these past studies can be briefly summarized.[2] Most people, including many of those living in "substandard" environments, tend to be fairly content with the residential environment in which they live. The social setting, including interpersonal relations, and the type of housing (i.e., whether or not one is living in single-family housing) are salient factors influencing an individual's level of satisfaction with the community. Other important factors related to general satisfaction include the physical conditions of the residential environment, the convenience of having nearby public and private facilities and services, the size of one's dwelling, and the presence of conditions, such as spacious, quiet, and safe surroundings.

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[2] A review of the findings from past studies is provided in Marans and Rodgers (1974).

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION

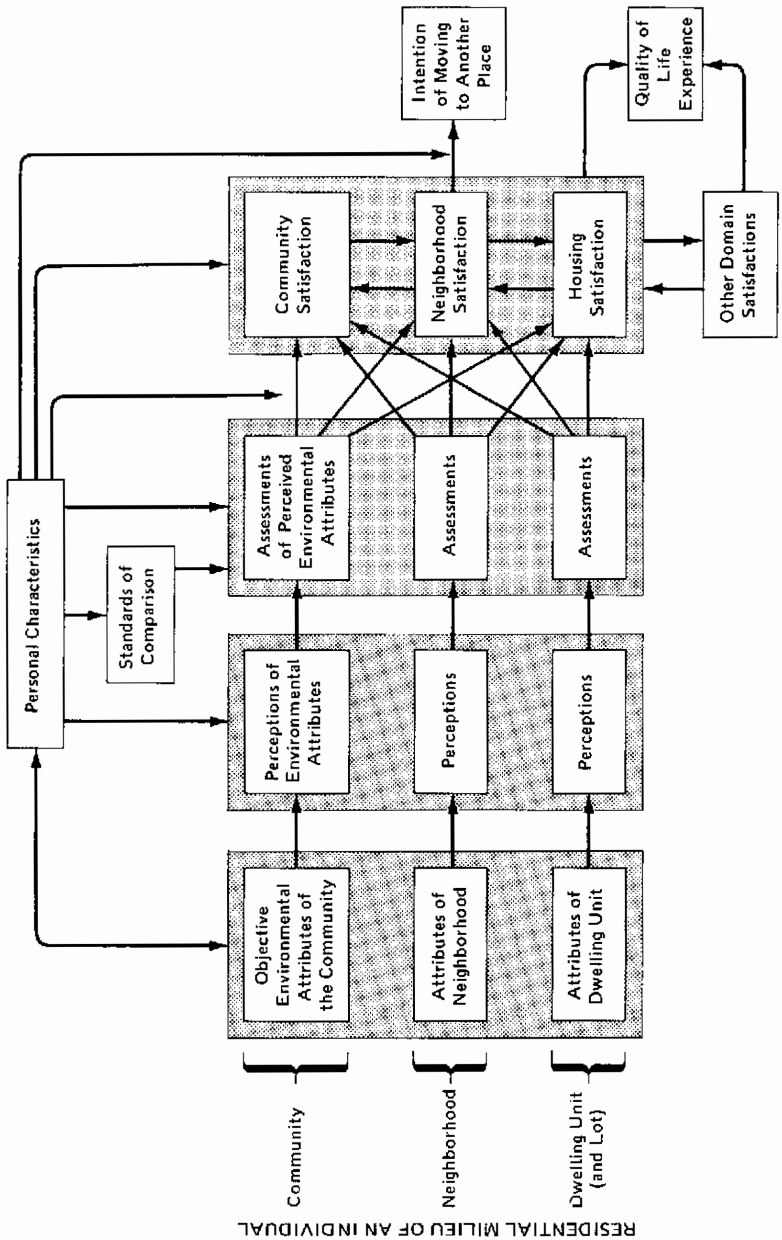
In our introductory chapter we provided a brief model which summarized in general form our view of the states of mind that produced ultimate judgments of satisfaction with life as a whole or with more specific domains of life. That model assumed that satisfaction diverged from feelings of happiness in part because more cognitive standards of comparison were brought to bear by the actor in forming his evaluation. In particular, satisfactions are seen as a product of comparisons between assessments of the life situations in which individuals find themselves and their internal standards derived from past experience and observation. In Chapter 6 we were able to report an initial inquiry as to the nature of those standards of comparison, including aspiration levels and their experiential determinants. Figure 6-2 summarizes the elaboration of this region of our guiding model.

The current chapter is the first in a sequence which will explore, domain by domain, the way in which assessments of the current situation are formed. Therefore, it is useful to elaborate this second region of the guiding model, as we do for the special case of the major environmental domains in Figure 7-1.

Since we will be testing the adequacy of several portions of this model over the course of this chapter and will have the same model in mind throughout the chapters in this part, there are several features of Figure 7-1 that deserve comment at this point. As in the general model, satisfaction with each domain as a whole (i.e., with the community, the neighborhood, or the dwelling unit) is conceived to depend on comparisons between the situation as experienced in its diverse detail and the individual's standards, the most notable of these standards in a proximal sense being aspirations and expectations.

The perceptions of detailed attributes of the domain situation are dependent in large measure, although not exclusively, on the corresponding objective attributes. By "objective attributes" we mean features of the situation as measured by outside observers or by any other technique that is independent of the particular resident whose assessments we are seeking to understand. For the community environment, such attributes might include the amount of open space per person, the frequency and efficiency of city services, or the amount of citizen participation in local governance. Since individual experiences with these facets of reality vary, perceptions of the same global reality as it might be measured for the community as a whole will show divergences from person to person. Moreover, as Figure 7-1 shows, the ultimate assessments of these attributes will diverge still further

Figure 7-1: Model of Determinants of Satisfaction with the Residential Environment



from person to person because individuals of different types bring different standards of comparison to bear on their perceptions of reality. It is possible in addition that individuals of different types may express different levels of satisfaction quite apart from differences in assessments of component attributes of the situation or, for that matter, standards of comparison. Response sets, or more basic personality traits, may influence the way people describe the quality of their lives. This possibility is represented by the arrow linking "personal characteristics" directly with the domain satisfactions, unmediated by attribute assessments. Finally, personal characteristics may condition the relationship between such attribute assessments and domain satisfaction; the important characteristics of a community to one type of person may be unimportant to other types of people.

Figure 7-1 adds to this general model for satisfaction with any particular domain the further possibility that there may be interrelationships among reactions to several domains. That is, assessments of neighborhood characteristics may be related to community satisfaction and to housing satisfaction, and vice versa. As we have seen, reactions to these domains are rather closely associated, so the likelihood of such cross-linkages must be kept in mind. It is evident, for example, that some features of residential situations, such as convenience of location, might well raise people's sense of satisfaction not only with their particular housing, but also with their neighborhoods and perhaps even their communities as well.

Although our current focus is upon understanding the genesis of these domain satisfactions, the model in Figure 7-1 makes clear that such satisfactions also are presumed to have a direct bearing on other states of mind. For example, we would naturally expect that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the residential environment would be one potent determinant of intentions to move to another residence; indeed, toward the end of the preceding chapter we saw fragmentary evidence that such dissatisfaction does in fact predict actual shifts in residence. Similarly, Chapter 3 documented the association between satisfaction with all three of these residential domains and a more global sense of well-being. Therefore we have drawn further arrows suggesting these important linkages with the "quality of life experience."

With this model in mind to guide our analyses, we shall now turn to a consideration of the relatively rich set of data collected concerning the more specific attributes or components of the residential situation. While we lack for our full sample the measures of aspirations, expectations, and other standards of comparison employed for the reinterview sample in the preceding chapter, we can nonetheless ask how well our materials fit most of the presumed connections in Figure 7-1, and whether it should be modified in any of its particulars.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

The focal point of our initial analyses is the concept of community satisfaction. The "community" in this study refers to the local politically defined unit in which the individual resides: the city or town for most people; the county for persons living in rural areas. Our respondents were asked to report how satisfied they were with the community in which they lived. Consistent with previous studies, we find that most people are satisfied with their communities as places to live. As shown in Table 3-1, over one-third (38 percent) of them reported that they were "completely satisfied" with the communities in which they lived, while less than one out of ten (9 percent) reported that they were dissatisfied to some degree. In comparison with other domains, satisfaction with the community is about average; people tend to say they are more satisfied with some domains, such as their marriages, but less satisfied with other domains, such as their financial situations. We also observed in Chapter 3 that satisfaction with the community is of moderate importance in predicting global measures of life satisfaction (cf. Tables 3-3 and 3-5).

Assessments of Community Attributes

Our interview asked the respondents to evaluate nine attributes of their local communities, including services provided by the local government, local taxes, and the climate. Although our primary interest in these assessments lies in how they relate to overall community satisfaction, the distributions of responses to these items are also worthy of note. Table 7-1 shows that each of the services provided by the local government is considered at least "fairly good" by large majorities of the respondents, but a majority also feels that the taxes they pay to underwrite those services are high. The public service which people are most likely to rate highly is garbage collection, while the service they are most likely to evaluate negatively is the provision of parks and playgrounds for children.

Taken one at a time, each of these assessments is related to the overall satisfaction with the community, although none of the relationships is very strong. The first column of Table 7-2 shows that among nine attributes rated by the people, evaluation of public schools is most strongly related to community satisfaction.[3]

Table 7-2 also shows how well the entire set of nine assessments pre-

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[3] The strength of each relationship is indicated by the *eta* coefficient, the interpretation of which is similar to that of the product moment correlation coefficient except that the latter assumes the relationship to be linear. The square of the *eta* coefficient, η^2, is known as the correlation ratio and indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable.

Table 7-1: Assessments of Community Attributes

		Attribute assessed as:						
		Very good	*Fairly good*	*Neither good nor bad*	*Not very good*	*Not good at all*	*Total*	*Number of respondents*
	Attributes[a]							
A3.	Streets and roads	22%	51	7	15	5	100%	2152
A4.	Public schools	38%	42	6	8	6	100%	1678
A5.	Garbage collection	56%	28	5	6	5	100%	1703[b]
A6.	Parks and playgrounds	30%	33	7	14	16	100%	1476[b]
A7.	Police protection	33%	40	11	10	6	100%	2007
A8.	Police–community relations	36%	43	9	9	3	100%	1904
A9.	Climate	36%	42	11	8	3	100%	2152
A13a.	Public transportation	30%	38	10	15	7	100%	884[c]
		Very low	*Low*	*Mod-erate*	*High*	*Very high*		
A10.	Local taxes	1%	4	36	39	20	100%	1921

[a] The wording of these questions is given in Appendix B.

[b] Residents in rural areas were not asked questions about neighborhood garbage collection and parks and playgrounds.

[c] If no local public transportation was available, respondents were not asked to make this evaluation.

Table 7-2: Prediction of Community Satisfaction, by Set of Assessments of Community Attributes (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Eta coefficients	*Beta coefficients*
	Assessments of community attributes		
A4.	Public schools	.27	.17
A9.	Climate	.23	.17
A3.	Streets and roads	.22	.13
A6.	Parks and playgrounds	.19	.13
A8.	Police–community relations	.25	.12
A10.	Local taxes	.17	.10
A5.	Garbage collection	.18	.08
A13a.	Public transportation	.15	.08
A7.	Police protection	.21	.07
	Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		18.6%

dict to community satisfaction.[4] Together, the nine assessments explain 19 percent of the variation in responses to the community satisfaction question; that is, if we know how a person evaluates each of the nine aspects of his community, we reduce the uncertainty about how he would evaluate his community as a whole by 19 percent.[5] Finally, Table 7-2 presents, for each assessment, *beta* coefficients which reflect the relative importance of each item in predicting community satisfaction. The ranking of the importance of the assessments by these *beta* coefficients is similar to the ranking by the simple correlations (as measured by the *eta* coefficients).

The considerable degree of uncertainty in predicting community satisfaction from specific assessments can be partially explained, as always, by the limited reliability of our measures.[6] In addition we must recognize that there are many attributes which the respondents were not asked to assess, such as fire protection, quality of stores, responsiveness of public officials to citizen inquiries, and the amount of air and water pollution. While an attempt was made to ask about attributes that seemed to concern people in preliminary investigations, many respondents might have felt that the most important community attributes, as far as their own satisfaction was con-

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[4] The principal multivariate technique used in the analyses reported in this chapter is the Multiple Classification Analysis or MCA technique. (For a complete discussion of MCA, see Andrews *et al.*, 1974.) This technique, unlike multiple regression, does not assume that the predictors are interval scales with linear relationships to the dependent variable. However, parallel analyses using multiple regression were done for most of the multiple classification analyses reported in this chapter. The overall explanatory power of the predictors, and the importance of each predictor, was generally quite similar using both techniques, indicating that the relationships are linear for the most part.

[5] Although this is not a very impressive reduction in uncertainty, it is considerably better than what is possible from a knowledge of any one of the set of nine assessments. For example, if it is known only how an individual assesses public schools in his neighborhood, the uncertainty about how he evaluates his community is reduced by only 9 percent.

[6] One indication of the reliability of the measures is provided by the stability of the answers by the subset of respondents who were reinterviewed after a seven- or eight-month period. The stability coefficient for the community satisfaction measure (excluding respondents who moved between the two interviews) is $r = .57$, which suggests that only one-third of the variance could be explained, the rest being due to "error" factors. However, the value of this stability coefficient is almost certainly an underestimate of the reliability of the measure, given the amount of real change in satisfaction that could have taken place over a period of several months. The stability coefficient for the neighborhood satisfaction item, which we will see is explained much more fully by component evaluations, is lower ($r = .48$) than that for the community satisfaction item. The stability coefficients for the nine component evaluations of the community range from a low of $r = .50$ (for the police-community relations item) to a high of $r = .65$ (for the evaluation of local schools).

cerned, had been overlooked. Furthermore, within the set of attributes that were included, considerable variation undoubtedly exists among respondents as to the importance of each. Perceived low quality of public schools might make a community completely unsatisfactory as a place to live for parents of school-age children, but for unmarried respondents the quality of public schools may be of little or no concern.

The reader will note that, except in the smaller reinterview study, we did not ask the respondents to give us any statement of "the best community they could imagine" or any other indication of their aspirations in this domain. Analyses reported in Chapter 6 demonstrate that the reported level of satisfaction is influenced implicitly by a set of standards held by the person, including his image of the most attractive community he has known or has read about, but it is clear that here and in the succeeding chapters our statement of satisfaction is being asked to serve as a simple expression of a rather complicated relationship between perceived achievement and ultimate aspiration.

Personal Characteristics

Perhaps we can get some feeling for how aspiration levels differ within the population when we consider the levels of satisfaction expressed by various population subgroups. Our model suggests that characteristics of people can influence their satisfaction with their community and with attributes of that community. As a means of amplifying our understanding of community satisfaction and as a prelude to testing relationships implied by the model, the distributions of community satisfaction and attribute assessments for different population subgroups were examined.

Community satisfaction shows the common patterns of variation by age and education discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 5. The gains in expression of satisfaction with increasing age are very marked: people 65 and older show values on this domain measure which are more than one-half a standard deviation higher than those for the youngest people (18-24 years of age). By and large, assessments of more specific attributes of the community show parallel changes by age, although the differences are a little less dramatic and there are two or three exceptions. There is little age variation in the evaluation of police protection, and there is a contrary trend with regard to taxes: younger respondents consider their local taxes lower, and hence presumably less oppressive, than do older respondents. Apparently the heightened sensitivity of older persons to the need for police protection and the bite of taxes on fixed incomes are sufficient to reverse the characteristic age gains in approval.

Where education is concerned, we encounter the familiar pattern discussed in Chapter 4, with the most satisfied being the least well educated. We also find that the poorly educated tend to express more criticism of specific features of their communities, and the well educated tend to express less than the summary statement of community satisfaction from each group would lead one to expect.

Black people and other nonwhites are considerably less satisfied with their communities than are white people. Blacks are also less positive in their evaluations of most of the community services; only in their evaluation of public transportation (of which they are more frequent users) are they more positive than whites. On the other hand, it is significant that they describe the climate in which they live just as positively as do whites, which suggests that their relatively negative evaluations of other community attributes are based on specific assessments of objective facts rather than on a general negativism about the world in which they live. Schuman and Gruenberg (1972) also found that black respondents in fifteen American cities were less satisfied with each of four city services than were white respondents. They present evidence that these differences are at least partially a reflection of objective differences in the services provided; for example, whites living in integrated neighborhoods were at least as dissatisfied with city services as blacks living in similarly integrated neighborhoods. They conclude that black respondents tend to be more dissatisfied, not because of the color of their skins, but because of the color of their neighborhoods, which in turn they suspect is related to the level of services actually provided by the city.

Another personal characteristic which turns out to have a rather prominent influence on reports of community satisfaction as well as most of our other satisfaction measures is the stage of the life cycle in which respondents find themselves. Basically, the life cycle categorization was developed to reflect the individual's marital status and the development of a family and has been found extremely useful in a variety of studies at the Institute for Social Research since originally developed in 1957 (cf. Lansing and Kish, 1957). Among married couples, for example, it differentiates among those who are childless, those with children living in the household at least one of whom is under six years old, families with children in the household all of whom are at least six, and couples with children all of whom are at least eighteen or have left home. It also differentiates between young unmarried people, many of whom will subsequently marry, and those older unmarried persons whose likelihood of later marriage is rather small.[7]

[7] While the concept of the life cycle is rather clear and obvious, it is a complex categorization which admits of many minor variations in the actual coding. The categories used in the current study are:

The fact that a life cycle characteristic should predict with relative strength to variations in most of our domain satisfaction measures, including community satisfaction, should come as no surprise. For one thing, we have seen in Chapter 5 that some of the most noteworthy demographic variations in all satisfactions are associated with age. These age differences are reflected with great fidelity across life cycle categories, since the mean age of widowed people or couples whose children have grown up and left home is naturally very different from that of people in the category "never married, under 30." Less obviously, perhaps, the life cycle categories also reflect great differences in educational background. For example, within our 1971 sample, the category of "widowed" people includes only 12 percent with any exposure to college, while 49 percent stopped their educations before any high school. For people "never married, under 30," these proportions are very nearly reversed, with 52 percent having had college exposure and only 6 percent limited to a grade school education. These are, of course, largely age-related differences, but they are of sufficient magnitude to reflect many of the effects discussed in earlier chapters which seem more associated with education than age. Indeed, most of the sharpest differences in all of our satisfaction reports that arise from use of the life cycle categories could be readily anticipated simply from the knowledge we have already developed concerning the general effects of age and education.

But in addition to its compounding of age and education effects in a single potent package, the life cycle variable also includes discriminations about family structure which seem to have still further effects independent of age and education. We can see a few such further differences in the case of community satisfaction. The life cycle category most dissatisfied with the community is made up of young single people. Other young people of nearly the same average age and education, but who have married, report greater satisfaction. Among people over 30, single respondents and those who are divorced or separated are also less satisfied with their communities than are married persons.

When we bring several personal characteristics of the respondents together in Table 7-3, we find that stage in the life cycle, race, educational attainment, and job status appear to be most strongly related to the individ-

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1. Unmarried, between ages of 18 and 29
2. Married, 18 to 29, no children
3. Married, youngest child less than 6
4. Married, youngest child between 6 and 17
5. Married, youngest child over 17 or not living at home
6. Widowed
7. Married, over 29, no children
8. Unmarried, over 29
9. Divorced or separated

Table 7-3: Prediction of Community Satisfaction, by Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

	Eta coefficients	*Beta coefficients*
Personal characteristics		
Life cycle stage	.22	.16
M2. Race	.15	.13
E1. Educational attainment	.15	.12
G12. Family income	.09	.09
F1. Job status	.15	.06
A1. Length of residence in area	.12	.05
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		7.3%

ual's satisfaction with his community. The measure of the strength of these relationships, as represented by the *eta* coefficient, is shown in the first column of Table 7-3.[8] As seen by the relatively high *eta* value (.22), the life cycle variable is most strongly related to community satisfaction for the compound of reasons suggested earlier. When the six personal characteristics in Table 7-3 are considered simultaneously with respect to community satisfaction, life cycle retains its role as the most important predictor. Nevertheless, a better perspective on the importance of these personal characteristics as predictors of community satisfaction is gained when we observe that, together, these six characteristics explain only 7 percent of the variation in community satisfaction responses.[9]

Having demonstrated that people in different social positions tend (albeit only slightly) to evaluate their communities with varying degrees of satisfaction, we may now search our data for evidence which will explain why these differences exist. Four possible lines of inquiry present themselves.

1. Different kinds of people tend to live in different areas of the community. Areas in the community differ by racial composition, average income, average age, number of children, and so on. If these areas also differ in objective attributes such as air pollution or quality of street repair, certain kinds of people may be less satisfied with their communities because of the characteristics of the areas where they tend to live.

[8] Age of respondent is not used in this analysis. Age is represented partially, as we have noted, by the life cycle variable. Also, length of residence in the community, which is included, is strongly associated with age.

[9] Since characteristics such as race and life cycle are categorically defined, MCA is the preferred technique over multiple regression analysis. However, in a parallel multiple regression analysis, the life cycle and job status variables were omitted, race was collapsed to a two-category (white vs. nonwhite) variable, and age was added; the explanatory power of the resultant five predictors was 6 percent, only slightly smaller than the 7 percent shown in Table 7-3 for the MCA.

2. It is likely that different kinds of people perceive their environments differently. Older people and women, for example, may see the streets as very dangerous because they feel themselves to be vulnerable to assault. These perceptions may reduce their level of satisfaction with their community.
3. People certainly differ in the standards of comparison by which they evaluate a particular community attribute. Even though two individuals might have a similar perception of the number of crimes in their part of the city or of the alacrity of the police in responding to distress calls, they may have widely divergent standards concerning the acceptability of these rates and thus express quite different feelings of satisfaction with the community.
4. All of the preceding examples imply an indirect relationship between the individual and his level of satisfaction. It is also possible that a more direct relationship exists between personal characteristics and community satisfaction. That is to say, different kinds of people might express different levels of community satisfaction even if they lived in objectively similar environments and even if they perceived and assessed the attributes of their environments in the same way.

The potential usefulness of the data from the present study in discriminating among these possible explanations is limited. In particular, very few objective data about the communities in which respondents live were accessible for use in analysis. What is available is the set of assessments of community attributes that were described in the previous section. By using these assessments, we propose to examine the relative importance of the direct and indirect effects of personal characteristics on community satisfaction.

The relevant analysis is summarized in Table 7-4. The first three columns of *eta* and *beta* coefficients are repeated from previous analyses (Tables 7-2 and 7-3). The set of six assessments explains 18 percent of the variance in community satisfaction, while the set of six personal characteristics explains 7 percent. If the effects of personal characteristics on community satisfaction were entirely indirect and mediated by the six assessments included in this analysis, the combined explanatory power of both sets would not increase beyond the 18 percent explained by the assessments alone. If on the other hand, the effects of the personal characteristics on community satisfaction were entirely independent of these assessments, the total explanatory power of both sets taken together would be the sum of the explanatory power of the two sets taken separately, or 25 percent. In fact, the last column shows that the total explanatory power of the two sets is 21 percent; this suggests there is a mixture of direct and indirect effects of personal characteristics on community satisfaction, with the preponderance being indirect.[10]

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[10] This conclusion must be tempered by consideration of the limitations of both sets of predictor variables. It is likely that if a more comprehensive set of assessments

Table 7-4: Prediction of Community Satisfaction, by Set of Assessments of Community Characteristics and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

			Beta coefficients		
		Eta coefficients	*Assessments only*	*Personal characteristics only*	*Assessments and personal characteristics*
Assessments of community attributes					
A4.	Public schools	.27	.18		.18
A9.	Climate	.23	.18		.16
A3.	Streets and roads	.22	.13		.11
A6.	Parks and playgrounds	.19	.11		.09
A8.	Police–community relations	.25	.14		.13
A10.	Local taxes	.17	.11		.11
Personal characteristics					
	Life cycle stage	.22		.16	.11
M2.	Race	.15		.13	.06
E1.	Educational attainment	.15		.12	.11
G12.	Family income	.09		.09	.08
F1.	Job status	.15		.06	.05
A1.	Length of residence in area	.12		.05	.04
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)			17.9%	7.3%	21.0%

Finally, we must consider the possibility that personal characteristics may influence the relationship between attribute assessments and overall community satisfaction. A careful search for such interactions in our data failed to reveal any such relations, although a number of hypotheses were investigated. One suggested that evaluations of public schools would be more strongly related to community satisfaction for parents of school-age children. This relationship was considered separately for respondents at each of the nine levels of the life cycle variable, but no consistent pattern emerged. Similarly, no consistent patterns were found when the respondents

were available—a set that could explain a higher proportion of the variance in community satisfaction—that the magnitude of the apparent direct link between the present set of personal characteristics and community satisfaction would diminish, perhaps even disappear. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the personal characteristics included in the present study are restricted to demographic variables. If measures of personality traits (such as "optimism-pessimism" or "repression-sensitization") were available, a quite different conclusion about the mediation of their effects on satisfaction might be reached.

were stratified by race and income and the relationships between each of the attribute evaluations and community satisfaction were compared across strata.[11]

To summarize, the data indicate that satisfaction with community is partially based on assessments of various attributes of the community, in particular, the public schools, police-community relations, the local taxes, and the climate. It also appears that population subgroup differences in community satisfaction responses are mediated to a large extent by differences in how people in those subgroups assess these community attributes. No evidence has been found of interaction effects; that is, we were unable to detect systematic differences in the strength of the relationship between the assessments of a particular community attribute and overall community satisfaction for different segments of the sample.

The Objective Environment

In our earlier discussion we indicated that we expect the assessments of community attributes to depend on perceptions of those attributes by the respondents—or more precisely, on the discrepancy between such perceptions and the individual's standard of comparison. The individual's perceptions of community attributes are, of course, personal interpretations of those attributes as they objectively exist. The attributes of the community are referred to in our model as objective environmental attributes. By the term "objective," it is implied that the attributes are measured by techniques that are independent of any personal report by the respondents.

General evidence concerning the importance of objective characteristics of the environment in determining subjective responses is provided when we examine the extent to which people living in close proximity to one another agree with each other. One stage in the sampling procedure used in the present study involved the designation of small clusters of dwelling units which might correspond, for example, to all or part of a city block. Several dwelling units within each such cluster were then selected, and finally an adult within each such dwelling unit was randomly selected as the intended respondent.[12] As the result of this sampling procedure, each respondent generally lives in close proximity to a few other respondents and presumably

[11] The reader may recall that there are indeed some interactions on a more generalized level that have been discussed already, briefly in this chapter and more fully in Chapters 4 and 5. For example, those with little education tend to say that they are more satisfied than the average respondent with their community, but their positive global statements are not matched by a similar degree of satisfaction with specific attributes of the community. These interactions, however, are not specific to assessments of particular characteristics of the community, nor indeed to the community domain, but a general phenomenon that cuts across domains.

[12] Details of the sampling procedures are given in Appendix A.

faces much the same residential environment as those other respondents. To the extent that his perceptions and assessments are influenced by objective conditions in that environment, they should be in agreement with the corresponding perceptions and assessments of his neighbors.

Because interviews could not be obtained with all of the designated respondents, some of the respondents were the only residents of the particular clusters in which they lived or were one of only two such residents. However, a total of 1,703 respondents lived in 456 clusters from which at least three interviews were obtained. The agreement among residents of the same cluster in their perceptions and assessments of community attributes and in their satisfaction with the community as a whole is shown in Table 7-5. The agreement on assessments of community attributes, while far from complete, is rather impressive; typically, between 20 and 40 percent of the variance in individual assessments can be "explained" by cluster of residence. Agreement on the perception of whether or not public trans-

Table 7-5: Agreement Among Neighboring Respondents in Their Responses to Items About the Community

		Adjusted correlation ratio[a]
	Perception	
A13.	Is public transportation available?	.83
	Assessments	
A3.	Streets and roads	.20
A4.	Local schools	.28
A5.	Garbage collection	.26
A6.	Parks and playgrounds	.40
A7.	Police protection	.22
A8.	Police–community relations	.20
A9.	Climate	.20
A10.	Local taxes	.21
A13a.	Public transportation	.30
A21.	Overall community satisfaction	.16

[a] The adjusted η^2 is the unbiased correlation ratio and is a measure of the strength of the association made after adjusting for degrees of freedom. (For most of the analyses of variance reported in this book, this adjustment is very close to one and the adjusted value is almost identical to the unadjusted value of the correlation ratio. In the present analyses, the adjustment is large because of the large number of categories—clusters—of the independent variable.) The adjusted correlation ratio can here be interpreted as the proportion of variance in the responses which can be explained by cluster; in other words, the extent of agreement among respondents within a cluster. These values are almost identical to those of the intraclass correlation coefficient, which is perhaps a more familiar measure of agreement.

portation is available is, not surprisingly, almost complete. On the other hand, agreement on level of satisfaction with the community as a whole is somewhat low. This pattern is consistent with our expectations. Since perceptions are closely linked with the objective environment we would expect a high degree of agreement on perceptions of a shared environment. Assessments are less closely linked and depend to a greater extent on personal characteristics of the respondents, so that less agreement would be expected among residents of a shared environment on their assessments than on their perceptions. Overall satisfaction depends even less directly on the objective environment and is affected as well by personal characteristics, so even less agreement would be expected.[13]

Direct measures of objective characteristics of the community were not available for analysis with the present data. The only objective datum about the community in which the respondents reside which has been utilized in analyses is the population size of the community. Size of community has been shown to be related to a number of community characteristics, so that although we lack explicit data concerning these links in our study, it is reasonable to assume that the size of the community in which the respondents reside is related to some of the attributes of those communities that the respondents were asked to assess. Following this argument, we expect that the size of community would also be related to the assessments of these attributes.

As seen from the data in Table 7-6, this expectation is confirmed. In particular, residents of the largest cities are less likely to evaluate characteristics of their communities in a favorable manner than are residents of smaller communities. For all attributes except public transportation, a smaller proportion of central city residents than residents of other-sized communities evaluate them as "very good."[14] Large city residents also are

[13] Not all of the agreement among cluster residents is necessarily attributable to the common objective environment. Due to housing patterns, neighbors also tend to share personal characteristics, such as race, socioeconomic level, and age. Therefore some of the agreement may be a reflection of such shared personal characteristics. However, we have already seen that a set of six personal characteristics explains only 7 percent of the variance in community satisfaction and will shortly see that they typically explain even less variance in the assessments of community attributes. Thus it seems safe to conclude that much of the agreement among neighboring respondents in their assessments is due to their shared objective environment.

[14] Four out of ten (42 percent) of the large city residents say that the available public transportation is "very good," compared to three out of ten (30 percent) of the sample as a whole. The difference would appear even larger if we included in the bases for the percentages those respondents who reported that there was no available public transportation, and so were not asked to evaluate it; only 1 percent of the residents of large cities said no public transportation was available, compared to over half (53 percent) of the sample as a whole.

Table 7-6: Proportion of Residents of Communities of Different Sizes Who Described Attributes as "Very Good" (in percentages)

		Size of community[a]					
		Largest cities	*Other large cities*	*Suburbs*	*Small cities and towns*	*Rural areas*	*Number of respondents*[b]
	Attributes						
A5.	Garbage collection	38	51	58	62	56	1703
A10.	Local taxes[c]	17	29	46	44	49	1921
A4.	Public schools	17	25	41	47	36	1678
A8.	Police–community relations	27	30	43	38	33	1904
A9.	Climate	24	40	29	39	41	2152
A7.	Police protection	26	30	40	39	25	2007
A6.	Parks and playgrounds	21	28	31	33	33	1476
A13a.	Public transportation	42	38	19	26	11	884
A3.	Streets and roads	10	17	27	24	21	2152

[a] Communities were categorized by the degree to which they were urbanized based on 1960 census data. The *largest cities* are the central cities of the twelve largest SMSA's. *Other large cities* are other cities over 100,000 population. *Suburbs* are places with a population of less than 100,000 in the twelve largest SMSA's and rural places of less than 2,500 in all SMSA's. *Small towns and cities* are places with a population between 2,500 and 100,000 which are not in the twelve largest SMSA's, while *rural areas* contain populations of less than 2,500 and are not situated in an SMSA.

[b] Respondents for whom a service was not available *are not included* in the base upon which the indicated proportions are calculated.

[c] Proportions refer to those respondents who say local taxes are low or moderate.

more likely than others to think that they are paying too much for what they get. Table 7-6 shows that only one in six (17 percent) of the large city residents consider their local taxes to be moderate or low, compared to four in ten (41 percent) of the sample as a whole.

Despite the substantial differences in assessments of community attributes given by residents of communities of different size, it is not necessarily true that these differences are attributable to objective differences in the characteristics of such places. Residents in different-sized communities differ in personal characteristics, including race, life cycle stages, and educational attainment. It is possible that differences in these personal characteristics, which were shown earlier to be related in assessments of community attributes, explain the association between size of place and those assessments.[15]

To test this possibility, we can examine the data to see how much, if any, variation in assessments can be explained by size of place which cannot be explained by personal characteristics. As an example, the assessment of a single attribute, that of the public schools, is considered. As shown at the bottom of the second column of Table 7-7, size of place by itself ex-

Table 7-7: Prediction of Assessment of Public Schools, by Size of Place and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

			Beta coefficients	
	Eta coefficients	*Size of place only*	*Personal characteristics only*	*Size of place and personal characteristics*
Size of place	.27	[a]		.26
Personal characteristics				
Life cycle stage	.14		.12	.11
M2. Race	.12		.11	.02
E1. Educational attainment	.06		.04	.03
G12. Family income	.08		.07	.06
F1. Job status	.10		.08	.08
A1. Length of residence in area	.06		.05	.05
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		7.4%	2.4%	8.0%

[a] Since the *beta* coefficient indicates the ranking of importance of predictors, no value is provided when only size of place is considered.

plains 7 percent of the variation in respondents' assessments of public schools. When a set of six selected personal characteristics is considered, only 2 percent of the variation is accounted for. Combined, the seven variables explain 8 percent of the variation in people's assessments of their public schools. Thus it is clear, at least for the assessment of public schools, that the predictive value of knowing the size of the place in which people live cannot be attributed in the main to differences in their family life cycle, race, and other personal characteristics.

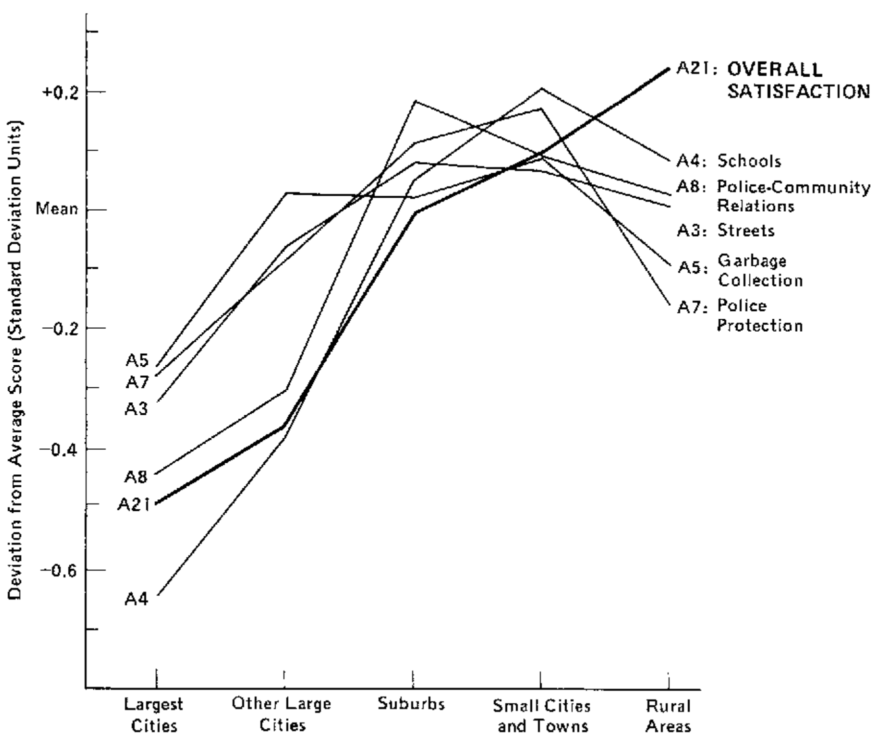
In Figure 7-1 we suggested that attributes of the community environment are related to perceptions of those attributes which in turn are related

[15] The causal direction of this association would not be at all clear since it could be argued that one reason for the differences in assessments between racial groups, and so on, is the differential distribution of such groups in places of different sizes, rather than the other way around.

through the attribute assessments to community satisfaction. That is, we expected that there would be correlations between objective characteristics of the community and overall community satisfaction. However, since we assume that there is no direct linkage between objective attributes and community satisfaction, and since we assume that characteristics of the person have disturbing effects on the perceptions and assessments of attributes which are seen as mediating the linkage, we did not expect the correlation to be terribly strong. Taking size of place as a surrogate for measures of more specific objective attributes, we can examine the data for evidence concerning the strength of their relationship with community satisfaction.

There is indeed a substantial relationship between the size of the community in which a respondent lives and level of community satisfaction. Figure 7-2 shows that residents of large cities tend to be considerably less satisfied with their communities than are residents of suburbs, smaller cities,

Figure 7-2: Average Levels of Satisfaction with Community and of Assessments of Community Attributes, Expressed by Residents of Communities of Different Populations



and especially of rural areas. Figure 7-2 also shows the average of the assessments of community attributes given by residents of different-sized communities; while the same general patterns are seen for most of these assessments as is seen for overall satisfaction, the differences are more pronounced for overall satisfaction than for almost any of the assessments. (The exception is the assessment of public schools, which is related more strongly to size of place than is overall community satisfaction.) In other words, residents of large cities tend to be relatively less satisfied with their communities than they are with any particular community attribute, while rural residents tend to be relatively more satisfied with the whole than with any of its parts about which they were asked.

A measure of the strength of association between size of place and satisfaction is shown in the first column of Table 7-8; the *eta* coefficient is

Table 7-8: Prediction of Community Satisfaction, by Set of Assessments of Community Attributes and Size of Place (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients	
	Eta coefficients	*Assessments only*	*Assessments and size of place*
Size of place	.24		.14
Assessments of community attributes			
A4. Public schools	.27	.18	.16
A9. Climate	.23	.18	.17
A8. Police–community relations	.25	.14	.14
A3. Streets and roads	.22	.13	.12
A10. Local taxes	.17	.11	.10
A6. Parks and playgrounds	.19	.11	.09
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		17.9%	18.9%

.24. We can explore the data further to measure the extent to which they are consistent with the hypothesis that the effects of objective characteristics on community satisfaction are mediated by assessments of the community attributes rather than having an effect on satisfaction which is independent of the assessments. In the third column of Table 7-8, the combined effects are shown when both size of place and six assessments are used in predicting to community satisfaction. The 19 percent of the variance accounted for is only slightly higher than that explained when only the six assessments were used in the analysis (as seen in the second column). Although we saw in Figure 7-2 that residents of large cities are less satisfied than we would predict on the basis of their attribute assessments, while residents of rural areas are more satisfied than predicted, this effect is not a very large one in terms of explained variance. There is little evidence for the hypothesis that objective differences between places of different size escape the conscious assessments of our respondents but generate differences in community satisfaction directly nonetheless, without registering "on the way" in those intervening assessments.

This is not to say, of course, that the size of place where a person lives fails to contribute in a basic way to his level of community satisfaction. On the contrary, we have seen that numerous objective ways in which places of varying size differ from one another are strongly reflected in perceptions and assessments which, in turn, determine overall community satisfaction.

Although objective data from the present study are limited to a single measure which is considerably less specific than what is implied by the model, the preceding analysis does offer evidence in support of one aspect of the model—that is, that objective environmental attributes influence community satisfaction and that this overall influence is largely mediated by their influence on assessments of specific community attributes.

NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION

From the larger areal surroundings which we have called the community, we now move inward to the more immediate environment of the "neighborhood." We did not undertake to define the concept of neighborhood for our respondents, and they may have had quite diverse areas in mind when answering questions about this domain of their lives. In pretesting our instruments, we found that people generally considered a rather large area when answering questions about their neighborhood but not as large an area as the political jurisdiction which defined the community.

As we have seen earlier, the relationship between community satisfaction and neighborhood satisfaction is fairly strong ($r = .54$). Nearly half of the respondents were "completely satisfied" with their neighborhoods while less than one out of ten said they were more dissatisfied than they were satisfied (Table 3-1). It appears that people tend to be somewhat more satisfied with their neighborhood than they are with their community. As we will see later, these high levels of satisfaction are not uniform across all segments of the population. First to be considered, however, are some neighborhood attributes which were assessed by people in different ways and which are major determinants of overall satisfaction.

Assessments of Neighborhood Attributes

We asked our respondents to assess five attributes of their neighborhoods: their convenience, how well neighboring houses are kept up, their neighbors, personal safety for walking outside at night, and the importance of locking their houses when out for brief periods. As we see in Table 7-9, neighborhood characteristics were evaluated rather positively by most of the respondents. Five out of six (84 percent) felt the place where they lived was at least "convenient enough." Two in five (41 percent) said that houses in the neighborhood were kept up "very well"; over one-half (54 percent) said that they have "very good" neighbors. One fourth of the respondents (26 percent) expressed some reservations about the safety of walking out-

Table 7-9: Assessment of Neighborhood Attributes

	Percent	*Number of respondents*
Attributes		
A12. Convenience		
Very convenient	42	
Convenient enough	42	
Not very convenient	13	
Not convenient at all	3	
Total	100	2157
A17. Condition of housing—upkeep		
Very well	41	
Fairly well	48	
Not very well	8	
Not well at all	3	
Total	100	2149
A18. Neighbors		
Very good	54	
Fairly good	33	
Neither good nor bad	9	
Not very good	3	
Not good at all	1	
Total	100	2138
A19. Safe to walk at night		
Yes	74	
No	26	
Total	100	2058
A20. Importance of locking doors		
Very important	56	
Somewhat important	17	
Not very important	15	
Not at all important	12	
Total	100	2161

side at night—or to interpret the same data in a more positive way, almost three-fourths of the respondents did not express any such fear. At the same time, over one-half (56 percent) of the respondents said they felt it was "very important" to lock up their house even when leaving it for only a brief period.

As shown in Table 7-10, the five assessments considered together ex-

Table 7-10: Prediction of Neighborhood Satisfaction, by Assessments of Specific Neighborhood Attributes (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Eta coefficients	*Beta coefficients*
	Assessments of neighborhood attributes		
A18.	Neighbors	.48	.37
A17.	Condition of housing—upkeep	.41	.25
A19.	Safe to walk at night	.27	.11
A12.	Convenience	.18	.10
A20.	Importance of locking doors	.15	.07
	Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		32.4%

plain almost one-third of the variance in neighborhood satisfaction. The most important predictor is the respondents' assessments of their neighbors, although their evaluation of the upkeep of neighboring houses is also important.

Personal Characteristics

As in the case of community satisfaction, people of different types vary in their assessments of neighborhood characteristics and in their satisfaction with their neighborhoods. These patterns are generally quite similar to those observed for community satisfaction, so only a few interesting exceptions need to be noted here.

Women and men do not differ to any important extent in their overall levels of satisfaction with their neighborhoods, but women are more likely to express concern for safety: they more often say that it is not safe to walk in the neighborhood at night and are somewhat more likely to feel it is important to lock their doors when they leave their homes empty. These are hardly surprising differences, and perhaps women have different expectations than do men since their greater concern about safety, relative to men, is not reflected in greater dissatisfaction with their neighborhoods.

Young people as usual tend to be less satisfied than older people, and the assessments of their neighbors made by young respondents are especially low. However, older people (those age 65 or older) are more concerned about their safety than are younger people. These age differences are also reflected in differences for people in various stages of the life cycle. For example, young single people are especially dissatisfied with their neighbors; widowed respondents are the most often concerned about their safety.

Nonwhites are less satisfied than whites with their neighborhood and with its attributes, but are especially negative about the condition of houses in their neighborhood and about the safety of walking in the neighborhood at night. People with low incomes are not very much less satisfied with their neighborhoods than those with high incomes, but they are considerably more negative with respect to the convenience of their neighborhoods, the condition of houses in their neighborhoods, and the safety of walking the streets.

The strengths of the relationships between each of six personal characteristics and neighborhood satisfaction are shown in the first column of Table 7-11 (the *eta* coefficients). These are generally quite similar to the corresponding coefficients for community satisfaction, as shown in Table 7-3. Altogether, the set of six personal characteristics explains 8 percent of the variance in neighborhood satisfaction.

Table 7-11: Prediction of Neighborhood Satisfaction, by Set of Assessments of Neighborhood Attributes and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

			Beta coefficients	
		Eta coefficients	*Personal characteristics only*	*Assessments and personal characteristics*
	Assessments of neighborhood attributes			
A17.	Condition of housing—upkeep	.41		.25
A18.	Neighbors	.48		.34
A19.	Safe to walk at night	.27		.14
A12.	Convenience	.18		.10
A20.	Importance of locking doors	.15		.07
	Personal characteristics			
	Life cycle stage	.24	.17	.10
M2.	Race	.15	.12	.02
A1.	Length of residence in area	.16	.09	.06
G12.	Family income	.06	.07	.04
A6.	Educational attainment	.10	.06	.07
F1.	Job status	.15	.06	.06
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)			7.6%	34.7%

Table 7-11 also shows that when the set of personal characteristics is combined with the set of neighborhood assessments examined earlier, the two sets explain 35 percent of the variance in neighborhood satisfaction. Since this is only 2 percent more than the explanatory power of the assessments alone, we conclude that as in the case of community satisfaction, most (though not necessarily all) of the explanatory power of these personal characteristics is mediated by the assessments of specific neighborhood attributes.

Perceptions of Neighborhood Attributes

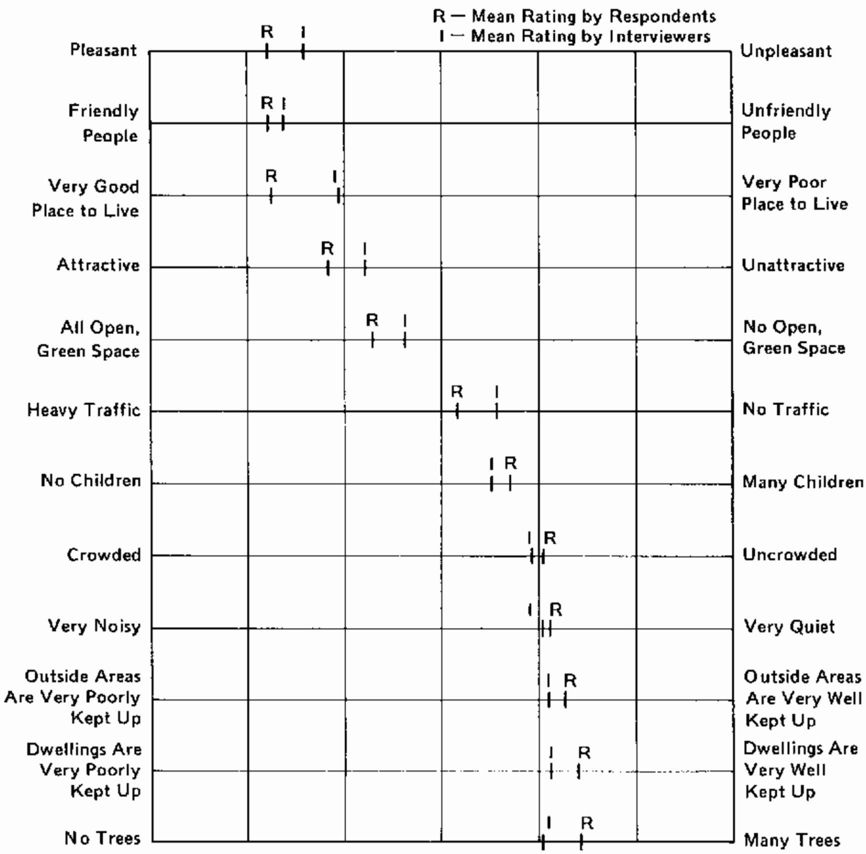
We asked our respondents to relate their perceptions (i.e., in a nonevaluative manner) of just one objective attribute of their neighborhood—its racial composition. They were asked whether their neighborhood was "all white, mostly white, about half and half, mostly black, all black or what?" Sixty-two percent of the respondents said that all of their neighbors were white, and another 23 percent said that most of their neighbors were white, while 9 percent said that all or most of their neighbors were black. When we also consider the race of the respondent, we learn that 65 percent of the respondents reported living in neighborhoods entirely of their own race.

In addition to this single perception of neighborhood racial composition in the primary data collection, perceptual data were obtained in the reinterviews of nearly 300 respondents several months later. These respondents were asked to describe their neighborhoods on some twelve different dimensions, using semantic differential scales.[16] These scales, and the average position of the neighborhoods as described by the respondents (and also by the interviewers—discussed later), are shown in Figure 7-3. It is clear that people generally tend to describe their neighborhoods in positive terms: they are pleasant, well kept up, with many trees and friendly people. More mixed reactions are observed in descriptions of the neighborhoods in terms of the amount of open space, the traffic volume, and the number of children.

In the reinterviews, respondents were asked not only to describe their neighborhoods on the set of twelve attributes, but also to evaluate this same set of neighborhood attributes—that is, they were asked how satisfied they were with each attribute. Most of these assessments are strongly related to the corresponding perceptions in a manner consistent with the link between those elements indicated in our model (Figure 7-1). For all but one attribute, the correlations (product moment coefficients) between the percep-

[16] The "neighborhood" was defined to be a more restricted area in these questions. Respondents were asked to think about just the five or six homes closest to their own. This microneighborhood is in contrast to a much larger area that is thought of by most respondents, when they answered other questions about their neighborhood.

Figure 7-3: Descriptions of the Neighborhood in which Respondents Live, by Respondents and by Interviewers (Reinterview only, N = 285)



tion of a neighborhood attribute and the degree of satisfaction with that attribute range from .55 to .77.

The exceptional attribute, that of the number of children in the neighborhood, is also interesting. The correlation between the perception and assessment of this attribute is only .13. This low correlation apparently reflects the fact that people have very different standards of comparison on this attribute; some people want to live in neighborhoods with many children, while others would be happy to have no children around. This unusual divergence of standards of comparison was confirmed elsewhere in the questionnaire. The respondents were also asked in the reinterviews to state how they would like their neighborhood to be on each of the twelve dimensions listed in Figure 7-3. For most of these dimensions, there was considerable consensus on what the ideal neighborhood would be like. On the "children" dimension, however, there was almost twice as much variance on the description of the ideal neighborhood as there was, on the average, for the other eleven dimensions.

For those who would prefer living in neighborhoods with few or no children, there is a strong negative correlation between the perception of the number of children in their present neighborhoods and their assessment of their neighborhoods on this dimension. For those who would prefer many children, there is a weak *positive* correlation between the perception and the assessment. What we have, then, is evidence in support of our expectation that the relationship between the perception and the assessment of an environmental attribute is modified by the individual respondent's standard of comparison. Evidently for most of these attributes, there is a high degree of consensus on standards of comparison, or at least we were unable to measure differences in these standards with our questions about the "ideal neighborhood." Only when there is an extraordinary amount of divergence on the standards of comparison, on the desired number of children in the neighborhood, did we measure differences with sufficient reliability to allow us to observe their mediating effects.

Objective Characteristics of Neighborhoods

The influence of objective characteristics of the neighborhood on perceptions and assessments of the neighborhood can be demonstrated in a general way by examining the extent to which neighbors agree with one another, just as was done earlier for assessments of community attributes. The extent of agreement is shown in Table 7-12. The agreement on a fairly

Table 7-12: Agreement Among Neighboring Respondents in Their Responses to Items About the Neighborhood

	Adjusted correlation ratio[a]
Perception	
A16. Neighborhood race	.85
Assessments	
A12. Convenience	.23
A17. Condition of housing—upkeep	.44
A18. Neighbors	.24
A19. Safe to walk at night	.30
A20. Importance of locking doors	.23
A22. Overall neighborhood satisfaction	.21

[a] This statistic is defined in footnote a, Table 7-5.

straightforward perception—that of the racial composition of the neighborhood—is very high. Agreement on assessments, which are influenced to a greater extent by personal characteristics of the respondents, is considerably lower, but is still high enough to demonstrate the importance of the influence of the objective characteristics.[17]

Some objective measures of specific neighborhood attributes are available. An objective measure of the racial composition of each respondent's neighborhood is provided by the race of other respondents living in the same geographic sampling cluster (as discussed earlier and in Appendix A). An objective measure of a second neighborhood attribute was provided by the interviewers, who described the condition of the housing in each respondent's neighborhood. Finally, a characteristic of communities that is also known to be related to neighborhood attributes is the size of the community; that factor is also considered in our analyses.

In the reinterviews of 300 respondents, the interviewers were asked to describe each respondent's neighborhood on the same set of twelve dimensions as were used by the respondents; the average ratings are given in Figure 7-3 and can be compared to those of the respondents. At least in terms of average ratings, the descriptions by interviewers appear similar to the respondents' descriptions (correlation of means = .985).

Relationship of Objective Characteristics to Perceptions and Assessments

For respondents living in urban areas and in sampling clusters from which at least three interviews were obtained, the relationship of the racial composition of the respondents in that cluster was compared to the perception of the neighborhood racial composition reported by the respondents. It was found that there is a high correlation ($r = .84$) between the objective and subjective indicators. There is reason to interpret this finding as more a reflection of the segregated character of most neighborhoods than of the perspicacity of the respondents. Nevertheless, whatever the explanation, the high correlation provides some justification for treating the respondents' perceptions of the racial composition of their neighborhoods as closely equivalent to an objective measure, and this equivalence will be assumed in multivariate analyses described in the following sections.

[17] The distinction we have been making between "perceptions" and "assessments" is not always clear, and a continuum rather than a dichotomy would probably be a better image. For example, the assessment of the condition of neighborhood housing is probably more directly a function of directly observable phenomena than is the assessment of one's neighbors, for which personal values and personality traits are almost certainly important determinants. This distinction would explain why there is considerably more agreement on the assessment of neighborhood housing than on the assessment of neighbors.

Another measure of an objective environmental attribute was an interviewer rating of the upkeep of structures in the neighborhood, on a 4-point scale from "very well kept up" to "very poorly kept up or dilapidated."[18] The relationship between the interviewers' ratings of the upkeep of structures in the neighborhood and the respondents' assessments of neighboring structures was quite substantial ($r = .53$). For cases in which the interviewer considered the neighboring structures to be kept up "very well," almost two-thirds (64 percent) of the respondents also evaluated their neighbors' houses as "very well" kept up as compared to only 7 percent of the respondents when the interviewer rated the nearby structures as kept up poorly.

Table 7-13: Proportion of Respondents in Communities of Different Sizes Who Gave the Indicated Responses to Items Concerning Neighborhood Attributes

	Size of community					
	Largest cities	*Other large cities*	*Suburbs*	*Small cities and towns*	*Rural areas*	*Number of respondents*
Respondents' assessments						
A19. It is safe to walk outside at night	43%	49%	80%	79%	86%	2058
A20. It is *not* "very important" to lock doors when leaving the house	19%	21%	44%	46%	63%	2161

Size of community is not a direct measure of any neighborhood attribute, but it is clear in Table 7-13 that neighborhood attributes are influenced by the size of the surrounding community. If we accept the statistics showing crime rates to be higher in central cities than in other places, it is not surprising to find sizable relationships between the size of place and two crime-related assessments—fear of walking outside at night and the importance people attach to leaving house doors unlocked.

The relationships between interviewer descriptions (objective measures

[18] It is true, of course, that the interviewer ratings of housing conditions could be treated as a subjective measure in another context. However, in the present context we consider these ratings to be "objective" in the sense that they are not made by the respondents whose assessments and satisfactions we are trying to predict. Furthermore, while no special effort was made to train the interviewers to make this observation, there is evidence that they were respectably reliable in their judgments. For the interviewer observation of the condition of structure, the test-retest stability over an eight-month span was rather high ($r = .62$).

Table 7-14: Relationships Between Interviewer and Respondent Descriptions of Neighborhoods on Each of Twelve Dimensions (Reinterview Study)

	Product moment correlation coefficient (r)
Amount of traffic	.67
Number of trees	.61
Number of children	.59
Amount of open, green space	.52
How crowded	.52
Upkeep of outside areas	.51
How noisy	.48
How attractive	.43
Upkeep of dwellings	.42
How good a place to live	.38
How pleasant	.37
How friendly	.33

in this context) and respondent descriptions of neighborhoods from the reinterview study are shown in Table 7-14. The attributes are listed in order of decreasing relationships, which serves to demonstrate that while all of the correlations are substantial, the items which have more evaluative connotations tend to be less highly correlated than the more straightforward descriptive items. While there is relatively high agreement between interviewers and respondents in their descriptions of the number of trees and children and the amount of traffic, there is considerably less agreement on descriptions of neighborhood friendliness and pleasantness. The latter dimensions could better be regarded as assessments rather than simple perceptions, and so the associations between them and objective attributes are expectedly lower than for the former dimensions.

Relationships of Objective Characteristics to Neighborhood Satisfaction

Each of the three indicators of objective characteristics that are available in the complete data set is related fairly strongly to the measure of neighborhood satisfaction. The correlations (*eta* coefficients) are shown in the first column of Table 7-15. Respondents who live in neighborhoods which the interviewers describe as well kept up tend to be more satisfied than residents of more rundown neighborhoods. Residents of large cities tend to be less satisfied with their neighborhoods than residents of smaller places (in the same way that, as we observed earlier, these large city residents are less satisfied with their communities). Finally, residents of neighborhoods composed entirely of their own race tend to be more satisfied

Table 7-15: Prediction of Neighborhood Satisfaction, by Set of Objective Measures of Environmental Attributes and Set of Assessments of Neighborhood Attributes (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients	
	Eta coefficients	*Objective attributes only*	*Objective attributes and assessments*
Objective environmental attributes			
Upkeep of neighboring structures	.28	.22	.05
Size of community	.27	.22	.14
Racial composition of neighborhood	.24	.15	.09
Assessments of neighborhood attributes			
A12. Convenience	.18		.11
A17. Upkeep of neighboring structures	.41		.24
A18. Neighbors	.48		.33
A19. Safety of walking	.27		.08
A20. Importance of locking doors	.15		.06
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		14.3%	34.5%

with their neighborhoods than are residents of racially mixed neighborhoods. When all three of these objective measures are considered simultaneously, they explain 14 percent of the variance in neighborhood satisfaction as shown by Table 7-15. The respective *beta* coefficients show that while the racial composition of the neighborhood is slightly less important than the other two objective characteristics, all three are respectably important as predictors of neighborhood satisfaction.

Table 7-15 also shows that when the three objective measures are combined with the set of five assessments of neighborhood attributes, the total explanatory power is 34 percent. Since this is only slightly higher than the explanatory power of the assessments alone (32 percent; cf. Table 7-10), we conclude that most of the impact of objective characteristics is reflected in the assessments of specific attributes, which in turn influence overall neighborhood satisfaction.

What the data imply, then, is that objective characteristics of neighborhoods have an important influence on resident satisfaction. This influence, furthermore, can be explained by the apparent accuracy with which people perceive the objective attributes and judge them against their personalized standards of comparison to form assessments of the suitability of their environment.

HOUSING SATISFACTION

The most immediate aspect of the residential environment for the individual and the one with which she or he is most closely identified is the private dwelling unit, be that a single-family house, an apartment, or whatever. Respondents were asked about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their housing; the distribution of answers on the standard 7-point scale is shown in Table 3-1. There is slightly less satisfaction expressed with housing than with the neighborhood, but about the same level of satisfaction is found for the broader environment—the community—as with the immediate environment—housing.

The three concepts (community, neighborhood, and housing) can be thought of as nested environmental realms: the neighborhood is a segment of the community, and the individual housing unit is situated in the context of the neighborhood. Thus it is not surprising that there should be substantial relationships among the measures of satisfaction with each of these levels. The relationships between housing satisfaction and satisfaction with the neighborhood and with the community are in each case substantial (the product moment correlations are .44 and .45, respectively). We see, for example, that of those people who are not satisfied with their communities, one-half are also not satisfied with their housing; in contrast, of those who are completely satisfied with their communities, only 15 percent are not satisfied with their housing.

Assessments of Housing Characteristics

We asked our respondents to evaluate four characteristics of the house or apartment in which they lived: the size of the rooms, how well-built the structure was, the heating system, and the costs. (The latter item was described as including rent and utilities for those who rented, or mortgage payments, maintenance costs, property taxes, and utilities for those who owned their homes.) The distributions of these assessments are shown in Table 7-16. To an even greater extent than was observed for community and neighborhood characteristics, a large majority of the respondents described their homes in positive terms: 71 percent say the rooms are about the right size, 78 percent say they live in well-built structures, 86 percent say the heating is at least fairly good, and 70 percent say their housing costs are moderate if not actually low. It was presumably factors such as these that influenced their selection of the dwelling in the first place, so it is perhaps not surprising to find that most people are positive in these assessments, but it is very likely that processes such as cognitive dissonance reduction and accommodation are also contributing to the skewed distributions.

The relationships of each of the four assessments to satisfaction with

Table 7-16: Assessments of Housing Characteristics

	Percent	Number of respondents
Attributes		
B3. Size of rooms		
Too large	2	
About right	71	
Too small	21	
Mixed	6	
Total	100	2160
B4. Well-built structure		
Yes	78	
In between; qpalified answer	4	
No	18	
Total	100	2150
B5. Heating		
Very good	58	
Fairly good	28	
Neither good nor bad	3	
Not very good	8	
Not good at all	3	
Total	100	2031
B8. Costs (renters)		
Very low	8	
Low	14	
Moderate	50	
High	20	
Very high	8	
Total	100	682
B10. Costs (owners)		
Very low	2	
Low	8	
Moderate	60	
High	24	
Very high	6	
Total	100	1344

the dwelling unit are shown in Table 7-17. All of these relationships are in the expected directions. The assessment that is most strongly related to housing satisfaction is that of whether the structure is well-built.[19] Also

[19] While we expect that most people were responding to the question at face value, that is, to the structural soundness or condition of the dwelling, it is also possible that many considered the maintenance level or how well the dwelling was kept

Table 7-17: Prediction of Housing Satisfaction, by Assessments of Housing Attributes (Multiple Classification Analysis)

	Eta coefficients	*Beta coefficients*
Assessments of housing attributes		
B4. Well-built structure	.46	.31
B3. Size of rooms	.35	.26
B5. Heating	.41	.25
B8/10. Costs	.19	.11
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		34.5%

relatively important is the adequacy of the heating in the winter and the size of the rooms in the dwelling. In the latter instance, rooms that are assessed as too small are evidently the primary source of dissatisfaction; people who describe their rooms as being too large (or as mixed) are intermediate in their housing satisfaction between those who say their rooms are too small and those who say they are about right.

There is only a weak relationship between the assessment of housing costs and satisfaction with housing. It is rather disconcerting that this relationship is so weak and that it is not linear. Evidently satisfaction with the costs of one's housing is largely independent of satisfaction with the housing itself.[20] It should be noted that this is especially true of those who own their homes; the *eta* coefficient, predicting housing satisfaction from subjective costs is .15 for owners, compared to .32 for renters. Perhaps for renters, the costs are seen as an integral element of the housing, whereas for owners, costs are less a function of the house than of external factors such as mortgage and tax rates.

Together, the set of four assessments explain 34 percent of the variance

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up when answering the question. It has been shown in other studies that upkeep of the immediate neighborhood (and its dwellings) is the most important predictor of micro-neighborhood satisfaction (Lansing, Marans, and Zehner, 1970; Marans and Rodgers, 1974).

[20] It may be that people interpreted our question about the level of their housing costs in different and conflicting ways. We intended the question to give us an estimate of the fairness of the costs in terms of what was received and assumed that this estimate would be positively associated with satisfaction with housing. It may be, however, that some people responded in terms of the sheer magnitude of their housing costs, without reference to whether what they were getting for this money was worth it or whether the cost was a fair price. This interpretation would obviously have contributed a good deal of ambiguity to the question and lowered the overall correlation we see in Table 7-17.

in housing satisfaction. Time limitations in the interview prevented asking for a more complete set of assessments, and it is clear that the respondents were not asked about many important aspects of their housing. Given the lack of information about other housing characteristics, we cannot say very much about the importance even of the few characteristics that respondents did assess. However, it is encouraging that such a short list of assessments, chosen with little empirical justification, does tell as much as it does about what contributes to an individual's satisfaction with his housing.

Personal Characteristics

The patterns of satisfaction with housing expressed by different kinds of people (as defined by race, age, income, and so on) are generally very similar to the patterns already observed for satisfaction with community and neighborhood. Black respondents are less satisfied with their housing than are whites; indeed, the difference is greater than was observed for neighborhood or community satisfaction. Among income groups, satisfaction is lowest in all three cases for those in the lower middle income group. As we have seen in Chapter 5, reported satisfaction increases with age and with length of residence in one's present house or community. Satisfaction is relatively high among the widowed and low among the divorced or separated, but in the case of housing satisfaction, married respondents with pre-school-age children are even less satisfied than the divorced or separated.

The assessments of housing characteristics—the size of rooms, heating, and the structure—are related to personal characteristics in generally the same fashion as is overall housing satisfaction. The assessment of the costs of housing, however, is only weakly related to any of the personal characteristics. In particular, there is no apparent regular relationship between family income and the assessment of housing costs. As noted earlier, this assessment is apparently based on complex considerations and is not a well defined concept.

In Table 7-18, the total explanatory power of a set of six personal characteristics in relation to housing satisfaction is observed to be 10 percent. This is a somewhat higher proportion than that observed for the same set of personal characteristics in relation to community and neighborhood satisfaction. The most important predictor of satisfaction with all three levels of the residential environment is the life cycle variable. Race is also a relatively important predictor, but income, educational level, and length of residence are remarkably unimportant predictors.

Further analysis (Table 7-18) reveals that most of the relationship between personal characteristics and housing satisfaction is mediated by the assessments of specific housing characteristics. When the set of four housing

Table 7-18: Prediction of Housing Satisfaction, by Set of Assessments of Housing Attributes and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients	
	Eta coefficients	*Personal characteristics only*	*Assessments and personal characteristics*
Assessments of housing attributes			
B3. Size of rooms	.35		.24
B4. Well-built structure	.46		.29
B5. Heating	.41		.24
B8/10. Costs	.19		.11
Personal characteristics			
Life cycle stage	.25	.20	.08
M2. Race	.18	.16	.07
E1. Educational attainment	.11	.07	.08
G12. Family income	.11	.09	.06
F1. Job status	.17	.10	.05
A2. Length of residence in dwelling unit	.14	.04	.06
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		9.7%	36.5%

characteristics is added to the set of personal characteristics, the total explanatory power of both sets in relation to housing satisfaction is only 2 percent higher than the explanatory power of the set of assessments alone (cf. Table 7-17).

Objective Characteristics

Several objective characteristics of the residential environment were considered in relation to satisfaction with housing. These will be examined separately, and then the explanatory power of a set of such characteristics taken simultaneously will be considered.

Type of Structure: About two-thirds of our respondents lived in detached, single-family houses, and these people are more satisfied with their dwelling units than are those who live in other types of structures. The next most satisfied respondents are the 4 percent who live in trailers. Less satisfied are residents of multiple-family structures, such as duplexes and row houses. The least satisfied, by a considerable margin, are the residents of apartment houses. It appears, however, that a major proportion of these differences in the average level of housing satisfaction of residents of different types of structures can be explained by other differences among the dwelling units, such as their size and whether they are owned or rented by the respondents. In other words, there is no clear indication that structure type *per se* is an important determinant of housing satisfaction.

Number of Rooms: The size of the dwelling unit, as measured by the respondent's report on the number of rooms, is related to the expressed level of housing satisfaction. Thirty percent of the respondents report that there are four rooms or less in their dwelling unit, and of these almost one-third (31 percent) say that they are not satisfied with their housing. At the other extreme, 11 percent of the respondents report that there are eight or more rooms in their dwelling unit, and of these only 11 percent say that they are not satisfied with their housing.

The relationship is even stronger when we consider the number of rooms per person living in the dwelling unit. Sixteen percent of the respondents live in dwelling units with one room or less for each person; 40 percent of these people are not satisfied with their housing. On the other hand, 15 percent live in dwelling units with more than three rooms per person, and only 12 percent of them are not satisfied.

The number of rooms per person within dwelling units is just one aspect of population density; another aspect is dwelling unit density (e.g., number of dwelling units per square mile). There is no necessary relationship between these two aspects of density, as exemplified by the contrast between high-rise luxury apartment buildings (with many dwellings per acre but a low person-to-room ratio) and rural poverty housing (with few dwellings per acre but a high person-to-room ratio). The effects of both of these aspects of population density on various behaviors and pathologies have been examined rather intensively in previous studies (cf. Marans and Rodgers, 1974).

Age of Housing: The interviewers were asked to estimate the age of the structure in which each respondent was living, using three rough age categories. Eleven percent of the respondents were estimated to be living in structures that were less than five years old, 39 percent in structures that were more than twenty-five years old, and the remaining one-half were placed in the middle category. There is a tendency for those who live in new structures to be more satisfied with their housing than the residents of older structures. The relationship is not very strong and is observed only when those in the newest category are compared to those in the two older categories of housing.

Owned vs. Rented Housing: About three-fifths of the respondents (62 percent) say that they live in houses that they (or their families) own or are buying. Most of the rest rent their homes, but a few percent report some other arrangement, such as housing that is provided as part of their compensation for work. The average housing satisfaction expressed by homeowners is considerably higher than that expressed by renters.

Rent: The average monthly rent that those people who rent reported paying was about $102. The range was considerable, from almost one-fifth who paid $50 or less to a similar proportion who paid $150 or more. However, despite this range, there is little relationship between reported rent and housing satisfaction. There is a weak trend for those paying higher rents to be more satisfied than those paying lower rents, and presumably this reflects a relationship between the amount of rent and the quality of the housing, but the trend is too weak to be taken very seriously.

Value of House and Land: Home owners reported that their house and land was worth an average of about $22,500. These values are, of course, skewed toward the high values, as indicated by the fact that the median reported value is only $18,500. About one-fifth of the respondents reported their homes were worth less than $10,000, while another one-fifth reported their homes were worth more than $30,000. Those who own more expensive homes tend to be more satisfied with their housing than those who own less expensive ones. This relationship, while stronger than that between rent and housing satisfaction, is nevertheless rather weak. The notion of an accommodation process of the kind described in Chapter 5 seems compelling here to explain the low relationship between value (or rent) and satisfaction. Basic needs for shelter and warmth are not in question for the vast majority, and other criteria, such as privacy, quality of construction, and status value, are probably judged in comparison to aspirations and expectations, as well as social comparisons with relatives and friends.

The Relationship of Objective Characteristics to Housing Satisfaction

The explanatory power of each of the housing characteristics just considered in relationship to satisfaction with housing is shown in Table 7-19. None of the relationships is exceptionally strong, as indicated by the range of the *eta* coefficients, from .12 to .26. Together, the set of housing characteristics explains 12 percent of the variance in housing satisfaction.

Table 7-19 also shows that about three-fourths of the explanatory power of the housing characteristics can be interpreted as being mediated by the assessments of housing characteristics that were examined earlier. The total explanatory power of both sets of predictors is 38 percent or 3 per-

Table 7-19: Prediction of Housing Satisfaction, by Set of Objective Measures of Housing Characteristics and Set of Assessments of Housing Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

			Beta coefficients	
		Eta coefficients	*Objective attributes only*	*Objective attributes and assessments*
Objective housing attributes				
B1.	Rooms per person	.26	.24	.14
B6.	Owned or rented	.23	.11	.03
B7/9.	Value/rent	.21	.10	.04
M11.	Type of structure	.15	.08	.08
M14.	Age of structure	.12	.13	.09
Assessments of housing attributes				
B4.	Well-built structure	.46		.28
B5.	Heating	.41		.22
B3.	Size of rooms	.35		.23
B8/10.	Costs	.19		.12
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)			12.1%	37.8%

cent greater than that of the assessments alone. It is likely that if the respondents had been asked to assess a larger set of housing characteristics, including specifically those for which we have fairly objective information, the explanatory power of the objective variables would be found to be entirely mediated by the assessments.

It appears, then, that just as in the cases of community and neighborhood satisfaction, objective housing characteristics are associated with the level of satisfaction with housing. These objective characteristics are observed and evaluated by residents, who then combine their assessments of housing dimensions into an overall rating of their dwelling unit.

THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AS A COMPLEX WHOLE

Up to this point, we have treated the three levels of the residential environment as relatively distinct entities. It is helpful now to look across these domains and to consider the residential environment as a whole. The fact that people do not clearly differentiate between their housing, their neighborhoods, and their communities has already been noted. Indeed, a close linkage between these levels was suggested in the model with which we began our analysis (Figure 7-1).

One implication of this lack of clear differentiation among these levels is that the distinctions made in earlier analyses among predictors of satisfaction with such levels may have been somewhat arbitrary. For this reason, another series of analyses will be described in which such distinctions, if any, are made empirically rather than having been predesignated.

Table 7-20 summarizes the results of these analyses. A comparison of the product moment correlation coefficients reveals that most of the assess-

Table 7-20: Predictions of Environmental Satisfaction Items, by Sets of Assessments of Environmental Characteristics, Across Three Levels of the Residential Environment (Multiple Linear Regression)

	Community satisfaction		*Neighborhood satisfaction*		*Housing satisfaction*	
	r	β^{a}	r	β	r	β
Assessments of community attributes[b]						
A4. Schools	.30	.18	.27	.08	.19	—
A8. Police relations	.26	.10	.27	.06	.23	.06
A9. Climate	.23	.15	.16	.05	.18	.07
A10. Local taxes	.16	.10	.09	—	.07	—
Assessments of neighborhood attributes[b]						
A12. Convenience	.18	.10	.16	—	.18	.06
A17. Neighborhood housing	.27	.10	.41	.20	.36	.13
A18. Neighbors	.28	.11	.47	.32	.27	.08
A19. Safety	.18	—[c]	.27	.10	.15	—
Assessments of housing attributes[b]						
B3. Room size	.14	.07	.17	.08	.34	.24
B4. Structure	.21	.07	.29	.10	.46	.26
B5. Heating	.19	—	.22	—	.40	.18
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)	22.7%		34.6%		38.0%	

[a] These standardized regression coefficients (path coefficients) were determined by stepwise multiple-regression analyses, stopping at the step prior to the one for which the added variable had a regression coefficient less than 2.6 times its standard error. (A more usual rule is to use regression coefficients that are at least twice as large as their standard errors, but because of the clustered sample design, a more stringent criterion was adopted.)

[b] This categorization of the attribute assignments into three sets was done prior to inspection of the data; cf. discussion in text.

[c] These variables did not enter the regression before it reached the criterion described in footnote a. In terms of magnitude, none of these β's are as large as .05, so they are insignificant in meaning as well as statistically.

ments are most strongly associated with the level of the residential environment to which they have been originally ascribed, on an *a priori* basis. There are, however, some exceptions. Assessments of local public schools and of police-community relations are both about as strongly related to satisfaction with the neighborhood as to satisfaction with the community. Assessment of the convenience of the location is related at about the same strength with all three levels of the environment.

Table 7-20 also shows that when all three sets of assessments are considered simultaneously in predicting to each domain satisfaction, how a person assesses characteristics of one level of the environment influences how satisfied he is with other levels of the environment (these influences are measured by the standardized regression coefficients, or *betas*). By taking account of this overlap between domains, we can do a better job of explaining interpersonal differences in reported satisfaction levels.[21]

We are now able to begin to explain why there are substantial correlations among levels of reported satisfaction with the three residential environment domains. The specific attributes which are important predictors of satisfaction with, say, housing, are often important predictors of satisfaction with the neighborhood and the community as well. This overlap among predictor sets, however, accounts for only a relatively small proportion of the correlations among these domain satisfaction scores. Another factor that contributes to these correlations is undoubtedly a so-called "methods factor": the satisfaction levels were measured by asking parallel questions with identical 7-point scales, and people differ in the way they use such scales, regardless of the content of the questions. However, analyses that are not shown here indicate that even after such a methods factor is taken into account, there remain substantial correlations among residential satisfaction measures that cannot be explained by the overlap among the predictor sets.

One interpretation of these correlations is that these residential environments are indeed nested concepts, as was suggested earlier; in particular, housing and neighborhood can be regarded as components of the broader community. There are many aspects of housing, presumably, about which the respondents were not asked in this study but which influence their level of satisfaction with housing. In other words, the measure of housing satisfaction captures the impact of many housing characteristics, some of which also influence community satisfaction. It should be noted that the causal

[21] This improvement in explanatory power is seen by comparison of Tables 7-2, 7-10, and 7-17 with Table 7-20. Note that this is true despite the greater restrictiveness of the assumptions underlying linear regression analysis than those underlying multiple classification analysis, which was the technique used in the previous analyses.

direction here is far from unambiguous, since it could equally well be argued that the community satisfaction measure captures the influence of many community characteristics, most of which were not assessed by the respondents in this study; and that these unmeasured community characteristics influence housing satisfaction as well. However, we will here limit our attention to community satisfaction as the primary dependent variable and ask how well differences between respondents in their levels of community satisfaction can be explained when all possible environmental characteristics are considered.[22]

Our overall model to explain community satisfaction is shown in summary in Figure 7-4 and in more detail in Table 7-21. It will be noted that the main difference between this model and the model with which we began, as shown in Figure 7-1, is that neighborhood and housing satisfaction are shown as predictors to community satisfaction. These serve as surrogates for unmeasured environmental characteristics. Specific links from assessments of environment characteristics to the satisfaction measures are shown if they are fairly substantial (at least .10) in magnitude. Also shown are links from personal characteristics and objective characteristics of the environment. Consistent with the original model, most of the linkages for the personal and objective characteristics are to assessments of environmental characteristics, rather than direct links to the satisfaction measures. The implication of this finding is not, it must again be emphasized, that such characteristics of the person and of his environment are unimportant in relationship to his satisfaction. They are in fact the initial terms in the causal process being described. But in focusing our attention on the variables that mediate between satisfaction and these personal and environmental characteristics (i.e., the assessments of environmental attributes), we have sought to illuminate the manner in which the influence of those characteristics is translated into individual satisfaction.

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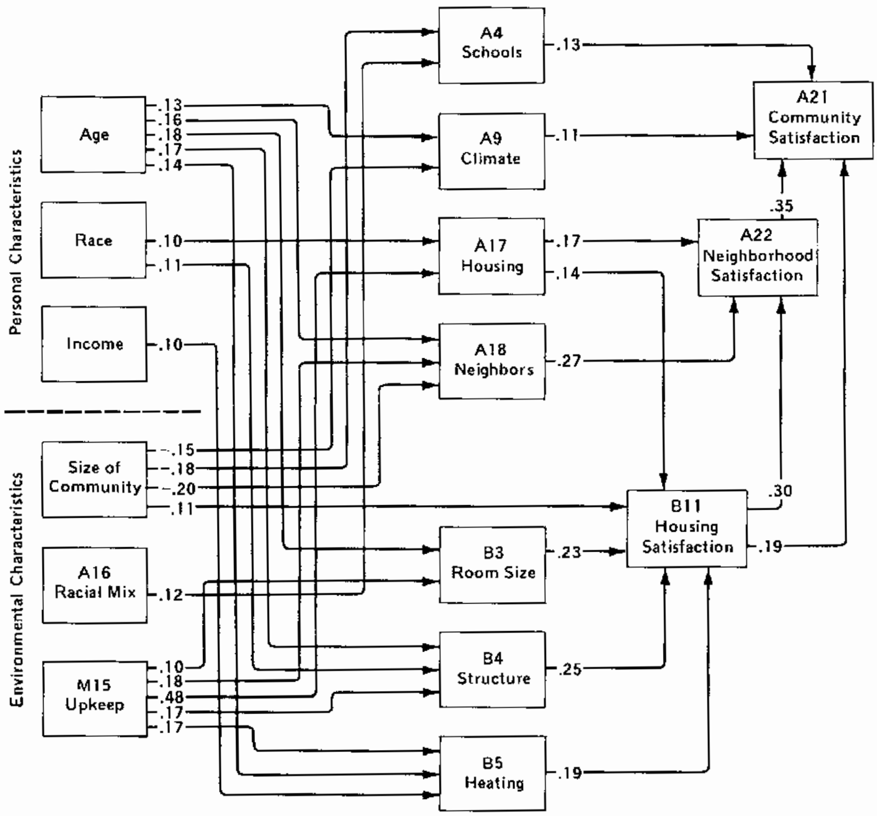
[22] We make another simplification for purposes of clarity by ignoring the fact that perhaps about one-half of the strength of the relationships between the satisfaction measures can be explained as the result of a methods artifact. However, the influence of the methods factor is counterbalanced by the fact that the satisfaction scores are only imperfect reflections of "true" satisfaction. Unpublished analyses, using an estimation procedure developed by Jöreskog (Jöreskog and VanThillo, 1972), indicate that the path coefficient from the methods factor to the domain satisfaction scores has a magnitude of about .4. Estimates of the paths from true housing and neighborhood satisfaction to true community satisfaction are estimated to be approximately .4 and .2, respectively. That is, the estimated paths, after taking account of the methods factor and also the error of measurements in the satisfaction scores, are not much different from the path coefficients in the simpler model in which neither a methods factor nor measurement error is considered.

Figure 7-4: Summary of Empirically Derived Model of Residential Satisfaction Scores



The Desire to Move

Another reason for thinking of the residential environment as a complex whole rather than a collection of three distinct domains becomes evident when we examine the respondents' desire to move to another place. This question has been analyzed in some detail (Newman, 1974), but will only be briefly considered here.

About one-fourth (28 percent) of the respondents say that they would like to move to another house or apartment, while the remaining three-fourths say they are satisfied to stay in their present house or apartment, at least for the time being. Young people, as they move away from their parental family and into marriage and the space demands of growing families, are more likely to want to move than are older people (44 percent of those age 18-24, vs. 13 percent of those age 65 or older). Urban residents are more restless than rural residents; 42 percent of the residents of large cities want to move, compared to 27 percent of the residents of small cities and towns and just 18 percent of residents of rural areas. Blacks, perhaps because they are kept in unsatisfactory housing by segregated housing patterns, are more likely to wish to move than are whites (43 percent and 25 percent, respectively).

The correlates of the desire to move are summarized in Table 7-22. In addition to the association with certain personal characteristics and environmental characteristics, the desire to move is associated with negative assessments of characteristics of the community, the neighborhood, and especially of the present dwelling unit. There are also strong negative relationships between the desire to move and overall satisfaction with each level of the residential environment. Multiple regression analysis reveals that these variables explain 34 percent of the variance in the expressed desire to move (last column in Table 7-22). The most powerful determinant of the wish to move, if we are willing to deduce causality from these cross-sectional data, is satisfaction with one's current dwelling unit. Satisfaction with the neighborhood is also an important predictor. Age is also a predictor, and this is at least in part independent of the relationship between age and satisfaction scores; older people have less desire to move than younger people, even when their levels of satisfaction with their present situations are held constant.

It appears, then, that just as satisfaction with different levels of the residential environment appear to be closely linked, so the desire to move depends on satisfaction with all levels of the environment. Although satisfaction with the dwelling unit is the most critical factor, satisfaction with the contextual environment is also an important determinant of the wish to move elsewhere.

CONCLUSIONS

The data presented in this chapter have been organized within a theoretical framework for understanding community, neighborhood, and housing satisfactions. The model suggests that satisfaction with a particular life domain, such as one's community, is primarily dependent on assessments of various attributes of that domain. Each of these assessments, in turn, depends on the perception of that attribute in relation to the standards of comparison against which an individual judges it. The individual's perception of an attribute, for the most part, corresponds to the attribute itself although the possibility of distortion between perception and reality is implicit in the model.

Table 7-21: Predictions of Environmental Satisfaction Items and Assessments of Environmental Attributes, by Four Sets of Predictors[a] (Entries are Standardized Regression Coefficients, or Path Coefficients, Derived from Multiple Linear Regressions; Predicting to the Column Variables)

	A21	*A22*	*B11*	*A4*	*A8*	*A9*	*A10*	*A12*	*A17*	*A18*	*A19*	*B3*	*B4*	*B5*
Satisfaction items														
A22. Neighborhood	.35													
B11. Housing	.19	.30												
Assessments														
A4. Schools	.13	.05	—											
A8. Police relations	.06	—	—											
A9. Climate	.11	—	.05											
A10. Local taxes	.09	—	—											
A12. Convenience	.07	—	.07											
A17. Neighborhood housing	—	.17	.14											
A18. Neighbors	—	.27	.06											
A19. Safety	—	.08	—											
B3. Size of rooms	—	—	.23											
B4. Structure	—	—	.25											
B5. Heating	—	—	.19											
Personal characteristics														
E1. Education	.07	—	—	—	—	—	.09	.08	—	—	.12	—	—	—
G12. Family income	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.06	.07	.08	—	.07	—	.09	.10
H6. Marital status[b]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.07	—	—
L1. Age	—	.07	.09	.08	—	.13	−.06	.09	.07	.16	−.07	.18	.17	.14
M2. Race[c]	—	.05	—	—	.13	—	.13	.11	.10	—	.06	—	.11	.07
Crowne-Marlowe	—	—	—	.08	.06	—	—	.06	.06	—	—	.07	.07	.06

Environmental attributes														
Size of community	—	−.08	−.11	−.18	−.09	−.15	−.18	.12	—	−.20	−.26	—	—	—
A16. Racial mix	—	.06	—	.12	—	—	—	—	—	.07	.18	—	—	—
M15. Neighborhood upkeep	—	—	—	.09	.21	—	—	.11	.48	.18	.08	.10	.17	.17
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)	38.4%	42.2%	39.6%	9.2%	9.6%	4.2%	7.0%	7.3%	30.8%	13.0%	18.7%	5.2%	10.6%	8.7%

[a] Each variable listed along the top was used as the criterion variable in a stepwise multiple regression analysis. The pool of predictor variables for A21 (community satisfaction) consisted of all the variables listed on the left (except A21 itself). The potential predictors for A22 included all variables except A21 and A22; those for B11 included all *except* A21, A22, and B11; those for the assessments included only the six personal characteristics and three environmental attributes. The multiple regression was stopped when no other variables had statistically significant regression coefficients; the magnitude of nonsignificant coefficients (indicated by dashes) are all .05 or less.

[b] Marital status was recoded, contrasting those presently married or widowed with those who are single, divorced, or separated.

[c] Race was recoded, contrasting whites with nonwhites.

Table 7-22: Prediction of the Desire to Move to Another Dwelling Unit, by Four Sets of Predictors (Multiple Linear Regression)

	r	β[a]
Satisfaction items		
A21. Community	−.35	−.06
A22. Neighborhood	−.41	−.15
B11. Housing	−.53	−.37
Assessments of environmental attributes		
A4. Public schools	−.14	—
A8. Police–community relations	−.17	—
A9. Climate	−.16	—
A10. Local taxes	−.09	—
A12. Convenience	−.09	—
A17. Neighborhood housing	−.25	—
A18. Neighbors	−.20	—
A19. Safety	−.10	—
B3. Size of rooms	−.26	−.09
B4. Structure	−.30	—
B5. Heating	−.26	—
Personal characteristics		
E1. Education	.04	—
G12. Family income	−.03	—
H6. Marital status	−.10	—
L1. Age	−.24	−.09
M2. Race	−.16	—
Crowne-Marlowe	−.06	.05
Objective environmental characteristics		
Size of community	.17	.05
A16. Racial mix	−.13	—
M15. Neighborhood upkeep	−.18	—
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		33.5%

[a] These standardized regression weights and the adjusted multiple R^2 were obtained by a stepwise multiple regression analysis which was stopped when no variable could be added which would have a regression weight at least 2.6 times as large as its estimated standard error. Thus the omitted regression weights (β's) are nonsignificant statistically and are all .05 or less in magnitude.

Thus the model as outlined makes a critical distinction between objective indicators (the reality) and subjective indicators (perceptions, assessments, and satisfactions) of the quality of the residential environment. This distinction is based on the assumption that characteristics of the individual intervene so as to influence the subjective indicators. Specifically, the manner in which an objective environmental attribute is perceived and assessed by individuals is modified by their present situation, their attitudes, and their past experiences. These considerations underlie the basic rationale for this study, namely that objective measures of environmental attributes are inadequate in themselves as indicators of life quality. Only as their relationships to subjective indicators are understood do they begin to take on human meaning.

Using available data, the theoretical model has been tested and illuminated although it is clear that considerable work remains to be done. The link from the assessments of particular attributes of an environment to overall satisfaction with the environment was found to be more or less strong in each of the three environments considered: the community, the neighborhood, and the dwelling. Personal characteristics, such as age, race, and educational level, and objective characteristics, such as size of population of the community and neighborhood upkeep, also were related to environmental satisfaction measures. These latter relationships seem to be largely mediated by the assessments of particular attributes of the environment.

Satisfaction with community is strongly related to satisfaction with the neighborhood, and satisfaction with neighborhood shows a strong relationship to housing satisfaction. Satisfaction with these domains of the environment are also related to satisfaction with other domains of life experience. Finally, satisfactions with these residential environments, as well as satisfaction with other domains of life experiences, are related to expressed satisfaction with life as a whole.

In the following chapters we will be applying the analytical design which we have employed in the preceding pages to the explanation of levels of satisfaction in the other life domains with which our study was concerned. In principle this design is equally applicable to each of these domains, but in practice we will see that in some domains we do not have the full repertoire of data necessary to flesh out our basic model. The model is particularly satisfying when we have in hand a range of information regarding the "objective" attributes of the situation underlying the domain experience which can be used as a "starting point" for our consideration of subjective perceptions and assessments and finally the level of satisfaction. In the present chapter we have been able to pursue a rather broad range of analytical possibilities but we will find in the chapter on marriage and family life, for example, that we do not have a comparable set of objective descriptors, and our analysis is consequently far more restricted. In some instances, such as the domain of health, we were constrained to such a narrow series of questions that the application of our model is hardly more than nominal. These restrictions were forced on us by our decision to cover a large number of life domains in a single interview. If subsequent studies are able to concentrate on individual domains, filling in the numerous data our model calls for, it should be possible to arrive at a much fuller explanation of individual satisfaction in these domains.

Chapter 8
The Country as a Domain of Experience

The most extended, and, in some sense, the most remote of our residential domains is the country as a whole. When we think of the nation as a domain to be assessed, there are at least two obvious but different facets that might be explored as contributing to a sense of well-being.

One of these involves satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the government of the nation. Our study was conducted in a period of troubles during which popular confidence in the national government had declined to a rather low ebb, and it would not be unreasonable to imagine that discomfort at the strains and disappointments of national political life over the preceding six or eight years might leave some feeling of an overall decline in the quality of life among our respondents. We have reviewed their statements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with "our national government" in Chapter 3.

The other facet of the nation as a residential domain is more global and impressionistic. It is the sense of "times and customs" in the country as evoked by the phrase "life in the United States today." Such a phrase invites comparison of the state of contemporary affairs in the country with earlier periods in American history, as well as with the character of life abroad. It is public evaluation of this broader image of national life with which this chapter will be concerned.

At the point in our interview immediately following the questions on community, neighborhood, and housing, we asked our respondents to assess their feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with "life in the United

States today." Within this general frame of reference we explored more specific gratifications and frustrations and dealt with two specific component measures concerned with those aspects of political life having to do with "freedom" and the performance of public officials generally. "Life in the United States" was also the key term used to measure satisfaction along our uniform 7-point scale for the country as a domain of experience.

It stands to reason that feelings about the United States as a rather remote backdrop for the daily lives of our respondents would be unlikely to have the same impact on their sense of well-being as the more immediate terms of their life such as their housing, jobs, or family situation. Indeed, we saw in Chapter 3 that assessments of "life in the United States today" were among the most weakly related of any of our domain satisfaction measures to the more global reports of well-being (Table 3-3). Moreover, our exploration of this domain was correspondingly brief, so that we cannot examine a model bearing on the determinants of these feelings concerning the country in anything like the detail employed for the other residential domains treated in the preceding chapter.

Nevertheless, satisfaction with life in this country does appear to have some modest bearing on overall life satisfaction, and we have enough measures to rough out a fragmentary sketch of the model even in this case. In addition, we have considered briefly what is probably the ultimate behavioral expression of dissatisfaction with any country, emigration. Our respondents were asked whether they would like to leave the United States and settle down in another country. While only a limited fraction of respondents expressing a positive preference for such a move would ever carry it out, this state of mind appears to express such an extremity of rejection and alienation from the country that the preference is of great interest in itself.

HOW IS LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES CHANGING?

Americans are often portrayed as being an optimistic people with a deep-seated commitment to change and progress and there is substantial evidence that Americans do tend to have positive expectations about their futures. Cantril (1965) found that a national sample of Americans in 1959 tended to expect that their lives five years later would be closer to the best they could imagine than they were at the time of the interview. Furthermore, they considered their present lives better than they were five years earlier. This optimism about one's future, and the conviction that one's life is better now than it used to be, has not changed since that initial study in 1959. Repetitions in 1964, 1971, 1972, and 1974 produced very similar data (Cantril and Roll, 1971; Watts and Free, 1973; Watts and Free, 1974).

However, at least in 1959, Americans were by no means extraordinary in their optimism. Cantril's study (1965) included data collections from samples of the populations of thirteen other nations, and while the Americans rated their present lives higher than residents of any other country, the expected improvement in the following five years was lower than average, as was the perceived improvement during the previous five years.

However, Americans' enthusiasm for the beneficial nature of change, at least in the past, seems to have applied to their personal lives but not to national life. Cantril asked respondents to rate national life as well as their own lives, and while he found that (in 1959) Americans placed the current national life closer to the "best possible" than did the residents of any of the other countries in his study, their assessment of the improvement in the previous five years was very low, much lower than that for most other countries. This perception that national life is not much better now than it was five years ago was also observed in repetitions of the study in 1964, 1971, 1972, and 1974; indeed in 1971, and even more in 1974, the past was perceived as having been *better* than the present. In each year, Americans expected the future to be better than the present, but there was no preponderance of feeling that things have been getting better in this country.

We opened this section of our interview with a set of questions intended to give the respondents an opportunity to discuss life in this country in the broadest terms. We asked the respondent to tell us in his own language how he felt about life in this country as a whole, in what ways was it getting worse, and in what ways better. The questions read as follows:

> Now I have some questions about life in this country as a whole. Do you think that there are some ways in which life in the United States is getting worse? [IF YES] How is that?
>
> Are there some ways in which you think life in the United States is getting better? [IF YES] How is that?
>
> All things considered, do you think things are getting better, or worse, that they are staying about the same, or what?

Our first question concerning things getting worse in this country was completely open-ended; no indication was provided as to the sort of answer that was expected. Up to five different answers were coded, and an average of 2.4 answers were in fact coded; about one-eighth of the respondents gave no answer to this question, apparently not being able to think of any way in which things were getting worse. There was considerable diversity in the types of things mentioned, as is indicated in Table 8-1.

Half of the respondents mentioned some kind of behavior or attitude held by individuals as a manner in which American life is getting worse,

Table 8-1: Proportion of Respondents Who Mentioned One or More Things in Each of the Listed Categories as Ways in Which Life in the United States is Getting Worse (in percentages)

Behavior and attitudes of individuals in social situations		52[a]
Use of drugs	17	
Values and morals	17	
Individuals' reactions to modern life and to each other: e.g., interpersonal differences, powerlessness, other indications of alienation	21	
Young people—students; hippies	14	
Sociological problems: institutions, economy, general living conditions		48
Inflation, high cost of living	17	
Taxes	10	
Ecological concerns	12	
Crime and law enforcement system		24
Crime	17	
Protests and protest movements		19
Protests concerning race; racial problems, race riots, backlash on racial protests	9	
Government, governmental policies, and practices		14
War or the military		7
Science, technology, or education		4
No way in which United States is getting worse		13

[a] Percentages add to more than 100 because most respondents gave more than one answer to the question. Many respondents gave more than one answer that was coded in a particular major code category listed on this table; others gave miscellaneous answers not fitting the listed categories.

even when mentions of crime are excluded from this category. About one-fifth of the respondents described some form of alienation of people from society or from one another: things such as a growing feeling of powerlessness, or apathy; or frustration and dissatisfaction; fear; or violence. This type of answer was given especially frequently by the college-educated respondents (30 percent), and with only low frequency by older respondents (15 percent of those age 65 or older).

About one-sixth of the respondents said that the morals and values of Americans have declined; specifically, they mentioned things, such as sexual behavior, respect for age or authority, and patriotism. The college-educated (27 percent) and those with high incomes (24 percent of those reporting family incomes of $17,000 or more in 1970) were especially likely to complain about such deterioration in values and morals. Young respondents (9 percent of those age 18-24) and blacks (8 percent) were rather unlikely to talk of such a decline.

Young people are sometimes portrayed as the leading edge of a new morality. They are sometimes lauded for their emphasis on social responsibility and concern for the welfare of minorities, but perhaps more often denounced for their attitudes toward traditional authorities, their sexual permissiveness, their use of drugs, and so on. About one-seventh of the respondents specifically mentioned the behavior or attitudes of young people as a way in which life in the United States is getting worse. Not surprisingly, older respondents do so more frequently (20 percent of those age 65 or older) than younger respondents (9 percent of those age 18-24). Only 5 percent of black respondents complain about young people.

A behavior that is often associated with alienation and the youth culture is that of drug usage, including both soft drugs (such as marijuana) and hard drugs (such as heroin). About one-sixth of the respondents mentioned the use of drugs as one way in which life in the United States is getting worse. Respondents who did mention drugs are rather evenly distributed across the sample: the young mentioned it as often as the old; the better educated and more affluent as often as the less educated and the poor; whites as often as blacks. Those living in rural areas were somewhat more likely to mention drugs than those in large cities; the difference is small, but opposite to what might have been expected on the basis of statistics concerning the prevalence of drug usage. For many rural people, drugs may symbolize the evils of urban life, evils with which they have had little direct experience.

Another behavioral manifestation of alienation from society is crime, and crime was cited by one-sixth of the respondents in answer to the question about how life is getting worse. It was mentioned especially often by blacks (26 percent), by residents of large cities (21 percent), by the poor (21 percent of those with family incomes of less than $3,000), and by the elderly (21 percent of those age 65 or older). It appears that those who are the most likely victims of crime are also most concerned with this as a problem in the nation.

A distinctly different perspective on changes in the country is indicated by those respondents who answer, not in terms of how individual behaviors or attitudes have changed, but in terms of how living conditions have changed. About one-half of the respondents did mention such changes as a way in which life in the United States has gotten worse. Their answers included general complaints about living conditions, and also more specific complaints about the economy, the job market, the health care system, the mass media, and the natural environment.

The most frequent category of answers of this type concerned inflation, mentioned by about one-sixth of the respondents. It was named with even higher frequency by residents of large cities (21 percent), by blacks (21 percent), and by those with moderately low incomes (21 percent of those reporting family incomes between $5,000 and $7,000). On the other hand, only 12 percent of those with relatively high incomes ($17,000 or more) complained about the rising cost of living. Another economic complaint concerned taxes. One-tenth of the respondents cited taxes as a way in which life is getting worse: taxes are either too high, or they are unfairly distributed.

Recent years have witnessed greatly increased attention in the mass media to the quality of the natural environment and the depletion of resources. Books in the tradition of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and events such as Earth Day (which first occurred in April 1970 or somewhat more than a year before the interviews) helped to increase the public's awareness of the fragility of the ecological system. In our study, one-eighth of the respondents mentioned "things getting worse" in this general category. Evidently awareness of this type of problem is related to education: only 6 percent of those with only a grade school education cited such concerns, and this proportion increased regularly up to 27 percent of those with college degrees. It also appears that these concerns are much more salient to white than to black people; only 4 percent of the black respondents gave answers in this category. This is consistent with the viewpoint that preservation of the natural environment is primarily a concern of whites, and perhaps one that distracts attention from the societal problems and inequities that fall most heavily on blacks and on the poor in general.

Other types of answers to the question of how life in this country is getting worse include: those about protests and protest movements, by one-fifth of the respondents; governmental standards and policies, mentioned by one-seventh of the respondents; mentions of the Vietnam war and other war and military issues by 7 percent of the respondents; and mentions of scientific, technological, and educational issues by 4 percent of the respondents. There are no particular groups that are observed to be outstanding in the frequency with which they mentioned any of these issues.

After describing ways in which they thought life in the United States is getting worse, the respondents were asked how it is getting better. Up to four different answers were coded; almost two-fifths (38 percent) of the respondents could not think of any way in which life is getting better, and another one-fourth gave only one answer. The types of things mentioned most often are listed in Table 8-2, along with the proportion of respondents who gave each type of answer.

Whereas one-half of the respondents named some aspect of human behavior or attitudes as a way in which life is getting worse, only one-ninth of the respondents gave such an answer to the question of how life is getting better. This type of positive response was given relatively frequently by college-educated (22 percent) and higher income respondents (19 percent of those reporting family incomes of $17,000 or higher). Contrariwise few of

Table 8-2: Proportion of Respondents Who Mentioned One or More Things in Each of the Listed Categories as Ways in Which Life in the United States is Getting Better (in percentages)

Behaviors and attitudes of individuals in social situations		11[a]
Living conditions		11
Economic conditions		19
Health: medical care		10
Racial situation		4
Education: quality and availability		13
Science, technology		18
Home conveniences	8	
No way in which life in the United States is getting better		38

[a] Percentages add to more than 100 because some respondents gave more than one answer to the question. Some respondents gave two or more answers that were coded into the same major category, and other answers were coded into miscellaneous categories not listed in this table.

those with little education (4 percent of those with only a grade school education or less) or low incomes (6 percent of those with incomes of less than $3,000) gave such an answer. Since similar relationships were seen in the frequency of mentions of individual attitudes and behavior as a way in which life is getting worse, it appears that those with higher incomes and better education are more verbal and more likely to think in such terms than those with lower incomes and less education. (There is, in fact, a relationship between both income and education and the number of different answers given to both of these questions about how life is changing.)

One-ninth of the respondents talked in a general way about how living conditions in this country have been improving. Almost one-fifth of the respondents said that economic conditions were improving, and one-tenth said that the health of the people and the health care system were improving. Health-related mentions were given rather infrequently by the elderly (6 percent of those 65 or older) and by blacks (3 percent). Both of these groups have more frequent personal health problems than does the population at large and perhaps, as an expression of halo effect, are relatively negative about all aspects of health.

Only about 4 percent of the respondents mentioned improvements in the racial situation (less discrimination against blacks, primarily), but a much higher proportion of blacks (20 percent) gave this type of answer.

About one-eighth of the respondents said that they thought there have been improvements in the educational system, either a greater availability to more people, or improved quality of education. Finally, about one-fifth of the respondents saw improvements through science and technology. More specifically, 8 percent mentioned greater home conveniences. About one-third (30 percent) of the college-educated mentioned scientific and technological improvements; at the other extreme, only 6 percent of black respondents gave this type of answer.

All Things Considered, Is Life in the United States Getting Better or Worse?

The third question in our sequence on life in the United States asked our respondents, who had told us their views of ways in which life in this country was getting better or worse, to come to a judgment "all things considered" of the general trend of life in this country. In view of what we have seen in Tables 8-1 and 8-2, it is not surprising to find that twice as large a proportion of our sample felt on balance that things were getting worse (36 percent) as thought they were getting better (17 percent). However, it is important to note that nearly one-half of the sample concluded that there was no overall change, and it is apparent that a good many of these people saw things they did not like about life in this country but were not willing to go so far as to say that on margin the quality of national life was deteriorating.

There are differences among various subgroups of the sample in the relative proportions who felt that life is getting better rather than worse, as shown in Table 8-3. Since these differences are similar to differences in levels of satisfaction with life in the United States, discussion will be deferred to a later point in the chapter. However, Table 8-3 also shows that there are differences in the proportion of respondents in such subgroups who felt that life is not changing either for the better *or* worse. Older respondents, less educated respondents, and rural respondents were all more likely to report that life has not changed. One may surmise that these groups are all a little removed from the mainstream of intellectual life and therefore less responsive to those changes which may be occurring. In contrast, we see that it is the college graduates who are most sensitive to change and specifically to changes for the better.

Our confidence in the reliability of these overall judgments of change for better or worse is strengthened by the substantial correlation we find between the number of ways in which respondents thought life in the United States is getting worse (or better) and their perception of whether life in this country is, overall, getting better or worse. Of those who did not mention any way in which life is getting worse, 36 percent thought life is getting better, and only 6 percent thought it is getting worse. Contrariwise, of those who mentioned four or more ways in which life is getting worse, only 9 percent thought that overall life in this country is getting better while 48 percent thought it is getting worse. An even stronger relationship is observed

Table 8-3: Proportions of Indicated Groups of Respondents Who Think Life in the United States Is Getting Better or Worse, or Staying the Same

	Better	*Staying same*	*Worse*	*Total*	*N*	*Ratio: worse/ better*
All	17%	47	36	100%	2126	2.1
Sex						
Males	20%	44	36	100%	897	1.8
Females	14%	51	35	100%	1229	2.6
Age						
18-24	24%	45	31	100%	330	1.3
25-34	15%	44	41	100%	438	2.7
35-44	16%	50	34	100%	366	2.1
45-54	14%	54	32	100%	351	2.3
55-64	20%	42	38	100%	283	1.9
65 or older	13%	52	35	100%	357	2.8
Educational attainment						
Eighth grade or less	12%	55	33	100%	463	2.9
Some high school, no diploma	11%	52	37	100%	392	3.3
High school diploma	17%	47	36	100%	698	2.1
Some college, no degree	22%	42	36	100%	328	1.6
College degree(s)	27%	38	35	100%	234	1.3
Race						
White	17%	47	36	100%	1845	2.2
Black	17%	50	33	100%	221	1.9
Income						
Less than $3,000	12%	52	36	100%	290	3.0
$3,000-4,999	13%	49	38	100%	280	2.9
$5,000-6,999	15%	50	35	100%	265	2.3
$7,000-9,999	17%	47	36	100%	362	2.1
$10,000-11,999	16%	47	37	100%	264	2.4
$12,000-16,999	20%	48	32	100%	319	1.6
$17,000 or more	24%	41	35	100%	261	1.4
Size of community						
Central cities	13%	36	51	100%	224	4.0
Large cities	20%	42	38	100%	238	1.9
Suburbs	21%	44	35	100%	451	1.7
Small cities and towns	16%	51	33	100%	670	2.0
Rural areas	15%	53	32	100%	543	2.2

between the numbers of ways mentioned by respondents in which life is getting better and their perception of the overall direction the quality of American life is heading (data not shown). The perception of specific instances of changes for better or worse is clearly associated with the overall evaluation of change.

ASSESSMENTS OF FAIRNESS AND FREEDOM

The questions concerning national changes for better or worse were followed by two questions intended to give the respondents an opportunity to assess specific aspects of their lives as citizens. There are many facets of the relationships of the individual to the various manifestations of governmental authority that we would have liked to pursue but in the present study we were restricted to the two which impressed us as both pervasive and fundamental, the degree of fairness the respondents sensed in their dealings with public officials and the degree of freedom they felt to live the kind of life they wanted to.

The question regarding fairness did not ask the respondents to specify particular incidents of fair or unfair treatment but asked in general about their experience:

> People tell us that public officials in this country don't always treat them as fairly as they ought to. How about you—would you say that in general public officials treat you very fairly, fairly enough, not very fairly, or not fairly at all?

The answers to this question demonstrate that most people in this country have no serious complaint about the fairness of their treatment but there is a significant minority who have:

22 percent say they have been treated very fairly,
56 percent say they have been treated fairly enough,
17 percent say they have not been treated very fairly, and
5 percent say they have not been treated fairly at all.

As one might expect, those people who felt they had been unfairly treated were not distributed equally throughout the population. Surprisingly perhaps, they were not congregated in the lower education or income brackets; these usually powerful variables appear to have little to do with the report of unfair treatment. They were, however, considerably more numerous among young people (25 percent of those aged 18-24) than among older (15 percent of those over 65) and among black people (34 percent) than white (20 percent). Almost one-half of the residents of the metropolitan centers (43 percent) complain of unfair treatment, far outdistancing those who live in less urbanized surroundings. When we combine these variables and select out the young black people living in metropolitan centers, we find a segment of American society whose perception of the fairness of their treatment by public officials is more likely to be negative than positive.

We do not know what kinds of incidents these people regarded as unfair, and we do not doubt that treatment which seemed unfair to some was seen as merely commonplace by others. It is surely not surprising, however, that young people and blacks are the most likely to complain of such treatment. If we assume that some significant part of the contact with public officials they have in mind is with the police, we would be compelled to expect from police records and other evidence that these people would stand high in the incidence of complaints. The fact that unfair treatment is so frequently reported in the metropolitan centers suggests either that the residents of these areas more often encounter public officials or that they are more sensitive to the treatment they receive. Without being able to demonstrate that either is true we think it likely that both are.

Our second question as to our respondents' experience as citizens dealt with their sense of freedom. "Freedom" is a concept which is subject to many definitions and ideally we would have preferred to pursue these variations in detail. The single question we asked was phrased in terms of "freedom" to live the kind of life you want to:

> Some people say there isn't as much freedom in this country as there ought to be. How about you—how free do you feel to live the kind of life you want to—very free, free enough, not very free, or not free at all?

Only a small minority of our respondents answered this question with any complaint as to lack of freedom. Their sense of being free to live their lives as they wished was even stronger than their sense of being treated fairly:

> 49 percent say they feel very free,
> 40 percent say they feel free enough,
> 10 percent say they do not feel very free, and
> 1 percent say they do not feel free at all.

In order to ascertain the frame of reference in which this question was interpreted we asked those respondents who felt less than free enough to tell us in what ways they did not feel free. As we had anticipated, the most frequently mentioned restraints on personal freedom were laws and governmental bureaucracy. Racial discrimination was mentioned by one-eighth of these respondents, primarily by blacks. Sexual discrimination, however, was not mentioned. Other types of answers to this question included societal norms and pressures, financial constraints, and personal problems.

As one might expect, the people who felt their freedom was restricted in some way also tended to complain of unfair treatment, and since these two measures are related ($r = .28$), it is not surprising that the distribution within the population of complaints regarding freedom is similar to that of complaints of unfair treatment. Three times as many blacks (26 percent) as whites (9 percent) say they do not feel free; two-thirds of these black people specifically refer to racial discrimination. Young people under 25 more often complain of restrictions on freedom (14 percent) than people over 65 (5 percent). People in the metropolitan centers are the most likely to feel their freedom to be restricted (21 percent). We again find no substantial relationship of level of complaint to educational or income status, although people with high income (over $17,000) have a very high proportion (60 percent) who say they feel very free to live their lives as they want to.

There is surely no difficulty in understanding why the black people in our sample were so much less willing than whites to describe themselves as free. Their struggle for freedom has been going on for over one hundred years and is by no means won. The difference in the age groups requires a different kind of explanation, however, and it must reflect the differences in levels of aspirations which we have discussed in Chapter 5. Older people appear to settle into an accommodation with reality which young people are not prepared to accept.

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

Following the format used in all the life domains of which we inquired, we completed this series of questions with the standard question, "All things considered, how satisfied are you with life in the United States today?" As we have seen in Table 3-1, about one-third of the population profess to be "completely satisfied," and the average level of satisfaction in this domain falls in the middle range of the other domains which we measured, higher than the financial and housing domains but lower than those of marriage and family life.

In order to "explain," insofar as we can, the differences between respondents in their expressed levels of satisfaction, we now examine the relationship between these satisfaction scores and the other information we have about the respondents. We first look at the relationship of the assessments of conditions in this country to overall satisfaction, singly and then as a set. Next the relationships between characteristics of the respondents and their satisfaction with American life are examined. Finally, the two sets of independent variables are combined and their overall ability to explain the satisfaction levels is determined.

Assessments of Conditions in the United States

The relationships between each of the three assessments of conditions in the United States and satisfaction with American life are shown in Table 8-4 (the *eta* coefficients). The strongest relationship is with the answers to the question about how much freedom the respondents felt they have to live the kind of life they wanted to lead. Somewhat less strong are the rela-

Table 8-4: Prediction of Satisfaction with Life in the United States, by Set of Assessments of American Life and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients		
	Eta coefficients	*Assessments of American life only*	*Personal characteristics only*	*Assessments and personal characteristics*
Assessments of American life				
C3. Life in the United States getting better or worse?	.33	.24		.25
C4. Public officials fair?	.29	.16		.14
C5. Freedom	.42	.33		.31
Personal characteristics				
Urbanicity	.17		.13	.07
E1. Educational attainment	.13		.10	.10
G12. Family income	.08		.08	.07
M2. Race	.15		.12	.08
L1. Age	.17		.07	.03
Life cycle stage	.19		.14	.10
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		26.3%	7.2%	29.4%

tionships with the questions as to whether or not public officials are fair and whether life in this country is getting better or worse. Table 8-4 also shows that when these three assessments are considered together, the set explains about 26 percent of the variance in the satisfaction measure.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Various characteristics of the respondent and of his social position were considered in relation to his satisfaction with American life (Table 8-4). Residents of large cities were considerably less satisfied, on the average, than were residents of small towns and rural areas, supporting our earlier finding that residents of large cities were much more likely than others to say that life in this country is getting worse. Consistent with findings discussed elsewhere in this book, younger respondents reported lower levels of satisfaction than did older respondents. This accounts in part, but only in part, for the fact that less educated respondents (who tend to be older) were *more* satisfied than the better educated. Similarly, those with higher family incomes tend to be less satisfied than those with less income. Blacks were considerably less satisfied with American life than were whites. Table 8-4 shows that altogether this set of personal characteristics accounts for about 7 percent of the variance in satisfaction with American life. Examination of other characteristics of the respondents added little to our understanding of their satisfaction with American life. There is very little difference between men and women; and among men, there is practically no difference between those who have and those who have not served in the armed forces. Among nonblack respondents, the very small groups of Chicanos and American Indians were less satisfied than other ethnic groups.

The explanatory power of the set of assessments of national life together with the set of personal characteristics is shown in Table 8-4 to be 29 percent of the total variance in satisfaction with life in the United States. That is, adding the set of personal characteristics increases the proportion of variance explained by only 3 percent over that of the set of assessments alone. We interpret this as meaning that most of the impact of the personal differences among various types of respondents on their overall satisfaction with life in this country is expressed through their assessments of the more specific aspects of American life.

WILLINGNESS TO LEAVE THE UNITED STATES

In most of the domains of life we asked about in this study, we did not attempt to carry our analysis beyond the explanation of the degree of satisfaction expressed; we did not undertake to explore the implications for behavior which the presence or absence of satisfaction might have. However, in the domain of housing, we did ask our respondents whether they would prefer to move from their present residence, and in the domain of life in the United States we asked the following questions:

> If you had a chance to move out of the United States and settle down for good in some other country, do you think you would like to do it? [IF YES] What would be your main reason for wanting to move?

Some Americans are so out of sympathy with the society in which they live that they are ready to move to another country if the opportunity is offered. Nine percent of the people interviewed say categorically they would like to "settle down for good in some other country" and an additional 6 percent feel they might under some circumstances. These people are not all moved by the same motives but a majority of them seem to be basically alienated by some aspect of American life and are looking for something better elsewhere.

The implications of the answers to this question can be understood better in the context of how residents of other countries feel about emigration. A similar question was asked in early 1971 by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup, 1972, p. 2292), not only in the United States but in eight other countries as well. Specifically, the question asked was: "If you were free to do so, would you like to go and settle down in another country?" Twelve percent of the respondents in the American sample said that they would, which is comparable to the proportion in our own study. This proportion was the lowest for all nine countries; the (unweighted) average proportion for the other countries was almost twice as high (23 percent) and ranged as high as 41 percent (in Great Britain). Those who said they would like to emigrate were asked which country they would most like to move to; it is interesting to note that the United States was the first or second most popular choice in six of the eight other countries.

In the present study, those who said they would like to live in another country were asked why they felt that way. There were a variety of answers to this question. On the one hand are purely personal reasons: one-fifth of these respondents wanted to travel and see new things, to experience different ways of life, to be near other branches of their family. A few respondents wanted to get away from their past and "start life over again." These reasons for leaving seem relatively benign. On the other hand, were the respondents who disliked the American society, or its form of government, and wanted to escape from it. Racial problems were mentioned, as was violence and crime. The cost of living in this country was cited by some as their reason for wanting to live elsewhere. It appears that there is no single overriding problem in this country (or was not as of 1971) that makes emigration an attractive decision for a very high proportion of people; this conclusion seems especially true when the American data are compared to the data from other countries in the Gallup Poll.

When we examine the relationships between willingness to emigrate and the various questions we asked regarding the respondent's evaluation of life in this country, we find that it is their overall satisfaction which gives us the strongest indication of their prospective behavior. As we see, however, all of these relationships are quite modest, the correlation coefficients being:

.30 with satisfaction with life in this country,
.19 with perception of degree of freedom,
.15 with perception of fair treatment, and
.13 with perception of change for better or worse.

We can sharpen this analysis somewhat by separating those potential movers who give "escape" reasons for wanting to leave the United States from those whose reasons do not imply any specific criticism of this country. Considering only the measure of general satisfaction with life in this country, we see in Figure 8-1 that readiness to emigrate for "benign" reasons is moderately associated with degree of general dissatisfaction; people who would think of leaving for personal or family reasons are found more commonly among those dissatisfied with American life. It is among those who give "escape" reasons that the relationship with general satisfaction is strongest, however, and here we see that of those who express dissatisfaction with life in this country, 24 percent declare themselves ready to dissociate themselves from it for escape reasons.

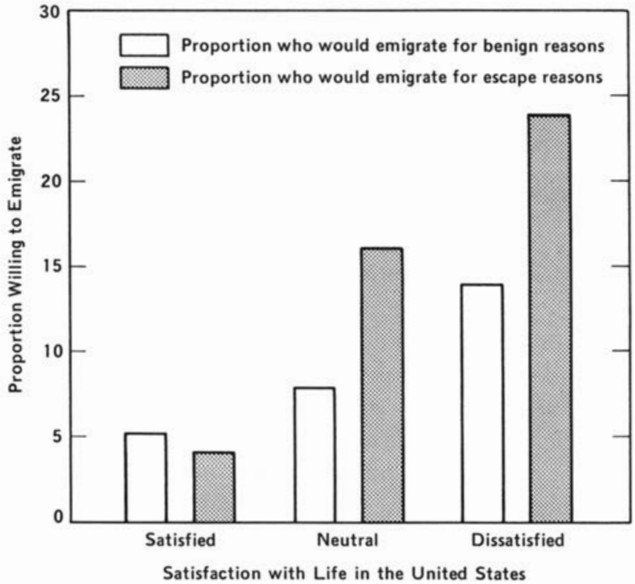
As one might expect, the personal characteristics of people who say they are willing to emigrate resemble those of people who say they are dissatisfied with life in this country. This becomes especially apparent when we separate the "benign" leavers from the "escape" leavers. When we compare these two types of prospective emigrees to those people who expressed no interest in leaving this country we find the following contrasts:

Of those who have no interest in leaving	*Of those who would leave for benign reasons*	*Of those who would leave for escape reasons*	
7%	20%	16%	are single people under 30
21%	5%	9%	are married people with grown children
13%	3%	3%	are widowed
23%	17%	13%	have only grade school education
11%	10%	18%	have graduated from college
9%	9%	20%	live in metropolitan centers
27%	18%	17%	live in rural areas
89%	81%	77%	are white people
9%	12%	19%	are black people

Young unmarried people, people of advanced education, people who live in the metropolitan centers, and black people appear in disproportionate numbers among the prospective emigrees. It is in the latter three segments of society especially that those who wish to escape the United States appear in numbers beyond their proportion of the total population. Young single people are found in large numbers among potential emigrants, but they are more common among those who would leave for benign, adventuresome reasons than among those who appear to be alienated from their country of birth.

It is evident from the data presented in this section that our ability to predict willingness to emigrate from expressions of dissatisfaction with the country is very limited. Quite clearly many people who are basically critical and discontent with trends in American life do not entertain the thought of changing their citizenship. Considering the fact that relatively few citizens ever emigrate from this country, it is rather unlikely that very many of those

Figure 8-1: Relation of Satisfaction with Life in the United States to Willingness to Emigrate



people who tell us they are willing to leave will ever do so. It seems likely, nevertheless, that while discontent may not be a sufficient condition to produce emigration it may be a necessary condition. We would expect that most of those people who do emigrate to another country, especially those leaving to escape conditions they find objectionable, will be found to have attitudes similar to those of the negative extremes of our measures.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in the summer of 1971 after a decade of civil disorder and conflict unprecedented in the memories of the American population. The struggle to break the pattern of racial segregation in the southern states during the early 1960s, followed by the black uprisings in the northern cities, the growing protests against the Vietnam involvement, and the clamor and violence on college campuses throughout the country—all of these, dramatized in every home by the remorseless eye of television—created an atmosphere of unrest and led many journalists and scholars to apocalyptic predictions for the American way of life.

In large part these predictions proved incorrect. The pattern of militant confrontation as the medium of black protest did not escalate; black pressure for equal rights and immediate rewards moved to a different format utilizing the political and economic power of the black population. The ferment on campus subsided; demonstrations and sit-ins seemed to go out of style, to the surprise and relief of the beleaguered administrators. Social scientists were not able to foresee these reversals, and they have not been able to agree on an explanation of them. It is intriguing now to look at our data from 1971 to search for clues to the changes in national mood which appeared to take place in the years following our survey.

Our evidence does indeed make it clear that many Americans (over one-third) perceived the quality of national life in 1971 as deteriorating. Unfortunately we do not have an earlier survey figure to give us a relative sense of how high or low this proportion should be considered to be. Perhaps there are always more people in the population who feel things are getting worse than see them getting better. The only related trend data we can draw on for an indication of changes in national mood come from the Institute for Social Research's continuing measure of trust in government. This index, composed of a series of questions regarding the competence and trustworthiness of our national political leadership, shows a progressive and substantial decline from 1958 to 1972. It would be surprising indeed if the more general evaluation our question asked for did not show an accompanying decline during this period of time.

When we examine the specific changes which people have in mind when they say life is getting worse in this country, we see that it is not the conditions of their own lives which primarily distress them (aside from economic pressures) but the behavior of other people—drug users, immoral people, young people, criminals, protesters. Relatively few people complained of those factors which appeared to underlie the public protests which gave the period its character—the Vietnam war, racial inequality, governmental policies. Many people had complaints about trends in national life, but many fewer appeared to be concerned about the factors which were presumed to cause the trends.

This conclusion is supported by the relatively small proportion of the population who feel they are unfairly treated by public officials or are not free to live their lives as they please. Here again we would be on safer ground if we knew something of how these proportions have changed over the last decade. One might assume that they have increased during this period of rising public protest; if so, they have risen from very low levels indeed since they were in the range of 10 to 20 percent when we recorded them in 1971.

These data lead us to believe that the extent of national discontent and alienation which existed in the population during the period prior to our survey was probably generally overestimated. The mass media, and especially television with its talent for selecting the eye-catching event, can hardly fail to create the impression that public protest is more intense and widespread than it actually is. A march on Washington which can fill the television screen requires only a minuscule fraction of the population. We do not doubt that many Americans were caught up in one or another of the protest movements during this period, but their proportion of the total population was probably much smaller than it appeared to be. Dissatisfaction with national life was high in 1971 but only a small fraction of it could be properly identified as political alienation.

As we have seen, manifestations of discontent with life in this country are very unevenly distributed in different strata of the population. In order to identify that part of the population which is most critical of our national life, we have sorted out of our sample those people who told us they had been unfairly treated by public officials, did not feel free enough to live their lives as they wished, and were dissatisfied with life in this country. Only 2 percent of the sample came through this screen and these disaffected people were far more likely than the public at large to be young, college-educated, metropolitan residents, and black:

Of the total adult population	*Of those most disaffected with life in the United States*	
16%	31%	are 18 to 24 years old
27%	50%	have attended college
11%	28%	live in metropolitan centers
11%	30%	are black

Four out of five of these people see life in this country as getting worse rather than better and two out of five say they would move out of the United States if they had a chance.

We cannot conclude from the fact that only 2 percent of our sample met the criterion we have used in this analysis that political alienation in this country is limited to this small minority. A less severe criterion would have produced a larger proportion. However, our data do identify the circumstances of life which are most productive of discontent: being black and living in the metropolitan centers as the major conditions, with being young and college-educated as secondary factors.

CONCLUSIONS

These indicators of national morale were taken in 1971 and they give us a reading of the condition of public satisfaction with life in America at that time. They show that the great majority of people in this country were content with "life in the United States today" but they also demonstrate the presence of millions of Americans who had serious complaints about their society. Whether or not these proportions are larger or smaller than they were twenty or fifty years ago cannot be determined since surveys of this kind are not available from those earlier periods. It seems probable that satisfaction in this domain of life is more responsive to changes in national circumstances than most of the other domains are and that subsequent surveys will show significant fluctuations from the level we recorded in this survey.

Chapter 9
The Experience of Work

From the external domains of housing, community, and the country, we move now to the more personal domain of work. Productive work is a major domain of life to almost all adult Americans, both those who work for pay and those who work in the home. Except for persons still preparing themselves for a career or retired from a life of work, very few Americans are not in some degree involved in the world of work. Work is not only a virtually ubiquitous personal experience, it is also a domain of intense public concern, the subject of many corporate and governmental programs intended to increase the availability of jobs and the quality of the work life. Satisfaction with work, as we have seen in Chapter 3, is one of the strongest predictors of our Index of Well-Being, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the variance of that general measure of the quality of life experience.

In light of the significance the domain of work has in the life of the individual citizen and of the nation, it is not surprising to find that the work experience has inspired a flood of research by social scientists of different callings. A community study of job satisfaction was reported as early as 1935, and by 1972 over 3,000 articles, books and dissertations on this topic had been published. We shall not, of course, undertake to review this literature here beyond referring the reader to a selection of review articles and books.[1] In developing the section of our questionnaire dealing with work we

[1] The interested reader is referred to review articles and books such as: Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, and Capwell (1957); Vroom (1964); Lawler (1970); Hinrichs (1970); Pallone, Rickard, and Hurley (1970); Pallone, Hurley, and Rickard (1971); Miner and Dachler (1973); and Quinn, Staines, and McCullough (1974).

depended heavily on the work of our colleagues at the Institute for Social Research, and we will make frequent reference to their research in this chapter.[2]

Given the broad focus of the present study, it was impossible to explore this particular domain in as much depth as could be done in studies devoted entirely to work; indeed, because of those studies, there was less urgency for the present study to devote major attention to the work domain. Nevertheless, we did consider it essential to include work in the present investigation in order to place it in context with the other domains. For this reason, a series of questions was asked about any paying job that the respondents had at the time of the interview, and a second series of questions about housework was asked of most women. We have treated housewives as working women, although not employed in the usual sense, and in the following pages we will sometimes consider women who work for pay separately from housewives and sometimes together.

Our major concern in this chapter will be to account for variations in satisfaction with work. We will examine various components of the job situation which might be thought to contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction and to attributes of the individual respondents, following the same basic model we have utilized in the two preceding chapters. Not everyone in the population is employed, some work for pay, some without pay, some are students still not in the job market, some are in the job market but unemployed, and some have retired from their work life. In order to provide a background for our analysis of job satisfaction, we will first review a range of descriptive information concerning the nature of the employment and of the work force.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

As shown in Table 9-1, three out of four men and one out of three women in the sample have full-time paid jobs, and another few percent have part-time jobs. Half of the women say that they are housewives not engaged in paid employment. Three or 4 percent of the respondents are unemployed (including those who are disabled), 2 or 3 percent are students, and the remainder (one out of seven men and one out of twenty women) say they are retired.

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[2] In particular, we have borrowed from the Survey of Working Conditions (Quinn *et al.*, 1971), an investigation which is sponsored by the Department of Labor, the co-principal investigators of which are Robert P. Quinn, Stanley Seashore, and Robert Kahn. The first national data collection, from 1,533 currently employed workers, was conducted in 1969; and the second data collection, from 1,496 workers, was conducted in 1972.

Table 9-1: Job Status Distribution of All Respondents and Separately for Women and Men[a]

	Work full-time	*Work part-time*	*House-wife*	*Retired*	*Student*	*Unem-ployed or dis-abled*	*Total*	*N*
Women	32%	10	48	5	2	3	100%	1259
Men	75%	4	—	14	3	4	100%	905
All	52%	7	26	9	3	3	100%	2164

[a] Job status was defined by the answers to the following questions. First, all respondents were asked:

> Are you working for pay, either full-time or part-time?

Those who said they did work for pay were later asked:

> About how many hours do you work on this job (i.e., their main job) in the average week?

Those who said they worked at least thirty-five hours in the average week were classified as working "full-time," while those who worked less than thirty-five hours were classified as working "part-time."

Female respondents who said they did not work for pay, in answer to the first question, were asked:

> Are you a housewife, unemployed, retired, a student or what?

Male respondents who did not work for pay were asked:

> Are you unemployed, retired, a student or what?

While Table 9-1 shows a large difference between the sexes in the proportion who have paying jobs, it does not show the extent to which this difference is changing. Some broad historic trends are shown in Table 9-2. This reveals a substantial rise in the overall rate of participation of women in the labor force, most of which can be attributed to the increasing proportion of married women, and of white married women in particular, who have jobs. Examination of changes from 1957 to 1971 within several demographically defined subgroups reveals that this trend is fairly uniform; however, it is not observed among residents of large cities, among those with very little formal education, and only weakly among those age 50 or older and among those in the lower one-third of the income distribution. One consequence of these differential changes is that the differences in the labor force participation by women between residents of more and less urban areas, and between blacks and whites, are much smaller now than they were in 1957 and earlier. Educational differences, on the other hand, have been accentuated.

We find further evidence for a secular trend toward greater participa-

Table 9-2: Historical Trends in Work Status of Women (Proportion Employed)

	White:			*Nonwhite:*		
Year	*Total*	*Single*	*Married*	*Total*	*Single*	*Married*
1890	12	35	3	40	56	23
1940	27	48	15	43	45	34
1951	32	51	24	41	41	36
1957	32	46	26	47	49	46
1960	34	46	30	41	34	41
1966	37	42	35	44	33	49
1971	41	47	37	49	49	49

SOURCES: 1890-1951, 1960: Lebergott (1964, p. 519); cited in Lebergott (1968, p. 104, Table 5).

1966: Bureau of Labor Statistics (1966, pp. A-5–A-7).

1957: Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960; this represents a secondary analysis of archived data from that study).

1971: Present study.

tion by women in the labor force when we examine the answers of housewives to a question about whether they had ever held a full-time job in the past. Over two-thirds of them replied that they had, and furthermore their answers are related to their year of birth: four out of five women under age 65 said that they had worked, compared to less than one-half of older women. It is also of interest to note that whether or not a woman has worked in the past is related to her education and her husband's income. Nine out of ten housewives with college degrees and a somewhat smaller proportion of those reporting family incomes of $17,000 or more said that they had worked in the past.

Some indication of future changes in labor force participation is provided by the answers housewives gave to a question about whether they were likely to work in the future. Questions of this nature were asked both in 1957 and in 1971.[3] One in six (17 percent) of the housewives replied affirmatively in 1957, and this proportion increased to one in four (27 percent) in 1971. The answer to this question was strongly related to age in 1971; over one-half of those less than 40 years old said that they thought they would work in the future, compared to less than one-tenth of those age 40 or older. The proportion of younger women who plan to work has increased markedly, from one-fifth to one-half, since 1957. With respect to

[3] The questions were worded somewhat differently; in 1957 the item was: "Are you planning to go to work in the future?" In 1971 the item read as follows: "Do you think you are likely to take an outside job in the future?" The different wording prevents complete comparability, since a person may expect to work in the future without having made any plans to do so.

other subgroups, black housewives are almost twice as likely as whites to think they will work in the future. Housewives with more education are considerably more likely to expect to work in the future than those with less education, and this relationship has become stronger since 1957. Finally, in 1971 though not in 1957, women reporting higher than average family incomes were much more likely (41 percent) to expect to work in the future than those with below average incomes (12 percent).

We did not undertake in this study to examine in depth the motives which impel people to work. We assume that most people work because they must, but we know from earlier studies that for many people work has intrinsic value quite aside from its significance as the instrument for providing income. We felt it was worthwhile in order to bring out these respective values to include in our interview one question which asked people working for pay whether considerations other than monetary return were important in their jobs. The question read as follows:

> If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you'd like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work?

Those who said they would prefer to continue working were then asked:

> Would you continue to work at the same job as you now have?

Less than one-third (31 percent) of all the respondents who were employed an average of more than twenty hours a week said that they would stop working if they did not need the money (Table 9-3). A similar question was asked in 1953 (cf. Morse and Weiss, 1955); at that time, 20 per-

Table 9-3: Proportion of Persons Employed for More than Twenty Hours a Week Who Would Work, Either at Their Present or a Different Job, if Money Were Not Needed[a]

	Would continue to work:				
	Work at same job	*Work at different job*	*Would not work*	*Total*	*N*
All	40%	29	31	100%	1114
Women	39%	20	41	100%	443
Men	40%	34	26	100%	671

[a] The above data exclude the answers of those who work only twenty hours or less in an average week on their main job. Included in the category "Work at same job" are 2 percent who gave qualified answers, such as saying they would keep their job under certain conditions or only on a part-time basis, and a fraction of 1 percent who said they would keep working at the same type of job, but in a different place or for a different employer.

cent of about four hundred employed men said that they would stop, compared to 26 percent of the men in the present sample. The latter proportion is very close to that found in the 1969 Survey of Working Conditions (27 percent of employed men; cf. Quinn *et al.*, 1971). Thus there may have been a slight downward trend in propensity to work, at least for men during the past two decades. The distribution of answers to the supplementary question asked in the present study of those who said that they would keep working shows that while about two-thirds of the respondents say they would keep working, only 40 percent would want to keep their present jobs.

Women are more likely than men to say that they would stop working if they had no need for additional money: four out of ten women (41 percent) say they would stop, compared to one out of four (26 percent) of the men. However, about the same proportion of employed women and men seem to get intrinsic satisfaction out of the jobs they now hold, as indicated by their statement that they would probably continue working at their present jobs. More women than men are apparently employed in jobs which are not rewarding in any sense other than monetary, and they are more willing than men to give them up.

This difference between women and men turns out, on closer examination, to hold true only for the white respondents. Black men are just as likely as black women to say that they would stop working if money were not needed. Furthermore, black respondents of either sex are less likely than whites of their sex to say they would keep on working at the same job. Since black people have historically been shunted into the least attractive and least well-paid jobs in the American job market it is hardly surprising that they are less likely to say they would keep those jobs if they did not need them for extrinsic reasons.

Willingness to give up the job in favor of a guaranteed income increases as the worker grows older. It is lowest among working men under 45 (20 percent) and highest among men in the decade before the usual retirement age of 65 (44 percent). The proportion of women in this preretirement group who would give up their jobs is also higher (59 percent) than in younger women (39 percent). The same age trend was observed for employed men in the 1953 study mentioned earlier (Morse and Weiss, 1955). We can only speculate as to why this trend exists. As we shall observe at a later point in this chapter, older respondents describe their job satisfaction as being higher, on the average, than do younger respondents, so it would be improper to attribute the age trend on the work motivation question to job dissatisfaction. It may well be, however, that the higher job satisfaction expressed by older respondents is more often a function of declining expectations and aspirations than of objectively better job situations, a phenomenon similar to that we were able to document for housing in Table 6-1. A person past the age of 55 knows he is close to the limits of the position within the organizational hierarchy to which he can hope to attain and may accept this despite earlier ambitions to a more responsible or higher paying job. With such accommodation, however, may come a loss in the enthusiasm for work and success he once felt.

A small number of women and men continue to work after age 65, and of these the proportion who are working only for money is relatively small—a majority saying they would prefer to keep their present jobs. A similar finding was observed in our 1953 data. Since these people are working beyond the ordinary retirement age and for the most part for reasons other than money, we must conclude that they find their work unusually rewarding. It is not surprising to find that these people congregate heavily in the professional and managerial occupations rather than in those which are hourly rated.

Consistent with this finding is the fact that workers with at least a high school education are more likely to say they would keep working if they did not need the money than are those with less education. Similarly, those with higher incomes are more likely than those with lower incomes to say that they would work even if they did not need the money. Residents of the metropolitan centers are less likely to say they would keep on working than other respondents.

Housewives

We have defined housewives in this study as women who are not gainfully employed and who identify themselves as housewives when asked the questions presented in Table 9-1. We were concerned with the job orientation of these women, and in order to ascertain their degree of interest in entering the work force, we asked them the following question:

> If you could have someone to take care of things here at home, would you like to take an outside job right now, or are you happy enough to be at home?

Approximately one-fifth (18 percent) of the housewives say that they would like to work now. This is probably an underestimate of the proportion who will seek jobs in the future, since reasons for remaining at home will diminish for many women as their children grow older. Indeed, we have already observed that 27 percent of these housewives say that they expect to work outside the home in the future.

We have already examined historical trends in the rate of participation of women in the labor market; it is also possible to examine changes since 1957 in the orientation toward jobs of those women not in the labor market. In both the 1957 and the present study, such women were asked:

"Have you ever wanted a career?" In both instances, about one-third of the women said that they had. Further analysis reveals that there are differences among various groups of women in their answers to this question. Women less than 40 years old are twice as likely as those age 60 or older to reply in the affirmative, indicative of a secular trend if taken at face value. This is not, however, confirmed by changes since 1957; the proportion of housewives in 1971 who report having wanted a career is no larger than that observed in 1957. This paradox may derive in large part from the fact that a great many housewives entered the job market between 1957 and 1971 and thus do not appear as housewives in the 1971 survey. Those women who did not want a career tended to remain in the housewife role and contributed to the higher than expected figure for housewives not wanting a career which we found in 1971.

Black housewives appear to be about twice as likely as white to say they have wanted a career. There is also a strong relationship with education: three out of four women college graduates say that they have wanted a career, compared to one in five of those with only a grade school education or less. This educational difference seems to have become stronger between 1957 and 1971. Both the present relationship with education and the trend since 1957 parallel observations made earlier about the proportion of women who are actually working (cf. Table 9-2).

What is the primary motivation of the housewives who want to work? Data already examined have shown that a majority of women who are presently working for pay say that they would continue to do so even if there was no economic need to (cf. also Crowley, Levitin, and Quinn, 1973). Information concerning the motivations of housewives was obtained by asking those who expected to work in the future what their main reasons would be for doing so. Three out of five of these women named economic factors as the primary reason they would work. This proportion was observed in 1957 as well as in 1971. Another one-fifth of the women say that their primary reason for working would be some sort of personal satisfaction they expect to obtain from a paying job, such as a sense of accomplishment, the chance to be with other people, or a feeling of independence. The remaining one-fifth of the women who want to work give a variety of reasons, such as wanting to get out of the house or feeling that idleness is improper or immoral. Financial reasons are more often cited by black (83 percent) than by white (56 percent) women and by those with family incomes in the lower two-thirds of the income distribution (74 percent) than by those in the upper third (40 percent). Economic reasons are most often cited by those with a high school education or less, while a majority of college graduates give reasons related to personal satisfactions expected from the job.

While the number of respondents is rather small, the differences just cited are all substantial and are replicated in the 1957 and 1971 data sets.

Retirees

The other large group of nonworking respondents consists of those women and men who have retired from the work force. As was noted earlier, this group consists of 5 percent of the women and 14 percent of the men in the sample; their average age is 69 years, four out of five (78 percent) being 65 or older. They retired an average of eight years before the interview from jobs with which they now say they were very well satisfied: 71 percent say they were "completely satisfied" with their last job, compared to only 36 percent of the respondents who are working. Some of this highly positive attitude toward the former job may reflect a certain selective remembering and a nostalgic recall of a former part of one's life. Moreover, the positive attitude toward work expressed by retired people parallels the general tendency for older respondents to express higher levels of satisfaction with almost every life domain. This is specifically true for work, as we shall observe later; indeed, among the small group of respondents age 65 or older who are still working, 81 percent say that they are completely satisfied with their jobs.

Why, if they liked their jobs so much, did they retire from them? The reason they most often mention is their health: either general poor health, or a specific illness or accident, is given as the reason for retirement by two of every five retirees. Another major factor is the strong cultural norm that workers ought to retire at an age between 65 and 70; no matter what the health or mental alertness or feelings of the individual might be, she or he is expected to step aside when that arbitrary age is reached. About three in ten respondents said they retired when they reached a certain age, generally 65; a portion said that there was a mandatory retirement age at the place where they had worked. Only a small proportion mention positive reasons for retirement, such as wanting to travel or to spend more time with their families, and a similarly small proportion say they retired because they were tired of working, or because they disliked their job.

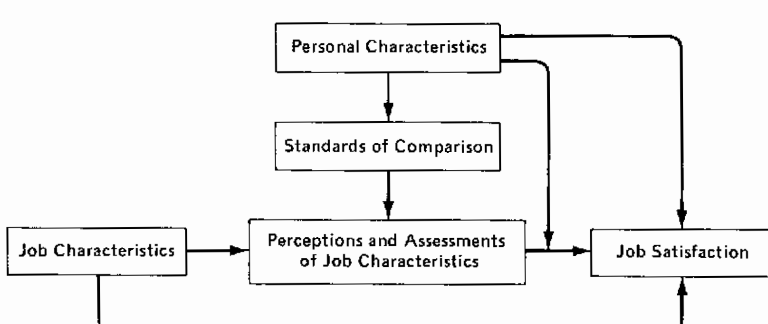
The retirees were asked whether, on looking back on their decision to retire, they felt that they made the right decision, or wished they had kept on working. It is noteworthy that a full one-third of them wish they had kept on working longer. Only 3 percent wish they had retired earlier than they did, and the remainder (63 percent) are glad they retired when they did. At a later point in this chapter we will examine the answers to this question in more detail when we consider the apparent effect of retirement on the overall quality of life.

HOW WELL CAN JOB SATISFACTION BE EXPLAINED?

The general conceptual model that we are using in this study to explain domain satisfactions (as described in Chapter 1) is presented in specific form in Figure 9-1. Job satisfaction is shown as depending primarily on the manner in which a person perceives and evaluates particular aspects of his own job situation. His perceptions, in turn, depend primarily, though not perfectly, on the corresponding objective characteristics of the job. Objective characteristics are shown as possibly having direct effects on job satisfaction, instead of or in addition to their indirect effects through the perceptions of the respondents. Characteristics of the respondents are shown as having possible effects at three levels: first, directly on job satisfaction; second, on perceptions and assessments of the job, and thus indirectly on job satisfaction; and third, as mediating the relationship between perceptions of the job and satisfaction with the job. More specifically, personal characteristics are shown as affecting assessments of particular aspects of the job situation because of the standards of comparison that different people bring with them into their current situation. As developed more fully in Chapter 1, standards of comparison encompass such concepts as expectation and aspiration levels, reference group levels, needs, and equity levels. In this respect, the conceptual model presented here for work satisfaction is similar to that developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969, Chapter 2). A more detailed model of the person-environment fit genre has been developed by Locke (1969).

The dependent variable in this predictive model is job satisfaction, a concept that has been assessed by innumerable items and scales with varying degrees of success. The characteristics of a number of such job satisfaction scales are described in Robinson, Athanasiou, and Head (1969, pp.

Figure 9-1: Model of Job Satisfaction Determinants



99 ff.). In the present study, in order to preserve comparability with measures of satisfaction with other life domains, job satisfaction was measured by a single item: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?" This was answered using our standard 7-point scale, from "completely satisfied" to "completely dissatisfied."

We will proceed now as we have in the earlier chapters of this section of the book to explain as fully as we can the variance in this measure, using information about the respondents' subjective assessments of the attributes of the job, the personal characteristics of the respondents themselves, and the objective characteristics of the job.

Assessments of Job Attributes

There are undoubtedly many attributes of an individual's work experience which might be thought to contribute to his general feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his job. Fortunately we did not have to sort through all these possibilities to find those attributes which are more important than the others. This had already been done for us by our colleagues at the Institute for Social Research in their 1969 Survey of Working Conditions (Quinn *et al.,* 1971). When respondents in that study were asked to rate the importance of numerous aspects of their jobs, it was found that there emerged a set of five major dimensions; items within each set were found to be correlated with each other and were combined to form measures of each dimension. These dimensions were as follows:

1. *Comfort:* Items measuring this dimension refer to the respondent's "desire for a job which provides solid creature comforts and which presents no problems for him."

2. *Challenge:* This dimension "reflects a worker's desire for stimulation and challenge in his job and the ability to exercise acquired skills in his job."

3. *Financial Reward or Pay:* "refers to extrinsic rewards and includes pay, fringe benefits, and job security."

4. *Coworker Relations:* "reflects a desire for friends and help among colleagues."

5. *Resources:* "represents a worker's wish for adequate resources with which to do the job well: help, equipment, information, and adequate supervision."

Because it was not possible to use the full set of items asked in the 1969 survey, it was decided to select items that would allow the respondents to describe their jobs as completely as practical on four of these dimensions, omitting the fifth ("Resources") dimension.

The comfort factor was measured in the present study by a set of three items which were reduced to a single scale. They were:

Now I'm going to make some statements about jobs. Please tell me how true each one is of your job. The first is: Travel to and from work is convenient. Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true?

The physical surroundings are pleasant.

I have enough time to get the job done.

Three questions were combined to form the challenge scale:

The work is interesting.

I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities.

I am given a chance to do the things I do best.

Two questions made up the scale on pay:

The pay is good.

The job security is good.

The coworker relations dimension was measured by a single question:

I am given a lot of chances to make friends.

The patterns of evaluation of these four job attributes by major subgroups of the employed population are shown in Figure 9-2. There are only small differences in the mean scores of women and men, with men scoring slightly higher on each of the scales except comfort. Blacks have lower scores than whites on each subscale except, again, comfort, and young respondents show a very similar pattern. College graduates have higher average scores on the challenge factor, but otherwise are not very different from those with less than a high school education.

Comparisons of the patterns of scores for those in different types of occupations are also interesting. Those who are in professional and technical occupations, who are mostly college graduates, also score high on the challenge factor and somewhat above average on the pay scale. Those in managerial occupations resemble those in the professional occupations except that they also have high average scores on the coworkers item. Clerical workers and craftsmen do not differ much from the average on any scale but tend to show opposite patterns; clerical workers are above average on the comfort scale but low on challenge, while craftsmen are low on the comfort scale but high on challenge.

Assembly line workers and other operatives have low scores on the challenge scale, not surprisingly. Service workers have similarly low scores on challenge and are also low on the pay factor. Farmers show the most extreme pattern: they score well above average on challenge and on comfort, but well below average on the coworkers item and the pay factor.[4] Most of these patterns for occupational groups would appear to support expectations and lend some evidence concerning the validity of the scales as indicators of the intended concepts.

From the nine items which went into the construction of the four assessment scales we selected six for the explanation of variance in job satisfaction, two from each of the scales on challenge, comfort, and pay. The single-item scale on coworkers was found to have little explanatory power with respect to job satisfaction and was excluded. As shown in Table 9-4, in the first column (*eta* coefficients), the perception which by itself explains the most variance in job satisfaction concerns whether the work is interesting or not. The next most powerful predictor is also from the challenge factor: the perceived opportunity to use one's skills. Third comes the perception of pay, followed by the other item in the financial rewards scale, the perceived job security. Last come the two items from the comfort scale. Together, this set of six perceptions of the job situation explains close to one-half (48 percent) of the variance in job satisfaction, as shown in the second column in Table 9-4.[5]

Personal Characteristics

We now examine that part of our model which assumes that the individual's degree of satisfaction with his job may be influenced directly by his characteristics, without the mediation of his perception of the job's attributes. Thus we were prepared to find, on the basis of our earlier discussion of the impact of age, that young people would express less satisfaction with their jobs than older people. This is indeed the relationship which we find, although it is not very strong. More surprising perhaps is the fact that people with more education are less satisfied with their jobs than people with less education. We have seen in Chapter 4 that the relationship of education to domain satisfaction is not as simple as the correlation coefficient makes it appear. We see in Figure 9-3 that satisfaction with the job is highest among the least well educated, declines among those who have more educa-

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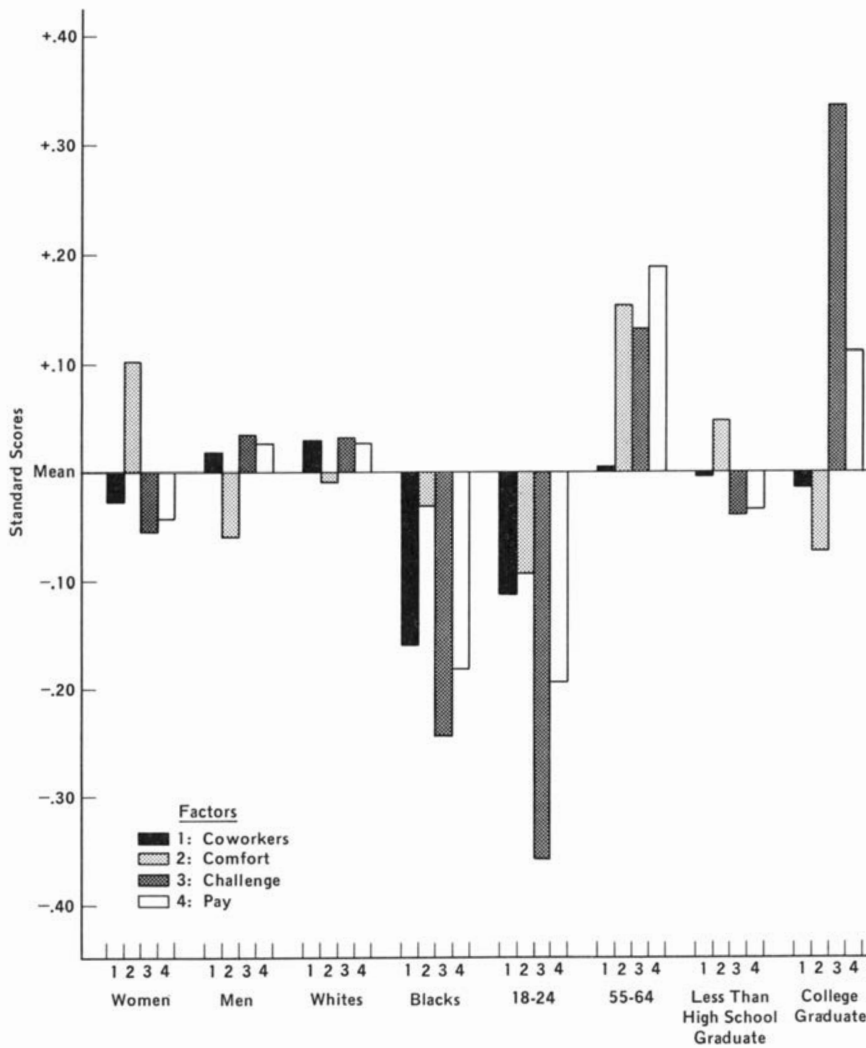
[4] The high score for farmers on the "comfort" scale points up the fact that this is probably a misleading label for the set of items that were selected for this study; the items, it will be recalled, are more specifically concerned with travel to work, physical surroundings, and time to get the job done.

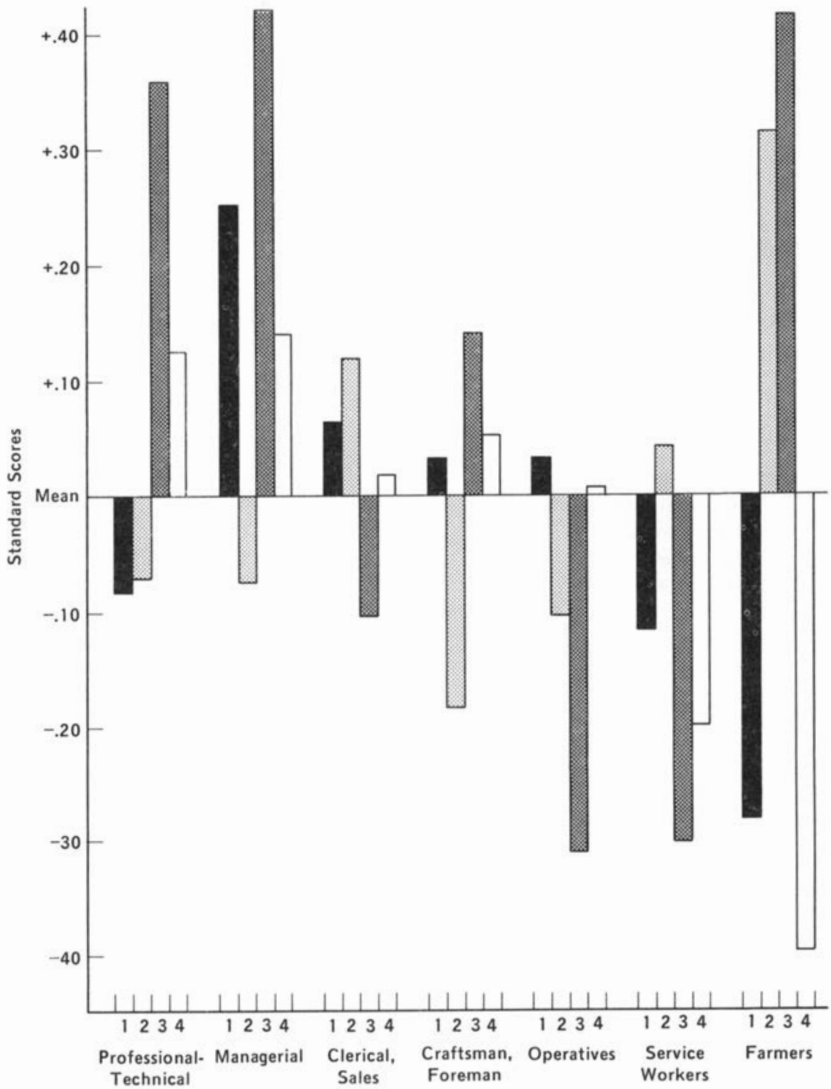
[5] The multiple correlation of .69 between the six perceptual items and the single-item job satisfaction measure compares favorably with analyses done in the Survey of Working Conditions data (Barnowe, Mangione, and Quinn, 1972). In that study, the multiple correlation between a set of thirty-three "quality of employment" indicators and a job satisfaction index based on twenty-eight items was found to be .73. This earlier study also found this relationship did not change significantly when computed separately for eight demographically defined subgroups.

Figure 9-2: Patterns of Average Standardized Scores of Demographic Subgroups on Four Job Factor Scales



tion, then is somewhat higher again for those who have completed college. We have argued that this pattern results from a rising level of occupational aspiration associated with higher educational attainment and depressed levels of occupational achievement among those who do not obtain the degrees which open employment opportunities.

There is practically no difference between women and men in average



job satisfaction. This is an example of the discrepancy which may occur between objective conditions and subjective evaluation. Employed women hold jobs which on the average have less status and lower pay than those of men, but they appear to be equally satisfied with them. This may well be an unstable situation, as women become increasingly aware of their positions and their standards of comparison rise.

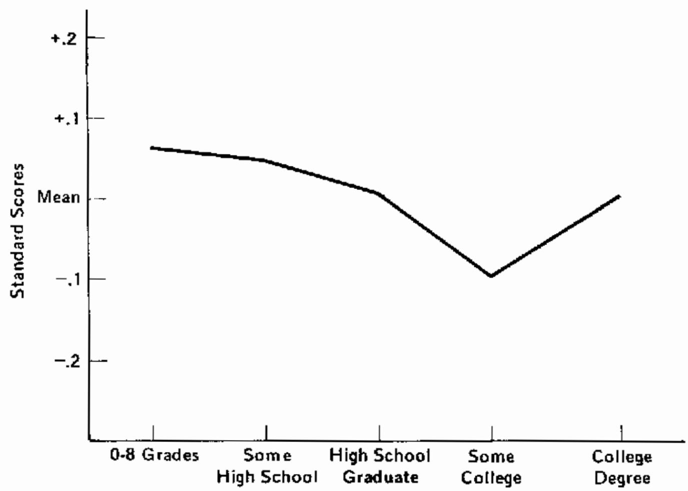
Table 9-4: Prediction of Job Satisfaction, by Set of Assessments of Job Attributes and Set of Personal Characteristics and by Set of Measures of Objective Job Attributes (Multiple Classification Analysis)[a]

		Beta coefficients			
	Eta coefficients	*Assess-ments only*	*Personal charac-teristics only*	*Objective attributes only*	*All three sets*
Assessments of job attributes					
F10. Work interesting	.55	.33			.33
F11. Pay good	.43	.23			.24
F13. Surroundings nice	.36	.09			.08
F14. Security good	.39	.14			.14
F16. Opportunity to do what like	.52	.22			.21
F18. Time to finish	.20	.13			.13
Personal characteristics					
E1. Educational attainment	.09		.06		.06
F25. Sex/housework vs. paid work	.10		.11		.08
F20. Work if rich?	.10		.13		.04
M2. Race	.05		.04		.01
L1. Age	.19		.12		.05
Life cycle stage	.20		.09		.07
Objective job attributes					
F6. Hours/week	.07			.05	.04
F7. Commuting time	.09			.10	.05
G13. Earnings	.13			.12	.03
Occupation	.13			.09	.07
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		48.2%	5.4%	1.3%	48.5%

[a] Only those respondents who claimed to work an average of at least thirty-five hours per week are included in these analyses.

Black workers are somewhat less satisfied with their jobs than whites, although here again the difference would not appear to be commensurate with the objective difference in job levels. For the groups defined by stage in the life cycle, job satisfaction is particularly low among young single and young married but childless respondents; and it is particularly high among widowed respondents and those whose children have all grown. All of these relationships of personal characteristics to job satisfaction are rather weak, and the whole set of personal variables explains only 5 percent of the variance in job satisfaction (cf. column 3 in Table 9-4).

Figure 9-3: Average Work Satisfaction Levels, Expressed in Standardized Form for Respondents with Different Amounts of Education



Objective Job Characteristics

Numerous characteristics of the job environment have been proposed as critical to job satisfaction. In some cases whole factories have been designed or restructured in the confidence that certain innovations would help solve the problems of worker alienation and discontent and its consequences. Such characteristics include supervisory practices, size of the work unit, complexity of the task, and so on (cf. Kahn, 1972; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973). The importance of such characteristics can be partially assessed by using the perceptual data already examined. In this study, however, the number of objective measures of the job environment is strictly limited.

Four fairly objective measures of job characteristics were available for use in the predictive model: hours worked per week, time required to travel from the respondent's home to his place of work, earnings during the previous year, and type of occupation—the latter serving as a surrogate for many other unmeasured aspects of the job. For two of these objective characteristics, perceptions of the respondents were also obtained, thus permitting the strength of the relationship between objective and subjective measures to be assessed.

Paralleling the amount of time respondents reported they spent commuting is their perception of the convenience of getting to work. There is a rather substantial relationship between the two measures. Those who say it is "very true" that travel to and from work is convenient spend an average of fourteen minutes getting to work, compared to an average of forty-seven minutes for those who say it is "not at all true" that travel is convenient. If the answers to the question about travel convenience are assigned numerical values from one ("very true") to four ("not at all true"), and if the result is treated as an approximation to an interval scale, the product moment correlation coefficient between this measure and reported commuting time is .51. Actual travel time clearly influences the perception of convenience, but it leaves most of it unaccounted for.

The respondent's report of how much he earned in the previous year can be related to his perception that "the pay is good"—by no means a perfect match, since not only may pay or even the job have changed, but also some respondents have second jobs. The product moment correlation between the perception that the pay is good and reported earnings is about .30, certainly not very impressive. Perception of the adequacy of pay obviously depends on more than the size of the paycheck. Questions of standards of comparison are no doubt involved but we have not been able to identify any bases on which these standards are formed. When we recompute the correlation separately for different age groups, and again for different educational groups, we find no systematic improvement in the correlation. Indeed, even when pay is simultaneously adjusted according to a set of nine factors (i.e., the respondent's age, education, race, sex, hours worked per week, whether or not he has a second job, region of the country, size of community, and whether he works for others or is self-employed), the correlation between perception of pay and adjusted earnings is not improved. This analysis has not helped us understand the process by which different respondents assess their earnings.

The number of hours worked per week, which is of course related to actual earnings, tells us very little about job satisfaction. More significantly the specific occupation in which the individual works is not as important as one might have expected. As we saw in Figure 9-3, people in the major occupational categories differ substantially in the assessments they give the various job attributes, but they differ only marginally in their overall job satisfaction. People in the professional and technical occupations are most likely to describe themselves as satisfied with their jobs and operatives are least likely, but the differences seem very small in relation to the profound contrasts in the objective characteristics of these occupations.

As we see in Table 9-4, none of the relationships of these four objective attributes of the job to our measure of job satisfaction is very impressive and taken together they explain only 1 percent of the variance in job satisfaction.

If we now bring together these three sets of predictors in a multivariate analysis, we will be able to discern whether personal characteristics and objective job characteristics have any direct effect on job satisfaction or if their effects are expressed indirectly through their influence on the manner in which workers perceive the attributes of their jobs. As shown by the figures in the fifth column of Table 9-4, the total explanatory power of all three sets is less than one percentage point more than that of the six perceptual assessments alone, indicating that nearly all of the influence of personal and objective job characteristics is mediated through their impact on perceptions of the job.

In terms of the model outlined in Figure 9-3, the arrow directly linking personal characteristics with job satisfaction is clearly a weak one. Most of the influence personal characteristics have on job satisfaction is evidently indirect, through the effects such characteristics have on the way respondents perceive their job environment. These relationships were described in the previous section of this chapter. In the absence of evidence from more direct measures of job aspiration or expectations, we assume that the link between personal characteristics and perceptions can be understood in terms of standards of comparison that vary among persons of different backgrounds even when their job environments are comparable. As suggested by Chapter 6, such aspirations are likely to depend on prior optimal job experiences, as well as jobs held by friends, relatives, and other reference groups.

There is also an arrow in Figure 9-3 from the "personal characteristics" box to the link between perceptions and job satisfaction. This arrow was included to represent the possibility that the strength, or even the direction, of the relationship between certain perceptions of the job environment and overall job satisfaction might be different for various types of people. For example, perhaps pay matters more to those with less education than for those with more, while the challenge of the job might matter more to those with more education. Such possibilities were explored, and the conclusion of the analysis (not shown) is that while there are some suggestive differences between subgroups, they are generally not very important. An exception is that the challenge perceived in the job explains twice as much of the variance in job satisfaction for those who earn relatively high incomes as for those who earn relatively little. Challenge is also more important to those with college degrees, as compared to those with little formal education. Differences between subgroups in the importance of the pay and comfort factors, as measured by the explanatory power of these scales relative to job satisfaction are quite small. Our conclusion is that the arrow indicating the possible conditioning effects of personal characteristics on the relationships between perceived job characteristics and job satisfaction is also rather weak.

We conclude this section by observing that of the various relationships suggested in the model outlined in Figure 9-3 and measured in this study, that between assessments of job attributes and job satisfaction is far and away the most important. All together, the three sets of variables (perceptions of the job, more objective characteristics of the job, and characteristics of the respondent) explain about one-half of the variance in expressed job satisfaction.

WORK IN THE HOME

Up to this point, we have focused our attention exclusively on jobs for which people are paid; housework, on the other hand, is unpaid work traditionally performed by women as part of their role as homemakers. Sex roles had become the subject of intense interest at the time this study was conducted, and a primary focus of criticism was housework, often portrayed as thankless and mind-numbing drudgery. Our data permit us to describe the way American women feel about work in the home.

Most of the women respondents—including those who work for pay, but excluding the 7 percent who are students or retired—were asked about their feelings toward housework: "Overall, how satisfied are you with being a homemaker—I don't mean with your family life, but with housework?" Overall, women say that they are about as satisfied with housework as all respondents (including men) who work for pay say they are with their paid jobs (cf. Table 3-1). Indeed, the proportion of women who say that they are "completely satisfied" with their housework (44 percent) is somewhat higher than the proportion of employed people who are completely satisfied with their jobs (36 percent).

The level of satisfaction with housework varies substantially among demographically defined groups of women. For example, over one-half of those with less than a high school education say they are completely satisfied, as contrasted with only one-fifth of the college graduates. At all educational levels except that of the college graduates, the proportion of women who are completely satisfied with housework is about the same as the proportion completely satisfied with their paid jobs; college graduates, however, are considerably less likely to be satisfied with housework than with their paid jobs. Moreover, younger women are less likely than older women to be satisfied with housework; only about one-third of those age 25-34 are completely satisfied, compared to almost two-thirds of those age 65 or older. There is a curious reversal of this pattern among young married women who do not yet have children, who are more satisfied with housework than others of their age group—an anomaly to which we will return in Chapter 12.

The higher proportions of dissatisfaction observed among the younger and better educated women might be interpreted as a consequence of the greater receptivity of such women to changing societal norms and expectations. The women's liberation movement has been primarily visible among such women, and so perhaps the impact of the ideas with which it is associated has been greatest on women in this social position. On the other hand, perhaps the dissatisfaction has always been greatest among those with more education, and it is for this reason that they are more likely to be attracted to the ideas of women's liberation. If housework is indeed the drudgery it is often described to be, it would not be surprising to find that the most educated find it least rewarding and that they are most likely to rebel against the societal norms that pressure them to accept such tasks as exclusively their own sex's responsibility.

There is some information from an earlier study by the Institute for Social Research which can be compared with that from the present study and which allows us to draw some inferences about time trends and possible causal directions. In the 1957 study of mental health conducted by Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960), women who were not doing any work for pay were asked the following question:

> Different people feel differently about taking care of a home, I don't mean taking care of children, but things like cooking, sewing, and keeping house. Some women look on these things as just a job that has to be done; other women really enjoy them. How do you feel about this?

This question was repeated in the present study. The distribution of answers at the two points in time is shown in Table 9-5. Far from indicating a decline in the acceptability of housework in the years since 1957, the table shows that the proportion of women who express unqualified enjoyment with housework has increased somewhat, from 51 percent to 60 percent.

It is evident at once that this apparent rise in popularity of housework

Table 9-5: Attitudes of Housewives (age twenty-one or older) Toward Their Housework, 1957 and 1971

	1957	*1971*
1. Unqualified liking	51%	60%
2. Qualified liking	19	14
3. Ambivalent	14	9
4. Qualified disliking	2	3
5. Unqualified disliking	3	3
6. Just a job that has to be done	11	11
Total	100%	100%
N	864	562
Mean	1.98	1.85

is rather deceptive. Between 1957 and 1971 the proportion of women who were in the labor force increased from 37 to 43 percent, a shift which is of course reflected in the samples we drew in those two years. If we make what would appear to be a reasonable assumption that those women who joined the labor force during this period were less enamored of housework than those who remained at home, we come to an explanation of the trend shown in Table 9-5 which does not require us to conclude that housework has become more attractive to women in general during the 1957-1971 period. Fewer women remain at home, and if some part of them do so because they prefer housework to outside employment, it is hardly surprising that as a group they are more positive about housework than the larger group was in the earlier years.

It may be, however, that this demographic change does not fully explain the shift in attitudes toward housework that our data show. It is certainly true that the rising standard of living since 1957 has enabled more people to purchase time and labor-saving home appliances which make housework a less onerous task. There has been an even more dramatic drop in the birth rate during this period which must have reduced the total burden of work associated with child care. For those parts of the female population most affected by these trends, the actual experience of keeping house may have become more positive. On the other side is the increasing call for the "liberation" of women from the tedium of housework, a call which might be expected to increase dissatisfaction with housework to the extent that it is effective. It is interesting, if not conclusive, that the categories of women who might be expected to be most responsive to the liberation movement are those in which no increase in reported enjoyment of housework is observed in our 1957-1971 data; the young, the college-educated, the upper middle class, and the urbanites.

Taking a Job

The more hours a woman spends working outside the home, the less satisfied she is with work inside the home (Table 9-6). Fully one-half of the women who do no work for pay say that they are "completely satisfied" with their housework, as compared to one-third of the women who have full-time paid jobs. What is the sequence of wants which brings this relationship about? We have suggested earlier that some women find housework distasteful and seek an outside job to give their lives more meaning. It is also likely, however, that women who go into the labor force for whatever reason find themselves under great pressure and begin to find housework a greater burden than it had been when it was their only job. Our 1965 study of the use of time gave us a convincing documentation of the demands on the time of an employed woman who is also managing a home (Robinson,

Table 9-6: Satisfaction with Housework Expressed by Women in Different Work Statuses

	Completely dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	6	*Completely satisfied* 7	*Total*	*Mean*	*N*
Work for pay, full-time (at least 35 hours/week)	4%	3	5	21	13	20	34	100%	5.39	384
Work for pay, part-time, or unemployed	1%	3	4	13	15	19	45	100%	5.74	156
Housewife	1%	2	3	11	9	22	52	100%	5.93	588

Converse, and Szalai, 1972). We are not going to be able to resolve this question of causal sequence, and we are inclined to the view that both phenomena occur and support each other: one's attitude toward housework influences the decision to take a job, and the experience of holding a job influences the attitude toward housework.

Many factors besides her attitude toward housework must certainly influence a woman's decision about working outside the home. The age of her children, if any, the economic situation of the family unit, her occupational skills and career aspirations, the availability of acceptable jobs—these and many other aspects of a woman's situation are probably determinants of her job status. We have attempted to identify the presence of some of these influences by asking women what they would *like* to do about taking a job if they had the ability to choose.

We have already reviewed the results of our question to employed women as to whether they would continue working if the money were not needed (Table 9-3). About two women in five said that they would not work under such circumstances. Subsequently in the interview we asked these employed women the following question:

> Apart from the money, which do you think is more important to you personally: your housework, or a job for which you are paid?

Again, about two working women in five say that their housework is more important, and another one-fifth say that the two roles are equally important; this seems to indicate that a majority of women are not working primarily because they regard housework as unrewarding. Those women who consider housework at least as important as their paid jobs are considerably more satisfied with housework than those who feel their paid jobs are more important. Fully one-half of the former group are completely satisfied with housework, as contrasted with only one-sixth of the latter group (Table 9-7). Indeed the former group of working women are as satisfied with housework as the women who do no work for pay. Whatever the causal se-

Table 9-7: Satisfaction with Housework Expressed by Women with Different Motivations Concerning Paying Jobs

	Completely dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	6	*Completely satisfied* 7	*Total*	*Mean*	*N*
Presently working or unemployed:										
Paid work more important than housework	7%	7	7	29	16	17	17	100%	4.59	219
Housework at least as important as paid work	*	1	3	12	12	22	50	100%	5.99	321
Presently housewives:										
Would like to work now	2%	6	8	20	12	18	34	100%	5.24	106
Would not like to work now but expect to work in future	1%	4	3	12	11	26	43	100%	5.81	138
Do not expect or want to work	1%	*	2	8	7	21	61	100%	6.24	343

quence may be, we find again that there is a relationship between motivation to hold an outside job and the attitude toward housework expressed by employed women.

Among women who do no work for pay, we have distinguished between those who would "like to take an outside job right now" but for some reason are not doing so and those who prefer to stay at home (Table 9-7). Among housewives who say they would like to work now if suitable arrangements at home could be made, only about one-third are completely satisfied with housework. Among women who do not want to work now, but expect to work sometime in the future, 43 percent are completely satisfied with housework. Among the remaining women (who neither want to work now nor expect to work in the future), three-fifths (61 percent) are completely satisfied with housework. This pattern supports our earlier conclusion; the job market tends to draw most heavily out of the pool of housewives those women who do not find housework fully satisfying.

Accounting for Housework Satisfaction

In the foregoing pages we have compared the levels of satisfaction with housework expressed by different groups of women. We now ask how well we can predict housework satisfaction from a set of characteristics of the housework situation of the women who do this work. Four characteristics of the situation were considered. The first two concerned the sheer size of the task: the number of rooms in the dwelling and the size of those rooms. The number of rooms that a woman is responsible for is not related to any important extent to her satisfaction. Information about the size of rooms was obtained by asking the following question:

> Would you say that in general the rooms in this (house/apartment) are too large, too small, or are they about the right size?

The relationship between room size and satisfaction with housework is not linear; the fact is that women who feel the rooms are "about right" in size tend to be more satisfied with housework than those who feel the rooms are too small as well as those who feel they are too large. One might conclude from this minor finding that one of the bases on which a woman judges her rooms to be about right in size is that their size lends itself to convenient and efficient housekeeping.

Our women respondents were also asked whether they ever hired anyone to help them with their housework. About one woman out of nine said she did so at least now and then, the proportion varying in predictable ways with indicators of socioeconomic status. It was expected that the women with such help would face an easier housework task than other women; while that may be true, these women nonetheless are less satisfied with housework than women who do not have such help. Presumably, this is one reason why they hire help, and it is also true that women at upper income and educational levels who are more likely to hire help are less likely to be satisfied with housework.

The last situational characteristic considered as a possible determinant of satisfaction with housework is whether the woman lives in a dwelling that she (and her family) own or rent. It might be thought that a person could get more enjoyment out of caring for a place which is her own property; and indeed, there is a statistically reliable difference in the expected direction. However, this difference can be almost entirely explained in terms of other differences between owners and renters, including age and socioeconomic status, so that there is little evidence that ownership *per se* is associated with greater enjoyment of housework.

None of the four situational factors, then, turns out to be a very important predictor of satisfaction with housework. This analysis is summarized in Table 9-8 which shows that the set explains only 3 percent of the variance in housework satisfaction.

Table 9-8 also shows the explanatory power of each of six personal characteristics. Most of these relationships have already been discussed. The more education a woman has had, the less she says she enjoys housework. Similarly with another indicator of social class, income: women with low family incomes are more satisfied with housework than women with higher incomes. Residents of the largest cities are considerably less satisfied with housework than residents of smaller places, and in particular than resi-

Table 9-8: Prediction of Housework Satisfaction, by Set of Measures of Objective Attributes and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients		
	Eta coefficients	*Objective attributes only*	*Personal characteristics only*	*Objective attributes and personal characteristics*
Objective attributes				
B1. Number of rooms	.06	.04		.06
B3. Size of rooms	.14	.14		.13
B6. Own or rent?	.09	.10		.08
F23. Hire household help?	.12	.13		.05
Personal characteristics				
E1. Educational attainment	.19		.13	.12
G12. Family income	.15		.13	.13
L1. Age	.19		.14	.14
M2. Race	.08		.06	.06
Urbanicity	.13		.08	.08
Life cycle stage	.21		.18	.16
Explained variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		3.0%	7.9%	9.3%

dents of rural areas. Older women report more satisfaction than younger women. Divorced, separated, and single women are considerably less satisfied with housework than married women and widows.

Together, this set of six personal characteristics explains a very modest amount (8 percent) of the variance of housework satisfaction. When this set of personal characteristics is added to the set of four situational factors described earlier, a total of 9 percent of the variance in housework satisfaction can be explained, as is shown in the last column of Table 9-8. While this seems very small compared, for example, to the amount of variance in satisfaction with paid jobs that can be explained (Table 9-4), it should be recalled that the most powerful predictors of work satisfaction were perceptions of the work situation on several critical dimensions and that women were not asked to make a comparable set of observations about their housework situations.

THE RELATION OF JOB STATUS TO QUALITY OF LIFE

Much has been said and written in recent years about the impact of work on the quality of one's life. Job pressures are found to produce numerous physiological effects and illnesses; repetitious jobs are supposed to produce alienated or apathetic citizens; job loss is shown to have severe psychological and biochemical consequences; and retirement is seen as a forerunner of mental and physical deterioration. In this final section of the chapter, we will examine the present data for evidence of the impact of the work domain on the quality of the rest of one's life. This inquiry will be in two stages. Our first concern will be with the effects of one's work status on the quality of life. Here we will compare unemployed respondents with their employed counterparts and retirees with their age-mates who are still working. Then, among employed respondents, we will consider the relationship of job satisfaction to other measures of life quality.

Unemployment

The seventy-five or so unemployed respondents in the present sample are considerably less satisfied with most aspects of their lives than are respondents with full-time jobs. This is especially true among men, but is also observed for women. Specifically, the unemployed are less satisfied with their housing and their communities, with their education, with their standard of living and their savings, and with their spare time activities. They tend to think they are less fairly treated by public officials than do the employed, and they also have less trust in people in general. The unemployed are more likely to say that they feel frightened by some aspect of their life situations and that they have worried about having a nervous breakdown. They are less likely than the employed to feel that they have satisfied their ambitions in life. They attribute this, to some extent, to a lack of a fair opportunity to make the most of themselves; in general, they feel less able to control their own lives than do other respondents. Men in particular report that they enjoy life less than others if they are unemployed, and both women and men are less happy if unemployed. Finally, on the measure of sense of overall well-being, the unemployed respondents have considerably lower scores than employed respondents. This is especially true for men (whose average scores are a full standard deviation lower than those of men with full-time jobs) and less true for women (whose average scores are less than a third of a standard deviation below those of women with full-time jobs).

Before we can feel comfortable in attributing the above differences between the unemployed and employed respondents to their job status *per se*, we need to consider other differences between these people which might influence both their job status and their subjective quality of life. The unemployed, for example, tend to have less education than the employed, their educational deficiencies undoubtedly contributing to their lack of employment. Educational level, however, is not strongly or consistently related to quality of life measures and we cannot attribute the dissatisfactions and unhappiness of the unemployed to their lack of education. Unemployed people are also characterized, of course, by their low income, and we may ask whether it is this low income, rather than some other effect of unemployment, that explains the relatively poor quality of life reported by these people. To answer this question, scores on the Index of Well-Being were adjusted to remove the correlation with income; when this was done, the unemployed men were still observed to have substantially lower scores than the employed men. Unemployed women, however, have almost the same scores on this index as women with full-time jobs, after adjusting for family income.

Further analyses have been done, introducing characteristics of respondents such as age and race, without markedly reducing the apparent impact of unemployment on the quality of life measures. Given the rather small number of unemployed respondents, our conclusions from this single study must be guarded; however, this is not the first study to have demonstrated the deleterious effects of unemployment on the subjective quality of life.[6]

Retirement

We have already examined the overall distribution of answers given by women and men who are no longer doing any work for pay in response to a question about whether they are glad they retired when they did. If we treat the answer to this question as a rough indicator of the success with which these respondents have adjusted to retirement, we can ask what characteristics and behaviors of the retirees are associated with successful adjustment to their change in status, although we will be plagued with the problem of what causal sequences may be involved in these relationships. For example, those who say they have severe health problems—problems which keep them "from doing a lot of things" they wish they could do—are much less likely than those with no health problems, or with only minor ones, to have adjusted well to retirement. Perhaps many of those who were forced to retire because of health problems wish their health had remained good so that they could have kept on working longer. On the other hand, those who have not been able to adjust well to retirement by finding alternative activities and sources of meaning in life may suffer a decline in health as a consequence. There is some evidence on this particular point; those who say they retired because of their poor health have adjusted much less successfully than those who retired for other reasons, which supports the first hypothesis,

[6] A longitudinal study of persons who lost their jobs when their firms were closed showed numerous effects of job loss on behaviors, attitudes, and physiological variables (cf. Cobb, 1974; Slote, 1969).

that retirement forced by poor health has negative consequences on the subjective quality of life. Those who retired for reasons other than poor health but who now report severe health problems have adjusted less successfully to retirement than those without such severe health problems. This latter relationship is ambiguous concerning causal sequence, since we did not ask questions which might have indicated which phenomenon—poor adjustment or poor health—came first. Data from previous studies, however, have indicated that ". . . the correlation between retirement and poor health is largely explained by the fact that people in poor health tend to retire, and not that retirement affects health" (Thompson and Streib, 1958; see also Shanas, 1970).

As might have been expected, those who retired at a fairly young age (before they were 60 years old) are more likely to say that they now wish they had kept on working longer. Also, those who retired eight years or more ago are more likely to wish they had kept on working. These tend to be the people who retired at a young age, but perhaps there is also an element of growing boredom or a feeling of uselessness that contributes to their poor adjustment.

Those who have at least a high school education are more likely to indicate successful adjustment to retirement than those with less education. One can speculate about why this should be the case: did the better educated make more intelligent decisions about retirement? Or does more education provide one with resources with which one can better adapt to a changing situation? Answers to these questions cannot be given definitively with the present data, but there are some suggestions.

For example, one resource that generally accompanies higher education is greater income and resultant accumulation of assets; the better educated retirees continue to enjoy better incomes. There is a weak relationship between income and adjustment, in that those with very low reported incomes (less than $3,000 in the previous year) are more likely to wish they had worked longer, as compared to those with higher incomes.

With education also may come a broader range of interests and activities which can be continued into retirement and thus provide meaning and purpose to life despite the loss of one major role. For example, better educated people belong to more voluntary organizations than do less educated; and among retirees, those who belong to two or more types of organizations are considerably more likely to be well adjusted to retirement than those who belong to only one, or to no organizations. According to disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry, 1961), successful adaptation to old age involves the gradual withdrawal from the environment and into oneself. The present data do not support such a notion; those who have remained engaged in aspects of their environment indicate a more successful adaptation to their retirement than those who have become, or remain, isolated.

More evidence on this point is provided when we look at the whole range of activities, such as hobbies, in which the retirees say they are involved. Those who mention two or more types of such activities indicate more successful adaptation than those who mention none or only a single type of activity. Furthermore, those who express complete satisfaction with such activities are more likely to have adapted well to retirement than those who are less satisfied.

As another approach to answering the question of how retirement affects the quality of life, we can compare the retired respondents with working respondents. Retirees, and retired men in particular, tend to describe their lives in more favorable terms than do those who are presently employed. Retired men say that they are more satisfied with several of the life domains, including the residential environment, their nonworking activities, and their financial situation. They also describe their lives as easier and freer than do employed respondents. However, many of these differences are more parsimoniously ascribed to the older age of the retirees than to their employment status, since older employed persons tend to describe their lives in the same relatively favorable terms as the retirees.

A more definitive comparison, therefore, would be one between retired persons and persons of similar ages who have not yet retired. This analysis was done for the Index of Well-Being. On this index, those who are still working score somewhat higher than those who have retired. This might, of course, be explained by other differences between the two groups: some of the retirees gave poor health as the reason for which they retired, so perhaps there are differences in the state of health of members of the two groups. There might also be differences in the income or educational levels attained by retirees and employed older persons. In an analysis which attempted to control for differences in the variables just listed, and also for differences in racial composition, marital status, and sex, it was found that those who are still working remain slightly more satisfied with their lives than those who have retired. The number of respondents is small and the differences in scores are also small, so the data are not definitive. Furthermore, we have data only on those who have survived, and it is quite possible that decisions about retirement could affect longevity. However, it does appear that retirement is not an unmitigated blessing, and that many would have a better quality of life if they postponed rather than hastened the time of retirement. When we couple this with data reported earlier showing that successful adaptation to retirement is associated with greater involvement in outside activities, the conclusion seems to be that older persons may feel better off if they avoid disengagement from life roles.

JOB SATISFACTION AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE

A second aspect of the problem that we have been considering—the effects of the work domain on the quality of life—concerns the relationship between satisfaction with jobs and other indicators of the quality of life. In Chapter 3 we noted that all of the measures of domain satisfaction, including work, are positively intercorrelated. Specifically, those who express high levels of satisfaction with their jobs are more likely than those who are less satisfied to express high levels of satisfaction with other life domains. The correlations are highest for the financial domains, nonworking activities, family life, and friendships, but are positive for all of the domains included in this study. As an example, almost one-half (49 percent) of those who say they are completely satisfied with their jobs are also completely satisfied with their housing, compared to only one-fifth (21 percent) of those who say they are less than completely satisfied with their jobs.

Expressed job satisfaction is also related to how satisfied a person says he is with his life as a whole. We observed in Table 3-3 that job satisfaction explains about one-fifth of the variance in the Index of Well-Being, and is one of the most important predictors of that index.

The apparent impact of job satisfaction on other domains of life is reflected in other measures besides the satisfaction items. For example, not only do those who are dissatisfied with their jobs express less satisfaction than other people with life in the United States, they are also considerably more likely to say that they would like to leave the country and settle down elsewhere if they had the chance. Those who are dissatisfied with their jobs also are more likely to say that they are frightened by something in their lives, and they express lower levels of confidence that they can control their own lives. They also declare lower levels of trust in other people.

These relationships are all interesting, but it would be highly conjectural to conclude from them that in a simple causal sequence job dissatisfaction produces negative consequences on other domains of life. An equally plausible set of explanations is that other factors influence both job satisfaction and the life quality indicators with which it is correlated. Since this topic has been explored in detail in Chapter 4, it is only mentioned here as a caveat to the reader. Panel studies, perhaps in conjunction with changes in the work environment, are necessary to evaluate the causal importance of job satisfaction on other domains of life. Nevertheless, these cross-sectional data do serve to demonstrate that job satisfaction is intimately related to other domains of life and must be considered a crucial ingredient of the overall quality of life.

CONCLUSIONS

Work is clearly one of the most important domains of life, whether it is evaluated in terms of the proportion of a person's waking life that is devoted to it or in terms of how it is related to the overall quality of life. A large majority of men, and an increasing minority of women, have paying jobs at which they spend an average of some forty hours per week. Furthermore, a substantial minority of housewives would like to be employed, if acceptable arrangements could be made to cover their household responsibilities. Many of those people who have retired from the labor force wish they had worked longer than they did. A major reason for working is, of course, financial; nevertheless, a high proportion of those who work (and especially those who are white and male) say they would work even if they had all the money they wanted.

People describe their jobs along four or five primary dimensions, including the challenge offered by the job, the financial rewards from the job, and their relationships with coworkers. Most workers describe their jobs in rather positive terms on each of these dimensions. Furthermore, these job descriptions explain a large part of the differences among workers in the extent to which they say they are satisfied with their jobs.

Women express higher levels of satisfaction with housework than they do with paying jobs although a substantial number of working women regard their jobs as more important than their household duties. There are sizable differences among women of different social position in their attitudes toward housework, with the better educated and younger women being most negative.

Unemployment appears to have substantial deleterious effects on the overall quality of life. For men, at least, this is not merely because of the consequent loss of income, but because of the effects of job loss on how the individual perceives himself and his society. Retirement appears to resemble unemployment in certain respects, since for many people it is more an involuntary transition than a deliberate choice. Health problems and age-linked stereotypes combine to induce retirement at an earlier age than many persons would have preferred, at least retrospectively. Furthermore, retired persons appear to be somewhat less satisfied with their lives than are comparable persons who are still working. Among the retired, better adjustment is found among those who have remained engaged in other social roles.

The nature of the work experience has changed dramatically in this country since the time of the twelve-hour day, and there is no doubt that further changes are developing. The character of the work force is changing, and some writers believe that a profound change in the work ethic is in process, especially among the younger generation. Work was an important domain of life in the experience of the people we interviewed in this study, and we think it will remain so. The work force will become better educated, more white collar, and more female, and this may change the relative significance of the different attributes of the work experience, but our study gives us no reason to believe that work will contribute less to the total quality of life.

Chapter 10
Marriage and Family Life

We began this series of chapters with consideration of those domains of life which are most impersonal, and we turn now to those private domains in which the individual is engaged in relationships of a more or less intimate character with spouse and family. We recognize the fact that either of these domains might have consumed our entire study and that the data we have to present are far more restricted than we would wish. In each domain, however, we have asked our respondents to place themselves on our standard satisfaction question, and in each case we are able to support this rating with additional information which broadens our understanding of personal experience in these two domains.

We will pursue the same basic model in this chapter which we have followed in the preceding analyses of domain satisfactions. We will be concerned with the individual's childhood background, his personal characteristics at the time of the interview, his assessments of specific attributes of the domains of marriage and family life, and his degree of satisfaction with those domains. Our purpose, as in the preceding chapters, is to account for the differences we see in the amount of satisfaction our respondents report in each of these domains.

We saw in Chapter 3 that satisfactions with marriage and family life form one of the clusters which appear when the total matrix of correlations among domain satisfactions is examined, a cluster which lies very near the position of the overall Index of Well-Being (Figure 3-2). Since a "happy marriage" is given a slightly higher rating of importance than a "good family life," we will look first at satisfaction with marriage and then at satisfaction with family life.

SATISFACTION WITH MARRIAGE

Most people 18 years of age and older are married. Most of these are still in their first marriage; some have remarried after a previous marriage had been terminated by death or divorce (Table 10-1). There are significant differences in the marital status of women and men, resulting in part from the longer life expectancy of women, and there are substantial differences between blacks and whites. These data from our survey diverge slightly from the population statistics of the Bureau of the Census as the result of errors of sampling, but these discrepancies are minor and they do not seriously compromise our objective which is to describe the experience of marriage as our respondents report it.

Those members of the survey sample who identified themselves as currently married were asked a series of questions regarding their relationship with their spouse which was followed by three questions intended to assess in a more general way the quality of the individual's marriage. These three questions were:

> Have you ever wished you had married someone else? (Yes, often; Yes, sometimes; Yes, once in a while; Yes, but hardly ever; No, never.)
>
> Has the thought of getting a divorce ever crossed your mind? (Yes, often; Yes, sometimes; Yes, once in a while; Yes, but hardly ever; No, never.)
>
> All things considered, how satisfied are you with your marriage? Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?[1]

These three global questions are highly interrelated (*r*'s range from .58 to .61), and their marginal distributions are similar, a heavy piling up at the positive end of the scale and a tailing off toward the negative extreme. These distributions are given in Table 10-2.

It is hardly surprising that most married people describe their marriages in very positive terms. As we have noted in Chapter 4, it may seem a paradox that this should be true of the society whose divorce rate is the highest in the Western world but the high divorce rate itself, of course, contributes to the distribution we find. When divorce is easy, it is not likely that individuals who find themselves in a totally unsatisfactory marriage will remain in it indefinitely. The negative side of these distributions is thus thinned out by the departure of such people from the state of matrimony.

[1] In order to avoid the influence of other adults in the household who might have been overhearing the interview, these three questions were printed on a card which the respondent read and marked with his or her answers.

Table 10-1: Marital Status of Women and Men

	White		*Black*		*All*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Married, still in first marriage	54%	66%	34%	40%	51%	64%
Widowed, now remarried	3	4	2	2	3	3
Divorced, now remarried	7	8	9	17	7	9
Never married	10	13	19	19	11	14
Now widowed	18	4	12	7	18	4
Now divorced or separated	8	5	24	15	10	6
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

It must also be assumed that there is a good deal of denial underlying these reports; no doubt many people find it difficult to face the realities of an unsuccessful marriage and describe themselves as "satisfied" with their marriage, not so much to deceive the interviewer as to reassure themselves. And finally, the commonplace observation that a great many married people in our society live together in apparent amiability over long periods of time would lead us to expect the kind of distributions which we have in fact found.[2]

The distributions in Table 10-2 do not differ greatly for women and men although women seem slightly more critical of their marriages than men are. We will be primarily concerned in the following pages with the scale of satisfaction with marriage, although we will refer to the "wish you had married someone else" and "ever thought of divorce" questions at later points in this volume.

We have seen in Chapter 3 that people rate "good health" and "a happy marriage" as the two most important values of all those discussed in our interview, and that satisfaction with marriage is one of the major contributors to the explanation of variance in the measure of sense of general well-being. These indications of the preeminence of marriage in contributing to the quality of life experience conform to expectation, and we will return to this question in greater detail in Chapter 12 where we compare people at different stages of the life cycle. We undertake now to scan the data of our study to seek an explanation of the differences we find among our respondents in their expressed satisfaction with their marriages. We will be concerned with

[2] We have expressed our doubts at an earlier point about the high proportion of married women and men who say the thought of divorce has never crossed their mind. Although we deliberately chose to word the question in order to make it easy for a person to indicate even ephemeral doubts about his marriage, it seems clear that some or most of the respondents chose to take it more seriously.

Table 10-2: Distribution of Responses to Three General Questions Regarding Marriage

"Have you ever wished you had married someone else?"

	Yes, often	*Some-times*	*Once in a while*	*Hardly ever*	*Never*	*Total*	*N*
Women	1%	5	6	18	70	100%	763
Men	*%	4	7	17	72	100%	684

"Has the thought of getting a divorce ever crossed your mind?"

	Yes, often	*Some-times*	*Once in a while*	*Hardly ever*	*Never*	*Total*	*N*
Women	1%	4	8	23	64	100%	763
Men	1%	3	5	20	71	100%	685

"All things considered, how satisfied are you with your marriage? Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?"

	Completely dissatisfied						*Completely satisfied*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*		
Women	1%	1	2	9	8	23	56	100%	763
Men	0%	*	1	6	6	27	60	100%	685

three classes of data: first, those describing the respondents' circumstances during the early years of their lives; second, those describing the current characteristics of the respondents; and finally, those describing the respondents' assessments of their relationships with their spouses.

Early Circumstances

In the preceding chapters we disregarded the information we have concerning the early years of our respondents' lives, since these data gave little promise of helping us understand level of satisfaction with the more external domains of life. However, it is a fundamental tenet of conventional psychological wisdom that childhood experiences have important consequences in the emotional life of the adult, and we felt that in analyzing the domains of marriage and family life we should take account of their possible influence. We did not attempt in this study to probe into the psychological quality of the early life of our respondents; even if we had assumed that we could have successfully carried out such an inquiry, we chose not to make this investment. We did, however, ask four questions concerning the time the respondent was "growing up" which tapped areas of childhood experience which might be reasonably hypothesized to have an influence on adult adjustment. They asked respectively whether or not the individual had grown up in a broken home, had lived in a rural or urban community, how often he attended religious services as a child, and what was the father's educational level. Despite the fact that all of these questions would appear to describe important aspects of a person's childhood experience, none of them relates in a very significant way to satisfaction with marriage.[3] Taken together, these four items of information account for only 1 percent of the variance in satisfaction with marriage (Table 10-3).

Personal Characteristics

We turn then to those measures from our interviews which describe the respondent's present characteristics: sex, age, race, educational and economic status, religion, place of residence, number of children in the household, and whether the respondent is in the first or a later marriage. As we see in Table 10-3, this analysis gives us a series of low correlations with satisfaction with marriage, the largest of which is with age. When combined into a multiple correlation, however, these nine variables correlated $R = .22$ with satisfaction with marriage and thus account for some 5 percent of the variance of that measure.

Although our ability to predict individual satisfaction scores is not greatly enhanced by a knowledge of these aspects of the respondents' personal characteristics, there are significant group differences within the population which have interest. The strongest relationship is with age, and this relationship is curvilinear (see Figure 5-3 for details). Chronological age is of course very strongly associated with the length of time the individual has been married, and in Chapter 5 we discussed the kind of "checkmark" form that characterizes this and other commitment relationships. There is an initial high point of satisfaction in the period just after the commitment, and then a period of decay in marriage satisfaction out to nearly the twentieth year of marriage. After this low point, reports of marriage satisfaction sweep upward into very old age.

Satisfaction with marriage is also modestly associated with the number of children in the family although the relationship does not run in the direction common expectation might have suggested. The highest levels of expressed satisfaction are found among families with no children in the home and decline moderately but consistently with increased number of children among both women and men. The people with no children in the home are a very heterogeneous group, made up of young couples who have not yet started their families, older couples who are voluntarily or involuntarily

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[3] People who grew up in a rural setting are marginally more satisfied with their marriages than those who were raised in cities, those who come from broken homes are slightly less satisfied than those from intact homes, those who attended religious services regularly as children slightly more satisfied than those who did not, and those whose fathers had less than average education more satisfied than those whose fathers had finished high school or gone to college.

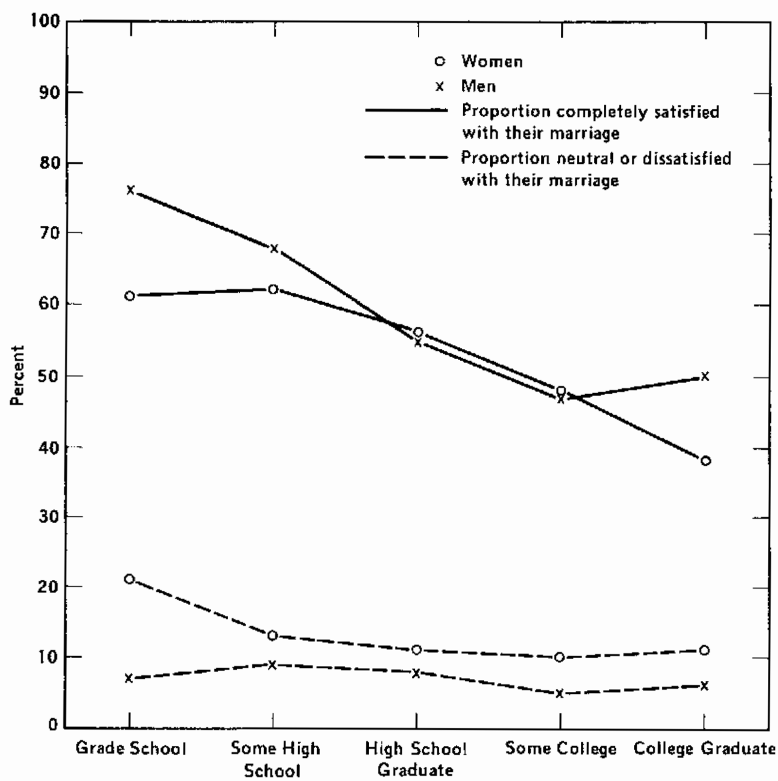
Table 10-3: Prediction of Satisfaction with Marriage, by Sets of Measures of Early Circumstances, Personal Characteristics, and Perceptions of Interpersonal Relations with Spouse (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients			
	Eta coeffi-cients	*Early circum-stances only*	*Personal charac-teristics only*	*Percep-tions only*	*All three sets*
Early circumstances					
L3. Size of hometown	.10	.09			.09
L4a. Broken home index	.07	.07			.05
L9a. Father's education	.06	.06			.03
G9. Religion as child	.03	.04			.03
Personal characteristics					
L1. Age of respondent	.15		.12		.09
Number of children at home	.12		.10		.04
Occupation of head	.11		.12		.07
G6. Religion	.11		.12		.08
Sex	.10		.09		.09
Urbanicity	.08		.09		.05
H8. First or later marriage	.07		.05		.04
G12. Family income	.07		.09		.09
E1. Education of respondent	.07		.09		.08
M2. Race	.06		.06		.04
Perceptions of interpersonal relations with spouse					
H11. Extent of understanding by spouse	.48			.27	.26
H13. Amount of companionship with spouse	.42			.24	.25
H12. Extent of understanding of spouse	.41			.15	.14
H10. Frequency of disagreements about money	.33			.16	.16
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		0.9%	4.8%	32.6%	34.3%

childless, and people whose children have grown up and left them in the "empty nest." We will consider each of these groups in detail at a later point; when we look at them as a single group, we see that they compare favorably to those families with one or more children in the home. One may guess that the relatively negative appraisals seen among the parents of large families may be influenced in part by greater than average financial pressure, and indeed we find that the parents of three or more children are considerably more likely than the members of smaller families to say they worry "all the time" about meeting their bills. The presence of numerous small children in the home no doubt has its rewards, but it apparently implies some psychological cost.

Finally we may look more closely at the levels of marital satisfaction expressed by people of different educational attainment. In Chapter 4, we noted that marriage was among the majority of our domains showing a weak but negative correlation with education: the poorly educated reported somewhat more satisfaction with their marriages than did the better educated (see Figure 4-6). Figure 10-1 suggests that this negative association, where marriage is concerned, is stronger among men than it is among women. Men with only a grade school education seem especially well satisfied with their marriages, but their wives (assuming that these men marry women of similar educational status) are considerably less enthusiastic and

Figure 10-1: Relation of Marital Satisfaction to Education Among Women and Men



are the most likely of all the educational groups to describe their marriages in neutral or negative terms. Of course the relationship between marital satisfaction and education is influenced by the underlying factor of age; young people are on the average better educated than their elders. However, if we remove the factor of age by means of partial correlation, we still find that complete satisfaction with marriage declines in the higher educational levels.

The declining satisfaction with marriage in the more highly educated groups which we see in these data is in direct contrast to the increasing expression of happiness with marriage which was reported in our 1957 study. Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960, p. 104) report a "rather strong" positive relationship between educational level and the degree of happiness with which their respondents described their marriage. This reversal appears to exemplify the distinction we have made earlier between an *affective* evaluation of a life domain and a *cognitive* evaluation. The "happiness" rating may be considered to have a relatively strong component of immediate feeling, while "satisfaction" seems to depend more heavily on a judgment of the relation of one's circumstances to some standard. Gurin, Veroff, and Feld did not ask their respondents to rate their satisfaction with their marriage but they did ask these people if they ever felt themselves to be "not as good husbands (or wives) as they would like to be." The answers to this question, which clearly implies some cognitive judgment about one's marital role, related to education in the same way as our satisfaction with marriage question did, that is, the higher educated people were most likely to express dissatisfaction with their performance as husbands or wives.

The ways in which educational experience may produce these differences are no doubt complex. Gurin, Veroff, and Feld conclude that "people with more education tend to be more introspective about themselves." In our language, they are more inclined to interpret a question concerning satisfaction in judgmental rather than affective terms and bring a richer awareness of alternatives to these judgments, so that they are more likely to see ways in which they fall short of their aspirations. It would not be unreasonable to expect increasing education to increase the tendency to apply such enriched cognitive judgments to various aspects of the life experience.

It can also be argued of course that what we see in Figure 10-1 simply reflects differences in the willingness of people of different levels of education to reveal inadequacies in their marriage. We cannot rule out this possibility, although we do not find it very plausible to credit people with less education with greater defensiveness against an interviewer's questions and greater reluctance to describe their marriages than we find among people with college degrees, particularly since satisfaction reports show the same pattern in a variety of other domains where defensiveness is a less obvious issue. We hold rather to the belief that the differences we see reflect real differences in the psychological conditions in which people live, differences in the standards against which they compare reality, and differences in their sensitivity to the discrepancy between the two. The case of college-educated women, with their very low level of satisfaction with their marriages, offers an intriguing opportunity to pursue this thesis, and we will return to a consideration of this group in Chapter 12.

Assessments of Interpersonal Relations With Spouse

Learning the external conditions of our respondents' lives has not greatly improved our understanding of their satisfaction with their marriages. Despite the various modest relationships we have examined, there is no single attribute of the individual's characteristics or status which comes through strongly as a predictor of marital satisfaction. We move now to the "subjective" level of explanation, asking the respondents to describe their relationships with their spouse. The four questions which were used for this purpose and the distribution of answers given by different segments of the married and previously married portion of the population are given in Table 10-4.

All of these subjective measures relate significantly to expressed satisfaction with marriage and always in the obvious direction. The coefficients (*etas*) for married people run from .48 to .33. The multiple correlation of these four measures with marital satisfaction is $R = .57$ and, as we saw in Table 10-3, they explain about one-third of the variance in the reports of satisfaction with marriage. Although this is a rather substantial relationship, it should be remarked that a high score on the marital relationship scale is more closely related to satisfaction with marriage than a low score is. Those people, both women and men, who have more positive than average scores almost never describe themselves as less than satisfied with their marriage. However, of those with the most negative scores over one-half call themselves satisfied with their marriage, not "completely satisfied" for the most part but not neutral or negative.

It was to be expected of course, as we came closer to the variable we were attempting to explain, moving from the external conditions of life to the internal perceptions of interpersonal relationships, that our ability to predict this variable would increase. Had we been able to expand our inquiry into the interpersonal experience of married couples by questions regarding sexual relations or management of children, for example, we could probably have increased the correlation with marital satisfaction still further. We do not assume, however, that the perception of one's relationship with his spouse (as measured by our four questions) is the same thing as satisfaction with marriage and we would expect a substantial part of marital satisfaction to remain unaccounted for, even if we had doubled the number of questions

Table 10-4: Relation of Assessments of Personal Relationship with Spouse to Marital Status Among Women and Men

"How often do you disagree with your (wife-husband) about how much money to spend on various things—never, rarely, sometimes, often, or very often?"

	First marriage	*After widowed*	*After divorced*	*Total married*	*Divorced-separated*
			Women		
Never	21%	31%	20%	21%	16%
Rarely	36	43	36	36	16
Sometimes	34	18	29	33	18
Often	6	8	7	7	28
Very often	3	0	8	3	22
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	645	39	86	770	125
			Men		
Never	22%	30%	32%	23%	15%
Rarely	35	37	32	35	23
Sometimes	30	23	30	30	28
Often	9	7	5	8	21
Very often	4	3	1	4	13
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	581	30	78	689	53

"How well do you think your (wife-husband) understands you—your feelings, your likes and dislikes, and any problems you may have; do you think that (she-he) understands you very well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?"

			Women		
Very well	41%	59%	42%	42%	7%
Fairly well	29	36	42	48	24
Not very well	7	3	14	7	38
Not well at all	3	2	2	3	31
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
			Men		
Very well	49%	55%	56%	50%	6%
Fairly well	45	45	36	44	32
Not very well	5	0	5	5	36
Not well at all	1	0	3	1	26
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

"And how well do you understand your (wife-husband)—very well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?"

	First marriage	*After widowed*	*After divorced*	*Total married*	*Divorced-separated*
			Women		
Very well	50%	66%	48%	50%	20%
Fairly well	44	29	39	43	42
Not very well	4	0	13	5	28
Not well at all	2	5	0	2	10
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
			Men		
Very well	43%	48%	56%	45%	17%
Fairly well	51	52	30	49	39
Not very well	5	0	10	5	28
Not well at all	1	0	4	1	16
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

"How much companionship do you and your (wife-husband) have—how often do you do things together—all the time, very often, often, sometimes, or hardly ever?"

	First marriage	*After widowed*	*After divorced*	*Total married*	*Divorced-separated*
			Women		
All the time	37%	54%	41%	38%	9%
Very often	33	23	18	31	11
Often	15	10	17	15	16
Sometimes	11	8	18	12	32
Hardly ever	4	5	6	4	32
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
			Men		
All the time	34%	48%	35%	35%	8%
Very often	32	28	32	32	20
Often	17	21	15	17	22
Sometimes	13	3	14	12	30
Hardly ever	4	0	4	4	20
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

intended to describe marital relationships. Nevertheless, the fact is that it is only when we consider the subjective experiences of married people that we begin to account for significant amounts of the variations in their satisfaction with their marriages. A knowledge of the personal characteristics of the individual adds relatively little to this explanation. As we see in Table 10-3, when we combine the childhood background and the personal characteristic variables with the assessment measures we increase the proportion of variance accounted for from 33 percent to 34 percent. The small influence which the former variables exert on satisfaction with marriage is expressed almost entirely through the latter.

We complete this review of our data regarding the quality of marriage by examining the relationship between the variables describing personal characteristics and background and the measures of marital relationships. Table 10-5 compares the responses given to these questions by women and

Table 10-5: Index Scores of Assessments of Interpersonal Relationship with Spouse of Women and Men in Different Marital Status

Index score of assessment of relationship with spouse	*First marriage*	*New marriage after being widowed*	*New marriage after divorce*	*Total married*	*Currently divorced-separated*
			Women		
1.0 to 1.4 (positive)	17%	31%	20%	18%	1%
1.5 to 1.9	22	26	17	22	3
2.0 to 2.4	27	23	20	26	9
2.5 to 2.9	20	15	26	21	14
3.0 to 5.4 (negative)	14	5	17	13	73
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	644	39	86	769	125
			Men		
1.0 to 1.4 (positive)	19%	34%	31%	22%	0%
1.5 to 1.9	19	14	22	19	4
2.0 to 2.4	24	28	15	23	11
2.5 to 2.9	25	24	14	23	11
3.0 to 5.4 (negative)	13	0	18	13	74
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	581	29	78	688	54

men in four categories of marital status: first marriage, remarried after being widowed, remarried after being divorced, and now separated or divorced. In order to lighten the burden of data presentation, the responses to the four questions asking for assessments of relations with spouse have been combined in Table 10-5 into a Marital Relationship Index.[4]

The most striking feature of Table 10-5 is the highly negative language in which divorced and separated people describe their previous marriages. It

[4] It was anticipated when these four items were constructed that they would be interrelated, and they are, with correlation coefficients ranging from .6 to .2.

would have been remarkable of course if this had not been true, and we may regard this finding as evidence for the validity of the Marital Relationship Index. It clearly has the capacity to distinguish between marriages which have failed and those which are still intact and by implication the ability to identify those marriages which, while still intact, are most likely to dissolve.

It is also possible in Table 10-5 to compare first marriages with marriages which follow widowhood or divorce. The number of second marriages in our sample is very small, and the data are relatively unreliable, but it is intriguing to see that the second marriages are described in terms no less positive than the first; indeed, there is some suggestion (especially among the previously widowed individuals) of an unusual number of highly compatible marriages among these people. This again is associated with the effect of age. In all of these three groups of married people, however, there are significant proportions whose assessment patterns resemble those of people whose marriages have broken up. These may be marriages now approaching dissolution or they may be families which, despite basic incompatibilities, have decided for reasons of religion, children, or economic considerations to remain together. There can be little doubt that some couples have the capacity to live together in what appears to be persistent discord for long periods of time.

From the comparison of women and men in Table 10-5, we conclude that they do not differ in their assessment of their relationships with their spouse. Married women are no more or less positive about describing their relationships with their husbands than men with their wives, and those women who are divorced or separated do not remember their unsuccessful marriage any more favorably than do their male counterparts.

If we now undertake to account for individual differences in these assessment scores by examining the characteristics of the respondents, we find the array of low correlations displayed in Table 10-6. The influence of early background is especially meager; the multiple correlation of the four questions regarding the respondent's life as a child with the compatibility index is only $R = .05$, accounting for less than 1 percent of the variance in the index score. The nine variables describing the respondent's personal characteristics are also only modestly related to the Marital Relationship Index; taken together, their multiple correlation is $R = .29$, accounting for 8 percent of the variance. It may be noted in Table 10-6 that number of children in the household and age, which were most significantly related to marital satisfaction, are rather more strongly related to positive assessment of marital relationships. We find again that older married people and people with few or no children in the household describe their relationships with their spouse more positively than young people or parents of large households.

Table 10-6: Prediction of Marital Relationship Index, by Set of Measures of Early Circumstances and Set of Personal Characteristics (Multiple Classification Analysis)

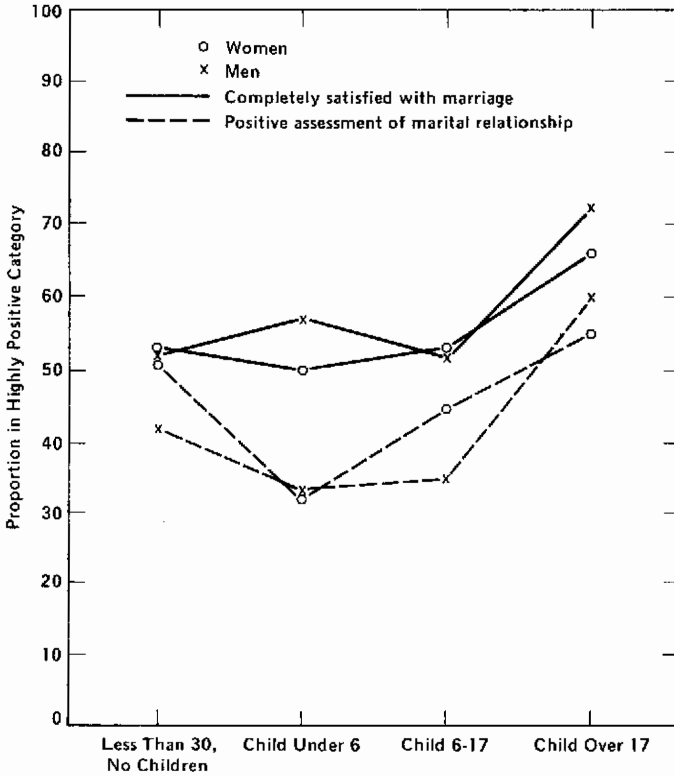
			Beta coefficients	
		Eta coefficients	*Personal characteristics*	*Early circumstances*
Personal characteristics				
	Number of children at home	.25	.22	
L1.	Age	.23	.12	
	Occupation of head	.16	.13	
G12.	Family income	.11	.09	
	Urbanicity	.10	.10	
H8.	First or later marriage	.08	.04	
E1.	Educational attainment	..07	.04	
G6.	Religion	.06	.10	
M2.	Race	.06	.04	
	Sex	.02	.01	
Early circumstances				
L3.	Size of hometown	.07		.07
G9.	Religion as child	.07		.07
L9a.	Father's education	.06		.06
L4a.	Broken home index	.05		.06
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)			8.2%	0.5%

These relationships are no doubt significant in relation to sampling error, but it is clear that our rather voluminous data concerning the background and personal characteristics of our respondents have not provided a satisfactory explanation of individual differences in the way people describe their marital relationships. Just as in the case of satisfaction with marriage, the subjective assessment of relationship with spouse cannot be accounted for successfully from a knowledge of the objective circumstances of the individual's life.

Discussion

In the preceding pages we have treated the measure of perceived relationship with spouse as a determinant of the sense of satisfaction with marriage, following the conceptual model we laid out in Chapter 1. The relationship between them is quite substantial ($r = .57$), and we have concluded that perception of harmonious relationships with spouse explains about one-third of the variance in satisfaction with marriage. We must consider, however, whether we are justified in treating this measure as an independent

Figure 10-2: Relation of Satisfaction with Marriage and Index of Marital Relationship to Stages of Married Life (Women and Men)



predictor of marital satisfaction or whether they are in fact both equivalent measures of the same thing and should be combined into a single measure.

Generally speaking, we would seek to establish the independence of two variables by demonstrating that they relate in different ways to external variables. In the present case, we see in Tables 10-3 and 10-6 that the pattern of relationships of the two variables with the background measures we have used is generally similar in the two cases. However, the Marital Relationship Index is considerably more closely related to age and number of children than satisfaction with marriage is. This difference becomes apparent in Figure 10-2 where we combine age and presence of children by dividing the married population according to stages of their married life from those under 30 with no children to those whose children are 18 or over and have for the most part left the parental home (as described in Chapter 7). We see in this figure only trivial differences in marital satisfaction in the early stages of married life, with a substantial rise in the empty-nest stage, while perception of marital relationship drops sharply in the young child stage and then recovers to a high point in the empty-nest stage.[5]

The difference in the two curves shown in Figure 10-2 may be explained in either of two ways. We may say that the measure of marital satisfaction measures the same thing as the Marital Relationship Index but is simply less sensitive and less responsive to changes in family circumstances. Or, as we think more likely, the assessment of marital relationships is more directly determined by the conditions of the marriage (particularly by the age of the children) and reflects the psychological cost which the married person is paying in disagreements, misunderstanding, and lack of companionship. In assessing his overall satisfaction with his marriage, however, the individual takes into account the rewards of his married life (the pleasure of small children, for example), as well as its costs and arrives at a sum which is partially determined by the experience measured by the Marital Relationship Index but is not identical to it.

It remains to be decided which of these two measures is the most valuable indicator of the quality of an individual's marriage. No doubt the most effective way to answer this question would be to follow these respondents through time and determine which measure predicted the ultimate success or failure of the marriage most accurately. We cannot do this, of course, but we will use both measures in subsequent analyses in the belief that they have a significant degree of independence and that the use of both will tell us more than the use of only one.

SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY LIFE

The domain of "family life" is not easily bounded. In the early stages of life, the family may mean one's parents and siblings, later it includes the

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[5] Most of the previous studies reporting changes in marital satisfaction through the life cycle are based on such small and unrepresentative samples that it is difficult to compare their findings with ours. Two studies, however, merit attention. A survey of 616 white married women in Detroit (Blood and Wolfe, 1960, p. 265) reports a persistent decline in its measure of marital satisfaction from a high point in the preparental stage through the years of child-rearing with a modest recovery in the postparental stage. This pattern is clearly different from that shown in Figure 10-4. More recently Rollins and Feldman (1970) have reported a study of 799 "middle-class" couples in Syracuse, New York. Their curve of marital satisfaction starts as a high point in the prechild stage and drops to a plateau running through the period of grown children. The measures used in both these studies combined perceived relationship with spouse with other indicators of satisfaction and they may have disguised life cycle changes which would have appeared, if the authors had kept these measures separate as we have.

marriage partner, still later children. Our interview attempted to cover all these contributors to the quality of family life by asking about parents (living or dead), brothers and sisters, wife or husband, and children. At the end of this extended series of questions (which included those relating to marriage which we have just reviewed), we asked the final query "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your family life—the time you spend and the things you do with members of your family?" The distributions in Table 10-7 reveal the ways in which women and men respond to this question.

Table 10-7: Distribution of Response to Question Regarding Satisfaction with Family Life

	Completely dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	*Completely satisfied* 6	7	*Total*	*N*
Women	1%	3	4	7	14	28	44	100%	1205
Men	1%	2	3	7	13	31	43	100%	869

A comparison of this table with Table 10-2, where satisfaction with marriage was recorded, discloses both similarities and differences. It is apparent at once that our respondents were less willing to express unalloyed satisfaction with their family life than they were with their marriage, although, as we saw in Chapter 3, marriage is the only domain which does exceed family life in level of expressed satisfaction. It is also clear that women and men resemble each other very closely in Table 10-7, more closely than they did in satisfaction with marriage.

Proceeding now in the same pattern of analysis we followed in the preceding section, we look first to the childhood background and the present characteristics of the individual respondents for an explanation of their satisfaction with their family life.

Early Background

The information we have regarding the respondent's early life gives us very little basis for understanding his level of satisfaction with his family life as an adult. Just as in the case of satisfaction with marriage, these variables have low relationships with satisfaction with family life which when considered together in a multiple correlation explain no more than 1 percent of the variance in this measure (Table 10-8). It is not surprising perhaps to find that people who grew up in an intact family, with both parents present until the age of 16, are somewhat more likely to describe their own family life as satisfactory than people whose families were divided by di-

Table 10-8: Prediction of Satisfaction with Family Life, by Set of Measures of Early Circumstances, Set of Personal Characteristics, and Perception of Relationships with Family Members (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients			
	Eta coefficients	*Early circumstances only*	*Personal characteristics only*	*Perceptions only*	*All three sets*
Early circumstances					
L4a. Broken home index	.10	.10			.07
L3. Size of hometown	.07	.06			.03
L9a. Father's education	.06	.06			.06
G9. Religion as child	.05	.05			.05
Personal characteristics					
H6. Marital status	.28		.28		.19
L1. Age	.10		.09		.05
E1. Educational attainment	.10		.09		.09
G6. Religion	.10		.07		.06
Occupation of head	.09		.06		.06
G12. Family income	.08		.08		.07
M2. Race	.07		.05		.06
Number of children at home	.06		.05		.06
Urbanicity	.06		.04		.05
Sex	.02		.01		.01
Perceptions of family relationships					
Relationship to spouse	.39			.35	.30
Relationship to children	.29			.21	.20
H4. Closeness to parents	.13			.08	.08
H5. Closeness to siblings	.08			.06	.06
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		1.3%	8.8%	20.4%	22.6%

vorce or separation, and it is interesting that people whose families were broken by death resemble those with intact homes rather than those whose families were divided by divorce or separation. These differences might have been expected to be larger than we find them to be. Other plausible hypotheses as to the origins of a satisfactory family life find no convincing support in our data. We do not find, for example, that people who grew up in rural places report a more satisfactory family life than people coming from metropolitan centers or that people who report having a religious background as children are generally more satisfied with their family life.

Our measurements of early experience are certainly limited but they give us very little reason to believe that an adult's satisfaction with his family life is very greatly influenced by those aspects of his early life on which we have information.

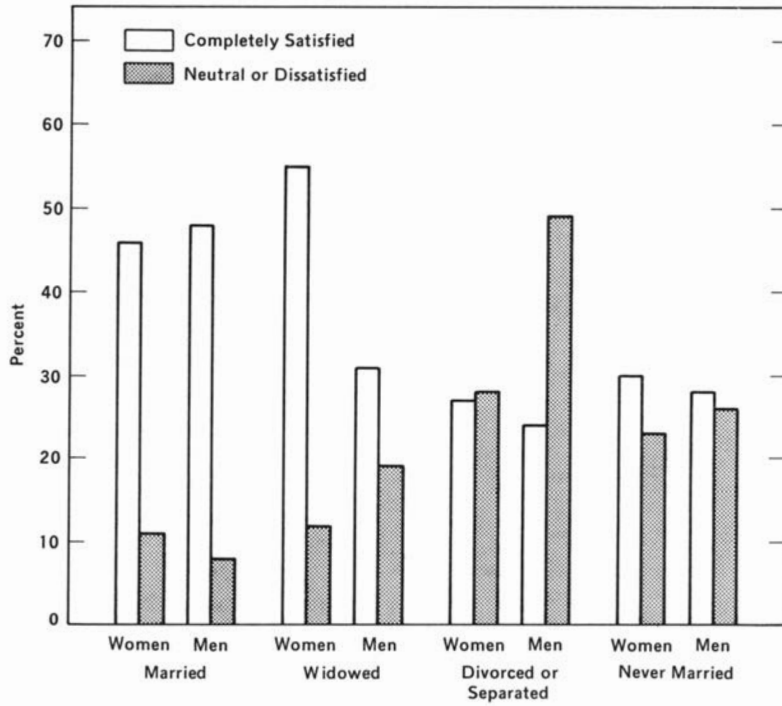
Personal Characteristics

We review again the various characteristics which we have used earlier to describe the respondent's social and personal attributes, replacing the designation of first or later marriage with a set of categories showing present marital status, including the unmarried. We see in Table 10-8 that there are modest relationships between satisfaction with family life and some of the familiar demographic measures; for example, older people tend to be more satisfied with their family life than younger people and people with little formal education are more satisfied than those with advanced schooling. These findings recall our discussion of age and education effects in Chapter 5. The most discriminating indicator of degree of satisfaction with family life, however, is the individual's marital status. If we divide the population into currently married, widowed, divorced, or separated, and never married, we find the varying reports of satisfaction with family life shown in Figure 10-3. Several features of this figure attract the eye. It is apparent immediately that married people, both women and men, are the most content with their family life. Widowed women, however, are equally positive in their appraisals, in sharp contrast to widowed men who are considerably more negative. It is not surprising to find divorced and separated people relatively dissatisfied with their family life, but the strikingly negative reports of the men in this group were not so predictable. Women and men who have never married, many of them still quite young, are also a relatively dissatisfied group, and again the men are slightly more negative. The presence of a spouse is apparently less essential to a woman's sense of satisfaction with family life than it is to a man's.[6]

We will pursue these differences between married and unmarried people in greater detail in Chapter 12 where we will divide our sample into stages of the life cycle and compare the evaluations of life experience reported by the various life cycle groups. Figure 10-3 tells us that for most adults family life implies a relationship with a marriage partner (and in most cases, children), and if that relationship does not exist, the domain of family life is not fully satisfying. We will find other indications of the im-

[6] Haavio-Mannila (1971) also reports greater satisfaction with family life among married people than unmarried people in Finland. Although she does not separate unmarried people into their component groups (widowed, divorced or separated, never married) as we have, she finds as we do that unmarried men report more dissatisfaction with their family life than unmarried women do.

Figure 10-3: Relation of Satisfaction with Family Life to Marital Status Among Women and Men



portance of marriage to the appraisal of family life in the pages which follow.

Despite the several modest relationships we have noted, the total influence of the ten variables we have included as describing present characteristics on satisfaction with family is rather small. Taken together they account for 9 percent of the variance in this measure, a somewhat higher proportion (5 percent vs. 9 percent) than that we recorded in the case of satisfaction with marriage.

Assessment of Family Relationships

Our inquiry into the way in which our respondents describe their relationships with various members of their families began with questions asking them to tell us whether their mother and father were still living, whether they felt closer to their parents than most people of their age did, and whether they felt closer to one parent than the other. As we see in Table 10-9, nearly two-thirds of the population 18 years of age and older have a

Table 10-9: Parental Relationships of Women and Men

	Women		*Men*		*Total*	
Both parents living		35%		39%		37%
Feel closer to mother	37%		22%		30%	
Feel closer to father	10		13		11	
Feel equally close to both	53		65		59	
	100%		100%		100%	
Feel closer to parents than average	42%		31%		37%	
About average	49		61		55	
Feel less close than average	9		8		8	
	100%		100%		100%	
Only mother living		19		21		20
Feel closer to mother than average	45%		36%		31%	
About average	45		55		49	
Feel less close than average	10		9		10	
	100%		100%		100%	
Only father living		5		6		5
Feel closer to father than average	31%		35%		33%	
About average	52		52		52	
Feel less close than average	17		13		15	
	100%		100%		100%	
Neither parent living		41		34		38
		100%		100%		100%
N		1259		905		2164

living parent, women less commonly than men because of their greater longevity. It is apparent that when asked to assess the "closeness" of their relationship with their parents, women and men are both very reluctant to admit that they feel less close than average. Women are especially inclined to describe themselves as "closer than average" to their parents, although this difference is not sustained in the small group whose father is living but not the mother.

When we simply compare the four major categories in Table 10-9, we find that the number of people describing themselves as completely satisfied with their family life is lowest among those whose parents are both living and highest among those whose parents are both deceased. This paradoxical finding cannot, of course, be taken to demonstrate the detrimental effect of surviving parents on the family life of the offspring but is rather an expression of the relationship of age which we have noted earlier. People whose parents are not living are very much older on the average than people whose parents are both living. More interesting is the assessment of degree of closeness to the parent expressed by the respondent. If we combine all those people who see themselves as closer than average to their parents (or to their mother or father if only one is living) and compare them to those people who describe their parental relationship as about average and to that small proportion who see their relationship to the parents (or parent) as less close than average, we find the latter expressing the least satisfaction with family life. The overall relationship is quite weak, but those people who feel themselves less close than average to their parents are clearly less positive in their evaluation of their own family life than those who see their relationship with their parents as at least average in closeness.

Most adults have a living brother or sister and, as Table 10-10 demonstrates, most have more than one. If we compare the assessments of "closeness" to these siblings to the estimates of closeness to parents (Table 10-9), we see that people are a little less inclined to describe themselves as closer than average to their siblings and a little more likely to admit being less close than average. As one might expect, these two measures are related to each other; people who feel closer than average to their parents tend also to feel closer than average to their brothers and sisters ($r = .33$). When we relate people's attitudes toward their siblings to their satisfaction with their family life, we find a pattern very similar to the one for attitudes toward parents.

Table 10-10: Number and Reported Closeness to Living Siblings

"Do you have any brothers or sisters living?"

[IF YES] "Would you say that you feel closer to your (siblings) than most people your age do, that you are about average, or that you feel less close than most?"

		Women		*Men*		*Total*
Have living sibling(s)		89%		91%		90%
One sibling	22%		19%		21%	
Two to four siblings	53		54		53	
Four or more siblings	25		27		26	
	100%		100%		100%	
Feel closer to sibling(s) than average	39%		26%		33%	
About average	50		60		55	
Feel less close than average	11		14		12	
	100%		100%		100%	
Have no living siblings		11		9		10
		100%		100%		100%

The overall relationship is very modest, but those who feel less close than average to their siblings are somewhat less satisfied with their own family life.

Those members of the sample who reported having been married at any time were asked if they had any living children and, if so, how many. Nearly nine out of ten of the sample respondents identified themselves as having been married, and nearly 90 percent of those identified themselves as parents. These latter were asked three questions and the responses of mothers and fathers to them are given in Table 10-11.

As we see, most parents admit that their children have given them problems at one time or another, although for the most part they have found parenthood enjoyable. They seldom express the wish to be free of the burdens of parenthood. These three questions were intended to sample a common domain of experience and the interrelations of the responses given (r's run from .22 to .37) indicate that in some degree they do. If we combine

Table 10-11: Distribution of Responses to Three General Questions Regarding Children

"Compared to most children would you say your children have given you a lot of problems, quite a few problems, some problems, only a few problems, or haven't they given you any problems at all?"

	A lot of problems	*Quite a few problems*	*Some problems*	*Only a few problems*	*No problems at all*	*Total*	*N*
Women	2%	4	22	42	30	100%	964
Men	1%	3	22	41	33	100%	642

"Would you say that in your case, being a (mother-father) has always been enjoyable; that it has nearly always been enjoyable; that it has usually been enjoyable; that it has sometimes been enjoyable; or that being a (mother-father) has hardly ever been enjoyable?"

	Always	*Nearly always*	*Usually*	*Sometimes*	*Hardly ever*	*Total*	*N*
Women	42%	36	16	6	*	100%	964
Men	42%	37	17	4	*	100%	642

"Have you ever wished that you could be free from the responsibilities of being a (mother-father)?" [IF YES] "Have you felt this way often or just sometimes?"

	Yes, often	*Yes, sometimes*	*No*	*Total*	*N*
Women	2%	18	80	100%	965
Men	1%	16	83	100%	642

these three questions into a single measure, we arrive at an index score which we can relate to satisfaction with family life, and we find a modest correlation ($r = .31$) with those few parents who are very negative in their assessment of their relationship with their children reporting very high levels of dissatisfaction with their family life.

We have now considered the individual's assessment of his relationships with parents, siblings, and children as they influence satisfaction with family life. We must also take account of relationship with spouse, and this we can do by utilizing the Marital Relationship Index which was described in the preceding section. This index, summarizing the individual's assessment of the degree of understanding and companionship with the spouse, does indeed relate significantly to satisfaction with family life ($r = .45$).

If we now bring these four assessment measures together we can estimate the degree to which we have accounted for individual variations in satisfaction with family life. Table 10-8 shows us that taking together the statements of relationships with parents, siblings, spouse, and children gives a multiple correlation of $R = .45$ with satisfaction with family life, and they explain some 20 percent of the variation in this measure. When we combine this set of assessment variables with the other two sets of measures we have considered (early background and personal characteristics) we can say we have accounted for 23 percent of the individual variation in satisfaction with family life, and it is clear that virtually all of the influence of the background and personal variables is mediated through the intervening assessment measures.

DISCUSSION

We obviously cannot claim that our effort to explain satisfaction with family life has been very successful. Despite the wide variety of data we have brought into this analysis, we have fallen considerably short of the proportion of variance explained which we achieved with satisfaction with marriage. Our principal conclusion from the data we have examined is that the major contributors to satisfaction with family life are the individual's relationship with his children and his spouse, a conclusion supported by the relative dissatisfaction of those single people who lack these elements of their family constellation. Parents and siblings are apparently less capable of filling the psychological space which people have in mind when they think about family life and this is especially true of men.

In retrospect it appears that the rubric "family life" may have been more broad than was desirable and that we would have done better to have concentrated on the more precisely defined concept of parenthood. In their 1957 study, Gurin, Veroff, and Feld attempted to assess satisfaction with the experience of being a parent by various indirect approaches after they found that a direct question was uniformly answered in highly positive terms. An extension of the questions we asked about relationships with children in this study to include the parent's evaluation of his performance as a mother or father or his assessment of the specific rewards and costs he had experienced in that role might have provided us a more valuable description of this area of life. Such an emphasis would have had the disadvantage of leaving out of consideration that one-fourth or so of the adult population who have no children, but it would have had the virtue of focusing the attention of the others on relatively specific aspects of their lives.

Despite the inadequacies of our approach to the domain of family life, there is no doubt that our measure of satisfaction with this domain had meaning to our respondents. Their responses to this question were one of our most effective predictors of their sense of general well-being. They also rated "a good family life" as one of the most important domains of life to them personally. Family life presents some difficulties of definition but it clearly includes components of life experience which are essential to a general understanding of quality of life.

CONCLUSIONS

We have seen in Chapter 3 that the two domains we have considered in this chapter, marriage and family life, are regarded by our respondents as among the most important of those we asked them to evaluate and that satisfaction with these domains contributes substantially to the general measure of life satisfaction. We have not succeeded in either case, however, in explaining the variance in these measures as fully as we have been able to in the case of other domains, satisfaction with neighborhood or housing, for example.

We are impressed by the limited influence of what we have called personal characteristics in determining satisfaction in these two domains. We have seen that in some domains of life there is a direct relationship between a specific personal variable and sense of satisfaction as, for example, income level in the assessment of standard of living or age in the assessment of health. Aside from the relationship of marital status with satisfaction with family life, we find very little basis in our information on early childhood or personal characteristics to account for individual differences in satisfaction in these "private" domains of life.

Of all the domains of life we inquired about, the two we have considered in this chapter would appear to be the most difficult in which to evaluate one's own experience against some external standard. In the domains of standard of living, education, or housing, for example, it is relatively easy to compare one's status with what other people have; the outside criterion is an objective one, and it is not hard for the individual to see how he departs from it. It is less clear, however, what standard he uses in evaluating his marriage or his family life, since there is no general norm in these domains to which he can compare himself.

Satisfaction in these private domains may depend more on idiosyncratic experiences and personality traits than is true of other areas of life. Had we been able to extend our inquiry into these kinds of information, we might well have achieved a fuller explanation of variance in individual satisfaction in these domains than we have in this chapter.

Chapter 11
Personal Resources and Personal Competence

In the past four chapters we have discussed determinants of satisfaction within the seven of our life domains for which our most detailed interview data were collected. The remaining domains which have figured in our predictions of individual differences in the general sense of well-being include health, education, financial situation, leisure time, and friendships.

Our investment in these remaining domains was relatively abbreviated, where interview time was concerned. Typically, for each of these domains one or two detailed questions were asked with regard to the respondent's factual situation, followed rapidly by the summary measure of satisfaction with that situation. Several considerations, varying from area to area, underlay this restricted treatment. Quite generally, of course, it would have been impossible within the compass of a single interview to probe into full details of a dozen or more such domains at once. But in addition, some areas appeared to need, or, alternatively, to permit more detailed coverage. Thus, for example, the bearing which a person's financial situation has on his perceptions of the quality of life has been the focus of an entire study in a vein very close to ours, by Strumpel and his associates (1974). Repetition seemed unnecessary. Similarly, the uses of leisure time and the reporting of health characteristics are difficult to enter without a major investment in detailed reconstructions that lay beyond our interview space. In all of these cases, we saw it as very important to elicit a general statement of satisfaction with the domains involved, since we wanted to know how such assessments fit into the total mosaic of satisfactions that we expected to constitute a general sense of well-being. But it was necessary, and in some degree appropriate, to leave our examination of these areas very limited.

At first glance, these remaining domains may seem to represent a rather mixed bag of topics. In fact, certain of them fall within the term "domain" only somewhat awkwardly. That is, all of the domains that we have previously considered in detail in the preceding chapters have at least a quasi-geographic flavor to them, as arenas of life activity. This is patently true for the four environmental domains, but it is also true in a looser sense of the social geography of role relationships where domains such as work or marriage and the family are concerned. However, a person's educational background, his financial situation, or even his health are of a somewhat different conceptual order.

Nevertheless, these remaining "domains" need not be considered as merely some residual miscellany, for they have a crucial element in common: they all reflect variations in personal resources. Indeed, in a recent essay suggesting a number of social indicators that might have some bearing on "effective life management" as a critical aspect of the quality of life, Zill (1974) lays out a framework which includes three clusters of measures: (1) indicators of environmental stress; (2) indicators of social functioning; and (3) indicators of "coping resources" available to the individual. The third cluster is illustratively expanded with the following items, under the rubric "General 'Social Assets' ":

Money
Command of goods and services
Education
Occupational status
Physical fitness
Intelligence
Social support and affection

The match between these items and our residual domains is nearly perfect. Our two measures of satisfaction with standard of living and savings, along with objective financial income, largely cover "money" and "command of goods and services." Satisfaction with the amount and utility of one's educational background, along with the objective details thereof, covers "education." Our health domain matches nicely with "physical fitness." While the family is undoubtedly the prime source of "social support and affection," an adequate network of friendships outside the family is a closely related requirement and is the substance of another of our residual domains.

Moreover, although we did not commission it as a domain *per se*, our data include estimates by our interviewers as to the intelligence of each of their respondents. Since intelligence is such an obvious personal resource and one much less than perfectly correlated with formal education, we shall naturally wish to draw these estimates into our discussion along with the other resource domains. We have other estimates by our interviewers as well concerning physical attributes of their respondents, including physical attractiveness, and it is appropriate to append these as additional personal resources. Another kind of attribute often seen as a coping resource is religious faith, and we have a measure of the religiosity professed by our respondents which may also deserve consideration.

Finally, if "time is money," then it is worth bringing time itself within our circle of personal resources. Of course all mortals are endowed with the same 24-hour day in which to live, but the proportion of that day available as a discretionary resource varies widely according to age, occupational status, and the like. Such a treatment of time as a resource may bring satisfaction with leisure time, our last residual domain, into our discussion a bit obliquely. However, we did ask questions concerning the availability of "spare time," and it is useful to consider time as a resource and an opportunity at this point.

Over the course of this chapter, then, it will be our purpose to inquire as to the ways in which greater or lesser command of these diverse personal resources contributes to variation in the global sense of well-being. In some modest degree, we shall be able to follow the general outlines of the explanatory model used in the preceding chapters, which traces influences from the "objective" situation, such as dollars earned or education completed, through satisfaction or dissatisfaction with financial situation or educational attainment, on to the apparent impact of such satisfactions on overall feelings about life. However, some of our resource terms, such as intelligence or physical attractiveness, are not accompanied by explicit satisfaction measures. It remains of considerable interest nonetheless to see what relationships, if any, they may have with a general sense of well-being.

At the same time, in dealing with these resource terms, it is useful to make one substantial modification of the prior explanatory model. One set of items described earlier (Chapter 2) provides us with a measurement of the individual's sense of personal competence. The sense of competence is itself quite significantly correlated with global measures of well-being, and it continues to add to the explanation of variations in the latter measure even after satisfactions with earlier (nonresource) domains are taken into account. People who feel personally competent are also more likely to express a greater overall satisfaction with life. If we go on to ask why some people feel more personally competent than others, it would be reasonable to imagine that a richer or poorer endowment with the kinds of resources being treated here might be an important consideration. In other words, we can ask whether possession of greater personal resources produces an enhanced sense of personal competence and by this route creates a greater sense of well-being. In effect, then, consideration of these resources will lead us to confront the "self" as the ultimately microcosmic and personal of domains.

MEASURES OF PERSONAL RESOURCES

Many of the measures on which we will depend in this chapter need little introduction, either because like annual income or years of school completed, they are obvious in themselves, or because they are measures with which we have worked in earlier chapters. A few of the resource variables, however, require initial discussion.

Interviewer Estimates of Personal Attributes

As noted above, our interviewers were asked to make several judgments concerning the respondents whom they had interviewed. Among these estimates, three in particular will concern us here as personal resources. These are estimates of our respondents' physical height, intelligence, and physical attractiveness.

Physical height was estimated simply in feet and inches. We did not, of course, see this as a particularly important variable within the study. However, since reports are made from time to time concerning the importance of physical stature for self-esteem among males, as well as relationships between height and such other resource-relevant terms as career success, it seemed worth inclusion as a potential personal resource. Interviewers were also asked to rate their respondent's "apparent intelligence" and "physical appearance" on two further 5-point scales. The labeling of these scales, along with the distributions of the total population as our interviewers rated them, are presented in Table 11-1.

In our ensuing discussions we shall tend to regard these ratings as "objective" characteristics of our respondents since they are not based on self-report, although of course they hinge on judgments which are necessarily subjective on the part of the raters. In view of the fact that the intelligence and attractiveness ratings in particular are somewhat unconventional forms of measurement, it is worthwhile reviewing their properties.

Where attractiveness is concerned, the labels of the rating scale (see Table 11-1) were designed to minimize variations by sex or age. As the data turn out, there was no marked problem of bias by sex. The mean rating accorded to male respondents differs only negligibly from that accorded to females. Our interviewers, in vast majority female themselves, may well have been willing to make slightly sharper discriminations among female respondents, since some 60 percent of males were placed in the middle

Table 11-1: Interviewer Ratings of Respondent Intelligence and Physical Attractiveness

		Percent of total sample
M3. Rate R's physical appearance:		
(1) Strikingly handsome or beautiful		3%
(2) Good-looking (above average for age and sex)		26
(3) Average looks for age and sex		56
(4) Quite plain (below average for age and sex)		13
(5) Homely		2
		100%
	N	2144
M5. Rate R's apparent intelligence:		
(1) Very high		6%
(2) Above average		30
(3) Average		54
(4) Below average		9
(5) Very low		1
		100%
	N	2155

or "average" category, as opposed to only 52 percent of females, with almost all of the excess of women rated other than "average" appearing symmetrically one step above or one below that middle rank. In view of the fact that these interviewers are disproportionately although not exclusively white, it is reassuring to note that the estimates of physical attractiveness of blacks and whites are distributed almost identically along the scale.

There is more noteworthy variation where age is concerned, despite our efforts toward standardization by age. Ratings of striking beauty or handsomeness are quite heavily concentrated among respondents under 35, and the rest of the rating distribution tends to show steady deterioration of attractiveness with growing age. Quite naturally, this fact in itself does not call the validity of the ratings into question, since by prevailing cultural standards such a trend is only to be expected. However, at some points where we wish to think of physical attractiveness as a matter which is relative to one's general age peers, it becomes important to control these ratings explicitly by age.

In view of the obvious causal nexus involved, it is not surprising that the ratings of respondent intelligence show a substantial association with education. Nevertheless, our observed correlation of $r = .56$ is not so great as to render it useless to consider intelligence as a variable apart from education. Some people with very limited educations are rated as above average in intelligence, while some people with claims to relatively advanced formal education strike our interviewers as being of average intelligence or less. Indeed, we shall see later that certain differential effects are associated with intelligence as opposed to education. It might be noted as well that the distributions of intelligence ratings for males and females are almost identical.

Although neither the attractiveness nor the intelligence ratings show any unsettling distortions in their demographic distributions or interrelationships with other attributes, this fact in itself is no very strong proof of the reliability or validity of these measurements. Perhaps the most germane evidence on these matters, however, can be drawn from our small reinterview sample, where interviewers were asked for the same ratings of the same respondents again. In a majority of cases, the same interviewers were assigned to given respondents, so that the correlations between successive ratings from the same respondents mainly address the question as to the reliability of these estimates in the eye of the same beholder. Nevertheless, we dispose of a fair number of instances in which the second ratings for a given respondent were made by a different interviewer, so that we can get some rough sense as to the degree to which these assessments depend on the idiosyncratic tastes and evaluative standards of particular observers.

Since respondent height depends on fairly clear-cut physical cues that are rather different from the seemingly ambiguous social judgments of intelligence and attractiveness, it would be natural to expect that the interviewer estimates of stature would show a closer correspondence over two ratings, whether the interviewer happened to be the same or different. Actually, while none of these ratings shows as much stability as one would like, the more questionable social judgments compete reasonably well with the judgments of height or, for that matter, other interviewer estimates based on physical cues, such as the rough age of surrounding dwelling units or the quality of upkeep of yards in the neighborhood. For example, when the same interviewers made the ratings, the height judgments show a correlation of $r = .74$, while both intelligence and attractiveness show values of .71. Where the interviewers were different, the correlations decline as would be expected, although not precipitously for either height or intelligence (to about .60). Only in the case of attractiveness does the correlation drop into a very marginal range ($r = .41$), suggesting a considerable admixture of the idiosyncratic in such judgments. Although it is clear that the intelligence ratings represent a more solid measure than the attractiveness ratings, we shall keep the latter measure in view within our portfolio of personal resources.[1]

[1] It might be kept in mind that data cited from reinterviews involving different interviewers rest on less than sixty cases, and hence are quite unstable. Indeed, there is reason to expect that the correlations given might have been higher if available for

As noted, we will expect to treat intelligence and physical attractiveness as "objective" characteristics of the individual along with height, income, and education, despite the fact that they are being subjectively estimated by outside observers. Unlike income or education, however, we shall also treat them as relatively ascribed characteristics, or ones which the individual must largely accept as "given." They are not, of course, immutable in the absolute sense of being totally innate. It is likely, for example, that an accumulation of education lends an aura of intelligence to the social impression that an individual makes, and it is undoubtedly true that long-term attention to physical care and grooming can have an important impact on apparent physical attractiveness. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to suppose that genetic factors strongly influence both of these attributes and that their malleability is severely limited by comparison with virtually all of the other resource items with which we shall deal save, of course, for physical height.

Health

We shall also treat health as a "given" or prior factor in the same relative sense. Our measure of health was elicited by self-report, in response to a simple question "Do you have any particular problems with your health?" For the 28 percent of the sample who professed problems, we went on to ask: "Would you say that these problems keep you from doing a lot of things you wish you could do, just certain things, or can you do almost anything you wish?" The portion of the sample asked the follow-up question divided roughly into thirds over the triad of responses offered.

Of course, much attention has been given to the development of a variety of detailed indicators reflecting the status of the national health (Goldsmith, 1972). At this point, well-validated measures of health based on personal reports do not exist, although intensive studies are going forward toward improving capabilities in this regard.[2] By comparison with such studies, our single question is naturally simplistic. Moreover, since we were not able to carry our respondents through a list of specific symptoms as is commonly done in epidemiological studies, it is difficult to establish clear links between this single item and other work on the subject. Nonetheless,

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the sample as a whole. This is so because as a matter of chance, persons given extreme ratings in the first interview on the 5-point scales for either intelligence or especially attractiveness were considerably underrepresented on the different-interviewer condition for the reinterview, by comparison with their proportions in the full sample. Such a truncation of variance has the effect of diminishing artificially the relevant correlations given.

[2] Various members of the Institute for Social Research have an increasing interest in health as a major area for research. Several studies are projected which could help to put this domain into better perspective, by showing how health relates to other measures of the quality of life.

where empirical comparisons are possible, the responses do appear to behave as they should.

An estimate reported from the Health Interview Survey of the United States Public Health Service suggests that some 16 percent of persons 17 years or older have "limitations of activity due to chronic conditions" (Namey and Wilson, 1972). In our sample, about 11 percent of persons 18 years and older say that they are kept from doing "a lot of things," and when those reporting restriction from at least "certain things" is added in, the figure mounts to almost 19 percent. Thus the gross responses appear to fall in a very reasonable range. Similarly, the major demographic variations underlying these responses fit the evidence from more intensive studies. As might be expected, the incidence of health problems advances rapidly in older age. The proportions of our sample who reported problems preventing them from at least "certain" activities were very small among people under 45 years of age, but rose sharply thereafter and exceeded 40 percent among those 65 years of age or older. A less strong but still prominent relationship accompanies income differences, with reported health problems increasing sharply as one moves below the median income level. Such age and income patterns are both very similar to those reported by the Health Interview Survey.[3]

In any event, our single-item measure, with its stress on restriction or incapacitation, is well suited to our treatment of good health as a personal resource, at least in the sense of functional health, or a state of perceived fitness which does not set limits on desired activities.[4]

Moreover, the broad time frame implied by the question wording should have excluded from the set of people with health problems those persons who might have been temporarily and exceptionally "under the weather," in favor of those whose problems were more chronic and, in the old sense, "constitutional." Hence it is appropriate to include the health measurement

[3] One minor discrepancy is that the Health Interview Survey finds women slightly less likely than men to report limitations of activity, whereas in our sample 20 percent of women report incapacity for at least "certain things," compared to only 18 percent for men. On the other hand, a more restricted survey in California (Belloc, Breslaw, and Hochstim, 1971), showing 15 percent of its sample with some degree of disability, also shows slightly more women reporting disability than men. All of these differences are small and within sampling error.

[4] There is evidence that people fail to report chronic health conditions with any high degree of accuracy or completeness, by comparison with their formal medical records. However, the accuracy of these reports is maximized when the chronic conditions are such as to have high visibility and impact on the daily lives of the respondents (National Center for Health Statistics, 1967). Various medically identifiable chronic conditions that do not impinge significantly on daily life are sure to be vastly underreported with a simple item of the type which we used, although this does not necessarily damage the utility of the item for our purposes.

along with height, intelligence, and physical attractiveness as reflecting a resource over which the individual has very little short-term control.

We shall distinguish between these four relatively ascribed characteristics on one hand and somewhat more nearly achieved resources like education and income on the other. Practically speaking, of course, years of formal education is effectively a fixed characteristic for all but the youngest cohorts in our sample, so that it fits very close to the physical or constitutional characteristics where short-term control is concerned. Nonetheless, as a conventional status criterion it is linked closely with wealth and income as resources, and we shall consider it as fitting most comfortably with them.

Time, Friends, and Faith

The other three resources which we shall consider as a third set are by and large still less fixed or ascribed and more situational than any of the preceding. The fact that we consider them as resources in our treatment here does not necessarily imply that we expect them to have strong effects on feelings of either personal competence or well-being. However, they are often mentioned as personal resources, so that it is useful to see what role they may play when laid against resources of other types.

Our investment in the domain of personal religiosity was cursory. Beyond rather standard "objective" information concerning current creed and denominational affiliation, recent frequency of church attendance, and childhood religious instruction, the central question posed was: "In general, how religious minded would you say you are?" Some 15 percent of the sample chose the "very" response, another 21 percent said they were "more than average," 42 percent described themselves as "average," 15 percent as "less than average," and slightly less than 7 percent called themselves "not at all religious minded." In accord with other findings, responses differ rather clearly by age and sex. Women are half again as likely as men to consider themselves "very" religious, and only half as likely to say they are "not at all" religious. Only 8 percent of those under 25 place themselves in the most religious category, as opposed to 29 percent among those 75 and older. There is some tendency for reported religiosity to decline with increasing education, although the trend is weak and irregular and among the most highly educated—college completion and beyond—there is both the largest proportion of "very" religious as well as the largest proportion of "not at all" religious.

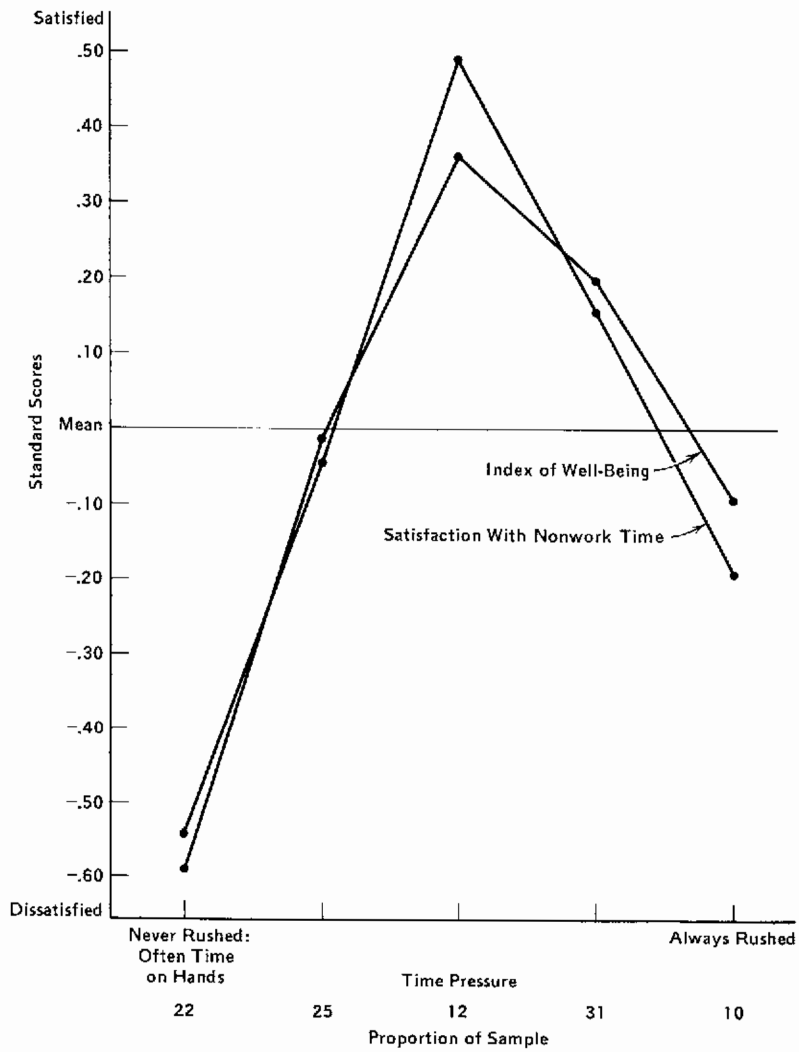
The religiosity variable shows correlations of some strength in the expected direction with other items like childhood religious instruction and frequency of church attendance. However, it seems to strike closest to what one would think of as religious faith, and we shall use it alone as our indicator of that personal resource.

The availability of discretionary time as a resource, or the absence of extreme pressure on time use, was measured by a pair of items originally designed to serve as an indicator of the tempo of life. After some questions on spare-time use, respondents were asked "In general, how do you feel about your time—would you say you *always* feel rushed even to do the things you have to do, only *sometimes* feel rushed, or *almost never* feel rushed?" Those who did not report always feeling rushed were then asked: "How often would you say you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with—*quite often,* just *now and then,* or *almost never?*" Responses to these two items may be arranged to form a time pressure continuum, from those who always feel rushed to those who almost never do and often have time on their hands.

If we insist on forcing the data into a simple linear relationship, then we find that having a relative abundance of free time actually shows a faint *negative* relationship ($r = -.07$) with the individual's satisfaction with his spare time. This is not, however, particularly astonishing, since having much time on one's hands may well be as unsatisfying as always feeling harassed to keep up with the time demands. Hence we might expect an optimum point of satisfaction to occur somewhere between the poles of the time pressure/time availability continuum. Figure 11-1 shows that this expectation is well borne out by the data. The proper prediction from this continuum is indeed curvilinear for both satisfaction with spare time and for the general sense of well-being, and the relationship cast in this form is considerably stronger (η's of .27 and .26, respectively). Thus where psychological satisfaction is concerned, a superabundance of discretionary time is no state to covet. In fact, people always rushed even to do what they have to do, while less satisfied than the average, are much less dissatisfied with their nonwork time or life generally than the nearly a quarter of the population under no time pressure. Parkinson's Law that work expands to fill the available time may be more of a human need than a human foible. Certainly lack of knowledge as to what to do with discretionary time in segments of the population that have an abundance of it seems fully as much a problem as severe time pressure in other segments.

Nevertheless, time remains something of a prized resource for many in the population. For several of our resource variables, for example, we asked questions as to felt frustrations in acquiring or exercising the resource. In this vein we asked "Are there things you wish you could do in your spare time or on vacations that you can't do for one reason or another?" Only about one-half of the population said that there were, and of this one-half we asked, "What are the main things that keep you from doing these things?" While a variety of responses were coded, including difficulties such as age, health, lack of necessary skills, and the like, by far the two most fre-

Figure 11-1: Variations in the Index of Well-Being and Satisfaction with Nonwork Time as a Function of Reported Time Pressure



quent "blockages" cited were financial and simple lack of time given other responsibilities. Hence we shall continue to treat time as a resource, although we shall recognize that for some people, there is such a thing as too much of it.

The last domain which will figure among our resources is that of friendships. Beyond the question in standard form concerning the general sense of satisfaction derived from friendships, we asked only two further items bearing on the subject. The first was: "How about your friendships: would you say that you have a good many very good friends that you could count on if you had any sort of trouble, an average number, or not too many very good friends?" As we often find in questions using this format, the number of people seeing themselves as above average (38 percent) is considerably larger than the number who see themselves as below average (19 percent). Nevertheless, the question is well-worded to gauge the abundance of friendships as a resource, and in particular, a "coping resource" in Zill's sense. As we might expect, it is the people with the largest number of friends who are the most satisfied with their friendships, and the relationship is quite substantial ($r = .38$).

The second question asked: "How interested would you say you are in meeting new people and making new friends? Would you say you are very interested, somewhat interested, or not very interested?" Most people express some interest in meeting new people and making new friends, although only about one-half of these are willing to describe themselves as "very interested." We might assume in advance that people anxious to make new friends would be disproportionately those who are relatively dissatisfied with their current friendships. In point of fact, however, the relationship between such motivations and friendship satisfaction is quite limited ($r = .13$) and runs in the opposite direction: people who are most interested in new friendships are also most satisfied with their current attachments.

When in Table 11-2 we examine the behavior of the friendship satisfaction measure as a joint function of the current number of good friends and the interest in new friendships, the reasons for this seeming anomaly

Table 11-2: Friendship Satisfaction, by Number of Friends and Interest in New Friendships

		Interest in making new friends		
		Very interested	*Somewhat interested*	*Not very interested*
How many very good friends?	A good many	+.53[a]	+.29	+.11
		(528)	(250)	(41)
	Average number	−.08	−.14	−.06
		(347)	(482)	(97)
	Not many	−.89	−.56	−.40
		(121)	(181)	(98)

[a] The cell entries are standard scores above and below the mean value reported for friendship satisfaction in the total sample. The numbers of cases for each cell are presented in parentheses.

becomes quite apparent. In the first place, people with the most close friends are also the most interested in making new friendships. Only one-quarter of those respondents who said they had fewer friends than average described themselves as "very interested" in making additional friends while the corresponding figure among people with more friends than average was nearly two-thirds. Clearly friends are a resource prized quite differently by different people, and the data suggest a very general trait of "gregariousness" leading some people to make many friends and to be very receptive to still more, as opposed to a reclusive inclination to withdraw or at least limit such relationships.

Thus the meaning of the question as to interest in making new friends has quite a different thrust, according to whether the respondent is highly gregarious or not. For gregarious persons who already have many friends, high interest in meeting new ones is no sign of loneliness or dissatisfaction with the current friendship network. These people are in fact happier about their current friendships than anyone else. People whose lack of interest in making new friends marks them as more reclusive draw less extreme satisfaction from the friendships they do have, as might be expected. But the people whose marked interest in having more friendships really is a sign of loneliness or some other inadequacy in their friendships are those in the lower left-hand cell of Table 11-2. It is among these people that the sharpest relative dissatisfaction with the domain of friendships is expressed.

Adding the question about interest in new friendships to reports of the number of current friendships raises our capacity to predict friendship satisfaction only very marginally, however.[5] Moreover, the report of number of friends conceptually fits our needs as a measurement of a resource very well when taken alone. Therefore we shall depend on this single item as our indicator of variations in the friendship resource in our subsequent examinations.

THE AGGREGATION OF RESOURCES

Now that we have surveyed our full portfolio of measures bearing on personal resources, another obvious question is worth addressing before we begin to examine the impact of these resources on feelings of personal competence or a more global sense of well-being. This question has to do with the way such diverse resources may tend to overlap for individuals in the adult American population. We saw in Chapter 5, for example, that while most domain satisfactions were negatively correlated with education at a

[5] The simple relationship between number of friends and friendship satisfaction of $r = .38$ only moves to $\eta = .40$ when the joint pattern of Table 11-2 with its statistical interaction is taken into account in predicting satisfaction.

faint level, the poorly educated did express relative dissatisfaction with their health and financial situations as well as with their educational backgrounds. It is obvious that people enjoying the resource of relatively extended education also enjoy higher levels of income in this and probably all societies, and it is not surprising to learn that they report fewer health problems also.

However, we have deliberately assembled a very disparate set of potential personal resources, ranging from physical stature to abundance of friendships, and it is useful to know whether some of these more diverse resources tend to co-occur at anything like the rate that wealth and education do.

A simple way to address this question is to examine a matrix in which each of our resource variables has been correlated with each other resource across the total population. We shall refrain from presenting such a matrix, however, because it inevitably includes a number of entries which are quite misleading. For example, one of the more striking entries in such a matrix is a positive correlation of .43 between the respondent's physical height and his personal (as opposed to family) income. However, this substantial correlation arises simply because males are typically taller than females, and the vast majority of people with no personal incomes in the country are women. When the height-income relationship is reviewed separately by sex, it falls to a very flat zero among women taken alone and remains but a meager, if statistically significant, trace relationship ($r = .10$) among men. Even this trace relationship for men remains somewhat suspect, since physical stature regresses in some degree among the elderly whose personal incomes have also declined through retirement.[6] Perhaps in the grand sweep of the evolution of the human species on the planet, the "raw" correlation between height and income of .43 is not exactly a spurious one, since the physically taller sex developed certain customary roles in the deep past which, within one stage of a market economy, has led to a much greater likelihood of responsibility for monetary income. However, for our purposes, this intrusion of conventional sex roles is not a dreadfully interesting fact, and the raw correlation is totally misleading unless this intrusion is taken into account.

In point of fact, we have found it most useful to examine the way resources tend to agglutinate (to use Lasswell's term) within categories of sex and age. With these latter variables controlled, there are perhaps a half-dozen points of very substantial overlap between the specific resource terms which we have commissioned for use, most of these intersections being fairly obvious ones. The strongest intercorrelation is that between estimates of the

[6] Actually, taking account of age differences among men does reduce the height-income relationship still further, but only by a tiny margin. With age controlled, the relationship remains +.08 and significant in the statistical sense.

respondent's intelligence and his educational background, which continues to show values between .50 and .60 even when age and sex are held constant. Most of the other points of considerable overlap involve the nexus between education and family or personal income.[7] The only other strong intersection (average correlation of about .46) is that between estimates of intelligence and physical attractiveness. This is a less obvious relationship. It undoubtedly is somewhat enhanced in strength by the fact that both estimates are social impressions formed of the respondent by the same observer, although as we have seen, a second observer forms very nearly the same impressions. The intelligence-attractiveness correlation appears to advance significantly with age among women, being $r = .38$ for those under 35, .44 for those between 35 and 65, and .52 for the elderly. It seems likely that women with numerous other resources are more successful in limiting the natural decline of youthful beauty than women under less advantaged circumstances, and undoubtedly the appearance of high intelligence is itself a facet of an older woman's attractiveness. For men, the same correlation shows a steady but slight decline with advancing age.

While these are the outstanding points of resource overlap in such a matrix after age and sex are taken into account, it turns out that there are no significantly negative correlations between any of the resources in our first two sets—the relatively ascribed physical attributes and health or the education-income cluster. Indeed, apart from physical height where women are concerned, most of these relationships, while not large, run above the barest trace levels of statistical significance (i.e., above .07 or .08). Thus, for example, even a rather dubious resource like physical height shows correlations of .14 with estimated intelligence for males, .20 with physical attractiveness, .17 with education, and .12 with family income. Hence even beyond the obvious intersections there is some modest tendency for all resources of these types to accumulate or at least co-occur.

When we draw into view the third set of resources, including time, faith, and friendships, however, the sense of aggregation is considerably reduced. In fact, if we use our measure of abundance of uncommitted time in its pure form, it shows significant negative correlations with virtually all other resources. The strongest negative correlations naturally occur between time abundance and personal earnings for people under retirement age, although negative correlations beyond a trace level also occur in connection with other resources like intelligence, physical attractiveness, health, and education. Once again, having more time than one knows what to do with is a liability associated with poor health, limited education, less than

[7] Quite naturally, the correlation between family income and personal income is much greater for males ($r = .72$) than for females, although the latter correlation remains positive and significant ($r = .25$).

average physical attractiveness, and the like. On the other hand, when we shift our time measure to its optimized version (where an overabundance of free time is recognized as a liability), the correlations with all other resources turn positive again.

The main positive correlation between resources of this third type involves friends and religious faith, although this association is quite weak (*r* of about .12). Other modest positive relationships involving the number of close friends are with good health and physical attractiveness, the latter particularly for women. Few other links between friends or religious faith and other resources are significant, save in isolated sex or age groups.

All told, then, there is considerable evidence of a rather generalized aggregation of resources in these data, although apart from the most intense overlaps involving education, income, and intelligence and perhaps physical attractiveness, the co-occurrence of resources remains quite modest, particularly where time, friends, or faith are concerned.

Perhaps the most striking further conclusion to be drawn from these analyses is that there is a marked tendency for resource aggregation to be most heavily concentrated in the middle years of life (defined here as the period between 35 and 65). The most dramatic example is provided by the relationship between the male respondent's education and his personal income. This correlation (*r*) is merely .02 for young men, rises to a value of .58 in the prime of life, and falls off again to .24 after retirement. While this is an extreme illustration, the same pattern repeats itself with surprising frequency across the whole matrix. In almost one-half of all age comparisons over the more than one hundred offered by the matrix within sex groups, resource concentration is highest during the prime of life, as opposed to the one in three ratio to be expected by chance alone, and the proportion would go much higher still if a few of the less conventional resources like physical height, time, and friendships were excluded. As an illustration, health is correlated with physical attractiveness at the level of merely .06 for young men and .15 for young women and .03 and .18 for elderly men and women, respectively. In the prime of life, however, the same correlation is .22 for men and .26 for women.

Most of these patterns have very reasonable interpretations. Education is not highly correlated with income among young males, because some of the more highly educated among them are still getting their educations or are at the bottom rungs of "escalator" careers in which their educational investments will only begin to reap handsome financial dividends after age 35. Similarly, the vagaries of retirement circumstances loosen somewhat the links between original educational status and current income. We need not, however, review all of the component processes which tend so frequently to produce peak overlaps between resources in the middle years. The important point for our purposes is simply that most resources other than physical stature, time and friendships are in fact most heavily concentrated or stratified during the prime of life, an observation worth keeping in mind in our subsequent inquiries.

That resources do tend to show some degree of concentration has implications for any predictions we may make from the possession of resources to other states. Most particularly, it means that when we muster a substantial number of resources for such predictions, as we are doing in this chapter, the overall level of prediction with all resources taken at once will be less strong than one might deduce from a knowledge of the individual relationships taken alone, as there is a certain amount of redundancy in prediction from one resource to another.

THE PREDICTION OF PERSONAL COMPETENCE

Before asking how the differential possession of our diverse resources affects feelings of global well-being, we shall ask the obvious question concerning the impact of resources on feelings of personal competence that are a little more particular than is satisfaction with life as a whole. Such feelings of personal competence are, not surprisingly, rather strongly associated with sense of global well-being ($r = .35$), and if we had constituted a domain of the "self," it would undoubtedly figure as one of our most important in determining overall well-being.[8]

Our measure of personal competence is a scale based on four items having to do with the degree of control that the individual feels he can exercise over the terms of his life:

(1) Have you usually felt pretty sure your life would work out the way you want it to, or have there been times when you haven't been sure about it?
(2) Do you think it's better to plan your life a good way ahead, or would you say life is too much a matter of luck to plan ahead very far?
(3) When you do make plans ahead, do you usually get to carry things out the way you expected, or do things usually come up to make you change your plans?
(4) Some people feel they can run their lives pretty much the way they want

[8] Had we constituted such a domain, the central concept would have been self-esteem rather than merely feelings of personal competence or efficacy, although the latter variable must be seen as a major component of self-esteem. Work by Andrews and Withey (1974) suggests that satisfaction with self ("self-esteem") may be as potent a predictor of global feelings of well-being as satisfaction with any other single domain. While this is not true for our measure of personal competence, which is no more than a major portion of self-esteem, it still ranks high among our diverse domain satisfaction measures in its strength of prediction of the Index of Well-Being.

to; others feel the problems of life are sometimes too big for them. Which one are you most like?

Responses to these items show a good deal of internal consistency, and the flavor of the questions is such that it is obvious to hypothesize that people commanding more of the resources we have in view would also have a stronger sense of control over their lives. Our main interest is in seeing how various types of resources contribute to these feelings of competence.

Table 11-3 provides a convenient summary of these relationships for the adult population as a whole. Each of the ten resources taken separately

Table 11-3: Prediction of Personal Competence, by Sets of Personal Resources (Multiple Classification Analysis)

			Beta coefficients			
		Eta coeffi-cients	*Ascribed resources only*	*Achieved resources only*	*Other current resources only*	*All three sets of resources*
Ascribed resources						
M5.	Intelligence	.26	.22			.14
G10a.	Health	.21	.16			.12
M3.	Attractiveness (age-controlled)	.16	.05			.04
M4.	Height	.10	.09			.07
Achieved resources						
G12.	Family income	.26		.17		.13
E1.	Education	.26		.17		.10
G13.	Respondent's income	.19		.07		.06
Other current resources						
G4a.	Time	.16			.15	.10
H1.	Number of friends	.15			.14	.14
G8.	Religious faith	.10			.08	.05
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)			9.6%	8.9%	4.7%	14.7%

shows significant association with personal competence, although in the case of one of the weakest relationships—that involving religious faith—the nature of the association is actually negative. That is, people who express relatively little religious faith tend to express stronger feelings of personal competence, a fact which might well be expected given the atmosphere of control over life lying outside one's hands that is characteristic both of many religious views and of the less personally competent alternatives in the original scale.

Nevertheless, when all ten resources are brought to bear at once on the prediction of personal competence feelings, they only account for a rather modest fraction of the variance (some 15 percent) in those feelings. This is notably less than one might assume from a knowledge of the ten separate associations, although as we have seen, the aggregation or overlap across many of these resources is fairly substantial.

The final column gives some sense of the size of relationships of each resource with personal competence after the overlap with all the other nine resources is removed. In some instances, these entries risk being misleading and deserve special comment. Thus, for example, the *beta* of .13 for family income cannot be taken as representing the general impact of command over financial resources upon feelings of personal competence, since this is the effect which still remains after the respondent's own income, along with eight other resources is controlled. Since the two income variables are strongly correlated among males in particular, the *beta* for family income taken alone must be cautiously interpreted. Similarly, many would think of intelligence and education as a common nexus of personal skills and capacities, so that controlling either in evaluating the other threatens to be inappropriate. It remains of interest, of course, that intelligence appears to make a stronger contribution to feelings of personal competence than does formal education, when pitted against one another in this form. Nevertheless, if we are interested in the more general skill nexus, we should come close to adding the two *betas* together, just as we might for the two income variables. Reviewing the table in this form leads to the impression that command of financial resources and cognitive skills are the most important sources of personal competence.

At the same time, at least one other resource of a less obvious sort that retains substantial importance is simply the number of close friends a person feels that he has. This resource does not stand out particularly in the simple relationships (*etas*), but it is independent enough of all of the other resources that controlling for them does almost nothing to diminish its estimated impact. Even when a variety of other personal resources are taken into account, the sense that one commands considerable social support appears to have more than an inconsequential impact on feelings of control over one's life.

Another aspect of Table 11-3 that might be misleading is the fact that it refers to the adult population as a whole and thereby fails to take into account systematic variations from one population grouping to another. Often it is true, as we have noted in earlier chapters, that such lines of internal variation are slight. However, this is not true in this instance, and it is important to recognize a number of points at which these data are no more than averages which conceal significant differences by sex or stages of the life cycle.

A good example is provided by physical stature as a resource. Height appears to have only a relatively limited impact on feelings of personal competence in Table 11-3, and as an average over the whole population this estimate is, of course, correct. However, among the half of the sample which is female, the association between height and sense of competence is very negligible indeed. Most of the association which registers in Table 11-3 springs from the half of the sample which is male, and if women were removed, the stature of males would emerge as a more prominent resource. It would not compete with the most important resources, such as intelligence or income, but with other resources controlled, it would lie in the same range for men with time, education, and even health.

Sex differences in the significance of physical attractiveness as a resource in shaping feelings of personal competence are less noteworthy than for stature, but attractiveness does show a somewhat greater weight for women than for men, particularly in the early years of adulthood and after the prime of life. The other marked sex differences underlying Table 11-3 involve the income variables. For a woman, the sense of personal competence depends very little upon the magnitude of her personal earnings, while the dependence for males is much greater than the overall table would suggest. On the other hand, the dependence of women upon total family income for feelings of personal competence actually outruns that for males, particularly outside the prime of life. While many of these patterns can be taken as routine reflections of values associated with conventional sex roles, in a longer run they may show evolutionary change which will make them fascinating social indicators in and of themselves.

There are also quite significant age variations in the degree to which diverse resources appear to contribute to these feelings of personal competence. Some of these variations are entirely obvious. Health concerns have little impact on the sense of competence among the young, probably because there is such limited variation in health prior to age 40 or so. This means in turn, however, that if Table 11-3 were limited to persons over 40, the importance of health for feelings of competence, while still not matching resources like intelligence or income, would be substantially magnified.

We have already noted that the classic resources, such as skills and income, tend to become concentrated in the prime years of life into a sharper division of "haves" and "have-nots" than is true at earlier or later ages. Therefore it may not be surprising that these classic resources also have a much more noteworthy impact on feelings of personal competence in the prime years (35-65) than they do either before or after. This is not to say that such resources are of negligible importance for the young or the old. However, a version of Table 11-3 restricted to the prime of life would show the financial and intelligence/education resources to be even more crucial relative to other resources than would be deduced for the sample as a whole, whereas among the young and the old, these classic resources fade considerably in their importance. They do not fade into total obscurity but become matched in importance at these ages by several of the other less classic resources.

It is self-evident that among the old, health would compete with the classic resources of finances and skills as a governor of the sense of competence, and indeed it does, with considerable success. It may be less obvious what other types of resources loom as exceptionally important among the young. Here a very prime role appears to be played by friendships. In fact, much of the rather strong role played by friendships in our total sample estimates (Table 11-3) would be eroded if people under 35 were removed from the data. Indeed, if we pay attention only to absolute differences, friendships are more important determinants of feelings of competence for young males than any of our other nine resources, and this is very nearly the case for young women as well. Later in life, the importance of friendships for competence declines. Among men, the decline is precipitous, and after age 35 the importance of friendships for males appears quite limited. Some decline is also visible for women, although it is much more gradual, and friendships still rate as a reasonably important source of female feelings of competence over the rest of the life span.

The significance of friendships for the young is of considerable interest, because it is a much less obvious phenomenon than such trends as the importance of health in later years. It also fits with other recent findings achieved by rather different methods. For example, Feather (1972), in studying explicit values by items of the Rokeach type applied across the life-span, has noted that among the sharper discrepancies in such values by age is a particular premium put by the young on friendship, relative to the same valuation in later years. In our case, we are not dealing with values as explicitly self-reported, but rather with an indirect estimation of the importance of the resource of friendship for feelings of personal competence. Yet the results appear entirely parallel.

To summarize, then, while Table 11-3 is of interest in its own right, it is somewhat less lively than it would be within segments of the population more homogeneously defined in terms of age and sex. This does not mean that even with such homogeneous subpopulations we would arrive at a point where our resource variables would explain a lion's share of the variation in feelings of personal competence. Clearly there are other important dynamics, probably of a personality sort, which shape these feelings in addition to the influence of our diverse resources. But it is to suggest that weights which might be assigned to various resources differ quite significantly by sex and stages in the life span, and some of the limited explanatory capacity reflected in Table 11-3 stems from the averaging of these patterns across the population.

PERSONAL RESOURCES AND FEELINGS OF WELL-BEING

We can clarify the way in which resources and personal competence fit in the nexus of well-being somewhat further if we examine the direct relationships between our several resource variables and our most general Index of Well-Being. Table 11-4 is organized in a form which is exactly parallel to Table 11-3, save that now the variable being predicted from resource variations is the general sense of well-being. Once again, the table is based on the total sample, rather than some more homogeneous segment of it.

In several of its features, Table 11-4 resembles Table 11-3. In general, if we look at the simple relationships (*etas*) within each set of resources,

Table 11-4: Prediction of the Index of Well-Being, by Sets of Personal Resources (Multiple Classification Analysis)

			Beta coefficients			
		Eta coefficients	*Ascribed resources only*	*Achieved resources only*	*Other current resources only*	*All three sets of resources*
Ascribed resources						
M5.	Intelligence	.18	.15			.13
G10a.	Health	.17	.16			.13
M3.	Attractiveness (age-controlled)	.11	.06			.03
M4.	Height	.06	.07			.05
Achieved resources						
G12.	Family income	.17		.19		.14
E1.	Education	.10		.08		.10
G13.	Personal income	.07		.04		.04
Other current resources						
H1.	Number of friends	.27			.24	.23
G4a.	Time	.26			.24	.21
G8.	Religious faith	.14			.10	.11
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)			5.3%	2.5%	13.5%	18.0%

we find almost exactly the same ranking of variables, whether we are predicting to personal competence or to well-being. Moreover, resources whose weights lose ground when the effects of the other resources are controlled (*betas*, compared to *etas*) are much the same, although this is a necessary consequence of the varying background correlations between resources, which are constant for the two tables.

However, there are several important differences which are illuminating. One is that we can actually explain more of the variance in feelings of well-being from a knowledge of these resources taken together than we explain in feelings of personal competence. At an earlier point we expressed an interest in ascertaining the degree to which the impact of resources upon feelings of well-being was mediated through enhanced feelings of personal competence or control over one's life. The fact that a higher level of explanation is attained when we predict directly from resources to well-being than we find predicting to personal competence already assures us that there are significant effects of a direct sort from resource variation to the sense of well-being which are not being mediated through the feelings of personal competence.

At the same time, detailed comparisons push us toward a more differentiated verdict. Perhaps the most striking difference between the two tables emerges from the differential success of each set of resources in accounting for either personal competence or well-being. When we are predicting to feelings of personal competence (Table 11-3), the relatively ascribed or fixed resources tend to account for much of the variance that can be associated with any of the resources at all. When we are predicting to a current sense of well-being (Table 11-4), however, the ascribed resources account for much less of the variance than what we have called "current," or more flexible, resources.

Although this contrapuntal pattern does not, strictly speaking, guarantee such a conclusion, further analyses compatible with the pattern suggest that in at least a rough way, the intermediary role of personal competence in the linkage between resource possession and current feelings of well-being tends to be most important where the most "primordial" resources are concerned and is of little importance indeed for relatively current resources, whose impact on the sense of well-being is entirely direct. Perhaps the extreme case of the primordial resource is physical height, and it is this instance in which the dependence on transmission through feelings of personal competence seems most complete. That is, apart from the small contribution which height appears to make in enhancing the sense of personal competence (chiefly for males), along with the fact that personal competence is substantially related to well-being, there seems to be no other connection between height and the ultimate sense of well-being. Physical attractiveness approximates the same model, although somewhat less completely.

Such patterning makes a good deal of intuitive sense if we are willing to assume, as is entirely probable, that the foundations for feelings of personal competence or a lack thereof are laid down rather early in life. This is not to argue that the degree of competence a person feels in controlling his life is immutable in adulthood or totally insulated from the influences of later good fortunes or disasters. But it is to suggest that such confidence or doubt may be quite durable for individuals over time, at least by contrast with perceptions of well-being, which probably are somewhat more situational. And it is to suggest that the roots of such confidence or doubt are engendered early in life when the influence of relatively primitive resources is probably most potent. Later on, such resources have little impact on the global sense of well-being, save for the original imprint on feelings of competence.

Table 11-4 deserves some of the same caveats we introduced in Table 11-3. Just as religiosity is negatively correlated with feelings of personal competence, its stronger association with the sense of well-being is also negative. Persons who confess to relatively strong religious values also report more limited feelings of well-being. Obviously the causal connections here cannot be taken simplistically. It seems most probable that people, whose life situations are, for other reasons, relatively unfortunate and who lack therefore even average feelings of well-being, may be more disposed to cling to religious values as a compensatory resource. In any event, it seems quite clear that religious faith does not function as a resource in the same way as our other resource variables do.

Beneath the surface of Table 11-4, there is another contrast of this kind with Table 11-3. The association between formal education and feelings of personal competence is positive whether the relationship is examined by itself or after the effects of other resource variables have been removed. Where well-being is concerned, the simple relationship with education is also positive: better educated people report a higher sense of well-being. However, when the effects of all other resources are controlled (final column), the education slope becomes negative, with better educated people expressing lesser feelings of well-being.

It is not difficult to find the main proximal reasons for such a shift in the direction of the relationship. Indeed, in Chapter 5 we noted that satisfaction with most specific domains behaved somewhat anomalously when correlated with formal education. We suggested that the education variable appeared to have at least two components which produced conflicting effects in predicting to domain satisfactions. On one hand, education was a resource and tended to be correlated with other resources like income. People with better educations typically live under better objective life circumstances, and if this were all education represented, such people could be expected to show higher satisfaction with their situations, particularly in the more materialistic domains. At the same time, however, another component of education which we identified as breadth of experience and awareness of alternatives tended to produce higher levels of criticism, or less complete satisfaction, with any given situation. In the case of the domain satisfaction measures being treated at the time, the component of increasing criticism at higher levels of education actually outweighed the resource component, such that the overall relationships between education and satisfactions with specific domains tended on balance to be faintly negative.

The simple relationship between education and the Index of Well-Being is in fact positive in the total sample, unlike the case with so many domain satisfactions, but the degree of association is very faint ($r = .05$). Therefore we may well suspect that the depressing effects of one component of increased education are continuing to affect even overall judgments about life. In other words, if by controlling other variables we were to remove the influence of differential resources associated with education, thereby removing much of the resource component in it, we would bring the more negative or critical component associated with higher education into plainer view, so that expressions of well-being would be more limited at higher levels of education.

This appears to be exactly what is happening in this circle of relationships. The correlation between education and the Index of Well-Being moves from a faint positive to a stronger negative mainly as the influence of two other resource variables closely associated with education are adjusted from the picture. These two other variables are income and intelligence. When income is controlled, the faint positive relationship between education and well-being is neutralized, turning trivially negative. When, in addition, differences in intelligence are controlled, the remaining relationship between education and well-being shifts more firmly and significantly in a negative direction.

The notions of intelligence and education are tightly enough wedded in our minds that it is not easy to conceptualize the meaning of education differences once differences in intelligence are removed or adjusted away. However, one way of formulating what is occurring within these relationships is to say that people whose formal education is high relative to their estimated intelligence tend to give more disparaging views of their overall life situations than persons whose formal educations are less than their estimated intelligence would lead us to expect. More generally, it seems fair to observe that intelligence, along with income, functions as a positive resource in creating life situations that enhance feelings of well-being. It is when these positive-resource correlates of formal education are stripped away by statistical control that the residual effects of education upon statements of well-being become negative.

In discussing Table 11-3, we devoted several paragraphs to a discussion of rather marked variation, particularly by age and sex, that underlay the entries in the table calculated for the total population. In general, the impact which various resources had upon feelings of competence differed quite strongly by sex and period in the life span. We can abbreviate such remarks considerably where Table 11-4 is concerned for two reasons. One is that this underlying variation is less pronounced for Table 11-4.[9] The other reason is that most of the variation present, particularly that which is at all marked, merely recapitulates the variations discussed earlier. Thus the main sex difference is with regard to the respondent's own income, where, of course, the male sense of well-being is more dependent on a good personal income than is true for women. Similarly, the main age differences involve the same heightening of importance of conventional resources, such as total income and skills during the prime years of life and a lack of importance of health among the young.

There is, however, one age pattern underlying Table 11-4 which is not a straightforward reflection of the variation discussed for Table 11-3. We noted that feelings of personal competence were peculiarly dependent upon friendships among the young (under 35), and that these effects dropped off considerably at later periods of life. Where friends and well-being are concerned, however, the degree of variation by age is much more restricted. There is something of the same decline in the impact of friendships as one moves from the young to the prime years of life, but the decline is much shallower. And after the prime years of life, the importance of friendships for the sense of current well-being actually comes to surpass the values for the young, particularly among women.

These observations make intuitive sense while fitting nicely with our earlier interpretations of the role of friendships and personal competence in the resource syndrome. Although getting and spending are dominant concerns of the middle years, it would be surprising, and quite contrary to common observation, if a dependence on friendships were not to resume after those mundane functions were completed in later years. However, the

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[9] A way of quantifying this amount of underlying variation is to calculate, for the correlation between any given resource and the dependent variable, the average deviation from the mean variance explained that emerges in a decomposition of the correlation into age and sex categories. When such calculations are performed for Tables 11-3 and 11-4, the underlying variation in the latter is only about 60 percent of that present in the former.

differences in age patterns underlying Tables 11-3 and 11-4 suggest somewhat contrasting dynamics. Among the young, feelings of personal competence are still being established, and an adequate network of friendships appears to be quite important for the outcome. At this age level, a fair portion of the impact of friendships upon the sense of well-being is in fact mediated by enhanced feelings of personal competence when friends are abundant. Variations in feelings of personal competence have been largely established by the middle years, and in any event concerns have shifted somewhat to those most highly influenced by the classic resources of skills and income. Later in life, friends again resume greater importance in shaping the sense of current well-being, although their presence or absence has little impact on feelings of personal competence, and their effects on well-being are largely direct. Indeed, the fact that friendships as a current resource remain important for the sense of well-being while declining in importance after youth where feelings of personal competence are concerned is symptomatic of the most dramatic difference between Tables 11-3 and 11-4: that current resources seem most important in shaping the sense of well-being, while earlier, more ascribed characteristics are important in shaping feelings of personal competence.

SATISFACTION WITH RESOURCES AND THE SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Up to now we have dealt exclusively with variations in more or less objective resources and the impact of these variations on summary feelings about the self. It would have been more in keeping with the format of earlier chapters in this section had we proceeded domain by domain, examining the degree to which variations in objective resource situations predicted satisfaction with each domain. As we advised at the outset, we have not followed this path over the course of the chapter, in part because the domains involved lent themselves to a treatment of comparative resources affecting well-being, and in part because the number of objective predictors we had in each domain was typically limited to one or two.

Nevertheless, for most of the resources we have been discussing, we do have relevant measures of satisfaction. These measures in effect capture the individual's assessment of his resource position in a particular domain, and it is useful in closing to draw this subjective layer of evaluations into explicit consideration to complete the triangle between objective resources, subjective evaluations of them, and the current sense of well-being.

Table 11-5 shows what happens to our predictions of the sense of well-being when to the resources of Table 11-4 we add an accounting of the individual's reactions to most of those resources. Eight satisfaction measures

Table 11-5: Prediction of the Index of Well-Being, Adding Measures of Resource Satisfaction to the Sets of Personal Resources (Multiple Classification Analysis)

		Beta coefficients	
	Eta coefficients	*Resource satisfactions only*	*All resources and resource satisfactions*
Ascribed resources			
M5. Intelligence	.18		.08
G10a. Health	.17		.04
M3. Attractiveness (age-controlled)	.11		.03
M4. Height	.06		.04
Achieved resources			
G12. Family income	.17		.07
E1. Education	.10		.10
G13. Personal income	.07		.04
Other current resources			
H1. Number of friends	.27		.08
G4a. Time	.26		.13
G8. Religious faith	.14		.05
Resource satisfactions			
G15. Standard of living satisfaction	.48	.29	.28
G16. Savings satisfaction	.39	.12	.11
H3. Friendship satisfaction	.36	.20	.16
J3e. Leisure activity satisfaction	.30	.15	.13
E5, 6. Satisfaction, utility of education	.29	.09	.08
E4. Satisfaction, amount of education	.29	.07	.08
G11. Health satisfaction	.28	.16	.13
J3f. Satisfaction from religion	.23	.13	.13
Explained Variance (adjusted multiple R^2)		39.1%	41.8%

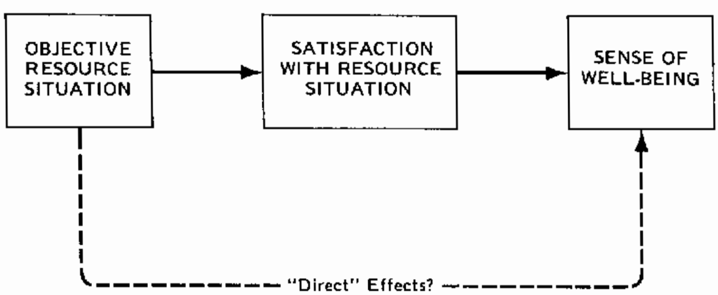
are brought to bear in the table. One pair deals with two aspects of the financial situation, and another pair deals with two aspects of satisfaction with past education. The other four deal with health, friendship, leisure time, and religion.[10] Thus there is some expression of satisfaction relevant

[10] Six of the eight satisfaction measures are in our conventional form, and were elicited after details relevant to the domain were discussed at one or another point in

to all of our resources, save for the relatively ascribed characteristics of height, intelligence, and physical attractiveness, which were not the subjects of direct inquiry.

The most noteworthy fact in Table 11-5 is, of course, that our capacity to predict variation on the Index of Well-Being is vastly increased (from 18 to 42 percent of the variance) when we take into account not only differences in resource situations, but also reactions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with them. Indeed, the set of resource satisfaction measures taken alone accounts for 39 percent of the variance in the sense of well-being, and adding our background measures of the actual resources to this information only brings the total to 42 percent of the variance.

This outcome is very similar to others we have encountered in the earlier chapters of this part. It is probably worth reiterating that such a result should not be interpreted as signifying that objective resources have negligible impact on the sense of well-being. When we introduce the resource satisfaction measures as in Table 11-5, we are intruding in the middle of what may reasonably be seen as a causal chain.



Within such a framework, it is not at all surprising if the relationship between satisfaction with a resource and the sense of well-being is considerably stronger than the more remote relationship between the objective resource and well-being. Nor is it at all surprising if, when we control for the intervening satisfaction term, the residual influence of the resource itself on

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the questionnaire. The measures of satisfaction with leisure activity and religion are drawn, however, from a battery of items near the end of the questionnaire which invited the respondent to express the degree of satisfaction he feels he gets from the domain (as opposed to the dissatisfactions he feels with it). The use of these items is necessitated in the case of religion, because no item in standard form was asked and in the case of leisure time, because the item in standard form appears to have been more broadly construed than we intended by many respondents to mean the degree of satisfaction felt with all facets of life away from the job (See Chapter 3, p. 75).

well-being is small, or for that matter, nonexistent. If it is nonexistent, we may infer that all of the effects of variation in the resource upon feelings of well-being are transmitted through feelings of satisfaction about the resource situation. But this is not to say that the resource itself is unimportant for the sense of well-being.

In general it is true for every one of our resources that the correlation between satisfaction with the resource and well-being is stronger than the correlation between the resource itself and well-being. Therefore the increase in predictive capacity between Table 11-4 and 11-5 is not in itself surprising. The fact that the addition of the resource measures does make for some increase—albeit a small one—over the predictive capacity of the resource satisfaction measures implies that there are some limited direct effects of resources on feelings of well-being, beyond those mediated by the relevant resource satisfactions. This fact is also mirrored by some of the *betas* for the resources in the final column, which remain nontrivial.[11]

Nevertheless, two facets do stand out from the data underlying Table 11-5. One is the fact that the increase in variance accounted for by the resource satisfactions is as great as it is. Another is that the relationships between given resource measures and their satisfaction counterparts, while quite variable as we shall see, are not overpowering in their magnitude: knowing a person's relative resource situation in any objective sense only gives us a view which is quite imperfect as to what he himself makes of his resource position. When these two facts are put together, the main lesson from Table 11-5 is that we must learn what people make of their resource situation in terms of our satisfaction measures, before we can arrive at any adequate understanding as to how resources are influencing the sense of well-being. This is true simply because people in exactly the same situation with respect to a given resource can vary quite widely in the evaluation of that situation. And if we wish to predict variation in feelings of well-being, knowledge of these evaluations is generally more helpful than knowledge of the objective resource situation, if we are forced to choose between the two.

In our case, we are not forced to make such a choice and therefore can examine in more detail the way in which objective resources affect these satisfactions and ultimately impinge on the sense of well-being. Although Table 11-5 reflects the fact only dimly, the details of these relationships

[11] *Betas* of less than .08 in the final column of Table 11-5 typically refer to residual relationships so weak in magnitude and irregular in their form that it is best to disregard them. Those of .08 or greater all show positive slopes—stronger sense of well-being accompanying more of the resource—with the exceptions of education, where the slope is negative, and time, where the relationship is curvilinear, as we have discussed at a prior point.

vary quite widely from one resource to another. Hence it is useful to return from the general observations of the current discussion to the specifics of the more important resources before us.

Functional Health

Good health is a very generally prized resource. We have seen in Table 3-4 that when we asked our respondents to judge the importance of various domains of their lives they gave the highest average rating to "being in good health and in good physical condition." Health as a resource does not absolutely dominate the predictors of the global sense of well-being, since a very considerable majority of persons in the population consider themselves to be in basically good health and, as we have noted, younger people with few physical problems largely take health for granted, save when the issue is explicitly raised. Nevertheless, as Table 11-4 demonstrates, even under these conditions of limited variation, health remains one of the more important resources contributing to feelings of well-being.

Health also provides a good illustration of a domain in which the effects of resource variation on felt well-being seem transmitted exclusively through statements of relative satisfaction with the resource position. In other words, there do not seem to be "direct effects" of the kind suggested by the curved arrow in our model on p. 375. People reporting health problems are far less likely than the average to express high satisfaction with their health. But among people of a given level of health satisfaction, further knowledge as to who has more or fewer health problems adds nothing to a prediction of variations in the sense of well-being.

The way in which the existence of health problems fits with reports of health satisfaction is itself of some interest. Perhaps the most important single issue to be resolved concerning the perceived quality of life is the nature of subjective transformations on objective reality which produce feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It should be clear from all that has gone before in this volume that people living in very similar "objective" situations can evaluate them quite differently. In the long run, it will be important to arrive at an understanding of the circumstances under which evaluations of the same objective conditions diverge for different individuals experiencing them. Resource domains are a particularly fertile field for this kind of inquiry, since resources are "goods," and people with an objective abundance should be more satisfied than those deprived. In principle we should be able to measure that objective abundance or deprivation and inquire as to why satisfactions are less than a perfect mirror of that objective reality.

Where the health domain is concerned, it is clear that we lack any firm objective measures of physical fitness to lay against feelings of health satisfaction. Presumably such measures could be derived from intensive medical testing. However, there are all sorts of structural or functional weaknesses which are medically detectable and which a doctor knows on balance will serve to shorten life expectancy by one or another modest amount, yet which are entirely invisible to the patient as "conditions" and fail to intrude on his daily life in any recognizable way. Obviously, our reports of constraining health problems could be expected to miss these latter frailties entirely, and hence are one important step removed from purest physical reality, in the direction of subjective recognition and salience. On the other hand, these responses do refer to a kind of health reality, rather than a pure evaluation of it.

It is perhaps because of this subjective element in the reporting of physical problems that our respondents' assessments of their health situations as expressed on our health satisfaction scale fit more closely with the statement of health problems than we find in pairing "objective" conditions with subjective satisfaction in any of our other resource domains. The correlation (r) between physical problem reports and the subsequent statements of health satisfaction is a high .65.

From an absolute point of view, it remains fair game to ask why this relationship is not a good deal higher than it is. After all, almost one-half of those people who report disabilities severe enough to prevent them from doing "a lot of things" are unwilling to say they are dissatisfied in any degree with their health, and a small number of them (6 percent) insist that they are completely satisfied with it. It is not easy to account for these responses, save as we introduce notions of the kind we earlier associated with a sense of resignation. While the health of these people may not be what they wish it were, they appear to have accepted their infirmities and adapted to them. But such reactions among some afflicted persons (but not others) is at least the proximal reason why health satisfaction does not show a perfect correlation with the presence of disabilities.

From a more relative point of view, however, health turns out to be one of our most straightforward resource domains. People in poorer health are much less likely to be satisfied with their health situation than people who report no physical disabilities. People dissatisfied with their health are also less likely to have a strong sense of well-being than those who are satisfied. And finally, once we know about the fit between health problems and health satisfaction, we are not obliged by our data to postulate any mysterious "direct effects" of objective health on well-being that somehow escape the mediation of feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that people have concerning their state of health. Some of our other resource domains are less straightforward in one or another of these particulars.

Friendships

If we take the number of "very good friends" reported by our respondents as a relatively objective measure of another kind of resource, then we find that the correlation between the amount of the resource and satisfaction with the resource position is considerably more attenuated in the friendship domain than in the case of health ($r = .38$, in contrast to .65 for health).

This contrast in domains does not appear at first glance to be at all surprising. We have already seen, in introducing the friendship measures earlier in this chapter, that people differ considerably in the premium they place on having close friends. Some people may report high satisfaction with a very limited circle of close friends, whereas others may feel deprived with a friendship net which is objectively larger. Unlike the preceding case, where few people could be expected to disparage the fullest possible health, friends seem to be a resource more like discretionary time, in the sense that for some tastes and capacities, there is such a thing as too much of the resource as well as too little. Since in addition these optimum levels apparently show a good deal of interpersonal variation, it would follow that the fit between descriptive fact and evaluation would be weaker when calculated for the total population than in the case of health.

However obvious these interpretations may be, the patterns of relationship surrounding friendships depart from the straightforward ones noted in the health case in other particulars as well, and these are less easy to explain. Most notably, there appear to be rather strong effects of friendship on the sense of well-being which are direct or not mediated through the reports of friendship satisfaction. In other words, if we take sets of respondents all of whom report exactly the same levels of satisfaction with their friendships, we can predict further significant differences in their reports of well-being by taking into account the number of friends reported. At any given level of friendship satisfaction, people reporting larger numbers of friends also report a greater sense of well-being than people with fewer friends. These are the kinds of direct effects which simply do not emerge where health is concerned.

This pattern would seem to imply that people who feel themselves to be highly satisfied with very limited networks of close friends might in fact register higher levels of felt well-being, if those networks were expanded. Or alternatively, people with limited numbers of close friends may tend to overstate the satisfaction they derive from friendships in a way which is not characteristic of health satisfaction reports.

We lack the kind of intensive information, preferably of a longitudinal sort, to arrive at a clearer diagnosis as to the nature of these direct effects in the friendship case. At the same time, while we shall not examine the area of time use more closely here, it also displays very strong direct effects on the sense of well-being which are not mediated by expressions of varying satisfaction with the disposition of discretionary time.[12]

Income

While we have said very little about income as a resource up to this point in this chapter, the reader surely has noted its persistent importance among resources accounting for variations in felt well-being. And when all resources and resource satisfactions are gathered together as in Table 11-5, the preeminence of satisfaction with one's standard of living as a predictor of such feelings is dramatic, and another income-related satisfaction, that with savings, makes a substantial independent contribution as well.

The importance of income as a resource comes through at many other points in our study. One central example is provided by the nature of responses to an item in our questionnaire which perhaps goes most closely to the sense of personal fulfillment with life, as opposed to feelings of current well-being. The question reads, "Up to now, have you been able to satisfy most of your ambitions in life or have you had to settle for less than you had hoped for?" Overall, almost 60 percent of the population responded positively, although it should be noted immediately that a question of this sort has rather different meaning for young persons of 25 or so than for the elderly.[13] Variations in responses to this item are more tightly associated with the classic resources of income and education than any of our other global measures of life satisfaction or felt well-being. Clearly income and

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[12] The parallels to be drawn for the domain of leisure time are, however, somewhat awkward given the measurements at our disposal. Time as a resource continues to have a rather imposing association with feelings of well-being even after all other resources and resource satisfactions are held constant (see Table 11-5). However, it should be kept in mind that this association is curvilinear, with the sense of well-being rising to its peak among people who are neither too harried by demands nor feel they have time on their hands they do not know what to do with. While satisfaction with leisure time activities *per se* also shows the same curvilinear relationship with optimal levels of time pressure, this satisfaction item is not geared as squarely to the question of the optimality of overall time demands as it might be for our immediate purposes here.

[13] There is in fact some tendency, consonant with our discussions of domain satisfactions and aging (cf. Chapter 5), for older people to respond more positively than the young. In future work, we would like to put more emphasis on such feelings of life fulfillment than we have been able to develop for this report, since the measure behaves somewhat differently at certain critical points than our scales of current well-being or overall life satisfaction. It would surely be interesting, for example, if in the year 2000, we were able to look back at a thirty-year record of these fulfillment responses given at each point by the departing older cohorts.

education deprivations impinge more deeply on these retrospective summaries of fulfillment than on any of our other global measures.

For the 40 percent of the population confessing they have had to settle for less than they had hoped up to now, we asked a further open-ended question, "What are the main things that [have] stood in your way?" As always, such a question generates a wide variety of idiosyncratic responses that are not easy to catalog in brief fashion. However, about one-half of the responding population mentions pure financial limitations in one or the other of the two responses coded, and some of the other descriptions which do not mention financial restrictions explicitly at least imply such constraints very clearly. This concentration on financial barriers far exceeds the clustering on any other substantive class of response. From the point of view of the adult American population, at least, the state of affairs is reminiscent of the old advertisement which said, "We at City Bank know that money isn't everything in life. But it sure is a long way out in front of whatever it is that's in second place."

Moreover, as we pointed out in Chapter 3, people express more dissatisfaction in the financial domain than in any other covered by the study. Out of fifteen domain satisfaction measures, the lowest mean satisfaction by quite a margin is registered in connection with "savings and investments." The next lowest mean occurs for the amount of education received, and the third lowest of fifteen is given for the family's standard of living, our other measure of financial satisfaction.

It is because of the importance of variation in financial situation for feelings of well-being, along with the relative prevalence of discontent in this domain, that much more detailed studies of the subject have been mounted.[14] Our purpose in including a few relevant measures in our own study was less to delve into the topic in any intensive way, but rather, as we have seen, to compare the impacts of the financial side of life on the sense of well-being with the impacts of other very different resources and satisfactions, ones which are rarely if ever brought into view in more focused studies of the subject.

In no small measure, this function has already been accomplished by data and discussions presented in earlier chapters (see especially Chapters 2 and 3), as well as by the tables of this chapter. There are, however, one or two more observations of a comparative sort that deserve to be made about the patterns surrounding income, financial satisfaction, and well-being, relative to those in other domains.

Perhaps the most important of these is the fact that the fit between the objective resource of income and subjective reports of satisfaction with one's

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[14] Once again, a central and up-to-date reference is provided by Strumpel, 1974.

financial situation is considerably weaker than the corresponding fit we have observed for any of the resource domains discussed earlier. The correlation between total family income and satisfaction with standard of living is a mere $r = .23$, while the same relationship with satisfaction as to savings and investments is .21. When the two statements of satisfaction are optimally combined to produce a more global compound measure that we shall call "satisfaction with financial situation," the link with total objective income merely rises to a correlation of .25.

Of course it might be objected that we failed to ask our respondents how satisfied they were with their incomes as such. Instead, we asked them how satisfied they were with two central components of their financial situations: their standard of living (consumption) and their savings and investments. Perhaps if we had asked the more direct question, the estimate of objective-subjective fit would have increased. However, the Strumpel study (1974) does pair a direct question as to income satisfaction with objective income and shows a correlation (r) between the two of .25, for a population of employed persons.

Hence our own estimate of .25 on an independent sample appears reliable. Yet such a figure means that variations in the objective income resource account for little more than 6 percent of the variance in financial or income satisfaction, although the number of one's close friends accounts for nearly 16 percent of the variance in friendship satisfaction, and reports of incapacitating health problems account for almost 43 percent of the variance in health satisfaction! These are stunning differences in the apparent degree of fit between descriptive fact and evaluation across the three domains, even allowing for the fact that the health reports are already a step in a subjective direction from purest medical reality.

Attempts to understand these differences can proceed in any of several directions. One of these is once again methodological. It might be argued that if our income reports have been given with reasonable honesty, they represent a more purely "objective" resource datum than we can employ in either of the other two domains. This kind of interpretation can be defended most plausibly in the case of the friendship domain. We did not conduct the kind of study that might have mapped out, by questioning and observation, the exact number of friends which a given respondent had beyond some predefined threshold of familiarity or contact. Instead, we merely asked whether the respondent had "a good many" close friends, an average number or not too many. We have already turned up ample evidence to suggest that the vague phrase "a good many" might mean rather different absolute numbers to people with different cravings for close friendship. Hence it can be contended that there is already a substantial evaluative coloring even in our "objective" resource of friendships and that the subjective-objective fit is exaggerated as a result.

The parallel argument is a little more tortured in the case of health. Nevertheless, as we have continually noted, the definition as to what constitutes a health problem is largely left for the respondent to fill in subjectively. If we had a great array of physiological measurements on each individual, and were able to reduce these to a summary indicator of "objective" health, the correlation with reports of health satisfaction would be visibly attenuated by comparison with the figures we have cited.

Such a line of argument has undoubted merit. But a serious question remains as to whether more strictly parallel measurement would really suffice to obliterate the very large differences in apparent degree of subjective-objective fit that emerge across these resource domains. Any answer to such a question must rest on conjecture at this point, although it would be our surmise that the differences probably surpass what such methodological incomparability might explain.

Another line of argument which is partially methodological and partially substantive might focus more directly on the unique properties of these several resource domains. One potentially important clue is provided by the discovery (Strumpel, 1974) that recent changes in income may actually be more highly correlated with income satisfaction than is the absolute level of income. Since upward and downward income changes can and do occur at almost any rung of the income ladder, the sensitivity of income satisfaction to recent change in an individual's income can readily be seen as a force serving to erode the correlation between total income and income satisfaction. How strong the force would be naturally depends on the prevalence and magnitude of income changes in the short run, along with the elasticity of satisfaction reactions for any given degree of income change. Although most investigators tend to treat family income as a relatively fixed characteristic, a panel study of a somewhat specialized cross-section of the adult population reported by Katona and Mueller (1968) shows quite impressive short-run variability in total family income, at least over the 1963-1965 period covered by the study.[15] About one-half of the population studied displayed changes of total family income in consecutive years that exceeded 10 percent, and nearly one-quarter registered changes of 20 percent or greater. These are shifts of substantial magnitude, and if expressions of income satisfaction are even moderately sensitive to them, it is easy to

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[15] The Katona-Mueller sample was restricted to nonfarm families whose total family incomes before taxes lay between $3,000 and $20,000 in 1963, the initial point of the study.

see that very substantial inroads might be made in the fit between absolute levels of income and statements of income satisfaction.

It would seem reasonable to suppose that fewer inroads of this same kind are being made by short-term change where the other two domains are concerned. Had we asked people to report how healthy they felt at the moment of the interview, we presumably would have picked up a record of the health resource that would be subject to much short-term fluctuation. However, as we have seen, the health question was directed quite clearly at long-term, chronic problems which would not be expected to show widespread temporal variation in the short term. In this regard, it may be significant as well that reports of health satisfaction also show less longitudinal variation for the same individuals between our interview and reinterview than any of our other domain satisfaction measures. Probably the size of friendship networks shows somewhat more oscillation over time, but it seems dubious that they would display quite the amount of short-run variability that seems documented for family income.

As we shall see shortly, there remain reasons for doubting that the factor of short-term change is entirely responsible for the surprisingly low degree of fit between total income as a resource and expressions of satisfaction with one's financial situation. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the temporal variability of income acts as a force in this direction and one which deserves more investigation over a range of disparate resources.

The other observation to be made about the financial domain where the nexus of relationships between resources, satisfactions, and well-being is concerned is that despite the strong links between financial satisfaction and felt well-being (Table 11-5), there are further direct effects of income on the well-being variable which are not mediated by financial satisfaction. That is, among people with the same degree of satisfaction with their financial situations (standard of living and savings), those at higher absolute levels of family income express a greater sense of well-being than those of lower income. These direct effects are not of the same apparent magnitude as we observed in the friendship domain but appear unmistakably present. Once again, it would not be hard to construct a model in which there is substantial short-run income change with income satisfactions highly responsive to such changes, where one could expect to observe signs of such direct effects if felt well-being were more attuned than income satisfaction to general and long-term levels of absolute income.

Education

When we ask our respondents who do not feel they have succeeded in fulfilling their life ambitions what are the main things that have stood in their way, the barriers most frequently cited after purely financial ones focus upon formal educations which were too limited to provide the necessary opportunities. Thus, the two resources we have called "classic" are also the ones that in the public mind are uppermost as causes when regrets are expressed about shortfalls in life fulfillment.

Only about one-quarter of our respondents who were not still in school reported that they were "completely satisfied" with the amount of education they had received.[16] In talking with all those less than completely satisfied, we went on to ask "What were the main reasons you stopped your education when you did?"

As might be expected, pure financial constraints are cited with considerable frequency, thereby completing the circle between these two related resources. Nevertheless, an impressive proportion of the reasons cited for failure to pursue an education adequately are best classed as motivational. There is a significant concentration of respondents who give as a main reason for a termination of education they now consider premature their own laziness or immature lack of understanding of the importance of education. For many others, financial and motivational reasons for a truncated education are blended: a full-size paycheck was wanted earlier rather than later, or family responsibilities were undertaken at too early an age.

Since it seemed quite possible that some people satisfied with the pure number of years of schooling they received still might feel that the content of that education had not been useful in equipping them for their adult roles, we asked a parallel question as to satisfaction with the utility of the education they did receive. As it turned out, less dissatisfaction was expressed on this score than with the sheer amount of education: 44 percent were completely satisfied, as opposed to 27 percent on the preceding question. Once again, we asked those less than completely satisfied with the content of their educations what kind of education they would have preferred and what the main reasons were that they failed to get education of that type.

Where the latter question is concerned, we rather expected blame to be attributed more heavily to the system than to the self, since the considerable majority of people less than completely satisfied with the content of their educations had not proceeded to a level of education where they had much latitude for curriculum selection. Lack of system opportunities is mentioned somewhat more frequently than in connection with impediments to the sheer amount of education, but still only rarely (about one time in eight). Once

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[16] Only in the area of savings, of all of our domains, is the proportion "completely satisfied" lower than this figure for education.

again, the vast bulk of barriers cited were financial, followed closely by motivational shortcomings.[17]

Satisfaction with one's educational background correlates with the objective number of years of formal education only at a rather low level and one which is very reminiscent of the relationship between financial satisfaction and income. The objective amount of education shows a correlation of $r = .24$ with satisfaction expressed as to the *amount* of education and a correlation of .21 with satisfaction as to its *utility*. An optimal combination of the two satisfaction measures only raises the link with the objective amount of schooling to a correlation of .26.

Once again, then, this link within the education domain is quite weak in comparison with the kinds of objective-subjective fit found for health, friendships, or other resources where the component variables are available. In the case of the low level of fit found in the financial domain, two kinds of explanations seemed plausible. One was that the measure of the income resource was more purely objective than our other resource measures. This comment could be equally well applied to education where we also have a purely objective measure. The other explanation was that short-term variability in income could easily be seen as attenuating the link between objective levels of income and financial satisfaction. It is self-evident that this latter argument has no relevance whatever for the education case. For all but a small minority of young people in our sample who are still adding to their training, spurts in education do not occur, and declines in the amount of past education for any given individual are a logical impossibility.

Nevertheless, there is another mechanism distinctive to the education domain which may make some contribution to the low objective-subjective fit in this case. We have noted throughout that there appears to be a component of the educational experience which predisposes those with more education to be more critical in their statements of satisfaction with various domains than the less educated. Most recently, in this chapter, we noted that once the resource of intelligence was controlled, the link between objective education and well-being was significantly negative. If we control education satisfaction, then the residual "direct effects" linking objective education with well-being are also negative. Indeed, among people equated for both education satisfaction *and* intelligence, the residual correlation between objective education and the sense of well-being advances to a rather

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[17] Since almost one-half of the persons asked what kind of education they would have preferred to the type they actually received simply said that they wished they had gone on to a more advanced level, such as completion of high school or progress to college, the similarities in the nature of barriers cited here to the constraints mentioned as limiting the amount of education are not entirely surprising. Apparently true regrets over the content of education, as opposed to the amount, are not widespread.

impressive −.24 (partial r): people with lower education, under such controls, are much more likely to express greater feelings of well-being than those with more education. While the case remains presumptive, it would not be implausible to imagine that the simple correlation between amount of education and satisfaction with this amount is implicitly being attenuated by the same component of relative negativism.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has been devoted to what may be thought of as a comparative study of the impact of diverse personal resources upon feelings of well-being. The resources brought to this comparative scrutiny were indeed diverse and some, such as physical height or religious faith, might be seen as downright esoteric. Nevertheless, all of these terms receive discussion now and again as personal resources which some people enjoy in greater abundance than others and hence seemed appropriate to include in such a comparative analysis.

It is not surprising, and may perhaps even be reassuring, that the most conventionally cited resources of health, wealth, and wisdom do indeed play very prominent roles in shaping the general sense of well-being. The impact of health is somewhat less than that of income or education, although this seems to be largely because health is a resource that the vast majority of the population has no keen sense of deprivation about, in some manifest contrast to wealth and education. At the same time we have seen that virtually all of the diverse resources considered show signs of making some contribution to feelings of well-being, and a few, such as friendships, have an apparent impact which approaches that of the most conventional resources.

Although we have been interested in estimating the sheer impact of these several resources on the sense of well-being, most of our attention has been given over to comparisons of the various paths by which variations in amounts of these resources come to affect such global feelings. One such path lay through feelings of personal competence. Our data suggested that certain relatively primitive personal resources, such as physical stature (for men) and attractiveness, made some contribution to feelings of personal competence which were laid down early in life and by the mechanism of such feelings had some modest influence on the later sense of well-being. However, most of what we called "current resources," such as friendships and optimal amounts of discretionary time, had a more direct impact on the sense of well-being, unmediated through feelings of personal competence.

We also investigated in a comparative vein the triangle of relationships leading from variations in objective resources, through subjective evaluations of those resources, to some ultimate contribution to feelings of overall well-being. At the most general level, our data made clear that the individual's estimate of his resource positions, as registered in feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with them, is a considerably more telling datum, if we wish to understand how strong his sense of well-being is, than the simple knowledge of his objective resources taken alone.

At the same time, we discovered that specifics of this triangle of relationships displayed noteworthy variation from one resource domain to another. Some resources, like friendship, appear to have strong direct effects on the sense of well-being that are not mediated through feelings of satisfaction as to the resource position. Others, like health, do not. Similarly, we found that feelings of health satisfaction were a reasonably faithful mirror of reported health states, as best we could measure the latter. Feelings of satisfaction with wealth and wisdom, on the other hand, reflected variations in the objective resources involved only with extremely limited fidelity. Contrasts in the degree of fit between objective conditions and subjective feelings about them are such a basic issue for any exploration of the perceived quality of life that variations of this kind cry out for more systematic and intensive exploration than our own broad-gauge study will permit. Hopefully, however, an extensive study of this type can direct more intensive investigations to puzzling contrasts that are ripe for explication. Domains of life that have a resource quality seem to offer uncommonly fallow ground for such efforts.

Part III

Introduction

We come now to the point where we reorient our approach to the data from our study, setting aside our preoccupation with methodologies of measuring satisfactions and affective states and with our attempt to account for their variances, and turn to the description of the life experiences of different segments of the population. To be sure, we have touched on numerous examples of such data in the preceding chapters, pointing out, for example, that college graduates are more positive about their lives than those who do not finish college or that homeowners are more satisfied with their housing than renters. But we have been using these personal characteristics as variables which might help us understand some aspect of satisfaction or sense of well-being, and we have not undertaken to bring our full range of data to bear on a description of the life experience of any discrete segment of the population.

We have no doubt that a major focus of a continuing program of monitoring the quality of American life will be on the changes which take place within the major components of the national population. As we have stated at the outset, a national measure of well-being which cannot be disaggregated is far less interesting than one which can. We cannot assume that changes in outlook which occur over time will develop at an equal pace throughout the population and it is of the greatest importance to be able to locate those points within society where change originates and to trace its diffusion outward. In time it should be possible to build a viable theory of social change with the aid of longitudinal data of this kind.

It is also apparent that a national index of well-being will have far less relevance to people concerned with public policy than an index on which the significant segments of the population can be compared. We assume that in due course subjective measures of the kind described in this book will be available from other countries and that cross-national comparisons will become possible.[1] At that point it will no doubt be a matter of great interest to discover that satisfaction with work, for example, is higher or lower in this country than it is elsewhere. There is an undoubted fascination in international comparisons, commonplace for many years in economic measures and now beginning to be seen in more broadly conceived measures of life quality.[2] As these measures become more standardized and more comparable across national lines, their implications for policy-makers and critics of national policy will certainly increase.

It is within the nation itself, however, that comparisons carry the greatest immediate impact. People in policy-making positions cannot ignore protests of inequity coming from aggrieved portions of their constituency, particularly if these protests are supported by substantial evidence. They are accustomed to dealing with grievances which derive from monetary need; they are finding themselves increasingly concerned with needs which are primarily psychological. Assuring dignified treatment of minorities, providing fulfilling experiences for old people, protecting natural beauty for defenders of the environment, providing a sense of physical security to people living in the inner cities—these problems now receive close attention at both federal and local levels. Data which demonstrate that the psychological rewards of life are seen by one self-conscious component of society to be inferior to those of another have obvious implications, especially in a nation in which a substantial part of the population is no longer disturbed about food and housing but is very much concerned with its "higher-order" needs.

We might have decided to devote the major part of this book to an exposition of how the major segments of American society describe their life experience. It would have been a volume as large as this one and no doubt full of interest. Our concern with the methodological and analytical problems which we thought to be basic to a developing program of research on quality of life precluded our making this choice but we reserved this short section of the book for two chapters which illustrate the kind of descriptive statement our study makes possible and suggest the potentialities

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[1] Preliminary studies in England and Scandinavia have already reported data from subjective measures of quality of life in these countries (see Abrams, 1973, and Allardt, 1973).

[2] See, for example, the attempt of *The Economist* of London to rank the citizens of ten countries in their likelihood of dying a violent death (January 5, 1974).

of trend analysis which will become possible, when this study is repeated at a later time.

The fact that we chose women and black people as the subjects of Chapters 12 and 13 is readily explained. Both of these groups are in the process of change, in their aspirations, perceptions, expectations, and values. The women's "movement" was in its early stages at the time of our survey in 1971, and our data will serve as a benchmark measurement against which subsequent changes in the lives of women can be assessed. The revolution in race relations in this country began in the early 1960s, and much change had already taken place by the time of our study. It is apparent, however, that this movement is only in mid-course and that the greater part of this drama remains to be played out.

We were also influenced in our choice of these two groups by our recognition of the high priority their problems command in contemporary American society. The fact that both of these groups are pressing to lift themselves out of centuries of psychological and economic discrimination has forced their demands onto the agendas of public and private agencies all over the country. We hope to contribute to an understanding of their situation by reviewing their life experiences in detail in this section.

Chapter 12
The Situation of Women[1]

Of the many dimensions along which American society might be divided, the two which intuitively appear to have the most compelling implications for the quality of life experience are sex and race. To an important degree, women and men grow up in different cultures, develop different expectations, learn different roles, and live different lives. The same may be said of the white and black races. No doubt these patterns are changing, and these differences may be diminishing as time passes, but it remains a fact of American life that the sexes and the races differ not only in their physiological attributes but in social-psychological characteristics as well.

We will undertake in this chapter to exploit those data from our study which permit us to describe the life experience of women. We will present data regarding women as a total group and women in the major stages of the life cycle, single, married, parent, divorced, widowed. We will be particularly concerned with a comparison of housewives and employed women. Where it is appropriate, we will present comparable data for men in order to identify those aspects of life which are described differently or similarly by the two sexes.

We look first at the two assessments of sense of well-being which were described in Chapter 2 and which we have relied on as general measures of quality of life. The data from these measures are arrayed in Table 12-1 and

[1] We wish to express our appreciation for the suggestions given us by our colleagues, Monica Blumenthal, Lolagene Coombs, and Elizabeth Douvan, who read an earlier draft of this chapter.

Table 12-1: General Measures of Life Experience of Women and Men

"We have talked about various parts of your life, now I want to ask about your life as a whole. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

	Completely dissatisfied					*Completely satisfied*		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	*Total*	*N*
Women	1%	2	4	12	20	39	22	100%	1239
Men	1%	2	3	10	22	41	21	100%	881

Index of general affect	*Negative*			*Positive*		
	1.0-4.8	4.9-5.8	5.9-6.5	6.6-7.0		
Women	21%	25	27	27	100%	1248
Men	21%	27	29	23	100%	899

we see there that women and men give virtually identical answers to these general questions regarding the quality of their life experience. We have seen some small differences in the satisfactions women and men express regarding specific domains of their lives in the preceding chapters but when they are asked to describe their lives "as a whole" even these differences disappear.

The data of Table 12-1 are in direct conflict with a recent observation by Gove and Tudor (1973) who state, "There are ample grounds for assuming that women find their position in society to be more frustrating and less rewarding than do men." Their conclusion is based on a review of a number of community surveys which have shown that women more commonly than men report experiences and symptoms which might be classified as indicating mental illness. Data on hospital admissions and patient care for mental illness also show a sizable majority of women.[2] Gove and Tudor apparently assume that if women are more numerous than men among the small proportion of the population who experience serious mental illness than among the population at large, women must find their life experience less satisfying than men do.

As we stated in the opening pages of this volume, this study was not intended as an inquiry into mental illness. It has, however, as the reader by this time is well aware, delved at great length into the question of satisfaction with life and with the various domains of life. We do not find that women describe their lives as "more frustrating and less rewarding" than those of men. It is always dangerous to assume that a relationship which

[2] These statistics have been challenged by Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1975) whose review of a very broad literature concludes that while the rates of some psychiatric disorders are higher among women, others are higher among men.

holds at the extreme of a distribution must hold throughout the distribution, and in the present case the predominance of women among some categories of the mentally ill appears to tell us nothing at all about the perceived quality of life of women and men in the general population.

Although we find little difference between the sexes when we compare them as total groups, we will see in the following pages that when we compare women and men living in different life situations, we reveal a complex pattern of differences which were not apparent when we simply looked at the two sexes as a whole. We assume that the two circumstances which make the greatest difference in the lives of women in our society are marriage and work. We will accordingly divide the women of our study, first, according to their marital status and, second, according to their work. In considering marriage we will combine the presence or absence of marriage with the presence or absence of children and superimpose these conditions on age. This will give us the continuum of succeeding stages of the life cycle which we described in Chapter 7. In considering work we will be concerned mainly with whether the woman is employed or not and our interest will be primarily in comparing housewives and married women who are employed.[3]

WOMEN THROUGH THE LIFE CYCLE

Women begin the life cycle as single persons. Most of them will marry; some will not. Most of those who marry will have children. Some of those who marry will be divorced; some of these will remarry. Most of those who remain married will eventually be widowed. By taking account of marital status, the age of the individual, and the age of her children, we can array the population of women into nine categories of the life cycle listed in Table 12-2. The first six stages in this sequence represent the modal life pattern, beginning with young unmarried status, running through marriage and parenthood to widowhood. The final three categories represent that part of the population which diverges from the norm, the childless married over age 30, the never married over 30, and the divorced or separated. Table 12-2 displays the answers given by people in these nine life cycle categories to our two general measures of well-being, and we see immediately that first, there are substantial differences between the different stages of the life cycle, second, there are differences between women and men within life cycle stages which are not seen in the total distributions, and finally, the two meas-

[3] Most employed people report working at least thirty-five hours a week. Over 90 percent of employed men, both married and single, work thirty-five or more hours a week. Seventy percent of employed married women work thirty-five or more hours; 80 percent of employed single women work thirty-five or more hours.

Table 12-2: General Measures of Sense of Well-Being of Women and Men at Stages of the Life Cycle

	Satisfaction with life as a whole (Categories 6-7)		*Index of general affect (Scores of 6.6-7.0)*		*Proportion of total population*			
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*N*	*Men*	*N*
1. Never married, between ages 18 and 29	57%	46%	29%	20%	7%	82	9%	85
2. Married, 18 to 29, no children	89%	72%	47%	34%	4	45	6	50
3. Married, youngest child less than 6	65%	64%	43%	31%	18	228	23	209
4. Married, youngest child between 6 and 17	67%	65%	54%	37%	18	225	21	187
5. Married, youngest child over 17	69%	66%	49%	49%	17	218	21	186
6. Widowed	56%	50%	35%	32%	18	220	4	37
7. Married, over 29 no children	69%	75%	42%	49%	4	50	6	55
8. Never married, over 29	53%	41%	38%	18%	4	53	4	40
9. Divorced or separated	33%	42%	28%	29%	10	128	6	52
					100%		100%	

ures of well-being follow similar but not identical patterns in the nine life cycle groups.

In order to unravel these complexities as completely as possible and to bring them into relationship with other information from our study, in particular the individual domain satisfactions, we propose to consider each of the life cycle groups separately, describing their circumstances and their psychological characteristics as fully as we can.

Never Married Women Under 30

Young unmarried adults comprise a relatively small part of the population, slightly smaller among women than among men. As we see in Table 12-3, the great majority of these people are either employed or in the status of student. The proportion of women who identify themselves as students in this group (30 percent) is much higher than we find among those women of equivalent age (under 30) who are married without children (2 percent). In contrast the proportion of young unmarried men who classify

Table 12-3: "Are you working for pay, either full-time or part-time? (IF NO) Are you a housewife, unemployed, a student or what?"

	Never married, under 30		*Married under 30, no children*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Employed	59%	69%	76%	82%
Unemployed	6	13	0	2
Student	30	18	2	16
Housewife[a]	5	—	22	—
	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	81	85	45	50

[a] Four unmarried women with children classified themselves in this category.

themselves as students (18 percent) is about the same as that of their age cohort who are married without children (16 percent). Since the actual educational attainments of these two groups of women do not differ significantly it seems apparent that a good many young women who would become full-time housewives or take paying jobs if they married remain in the role of student if they do not marry. Marriage does not, however, reduce the number of young men who continue as students.

The same pattern appears when we ask these young people if they have gone to school during the preceding year. The proportion of unmarried young women who report attending school of some kind (61 percent) is twice as high as that of their married age cohort (29 percent) but the proportion of unmarried men of this age (47 percent) is virtually identical to that of married men (48 percent).[4] When asked why they had terminated their formal education when they had, almost half the married women referred to their marriage; this response was far less common among young married men.

The proportion of young single men who are employed (69 percent) is somewhat lower than that of the total male population (79 percent), reflecting the presence of those who are still students and a high rate of unemployment. Young single women are far more likely to be employed (59 percent) than women in general (42 percent) although they are somewhat less likely to be in the labor force than men are. An indication of the degree of commitment these young women have to their work may be discerned from their answers to the question "If you were to get enough money to live

[4] "Attending school" does not mean formal academic institutions, colleges, or high schools in all cases. About one-third of these people had in mind job training programs, do-it-yourself courses, even instruction in how to play bridge.

as comfortably as you'd like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work?" Although employed women at all stages of the life cycle are less likely to say "Yes" to this question than are employed men, single women in the under-30 age group are more likely to make this choice than employed women at any other stage of the life cycle. Their proportion (60 percent) making this choice does fall short of the proportion (72 percent) reported by employed men, however.

Additional insight regarding the orientations of these young unmarried women comes from the three questions we reviewed in Chapter 9 in which we asked women to evaluate housework. The first of these questions read as follows:

> Different people feel differently about taking care of a house. I don't mean taking care of children, but things like cooking, sewing, and keeping house. Some women look on these things as just a job that has to be done; other women really enjoy them. How do you feel about this?

As we have seen in Table 9-5, well over one-half of the women in this country (excluding students or retirees) express an unqualified liking for housework as it is described in this question. The others express much or little reservation about it but only 3 percent say they unqualifiedly dislike housework. Of women at the various life cycle stages, young unmarried women are less likely than most of the life cycle groups to indicate unqualified liking for housework (54 percent) and, paradoxically enough, young married women without children are among the most likely (61 percent).

The same pattern emerges in response to our second question:

> Overall, how satisfied are you with being a homemaker—I don't mean with your family life, but with your housework?

As we saw in Table 3-1, about two-thirds of the women questioned (excluding students and retirees) placed themselves in the most positive two categories of this 7-point scale, but again it is the unmarried women who are among the least likely to rate themselves as very satisfied (46 percent) and their age equivalents, young married women without children, who are among the most satisfied (70 percent).

Finally, we asked those women who were employed at the time of the interview to compare the importance of their housework and their job:

> Apart from the money, which do you think is more important to you personally: your housework, or the work for which you are paid?

Of the 42 percent of women who work for pay, 37 percent say their housework is more important,

41 percent say their work is more important,

22 percent say they are equally important.

As might be expected, women at different stages of the life cycle differ greatly in the importance they attach to their paid jobs. The young unmarried women are among the most likely to rate their job as more important than their housework (65 percent), surpassed only by single women 30 years old and over (71 percent). Married women with small children in the home are least likely to give their job this priority (with children under 6, 23 percent; with children 6 to 17, 21 percent). Young married women without children are not very different from women with children (24 percent), again differing substantially from young women of their same age range who are not married.

If we assume that the ferment regarding "women's role" which has been prominent in intellectual circles in this country during the last few years has reached beyond into the larger female population, we should certainly expect to find its impress most evident among younger women. It is indeed the young unmarried women whom we find to be most liberated from the traditional association with housework and strongly oriented toward a paid job. It is striking, however, how greatly these women differ from other young women of their same age who have married and do not yet have children. These women in the early years of married life appear to be marching to a different drummer.

It is evident from Table 12-2 that these young unmarried women do not describe the quality of their lives in very positive terms. The profiles of scores on the two measures of sense of well-being are similar for women and men, although women are not as negative as men on either measure. If we look back through the various domain satisfactions which we have considered in the earlier pages of this book, we find that there is only one domain for which young unmarried people, both women and men, express greater satisfaction than does the population at large and that is, reasonably enough, health. In the economic aspects of their lives—standard of living, savings, and housing—people at this stage of the life cycle resemble the general population. In satisfaction with their community, neighborhood, city, and the country at large, they are more negative than the average. They are also less satisfied with their work and their nonwork activities. Young unmarried men are clearly less satisfied with their family life than the general population is; women at this stage, however, do not differ from the average in this aspect of their life experience.

We can summarize this burden of detailed information by adding the number of domains for which these people express high satisfaction. If we omit satisfaction with job, with amount of education, and of course with marriage, which do not apply to all of the members of these groups, we find that young unmarried people, both women and men, have lower cumulative scores of domain satisfactions than do most of the other life cycle stages. These comparisons may be examined in Table 12-4.

Table 12-4: Proportions of Life Cycle Groups with High Cumulative Scores of Domain Satisfactions (In percentages)

	Women	*Men*
1. Never married, between ages of 18 and 29	16	20
2. Married, between 18 and 29, no children	16	14
3. Married, youngest child under 6	22	20
4. Married, youngest child between 6 and 17	36	32
5. Married, youngest child over 17	41	40
6. Widowed	48	41
7. Married, over 29, no children	40	44
8. Never married, over 29	28	18
9. Divorced or separated	16	25

The evidence from our general measures and from the specific domain satisfactions brings us to the same conclusion, unmarried women and men under 30 do not evaluate their life experience as positively as do people at most other stages of the life cycle. The free, unfettered life of the single girl and her male counterpart does not seem as attractive to those who are living it as one might have predicted. We will gain some insight into this finding as we examine the other stages of the life cycle.

Young Married Women with No Children

In a sense it can be said that these young people provide an experimental contrast to the group we have just described. They are all within the same age range, 18 to 29, although the married group has a somewhat larger proportion of its number in the older years of this range. Their educational levels are similar if one keeps in mind that the unmarried group has a substantial proportion who are still students. Married women and men both have somewhat higher employment rates than their single counterparts; the large number of students among the unmarried women almost disappears among those who marry, some of them assuming the role of housewife and others taking a job. The major distinctions which we see between these two young groups appear to derive from the fact that one is married and the other is not.

The striking fact about people in this stage of the life cycle is the very favorable way in which they describe their life experience "as a whole." As we saw in Table 12-2, both women and men in this young married group exceed most other life cycle stages in the positive quality of their responses to the two measures of sense of well-being. The women at this young, married but childless stage are particularly impressive. Their scores are higher than those of the men at this stage, although these young men (married but not yet parents) have among the highest scores of men in general.

It is intriguing to discover that, despite their highly favorable assessments of their general well-being, these young married people do not express high satisfaction regarding the specific domains of their lives. The pattern of their domain satisfactions resembles that of their unmarried age cohort in the low proportion expressing high satisfaction with the domains of their lives. They differ, however, in the part of the distribution not shown in Table 12-4; the young married people are far less likely than the unmarried to fall into the categories expressing the greatest dissatisfaction with their life domains. The mean domain satisfaction of the married women and men is higher than that of the unmarried but it is still lower than that of the total sample.

Young people, such as those in these two under-30 groups, have been shown in this study and others to be distinguished by high levels of criticism and dissatisfaction with their jobs, the government, the police, and other institutions with which they come in contact. It is therefore not surprising to find these two groups holding the positions they do in Table 12-4. The fact which is remarkable is that while young unmarried people are also rather negative about the general quality of their lives, the young married people (without children) are extraordinarily positive.

One additional cluster of data from our survey adds a further facet to our comparison of these two groups and of the women and men who comprise them. Several questions included in our interview were intended to give information on the extent to which our respondents felt themselves to be under pressure or strain. Two of these were items in the semantic differential series, asking the respondents to place themselves in the space between "easy/hard" and between "free/tied-down." Another was specifically financial in character, asking how often the individual worried about meeting family expenses. A fourth simply asked whether the person ever felt "rushed." The fifth asked whether she or he ever felt "frightened or worried" about anything, and the final question was the one previously referred to asking whether the individual ever worried about having a "nervous breakdown."[5] The answers to these questions given by people in the nine

[5] The answers to these six questions are only moderately interrelated, product moment correlations average .20, *gammas* average .31.

Table 12-5: Indicators of Psychological Stress at Stages of the Life Cycle (Women and Men)

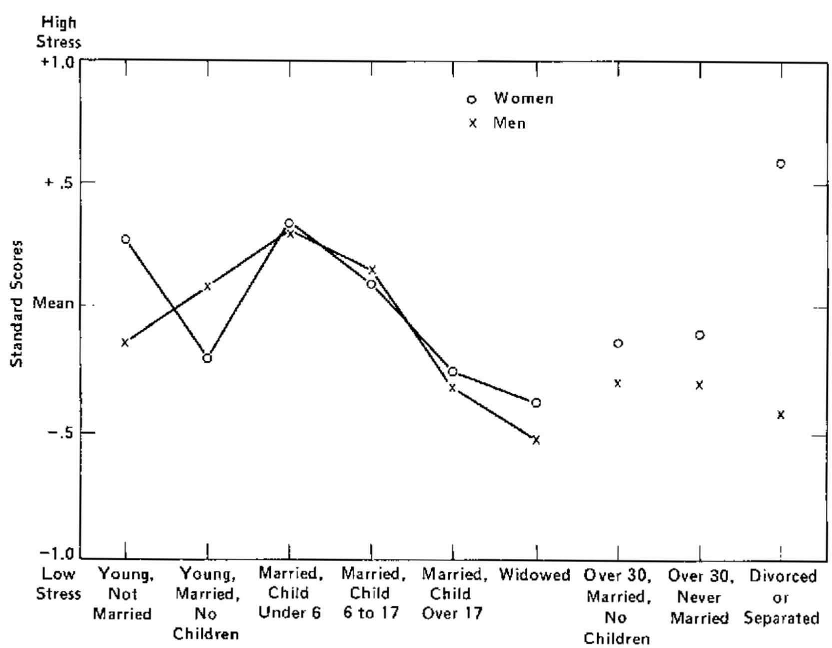
	Proportion who					
	Feel life is hard	*Feel tied-down*	*Always feel rushed*	*Worry some about bills*	*Feel fright-ened*	*Worry about nervous break-down*
			Women			
1. Never married, between ages of 18 and 29	35	19	16	33	58	18
2. Married, 18 to 29, no children	18	4	13	20	47	7
3. Married, youngest child less than 6	28	25	28	46	46	19
4. Married, youngest child 6 to 17	24	11	28	38	46	15
5. Married, youngest child over 17	15	12	17	24	43	10
6. Widowed	23	12	12	29	41	11
7. Married, over 29, no children	18	12	25	24	50	18
8. Never married, over 29	19	13	26	39	51	8
9. Divorced or separated	42	20	34	63	60	25
All women	24	15	23	36	47	15
			Men			
1. Never married, between ages of 18 and 29	27	15	13	22	44	13
2. Married, 18 to 29, no children	34	14	24	38	36	12
3. Married, youngest child less than 6	34	25	23	47	43	12
4. Married, youngest child 6 to 17	30	14	29	44	38	11
5. Married, youngest child over 17	25	7	21	24	36	8
6. Widowed	28	6	8	27	22	0
7. Married, over 29, no children	20	11	18	22	30	7
8. Never married, over 29	23	10	5	28	39	13
9. Divorced or separated	25	15	12	35	29	8
All men	28	15	21	35	38	10

life cycle stages are presented in Table 12-5 as indicators of psychological stress, and the summed standard scores of the six measures are plotted in Figure 12-1.

Deferring comment on the total configuration shown in Figure 12-1 until later in this chapter, we see an interesting reversal in the positions of the two young groups we have been considering in their admission of feelings of stress. Women under 30 and not married respond consistently more negatively on these indicators of stress than do the men. But those women of this age group who are married (but childless) seem more stress-free than men, or indeed than most of the other life cycle groups of women. The men in this married preparent stage seem considerably more burdened with the problems of early married life, and it is particularly interesting to see how much more likely they are to express worry about meeting their bills than their young wives are. They are one of the few categories of men who more often report concern about a nervous breakdown than do women.

These data, showing a stronger sense of well-being and lower feelings of stress among young married women than among their young husbands, demonstrate that early marriage is in some respects a different experience

Figure 12-1: Cumulated Scores of Indicators of Psychological Stress at Stages of the Life Cycle (Women and Men)



for women and men. Without presuming to pursue this question in any depth, we suggest two considerations which may have significance for this difference: first, there seems little doubt that the act of marriage has historically been a more central achievement for women than it has for men, the fulfillment of the status which has traditionally been regarded as preeminent for women, and second, it seems likely that the background of experience and training young women bring to marriage makes it less stressful for them to enter into an intimate psychological relationship than it is for men. Early marriage appears to be a relatively favorable phase of life for both sexes, but for women it is especially positive.

We must recognize of course the possibility that the differences between single and married people which we see here, and will see again later, do not derive from the circumstances of being married or single but result from the process of selection which takes a majority of people into the married state and leaves the "unmarriageable" minority still single. This is a very difficult hypothesis to test without a continuing study of an age cohort through the 18-to-30-year period when most marriages are entered into, and it surely cannot be tested from a single cross-sectional study. While we must take this factor of selection into account, we incline to believe that the experience of early marriage has a special quality. Young married people without children are not only more positive in their sense of well-being than unmarried people of their own age, they are also more positive than the slightly older married people with small children.

Married Women with Youngest Child Under Six

Approximately one woman out of five in this country is living as a married parent in a household with a child less than six years old. These women are nearly all under 45 years of age, slightly over one-half of them are between 25 and 34. They resemble the rest of the population in religion, education, income, urbanicity, and other social characteristics.

As we see from Table 12-2, these young mothers do not evaluate their life experience as positively as young married women without children do. Their scores on the two general measures of sense of well-being are in the middle range when compared to the other stages of the life cycle. The differences between women and men are not substantial; if anything the women are slightly more positive. In the specific domains of life, young mothers are high in their satisfaction with their health and low in their satisfaction with standard of living, savings, and housing. Their cumulative scores of domain satisfactions are below average. Women and men differ very little in these domain evaluations.

Women at this stage of the life cycle may be assumed to be devoting a considerable part of their energies to the care of small children. Relatively few of them (25 percent) are working for pay outside the home. Despite the burdens which the roles of mother and homemaker impose on these women, they do not evaluate housework as negatively as women at some other stages of the life cycle do; they are indeed at about the average of all women. Slightly over one-half of them express unqualified liking of housework; two out of three place themselves in the two highest categories in our scale of satisfaction with housework. Of those young mothers who work for pay, only one-fourth say their job is more important to them personally than their housework, a very much lower proportion than we saw for young single women (65 percent) and not different from that of young childless married women (24 percent).

We saw in Figure 10-2 that parents at all stages of the life cycle tend to describe their marriage as "completely satisfactory," with this appraisal being especially common after the children have reached adulthood. Much more dramatic differences appear, however, when we compare the way married people describe their relationship with their spouse at successive stages of married life. The contrast is especially marked between the parents of a child under 6 and people at later stages of married life.

Parents of small children are the most likely of all the married groups to admit that they disagree at least "sometimes" with their spouse about money (52 percent of wives and 53 percent of husbands). We have seen that these people are relatively dissatisfied with their standard of living and level of savings, and among the life cycle groups they are the most likely to say that they frequently worry about paying their bills. These economic stresses apparently come through in their interpersonal relationships. Young parents also score lowest in their perception of interpersonal understanding between themselves and their spouse. Thirty-five percent of the young mothers say their husbands understand them "very well"; this figure is not substantially lower than that of the other married women, but it is the lowest. Forty-three percent of the young fathers say their wives understand them "very well"; this does not differ significantly from the percent of other young married men who give this answer, but it is considerably lower than that given by older men without children or fathers whose children have grown up and left home. Thirty-nine percent of married women with children under 6 believe they understand their husbands "very well"; 34 percent of the husbands give this answer. These are among the lowest proportions of any of the married groups, particularly in comparison to the older married women and men with no children in the home.

In answer to the question as to how often the wife and husband do things together, 32 percent of young mothers say "all the time"; the same figure is given by married women whose youngest child is between 6 and 17. Twenty-eight percent of young fathers say "all the time," and this is virtually the same figure given by fathers whose youngest child is between 6 and 17. These proportions are visibly lower than those of any of the other groups, especially of those married women and men who have had no children. The presence of children in the home appears to reduce the amount of companionship, "doing things together," which the parents report.

In Chapter 10 we reviewed two additional questions which were asked to assess the stability of the marriage. The first of these asked whether the person had ever wished she or he had married someone else. Married women and men are about equally likely to answer "Yes" to this question, but of all the life cycle groups, mothers of young children are the most ready to admit that this thought has crossed their minds. Older married women are much less likely to have entertained this wish or, perhaps, to remember having had such a thought. Married men do not differ greatly from one life cycle stage to another, and they differ from women only at the young parent stage where they are less likely to admit a wish for a different spouse (30 percent) than are women (41 percent).

Similar results emerge from the second question regarding the thought of getting a divorce. Married men are a little more likely to deny ever having such a thought than are married women but here again married women with children under 6 are the most likely to say they have entertained this thought at some time (48 percent). Fathers of young children are less ready to admit any such digression (33 percent). It is the older life cycle groups among both women and men who are most likely to insist that they have never wished they had married someone else and that the thought of divorce has never crossed their minds.

We can draw on Chapter 10 for one additional bit of evidence regarding the way these young parents evaluate their lives. All of the parents in our sample were asked whether they had ever wished they could be free from the responsibilities of being a parent. Despite the fact that this would appear to be a rather threatening question, two out of five mothers of small children admit they at least "sometimes" wish they could be free of the responsibilities of being a mother. This proportion is one out of five for mothers of children between 6 and 17 and is less than one in ten for mothers whose children are 18 or older. The picture for fathers is quite similar for those whose children are 6 to 17 or above 17 but is different for the fathers of children under 6, of whom only one in five (compared to two in five of young mothers) say they "often" or "sometimes" wish they could be free of the responsibilities of parenthood.

Finally, when we examine Table 12-5 to compare the indications of stress experienced by these young parents to those of other people of their age bracket, we find them much the most likely to report feeling pressure of various kinds. Indeed, these parents of small children are less likely than any of the other life cycle groups (except divorced or separated women) to choose the positive alternatives to the six questions in Table 12-5. The contrast between the young married women with no children and the young mothers only a few years older is remarkable. The latter are more negative on all but one of the six indicators; particularly significant is their worry about a nervous breakdown, admitted by 19 percent of the young mothers and only 7 percent of the young married women without children. It is noteworthy that young fathers are fully as likely as young mothers to describe their lives as stressful, although they do not as frequently admit worry about a nervous breakdown.

We conclude from these various pieces of evidence that the situation of young parenthood is a time of many dissatisfactions and psychological stresses. Women and men both describe their lives at this stage of the life cycle in relatively negative terms, in their general sense of well-being, their assessment of specific life domains, and their perception of tension. The strains of marriage and parenthood are sharper among young parents than older ones, and this is true of both wives and husbands. It is the young mothers, however, with their frequent thoughts of escaping from their marital roles and their fears of a nervous breakdown who appear to feel this pressure most acutely.

Married Women with Youngest Child Between 6 and 17

Women at this stage of the life cycle are older than those in the groups we have considered up to this point. Nearly three out of four of them are between 35 and 54 and a slightly larger proportion of the men are also in this age bracket. The men are nearly all in the work force, as are nearly one-half of the women (48 percent), a notably larger proportion than of mothers of younger children (25 percent). The average income of these families is higher than that of any of the other life cycle groups, partly as the result of the large proportion of working wives. Their educational attainments reflect their age, higher than that of the older groups and lower than that of the younger. In other social characteristics, they resemble the population at large.

Table 12-2 tells us that women see the period of school-age children as one of the most positive of the stages of the life cycle. They rate their lives on both the two general measures of well-being above the level of women in general. Men at this stage of the life cycle are not as favorable in their evaluation of their life experience as their wives are, but they are somewhat above the average for all men.

In their evaluations of the specific domains of their lives, women and men at this stage of life do not depart significantly from the population at large. It is noteworthy that although these people have the highest average family incomes of all the life cycle groups, they do not express greater than average satisfaction with their financial circumstances. Women do not differ from men either in the specific domains or in the cumulative satisfaction scores.

In their answers to the questions regarding their marriage, women in this life cycle group are consistently more positive than women who still have a preschool-age child in the home. They less often disagree with their husbands about money, they are more likely to believe their husbands understand them and that they understand their husbands, and they less often wish they had married someone else or contemplate divorce. Men at this stage do not differ so significantly from fathers of preschool children. As we have suggested earlier, the presence of small children apparently has a greater effect on the mother's evaluation of her marriage than it does on the father's.

We have seen that small children appear to reduce the companionship of the parents, how often they do things together. This is equally true for families with older children. Among fathers of children under 6 years old, 28 percent say they share activities with their wives "all the time"; a similar proportion appears among fathers of children 6 to 17. Thirty-two percent of mothers of small children give the "all the time" response to this question, and the same proportion of mothers of older children do so also. However, these proportions are considerably smaller than those we find among those married couples who do not have children in the home, especially those people over 30 who have never had children. Among these couples, 58 percent of the women and 51 percent of the men say they "do things together" all the time.

Mothers of school-age children evaluate their housework in very much the same terms as mothers of younger children. They are neither as negative as the young unmarried women nor as positive as the older women, widowed or with grown children.

In their perception of stress, women at this life cycle stage are not remarkable. Their scores have declined from the high level reached by the parents of younger children, and they will decline still further in the next stage when the children have grown up and left home. The strains associated with raising children have diminished, but their perception of stress is still higher than that of women at most other stages of the life cycle.

Married Women with Youngest Child Over 17

The period of later parenthood, when the children are 18 and over and have for the most part left the parental home, the period often lugubriously identified as "the empty nest," appears to be one of the most positive stages of the life cycle. Women at this point in life are nearly all over 45 years old, and they range into the advanced years. A sizable proportion of them (65 percent) are not in the labor force (as compared to 37 percent of the men), and their financial circumstances vary throughout the range of the total population. Because of their age, they have less formal education than most of the other life cycle groups.

Married women who have reached the empty-nest stage of life rank high in their responses to our measures of general well-being, surpassed only by young married women with no children. Men at this stage describe their general life experience more positively than most of the other life cycle groups of men. Whatever remorse or loneliness these people feel at no longer having children in the house does not seem to affect their general outlook on life very seriously.

Neither does it appear to depress their satisfactions with the specific domains of their lives. The empty-nest people are generally very positive. The men in particular are more positive than average on all of the domain scores with the exception of health, on which both women and men in this group are less satisfied than the population at large. They stand especially high in their satisfaction with the economic aspects of their lives, standard of living, savings, and housing. They are least likely of all the married men to say they worry a great deal about meeting the family bills. Women at this stage of the life cycle do not depart as far from the population average in their domain satisfactions as men do, although those who work express unusual satisfaction with their jobs. In cumulated satisfaction scores, empty-nest women are among the highest of the life cycle groups, along with another older-than-average group, widows. Men with grown children also stand high on this scale, along with widowers and older married men with no children.

Nearly two-thirds of the women at this stage of the life cycle say without qualification that they "like" housework, a proportion exceeded only by those women who are widowed. They are, moreover, the highest of all these groups, along with widows, in their expression of satisfaction with housework.

Of those women in this group who are employed (35 percent of the total), 36 percent say their work is more important to them than their housework. This figure is much lower than that of the single women who work but is clearly larger than that of employed married women at earlier stages of the life cycle. It would appear that these older women are not generally alienated from their homemaking role, but for those who work outside the home, it is less important than it was when they had children in the home.

Nearly four out of five of these older people are, according to their own report, still living in their first marriage. After at least eighteen years of marriage, these empty-nest couples appear to have learned to live together.

They and the other older-than-average group of married people, over 30 with no children, are consistently the most likely of the married people to describe their marital relationships in positive terms. If we compare these two groups to the two youngest groups of married people, those under 30 with no children and those with a child under 6, we see the breadth of the differences (Table 12-6).[6]

Table 12-6: Differences in Perceived Attributes of Marital Relationship, Reported by Wives and Husbands in Selected Stages of the Life Cycle

	Married, under 30, no children		*Married, youngest child under 6*		*Married, over 30, grown children*		*Over 30, married, no children*	
	Wives	*Husbands*	*Wives*	*Husbands*	*Wives*	*Husbands*	*Wives*	*Husbands*
Say they never or rarely disagree with spouse about money	56%	50%	48%	47%	65%	74%	73%	75%
Say they believe their spouse understands them very well	44%	44%	35%	43%	48%	65%	43%	65%
Say they believe they understand spouse very well	47%	36%	39%	37%	62%	61%	57%	60%
Say they do things together with their spouse "all the time"	47%	42%	32%	28%	46%	45%	58%	54%

Similar differences appear in answers to questions regarding preference for having married someone else, thoughts of divorce, and wish to be free of the responsibilities of parenthood. The two older groups, particularly those with grown children, consistently describe their marriages in more favorable terms than do married women and men at the early stages of the

[6] It is intriguing to see that while the older husbands are considerably more likely than the younger husbands to believe their wives "understand them very well," this age difference does not appear among women. Women apparently do not find their husbands becoming more understanding as the duration of the marriage increases. This finding suggests that men find it difficult to learn practices of interpersonal response which would be seen by their wives as expressing understanding. And it may be that women set a higher standard of being "understood very well" than men do.

life cycle. Young childless couples resemble the group of young parents who are closest to them in age in all respects except the amount of time spent together; in this respect they are more like the older couples with no children in the home.

As we see in Figure 12-1, the amount of stress reported by these empty-nest people is consistent with the other measures of their experience we have examined. They are the most free of perceived stress of all the married groups, and they stand well below the average for the population as a whole in this regard. Women and men in this group resemble each other very closely in their responses to these questions and seem about as positive in comparison to the other life cycle groups in this aspect of their experience as in the others we have considered.

The time of life which these older married people have reached can be characterized perhaps as one of contentment. Although some of these people range into the later years of life and must have health problems that younger people do not have, they are not an unhappy group, they do not describe their lives as lonely or empty, and they are not disturbed by tensions and worries. On the contrary, they have the appearance of people who have come through the stressful period of family formation, child raising, and career building and are now generally satisfied with their way of life. The empty nest turns out to be a time of fulfillment.

Widows

The final stage of the modal life cycle of women is entered when the husband dies and the wife lives on as a widow. Widowhood is the oldest stage of the life cycle, over 80 percent of this group are at least 55 years old. These women fall far below the general population in their educational level, and their family incomes are the lowest of all the life cycle groups. Only one-quarter of these people are in the labor force. There are, of course, far more widowed women than widowed men.

When these women are asked to assess the general quality of their lives —to evaluate their sense of well-being—they place themselves among the lowest of the life cycle groups, although, despite their low income and the loss of their marriage partner, they are not as negative in these measures as divorced women. Widowed women are slightly more positive in these ratings than widowed men.

There is a remarkable disparity between the way these widowed women describe their lives in terms of general well-being and the degree of satisfaction they express in the specific domains of their lives. In spite of their low incomes and a relatively unfavorable family need to income ratio they are more inclined than average to express high satisfaction with their housing, savings, and standard of living. In contrast to people at the other end of the age distribution they are more satisfied with their neighborhood, their city, and the country at large than is the general population. Only in their evaluation of their health (and in the case of the men, their family life) are they clearly less positive than the other life cycle groups. Taken together the cumulated satisfactions expressed by these widowed women are the highest of all the groups we have examined.

We have expanded at some length in Chapter 5 on the relationship between domain satisfaction and age. There is an undoubted tendency for older people to express greater contentment with specific aspects of their lives—their jobs, their housing, their financial situation, their community. To some extent this probably reflects an actual improvement in the objective conditions of their lives, but we have argued that it must also result in part from a decline in aspiration levels as the realities of life experience compel a reassessment of one's expectations. It is notable that satisfaction with health declines with age. Health is in some degree at least an objective condition of life, and on the average it deteriorates through the life cycle. People no doubt adjust their expectations regarding health as they grow older, but, as we see, this adjustment is not enough to overcome an increasing feeling of dissatisfaction.

Widowed women provide the second example we have seen of a strong contrast between the domain satisfactions and the measures of general sense of well-being. We recall that young married women without children assess their life experience very favorably but are less satisfied than average with the specific domains of their lives. Widowed women provide the opposite pattern.

Widowed women rank high both in their enjoyment of housework and in their satisfaction with it. They resemble in this respect the other older married group (empty nest) and, interestingly enough, the youngest married group, those under 30 with no children. Those widowed women who are employed resemble divorced women in their attitudes toward their job. As a group they are not as work-oriented as single women, but they are considerably more so than married women who work.

We will see that women whose marriages are broken by divorce show much evidence of psychological stress in their lives as single women. None of this is true of women whose marriages were terminated by death. On all of the indicators of psychological stress we reviewed in Table 12-5, widowed women are more positive than women in general (widowed men are the most positive of the male groups). Some of this dramatic difference must derive from the substantial difference in age between these groups; very few of the widows have small children in their homes, for example. Our study is not substantial enough to permit us to control these age differences; we suspect, however, that even with age controlled differences would remain and that the loss of a husband through divorce does indeed have more damaging consequences for a married woman than his loss through death.

The situation of the widowed woman is commonly represented as one of sadness and psychological difficulty. Our data sustain this image in some degree; the widows in our study did not describe themselves as very happy, and, along with divorced women, they were the most likely of all the life cycle stages to use negative adjectives to describe their lives. The wine of their lives has lost some of its flavor. It is particularly striking how they contrast in this respect with the group whom they resemble most closely in other respects, the married women with grown children. These people, some ten years younger on the average, are among the most positive of all the life cycle groups in their general sense of well-being. To be sure, the loss of the partner is not the only difference between widowed women and those in the empty nest, but it is a loss which surely contributes to the profound difference in outlook we see between these groups.

On the other hand, widowed women are not negative in their satisfactions with the specific domains of their lives; they are indeed more positive than average. And they do not describe themselves as beset by psychological stresses and strains. As a group, they appear to have made a satisfactory adjustment to their situation as compared to people at other life cycle stages, but the loss of their marriage partner has clearly diminished the quality of life they might have experienced had that person lived.

Married Women, Over 29, No Children

Most married women beyond their twenties are parents; approximately 10 percent of such people have never had a child. Most of these childless women are 45 years old or more; they have somewhat less formal education than married women with children, and their average family income is somewhat lower. For one out of four of these women this is not the first marriage; they have the highest rate of second marriages of any of the married groups. Their divorce rate is twice as high as that of the closest competitor, parents of grown children.

Despite the fact that these marriages might be regarded as unfulfilled in terms of prevailing cultural norms, these women do not describe their lives in more negative terms than people at other stages of the life cycle. While childless wives over 29 are somewhat less positive than younger (under 30) married women with no children in their general sense of well-being, they are more positive than the average of all women. The husbands of these childless marriages are one of the most positive life cycle groups among men in their overall evaluations of their lives, their assessments of general well-being being similar to those of married men with grown children.

These findings are consistent with those from our 1957 study (Veroff and Feld, 1970).

In their satisfactions with the specific domains of their lives, these women are also more positive than the general population; in this respect they fall short of only one other life cycle group, those women who are widowed. Only in their satisfaction with their health are these childless people more negative than average, a reflection of their age. It is intriguing that although women and men in childless families do not have particularly favorable incomes and their satisfaction with their standard of living is no greater than average, they are more likely than any of the other life cycle groups to say they are very satisfied with their savings. They are also among the least likely to say they worry about paying their bills. The absence of children apparently contributes to peace of mind in the financial areas of life. It is finally of interest to note that childless couples do not differ from those with children in their expressed satisfaction with their family life, "the time you spend and the things you do with members of your family." Parenthood is clearly not essential to a sense of family and a satisfaction with that association.

We have seen in Table 12-6 how favorably these childless wives and husbands describe their marital relations. In the absence of conflict over money, in mutual understanding, and particularly in amount of companionship, they far surpass those married people who still have small children in their homes. They also differ substantially from younger childless couples, although it is interesting that it is in amount of companionship that these younger people most closely approximate them. The absence of children appears in both cases to permit greater freedom to "do things together."

Thirty-four percent of the women in this life cycle group are employed. This is a somewhat lower proportion than that of married women in general, but those who work express high satisfaction with their jobs, and almost two-thirds of them say they would rather continue to work than retire comfortably. These childless wives aged 30 and over place a relatively low value on housework, compared to the other groups of women; they are less likely to say they like housework or to describe themselves as very satisfied with it. Of those women who are employed in this group, about twice as many say their work is more important to them than their housework as is true of the other employed married women. Their feelings about housework may be reflected in the fact that over one-third of them employ household help, much the largest proportion of any of the life cycle groups.

The generally positive picture we have found for these older childless married women is not reversed, when we examine their responses to our questions on psychological stress. Their perceptions of stress are close to the average of women in general.

We do not know specifically how many of these couples are childless from their own choice: the findings of Freedman, Whelpton, and Campbell (1959) would indicate that most would have preferred to have children. In any case, it is clear that as a group these people do not describe their lives in less favorable terms than parents do. It is particularly impressive that the wives in these childless families, who have not fulfilled the primary role which our society has traditionally assigned to women, are at least as positive about their life experience as those women who have borne children. The financial consequences of the absence of children may have implications for the women in these families that have not been fully appreciated. In relation to their needs, the incomes of these families are the most adequate of all the life cycle groups, and we have seen the various effects this relative affluence has for these families and especially for the wives. No doubt these women would have led rather different lives if they had borne children, but there is nothing in our study that tells us that in total those lives would have been more satisfying than the lives they have actually experienced.[7]

Women Over 29, Never Married

This group of women make up about 4 percent of the female population and they, like the married women without children, comprise a group which departs from the societal norm. They have the same age range as the childless married women who are over 29 and their age distribution is quite similar. They resemble this group in educational level, but their income is somewhat less on the average, due in large part to the fact that one-third of the childless families have a second wage earner. As we will see, however, it is not the childless married group over 30 that these older single women resemble in their evaluation of their lives but those younger women under 30, who like themselves are also unmarried.

Table 12-2 demonstrated that in comparison to people in the other stages of the life cycle, women and men 30 and over who have never married describe their lives in very negative terms. This is especially true of unmarried men whose ratings on the two general measures of well-being are the lowest of all the life cycle groups. The contrast between these men and those in the childless married group over 29 is striking. Their similarity to young unmarried men compels the conclusion that the failure to marry is the critical element in these men's lives and the negative effects of this failure do not diminish as these men pass 30. Single women 30 and over are

[7] It must be remembered that these childless people are all living with their spouses. Eventually those who survive will be widowed and living alone. At that stage, the absence of children may have a different meaning than it did while the spouse was still living.

not as unfavorable as their male counterparts in their general assessments of their lives, but they are one of the most negative groups among women. Like men, single women 30 and over describe their lives in terms which resemble those used by single members of their sex under 30.

In the specific domains of their lives women in this group express greater satisfaction than men; one of only two of the female groups for which this is clearly the case. Single women 30 and over are more satisfied than men with their education and their jobs. Both women and men in this group are less satisfied than other women and men with their family life. Economic considerations, however, do not cause them unusual concern. They are more than ordinarily satisfied with their housing, and they resemble the rest of the population in their satisfaction with their standard of living and their savings and in their worry about meeting their bills. In their cumulated number of domain satisfactions, single men 30 and over are one of the lowest of the life cycle groups. Women are near the average for all women.

Two-thirds of these older single women work; most of the others describe themselves as "retired." As we have seen, those who work are more inclined than average to express high satisfaction with their work, but over one-half of them say they would retire rather than work if that were possible. This no doubt reflects their age: half of these women are 55 or older. These older single women do not express unusual dislike for housework, although when it comes to a choice among those who work as to which is more important, housework or the job, these women, along with the younger single women, are most inclined to choose the job.

When we look at Table 12-5 to examine the way these single women answered our questions on stress we see that in most of their responses they were less positive than men, and in the aggregate they came near the average of the other female life cycle groups. While single men 30 and over report less stress overall than single women of their age, it is intriguing that this is one of the two life cycle groups in which women are clearly less likely to say they worry about a nervous breakdown than men are, the other being young married people without children. These are small percentages of small groups and not very reliable, but they suggest again that men find the failure to marry particularly disturbing.

The state of marriage is so often represented as the natural condition of the human species, and contemporary society is so basically organized around the institution of marriage that it is surely not surprising to discover that women and men who have never married view their lives less favorably than those who have. We have concluded earlier that the absence of children does not diminish the evaluation married couples place on the quality of their lives; it seems evident, however, that the absence of a wife or husband is associated with negative assessments of life both in the early and in the later years. As we have noted, it can be argued that women and men who never marry have psychological disabilities which explain both their failure to marry and their negative outlook on life. No doubt there are such individuals among these unmarried people; our study does not tell us enough about the personalities or the mental health of our respondents to give us any indication of how many there may be. It seems probable, however, that the high incidence of negative reports we find among single people is not primarily the result of personality disorders but is indeed the consequence of the failure to meet psychological needs which marriage uniquely fulfills.

We are not surprised to discover that single women describe their lives more favorably than do single men, although the familiar stereotypes of the carefree bachelor and the old maid might have prepared us for the opposite finding. The fact is that we found these same results in our 1957 study of the nation's mental health, and subsequent research has confirmed this finding: men who do not marry appear to suffer more from the absence of a wife than unmarried women do from the absence of a husband.

At the time this study was conducted in 1971, the rhetoric of women's liberation commanded a prominent place in the national media. On the outer fringes of the movement, if not more central, was an assault on marriage as a sexist institution which almost inevitably degraded women into a second-class role. We do not know how widely this view was shared by American women at the time of our study, nor whether it was growing in acceptance. In 1971, being single was not a favorable condition of life for either women or men; if prevailing folkways regarding marriage change as dramatically as some observers think they may, the fact of being single or married may lose much of the significance it now has for the quality of life.

Divorced or Separated Women

Most people whose marriages fail marry again. Some do not. At any point in time there exists in the population a scattering of people, less than 10 percent of the total, who are separated or divorced. They may marry again at some later time, but at the moment they are single following the dissolution of their marriage. There are more women in this category than men since men apparently are more likely to remarry than women, and, as we shall see, the situations of women and men at this stage of the life cycle differ in interesting ways. Most of the people in this divorced-separated category are in fact divorced, and we shall refer to them as such in the following discussion.

Divorced women are younger than divorced men; less than one-half of the women in this group are 45 or over, two out of three of the divorced men are this old. This discrepancy no doubt reflects differences in patterns of marriage and remarriage which our survey did not pursue. The educational achievements of divorced women do not differ significantly from those of women in general but those of divorced men are somewhat below those of other men. The family incomes of divorced men average considerably lower than that reported by other men, but they are not very different from those reported by single men 30 years old or more. Divorced women report incomes far below the family incomes reported by married women (and clearly smaller than those reported by single women 30 and over). Slightly less than one-half of the divorced men are not in the labor force; most of them describe themselves as "retired"; 71 percent of the divorced women are employed.

It is apparent from Table 12-2 that the evaluations divorced women give of their general well-being are very unfavorable compared to those of most other life cycle groups. They stand at the lowest point on both of the general scales, women being slightly more negative than men. Divorced women and men differ somewhat in their satisfactions with the specific domains of their lives. The men in this group resemble men in general in all of these areas except one; they express far less than average satisfaction with their family life. Divorced women are generally more negative than women in general in a number of domains but they are particularly dissatisfied with their standard of living and their savings. They differ sharply from divorced men in this regard, a difference which is dramatized by the fact that while 58 percent of the divorced men assert that they never worry about meeting their bills, only 30 percent of the divorced women are so confident of their financial circumstances. Women in this group, like men, are far below average in the proportion who express high satisfaction with their family life. Divorced men fall slightly below the average of all men in their cumulated satisfaction score but divorced women are among the most dissatisfied of all the life cycle groups, women or men.

Most divorced women have children (84 percent), and most of them are working outside the home (71 percent). They are about as likely as other working women to express satisfaction with their jobs, and they are more than ordinarily likely to say they would prefer to continue to work even if it were possible for them to retire comfortably. They do not give a high rating to their housework; they and the under-30 unmarried women are the lowest in their expressed enjoyment and satisfaction with housework. They are far more likely than other working women with children to rate their job as more important than their housework. As we have seen, however, many of these jobs are poorly paid, and, as a group, these women are under severe economic pressure. Despite the demands of home and work, very few of these women (4 percent) hire someone from outside to help with the housework.

Chapter 10 has reviewed the terms in which these divorced women and men describe their former marriages. In interpersonal conflict, failure of understanding, and lack of companionship, these unions were plainly disastrous. It is interesting, however, that of those divorced people who had children there was no greater tendency to regret their parenthood than there was among parents still married. Like other parents, the great majority said they had never wished they could escape from the role of parent.

It is surely a commonplace observation that divorce is a damaging experience for both women and men, and the fact that the divorced people in our study described their lives more negatively than any other life cycle group is not unexpected. Our data demonstrate, however, that divorce has a different meaning to women than to men. We have pointed out the great dissatisfaction divorced women feel with the economic circumstances of their lives, a feeling not shared by divorced men. Numerous other evidences that the life of a divorced woman is more stressful than that of a divorced man appear in Table 12-5. Divorced women report far more stress in answer to these questions than any of the other groups of women. Divorced men, on the contrary, are somewhat less likely to report stress than the other groups of men. Particularly striking is the high proportion of divorced women who fear they may have a nervous breakdown (25 percent) compared to the much smaller proportion (8 percent) of divorced men.

Taken together our survey gives us a picture of divorced men who describe the general quality of their lives in relatively unfavorable terms, are very dissatisfied with their family life (or lack of it) but do not find their lives strained or disturbing. The picture of divorced women is unrelievedly negative. Partly for financial reasons and partly for reasons less easily identified, they find their lives less satisfying than other women do and marked by much psychological stress.[8]

WOMEN AT WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

Some six adults out of ten in this country are employed. About a quarter of the population classify themselves as housewives, 10 percent as retired, and the rest as either unemployed or students. We have presented our basic data on the domain of work in Chapter 9, and we are now concerned with extending that analysis to comparing the ways women and men

[8] An examination of the psychological, social, and economic difficulties encountered by divorced women is presented in a recent review by Brandwein, Brown, and Fox (1974).

who stand in different relationships to the job market assess their general well-being and the other specific domains of their lives. Among women, we will compare housewives not otherwise employed, married women who are employed outside the home, and single women who are employed. This excludes some women who are students, some who are retired, and some, mostly elderly widows, who are single heads of household but unemployed. None of these groups is large enough to sustain the type of analysis we propose to pursue, and we will not consider them further. Among men we will be interested in married men who are employed, single men who are employed, and men who are retired, these three groups making up all but a small proportion of the male population.

Over one-third of all women 18 years and older are housewives and not otherwise employed, nearly a quarter are married and also work for pay, and one of six is a single employed woman. Four men out of five describe themselves as working for pay; of these 82 percent are married, and 18 percent are single; about one man in seven says he is retired. When we compare the ways these six groups describe their general well-being, we find the pattern displayed in Table 12-7.

Housewives, Employed Wives and Employed Single Women

Of the three groups of women, the two married groups resemble each other very closely in the two measures presented in Table 12-7. They are consistently more positive in their responses to these questions than the single employed women. We have seen earlier that employment among married women is heaviest among young wives with no children and wives whose youngest child is between 6 and 17 years. This means that the age distributions of housewives and wives who work for pay are not exactly comparable. These women also differ in their educational achievements and in their family income. Employed wives on the average have been in school longer than housewives and, in large part as the result of their own contributions, their family incomes average higher. They are somewhat less likely to have children, although a large majority of both groups are mothers. Despite these differences and despite the fact that one group works outside the home and the other does not, their assessments of their general life experience do not differ.[9]

They do differ, however, from the employed single women. This group

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[9] It is perhaps significant that among the eight adjective pairs which make up the Index of General Affect there is one which differentiates sharply between housewives and working wives. In choosing between "Brings out the best in me" and "Doesn't give me much chance," the working wives are considerably more likely to locate themselves at the "Brings out the best in me" side of this choice. Single employed women resemble housewives in their reaction to this item.

Table 12-7: Sense of General Well-Being of Groups of Women and Men

"We have talked about various parts of your life, now I want to ask about your life as a whole. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

	Completely dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	6	*Completely satisfied* 7	*Total*	*N*
Housewives	*%	1	3	10	17	41	28	100%	445
Married employed women	1%	1	2	7	23	43	23	100%	291
Single employed women	2%	4	5	18	24	34	13	100%	232
Married employed men	*%	1	3	9	18	41	28	100%	579
Single employed men	*%	4	5	20	25	30	16	100%	132
Retired men	3%	2	4	7	15	29	40	100%	127

Index of general affect	*Negative* 1.0-4.8	4.9-5.8	5.9-6.5	*Positive* 6.6-7.0		
Housewives	18%	22	30	30	100%	445
Married employed women	13%	24	28	35	100%	291
Single employed women	27%	27	28	18	100%	232
Married employed men	16%	29	31	24	100%	579
Single employed men	30%	26	25	19	100%	132
Retired men	19%	18	24	36	100%	127

is composed of women who have never married (36 percent), are divorced or separated (39 percent), or are widowed (25 percent). About one-half of them have children. A smaller proportion of these women fall in the 25-to-44-year range than we find in the other two groups. Although the educational levels of the single employed women do not differ greatly from those of the two married groups, their incomes average much lower, the result, one assumes, of the presence of a male income in virtually all of the families of the married women. Since we have seen that none of the life cycle stages from which this group of women is drawn views its general life experience very positively, it is not surprising that these women have a relatively unfavorable outlook on their lives, and the fact that they are employed does not appear to affect this outlook greatly.

When we look at the satisfactions these women express with the various domains of their lives, we find that the two groups of married women resemble each other very closely in all of the areas of life we inquired about. They also resemble the single employed women in all but two domains; single women were significantly less satisfied with their standard of living and their family life. These dissatisfactions, however, appear to derive from the fact of being single rather than from the fact of being employed.

It is not surprising to discover that housewives are more likely than either group of working women to say they enjoy housework and that they are very satisfied with it. The differences are not remarkable, however; one might wonder that they are not larger. Single employed women are less likely than either married group to express high satisfaction with housework, and the uniqueness of their situation is again evident in the fact that twice as many of them (56 percent) say their work is more important to them than their housework as is true of employed wives (28 percent). In each group about one-fifth of the women regarded the two as equally important.

We asked these women who are employed to describe their jobs and to indicate their level of satisfaction with their work. We find no differences between married women and single women in the way they talk about their jobs. This is an interesting contrast to the two groups of working men who, as we will see later, do differ in their assessment of their work.

Married women who work for pay typically do not give up their roles as wife, mother, and homemaker when they accept outside employment. In many cases, they appear simply to add new responsibilities without giving up any of those which are traditionally expected of them. The possibility of conflict between these various roles is obvious, and a continuing debate goes on as to the positive or negative effect of a wife's work on her marriage and family. We cannot provide a complete answer to this complicated question, but our data are relevant. If we compare the answers given by housewives and employed wives to our questions regarding their marriages, we find the following:

Of housewives	*Of employed wives*	
57%	58%	Say they "never" or "rarely" disagree with their husbands about how much money to spend
42%	43%	Say they think their husbands understand them "very well"
51%	49%	Say they understand their husbands "very well"
39%	37%	Say they share companionship with their husbands "all the time"
74%	63%	Say they have "never" wished they had married someone else
68%	59%	Say the thought of getting a divorce has "never" crossed their mind

82%	76%	Describe themselves as "very satisfied" with their marriage
77%	74%	Describe themselves as "very satisfied" with their family life

As we see, the differences in the answers these two groups of women give to these questions are rather slight. The various life cycle groups differed substantially in the way they described their marriages, but housewives and employed wives do not. The two groups describe their relationships with their husbands in almost identical terms; the housewives are slightly more likely to respond positively to the general questions about their marriage. So far as our data can carry us, we find little reason to believe that on the average employment outside the home either enhances or diminishes a marriage, at least as the wives see it. We will ask later how the husbands of these working wives view the matter.

If employment outside the home does in fact put pressure on the working wife, we might expect to find evidences of it in the questions regarding stress which so distinguished divorced women. The only difference we find, however, is that housewives are more likely to describe their lives as very "easy" than working wives are. This seems reasonable enough considering the additional burdens a working wife has, but the significant fact is that this added responsibility does not appear to be translated into unusual psychological tension.

We conclude from our comparisons of the two largest groups of women, housewives and employed wives, that they bear a high degree of similarity to each other in their general sense of well-being and in their assessment of the major areas of their lives. Up to this point, we have considered these groups as totals; we will now divide them on the dimension of education to explore what relationship, if any, this important aspect of life experience has to the way these women describe their lives. This division will stretch our data to their limits, but it will reveal, in at least a provisional way, additional insight into the meaning of marriage and work to married women.

The pattern of the data in Table 12-8 is intriguing. On both of the measures of well-being, the proportion of positive responses among employed wives increases as education increases. The scores of housewives are more nearly flat across successive educational levels. There is one striking departure from this pattern. The scores of housewives who have graduated from college drop below those of the women of lower levels of education on both of the general measures (a direct reversal of the pattern for the entire population seen in Figure 2-4), and they are clearly less positive than employed wives who have graduated from college. These samples of college

Table 12-8: Proportion of Housewives and Employed Wives at Different Educational Levels Who Express High Sense of Well-Being

We have talked about various parts of your life; now I want to ask you about your life as a whole these days. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

	Grammar school	*Some high school*	*High school graduate*	*Some college*	*College graduate*
Satisfaction with life as a whole (Categories 6 and 7)					
Housewives	67%	69%	72%	68%	56%
N	84	96	192	50	25
Married employed women	50%	56%	69%	69%	79%
N	23	52	137	48	33
Index of general affect (Scores of 6.6-7.0)					
Housewives	26%	39%	28%	34%	20%
Married employed women	26%	29%	38%	33%	36%

women are very small, but these differences are too large to attribute to chance.[10]

This decline in the level of well-being expressed by college-graduate housewives suggests that the role of homemaker is not as fulfilling to women of this level of education as it is to less highly educated wives. It is significant that the two items in the Index of General Affect which differentiate most sharply between college-graduate housewives who are employed and those who are not are "Interesting" and "Brings out the best in me." College women as a total group are somewhat more likely to use these terms to describe their lives than women of less education are, but among college women those who are employed are considerably more likely to see their lives as very interesting and very challenging than are those who do not work outside the home. College women are also considerably less likely than other women to say they enjoy housework, and again it is the employed wife who is least favorable to the housekeeping role.

[10] A partial replication of these data adds to our confidence in the reliability of these differences. The question, "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?" was asked of a national sample interviewed by the Institute for Social Research in October 1972 (Andrews and Withey). The pattern of responses was generally similar to that seen in Table 12-8 with the same reversal at the college graduate level. The decline in the proportion of very satisfied housewives was not as sharp as in the current study but, as the following proportions of very satisfied women show, the pattern was identical.

	Some college	*College graduate*
Housewives	69%	66%
Married employed women	65%	76%

We now ask one further question of our data comparing these two groups of college graduate women: How do they describe their marriages? We have seen that when we compare the total group of housewives and employed wives the differences in their responses to our questions about marriage are not very impressive. When we consider only those women with a college education, however, we find the following picture:

Of college graduate		
Housewives	*Employed wives*	
52%	66%	Say they "never" or "rarely" disagree with their husbands about how much money to spend
28%	50%	Say they think their husbands understand them "very well"
28%	37%	Say they think they understand their husbands "very well"
24%	41%	Say they share companionship with their husbands "all the time"
62%	70%	Say they have "never" wished they had married someone else
58%	46%	Say the thought of divorce has "never" crossed their mind
71%	82%	Describe themselves as "very satisfied" with their marriage
68%	85%	Describe themselves as "very satisfied" with their family life

We must caution again that these comparisons are based on very small samples and at the same time note that it is unlikely that these differences are entirely a matter of chance. We can say without question that married college women who have accepted employment outside the home do not describe their marriages in more unfavorable terms than college women who remain housewives. On the contrary, it is the highly educated housewife who does not have an outside job whose marriage seems most likely to be beset by disagreements, lack of understanding and companionship, doubts and dissatisfactions. It is puzzling that the thought of divorce does not seem to be a part of this pattern. College graduate women as a group, employed and unemployed together, are more likely than women at any of the lower educational levels to admit having contemplated divorce at one time or another; their advanced education has liberated them in some degree perhaps from conventional views regarding the indissolubility of marriage.

We will now carry this inquiry into the employment of married women one step further by examining the quality of their work experience. We have seen in Chapter 9 the different facets of the work experience with which our study was concerned, and we examine in Table 12-9 the way married women of different educational levels describe their jobs.

As we have seen earlier, the relationship of education to the quality of the job experience varies from one aspect of the job to another, but the striking fact about Table 12-9 is the consistent position of the employed wives who started college but did not finish. They are clearly less positive about their work than the general pattern of data would lead us to expect. They find their work less interesting, less challenging psychologically, and less rewarding monetarily than either high school graduates or college graduates.

We are again dealing with small samples in comparing these working wives with different levels of education, and although the absolute differences we see in Table 12-9 are large and consistent, they must be interpreted with caution. Fortunately we are able to compare these findings to answers to the identical questions asked of employed wives in the Institute for Social Research's 1969 Study of Work. This study, based on a somewhat larger sample of working women, gives us precisely the same pattern of attitudes we see in our present data. A definitive study of these working women remains to be done, but these two sets of confirmatory data give us reason to believe that there is something uniquely unsatisfying about the work experience of the married woman who has attended college but not completed a degree.

One has only to look at the occupations held by these working wives to

Table 12-9: Descriptions of Work Experience by Employed Married Women of Different Educational Levels

	Grammar school	*Some high school*	*High school graduate*	*Some college*	*College graduate*
The work is interesting					
Very true	44%	64%	69%	65%	84%
The pay is good					
Very true	35%	33%	43%	21%	47%
I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities					
Very true	17%	28%	47%	44%	66%
I am given a chance to do the things that I do best					
Very true	35%	39%	50%	46%	63%
The chances for promotion are good					
Very true	9%	12%	21%	11%	25%
Very satisfied with job					
Categories 6 and 7	70%	77%	73%	61%	72%

find at least part of the explanation of the differences in work attitudes we have just seen. When we asked these women to tell us what kind of work they did, they gave us the following answers:

	High school graduates	*Some college*	*College graduates*
Professional, managerial, self-employed	15%	17%	85%
Clerical, sales	59	67	12
Other	26	16	3
	100%	100%	100%

It is apparent that women with some college are doing very much the same work, at least within these rough categories, as high school graduates. A college degree liberates most women from the confines of clerical occupations. A similar pattern appears when we compare the family incomes of these three groups of women: the college graduates report much higher average incomes than the other two groups, who do not differ greatly from each other.

If we make the commonsense assumption that the experience of going to college tends to raise the aspiration levels of those who are exposed to it, the work attitudes of women with some college becomes readily understandable. A woman who has learned to relate herself to college people as a reference group finds herself doing the work and being paid the salary of women of high school education. She can hardly fail to feel that she is underclassified. In the 1969 Study of Work referred to earlier, three-quarters of the working wives of this educational level described their jobs as requiring less formal education than they in fact had, a proportion over twice as large as that of any of the other educational groups.

We will find when we examine the work attitudes of employed husbands that men with some college but not a degree do not show the pattern we see among women. The failure to complete a college degree apparently has a much more effective "ceiling" effect on the job achievements of women than it has on those of men. Women without a degree find it very difficult to break out of the traditional clerical occupations to which women are customarily assigned in our society. The wonder is not that these women with some college are critical of their jobs, but that these dissatisfactions with their work life do not seem to have any deteriorating effect on their general sense of well-being.

Employed Husbands, Single Employed Men, and Retired Men

We acquire perspective on the situations of employed and unemployed women by looking at comparable groups of men. Of the three groups of men represented in Table 12-7, the employed married men are much the largest: two men out of three, 18 years and older, fall in this category. On the average they are older than the single employed group, of whom approximately one-half are under 30, and they are, of course, much younger than the retired men, the great majority of whom are 65 or over. They have about the same educational attainments as the single employed men, but they have much more education than the retired men whose average education is far below the national average. Their family incomes average higher than those of the single men, partly because some of them have working wives, and, of course, they average much higher than those of the retired men. Two-thirds of the single men have never married; most of the others are divorced or separated. Two-thirds of the retired men are married; the majority of the others are widowed.

Just as the employed wives rate themselves more positively on the two measures of general well-being than do the employed single women, so also are the working husbands more positive than the employed single men. This is not surprising in view of the fact that single men *in toto* rate themselves below the male average on these measures. It is rather unexpected perhaps to find how favorably retired men describe their lives. Despite their restricted financial circumstances, they view their lives about as favorably as employed married men do. There is an interesting suggestion of bimodality among these older men, an unusual number of very positive and very negative responses, but our sample is not large enough to permit us to pursue this.

Employed husbands are on the average more satisfied with the various domains of their lives than single employed men and less satisfied than the retired men. The single men are less satisfied with their community, with their job, and especially with their family life. The retired men, like the married men with grown children whom they overlap in large part, have a generally positive profile with especially high satisfaction with their community, their housing, and their standard of living and savings. They are the lowest of all the groups we have compared in their satisfaction with their health, and they are also the oldest group. They also are the most likely to describe their lives as "free" rather than "tied-down" and "easy" rather than "hard," reflecting, one assumes, the absence of responsibility for either job or children.

If we now compare employed men and employed women in their expressions of sense of well-being, we find that they divide into two pairs, married men and women and single men and women. Married men and women who are employed resemble each other very closely in the way they describe their lives, the women being slightly more positive in some respects. Single men and women who are employed also resemble each other, but they are clearly less positive than the married workers in their evaluations of their life experiences. As we saw in the comparison of life cycle groups, the fact of being single appears to diminish the quality of life for both women and men, and the fact of being employed does not remove the difference between single and married people.

We have remarked earlier in this chapter on the fact that married women and single women do not differ in the way they talk about their jobs. Single men, however, are less positive about their work than married men or than either group of employed women. They do not complain about their pay in any unusual degree but they are less likely to describe their jobs as interesting or challenging or giving them a chance to do what they like to do. Their overall satisfaction with their jobs is lower than that of any of the other three groups, who do not differ among themselves in this respect. These differences are not as large as others we have commented on, but they are not simply chance variations. They appear to be a part of the general pattern of less favorable orientation toward life which we have found to distinguish single men.

Of the employed married men, about one in three has a wife who is also employed. We have seen earlier that these employed wives do not differ greatly in their assessment of their marriages from housewives who do not work outside the home. We can now answer the question of whether the husbands of employed women feel any differently about their marriages than the husbands of women who are not employed. We will use the same questions we used before for purposes of comparison, and we find the following results:

Of employed men whose wives are employed	*Of employed men whose wives are not employed*	*Employed wives*	
54%	55%	58%	Say they "never" or "rarely" disagree with their spouse about how much money to spend
48%	48%	43%	Say they think their spouse understands them "very well"
44%	42%	49%	Say they think they understand their spouse "very well"
34%	31%	37%	Say they share companionship with their spouse "all the time"
71%	70%	63%	Say they have "never" wished they had married someone else
68%	70%	59%	Say the thought of divorce has "never" crossed their mind
81%	80%	76%	Describe themselves as "very satisfied" with their marriage
80%	79%	74%	Describe themselves as "very satisfied" with their family life

It is apparent that the fact of having an employed wife has no effect on the way employed men describe their marriages. It is also evident that working husbands differ very little from working wives in their answers to these questions although the wives seem a little more likely to admit having entertained the thought of divorce at one time or another. Aside from the unique case of college-graduate women, a broad review of the data of our study reveals only one dimension in which the fact of a wife being employed or not appears to affect a marriage significantly and that is in its financial affluence. A family with two incomes is, not very surprisingly, more likely to be well off in relation to its needs than a family in which only the husband is employed.

The division of working husbands by educational level does not reveal the same pattern of responses to our inquiries that we found among married women. Whereas the curve of positive responses to the two measures of general well-being is progressively upward through the educational ladder of employed wives, it is generally flat among working husbands. We cannot make a comparison comparable to that between college graduate employed wives and housewives, since there is no group analogous to housewives among men.

When we examined the work experience of employed wives in Table 12-9, we were struck by the negative way in which women with some college education described their jobs. As we see in Table 12-10, this peculiarity of employed wives is not found among working husbands.

Table 12-10: Descriptions of Work Experience by Employed Married Men of Different Educational Levels

	Grammar school	*Some high school*	*High school graduate*	*Some college*	*College graduate*
The work is interesting					
Very true	60%	65%	65%	64%	72%
The pay is good					
Very true	41%	39%	40%	42%	39%
I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities					
Very true	42%	54%	42%	53%	64%
I am given a chance to do the things I do best					
Very true	54%	49%	46%	44%	55%
The chances for promotion are good					
Very true	17%	22%	21%	29%	39%
Very satisfied with job					
Categories 6 and 7	66%	71%	66%	67%	67%

The pattern of the data in Table 12-10 is basically flat; there appears to be no consistent relationship between the educational achievements of these working married men and the way they talk about their jobs. In contrast to employed wives, working husbands who have attended college but have not completed a degree typically fall between the educational groups on either side of them in the positive quality of their job descriptions. They also fall between these adjoining groups in their occupational status as the following comparison demonstrates:

	High school graduate	*Some college*	*College graduate*
Professional, managerial, self-employed	23%	37%	84%
Clerical, sales	17	21	10
Skilled craftsman, foreman	29	20	3
Operative, service	26	21	3
Other	5	1	0
	100%	100%	100%

The importance of advanced education as the vehicle of entry to the preferred occupations is impressively demonstrated in these data. One is also impressed by the differences in the employment patterns of married men and women. As we saw earlier, the lack of a college degree denies entrance to the professional, managerial, and self-employed occupations for most women. This is less true of men; the probability of their entering these occupations increases with increased education, to be sure, but the number who attain these levels with less than a college degree is substantial. It is hardly surprising that women with some college express an unusual degree of dissatisfaction with their jobs and men with equivalent education do not.

DISCUSSION

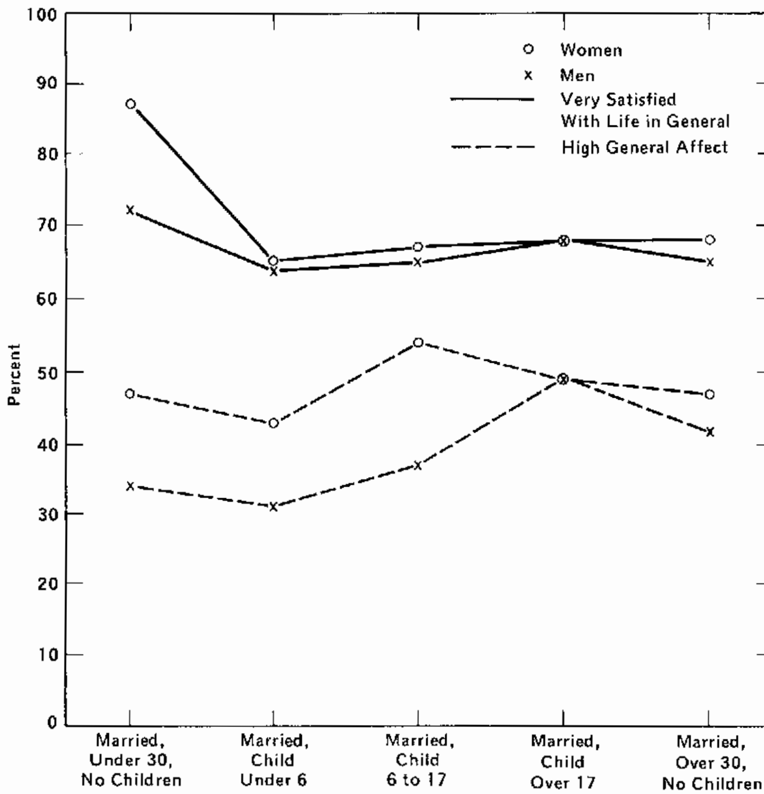
The foregoing pages bring us to the conclusion that the simple fact of knowing that a person is a woman or a man tells us very little about the way that person will describe the quality of her or his life experience. When we compare all women in the adult population with all men, we find that they differ very little in their expressions of general well-being, their satisfactions with the specific domains of their lives, or their feelings of stress. It is only when we divide these heterogeneous groups along the major dimensions of their experience as women and men that we see the substantial differences which exist among them. Marriage with its variations of children, divorce, and widowhood is undoubtedly the major contributor to these differences; employment is also significant and may be gaining importance in the lives of women. Age and educational level are underlying factors which influence expectations and values and must be taken into account.

Our evidence on the experience of marriage has been our major concern in this chapter and it is relevant to questions currently being asked as to the meaning and the impact of marriage on the two sexes. A recent review of research on marriage concludes that "The psychological costs of marriage seem to be considerably greater for wives than husbands and the benefits considerably fewer" (Bernard, 1972, p. 28). This conclusion apparently depends heavily on mental health statistics which we cannot duplicate, but we can search our data for points of contact. When we simply compare the way married women and men assess their general well-being, we find no differences; indeed, if we look at the successive stages of married life, we see that there is no point at which married women describe their lives in less favorable terms than married men (Figure 12-2). This is also true of our limited data on perceived stress; the only point of discrepancy between married women and men we see in Figure 12-1 is in the early years of marriage when the wives report slightly less stress than their husbands. Looking more specifically at the evaluations these people make of their own marriages, we have seen that women are no more likely than men to express dissatisfaction (Figure 10-2), nor are they consistently more or less positive than men in describing their relationships with their spouses.

It is not possible to conclude from these data that the "costs and benefits" of married life differ in any substantial way for wives and husbands. The differences in the experience of marriage differ more according to stages of the life cycle than they do by sex. In general women and men resemble each other at the successive stages of married life, although in the early years before becoming parents women are generally more positive in their description of their marital relationship than men are. The arrival of small children wipes out this difference and puts a strain on the lives of both marriage partners. In some respects, this pressure seems more severe for the wives than the husbands since it appears to raise more consideration of escape from the parental role among the young mothers than it does their husbands. Most marriages survive this period, and wives and husbands both describe their marital situation and their lives in general more favorably as the children grow older and eventually leave the home, the wives being no less positive than the husbands. Considering the entire marital cycle we see that women appear to evaluate their experience more favorably than men at one stage, equally favorably at others, but we cannot conclude that either sex feels itself generally disadvantaged throughout the marriage period.

We can evaluate the experience of marriage for women and men in a

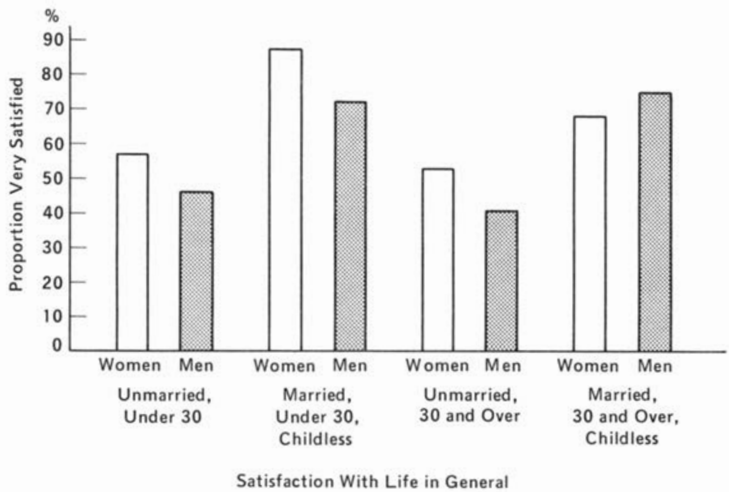
Figure 12-2: Measures of Sense of General Well-Being at Stages of Married Life Among Women and Men

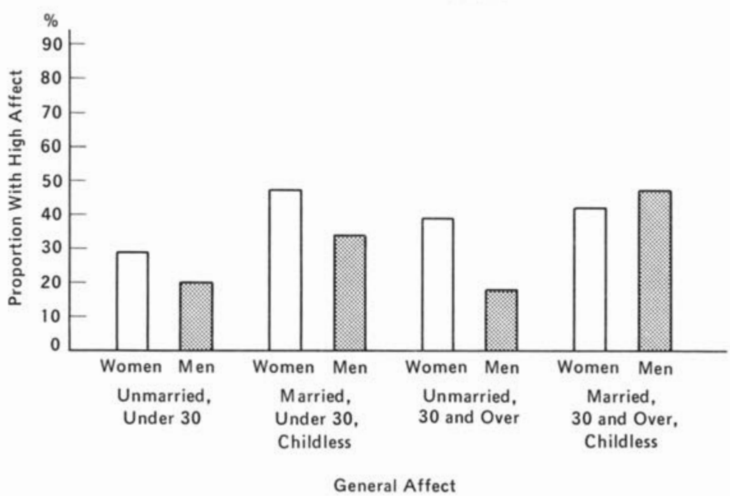


different way by comparing those who are married to those who are not married. People are single for one of three reasons: they have never married, they are divorced or separated, or they are widowed. Despite the strain it puts on our sample, we can divide the unmarried population into these three categories for this comparison. Considering the never-married first, dividing them further by age (under 30 and 30 and over), and comparing them to married but childless persons of the same age ranges, we find the substantial differences in general assessments of life experience shown in Figure 12-3.

Four interesting conclusions emerge from the figure: 1) married women and men without children are more positive about their life experience than never-married people of comparable age; 2) this discrepancy is greater among older men than older women; 3) never-married women are more

Figure 12-3: Measures of Sense of General Well-Being Reported by Unmarried Women and Men and Married but Childless Women and Men





positive than men of comparable age; and 4) never-married people do not become more positive about their lives as they grow older. If we add to these findings the fact that never-married people are much less likely than married people to express satisfaction with their family life (Table 10-3), we come to the conclusion that whatever the psychological costs of marriage may be, the costs of remaining single are considerable and that they are greater for men than for women.

We have reviewed the characteristics of divorced and separated people and those who are widowed earlier in this chapter. Divorced women present the most negative pattern of evaluations of any of the population groups we have considered. Not only do they describe their general well-being very unfavorably, they are also very negative in assessing the specific domains of their lives, including their family life, and they give much more evidence of psychological tension than women in general do. Divorced men also score very low on the measures of well-being, and they are unusually dissatisfied with their family life, but they do not show as pervasively negative a pattern as we see in divorced women. These data make it appear that divorce is a more damaging experience for women than it is for men, but we must take note of the possibility that this finding is influenced by the fact that divorced men are more likely to remarry than divorced women are. It may be that those divorced men who find their single status most intolerable remarry; those who are relatively content as single men remain single. Divorced women, who may not find it as easy to remarry as men do, are more likely to remain divorced even if they are very dissatisfied with their single status and would greatly prefer to remarry. We think it likely that this difference in rates of remarriage explains part of the contrast we see between divorced women and men, but we assume that there are other elements of the situations of divorced women and men, including the economic ones we have mentioned, which are also important. Our study gives us no reason to believe, however, that divorced women, having found marriage a less rewarding experience than their male counterparts do, are happier to be single again.

The psychological situation of widowhood offers an instructive contrast to the status of the divorced person and gives us still another view of the meaning of marriage. Widows are single because of an "act of God"; their loss may have been traumatic, but it was an event which they cannot ordinarily feel responsible for or guilty about. We have seen that in their general sense of well-being widowed people assess their lives very unfavorably, resembling people who are divorced and contrasting very sharply with married people in their own age range. But they are not negative in their satisfaction in the specific domains of their lives; they are indeed among the most broadly satisfied of the life cycle groups. We find only one aspect of their lives which would indicate that widowhood has a different meaning for women than it does for men. Widowed women, as we saw in Figure 10-3, are as satisfied with their family life as married women; widowed men are far less satisfied than married men. Like never-married men, widowed men appear to feel the absence of a marriage partner more acutely than women in the same category.

If we were to summarize in a sentence these comparisons of single and married people we would not be far off the mark if we said, "Whatever the psychological costs of marriage, the costs of being single are greater." They are greater for women as well as men, and if the single status follows divorce, they are much higher for her than for him. The high and increasing divorce rate demonstrates clearly enough that many individual women and men find their marriage intolerable, and they may well find life outside such a marriage more satisfactory than attempting to continue within it.[11] But if we look at the population at large we cannot fail to conclude that single people, never-married, divorced, or widowed do not find their lives as pleasant or as satisfying as people who have married and have remained married.

The presence or absence of children appears to influence married people's descriptions of their lives less than might have been expected. Most married people want children, including those who do not have them, and very few parents are prepared to express regret that they have children. Married couples without children, however, give no evidence in this study that their lives are in any way diminished by the fact that they are not parents. It may be that our interview failed to inquire adequately into their feelings on this matter and that more penetrating questions would have brought out a feeling of deprivation we did not touch. Even if this were true, the fact remains that the absence of children does not appear to have prejudiced their satisfaction with other domains of their lives or with their life in general.

We do not find, however, that our data fully support a recent conclusion that "childless marriages that do survive tend to be happier than marriages with children . . ." (Bernard, 1972, p. 60). We have seen that the young (under 30) childless married people in our sample did indeed describe their lives in very positive terms, and this was especially true of the wives. It is likely, however, that the majority of these young people expect to become parents at a later point and will in fact become such. Childlessness, as a life pattern, only becomes psychologically real after the couple are beyond the usual age of the birth of the first child. When we look at the reported well-being of the childless married people of the age of 30 or beyond, we find that the women are not more positive than similarly aged married women with children. The childless married men do seem marginally more positive than those married men of their age range who have children. This same pattern appears in the measures of stress; the childless women resemble the mothers while the childless men report less stress than the fathers. We find no evidence that childlessness enhances the life experience reported by married women beyond their twenties; we find some small indication that

[11] We recall the recently divorced woman described in Chapter 6.

it is associated with a positive sense of well-being among married men beyond this age.

The advent of children is clearly not an entirely positive experience for the parents. Parents of young children show a great deal of strain, both personal and economic, which gradually subsides as they pass through the stages of later parenthood. After the children are grown and the parents are alone again, their general contentment is again high and their companionship and mutual understanding surpass their early parenthood level.[12]

Parenthood undoubtedly adds a unique dimension to human experience, but it is not an essential dimension. People for whom childlessness has become a life style do not report blighted lives; they describe their life experience in very much the same terms as parents in their same age group. People with children find that parenthood involves both costs and rewards, and during the years of raising small children, the costs appear to be substantial.

We have devoted a good deal of attention to employment in this chapter, partly because of its increasing significance for women. The proportion of women who are employed is rising in the United States, especially among women who are married. This trend has great interest not only for its implications for the status of women but for its impact on the institution of marriage as well.

Most women are married, and of these some two-fifths are employed outside the home. Housewives and employed wives make up the large majority of all adult women—which have we found to be more satisfied with their lives? If we assumed, as some do, that housekeeping has a "pathogenic effect" on wives (Bernard, 1972, p. 171), we should expect to find some evidence of this in our sample of housewives. If we argued on the other hand that working wives, who seldom give up the obligations of housekeeping when they take outside work, are under extraordinary pressures from the burden of their two roles, we might reasonably expect them to describe their lives rather unfavorably. As we have seen, neither of these expectations is fulfilled. Housewives and employed wives are both more positive about their life experience than single women who work, but they do not differ from each other.

This finding is subject to more than one interpretation. It would appear on the face of it that adding a job to the life of the average married woman has no effect on her evaluation of her life, other than to make her feel less free. It seems more likely, however, that a factor of self-selection enters into

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[12] We would, of course, be more confident of this description of life cycle changes if our data were longitudinal rather than cross-sectional.

the division of married women into housewives and employed wives, that those women who choose to work outside the home are motivated in some degree at least by a failure to find homemaking totally satisfying, and those who choose to remain at home do so because they find it rewarding. No doubt many women are employed who would prefer not to be, as is also true of men, but most married women who work outside the home say they would not like to give up their jobs, even if it were economically possible to do so, and we must assume they derive some psychological return from their work. Employed women appear for the most part to have found a life style which suits them; those who have stayed home appear in equal degree to be satisfied with the lives they live.[13]

The fact that husbands of employed wives are no more or less positive about their marriage than husbands whose wives are not employed outside the home also suggests a selective influence. The fact that a wife is or is not employed must in some cases at least reflect the attitude of the husband. If he objects to her working, she is not likely to take a job, and he is satisfied with the marriage on that basis. If he approves or acquiesces, she is more likely to take a job, and he has no reason to find this disturbing. If we had been able to identify in our sample those husbands who did not approve of their wife's employment, we would probably have found other indications of dissatisfaction with their marriage. As it is, we can say with assurance only that those men whose wives are employed are no less positive about their marriage or their life in general than men whose wives stay home.

Our data give an ambiguous answer to the question of whether "increased participation of the wife in the labor force . . . has benign effects on the wife" (Bernard, 1972, p. 256). We have no way of knowing how our employed wives evaluated their lives before they took a job, or whether their evaluation of their lives is more favorable now than it was then. We have only one indication that "work outside the home improves marriage" and that is in the small but interesting part of the female population who have completed a college degree. Our sample of this group is too small to give confidence in the findings we have presented, but the reversal of the relationship between education and sense of well-being which we see in Table 12-8 is so striking that it demands attention. College-graduate women who are housewives find their lives less rewarding than other housewives and in particular less rewarding than the lives of college-graduate women who are employed. We cannot say with assurance that their college experience caused these women to be dissatisfied with the life of a housewife;

[13] Orden and Bradburn (1968) report that married women who work part-time describe their lives and their marriages more favorably than those who work full-time. We do not find comparable differences in the present study.

perhaps they would have answered our questions the same way if they had not gone to college. Our findings raise an intriguing question, however, which we would like very much to see pursued in a more appropriate research design.

Our data are particularly acute, however, in demonstrating that these college women will not be satisfied with just any job that takes them out of the home. College-graduate wives who work go in very large majority into professional jobs, and they appear to be relatively well satisfied with them. Married women who take employment after having only partially completed a college course go in very large majority into jobs which are clerical, and in comparison to other employed women they find them very unsatisfactory. We may surmise that having had their employment aspirations raised by their college experience these women encounter a job market which requires a diploma for their entry into positions they would see as having appropriate status and skill level. Until the entry into rewarding employment is as open to women as it is to men at this educational level, the value of a partial college course for the occupational success of women does not seem very great.[14]

CONCLUSIONS

We have not been able to find support in our study for the contention that the lives of women in this country are less rewarding than those of men. It is true that we have found some women whose situation seems more frustrating than that of men, divorced women for example, but we have also seen men whose lives seem less satisfying than those of most women, unmarried men for example. The greatest differences we have found in this study are not between women and men, taken as total populations, but between groups within each sex who live in different circumstances. It is far less important to know that a person is a woman than to know she is a young childless wife or middle-aged widow, or to know that a man is over 30 and never married or the parent of grown children. When we throw all these groups together, we disguise these important differences, and we conclude that women as a whole are no more or less discontent with their lives than men are.

It may be that women *ought* to feel more frustrated and unrewarded than men. This of course becomes a question not only of the objective circumstances in which women live but also of their aspirations and expectations. Who can doubt that the American culture has historically taught women to value the nurturant role of mother and homemaker and to be sat-

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[14] The accumulating literature of research on working women is well reviewed in a recent volume by Hoffman and Nye (1974).

isfied with obligations and rewards which are different from those it prescribes for men? And who can be surprised to find that most women seem content with a life style which has been accepted almost without question for generations?

We recognize that aspirations change, not only for individuals but for total populations. The black community in the United States has raised its sights dramatically in the last ten years. So also have some women; as we have seen, evidences of dissatisfaction among college women are quite striking. Social trends now in motion foreshadow increasing change in prevailing attitudes. More women are taking college degrees, more women are working outside the home, more women are restricting their number of children. These trends have important implications for the traditional relationships between women and men in this country, and in future replications of this study we would expect to find significant changes in the pattern of perceptions and evaluations we have seen in this chapter.

Chapter 13
The Quality of Life Experience of Black People[1]

There is a growing realization among social scientists of the need for social indicators on the life of the American minorities, not only blacks but Mexican-Americans, native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Orientals. The following quotation exemplifies this feeling:

> Although over the years there have been thousands of titles published on the subject of race relations in this country, social science has failed to provide the systematic monitoring of change in the social psychology of American Negroes which the importance of the problem would appear to justify (Campbell and Converse, 1972, p. 14).

The purpose of this chapter is limited specifically to dealing with the life experiences of blacks in the context of the present "quality of life" survey.

In recent years, support for research on the subject of race has been forthcoming from both private and public agencies, reflecting a sense of the need for trend data on the lives of minority people.[2] We believe that this

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[1] This chapter was written by James H. Bracy, Ph.D. candidate in social psychology at The University of Michigan. Mr. Bracy joined the study staff after the interview data had been gathered and did not participate in the design of this study. He wishes to express gratitude for advice given by Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, and Willard Rodgers, as well as the Black Student Psychological Association of Michigan and Michigan members of the Association of Black Psychologists.

[2] Cf. Hyman, 1972; also Pettigrew, 1972, who calls attention to "an acute national need for systematic, longitudinal public opinion data on such major concerns as race relations."

area of inquiry should be entered into with considerable caution and with serious thought as to the overall effects which studying social indicators on minorities may have on policy decision-making. Minority scholars disagree as to the worth of such indicators, raising questions as to their value as scientific tools for the study of minority life and warning as to the potential harmfulness to minorities which may arise from such tools. It is felt that the continuing study of social-psychological changes in the black population may lead to damaging as well as beneficial consequences.

DANGERS AND POSSIBLE PROBLEMS IN SOCIAL INDICATOR RESEARCH

A persistent danger from the use of social indicator data derives from the overly conscious comparisons which are made between the minorities and the majority by policy-makers, social scientists, and others. To present social indicators on minority people from an unrelievedly detrimental perspective simply adds to the limited orientation which has been ingrained in majority thought in this country for many years. It would appear to be time to emphasize more positive perspectives toward minority groups and to give more attention to comparisons of different categories of people within these groups and of one such group to another.

Instances of misuse and misinterpretation of data on minorities have been numerous. Government, business, public and private agencies, and the community in general have all been at fault at one time or another. The question may well be raised of why the need for social indicators, if their use will be just added "ammunition" for the purpose of use against minorities. The emphasis and interpretation one gives to such data can greatly affect those who read and use these findings in coming to policy-relevant decisions. It may be that a historical context is required to insure proper interpretation and perspective so that one uses indicator data only in relation to events which took place prior to and at the time the data were recorded. Any interpretation of such trend data should be viewed in light of such historical influences and consequences.

In the present study of the quality of life of black people, the main indicators are the subjective feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction which blacks report concerning their life situations. This type of indicator has been previously suggested by Hyman, who wrote:

> To construct indexes that are accurate in representing these changing circumstances, and unambiguous in their interpretation, is most important and exceedingly difficult. But it is the meaning the participants themselves confer on the circumstances that is critical. That is lacking in the data, and the present-

day analyst must confer that meaning by sheer speculation (Hyman, 1972, p. 342).

Most objective indicators, such as occupation, income, age, sex, education, place of residence, health, family structure, and the like, display some of the results of discriminatory practices, but they do not give the personal feeling and perceptions of those being handicapped by these situations.

We do not know at this point the extent to which there will ever be a useful set of indicators for minorities. The answer can be known only with further research of the kind reported in this volume. For the present it is important to emphasize the immense possibilities of such indicators proving useful in their application to the problems of minorities.

SOCIAL INDICATOR RESEARCH ON BLACKS: WHY QUALITY OF LIFE?

One way to use social indicators for minorities is to help in assessing their life experiences. By focusing on the particular life experiences of blacks, the societal problems which caused these same experiences hopefully may become more salient. When one questions how a person feels about his or her life and then these same feelings are compared with actual societal practices, an overall picture of the remaining barriers and hardships which still exist are more poignantly displayed. From such disclosure, alternative methods and procedures may be adopted to help eliminate such gross injustices and enhance the quality of life for all.

Work at The Urban Institute of Washington, D.C., exemplifies the concern for development of social indicators relevant to minorities. Their report (Flax, 1972) on "quality of life" presents indicators along fourteen dimensions covering the eighteen largest metropolitan areas with heavy emphasis on Washington, D.C. They utilized unemployment rates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics as an indicator of racial inequality. As the only indicator distinguishing minorities, it had deficiencies. For example, one-third of the cities had no data available. Also, there were no distinctions made between minorities, only a superficial dichotomy of white vs. nonwhites. This simplistic dichotomy showed an encouraging reduction in ten of twelve cities in the ratio of unemployed whites vs. nonwhites.

An earlier indicator report attempted to differentiate more clearly between blacks and whites as well as give needed general interpretations (Flax, 1971). There were sixteen indicators used to ascertain the situation on racial equality during 1960 and 1968 and in addition the possible future changes.[3] The Bureaus of the Census and of Labor Statistics were the primary sources referred to by the investigator. The overall conclusions were encouraging although the data showed a slower improvement among nonwhites than expected or desired by many of the minority segments of society. And even the area which may be least tractable to change, the family structure, may have different implications because of cultural differences as well as the possible changes that may occur later on due to possible future improvements among the other domains.

This work by The Urban Institute exemplifies what has transpired until very recently among investigators who included social indicators relevant to minorities in their investigations. More recent work, such as the "quality of life" study reported here and the parallel study at the Institute for Social Research by Frank Andrews and Stephen Withey and associates on the development of social indicators, are giving greater import to the need for dissecting from the overall population those aspects of the minority sectors of society for closer scrutiny. These studies are initial steps toward developing efficient social indicators and for responding to the growing concern among both the majority and minorities (ethnic and otherwise) for more valid ways to discern the ever-changing posture of society and the effects of such change.

Present Limitations

We will attempt in the following pages to utilize as fully as possible the information our study provides regarding the life experience of black people. It will become apparent to the reader that our analysis suffers from two serious limitations. The first of these derives from the fact that the study from which we are drawing data was intended as a study of the total population, not of the black population specifically. As a result, the questions asked were restricted to those which had relevance to the lives of all adults without regard to minority or majority status. Had the study been focused on the experiences of black people, the questionnaire would have dealt in greater detail with the particulars of black life. The second restraint on our analysis comes from the small number of black respondents in the study sample. Of a total sample of 2,164 persons 223 were black, approximately the ratio of blacks to whites in the total population. Although the Institute for Social Research has on occasion doubled or tripled the sampling rate of black respondents in order to increase the reliability of the black sample it did not do so in this study. As a result the data presented

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[3] These sixteen indicators were classified into the following set of general domains: living conditions, housing, family, education, employment, and income.

in this chapter have a relatively large sampling error, and our ability to compare various segments of the black sample is very restricted.

GENERAL MEASURES OF WELL-BEING

We have reviewed in Chapter 2 the several measures we used to ascertain how people describe their lives "in general." These measures did not refer to specific aspects of the individual's experience although, as we have seen, they were all associated in some degree with his evaluation of the major domains of his life. In reviewing our data concerning the lives of black people, we will begin with these general measures examining differences within the black population in the answers they give to the survey questions and comparing black and white responses.

Happiness

In Chapter 2 we reviewed the answers given by our 1971 sample of the American population to the question, "Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy these days?" We saw in Table 2-1 that the proportion of Americans describing their lives as "very happy" has declined steadily since our earliest measurement in 1957. When we now divide the population into blacks and whites in Table 13-1, we find that black

Table 13-1: Trends in Reported Levels of Happiness by Race

"Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy these days?"

	Very happy	*Pretty happy*	*Not too happy*	*Total*	*N*	*Time of survey*
Blacks						
1957[a]	22%	54	24	100%	188	March-May
1963[b]	18%	57	25	100%	516	January-March
1971[c]	19%	62	19	100%	222	July-September
1972[d]	12%	67	21	100%	219	May and November
Whites						
1957	36%	54	10	100%	2164	
1963	35%	56	9	100%	2219	
1971	30%	61	9	100%	1862	
1972	26%	66	8	100%	2091	

[a] Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960.
[b] NORC, Study SRS 120; cf. Bradburn, 1969.
[c] Present study.
[d] SRC unpublished data.

people have been substantially less willing than whites to call themselves "very happy" throughout the fifteen-year period of our studies. Dramatic events have taken place within the black community during this span of time, but, as far as we can tell from this question, they have not enhanced black people's general sense of well-being.

Black people differ among themselves in the way they evaluate their lives, and Table 13-2 shows the differences in level of happiness expressed

Table 13-2: Average Levels of Happiness for Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Expressed in Deviations in Standard Deviation Units from the Overall Mean Score for Black People)

Sex		*N*	*Educational level*		*N*
Women	−.01	133	Less than high school	.09	131
Men	.02	89	High school graduate	−.16	42
			Some or completed college	−.08	48
Region			*Family income*		
North	−.12	88	Less than $3,000	.10	64
South	.08	134	$3,000 to $7,000	−.14	80
			$7,000 and over	.05	71
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	−.11	84	Single	−.24	42
35-54	−.13	81	Married	.15	113
55 and over	.35	56	Divorced-separated	−.24	45
			Widowed	.14	22

by people at different social positions. The small size of the black sample compels us to condense these positions into rather broad categories; even so, the groups are small and much less reliable than the comparable white groups. Like white women and men, black women and men do not differ in their answers to this question. Black people living in the North are slightly less ready to describe themselves as happy than blacks in the South; older black people are clearly more likely to call themselves "happy" than younger blacks; there is no consistent movement of happiness scores among blacks of different educational or income levels; married and widowed black people are considerably more inclined to describe themselves as "happy" than blacks who are single or divorced.

There are interesting contrasts between these data and those describing white people. Older white people are not happier than younger whites; to the contrary, they are less happy. Indeed black people over 55 are more likely to call themselves "very happy" than are white people of that age. Whites of high income and educational levels are happier than whites at lower levels; this is not true among blacks. We will look for differences comparable to these in the pages which follow, pursuing the implication these data give that these differences in social position, especially in generational status, have a different meaning to whites than to blacks.

Life Satisfaction

The Survey Research Center has asked questions regarding satisfaction "with your life as a whole" of national samples since 1965. The format of the question has changed over that period, and it is not possible to compare our 1971 data precisely with those from the earlier surveys. However, Table 13-3 presents the distributions of the responses of blacks and whites to questions asked in 1965, 1968, and 1971. In the 1965 and 1968 surveys,

Table 13-3: Trends in Reported Levels of General Life Satisfaction by Race

"How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

	Completely satisfied		*Pretty satisfied*		*Not very satisfied*[a]			*Total*	*N*
Blacks									
1965[b]	26%		64		10			100%	93
1968[c]	14%		69		17			100%	223
	Completely satisfied						*Completely dissatisfied*		
	7	*6*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*		
1971[d]	18%	33	22	16	7	4	0	100%	223
	Completely satisfied		*Pretty satisfied*		*Not very satisfied*[a]				
Whites									
1965	23%		66		11			100%	962
1968	25%		65		10			100%	1205
	Completely satisfied						*Completely dissatisfied*		
	7	*6*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*		
1971	22%	41	20	11	3	2	1	100%	1851

[a] In the 1965 survey, the alternative "not at all satisfied" was read. Less than 1 percent of the total sample chose this alternative, and these are merged with the "not very satisfied" responses in this table. This alternative was not used in the 1968 survey.

[b] Unpublished SRC data.

[c] Unpublished SRC data.

[d] Present study.

the respondents were asked to choose among the four alternatives shown in the table; in 1971, they responded to the 7-point scale ranging from complete satisfaction to complete dissatisfaction which was used throughout this survey.

The striking feature of this table is the shift in the relationship of black and white responses to this question from 1965 to the later years. In 1965 black respondents were as positive in their assessment of life satisfaction as whites; three years later they were considerably less so, and they remained less positive in 1971.[4] The very small size of the 1965 black sample (93 cases) makes this comparison very tenuous, but the data suggest that the racial upheaval which occurred during the 1965-1968 period had an effect on and was effected by black aspirations and feelings of equity and inequity.

The pattern of satisfaction-dissatisfaction found in the various segments of the black population resembles that which we saw for the measure of happiness. There is, however, a greater difference between women and men, the latter being more satisfied with life, and between the North and the South, southern blacks appearing to be more satisfied than the northern (Table 13-4). When we compare the satisfaction scores of blacks to whites, we see that in 1971 blacks were less content than whites in most categories. The pattern of satisfaction levels by social category is similar to that of whites in most respects, northern whites are a little less satisfied than southern; whites' satisfaction levels do not vary systematically by family income or educational level; married and widowed whites are more satisfied with their lives than single or divorced-separated people of their race. However, white women and men do not differ in the way blacks do, and the difference between older and younger white people is not as sharp as it is among blacks. Older blacks are not only considerably more positive about their satisfaction with life than younger blacks; they are also more positive than older white people. We find again a suggestion that older blacks have accommodated to a life situation which younger blacks are less willing to accept and less able to find satisfying.

General Affect

We have described in Chapter 2 the measure we devised to permit our respondents to describe their "present life" through the use of the semantic differential procedure. Eight adjective pairs were found to have a common element, and we have combined these to form the Index of General Affect. Black people are slightly less positive on this scale than white people as we see in Table 13-5.

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[4] The 1965 sample was restricted to the population living in communities of 50,000 or more and excluded families in which no one was employed. The other two represented the total national population in the contiguous forty-eight states.

Table 13-4: Average Levels of Life Satisfaction Expressed by Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Expressed in Deviations in Standard Deviation Units from Overall Mean Score of Black People)

Sex		*N*	*Educational level*		*N*
Women	—.18	134	Less than high school	.03	132
Men	.22	89	High school graduate	.01	42
			Some or complete college	—.05	48
Region			*Family income*		
North	—.22	89	Less than $3,000	—.09	64
South	.14	134	$3,000 to $7,000	—.01	80
			$7,000 and over	.04	72
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	—.16	85	Single	—.39	42
35-54	—.07	81	Married	.28	113
55 and over	.39	56	Divorced-separated	—.48	46
			Widowed	.28	22

The pattern of differences among black people at various social positions is presented in Table 13-6, and it resembles what we have seen in the preceding tables. This measure appears to discriminate particularly sharply between people of different marital status. Black people who are divorced or separated are far more negative about their lives than blacks who are married.

Most of these black groups are more negative on this measure than corresponding white groups, and in some cases the differences are substantial. Whites in the southern states, for example, are clearly more positive than blacks in that area. Youthful blacks are far more negative about their lives than young whites. Divorced or separated blacks describe their lives much more negatively than white people in this category.

Sense of Stress

We have reviewed in Chapter 12 the six questions which we used as indicators of perceived stress, whether the person described his life as hard, whether he felt himself to be tied-down, how often he felt rushed, how

Table 13-5: Distributions of Black and White Responses to Eight Semantic Differential Items

	Positive							*Negative*	*Total*	*N*
Black	12%	10	10	13	19	12	9	15	100%	221
White	13%	14	14	14	14	11	11	9	100%	1866

Table 13-6: Average Levels of General Affect Expressed by Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Expressed in Deviations in Standard Deviation Units from Overall Mean Score of Black People)

Sex		*N*	*Educational level*		*N*
Women	—.02	133	Less than high school	—.05	131
Men	.02	88	High school graduate	—.08	42
			Some or complete college	.18	48
Region			*Family income*		
North	.02	88	Less than $3,000	—.13	64
South	—.01	133	$3,000 to $7,000	.02	80
			$7,000 and over	.09	71
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	—.09	84	Single	—.20	42
35-54	—.01	80	Married	.27	111
55 and over	.17	56	Divorced-separated	—.59	46
			Widowed	.19	22

much he worried about financial matters, whether he felt frightened or worried about anything, and whether he worried about having a nervous breakdown. These questions do not divide black people from white people very sharply. Blacks are more apt to say they worry about meeting their bills; whites more often say they "always feel rushed." When we combine these six questions into an index, we see that overall black people are no more ready to express feelings of stress than white people are (Table 13-7).

Feelings of stress are more common among black women than black men and among young black people than among those over 55 years of age (Table 13-8). Black people who have completed high school are more likely to report stress than black people who have either more or less formal education. Differences among blacks in different marital statuses are not very impressive except for those people who are widowed; their relatively low stress scores probably being a reflection in part of their advanced age.

The pattern of perceived stress reported by these groups of blacks is different in some interesting respects from that reported by whites. White

Table 13-7: Index of Perceived Stress Reported by Black and White People

	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	*High* 7		*N*
Black	9%	18	11	13	17	19	13	100%	219
White	11%	15	14	16	17	16	11	100%	1845

Table 13-8: Average Levels of Perceived Stress Expressed by Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Expressed in Deviations in Standard Deviation Units from Overall Mean Score of Black People)

Sex		*N*	*Educational level*		*N*
Women	.18	132	Less than high school	—.08	128
Men	—.22	87	High school graduate	.26	42
			Some or complete college	—.01	48
Region			*Family income*		
North	—.02	88	Less than $3,000	—.08	62
South	.02	131	$3,000 to $7,000	.03	80
			$7,000 and over	.01	71
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	.14	84	Single	.01	42
35-54	.14	79	Married	.03	109
55 and over	—.42	55	Divorced-separated	.13	46
			Widowed	—.45	22

women and men do not differ in their reports of stress as black women and men do. White high school graduates do not show the unusually high stress scores that blacks of this educational level do. Divorced white people not only report more stress than other white people but also more than divorced black people. It is striking that in neither race is income level very significantly associated with perceived stress.

Personal Competence

We have referred at various points in this volume to our measure of sense of personal competence, a scale of four items intended to measure the individual's sense of his ability to control his own life. When we compare black and white responses to these questions, we find black people considerably less self-confident than white people (Table 13-9).

Black women and men do not differ very greatly in their expressed self-confidence and there are only minor differences in black people from the North and South (Table 13-10). There are clear differences, however, between blacks who differ in age, education, or income. Blacks, who are over 55 years of age, who have a college education, or who have higher

Table 13-9: Feelings of Personal Competence Among Black and White People

	Low				*High*	*Total*	*N*
Black	17%	25	26	21	11	100%	221
White	7%	19	24	29	21	100%	1853

Table 13-10: Average Levels of Personal Competence Expressed by Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Expressed in Deviation in Standard Deviation Units from Overall Mean Score for Black People)

Sex		*N*	*Educational level*		*N*
Women	—.08	132	Less than high school	—.12	131
Men	.10	89	High school graduate	—.23	42
			Some or complete college	.55	47
Region			*Family income*		
North	.11	87	Less than $3,000	—.24	64
South	—.07	134	$3,000 to $7,000	—.07	79
			$7,000 and over	.27	72
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	.05	83	Single	—.17	41
35-54	—.23	81	Married	.10	112
55 and over	.26	56	Divorced-separated	—.17	46
			Widowed	.16	22

than average income, score higher than blacks as a whole on this scale. Differences among blacks of differing marital status are not especially impressive, but among these groups divorced, separated, and single people are the least positive.

Black people express less sense of personal competence than white people in virtually all of the subgroups we have considered, but the patterns are not identical. Feelings of personal competence do not vary with age among whites as they do with blacks. The successive age cohorts among whites differ very little on this scale. Black people over 55 are much closer to white people of their age level than younger blacks are to younger white people. The educational groups also differ; feelings of personal competence increase progressively through the educational levels among white people, but among black people they are lowest among high school graduates. In contrast this sense of personal competence rises with income among both races.

Trust in People

Finally we now consider a measure which we have not referred to earlier in this volume, a scale composed of three questions intended to assess the degree to which the individual respondent felt people in general could be trusted. The questions read:

> Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?

Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?

The answers to these questions interrelate rather strongly (r's ranging from .49 to .53), and we have combined them as unweighted components into a single score. The content of this measure is obviously not as broad as those we have been considering, but it brings out a specific aspect of the black experience which the other measures do not.

As we see in Table 13-11, black people are very much less willing to express trust in their fellow man than are white people. This difference has been found in earlier uses of this scale by the Institute for Social Research, and it tells us something about the way the world looks to a black person as compared to how a white person sees it.

Table 13-11: Feelings of Trust in People Among Black and White People

	High trust			*Low trust*		
	1	2	3	4	*Total*	*N*
Black	14%	14	25	47	100%	221
White	41%	21	17	21	100%	1849

We did not ask our respondents to explain their feelings of trust or distrust or to describe the experiences on which those feelings were based, although this would have been an interesting extension of the inquiry. We can only deduce from comparing the degree of trust expressed by different segments within the black population what aspects of the lives of black people contribute to the relatively low level of trust in people. Table 13-12 shows us these comparisons, and we see that the most discriminating variables are those most closely associated with class status, that is, income and especially education. Black people at the lowest rung of the class ladder are least trustful of people, and trust increases among people of higher status. Black people who are divorced or separated also have high levels of distrust. Age, which has been such an important factor in other measures of well-being, is less strongly related to feelings of trust, although again it is the older black people who express the most positive feelings.

All of this seems to make good intuitive sense; those people who have been least successful in their encounters with society have the least reason to feel trustful of it. And this reasoning gains weight when we find that very much the same pattern we have seen among blacks also characterizes whites. It is the low-income, low-educational-level whites who are most distrustful of people; divorced or separated white people also have high scores of distrust. Age seems less important with older people again being somewhat

Table 13-12: Average Levels of Trust in People Expressed by Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Expressed in Deviations in Standard Deviation Units from Overall Mean Score for Black People)

Sex			*Educational level*		
Women	—.02	132	Less than high school	—.17	130
Men	.02	89	High school graduate	.22	42
			Some or complete college	.30	48
Region			*Family income*		
North	.07	88	Less than $3,000	—.12	63
South	—.04	133	$3,000 to $7,000	—.08	80
			$7,000 and over	.18	72
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	—.08	84	Single	—.19	42
35-54	—.02	81	Married	.12	111
55 and over	.14	55	Divorced-separated	—.35	46
			Widowed	.48	22

more trusting. It is apparent, however, although these patterns are similar within the two races, that the fact of being black adds an independent increment to the feeling of distrust. In all the population categories we have been comparing, the trust scores of blacks are lower than those of whites in the same category. It is not simply a matter of being poor or uneducated or divorced; it is also a question of being black.

One is not hard pressed to imagine why it is that being black should *per se* diminish one's sense of trust in people. The history of the black experience in America is not one which would naturally inspire confidence in the benign intentions of one's fellow man. We do not know whether our black respondents were thinking primarily about whites or blacks when they answered our questions about trust in people. In the 1968 study for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Campbell and Schuman, 1968, p. 26), two out of three urban black respondents stated they did not trust one race any more or less than the other, and it seems doubtful that in the present study the black respondents were thinking specifically of one race rather than the other. Their experiences with people in general apparently have given blacks less reason than their white counterparts to believe that people can be trusted.

Summary

In reviewing our findings from these six general indicators of well-being we see that, although there are substantial differences within the black population as to how positively or negatively people of different social positions describe their lives, black people as a whole respond less favorably than white people to all of these measures except in feelings of stress. Considering the objective disadvantages under which black people live in this country, perhaps this finding is surprising only in the fact that the differences are not larger than they are.

If we were able to remove the status differentials which divide the black and white populations, their differing income and educational levels, for example, to what extent would we also remove the differences in their evaluation of their life experience? Do white people describe their lives more positively than blacks, because they are economically better off or better educated or simply because they are white? We cannot answer this question precisely, but we can estimate how our white sample would have answered our questions regarding their sense of well-being, if their objective conditions of life had been the same as those of our black sample. We can achieve this maneuver by weighting the two samples so that they resemble each other on the following variables: family income, educational level, occupation, northern or southern residence, size of place of residence, and age.[5] Of course this is only an approximation of equating the objective conditions of life of the two races, but as we see in Table 13-13 this statistical manipulation does remove much of the difference in their subjective assessment of their lives.

Two items from this table attract comment. Although the "removal" of the handicapping conditions appears to bring blacks and whites quite close together on most of our measures of well-being, we still find black women clearly less satisfied with their lives "as a whole" than white women or black or white men. We will return to a consideration of the lives of black women at a later point. We also see in Table 13-13 that a substantial part of the negativity our black respondents showed in responding to the questions regarding trust in people remains after the effect of the six controlling variables has been removed. As we have suggested earlier, the experience of being black appears to exert a unique influence on this aspect of the way a black person views the world around him.

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[5] Most of these variables, and especially the three socioeconomic indicators (i.e., income, education, and occupation), can be considered objective handicaps faced by blacks relative to whites in this country. Region and urbanicity are included as indicators of opportunities for educational and occupational mobility. Age, on the other hand, is included not as a handicapping condition affecting blacks and whites differentially, but because of the relationship between age and our satisfaction measures, as explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The average age of black respondents was about two years less than that of whites.

Table 13-13: Standard Scores of Black and White Responses to Measures of General Well-Being, Before and After Adjustments to Remove Correlations with Six Situational Variables

	Women		*Men*	
	Unadjusted	*Adjusted*	*Unadjusted*	*Adjusted*
Happiness				
Blacks	—.332	—.073	—.301	—.100
Whites	.053	.016	.036	.009
Difference	.385	.089	.336	.109
Life satisfaction (item)				
Blacks	—.400	—.211	.023	.047
Whites	.043	.016	.003	—.007
Difference	.443	.227	—.020	—.054
Index of general affect				
Blacks	—.196	.053	—.065	.091
Whites	.053	.016	—.001	—.027
Difference	.249	—.037	.064	—.118
Index of well-being				
Blacks	—.348	—.109	—.024	.075
Whites	.055	.020	.000	—.020
Difference	.403	.129	.024	—.096
Stress (lack of)				
Blacks	.252	.062	—.172	—.152
Whites	.003	.033	—.044	—.038
Difference	—.249	—.028	.128	.114
Personal competence				
Blacks	—.461	—.205	—.284	—.018
Whites	—.013	—.048	.127	.095
Difference	.448	.157	.411	.113
Trust in people				
Blacks	—.665	—.282	—.630	—.249
Whites	.155	.101	.022	—.029
Difference	.821	.383	.652	.220

SATISFACTION WITH THE DOMAINS OF LIFE

In Chapter 3, we displayed the distributions of responses the total sample gave to the fifteen questions asked regarding degree of satisfaction with various domains of their lives (Table 3-1). In Table 13-14, we present these distributions for the black sample only, and a comparison of the two tables reveals several interesting facts:

Table 13-14: Means and Distributions of Satisfactions of Black People with Domains of Life

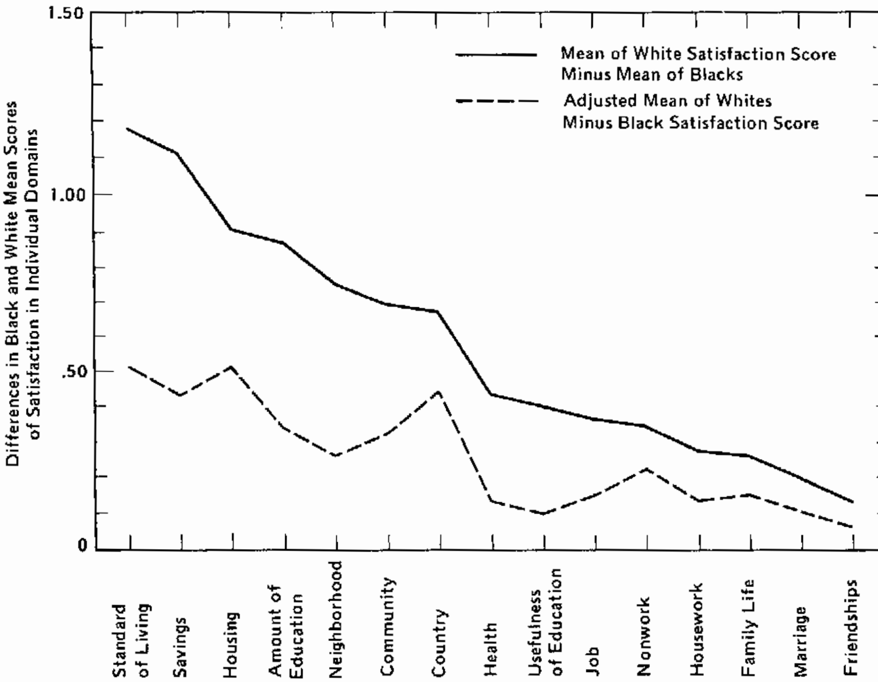
	Completely dissatisfied 1	2	3	*Neutral* 4	5	6	*Completely satisfied* 7		*Mean*	*Women*	*Men*	*N*
Savings	30%	14	13	12	10	11	10	100%	3.30	3.16	3.47	223
Amount of education	23%	13	8	14	14	7	21	100%	3.90	4.17	3.57	202
Standard of living	9%	10	11	23	20	15	12	100%	4.28	4.25	4.31	223
Usefulness of education	6%	5	7	22	9	10	41	100%	5.17	5.39	4.90	222
Housing	7%	6	7	24	14	21	21	100%	4.79	4.67	4.93	221
Nonwork	3%	4	6	16	16	24	31	100%	5.32	5.11	5.57	223
City or county	4%	2	9	29	13	14	29	100%	5.02	4.86	5.23	219
Life in United States	3%	6	8	22	17	19	25	100%	5.03	4.95	5.12	222
Job	3%	4	2	22	16	18	35	100%	5.38	5.19	5.52	142
Housework	4%	3	3	22	10	16	42	100%	5.48	5.48		116
Friendships	0%	2	2	19	17	25	35	100%	5.65	5.56	5.75	223
Neighborhood	4%	4	8	20	16	20	28	100%	5.12	5.02	5.24	222
Health	7%	5	4	9	10	28	37	100%	5.41	5.27	5.59	212
Family life	1%	5	5	9	14	25	41	100%	5.70	5.57	5.86	211
Marriage	0%	0	2	17	6	18	57	100%	6.11	5.93	6.26	112

1. The order of the fifteen domains in the degree of satisfaction expressed is very similar for blacks and for the population at large (*rho* = .8). The greatest satisfaction is with the interpersonal domains (marriage, family, and friendships) and the lowest with the financial domains and amount of education.
2. Black satisfaction is lower than that of the population at large in every one of the fifteen domains.
3. The discrepancy between the degree of black satisfaction and that of the population at large in the fifteen domains is inversely correlated with the absolute level of satisfaction with these domains (*rho* = .9). Black satisfaction falls furthest short of that of the total population in those domains with which their satisfaction is least (the financial domains and amount of education) and differs least in the interpersonal domains.
4. Black women are less satisfied than black men with all of the fourteen domains of their lives except those relating to the extent and usefulness of their education. These differences are not large, but they are consistent with the less positive responses black women gave to our measure of general satisfaction with life. The differences in the domain satisfactions of white women and men are generally small and fall in both directions.

We have taken note in Chapter 3 that the greatest dissatisfactions expressed by our survey population were concerning those domains which are most readily assessed in countable units, dollars and years of schooling, and those domains least easily reduced to such units—marriage, family life, friendships—were least often described as unsatisfying. We proposed at that point that this pattern must depend in some part on the greater ability of the individual to perceive a societal norm in those domains and to gauge the discrepancy between this norm and his own achievement. An adult who has not finished high school knows that he falls below current standards; he is a "dropout." He cannot be so sure that because his wife nags him occasionally his marriage falls short of what a husband might reasonably expect and he has reason to be dissatisfied. There is no finite standard of a "good marriage" that he can set his own experience against.

We now ask why it is that black dissatisfaction most exceeds white dissatisfaction in those domains in which general dissatisfaction is greatest, and we find our answer in Figure 13-1. The domains in which the black-white discrepancy is greatest are precisely those in which blacks, "a disadvantaged minority," to use an often quoted phrase, are most obviously deficient. Black discontent exceeds white most clearly in standard of living, level of savings, housing, amount of schooling, and neighborhood, in that order. Black people, like white people, express the most dissatisfaction with those domains which can be the most objectively assessed, and they express more dissatisfaction than white people with those domains, because they fall far short of the societal norms in these domains and they are aware of it.

Figure 13-1: Differences in Mean Scores of Blacks and Whites in Satisfaction in Domains of Life



We have remarked in an earlier study of racial differences that the degree of well-being expressed by black people may depend less on the absolute level of their income and other conditions of life and more on their level relative to other people whom they take as point of reference. The pattern we see in Figure 13-1 supports the conclusion that the reference group to whom black people compare themselves is not exclusively other black people, but to some degree the population at large as well. In the earlier study of the financial aspirations of blacks and whites, it was concluded that there appears to be "some more or less common financial status to which Americans of all income levels aspire and the further they are away from it the less satisfied they are with what they have. The same may be said in lesser degree about housing" (Campbell, 1971, p. 101). The data of Figure 13-1 conform very agreeably to this statement.

The remaining entries in Figure 13-1 also have interest. The relatively high discrepancy between black and white evaluations of city or county and nation would appear to reflect a general black discontent with their situation in this country, a weakness of identification with what is seen as a primarily white community. The discrepancies in the domains of health and job may be taken to reflect the objective differences in the status of blacks and whites in these domains; blacks have poorer health and inferior jobs. They are apparently either less sensitive to these facts than they are to their financial status, or the perceived distinctions in jobs and health are smaller. The domains in which there is the least difference in the satisfaction levels of blacks and whites are those involving interpersonal relationships, family life, marriage, and friendships. We cannot say that the experience of these relationships is precisely the same for blacks and whites, but we can say that their expressions of satisfaction with these relationships do not differ significantly.

In Figure 13-1, we have also charted the discrepancy between black and white satisfaction levels when we adjust the means of blacks and whites on these measures of satisfaction to remove the influence of the six control variables described earlier. The effect of this adjustment is in all cases to reduce the discrepancy between the black and white means, particularly in those domains in which the discrepancy was greatest. Black satisfaction in the economic and housing domains still falls significantly short of the white level and the discrepancy in racial differences in satisfaction with "life in the United States" remains relatively high despite our statistical adjustment. Those domains in which the unadjusted means did not differ substantially become even more similar, but, as we see in Figure 13-1, in no case does the black average become more positive than the white when the control variables are introduced.

We will not undertake to present a documentation of differences in the fifteen domains for all of the segments of the black population we have considered in the preceding section. In general, it can be said that the various sections of the black population we have been comparing differ among themselves considerably more in their satisfaction with specific domains of life than they do on the general measures of well-being.[6] In order to conserve space we will use the combined domain satisfaction scale which we have used in earlier chapters, combining responses to all the domains except marriage, work, housework, and education. This maneuver gives us the pattern shown in Table 13-15.

The combined score of domain satisfactions necessarily reflects the racial differences in the individual domains which we see in Figure 13-1; black people are less satisfied than white. It is also apparent that the adjustment of the situational differences between the two races does not equate

[6] It is significant that the sharpest differences are found in satisfaction "with life in the United States today." Black people who live in the North, are under 35 years of age, have attended college, and have higher than average incomes are much less positive in their response to this question than other black people are.

Table 13-15: Standard Scores of Black and White Responses to Measures of Satisfaction in Ten Life Domains, Before and After Adjustments to Remove Correlations with Six Situational Variables

	Women		*Men*	
	Unadjusted	*Adjusted*	*Unadjusted*	*Adjusted*
Black	—.684	—.294	—.459	—.250
White	.133	.076	.042	.007
Difference	.817	.370	.501	.257

the satisfaction levels and that some part of the difference between them appears to be due to other factors associated with being black.

The pattern we see when we compare the satisfaction index scores of different subgroups within the black population (Table 13-16) very closely resembles what we saw in Table 13-4 where we compared the responses of these groups to the overall question of life satisfaction. Black women are less positive than men; northern blacks are less positive than southern. Age is strongly related to expressed satisfaction; income and education are not. Single and divorced people are less positive than married or widowed people. Since we know that the domain satisfaction index is highly correlated with the life satisfaction measure, it is not surprising that the pattern we see here is so similar to that in the earlier table.

When we compare these data on segments of the black population to

Table 13-16: Average Levels of Domain Satisfaction Index Expressed by Black Respondents in Demographic Subgroups (Deviations in Standard Deviation Units from Overall Mean Scores of Black People)

Sex		*N*	*Educational level*		*N*
Women	—.09	134	Less than high school	.10	132
Men	.11	89	High school graduate	—.29	42
			Some or complete college	.01	48
Region			*Family income*		
North	—.27	89	Less than $3,000	.05	64
South	.18	134	$3,000 to $7,000	.01	80
			$7,000 and over	—.05	72
Age			*Marital status*		
18-34	—.25	85	Single	—.33	42
35-54	—.10	81	Married	.17	113
55 and over	.56	56	Divorced-separated	—.28	46
			Widowed	.38	22

comparable data from whites we find a generally similar pattern with some interesting differences. The regional difference among blacks, for example, disappears among whites. The relationship with age is present among whites as it is with blacks but is not as strong; black people over 55 are clearly more satisfied relative to the black average than older whites are to the white average. The negative scores of the high school graduate blacks, which we have seen in some of the earlier tables, are not found in the white population.

We may summarize what we have found by looking at the domain satisfactions in much the same terms we used to conclude our review of the general measures of well-being. Black people are not as satisfied with their lives when considered in individual domains as white people are and equating them to white people in their social, economic, residential, and age status does not wholly remove this difference. The consistently more negative tone in which black people describe their lives derives not only from the disadvantages associated with being poorly employed, poorly paid, and poorly housed, but also from other experiences and viewpoints associated with being black in a society which is only beginning to accord blacks equal recognition as citizens and neighbors.

QUALITY OF LIFE FOR BLACK PEOPLE: A SUMMARY

We have compressed a heavy load of data into the preceding pages and we attempt now to summarize them in a more comprehensible form. We move from a statement of the range of responses to each of our measures to a description of the responses given by each of the major divisions of the black population.

Women and Men

The tables we have presented show that black women responded more negatively than the rest of the sample population on most of the scales we have examined. Both in their overall sense of well-being and in their satisfaction with specific domains of life, black women are more negative than black men or than white people of either sex. Black males, on the other hand, show some surprising similarities of response to the white sample.

Contrary to this generalization, black women and men were found to be quite similar in their estimates of their degree of personal happiness. Both expressed declining levels of happiness over a fifteen-year period, as did comparable whites. The discrepancy between the reports of blacks and whites has remained relatively constant throughout this period; their reported happiness has declined in about equal measure.

The measure of general life satisfaction displayed a greater difference between black women and men than we saw for the measure of happiness. Black women were found to be much less satisfied than black men or whites, and much of this difference remained after black and white social and economic characteristics were statistically controlled. Black men responded relatively positively in their satisfaction with "life as a whole" and were conspicuously similar to whites.

We do not find any significant difference between black women and black men in their responses to semantic differential questions, although black women and men are less positive on the Index of General Affect than white women and men.

The responses by black women to the Index of Perceived Stress suggest that they more often experience feelings of stress than do black men, whereas white women were similar to white men. However, while whites are more likely to say they "always feel rushed," and blacks more apt to say they worry about meeting their bills, in general, the difference in degree of perceived stress reported by the two races is not very impressive.

Greater differences were found between the races in feelings of personal competence and trust in people. In general, blacks were significantly less self-confident and trusting than whites, and black women expressed slightly weaker feelings of personal competence than black men.

In all of the domains of life we measured except those relating to education, black women were less satisfied than black men. White people expressed greater satisfaction in all of these domains than black people, but white women did not differ consistently from white men.

The quality of life of the black female appears less positive than that of any of the other segments of the population in question. It is ironic that some elements of the black leadership in this country have taken the position that women's liberation is not an appropriate cause for black women. The present study implies that the black woman's need for liberation is as great or greater than that of the white woman, and a recent Institute for Social Research survey (1973) demonstrates that a national cross-section of black women are even more approving of the women's liberation movement than white women are. It will be interesting to follow such organizations as the National Council of Negro Women (New York City) to see if their attempts to develop a black women's movement by consolidating conflicting group ideologies will prove fruitful and bring economic, political, and psychological results. The social, political, and economic events of the past two decades in the civil rights period may have been meant to bring about a better society for all, especially minorities—but the black male may have benefited more than the black female.

Age

At the time this study was conducted, generation appeared to be one of the primary determinants of the reported life quality of black people, consistently more important than it was for white people. Older blacks, those 55 years or older, expressed more happiness than younger blacks. This age difference was not found among whites and, indeed, older whites were not as happy as their black counterparts. The same large differences between older and younger blacks appeared on the life satisfaction index, older blacks reporting more life satisfaction than younger blacks. Older whites, however, did not differ as greatly from younger whites. Indeed, older blacks expressed more overall satisfaction with life than older whites.

The same negative feelings among youthful blacks were demonstrated on the Index of General Affect and the Index of Perceived Stress. Young blacks were more negative about their lives and expressed greater feelings of stress than whites or older blacks.

Again, blacks over 55 years of age scored higher than younger blacks on the feelings of personal competence scale. Though personal competence did not vary with age among whites, these older blacks were more similar to comparably aged whites than younger blacks were to younger whites. Older blacks were also found to be somewhat more trusting than younger blacks and far more satisfied with the specific domains of their lives.

These generational differences strongly suggest that the recent history of race relations in this country has had a different meaning for young black people than it has for their elders. The generally positive evaluation which older black people make of their lives appears to reflect an accommodative attitude, a lifetime adjustment to reality, and an acceptance of life as it is experienced. We have argued in Chapter 5 that this is a general phenomenon of age, but it appears to have a special significance for blacks. The 1968 study for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders showed us that young black people were much more responsive to the black "movement" at the time than were their parents' generation (Campbell and Schuman, 1968), and our present data indicate that their aspiration levels have risen, probably beyond the levels their parents experienced at their age. The cultural patterns which older black people have learned to accommodate to are not as acceptable to their children.

Region

Black people living in the North are slightly less ready to describe themselves as happy or satisfied with life than blacks in the South or whites in either region. Though northern whites were a little less satisfied with life than southern whites, the regional variation among whites is not great.

In general, blacks did not vary greatly from North to South on the Indexes of General Affect, Perceived Stress, Personal Competence, or Trust in People. Northern blacks were considerably less satisfied with the specific domains of their lives, however. Whites in the two regions did not vary greatly between themselves on these measures, but they were more positive than blacks in their responses to all of them except in feelings of stress.

Education

Blacks of the higher educational levels, high school graduates and some or completed college, were slightly *less* happy with their lives than lower educated blacks with less than a high school diploma. However, this is not true for higher educated whites; higher educated whites were found to be *more* happy than whites at lower levels. Moreover, higher educated blacks reported less happiness than whites at this educational level.

Blacks who had gone to college were not significantly more or less satisfied with life in general than blacks with only a high school or lower education. All educational levels of blacks scored lower on the life satisfaction index than whites. White satisfaction levels are highest among college graduates and lowest among those who did not complete their college work.

College-educated blacks described their lives somewhat more positively on the semantic differential questions than did less well-educated blacks. This tendency toward a more positive description of life was also found among educated whites.

Blacks who had completed high school were more likely to report stress and feelings of personal incompetence than either blacks with lower or higher education. They were also less satisfied with the specific domains of their lives. On the other hand, white high school graduates did not report such high stress as the black high school graduates, while feelings of personal competence increased progressively through the educational levels among whites. The highly educated black or white apparently expresses greater personal competence with relative amounts of stress and this greater self-confidence may in turn be of help in coping with later stressful situations.

Blacks with less than a high school education were found to be least trustful of people. An increase in education apparently is accompanied by an increase in trust in both races. Whatever the influence a successful education may have on this attitude toward one's fellow man, it does not wipe out the influence of race; at all educational levels, blacks have higher levels of distrust than whites.

Our data are regrettably too limited to permit us to press the interpretation of these differences between blacks of differing educational attainment. We are particularly intrigued by the relative negativity of black people who finish high school but do not go on to college. Their situation appears to be one of high aspiration and disappointing achievement, a frustration probably made more acute in many cases by the perception that the lack of achievement results from racial discrimination. It may be that the intensified frustration felt by high school blacks is parallel to that displayed by whites failing to complete college. In both cases, the frustrated groups are near the top of the educational ladder in their respective communities but conspicuously fail to receive the rewards of the top groups.

Income

There is surprisingly little difference between black people at different income levels in their general sense of well-being. Neither in reported happiness, life satisfaction, general affect, nor perceived stress do the poor differ from the well-off. There is also very little difference among these people of different incomes in their expressed satisfaction with the specific domains of their lives. Among white people high income is consistently associated with positive reports of life experience.

Higher income blacks and whites reported more self-confidence than lower income blacks and whites. This appeals to common sense if one considers that income is a type of feedback on performance and as one progresses up the income ladder his feeling of personal competence is likely to be enhanced.

Again, low income blacks are more distrustful of people than higher income blacks. Though the differences were not as great, low income whites scored lower on the trust scale than higher income whites. However, no matter what level of income, blacks are consistently less trustful of people than are whites.

Marital Status

Single and divorced-separated blacks were found to be significantly less happy, less satisfied, more negative about their lives in general and the specific domains of life than married or widowed blacks. Though not as pronounced, these negative responses by single and divorced-separated blacks were also reflected in their lower feelings of personal competence and distrust of other people. Divorced and separated blacks also reported more perceived stress than any of the other black groups, although more stress was reported by divorced or separated whites than by divorced or separated blacks.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study of black people should be considered only the beginning to possible future social indicators research on *all* minorities. What appears to be needed is a concerted effort to produce large national samplings of minorities; there have been far too few surveys of any type with ample populations of blacks, let alone the smaller numbered minorities. Similar effort must be given to include stronger and more complete social-psychological measures; for example, it appears almost ridiculous to find very little work (not to mention panel data) on the *values* possessed by each segment of society. The foundation in such an area has already been laid by such researchers as Rokeach (1973), Rokeach and Parker (1970), Kluckhohn (1953), Allport and Vernon (1931), and others. One could expand such work to include all-inclusive mental health panel data collections as well. Another area where work needs to be done is on the stability of the basic family unit of minority people. Is it or is it not "breaking down"? Recent works by Andrew Billingsley (1968) and Robert Hill (1972) give implications of stronger family units among minorities than have been mentioned in some previous studies (Moynihan, 1965), despite comparatively high rates of marital dissolution. Only concerted research of this nature, hopefully by an increasing contingent of minority researchers, will bring forth the cultivation of the social indicator movement as a legitimate and fruitful area.

If we can assume that the social indicators movement will progress and will have a growing impact on all types of policy decision, governmental and otherwise, it appears appropriate in this early stage of social indicator development to remind the reader and especially the social indicator researcher of what a recent humanitarian concerned with all types of research with potential impact had to say:

> For social scientists, the opportunity to serve in a life-giving purpose is a humanist challenge of rare distinction. Negroes too are eager for a rendezvous with truth and discovery. We are aware that social scientists, unlike some of their colleagues in the physical sciences, have been spared the grim feelings of guilt that attended the invention of nuclear weapons of destruction. Social scientists, in the main, are fortunate to be able to extirpate evil, not to invent it (King, 1968).

The preceding quotation is appropriate in forewarning social indicator researchers and users that one must be cautious in how and to what extent the information received from such research is used.

Chapter 14
The Perceived Quality of Life and Its Implications

In a real sense this volume has been premature. Our study of the perceived quality of life was designed at its very core to be repeated over time. Hence an exposition of static results from no more than a single slice of time sits uncomfortably beside the true purposes of the investigation.

To be sure, certain basic questions underlying the inquiry could be answered to a fair approximation even within the compass of a single study. We began, for example, with a rudimentary curiosity as to whether global feelings of well-being about life, which had begun to receive investigation in the preceding decade, could accurately be seen as some composite of feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a number of the more important domains or facets of life. If such a decomposition were shown to be valid, empirically and psychologically, then we could kill at least two prize birds with one stone. On the one hand, we would have laid the groundwork for an understanding of the causal roots of such global feelings and could even go on to learn something straightaway about the combining mechanisms producing these global feelings in people's minds. On the other hand, we would have brought these global feelings a step closer to intelligent collective action. That is, the "quality of life" is a vague and ethereal entity, something that many people talk about, but which nobody knows very clearly what to do about. Successful dissection of this entity into more concrete but still subjectively meaningful components held promise of bringing the concept within policy reach.

We have been able to address these initial questions with some success.

In Chapter 3, we saw that global measures of well-being could indeed be seen as substantially reflecting a composite of satisfactions with more specific domains of life. We also saw that despite many intriguing "combining" models that have been suggested for such summations of feeling, it was hard to find much sign that anything beyond the simplest combining rules were being employed. Moreover, even a study at a single point in time could undertake to answer questions concerning demographic variation in these satisfactions and their combining patterns or apparent determinants of some of the more specific domain satisfactions themselves, and a fair portion of this volume has been devoted to such topics. Finally, by drawing on items from earlier studies, we have been able at a few stray points to give some time depth to our data.

However all this may be, the study was conceived as a base-line investigation against which changes in the future could be measured. The purpose was to establish a series of measurements bearing on the perceived quality of life which could be monitored at more or less regular intervals over coming decades. Whether our interests lie with the policy relevance of these materials or with the scientific understanding of man's fate, such repeated measurements become essential.

Where policy is concerned, results from one point in time are of limited interest in part because we do not know "how high is high," where numerical results on these satisfaction ratings are concerned. We can draw some preliminary inferences, as we have, from the fact that satisfaction responses in some domains are considerably more tempered than those in other domains. But these inferences are weak substitutes for the charting of gains and losses in these feelings of satisfaction, domain by domain, over the years as conditions change.

At this point, there is no way of knowing how such indicators will perform in even an intermediate term. Yet a compelling argument can be made that any policy weight to be placed on information of this kind should be light at the very most, until such elementary information is in hand. Indeed, the argument is compelling that such weight should be light until not only are some temporal trends brought into view, but also a more satisfying understanding of a systematic sort concerning the causal dynamics underlying such temporal variations. And such understanding can be firmly founded only upon measurements enjoying some time depth.

At one limited point we achieved a fragmentary time depth by reinterviewing a small subsample of our original respondents. This enterprise was extremely helpful in providing rough estimates of the reliabilities of our subjective measures at various levels of abstraction, and we were able to exploit some of this information further in Chapter 6 to suggest the efficacy of our satisfaction measures in predicting to behavior, as well as their responsiveness to events affecting the lives of our respondents. Similarly, our analyses have put uncommon emphasis on all attributes of our respondents that are time-based and process-related, such as chronological age or the lengths of time in a house or a marriage. It is through such time-related variables that we can get our first dim glimpse of dynamics and change, even in a study at a single point in time. Nonetheless, however hard we may press information of this kind, the limits of inference remain severe without true longitudinal data over a reasonable span of time.

It is in these various senses that this current volume is premature. However, it seemed important to write as a statement of progress. The area of measurement was relatively unfamiliar, but scholarly interest in it has been intense in recent years. Given the kind of investment that any study of this magnitude represents, it seems important to share these experiences with a broader community of investigators as rapidly as possible. While we have little more than scratched the surface of what needs to be learned in the area, we know vastly more than when we began, and we hope others can profit from our experience as well.

It is now time for a summing-up, a drawing together of the more important loose ends strewn through preceding chapters, accompanied by suggestions both as to the broader implications of our findings, as well as to future directions of inquiry that now seem particularly fruitful.

We will address this summing-up to at least two audiences, if not more, and these two are represented by the watershed between the purely scientific concerns of the study and the hope that in a longer run, work of this kind may achieve some solid policy relevance. Hopefully there will be a third audience of some size which entertains both concerns simultaneously.

The first two sections of this concluding chapter will be devoted to a summing-up of progress on the scientific front. Initially we shall devote our attention to the light our study may claim to have shed on the interplay between subjective and objective social indicators of well-being. Of course the generic model we have used over the course of the preceding chapters leaves a place for both types of indicators. However, the generic version of the model is no more than a framework for organizing information and hence does little to highlight more substantive issues involved in this interplay. Most of these issues have been joined at one point or another in this manuscript, but what remains to be laid out is a more compact statement, tying together the relevant observations afforded by our data, with a highlighting of questions which now seem deserving of intensive pursuit in the future.

The second section will review the principal measurement lessons we have drawn from the study. Once again, because we were engaging in a number of unfamiliar forms of measurement, we have devoted uncommon attention in this volume to issues of measurement validity, reliability, and bias. Although these experiences are often left as informal "lore" swapped among investigators sharing common substantive interests, it seems worth summarizing them here to make them accessible to the widest possible audience.

Finally, the closing section of the chapter will address the broader policy relevance of our study in particular, along with the kinds of policy relevance that second- and third-generation studies of this type might aspire to achieve. We shall argue that it is very easy to overestimate this relevance even for the long run, but we shall contend that on a limited basis, safe and sane policy implications are not at all out of reach even within early studies of this genre.

SUBJECTIVE REFLECTIONS OF OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS

There is not much doubt that the central issue confronting any examination of the perceived quality of life involves the relationship between subjective and objective indicators of well-being. This issue can arise in a purely substantive form, where the empirical question concerns the actual nature of the interplay between objective conditions and subjective evaluations of them. The issue can also arise, and frequently does, as to the relative worth of subjective and objective indicators as means of monitoring the welfare of populations.

Whereas there appears to be widespread agreement that the purely economic terms embodied in a system of national accounts provides an inadequate statement of the general weal and needs broadening with other kinds of noneconomic indicators, this consensus seems as likely to fuel the subjective-objective issue as to resolve it. For some the need could be met by developing other arrays of equally "objective" indicators, but in other social or environmental domains. For other critics, the need is for subjective data bearing on the meaning of objective conditions, be they either economic or noneconomic, from the point of view of the people actually experiencing them.

In response to many of these felt needs, the Office of Management and Budget of the United States government recently drew up a compilation of indicators designed to "describe social conditions and trends in the United States."[1] This volume included time series on a wide variety of conventional objective indicators, largely from governmental sources. It also contained a few time series of a subjective sort, including data on satisfactions of the type with which our own study has been occupied. While the produc-

[1] *Social Indicators, 1973,* prepared under the direction of Daniel B. Tunstall. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

tion of the OMB report has generally been met with favor as a step in the appropriate direction, the insertion of subjective indicators draws criticism from some observers because they are "soft" measures and "we do not know what they mean." On the other hand, some of the more objective measures have been criticized in their turn because the relationship between gains and losses in these quanta and changes in the welfare of the population is thoroughly unclear.[2] Thus the problem of measurement meaning can be made to appear oppressive whichever type of indicator of well-being is used.

From our perspective, both types of indicators of well-being have their characteristic virtues and defects, and we would be infinitely better off in the long run if we were able to monitor both. Indeed, an attractive argument can be mounted that the limitations of meaning which seem to surround both types of indicators would be most speedily remedied if more were understood about their interaction, particularly in a dynamic sense.

Surely both types of indicators suffer measurement error. Of course it is commonly presumed that measurement error is a far more serious problem for subjective measures of well-being than for objective ones. This is the conventional invidious contrast between "hard" data and "soft," which may lay claim to some grain of truth, yet which lends itself to wild exaggeration as well.

Assuming that references to the "hardness" of objective indicators is intended to say something about their relative accuracy, this is a property which can easily be overestimated. The simple counting operations which produce rates of literacy, unemployment, crime, or dwelling units with this or that amenity are deceptively straightforward on the surface. What frequently lies hidden beneath such counts are severe ambiguities as to whether given empirical cases should or should not be taken as instances of the phenomenon being measured. Exactly what skills certify the presence of literacy? How do we even define what a dwelling unit is? In the early stages of measurement, such decisions tend to be left to the common sense of the particular data-gatherer, a practice which invites wide variation in definitions and drift in their boundaries over time. In later stages, complex hierarchies of decision rules are erected, although the fidelity of their application in the field often remains questionable.

> Public agencies are very keen on amassing statistics—they collect them, add them, raise them to the nth power, take the cube root and prepare wonderful diagrams. But what you must never forget is that every one of those figures

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[2] These comments are drawn from a symposium on the OMB *Social Indicators, 1973,* held in February, 1974, in Washington under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council. For a report of the symposium, see Van Dusen, 1974.

comes in the first instance from the village watchman, who just puts down what he damn pleases.

Sir Josiah Stamp, as cited
in Wonnacott and Wonnacott (1972).

Despite such difficulties, it is probably true that the majority of objective indicators are somewhat "harder" than most of the subjective measurements with which we have dealt in this volume, in the particular sense of being more readily replicable, or "reliable."[3] Over the course of this volume we have attempted to make available as much information as possible concerning the reliability of our subjective measurements. Many of these estimates, based on cross-time or "test-retest" comparisons, are soberingly low. As we have pointed out, these estimates are no more than lower bounds for the reliability of these measures because of the intrusion of true change. Therefore it is fair to adjust them upward mentally, at least in modest degree. Even with such adjustments, however, the presumed reliability of the more global measurements of well-being in particular remains quite unimpressive. Conceivably such measurements could be considerably improved with further experimentation and the establishment of broader, multi-item bases for their assessment. Yet it does not seem likely that such advances would bring the reliabilities of these most highly subjective global indicators fully into the upper ranges that can probably be presumed for most objective indicators. Thus one part of the invidious comparison is undoubtedly correct. However, if we are interested in indicators of human welfare, measurement reliability is no more than half the picture. There is also the critical question of measurement validity or the fit between what is being measured and the substantive interpretations to be placed upon the measurement. Accumulated accounts of the incidence of divorce probably have a reliability far beyond that which can be expected for most subjective measures. And when such figures are interpreted as reflecting no more than the rates of legally dissolved marriages, they can lay claim to an equally high level of validity. Once they begin to be interpreted, however, as indirect indicators of human welfare in an aggregate, it is clear that their validity drops pre-

[3] One pseudo-issue which sometimes intrudes on the "hard-soft" debate stems from the fact that subjective data are usually collected on samples of very limited size, while objective data, particularly from governmental sources, tend to be based on very large samples if not more or less complete enumerations. This being so, subjective indicators obviously are "softer," in the sense of suffering wider error margins due to sampling variation, than is the case for many objective indicators. However, it is equally apparent that this particular contrast has nothing whatever to do with intrinsic differences between objective and subjective measurement. The role would simply be reversed in instances where objective data were based on small samples and subjective data on large ones.

cipitously and probably falls well below that which might be expected from more subjective inquiries into the disparate meanings of divorce for the adults and children who may be party to the process.

Indeed, it has seemed necessary in connection with some objective indicators to nudge them in a subjective direction in order to raise confidence in their significance for human well-being. A key social indicator like the rate of unemployment seems to have a fairly direct bearing on societal welfare. Yet in recent years the standard unemployment measurement has been extended in an effort to take account of the discouraged worker who has stopped looking for work out of despair at finding an appropriate job. This extension of the measurement rests among other things upon responses to questions concerning the unemployed person's intentions to seek work again, his desire for a job, and the reasons given for not seeking work. All of these latter defining characteristics involve subjective reports added to an original "objective" measure in order to increase its bearing as an indicator of welfare.

Of course, across the full range of purely objective indicators there is wide variation in face relevance for estimates of welfare. Some common indicators, such as real income or certain crime and health statistics, may require very little inferential leap between the entities they measure and conclusions as to their significance for well-being. However, it seems likely that this leap is very substantial for the vast bulk of objective indicators generated by governmental agencies. Thus one is often faced with a hard choice between objective indicators of high reliability but of low validity for purposes of assessing welfare and more direct subjective indicators whose reliability is only middling, yet whose validity for the same purposes probably runs very close to those middling limits imposed by the reliabilities.[4]

Hence considerations of error and meaning are often used polemically to draw invidious comparisons between "hard" and "soft" measures of well-being. But if these considerations are brought under any scrutiny at all, they lead rapidly back to an eclectic posture that calls for the joint use of both types of indicators. In fact, there is probably enough heterogeneity within

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[4] It may be recalled that in the later stages of Chapter 6 we developed some materials addressing the validity of our satisfaction measures, both in the sense of behavioral prediction and in the sense of responsiveness to change in objective life situation. In such a context, the measures seemed to perform with flying colors and surely as well as could be expected given the ceiling on performance imposed by their modest reliabilities. Indeed, if by "well-being" we mean *felt* well-being, there is little reason to believe that the validity of the measures for such assessment purposes falls much short of the reliability limits. Of course, this observation begs the question concerning other more Olympian definitions of human welfare. The latter issue is important, and one which we shall confront in the following pages.

the set of indicators of either type, where properties such as reliability and validity for well-being estimates are concerned, that most debates presuming some generalized superiority of one set over the other are simplistic and, in the final analysis, quite sterile.

Instead of pursuing such debates, it would be more fruitful, as it seems to us, to turn our attention to the scientific side of the issue, which must ultimately involve a systematization of the conditions under which subjective feelings of well-being diverge from what might be deduced about welfare from a knowledge of objective conditions taken alone. It is our belief that only as these conditions come to be laid bare will we make satisfying progress on the problems of meaning that seem to haunt indicators of both subjective and objective types. We have tried to make some empirical contribution to this question over the course of our study, and it remains to summarize what we feel we have learned.

The Interplay of Subjective and Objective

While it is of course important to arrive at a sense of the particular mechanisms that produce subjective reactions of one or another inclination to any given objective condition, it is also useful to begin our review at an even more elemental level. What are the generic conditions under which human beings are most and least likely to arrive at agreement concerning the nature of an "objective" reality? Where agreement could be expected to be extremely high, this is tantamount to saying that the subjective-objective fit is extremely tight. Where agreement falls away, the subjective-objective fit could be expected to loosen across a set of observers.

At this most general level, there are at least two old and familiar conditions commonly assumed to govern the tightness of this subjective-objective relationship, one of which has to do with the object of judgment and one of which has to do with the judges of the object. Objects of judgment are presumed to vary along a dimension from clarity to ambiguity, in a sense which is often made equivalent to the intrinsic dimensionality of the object itself. A relatively simple object of judgment, such as a pure musical tone, is supposed to stand high on clarity, while a very complex and multidimensional object of judgment such as a total symphony, and certainly one's life, would be seen as correspondingly ambiguous. The general principle is, of course, that the more ambiguous the object of judgment, the less agreement about its character, and hence the weaker the subjective-objective fit.

On the other hand, the character of judgments varies as well, apart from variations in the objects being judged. Here the key continuum runs from description to evaluation. In general, it is assumed that there will be more agreement on descriptive fact than upon evaluations of these facts, since the latter depend on the personal tastes of the judges. Much as a prism scatters light arriving at a fixed angle into a spectrum of angles, so evaluations of the same object of judgment are refracted into a spectrum of varying reactions, thereby loosening the subjective-objective bond.

Both of these two general effects seem to be writ large in our data. Good examples are provided by Tables 7-5 and 7-12. When clusters of neighbors are asked to describe facts such as whether or not public transportation is available to them, or what the racial composition of their neighborhood is, the degree of agreement in response approaches perfection about as closely as one could hope in view of the fact that there are probably some minor discrepancies in the objective reality that these clusters of neighbors confront. When, however, the same clusters of neighbors are asked questions of a more evaluative tone concerning features of their neighborhoods, the degree of agreement falls away very palpably. It remains relatively high where the evaluation is most nearly factual and descriptive, such as the assessment of the upkeep of neighborhood housing; it falls to a low point where an item, such as convenience of location, which is much more purely a matter of personal need, is concerned. In both Tables 7-5 and 7-12 agreement declines to its lowest point, however, where the most global measures of satisfaction with each domain are concerned, presumably because the great multiplicity of more specific attributes constituting these domains create ambiguities in the object of judgment that provide still greater latitude for individual differences in assessment.

We discussed similar effects in Chapter 4, when we encountered the fact that assessments of concrete features of housing and the neighborhood were rather strongly correlated with the incomes of our respondents in the direction that would obviously be expected given the fact that higher income people tend on the average to reside in objectively more pleasant circumstances. However, as soon as we move up a step in the ladder of abstraction and, presumably, ambiguity, we find that our measure of overall satisfaction with housing shows only a vestigial correlation with income (see Figure 4-6). Similarly, if we compare ratings made by our interviewers as to how well kept up neighborhood structures are with an item asked of respondents concerning the condition of houses in the neighborhood, there is rather substantial agreement on the facts of the matter from one income level to another. The interviewers of poor respondents give low grades to the upkeep of houses in the neighborhood, and the respondents themselves give grades which are almost as low. Interviewers of high income respondents rate the upkeep of neighboring houses highly, and the respondents themselves give assessments which are nearly as favorable. However, the poor respondents express almost as much overall satisfaction with their neighborhoods as is expressed by respondents of high income. Again, the move from a relatively specific physical evaluation to a more summary or global set of feelings seems to decrease the predictability of reactions from a knowledge of objective conditions.

It is worth pointing out that some of the areas that we have commissioned as domains are more concrete and specific, or limited in their dimensionality, than other domains. Thus, for example, one's financial situation can be much more effectively and unequivocally summed up in countable units than is true for the plethora of intangibles surrounding one's marriage, family, or friendships. Hence some domains present much less ambiguity as objects of judgment than others. In Chapter 3, we noted that it is in these least ambiguous domains, such as income or years of education, that the highest aggregate dissatisfaction is expressed. It seems very much as though it is the human lot to find as much contentment as the objective situation will allow; and where the domain being judged is most ambiguous, thereby permitting broader latitude for evaluation, the expressions of satisfaction rise to their peak.

We have reported other systematic variations occurring across the levels of reality which we have treated ranging from the relatively specific to the more abstract and global, which seem interpretable in much the same terms. For example, in Chapters 3 and 4, we noted that the stability correlations over time for our most global measures of life satisfaction and happiness were lower than for any of the other types of evaluations measured. As we move "down" to the more specific level of the particular domain, even summary judgments of satisfaction show higher stability for the same respondents over time than is true for the most thoroughly global judgments of life as a whole. And although the evidence is a little less clear, when we descend yet another level to still more specific features of particular domains, it seems likely that the stability of evaluations tends to increase still another notch as well. In other words, it may well be true that just as evaluative agreement among different judges erodes as the objects of judgment move from simple to more complex and multidimensional, so the degree of agreement between a given judge and himself at another point in time may well erode along the same dimension, diminishing the intrapersonal reliability of judgment as well!

Thus the effects of ambiguity and evaluation in loosening the bonds between objective conditions and subjective reactions seem to have registered with some clarity in our data. In addition to these broad determinants, however, it is probably worth recognizing that attributes may differ intrinsically from one another along a continuum ranging from what might be called completely *consensual goods* to attributes whose evaluation is subject to wide divergences in *private taste.*[5]

Chapter 7 provided a particularly dramatic illustration of this distinction. When a large number of specific attributes of neighborhoods was explored in our reinterview, most of these attributes were largely evaluated in a consensual way. That is, some neighborhoods had many trees and much open green space, while others had no trees or open space. And there was very widespread agreement that the former neighborhoods were more desirable places to live than the latter. Similarly, some neighborhoods were subject to heavy traffic and a good deal of noise, while others were quiet with little traffic. Once again, there was fair consensus that the quiet neighborhoods were preferable. All of these attributes can be seen as lying toward the pole of completely consensual goods, although in stray cases they may admit of some divergence in taste. However, some neighborhoods had many children in residence, while others had next to none. Yet evaluations as to whether having many children made a neighborhood better or worse were enormously disparate, according to the tastes and needs of particular respondents. In other words, the presence of children as a neighborhood attribute is very far from being a consensual good.

Some of our domains, such as health and financial situation, center upon goods which are largely consensual. Our data in Chapter 11 suggested that some other domains, such as friendships, are much less consensual. For most consensual goods, the general rule is typically the more the better. For less consensual goods, there is often a too much as well as a too little, as we discovered to be the case not only for numbers of friends but also for attributes like amounts of discretionary time. And it is likely for attributes of this type that the optimal condition is highly subject to private taste.

To summarize, then, we have observed that agreement between judges and hence the tightness of bonds between objective conditions and subjective appraisals declines as the object of judgment becomes increasingly multidimensional and ambiguous, and as the task of appraisal moves from descriptive fact to affective evaluation. Moreover, with some kinds of relatively consensual goods, the decline in agreement as one moves from fact to evaluation is relatively slight, although there are much less consensual goods for which the same decline can be expected to be precipitous.

These are all simple generalizations which appear to receive pervasive support in our data. However, they give us little more than a descriptive map of the main features of the terrain, where subjective-objective conver-

[5] An attribute is a "completely consensual good" if all evaluators consider its presence in a complex object as desirable and its absence or negation to be undesirable.

gence and divergence are concerned. Ultimately we shall need to know not only that the subjective-objective fit is likely to be weaker in this case or stronger in that, but also the specific directions in which various subjective reactions will be more or less refracted, and why.

Mechanisms Governing Subjective-Objective Divergence

There are at least two broad explanatory concepts that are conventionally brought to bear in instances where there is some manifest disjuncture between objective conditions and subjective evaluations of them. These concepts, as it turns out, are scarcely contradictory, since one can be encompassed as a special case of the other. However, they are commonly cast in different vocabularies.

The first such concept is the notion of aspiration level. If we observe a person who has very little of what we consider to be a consensual good, yet who expresses satisfaction with his situation in this regard, we are apt to account for this unexpected configuration by concluding that he has remarkably low levels of aspiration with respect to the good in question. Alternatively, if a person has a great deal of a consensual good, but is nonetheless dissatisfied with his situation, we are likely to explain the case by recourse to some assumption of uncommonly high aspiration levels. Persons who have little of a consensual good and are dissatisfied with the fact, or who have much and are satisfied, do not oblige us to introduce a notion like aspiration level, although we can implicitly assume that their levels of aspiration are merely "normal."

The other main explanatory concept involves one or another variant of the notion of individual taste. If two people are in identical situations and one finds the situation pleasurable while the other finds it abhorrent, we are likely to explain the discrepancy simply by noting that tastes differ. The most elegant version of such an accounting is undoubtedly the theory of person-environment fit (French, Rodgers, and Cobb, 1974), which in a nutshell supposes that individual needs differ with respect to optimum levels of diverse variables in a complex situation: some need more friends and others fewer; some need more discretionary time and others less, and so on. In such a view, satisfaction is naturally maximized where the fit between individual needs and the details of one's environmental niche is optimized. While this theory is obviously tailored to instances of attributes of a situation which are less than consensual goods, it has no difficulty encompassing consensual goods as a special case in which virtually everybody considers an optimum to be rather unbounded "upward."

It would be hard to dispute the manifest truth value of either of these types of explanations, and of course they do not stand in any necessary conflict with one another. The optimal amount of any attribute can simply be taken as the aspiration level peculiar to the given individual with discrepancies from that level experienced as dissatisfying.

Moreover, at various points in our study we have been able to introduce empirical materials which appear to confirm both these types of explanation. Thus, for example, while the notion of aspiration levels is most often introduced as a *post hoc* explanation of observed subjective-objective discrepancies, we were able in Chapter 6 to show how handsomely explicit measurement of aspiration levels in at least the special cases of the housing and neighborhood domains did in fact explicate a particularly large-scale and troublesome set of divergences between objective facts and subjective reactions. We had found that as a fairly general rule, the elderly and the poorly educated expressed satisfaction with various of the domains of their lives which seemed out of all proportion to our knowledge of their objective welfare, as commonly construed. Yet our direct measures of aspiration levels showed them to be peculiarly constricted in this segment of the population; and more generally, variations in responses to our satisfaction measures could largely be seen as a product of the gap between estimates of the current situation and levels of aspiration.

However worthy generic explanatory constructs like tastes or aspirations may be, they fall far short of providing any very elaborated theory. There has been some intensive work on aspiration levels, but virtually all of it has been conducted in extremely confined laboratory settings with results that are usually hard to translate into the complexities of real-world processes. While *post hoc* justifications of any of our data patterns are limited only by ingenuity, it would have been extremely difficult to have deduced in advance from any of this work or, for that matter, doctrines of differing taste, that we should anticipate the kinds of impact of educational differences on satisfactions and aspirations or any of a number of other patterns we in fact observed. More centrally still, as we noted in Chapter 6, there is next to no wisdom accumulated as to the dynamic behavior of aspiration levels under varying sequences of complex, real-world conditions, although more relevant theoretical elaborations, grounded in systematic longitudinal studies, would seem in principle to lie within reach and to be of vital importance in understanding large-scale fluctuations in satisfactions relative to shifts in objective conditions over time. In brief, then, while notions of aspirations or taste are useful starting points for understanding subjective-objective divergences, they are no more than that. They cry out to be embedded in successive layers of an elaborated theory.

Such elaborations can be approached from more than one direction, as witnessed by several discussions scattered through this volume. In Chapter 6 we experimented with a number of social and experiential standards of comparison that might plausibly be seen as important in determining the levels at which the individual pegs his aspirations at any given point in time. Our results within the domains of neighborhood and housing suggested that while all of the standards of comparison that we measured made some detectable contribution of this sort, a standard established by the individual's optimal prior personal experience was considerably more potent in accounting for current aspiration levels than were standards set by other obvious social reference points or other types of past personal experience.[6] Since the set of persons currently operating within what appear to be objectively equivalent circumstances are likely to have past experiences which are rather varied with respect to earlier optimal situations, this fact in itself would help to account for much of the dispersion of reactions that we have typically found for such equivalent situations.

Provisional findings of this sort are greatly in need of replication and extension. They arise from a small subsample of cases extensively interviewed with respect to two overlapping domains of neighborhood and housing. While the results have a fair amount of surface plausibility, it remains quite conceivable that the general structuring of standards of comparison and aspiration levels might take quite a different form in other more disparate domains such as financial situation or marriage. Similarly, in the future it would be important to consider whether there were not other potentially important standards of comparison that should be laid alongside those which we measured. Surely a prime candidate here would have to be the kind of situation to which the individual feels he is entitled, through one or another notion of social equity and his rightful position in the scheme of things.

Such an exploration of the structure of standards of comparison and their impact on aspiration levels is clearly one fruitful approach to a fuller elaboration of our understanding as to the incidence and magnitude of discrepancies between objective conditions and subjective reactions to them.

However, there are a number of related topics in equal need of development. The kind of structural examination of standards of comparison with which we have experimented depends on correlations between entities measured at a single point in time. Such static correlations, while of some diagnostic value, are often treacherous if used blithely as estimates of causal impacts in a more dynamic process. Thus, for example, in discussing the strong association between ratings of the "most liked" past neighborhood and housing experiences, we recognized that there might be important feedback effects, such that earlier aspiration levels might have prompted the in-

[6] These findings in turn provide a useful elaboration of the empirical results in Chapter 5 which suggested that other things equal persons with richer prior personal experience, and hence presumably aware of a greater range of alternatives, tend to show greater dissatisfaction with their current situation.

dividual to seek out even temporary changes in situation that would causally influence what would subsequently become, or fail to present itself, as a new "most liked" situation. Thus the causal flow between optimal past experience and aspirations might be in some degree reversed, contaminating both our causal assumptions and the dynamic meaning of the static correlations which we observed. Similarly, it is likely that ratings of things like "most liked" past experiences are themselves subject to some relatively autonomous time-dependent effects, such as decay in salience or even appreciation as a simple function of the length of time which has elapsed since the optimal situation was experienced.

At various points we have in fact noted at least two major time-dependent effects that appear to have significant influence on satisfactions and their fit with objective reality:

(1) Where a situation is fixed for a person over a long term, there may be a tendency toward *accommodation* to it, reflected in gradual increases in satisfaction.
(2) Where a situation is subject to short-term change, improvements or deteriorations may touch off quite disproportionate surges of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

We felt obliged to posit an accommodation process in Chapter 5. The possibility of such a mechanism is naturally most helpful in understanding why people trapped more or less permanently in bleak situations seem able to find as much gratification from these situations as they appear to, both in our data and in assorted impressionistic writings. This is the same case as is frequently explained with the imputation of low levels of aspiration, an inference which does not at all conflict with the postulate of an accommodation process. What the accommodation mechanism adds to such a standard explanation is a time dimension: if a person is in a fixed situation for a long enough period of time, his aspiration levels will gradually contract back toward the terms of that situation, with his satisfaction increasing concomitantly. For the set of people observed to be in an equivalent objective situation at a point in time, one source of varied subjective reactions to it is therefore the varying degrees of accommodation that have occurred, as a function of the length of time spent in the situation. Among important patterns in our data which an accommodation mechanism seems to illuminate are the very general gains in satisfaction with age in all domains but health, as well as declines in aspiration level with age.

We encountered the second effect primarily in Chapter 11, in connection with the very limited fit between objective income and satisfaction with one's income or financial situation. Findings from other studies suggested that recent changes in income, upward or downward, might have a particularly strong effect on feelings of financial satisfaction. Thus, the head of a family earning $20,000 a year would be expected to report greater satisfaction with its financial situation than the head of a family earning $6,000 a year, and at least as a statistical tendency does so in empirical fact. Nonetheless, it would not be hard to imagine that if the family head registering an income of $20,000 has fallen to that point from a prior year's income of $25,000, whereas the breadwinner at $6,000 has just advanced to that point from prior maximal earnings of $5,000, the latter might readily surpass the former in current financial satisfaction. Of course, if short-term changes of some magnitude have a high incidence within a particular domain and if feelings of satisfaction are highly responsive to such short-term change, then of course the attenuation of correlations between overall objective situations and feelings of satisfaction with them might become quite imposing.

There are surely other critical mechanisms associated with particular sequences of objective change, and what these sequences portend for expectations in the moderate term, as well as for longer-range aspirations. Several scholars (Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970) have deduced from the macrocosmic historical record of civil discontent the possibility that dissatisfactions become particularly acute when, after a lengthy period of improving (economic) conditions, the gain is arrested or slightly reversed, even for a short period of time. In other words, expectations have become harnessed to a certain rate of gain as a kind of automatic escalator, and dissatisfaction becomes much more intense when the escalator stops than in any situation of long-term stagnation or equilibrium.

Similarly, Hirschman's recent attempt (1973) to account for the passivity of lower classes in some rapidly developing countries, where the upper classes are reaping handsome dividends but the lower classes little or none, invokes the metaphor of lanes of traffic blocked in a tunnel. He posits that the frustration of the blockage declines not only if one's own lane of traffic begins to move, but also if even a neighboring lane of traffic begins to move, simply because of the impact of such movement upon expectations that one's own liberation is the more imminent. This is, of course, an intriguing inversion of certain standard expectations concerning the influence of invidious social comparisons. And if valid, it is yet another dynamic mechanism that might be expected to cloud the fit between the most simple descriptions of an objective situation and the feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction it engenders at any point in time.

While neither of the latter two mechanisms are likely to be detectable in our study conducted at a single cross-section of time, they are certainly among the possibilities that could be more systematically investigated, were our study to be repeated at intervals in the future.

Finally, one other important mechanism bearing on the question of subjective-objective fit which our data have suggested is less obviously time-dependent in the same sense as the foregoing. Nonetheless, it seems intrusive enough that it might well require some explicit place in a more elaborated theory of these matters. This is the effect of the salience of alternatives upon satisfactions. We have seen at several points in this volume that one component of increased education seems to act as a depressant on reports of satisfaction with most domains. The well-educated tend to be more critical of their situations than the poorly educated, once differences in the objective goodness of the situations of the two groups are taken into account. We surmised that there might be a particularly bland form of high satisfaction registered by persons in situations which lack in their minds any very salient alternatives, or alternatively, an increment of dissatisfaction in the responses of persons for whom many alternatives to their current situation are familiar. Since education is designed to increase awareness of alternatives, among other things, it seemed plausible that such an effect might underlie some of the observed patterns associated with education. At one point in Chapter 5 we were able to use another variable reflecting variety of experience, which was only moderately correlated with education, and which showed the same systematic depressing effects on relevant satisfactions even when education itself, or length of time in an environmental situation, was controlled. The effect of such a mechanism, once again, is to blur the fit between objective situations and subjective assessments of them.

Summary

While we have tried in recent paragraphs to provide a summary of much that we have learned concerning conditions under which subjective and objective indicators are most likely to diverge, it goes without saying that our catalog of constructs and mechanisms falls far short of fulfilling what we had in mind as a potential "elaborated theory" of such phenomena.

For one thing, it is not clear that all of the constructs or mechanisms cited are really independent of one another or could not profitably be compressed and simplified. Perhaps, for example, what we have called the "lack of salience of alternatives" could be discussed equally well in terms of a process of accommodation to a fixed situation which happens to be particularly far advanced; or, to reverse the matter, that the accommodation process might better be described as arising through the memory decay of relevant alternatives. While there are in fact some empirical reasons to imagine these two effects are less than identical, there may well be a large measure of overlap.

More important still, our catalog is scarcely a theory, because we have made no attempt to fuse the elements listed together in any kind of working model. While such an effort would seem rather premature until more intensive and extensive measurements are available, it would seem to be a feasible endeavor in a longer run. And it seems likely, moreover, that the elements of our catalog are at the very least important candidates for inclusion in a more elaborated working model of the way in which objective conditions, as well as their change over time, produce different patterns of subjective reactions. If not a full recipe, it is at least an initial compilation of ingredients.

SOME MEASUREMENT LESSONS

Since our study experimented with a rather wide range of measurements bearing on subjective well-being, it is worth summarizing here a number of observations that we have made concerning the differential properties of these measures. For the sake of brevity, of course, we must pay rather little attention to specific items, in favor of general comments comparing broad classes of items contained within our interview. Perhaps the most useful classification of these items for such purposes, and one on which we have depended heavily throughout this volume, divides them into (a) global evaluations of life; (b) reports of overall satisfaction with more specific life domains; and (c) assessments of still more concrete facets of those domains. Of course, we engaged in other types of measurement as well, including factual perceptions, standards of comparison, and the like. But this tripartite division along a global-specific dimension has been most central.

In the preceding section we have just reviewed one or two important properties that seem to vary systematically along this dimension. We noted that toward the specific end of the continuum, responses appear to be more tightly anchored in a consensual objective reality than they are at global levels. As we proceed "upward" to more global measures, there seems to be an increasing amount of individual refraction of judgments. There also appears to be a decline in at least the stability of responses for the same individuals over the short term and probably a decline in their reliability as well.

At first glance, these facts might seem to suggest that preferred strategy for inquiries into subjective well-being would involve limiting measurement to the more stable and reliable assessments of highly concrete features of life. However, as we shall see over the course of this section, there are a variety of reasons why this may be too simplistic a conclusion.

Choice of Global Indicators

In Chapter 2 we reviewed a number of measures aimed at assessing the individual's most global feelings about life. In general, we noted that there were very substantial intercorrelations between all of these measures and that they tended by and large to show much the same kinds of patterns in response to other variables. Taken alone, this information implies that the selection between types of global measures, at least of the kind we have explored here, does not involve decisions which are extremely critical for the kinds of findings to be expected. This degree of generality is naturally reassuring.

At the same time, we have devoted considerable attention to nuances of difference between some of these global measures. Following analytic work by McKennell (1973) on our data in conjunction with those from parallel studies, it appears that the main axis of differentiation across competing global measures involves pureness of affect at one pole, with the considerable intrusion of cognitive standards of comparison in mediating evaluative responses at the other. In principle, the emotive terms "happiness" and "unhappiness" lie at the first pole, while gauges of "satisfaction" and "dissatisfaction" lie at the other. In practice, it seems that it is hard to devise an operational measure which could be taken as lying purely at one pole or the other: most plausible question wordings seem to invoke responses that are admixtures of both elements, thereby accounting for the substantial intercorrelations of all such items. Nonetheless, measures such as Bradburn's Affect Balance Scale, or the single item concerning happiness, appear to lie somewhat more toward the affect pole. In contrast, an item such as our measure of Overall Life Satisfaction lies somewhat more toward the cognitive pole. Other measures on which we have depended, such as the summaries of semantic differential characterizations of life, would appear to lie rather in between these measures, with a somewhat stronger component of pure affect than seems to be represented when "satisfaction" is used as the key discriminating term.

None of these observations can be translated directly into any very clear recommendations as to the desired mixture of these elements for an "ideal" global measure of felt well-being. In part this is true, as we must continue to stress, because the differences in performance of these competing measures are marginal at best, and most inferences generated by them would be largely the same. Nevertheless, we have maintained our interest in the nuances of difference in part because of our calculated initial decision (see Chapter 1) to invest most heavily in questions of the satisfaction type, once below the highest level of generality ("life as a whole").

Apart from the greater cognitive-comparison component which seems to mark satisfaction items, one of the chief contrasts in performance between satisfaction and happiness measures appears to be the differential trends by age, with the young being more happy but less satisfied and the old being less happy but more satisfied. In Chapter 5 we attempted an intuitive description which might help to make these diverging combinations more intelligible, based in part on the behavior of levels of aspiration over the life span. Although happiness and satisfaction are highly correlated, the texture of feelings of well-being seems to vary significantly in these regards as life progresses.

There are at least two other observations which deserve to be made, where the marginal differences between happiness and satisfaction measures are concerned. As McKennell (1973) has observed, reports of happiness appear to hew a bit more closely to what might be expected given variation in objective conditions, where consensual goods are concerned. Thus, for example, the prototypic correlation between income and well-being tends to run slightly but persistently higher when a happiness item is used to index well-being than with our measure of overall life satisfaction, although the association would only rank as weak in either case. This difference might well be expected if the more heavily cognitive component in satisfaction responses were adding a further increment of subjective refraction, due to the salience of multiple standards of comparison, than is present in the happiness reports.

The anomalies may seem to be compounded when we also recall (from Chapter 6) that reports of overall life satisfaction appeared to be a bit more responsive to changes in objective life conditions than did the happiness item. However, it is quite possible to organize a set of systematic propositions about the marginal happiness-satisfaction differences which would in fact quite neatly reproduce these apparently conflicting patterns, and would be intuitively pleasing to boot.

Let us imagine that happiness reports are peculiarly sensitive to moods which can vary in the short term, even on a day-to-day basis. The amplitude of these variations, while large enough to be quite noticeable, nonetheless fails to cover anything like the full range of reports that might be given from delirious happiness to abject unhappiness. Instead, the variation for any given individual covers only a moderate portion of this range, and if we were to take a large number of repeated measurements of the happiness of any given individual, so as to establish a more stable central tendency of happiness for this individual, short-term fluctuations aside, these more stable values would show a considerable coincidence with objective conditions, although a coincidence typically dulled by the intrusion of those fluctuations.

Let us imagine on the other hand that satisfaction reports are far less subject to daily variations in mood than are feelings of happiness. This would mean, in effect, that if we had reinterviewed our respondents after an interval of merely one week, rather than an interval of about eight months, the discrepancy in stability favoring satisfaction responses would have been far more marked than the small difference observed after eight months. However, let us go on to suppose that feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are significantly more dependent on *changes* in objective situation than are reports of happiness. In other words, our household head of relative affluence who suffered a diminution of income from \$25,000 to \$20,000 between two successive years would drop more dramatically in life satisfaction, relative to the population distribution on that variable, than he would in his reports of happiness, as averaged over repeated measurements for a number of successive weeks.

Such hypothetical differences in the dynamic behaviors of happiness and satisfaction rest on some assumptions, such as the mood-dependence of feelings of happiness, which are, after all, quite plausible. And if this structure of assumptions were to be granted, then all of the seemingly mixed empirical observations concerning the two types of measures would become quite intelligible. In any moderate term, reports of happiness could remain both (1) slightly less stable for individuals over time; yet (2) geared somewhat more closely to absolute differences in objective conditions (as opposed to *changes* in those conditions).

Naturally, we offer these observations only as surmises worth further examination and test. Given the generally substantial covariation in happiness and satisfaction, the differences in performance are at best small and often spring from small samples as well. They are in dire need of replication before all else. Nevertheless, they represent the kinds of reasonable hypotheses which could be pursued with some effectiveness in a more full-blown longitudinal extension of the kind of study we have carried out.

Even these observations do not lend themselves to translation into obvious general purpose recommendations as to whether an "ideal" global measure of felt well-being would be one which leans to the cognitive or the affective side. It is probably fortunate that the behaviors of these measures are as similar as they are, since it takes much weight off any particular decision. On the other hand, for more intensive investigations with specialized purposes, some of our comparisons may be helpful in suggesting which type of measure might be optimal, if indeed it did not seem important to monitor some of the marginal differences in performance between the two.

There is a final observation of a comparative sort between these types of measures which might be made. It is at least possible that feelings of dissatisfaction, in the degree they differ from unhappiness, might be better predictors of attempts at corrective behavior on the part of the actor. We have not been able to deal as heavily with behavior predictions in this cross-section study as we would like. However, there is a more passive set of connotations which seems to surround a term like "unhappiness" than there is for "dissatisfaction." Indeed, our most passive respondents are the relatively unhappy but relatively satisfied elderly, who seem resigned to their condition, and our most active ones are the happy but dissatisfied young. Dissatisfactions seem in their very nature to be more focused upon particular conditions, and their link with aspirations again suggests more of a behavioral "striving." We saw in Chapter 6 that our focused dissatisfaction measures did seem predictive of at least a limited range of behavioral changes in situation, such as leaving a marriage or changing one's housing. We have no comparably focused measures of unhappiness as a foil, but it would be plausible to expect that while they would show some covariation with such behavior, it would be weaker. It may well be, for example, that focused feelings of dissatisfaction about conditions are more likely to put an active burden of demands on a political system than are vaguer and more free-floating feelings of unhappiness.

Choice of Levels of Measurement

We noted earlier that given the rather limited apparent reliabilities of any of our single-item global measures of well-being, it might be useful to attempt to measure even global well-being by cutting in at a more specific level, gauging the detailed assessments of very concrete features of life.

We do not think this strategy bears much scrutiny, although the reasons why provide a useful vehicle for summarizing a number of other measurement lessons. One such reason is simply a factor of cost. We reported in Chapter 3 that an optimal combination of a set of our seventeen domain satisfaction scores accounted for some 54 percent of the variance in our Index of Well-Being. The figure would have been visibly lower if we were predicting not to the combined index, but to one of our individual global items. As Figure 3-1 makes clear, there is some gain in stability, and undoubtedly in reliability as well, which arises from the compounding of these global items.[7] Nevertheless, it is well worth noting that when we dropped

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[7] It might be noted once again for the clarity of the record that the amount of variance accounted for in a measure like the Index of Well-Being considerably exceeds the eight-month stability correlation for this measure, as it would for other global items taken as dependent variables in the prediction. If these stability correlations were actual measures of test-retest reliability of the variables, this should not in principle happen. The apparent oddity is readily understood, however, in terms of two facts. The stability correlation is not an estimate of reliability but only suggests a lower bound for that value. Since true change intrudes in an eight-month period, the actual reliability of any of these measures is almost certain to be at least somewhat greater than the stability correlations suggest. The proportions of variance accounted for are large enough to imply that the upward adjustment which would be appropriate might also be large, save for a second fact: the amount of variance accounted for in most of these measures is likely to be inflated by a "methods factor" arising because the majority of the key satisfaction items were measured in a common format.

one level in Part II (Chapters 7-11) and attempted to account for variance in our domain satisfaction measures from more concrete assessments of specific features of each domain, our predictive capacity typically dropped off by a rather considerable margin, relative to predictions from the summary domain satisfactions to the most global measures, compound or single. We have generally taken for granted that this effect arises because, due to limitations of cost, interview time, and respondent patience, we were only able to measure a very few such assessments out of the myriads that must realistically underlie these summary domain judgments. By contrast, in forming the global well-being prediction, we swept across a large set of important domains which, while they surely do not exhaust all possible domains of life for all persons, would appear to constitute much more thorough "coverage."[8]

What all this means is that if we were to attempt to put together a picture of the general state of felt well-being in the population compounded from a set of items all of which were focused at the level of our most reliable specific assessments, the coverage problem would be prohibitive and by an astronomical margin. It is unlikely that a tripling of interview length would even begin to scratch the surface of all possible concrete features of people's lives; and even if interview length were multiplied by an order of magnitude or two, other problems of a technical or statistical sort would arise which would mean that useful inferences could only be drawn from samples much larger and more costly than those which seem feasible. In other words, the simple expedient of asking people to carry out some mental summarization, so that more global feelings can be captured in a very few items, is manifestly worth some loss in reliability. Indeed, it is hardly a choice.

We would not have to say anything like the same thing if the proposal were instead to invest in the intervening level (b) of our domain satisfactions. The stability of these items, although quite various across the set, tends to fall in a range which seems only a trifle less than the stability of more concrete assessments and significantly higher than that of the global assessments. And, as we have seen, the capacity of a fairly limited set of these domain measures to serve as an instructive decomposition of the global measures is quite reassuring. Some population studies might not be

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[8] This assumption of an association between "coverage" and predictive capacity is well bolstered by the fact that the parallel Andrews-Withey study (forthcoming), which included a much larger set of candidate domains, has attained a still larger proportion of variance accounted for in similar global measures of well-being. Through experimentation with this pool of candidate domains, higher predictive capacity can be achieved with a smaller number of optimal predictors (twelve) than the seventeen we used.

willing to make even this degree of investment in a dozen or more items bearing on summary domain satisfactions, and for such studies, it is likely that the only course would be to rely upon global items, with a selection made according to the terms of our preceding discussion of those items, taking into account more specific purposes of the investigation.

There is, of course, a more conventional way of increasing the reliability of uncertain measurements. This is to compound multiple items into larger indices with a broader measurement base. We have engaged in the compounding of indices in some degree (e.g., the Index of Well-Being), although we have also maintained an interest in the behavior and predictability of many variables on a single-item base. Indeed, if we refer again to Figure 3-1, we see that the compound measure which simply sums across fourteen expressions of domain satisfaction is probably as reliable a purely subjective measure of well-being as appears in our study. We have used this measure at points in this volume and at one time seriously considered using it as our primary measure of global well-being.

We ultimately refrained from using it in this way for several reasons. One is that we were interested in examining the degree to which we could predict to global well-being from a knowledge of satisfaction in a number of specific domains. For such prediction, it is obviously more enlightening to use as the operational measure of well-being responses which come from independent items, rather than examining part-whole relationships, as would be the case if we had predicted to the sum of domain satisfactions from the fourteen measures taken separately. Moreover, most indices are constructed from sets of items conceived as measuring very different entities. If they are mechanically summed together, then the only meaning that can be attached to the total is some rather generic feeling of well-being. Yet the interest of the measurement in parts is exactly the diversity of those parts, and hence we have tended to work with the portfolio of domain satisfaction measures largely in their decomposed form.

The same issue of combination has arisen for us in a slightly different form within our domains. We typically have had a summary measure of overall satisfaction with a domain along with a set of assessments of a number of its more specific features. In Chapter 10 we explicitly raised the question as to which measure of feelings about marriage would be more valuable: the single-item statement of satisfaction or an index compounded of the reactions to various attributes of marriage. Indeed, by normal criteria of scale construction, it would not have been inappropriate to have added the domain satisfaction measure to the other items in a single index. We have not made a practice of this latter step, however, because it has seemed worth keeping these different levels of reference separate.

The question of relative value could be posed within any of our domains where enough specific assessments were collected. Our general conclusion has been that the single-item summary, despite its lesser reliability, is probably of prime value because of its (1) simplicity; and (2) its likely "coverage" of the domain from the point of view of any given individual. The selection of more detailed attributes for assessment is obviously very incomplete and largely an arbitrary set of choices. It is always possible that one might get visibly different results with another selection of attributes. Moreover, if one begins to contemplate the monitoring of these matters by different investigations over time, the complex set of considerations that go into the selection of a set of attributes, as well as how the assessment items should be worded, are a distinct liability, since the likelihood is high that experimentation with other attributes and other wordings would be desirable in the future, but corrosive of time comparability. The summary item is not free of need for such experimentation, but its simplicity and generality mean that a standard form is much easier to achieve. Of course in terms of time cost, the single item has a clear advantage.

One other liability of an index is less familiar from the literature but is highly germane for the kind of work which we think this area deserves over coming years. As social scientists work more with data collected over lengthy periods of time, there is growing evidence that sets of items originally grouped in an index often lose their initial coherence and integrity as time passes. The separate items do not covary neatly across time, however neatly they may have been associated in a static way at an initial point in time and however handsomely they may have fulfilled any number of technical criteria established to determine whether index construction is appropriate. Of course when such an erosion occurs, much of the intellectual interest of the original index is lost. Attention becomes riveted upon decoding differential sources of change at the level of specific items, and prior work packaged into index form simply becomes obsolete. This observation does not, of course, constitute any judgment that such a fate is inevitable for any compounded index of items. In the long run, configurations of items may sift clear that show a very durable integrity over time. The important point, however, is that such integrity simply cannot be deduced with any confidence from information collected at a single point in time, or for that matter, probably within even a time frame of a few years. Hence, while we have in fact used some indices for their economy of exposition, it has not seemed desirable to overdo such an investment despite the gains in reliability that can be expected.

In closing, we can reject a final argument which might be levied in favor of measurement investments limited to the more concrete facets of life. Such an argument might be based upon our observation that concrete assessments, even those that are basically evaluative rather than perceptual, seem to be more faithful mirrors of what one would expect from a knowledge of objective conditions than even our domain satisfaction measures. This added fit may seem comforting and could lead to the impression that more "real" data are being collected.

We shall argue in the next section that measurements at these more specific levels can be helpful in pinning down a mosaic of subjective reactions, particularly in a policy context. But it is important to keep in mind what we mean by the greater apparent "reality" of data in this form. It is simply that the fit with objective conditions is more tight. Presumably the domain satisfactions and the more global reports are also "real" in large measure, in the classic sense of having real effects, even though they are more widely refracted from the common source in objective conditions than is true of concrete assessments, in the ways summarized earlier in this chapter.

This assumption of the reality of the subjective has certainly been subject to philosophical contest in the past. Yet if we really want to reject that assumption, then the collection of data on subjective evaluations of more concrete features of life because they are closer to objective conditions is a strange tactic: it would seem much more to the point to limit energies to the collection of the objective indicators themselves. If, on the other hand, we do not want to reject that assumption, then it would seem to follow in the most direct way that we should try to trace out those more global refractions of the consciousness to their empirical extremes. And if such be our purpose, any effort to limit measurement to specific subjective reactions that mirror as closely as possible the objective core would seem both inefficient and largely beside the point.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND THEIR LIMITS

Naturally, this study was conducted and reported on the assumption that subjective states, even the more global and nebulous ones, are real and have real effects. Nonetheless, what a vague term like "real" truly means depends in no small measure on the context and the criteria employed. One familiar context is that of "policy relevance."

We did not mount this inquiry with an eye toward supplying detailed information for any immediate policy programs. Biderman (1970) has suggested that there are three quite different uses of social data: (1) as "information" for immediate operational use; (2) as "intelligence" for overall administrative management purposes; and (3) as "enlightenment" or more sweeping and basic contributions to public understanding relevant to the formation of general policy. More recently, Sheldon and Parke (1975) have argued that social indicators should not be thought of primarily as designed to be "a social engineering effort aimed at the solution of social problems" but rather should be developed chiefly for more general enlightenment as to the dynamics of social change. Our own efforts to foster a set of subjective indicators that might be monitored over time were clearly intended as a beginning in this latter region of "enlightenment."

In the fads of recent years, and in Washington in particular, social science data are seen to enjoy "policy relevance" only if their immediate operational use in answering special-purpose questions posed by social engineering can be demonstrated. To our view this is embarrassingly shallow and short-term understanding of what makes information relevant to policy. It is likely, for example, that "enlightenment" research conducted by sociologists on the problems of poverty in the 1920s had far more impact on a shift of basic perspectives on welfare issues in the Congress between the 1930s and 1960s than any amount of operational data for immediate policy use that may have been collected over the whole period. Much the same might be said of the impact of "enlightenment" social research on race in the 1930s or 1940s and the broad shaping of racial policy in the 1950s and 1960s. If one demands "policy relevance" of any scope, profundity, or "staying power," then Biderman's social data collected as mere "information" would seem to be exactly the wrong place to look.

To be sure, the ultimate policy relevance of any given form of enlightenment research may be chancy and is surely slow in its fruition, probably because it involves too basic a shift in perspectives and understandings to be learned in maturity by a current generation of politicians and instead must trickle first into college curricula and hence become formative in the socialization of a later generation of policy-makers. And these later policy-makers, working with concrete problems and very short time frames, probably have little understanding of the impact which earlier enlightenment research has had upon their ways of viewing the world. But this is scarcely to say that the conceptions among current policy-makers as to what makes for real policy relevance are very compelling.

Given such a view of policy relevance, it goes without saying that it is far too early to have much sense of the policy significance of the kind of enlightenment research which we have described in this volume. It is at least possible that it will have rather little policy significance even in the long run. Indeed, until work in this mode is extended over at least a moderate period of time, as our design originally envisioned, it might well be argued that it *should not* have much serious impact on policy.

However all this may be, the question of policy relevance, current and future, has remained on our minds as we have worked. In this closing section we would like to summarize a few of our provisional observations on this issue. At this point, these observations will stress as much the limitations of policy relevance, to be underscored as a hedge against overly simplistic enthusiasm and use, as its policy potentials.

Limitations of Policy Relevance

It should be apparent that some of our domains are much more intensively the conventional targets of public policy than are others. Areas such as marriage and the family are obviously not immune to policy manipulation, and indeed are shaped in vital ways by legislation bearing on topics such as divorce, adoption, and abortion. On the other hand, it is far easier for governments to take steps to limit disease or to put persons into sound housing than it is to ensure that they find fulfilling and companionable marriage partners. To some degree, the differences involved have to do with what are relatively consensual goods, as opposed to those of personal taste: the role of the state in allocating pleasures is obviously likely to be weaker where tastes diverge, and its role is usually limited to the facilitation of a situation in which people can sort themselves into niches by private preference, if indeed it takes a role at all. But also, it is the most intimate areas of life where policy "reach" tends to be weakest.

This is somewhat ironic, since the general contours of our data suggest that it is these intimate areas of primary relationships which have the most potent impact on general feelings of well-being enjoyed by members of the population. Thus there may be some rather built-in limitations on the degree to which governments bent on upgrading the general felt welfare could accomplish it, even though like some current Arab sheikdoms they might dispose of dazzling material resources.

On the other hand, it remains true that on balance over the population, it is exactly these intimate areas, such as marriage and the family, which receive the most positive expressions of satisfaction from the populace, while domains such as education and income, customary concerns of the state, are targets of the greatest relative dissatisfaction. And even though overall satisfaction with the environmental domains does not differ widely, we noted in Chapter 7 that assessments of more detailed features of housing, the most personal and microcosmic of these domains, tend to show notably more positive distributions than those given for neighborhood, community, and country. Undoubtedly throughout these data the more microcosmic features of life are seen to be more the result of personal choice and arrangement, and hence are looked on more positively than the broader features of the "outside world." This means in turn, however, that while the less personal domains of life usually seem to have less impact on general feelings of well-being than the more intimate arenas, the former receive more criticism and hence would appear more subject to improvement through enlightened policy.

The key question which confronts us is the degree to which satisfaction data of the types or levels represented in this study might be taken as useful guides to public policy. It could be argued, for example, that governments typically encounter enough difficulties trying to maintain reasonable control over the allocation of consensual goods defined by purely objective criteria that the addition of the kinds of complexities we have seen to be bound up in the interplay between objective conditions and subjective reactions runs well beyond what policy might be expected to cope with. However, this is a rather myopic view of the problem, looking as it does at governments entirely from the supply side. If we consider the relationship from the side of citizen demand, then at least in a nexus of democratic institutions, there is bound to be some fit between citizen demands and citizen dissatisfactions, however disjunctive these latter subjective reactions may seem to be when laid against what is known of objective conditions. In other words, the kinds of subjective refractions we have measured here almost certainly impinge on politics and the policy process in one degree or another. Indeed, such impact is among their "real effects."

Nevertheless, the aggregation of felt dissatisfactions into forceful political demands is itself a complex and problematic sociopolitical process, such that many felt dissatisfactions distributed through the population may never be brought into much truly political play and hence are conventionally ignored in policy formation. One of the virtues of the type of study we have conducted is that it may claim to show the patterning of contents and discontents as it stands, before the processes of political aggregation lend emphasis to some demands and minimize others.

This need not mean, however, that an ideal process of policy formation would produce some one-to-one response to the patterning of satisfactions and dissatisfactions that our interviews have produced. In Chapters 4 and 5 we developed a hypothetical dialogue with a benevolent dictator who was eager to use data of this kind in just this way, with consequences that most would agree are disastrous. In part, as we saw, the benevolent dictator's response would have been inappropriate simply because he was reacting simplistically to data in raw form. But there were deeper problems involved in the same illustration.

In particular, it seemed unlikely that we would want to develop a social policy which failed to discount in one degree or another the kinds of feelings of satisfaction hinged on ignorance of alternatives or the shrinking of aspirations through long-term accommodation to conditions which are, in any objective sense, bleak. Examples of these latter phenomena have scarcely been limited to the rather specific situations discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Instead, they have been rather liberally sprinkled throughout this volume.

In Chapter 13, for example, we found that older blacks (over 55) expressed greater satisfaction with their lives not only when compared with younger blacks, but when compared with older whites as well! Indeed, they form one of the most satisfied segments of the population, despite the fact that their material circumstances are impoverished and the fact that their current situations are in no small measure the outcome of large-scale and systematic discrimination in their younger years.[9] Surely one would not take older generation blacks as an ideal product of enlightened social policy, despite their high reports of current life satisfaction.

In his *Exit, Voice and Loyalty,* Albert Hirschman (1970) asks what market mechanisms, if any, come to play to prevent moderate deteriorations in the quality of goods and services being provided to a clientele. In a fully competitive market, the classic mechanism is of course "exit," or the switching to another brand, with the economic sanctions which that mechanism implies. Where government goods and services are concerned, however, the market is scarcely competitive, and the exit option (emigration) not an easy one to take. The only realistic corresponding mechanism in such cases is "voice," or complaint. If, however, one goes on to assume as Hirschman does that customers vary significantly in their sensitivity to deteriorations in quality, and that quality "connoisseurs" exit most rapidly within a competitive market, and exercise "voice" most rapidly in the noncompetitive setting, then we arrive at a "disconcerting" conclusion:

> . . . since, in the case of these services, resistance to deterioration requires voice and since voice will be forthcoming more readily at the upper than at the lower quality ranges, the cleavage between the quality of life at the top and at the middle or lower levels will tend to become more marked (Hirschman, 1970, p. 53).

There is, of course, a very obvious fit between Hirschman's quality "connoisseurs" and the responses of well educated people in our sample who, as we have noted repeatedly, appear to express greater dissatisfaction over most quadrants of life than would seem at all reasonable given the objective conditions under which they live. If the goods or services being subjected to criticism are collective rather than individual ones, as is the case with some frequency where public goods and services are concerned, then it does not matter particularly who exercises voice as quality deteriorates, provided only that the complaint is effective. Where public goods are divisible,

[9] Although these blacks express high satisfaction with their lives, they are also less likely, in response to other questions, to claim that they have satisfied their life's ambitions or that they have enjoyed a fair opportunity in their lives. It will be of high interest, a few decades hence, to see how the current younger black generation responds to these items in their older years.

however, and governments respond to voice only by attempting to grease the wheel that squeaks with a restoration of quality, leaving the other wheels to endure the deteriorated performance, there is clearly a mechanism in operation which tends to favor those already favored. Our data, taken simplistically, would lead in the same direction, and this direction would not seem to be any hallmark of enlightened policy.

Hence there are several reasons why any effort to arrive at any one-to-one match between the allocation of resources through policy and the patterns of dissatisfaction registered in our data might at the margins be a good deal less than benign. On the other hand, this is scarcely to say that data in this form are without use in informing policy. Indeed, those who lack the skills to exercise voice are more likely to be heard from in a study of this type than in the normal workings of even a democratic political process. Moreover, special effects such as those associated with patient accommodation in the long term to bleak situations, or the heightened discernment and criticism of quality connoisseurs, only leave modest imprints on our data. There are many other sources of strong variance in subjective reactions beyond these special effects, and there is no reason to feel that the latter effects could not be effectively discounted, where desirable, in order to lay bare the other kinds of variance. One such simple and obvious method of discounting would become available as soon as satisfaction data were collected over longer periods of time. In such a case, instead of being limited to the kinds of cross-sectional comparisons of this report, one could observe changes in the responses of quality connoisseurs or, independently, the benighted and inexperienced, as they shifted over time, thereby implicitly controlling away differences in subjective reactions due to variations from person to person in quality sensitivity.

There is at least one other broad class of reasons why satisfaction data of the sort we have collected, even if fully understood and discounted where appropriate, should not be expected to play more than a modest informing role on policy formation, rather than a strictly determining one. What this class of reasons has in common is the simple fact that the immediate felt wants of individuals involved in a situation are far from the only considerations that a truly enlightened policy formation process would need to take into account. The actors themselves are not typically endowed with anything like perfect information either as to the constraints of the situation in which they are operating or, for that matter, its possibilities. The policy-maker's information in these regards is a good deal less than perfect also, although the odds are rather great that his information is at least somewhat broader than that of the immediate actors. And the requirements of enlightened policy oblige him to take this broader information into account as well as to continue to broaden it as far as he can.

Perhaps the finest statement of the issues involved here has been provided by Seashore (1973) in a discussion limited to the domain of work. The immediate purpose of his essay is to dissect the relationship between reports of "job satisfaction" taken as a measurable indicator, and a broader concept of "the quality of employment." However, most of his arguments could be readily translated into other domains where we have measured parallel satisfactions, or into the more global relationships between reports of life satisfaction or happiness and the true "quality of life."

Seashore makes clear his own sense of the importance of learning, firsthand, how individual workers evaluate their jobs, as a much-needed corrective against simplistic judgments based on assumptions of consensual tastes and the shallow appearances of "objective conditions." But he goes on to observe:

> The individual worker, whatever his background and status, is in important respects incapable of optimum judgment of his own life situation. While his report of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction surely reflects a fundamental biological wisdom concerning the life-sustaining and life-enhancing properties of his work environment, his report also contains elements of expedience, self-deception, ignorance, social pressure, and false beliefs about the world in which he lives. Hence, in our studies of the quality of working life, individuals can and do report satisfaction with work situations that we know (from information not accessible to the respondents) are abbreviating their lives, threatening their family relationships, and unnecessarily narrowing their future life options. Others can and do report dissatisfaction in work situations that display in high degree virtually all of the attributes that are generally valued by others and none that are plausibly accessible for "improvement." These are not trivial individual aberrations of judgment, but extreme cases that remind us of the frailty of all evaluations based exclusively upon one person's own values, own perceptions and own information resources . . . (Seashore, 1973).

Fully as important, Seashore proceeds to argue that, even if the worker did enjoy some remarkable omniscience and prescience concerning the full and long-term implications of this particular job upon his quality of life and could report appropriately in "job satisfaction" form, this information would remain quite inadequate as a base for enlightened policy aiming at improving the quality of employment. While the worker's personal priorities are of key importance, the quality of employment is simply not "a wholly private affair of the job occupant." The needs of his employers and the maintenance of an adequately functioning enterprise must also be taken into account. Moreover, even if the cost-benefit calculus of the worker could be reasonably harmonized with that of the employer, there are further community needs and societal perspectives that would be unlikely to be represented on either accounting sheet, such as the constraint that under-utilized skills are lost to the broader economy and impose indirect costs on other people.

Thus direct information on actor satisfactions is merely one ingredient among many to be folded into the development of enlightened policy. Over the period during which we planned and carried out this study, we received numerous and sometimes vehement communications from colleagues who were concerned that in focusing a major study on the feelings people had about the major terms of their lives we would somehow mistake the *perceived* quality of their lives for its actual quality, as might be determined by some outside and presumably higher wisdom. While the details varied across these well-intended cautions, fears that we might foster the most superficial and individualistic "hedonism" as a prime guide for policy were commonly expressed.

If an interest in how actors evaluate the situations in which they find themselves can be caricatured as "hedonism," then many of the concerns expressed in the Seashore essay can equally well be caricatured, although quite unfairly to our mind, as "paternalism." The actors themselves cannot be trusted to see their immediate situations in the sufficiently broad perspective available to intellectuals and decision-making elites and hence, "papa knows best" what policy thrusts would really serve to promote the general weal.

Neither of these postures, at least in their caricatured forms, strikes us as being worth extended scrutiny or comment. It would seem obvious that the latitude for enlightened policy maneuver falling well within either of these extremes is simply enormous. At the same time, the basic issues which the caricatures call up remain important, even if one advocates something of a middle course, for any given policy thrust can reasonably be charged with leaning too far in one way or the other. The issues are indeed fundamental and deserve fullest public debate, although such debate is probably most fruitful if carried out special case by special case, rather than at the abstract level brevity requires here.

To summarize, then, if actor perceptions of their immediate situations are, taken alone, a very thin reed upon which to base public policy, neither can they safely be ignored. If, as we believe, there are strong normative reasons against ignoring them completely, then they must enter as one ingredient into public policy debate, and this of course is best accomplished if we first have generated some systematic information on the subject. Where policy relevance is concerned, such information generation was one of the major goals of this study and, hopefully, its successors. But this posture is a far cry from any myopic assumption that enlightened policy formation need only move in a straight and narrow course from data of this type. The limitations on policy use are numerous and fundamental.

Limited Policy Uses

However obvious all the foregoing may be, it would strike us as a mistake to conclude that a rigid compartmentalization should be established between a study of this type and any policy thinking, even in the short run when many aspects of the measurements involved remain to be explored. The study was designed in fact with some general and long-range policy "enlightenment" in mind, and it seems to us that even a precursor study of this kind can yield provisional points of such enlightenment.

Many of these points of enlightenment involve special case details that must be ferreted from earlier pages and tabulations by readers with specialized interests in one or another domain or class of policy problem. Our purpose in these closing paragraphs is merely to summarize two rather general types of policy-relevant information that seem safely and sanely available from this or parallel studies, although less to determine policy, as we have seen, than to inform it. One of these involves the scanning of the general population for what might be called "hidden pockets of discontent." The second involves the generation of information concerning concrete features of particular domains that seem especially important in mediating people's sense of satisfaction with them, as well as the differential importance of various domains for overall feelings of well-being.

It might seem perverse to suggest that we need to search out pockets of discontent in the society by such elaborate means, since such pockets surface with force upon the political process in ample number in the normal course of events. We surely did not need to conduct our study to learn of the dissatisfactions of blacks or the college-educated young by the end of the 1960s, or of concern over the status of women. However, the emphasis here is upon pockets of discontent that are *hidden*, in the sense of lacking much political visibility, or "voice," in the Hirschman sense. As we noted earlier in the chapter, there are a variety of barriers of communication and organization that lie between feelings of dissatisfaction experienced individually by persons in a particular life situation and the aggregation of any effective political voice. Our study gives some information as to the distribution of dissatisfactions without requiring these complex aggregation processes to have occurred first.

Two rather striking foci of hidden difficulty were presented, for example, in Chapter 12. In that chapter we were impressed by the apparent high levels of stress and inroads on feelings of well-being encountered by young parents establishing a family. While there are small groups of persons, such as the currently divorced, who are more dramatically dissatisfied with their lot, the difficulties encountered by couples engaging in family formation stand out with some clarity against the backdrop provided by people in other stations along the mainstream life cycle of marriage, family, and aging. Another population grouping discussed in the same chapter as showing particular distress is made up of women who are housewives despite their college degrees and whose lives appear to be much less than fulfilled.

It would be quite inappropriate to imply that the difficulties encountered by such segments of the population warrant the same public policy attention being commanded by several more politically visible groupings, such as blacks or the poor. For one thing, the concentration of problems faced by young parents appears to be a passing matter, unlike the difficult situations into which blacks and the poor are locked more or less permanently. Indeed, the transience of the young-parent status is probably a major reason why there is no noteworthy political expression of their difficulties. Political organization takes time and requires some durability of leadership; other studies show that political involvement is at its nadir among young parents, presumably because the cumulation of problems they face requires them to run so fast on other fronts simply to stand still. The plight of the college-educated housewife is somewhat more drawn into public view as a part of the more general movement toward women's rights, although our data are useful as a means of suggesting some of the more specific segments of the female population where the shoe of conventional sex roles is pinching with special force.

These are but stray examples of what we mean by hidden pockets of pressure or distress. They were chosen for illustration, because they involve substantial groups in the population whose dissatisfaction covers a broad enough spectrum of life's activities to register quite clearly in their most global reports of well-being. If we descended to the level of our domain satisfaction measures, other more specialized concentrations of hidden discontent could be cataloged and, because of their greater specificity, would show more immediate and obvious policy implications.

It is not likely that pure politicians would take a lot of self-starting interest in discontents that remain, for whatever reason, hidden from political view. On the other hand, if one is interested in data which might make useful inputs into the formation of truly enlightened policy, then information of this kind would make a reasonable starting point. The brush strokes are too broad in the kind of extensive study we have carried out to provide any firm guide for the construction of specific programs, but the materials can be seen as helpful, in part because of their very breadth, in localizing problem areas for more detailed examination. And while hidden discontents may not capture the fancy of many politicians, it seems likely that policy-makers aware of these relatively concealed pressure points in segments of the population would be able to foster policies that take them into account even while responding principally to more highly articulated political demands.

Thus, for example, ferment surrounding the status of women has included among its political demands the establishment of a more ambitious system of day care centers for young children. The development of such a program, while responding to political pressures from a subset of activist women, would undoubtedly have favorable repercussions across both of the hidden pockets of discontent described above: it would help not only college-educated women currently locked in housewife roles, but would help as genuinely if less directly the set of young fathers whose difficulties our data have also made manifest.

A more detailed type of policy input from the kind of study we have conducted might be drawn from some of the relationships we have examined between more detailed assessments within a domain and the more summary reports of satisfaction with the domain. Chapter 7 provides a number of specific examples. For instance, Table 7-4 suggests that across a number of common public services it is the quality of local public schools (along with the unmanipulable factor of weather) that seems most important among factors examined in accounting for a sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the community. Comparisons of Tables 7-11 and 7-18 suggest that the soundness of craftsmanship in building is a particularly strong determinant of satisfactions with the more immediate residential environment, rather outshadowing a number of other familiar manipulable factors. The text associated with all of these tables makes clear that apart from minor variations, surrounding the life cycle stages, these relationships are very central ones, in the sense that once we know how individuals assess some of these key attributes of their environment we add very little to our understanding of their general residential satisfactions by further knowledge concerning a variety of their demographic characteristics. And finally, information from Chapter 3 assures us that such key factors, in influencing their feelings of satisfaction about their residential situations, also have a further significant impact on their more global feelings of well-being.

This is, at this point, no more than suggestive information. It would naturally be desirable to canvass a broader range of concrete assessments within these domains, in order to account for more of the variance in satisfactions concerning them and to gain assurance that no determinant of overweening importance is being ignored. Further replications over time would as always be desirable as well. The important point is, however, that information of this sort, tying concrete features of the domains of life more or less tightly, as the empirical case may be, to general feelings of well-being, provides a worthwhile level of enlightenment to the formation of any social policies designed to improve the perceived quality of life. Some factors which turn out to be relatively important for well-being, such as the weather or the flavor of interactions with one's spouse, are not particularly amenable to policy manipulation. But others which also turn out to be important are more within policy reach. And, without forgetting the numerous caveats we placed upon the policy relevance of these data earlier, it would be reasonable to focus policy attention in these directions.

However all this may be, it is worth remembering in closing that our study was not deliberately designed for any immediate relevance to public policy as such, but rather as a contribution to a more generalized enlightenment. While the latter goal taken in the abstract may seem suspiciously bland, the fact remains that it may have fully as practical and beneficial effects, even in the short run, as those likely to be achieved by more ponderous administrative programs. For individuals and private agencies can find in materials of the kind we have developed here information which may be quite serviceable as a guide to action and self-evaluation in the improvement of the quality of life.[10]

Thus if it is true that early parenthood is a period of particular stress, it is of importance that counselors as well as young parents themselves understand both that the condition is widely shared and, in most cases, will be transitory. Similarly, if longitudinal analyses confirm that well-educated wives who develop a working role outside the home find a greater sense of fulfillment in life than those who do not, as our static data strongly suggest, then there is a "policy" implication which not only can be, but probably must be, implemented at the private level assuming that this bit of "enlightenment" penetrates the common culture and comes to be taken seriously by young women emerging from college, along with their husbands and their advisors. In short, while aspects of our findings can be lent relevance for public policy, it is perhaps fortunate that governments are not the sole brokers of the public weal and that enlightenment itself retains a vital function.

CONCLUSIONS

At one point and another in this volume we have described our study in the metaphor of an exploration into unknown territory. We have now completed our description of what we learned on this expedition and have given as clear a picture as our recording instruments permit of the terrain in this intriguing land of perceived quality of life.

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[10] We are entirely indebted for these closing remarks to suggestions by Milton Moss.

Like most explorers we now look forward to a return to the area of our exploration. We know from our first journey what the general topography of the territory is, but there are regions which we observed only at a distance and others which we had to forego altogether. We will want to confirm the benchmarks of our earlier survey and extend our mapping into those areas which we were not able to explore. We will hope to increase the accuracy of all of these observations by improvements in our techniques of measurement.

Most of all we will want to record the changes in the landscape which have taken place since our 1971 excursion. We are anxious to learn which attributes of this terrain remain constant and which do not. Ultimately, as we and others continue observations of these attributes over time, we will expect the record of these constancies and changes to bring us to a clearer understanding of the nature of the world in which they occur.

Appendices

A. Sample Design and Characteristics
B. The Questionnaire

Appendix A
Sample Design and Characteristics

Data for this study were obtained through personal interviews with 2,164 persons, 18 years of age or older, living in households within the coterminous United States exclusive of households on military reservations.[1] Interviews were conducted by the Survey Research Center during July and August 1971.

The sample design is that used by the Survey Research Center to select national probability samples of dwellings (cf. Kish and Hess, 1965). At an overall rate of one in 22,500, approximately 2,720 occupied dwellings were selected for the sample.[2] Within each household where a responsible person could be contacted, one eligible individual was designated as the respondent (Kish, 1949).

[1] In 1971 the Survey Research Center was using the dwelling unit definition formulated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and reported in *1950 Census of Housing, Vol. I, Part I,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953, p. XVI. Persons living in a dwelling unit comprise a household. Persons in nondwelling unit quarters (for example: large rooming houses; residential clubs; transient accommodations; barracks for workers; accommodations for inmates of institutions; general hospitals) were excluded from the study.

[2] The estimate of 61.2 million households, obtained by multiplying the number of occupied sample dwellings by the reciprocal of the sampling fraction, is not directly comparable with the Census Bureau's estimate of 64.4 million households reported for March 1971 in *Current Population Reports,* Series P-20, No. 233.

The Bureau's estimate includes Alaska and Hawaii, which are excluded by the Survey Research Center. Furthermore, comparability is diminished because of differences in time period and household definition. Some discrepancy can be attributed to sampling variability, while the remainder may well be explained by undercoverage of households occurring, because some dwellings are overlooked by the Survey Research Center's interviewers.

If after repeated calls no one was at home, or the designated respondent was not at home or refused to be interviewed, no substitution was made. The overall response rate was about 80 percent.

Although households were sampled at a constant rate, designated respondents had variable selection rates according to the number of eligible persons within the household. To be mathematically precise, data for each respondent should be weighted by the number of eligible persons in the household. However, because variable weights increase the complexities of data processing and analysis to some degree, the researcher is advised to examine both weighted and unweighted estimates for a number of variables considered to have primary importance for the research.

The comparisons of weighted and unweighted estimates of mean measures of satisfaction show the means to be identical or to differ by no more than .1. Percentage distributions have more frequent and larger differences (see Table A-1), in part because for every increase there must be a decrease of the same magnitude; nevertheless, differences between weighted and unweighted percentages are usually less than one percentage point. Exceptions are age and sex distributions that have some differences as large as three percentage points. Since estimates of age and sex distributions are not a primary concern of the research, there was a decision to analyze the data unweighted by the number of eligible respondents.

Several comparisons were possible between characteristics of the respondents and those of the American population, as measured in the 1970 census. These comparisons include region of residence, sex, race, age, educational attainment, and family income, and are shown in Table A-1. The differences between our sample and the target population are generally small. The most noteworthy discrepancies involve sex: for various reasons that affect census counts as well as sample surveys, males are underrepresented. Because of this, the analyses reported in this book have been weighted, with males given weights of 1.25 relative to those of females. In practice, however, this weighting procedure had very little effect on the findings. Overall, the high degree of correspondence between the 1971 sample data and the 1970 census figures gives us assurance that our sample adequately represents the American population as intended.

SAMPLING VARIABILITY

Sample statistics, such as means, percentages, and indexes, calculated from survey data are subject to errors arising from several sources. Among these are sampling errors, noncoverage, response and reporting errors, nonresponse, and processing errors.

With a probability design, the type used for this research, sampling errors can be approximated from the sample. The sampling error does not measure the actual error in a sample estimate, but it does allow the construction of a region or interval, such as a confidence interval, that will cover the population value with a specified probability. Although possible, it is impractical to calculate the sampling variability of each sample estimate. Furthermore, instead of present-

Table A-1: Comparisons Between Respondent Characteristics and 1970 Census Figures for the United States Population (in percentages)[a]

	Unweighted sample	*Weighted sample*[b]	*1970 census*	*Difference: sample vs. census*	*Difference: weighted sample vs. census*
1a. Region					
Northeast	21.4	22.0	24.3	−2.9	−2.3
North central	28.1	27.9	28.0	+0.1	−0.1
South	33.8	33.8	31.0	+2.8	+2.8
West	16.8	16.3	16.7	+0.1	−0.4
1b. Sex					
Male	41.8	44.4	48.7	−6.9	−4.3
Female	58.2	55.6	51.3	+6.9	+4.3
1c. Race					
White	87.2	87.2	87.5	−0.3	−0.3
Black	10.3	10.1	11.1	−0.8	−1.0
Other	2.5	2.7	1.4	+1.1	+1.3
1d. Age					
18-24	15.4	18.6	17.7	−2.3	+1.1
25-34	20.5	19.7	18.7	+1.8	+1.0
35-44	17.1	17.4	17.4	−0.3	0.0
45-54	16.7	17.8	17.4	−0.7	+0.4
55-64	13.5	12.7	13.9	−0.4	−1.2
65-74	10.9	9.0	9.3	+1.6	−0.3
75 and over	5.9	4.9	5.8	+0.1	−0.9
1e. Education					
Persons age 25 and older					
Eighth grade or less	26.0	23.2	27.8	−1.8	−4.6
Some high school	19.4	18.6	17.1	+2.3	+1.5
High school graduate	31.9	34.1	34.0	−2.1	+0.1
Some college	11.1	12.1	10.2	+0.9	+1.9
College degree(s)	11.6	11.9	11.0	+0.6	+0.9
1f. Income in 1970[c]					
Families and unrelated individuals					
$3,000 or less	14.1	[d]	17.8		−3.7
$3,000-4,999	13.8	—	12.0		+1.8
$5,000-6,999	13.0	—	12.0		+1.0
$7,000-9,999	17.7	—	18.2		−0.5
$10,000 or more	41.4	—	40.0		+1.4
Median income	$8400	—	$8335		

[a] Excluding Alaska and Hawaii.

[b] Weighted by number of eligible respondents in the dwelling unit.

[c] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports,* Series P-60, No. 85, "Money Income in 1971 of Families and Persons in the United States," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1972 (Table 7, 1970 figures).

[d] Since this is family rather than individual income, it is inappropriate to weight by the number of adults.

ing several measures of sampling variability, for this report the standard error is taken as a convenient measure of sampling variability.

The procedure was to calculate the standard errors for a relatively large number of percentages and their differences, first having chosen those percentages with some care to represent a variety of subject matter, a range in both size of estimated percentages and size of bases.[3] From the calculated standard error, average values were obtained and summarized in accompanying tables.

Table A-2 gives the average value of the sampling error associated with per-

Table A-2: Approximate Sampling Error[a] of Percentages (Expressed in Percentages)

Reported percentages	*Number of interviews* 2,000	1,500	1,000	700	500	400	300	200	100
50	2.9	3.2	3.8	4.4	5.1	5.6	6.4	7.6	10.0
30 or 70	2.6	2.9	3.5	4.0	4.7	5.2	5.9	7.0	9.6
20 or 80	2.3	2.6	3.0	3.5	4.1	4.5	5.1	6.1	8.4
10 or 90	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.6	6.3
5 or 95	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.8	3.3	4.6

[a] The figures in this table represent *two* standard errors. Hence, for most items the chances are 95 in 100 that the value being estimated lies within a range equal to the reported percentage, plus or minus the sampling error.

centages according to the magnitude of the percentage and the number of sample cases on which it is based, since the sampling error varies with both of those factors. Under the assumption that sample estimates are normally distributed, an interval of the width of the sampling error (two standard errors) on either side of the sample estimate has a chance of nineteen in twenty of including the population value—the value that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken at the same time and under the same conditions as the sample survey. Now suppose that the sample shows that 50 percent of 1,000 full-time workers have high life satisfaction scores; we would like to know what proportion would have been obtained if a census had been taken rather than a sample. By referring to Table A-2 and locating the intersection of the row for 50 percent and the column for 1,000, we find the average sampling error for the particular combination to be 3.8 percent. Therefore, we can say that the interval 46.2 to 53.8 percent has nineteen chances in twenty of including the population proportion of employed persons with high life satisfaction index.

Table A-3 gives the average value of the sampling error associated with the difference between two percentages according to the magnitudes of the percentages and the number of sample cases in each of the two different subgroups. (Table A-3 is not applicable when percentages of overlapping subgroups are

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[3] The estimates of sampling errors were calculated using the formulas described in Kish and Hess (1965), pp. 43-46.

Table A-3: Approximate Sampling Error[a] of Differences (in Percentages)

Size of sub-groups	2000	1500	1000	700	500	400	300	200	100
				For percentages from 35% to 65%					
2000	3.9	4.3	4.7	5.2	5.8	6.2	6.9	8.1	11.0
1500		4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.1	8.3	11.0
1000			5.4	5.8	6.4	6.8	7.4	8.5	11.0
700				6.3	6.8	7.2	7.8	8.8	11.0
500					7.2	7.6	8.2	9.2	12.0
400						8.0	8.5	9.5	12.0
300							9.0	9.9	12.0
200								11.0	13.0
100									15.0
				For percentages around 20% and 80%					
2000	3.1	3.5	3.8	4.2	4.6	5.0	5.6	6.5	8.6
1500		3.6	4.0	4.4	4.8	5.2	5.7	6.6	8.7
1000			4.3	4.7	5.1	5.4	5.9	6.8	8.9
700				5.0	5.4	5.7	6.2	7.1	9.1
500					5.8	6.1	6.5	7.3	9.3
400						6.4	6.8	7.6	9.5
300							7.2	7.9	9.8
200								8.6	10.0
100									12.0
				For percentages around 10% and 90%					
2000	2.3	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.8	4.2	4.9	6.5
1500		2.7	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.9	4.3	5.0	6.6
1000			3.2	3.5	3.8	4.1	4.5	5.1	6.7
700				3.8	4.1	4.3	4.7	5.3	6.8
500					4.3	4.6	4.9	5.5	7.0
400						4.8	5.1	5.7	7.1
300							5.4	6.0	7.3
200								6.5	7.8
100									8.9
				For percentages around 5% and 95%					
2000	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.7	3.0	3.5	4.7
1500		2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.6	4.8
1000			2.3	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.7	4.8
700				2.7	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.9
500					3.2	3.3	3.6	4.0	5.1
400						3.5	3.7	4.1	5.2
300							3.9	4.3	5.3
200								4.7	5.6
100									6.4

[a] The values shown are the differences required for significance (two standard errors) in comparisons of percentages derived from two different subgroups of the current survey.

compared; then the sampling error should be calculated for the specific comparison.) Under the assumption that the estimated differences are normally distributed, a difference as large as the sampling error (two standard errors) reported in Table A-3 has at least nineteen chances in twenty of denoting a true difference between the two subgroups in the population rather than merely reflecting the vagaries of sampling. Let us suppose that we are interested in the difference between the 50 percent of 1,000 full-time workers and the 40 percent of 300 part-time workers who have high life satisfaction indexes. By inspecting the section of Table A-3 for percentages from 35 to 65 percent, and locating the intersection of the row for 1,000 and the column for 300, we see that the average sampling error (two standard errors) is 7.4 percent. Since the observed difference of 10 percent exceeds the average sampling error, we may say that the chances are at least nineteen in twenty that a complete census in July and August 1971 would have shown that full-time workers have higher life satisfaction indexes than part-time workers.

Tables A-2 and A-3 provide estimates of average sampling errors for specified percentages and bases, or subgroups; the researcher can interpolate for intermediate points. We emphasize that the sampling errors are *average* values for estimated percentages of the total study population or for percentages of subgroups that extend across all primary areas. Therefore, it is useful to know what classes of sample estimates show important departures from the average. Here we can give only general observations, with a repeated warning that when sampling errors specific to particular sample estimates are required, calculations should be made for those particular estimates.

From the calculations that were made, sampling errors of estimates for no subgroup of the population are consistently above or below average. Sampling variability of estimates for the black population were generally lower than for the white or for the total population of which the white population is a very high proportion; however, a decline in the level of sampling variability is reflected in the averages as the sample size or base declines from around 2,000 down to 100. Responses from the subgroup 65 years or older had above average sampling variability on estimates related to satisfaction with use of spare time and satisfaction with their own health status, but are close to average on life satisfaction index. It is clear that our analysis is too limited for broad generalizations about subgroups of the population.

Included in the calculations were a few subject items that drew highly variable responses from each subgroup examined. Estimates of satisfaction with street or road maintenance in the neighborhood and "safe to go out walking at night" have sampling errors as much as 20 percent above average. Estimates of satisfaction with the United States, the place (city, town) where living, and the neighborhood are also subject to above average sampling errors. The implication is that there are clusters of respondents sharing the same opinions. When the estimates are concerned with characteristics that vary with individual respondents, rather than with clusters or groups of respondents, then the average sampling errors apply.

REINTERVIEW SAMPLE

In the spring of 1972 a one in six sample of persons interviewed in 1971 was selected for reinterview. To satisfy research requirements within budgetary limitations, primary areas, exclusive of the two Standard Consolidated Areas and the Los Angeles Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, were sampled at the rate of 1:3 and respondents within selected primary areas sampled at the rate of 1:2 to yield the overall subsampling rate of 1:6.

In the Standard Consolidated Areas (New York–Northeastern New Jersey and Chicago, Ill.–Northwestern Indiana) and the Los Angeles SMSA, subsampling was first by place (cities, towns, census tracts) at the rate of one in three and then by respondent at the rate of one in two to achieve the one in six subsampling rate.

Over all primary areas the subsampling was controlled to ensure that the percentage distribution of respondents selected for reinterview was in agreement with the original sample in respect to six size-of-place classifications.

From the 346 respondents in the subsample, 285 reinterviews were obtained.

Appendix B
The Questionnaire

SECTION A: CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD

A1. In this study we are interested in measuring the quality of life of people in this country -- that is, the things people like and dislike about their homes, cities, neighborhoods, jobs, and so on. The first question is: How long have you lived in (INSERT NAME OF COMMUNITY, OR OF COUNTY IF RURAL) ________________. (IF LESS THAN TWO YEARS, GET NUMBER OF MONTHS.)

________ YEARS ________ MONTHS, OR SINCE: ________________

A2. And how long have you lived here in this (house/apartment)? (IF LESS THAN TWO YEARS, GET NUMBER OF MONTHS.)

________ YEARS ________ MONTHS, OR SINCE: ________________

A3. I'd like to ask how satisfied you are with some of the main public services you are supposed to receive. (HAND R CARD 1,YELLOW) Please tell me how you feel about each thing I mention, using one of the answers on this card. First, how about the way streets and roads are kept up around here. Would you say this service is very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL

A4. How do you feel about the quality of the public schools that the children from around here go to -- would you say it is very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

IF R LIVES IN A CITY, TOWN, OR VILLAGE, ASK A5 AND A6: IF RURAL, TURN TO A7

A5. How good is garbage collection in this neighborhood? *Is it very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

A6. What about the parks and playgrounds for children in this neighborhood? *Are they very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

ASK EVERYBODY:

A7. How about police protection around here. *Is it very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

A8. How good do you think relations are between the police and the people around here? *Are they very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

A9. Another way people judge a place to live is what the weather throughout the year is like -- as far as you are concerned, how good is the climate here? *Is it very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

A10. (HAND R CARD 2, GREEN) Would you say that the local taxes in (NAME CITY OR COUNTY) are very low, low, moderate, high, or very high?

1. VERY LOW	2. LOW	3. MODERATE	4. HIGH	5. VERY HIGH	8. DK

A11. Have you ever lived in a place where life is much different from what it is here?

1. YES

5. NO -- GO TO A12

A11a. Where was that? ______________________________
(COUNTRY OR STATE AND CITY)

A12. Now I have some questions about this neighborhood. First, thinking about the kinds of things you would like to have near where you live -- places you go fairly often -- how convenient would you say this location is: is it very convenient, convenient enough, not very convenient, or not convenient at all?

1. VERY CONVENIENT	2. CONVENIENT ENOUGH	3. NOT VERY CONVENIENT	4. NOT CONVENIENT AT ALL

A13. Is there any form of local public transportation available to you here? (NOT TAXICABS)

1. YES	5. NO -- GO TO A14	8. DK -- GO TO A14

A13a. (CARD 1, YELLOW) How good is the public transportation for people who live around here? *Is it very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

A13b. How often do you use public transportation: almost every day, once a week or more, once a month or more, less than once a month, or never?

1. ALMOST DAILY	2. ONCE A WEEK OR MORE	3. ONCE A MONTH OR MORE	4. LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	5. NEVER

IF R IS BLACK, ASK A14 - A15; IF NOT BLACK, GO TO A16

A14. FOR BLACKS ONLY: One hears a lot of different terms used these days to identify race. What term do you prefer when talking about yourself?

(What do you call yourself?) ____________________

A15. USE R'S PREFERRED TERM IN THE REST OF THE INTERVIEW. IF R REFUSES TO SELECT A TERM, PROBE GENTLY. IF R STILL CANNOT SELECT A TERM, USE YOUR OWN PREFERRED TERM.

____
(SPECIFY TERM USED)

ASK EVERYONE:

A16. Is this neighborhood all white, mostly white, about half and half, mostly (Black), all (Black), or what?

1. ALL WHITE (EXCEPT R AND FAMILY)	2. MOSTLY WHITE	3. HALF AND HALF	4. MOSTLY BLACK	5. ALL BLACK (EXCEPT R AND FAMILY)

OTHER, SPECIFY: ____________________

____

A17. What about the condition of the houses in this neighborhood. Overall, would you say they are very well kept up, fairly well, not very well, or not kept up well at all?

1. VERY WELL	2. FAIRLY WELL	3. NOT VERY WELL	4. NOT WELL AT ALL

A18. (CARD 1, YELLOW) What about the people who live around here. As neighbors would you say they are very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL

A19. Would you say that it is safe to go out walking around here at night?

1. YES	5. NO	OTHER: ______________ (Specify)

A20. How important do you feel it is to lock your doors when you are going out of the house for just an hour or two? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

1. VERY IMPORTANT	2. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	3. NOT VERY IMPORTANT	4. NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

A21. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Here is a card that I want you to use to tell me how satisfied you are with (NAME CITY OR COUNTY) as a place to live in. This is how we will use it. If you are completely satisfied with (NAME CITY OR COUNTY) as a place to live, you would say "one." If you are completely dissatisfied, you would say "seven." If you are neither completely satisfied nor completely dissatisfied, you would put yourself somewhere from two to six; for example, four means that you are neutral, or just as satisfied as you are dissatisfied.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A22. (CARD 3, WHITE) And what about this particular neighborhood in (NAME CITY OR COUNTY). All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this neighborhood as a place to live? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION B: HOUSING

B1. Now I have some questions about your (house/apartment). How many rooms do you have here (for you and your family), not counting hallways and bathrooms? (COUNT ROOMS IN BASEMENT OR ATTIC ONLY IF FINISHED AND FURNISHED.)

______________________ ROOMS

B2. (CARD 1, YELLOW) Would you say that as a place for you (and your family) to live, this (house/apartment) is very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL

Now I am going to ask about some things that people often say they like or dislike about their homes. As I mention each item, please tell me how well you feel this (house/apartment) fits what you would like.

B3. Let's try the first one: Would you say that in general the rooms in this (house/apartment) are too large, too small, or are they about the right size?

1. TOO LARGE	3. ABOUT RIGHT	5. TOO SMALL	7. MIXED	8. UNDECIDED

B4. Would you say that this building is a well-built structure?

1. YES	5. NO	OTHER: ______________________ (Specify)

B5. (CARD 1, YELLOW) How good is the heating in the winter? *Is it very good, fairly good, neither good nor bad, not very good, or not good at all?*

1. VERY GOOD	2. FAIRLY GOOD	3. NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD	4. NOT VERY GOOD	5. NOT GOOD AT ALL	8. DK

B6. Do you own this (home/apartment), pay rent, or what?

1. OWNS OR IS BUYING -- GO TO B9

2. PAYS RENT -- GO TO B7

3. NEITHER OWNS NOR RENTS

B6a. How is that? ______________________________

____

ASK IF R RENTS:

B7. About how much rent do you pay a month?
$ ______________

B8. (HAND R CARD 2, GREEN) Think of the costs of this (house/apartment) -- such as the rent and the utilities, if those are not included in the rent. Overall, would you say that for a (house/apartment) such as this one these costs are very low, low, moderate, high, or very high?

1. VERY LOW	2. LOW	3. MODERATE	4. HIGH	5. VERY HIGH	8. DK

TURN TO B11

ASK IF R OWNS OR IS BUYING:

B9. Could you tell me what the present value of this house and land is? I don't mean what you would like to get, but about what do you think it would really bring if you sold it today?
$ ______________________

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF R LIVES IN MULTIPLE DU STRUCTURE, TRY TO GET VALUE FOR R'S DU ONLY. HOWEVER IF R CAN GIVE YOU ONLY VALUE OF ENTIRE STRUCTURE, BE SURE TO NOTE THAT FIGURE IS FOR WHOLE STRUCTURE.

B10. (HAND R CARD 2, GREEN) Think of the costs of this (house/apartment) -- such as the mortgage payments, the maintenance costs, property taxes, and utilities. Overall, would you say that for a (house/apartment) such as this one these costs are very low, low, moderate, high, or very high?

1. VERY LOW	2. LOW	3. MODERATE	4. HIGH	5. VERY HIGH	8. DK

ASK EVERYBODY:

B11. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Considering all the things we have talked about, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this (house/apartment)? Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B12. At the present time, are you satisfied to stay here, or would you like to move to another house or apartment?

1. SATISFIED TO STAY — TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION C

5. WOULD LIKE TO MOVE

8. DK — TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION C

B12a. What is the main thing that keeps you from moving right now?

____

____

____

SECTION C: COUNTRY

C1. Now I have some questions on how you feel about life in this country as a whole.

Do you think that there are some ways in which life in the United States is getting worse? (How is that?) ______

C2. Are there some ways in which you think life in the U. S. is getting better? (How is that?) ______

C3. All things considered, do you think things are getting better, or worse, that they are staying about the same, or what?

1. BETTER	5. WORSE	3. SOME BETTER, SOME WORSE	4. ABOUT THE SAME

OTHER: ______

C4. People sometimes tell us that public officials in this country don't always treat them as fairly as they ought to. How about you -- would you say that in general public officials treat you <u>very</u> fairly, fairly enough, not very fairly, or not fairly at all?

1. VERY FAIRLY	2. FAIRLY ENOUGH	3. NOT VERY FAIRLY	4. NOT FAIRLY AT ALL

C5. Some people say there isn't as much freedom in this country as there ought to be. How about you -- how free do you feel to live the kind of life you want to -- very free, free enough, not very free, or not free at all?

1. VERY FREE	2. FREE ENOUGH	3. NOT VERY FREE	4. NOT FREE AT ALL
GO TO C6	GO TO C6		

C5a. In what way do you feel you aren't very free? ____________

C6. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how satisfied are you with life in the United States today? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C7. If you had a chance to move out of the United States and settle down for good in some other country, do you think you would like to do it?

1. YES	3. NOT SURE, DEPENDS, DK	5. NO -- TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION D

C7a. What would be your main reason for wanting to move? ____________

P A S T E   T A N   S H E E T   H E R E

SECTION D: ADJECTIVES

D1. (HAND R TAN SHEET) Here are some words and phrases which we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your present life. For example, if you think your present life is very "boring," put an X in the box right next to the word "boring." If you think it is very "interesting," put an X in the box right next to the word "interesting." If you think it is somewhere in between, put an X where you think it belongs. Put an X in one box on every line. (INTERVIEWER: GO THROUGH THE SECOND EXAMPLE IF NECESSARY. AFTER R FINISHES, CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT HE HAS PLACED AN X IN ONE BOX ON EACH LINE.)

TAN SHEET:

BORING	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	INTERESTING
ENJOYABLE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	MISERABLE
EASY	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	HARD
USELESS	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	WORTHWHILE
FRIENDLY	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	LONELY
FULL	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	EMPTY
DISCOURAGING	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	HOPEFUL
TIED DOWN	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	FREE
DISAPPOINTING	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	REWARDING
BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	DOESN'T GIVE ME MUCH CHANCE

SECTION E: EDUCATION

E1. What was the highest grade of school you completed?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 — GO TO E2

9 10 11 12 → E1a

13 14 15 16 MORE THAN 16 → E1c

E1a. Do you have a high school diploma?

YES NO

E1b. Have you attended college?

YES -- GO TO E1c

NO

E1c. What college or university have you attended? (IF MORE THAN ONE, GET MOST RECENT.)

____

E1d. What city is that in?

____

E1e. Do you have a college degree? (IF YES): What degree(s) do you have?

5. NONE

Specify: __________

____

ASK EVERYONE:

E2. Have you gone to school in the past year?

1. YES → E2a

5. NO -- TURN TO E3

E2a. What type of school was that? ____________________

____

E2b. Are you still a student?

1. YES (OR ON VACATION FROM SCHOOL) -- TURN TO PAGE 14, E6

5. NO -- TURN TO E3

IF R IS NOT A STUDENT, ASK E3-E5:

E3. Many people wish that their education could have been different in some way. Looking back they wish they had prepared for a different line of work, learned some different things, or had more or less education than they received. How about you -- if you could do it over again, would you try to get an education that was different in any way from what you have?

[1. YES] [5. NO]

E4. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) How satisfied are you with the amount of education you received? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

[1] GO TO E5 [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

E4a. (IF NOT 1) What were the main reasons you stopped your education when you did?

E5. (CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how useful do you think your education was for you personally? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

[1] TURN TO PAGE 15, SECTION F [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

E5a. (IF NOT 1) What kind of education would you like to have had?

E5b. What were the main reasons that you didn't get the kind of education you now want?

TURN TO PAGE 15, SECTION F

IF R IS A STUDENT, ASK E6:

E6. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how useful do you think your education is for you personally? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

[1] TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION F

[2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

E6a. (IF NOT 1) What kind of education would you like to have?

E6b. What are the main reasons that you aren't getting the kind of education you want?

SECTION F: EMPLOYMENT

F1. Now I want to ask you about work. Are you working for pay, either full-time or part-time?

1. YES -- (OR HAS JOB BUT NOT WORKING JUST NOW -- ON VACATION, SICK, LAID OFF BUT EXPECTING TO BE RECALLED, ETC.)

TURN TO F2

NO

IF R IS MALE

F1a. Are you unemployed, retired, a student, or what?

3. UNEMPLOYED -- TURN TO PAGE 20, F26

4. RETIRED -- TURN TO PAGE 22, F37

5. STUDENT -- TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

6. OTHER: ______________ -- TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

IF R IS FEMALE

F1b. Are you a housewife, unemployed, retired, a student, or what?

2. HOUSEWIFE -- TURN TO PAGE 23, F44

3. UNEMPLOYED -- TURN TO PAGE 20, F26

4. RETIRED -- TURN TO PAGE 22, F37

5. STUDENT -- TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

6. OTHER: ______________ -- TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

IF R IS WORKING:

F2. What is your main occupation -- that is, what sort of work do you do?

____

____

F3. (IF NECESSARY) Tell me a little more about what you do. ____________

____

F4. What sort of (business/industry) is that? ____________________

____

F5. Do you work for yourself or are you employed by someone else, or what?

1. SELF-EMPLOYED | 5. WORKS FOR OTHERS | OTHER: ____________

F6. About how many hours do you work on this job in the average week?

____________ HOURS PER WEEK

F7. About how long does it usually take you to get from home to the main place you work, door to door?

____________ MINUTES (ONE-WAY TRIP)

F8. Do you presently have any other jobs or do you do any other work for pay?

1. YES | 5. NO -- TURN TO F9

F8a. About how many hours a week on the average do you work for pay <u>outside</u> of your main job?

____________ HOURS PER WEEK

IF R IS WORKING:

F9. Now I am going to make some statements about jobs. (HAND R CARD 4, BLUE) Please tell me how true each one is of your (main) job, using one of the answers on this card. The first one is: Travel to and from work is convenient. Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your (main) job?

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F10. The second one is: The work is interesting. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F11. The pay is good. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F12. The next one is: I am given a lot of chances to make friends. *Is this very true of your job, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F13. The physical surroundings are pleasant. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F14. The job security is good. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F15. I have an opportunity to develop my own special abilities. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	4. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

IF R IS WORKING:

F16. I am given a chance to do the things I do best. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F17. The chances for promotion are good. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F18. The last one is: I have enough time to get the job done. *Is this very true, somewhat true, not very true, or not at all true of your job?*

1. VERY TRUE	2. SOMEWHAT TRUE	3. NOT VERY TRUE	4. NOT AT ALL TRUE

F19. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

F20. If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you'd like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work?

1. YES

5. NO -- TURN TO F21

F20a. Would you continue to work at the same job as you now have?

1. YES

5. NO

OTHER: ____________________ (Specify)

IF R IS WORKING:

F21. INTERVIEWER CHECK POINT: R IS:

[1. MALE] -- TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

[5. FEMALE] -- ASK F22-F25

F22. Different people feel differently about taking care of a home. I don't mean taking care of children, but things like cooking, sewing, and keeping house. Some women look on these things as just a job that has to be done; other women really enjoy them. How do you feel about this?

____

____

____

F23. Do you ever hire anyone from outside to help with the housework?

[YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO F24

F23a. Do you have someone regularly, or just now and then?

[1. REGULARLY] [3. JUST NOW AND THEN]

F24. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Overall, how satisfied are you with being a homemaker -- I don't mean with your family life, but with your housework? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

F25. Apart from the money, which do you think is more important to you personally: your housework, or the work for which you are paid?

[1. HOUSEWORK] [5. PAYING JOB] [3. EQUALLY IMPORTANT]

TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

IF R IS UNEMPLOYED:

F26. What sort of work did you do on your last regular job? ____________

____

F27. (IF NECESSARY) Tell me a little more about what you did. __________

____

F28. What sort of (business/industry) was that? ______________________

____

F29. Have you had a job in the past twelve months?

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO F30

F29a. About how many weeks have you worked in the past twelve months?

____________ WEEKS

F29b. About how many hours did you work on your last job in the average week?

__________ HOURS A WEEK

F30. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how satisfied were you with your last regular job? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you felt?*

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

F31. If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you'd like for the rest of your life, would you still want to work?

[1. YES] [5. NO]

IF R IS UNEMPLOYED:

F32. INTERVIEWER CHECK POINT: R IS:

1. MALE -- TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

5. FEMALE -- ASK F33-F36

F33. Different people feel differently about taking care of a home. I don't mean taking care of children, but things like cooking, sewing, and keeping house. Some women look on these things as just a job that has to be done; other women really enjoy them. How do you feel about this?

____

____

____

F34. Do you ever hire anyone from outside to help with the housework?

YES → F34a   5. NO -- GO TO F35

F34a. Do you have someone regularly, or just now and then?

1. REGULARLY   3. JUST NOW AND THEN

F35. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Overall, how satisfied are you with being a homemaker -- I don't mean with your family life, but with your housework? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

F36. Apart from the money, which do you think is more important to you personally: your housework, or a job for which you are paid?

1. HOUSEWORK   5. PAYING JOB   3. EQUALLY IMPORTANT

TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

IF R IS RETIRED:

F37. What sort of work did you do on your last main job before you retired?

____

____

F38. (IF NECESSARY) Tell me a little more about what you did. ____________

____

F39. What sort of (business/industry) was that? ______________________

____

F40. About how many years ago did you retire? (IF <u>LESS</u> THAN TWO YEARS, GET NUMBER OF MONTHS.)

__________ YEARS __________ MONTHS, OR SINCE: __________________

F41. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how satisfied were you with your last job before you retired? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you felt?*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

F42. Why did you retire when you did? ____________________________

____

F43. Are you glad you retired when you did, or do you wish you had retired either earlier or later?

1. GLAD RETIRED WHEN I DID	2. WISH RETIRED EARLIER	3. WISH RETIRED LATER

TURN TO PAGE 25, SECTION G

IF R IS A HOUSEWIFE:

F44. Different people feel differently about taking care of a home. I don't mean taking care of children, but things like cooking, sewing, and keeping house. Some women look on these things as just a job that has to be done; other women really enjoy them. How do you feel about this?

____

____

____

F45. Do you ever hire anyone from outside to help with the housework?

[YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO F46

F45a. Do you have someone regularly, or just now and then?

[1. REGULARLY] [3. JUST NOW AND THEN]

F46. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Overall, how satisfied are you with being a homemaker -- I don't mean with your family life, but with your housework? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

F47. Do you get much chance to spend time with other people during the day?

[1. YES] [5. NO] [OTHER: ______________________________]
(Specify)

F48. Have you ever wanted a career? (NOT JUST A SHORT TERM JOB)

[1. YES] [3. MIXED] [5. NO]

IF R IS HOUSEWIFE:

F49. Have you <u>ever</u> held a full-time job?

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO F50

F49a. What sort of work did you do on your last full-time job?

F49b. (IF NECESSARY) Tell me a little more about what you did.

F49c. What sort of (business/industry) was that?

F50. If you could have someone to take care of things here at home, would you like to take an outside job right now, or are you happy enough to be at home?

[1. WOULD TAKE OUTSIDE JOB] [5. HAPPY ENOUGH TO BE AT HOME]

F51. Do you think you are likely to take an outside job in the future?

[1. YES] [3. DEPENDS] [5. NO] -- TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION G

F51a. Women have different reasons for working. What would be your main reasons for working?

SECTION G: ORGANIZATIONS, SPARE TIME, INCOME

G1. We have talked about your work, now how about the things you do when you're not (working/studying)? Is there anything you like to do when you're not (working/studying) that you get special pleasure out of? (What is that?) Anything else? ______________________

____

____

G2. Are there things that you wish you could do in your spare time or on vacations that you can't do for one reason or another?

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO G3

G2a. What are the main things that keep you from doing these things?

____

____

G3. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways you spend your spare time? *Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel?*

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

G4. In general, how do you feel about your time -- would you say you always feel rushed even to do the things you have to do, only sometimes feel rushed, or almost never feel rushed?

[1. ALWAYS] [3. SOMETIMES] [5. ALMOST NEVER]

TURN TO G5

G4a. How often would you say you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with -- quite often, just now and then, or almost never?

[1. OFTEN] [3. NOW AND THEN] [5. ALMOST NEVER]

G5. (HAND R CARD 5, ORANGE) Now here is a list of clubs and organizations that many people belong to. Please look at this list and tell me which of these kinds of organizations you yourself belong to. *Can you see the items all right, or would you like me to read them to you?* (PAUSE; PLACE AN "X" AT THE LEFT OF EACH KIND OF ORGANIZATION R BELONGS TO. DON'T FORGET PROBE AFTER ITEM "p.")

a. ☐ Church or synagogue

b. ☐ Church-connected groups

c. ☐ Labor unions

d. ☐ Fraternal lodges or veterans' organizations

e. ☐ Business or civic groups

f. ☐ Professional groups

g. ☐ Parent-teachers associations

h. ☐ Youth groups (Girl Scout Leaders, Little League Managers, etc.)

i. ☐ Community centers

j. ☐ Neighborhood improvement associations

k. ☐ Social or card playing group

l. ☐ Sport teams

m. ☐ Country clubs

n. ☐ Political clubs or organizations

o. ☐ Issue or action oriented groups

p. ☐ Charity or welfare organizations

Are there any (others) you're in that are not on this list?

q. ☐ Other: ______________________________

r. ☐ Other: ______________________________

☐ NONE (NONE ON CARD <u>AND</u> NONE OTHER)

G6. Is your religious preference Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or something else?

[1. PROTESTANT] [2. ROMAN CATHOLIC] [3. JEWISH]

[OTHER:] ______________________________
(Specify)

IF PROTESTANT:

G6a. What church or denomination is that?

____

G7. In the past year, have you attended church services more than once a week, once a week, two or three times a month, once a month, less than once a month, or not at all?

[1. MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK] [2. ONCE A WEEK] [3. TWO OR THREE TIMES A MONTH]

[4. ONCE A MONTH] [5. LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH] [6. NOT AT ALL]

G8. In general, how religious minded would you say you are -- very religious minded, more than average, less than average, or not at all religious minded?

[1. VERY] [2. MORE THAN AVERAGE] [3. AVERAGE] [4. LESS THAN AVERAGE] [5. NOT AT ALL]

G9. Now about your life when you were growing up. Did you attend Sunday School or religious instruction classes regularly, most of the time, some of the time, or never?

[1. REGULARLY OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOL] [2. MOST OF THE TIME] [3. SOME OF THE TIME] [4. NEVER]

G10. Do you have any particular problems with your health?

[YES] [5. NO] -- TURN TO G11

G10a. Would you say that these problems keep you from doing a lot of things you wish you could do, just certain things, or can you do almost anything you wish?

[1. LOT OF THINGS] [2. CERTAIN THINGS] [3. CAN DO ALMOST ANYTHING]

G11. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) Of course most people get sick now and then, but overall, how satisfied are you with your own health? *Which number comes closest to how you feel?*

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

G12. (HAND R CARD 6, TAN CARD) In this survey of families all over the country, we are trying to get a clear picture of people's financial situations. Taking into consideration all sources of income, what was your total family income before taxes in 1970? Just give me the letter on the card.

00 A. NOTHING, OR LOSS	01 B. $1 - $1,999	02 C. $2,000 - $2,999
03 D. $3,000 - $3,999	04 E. $4,000 - $4,999	05 F. $5,000 - $5,999
06 G. $6,000 - $6,999	07 H. $7,000 - $7,999	08 I. $8,000 - $8,999
09 J. $9,000 - $9,999	10 K. $10,000 - $10,999	11 L. $11,000 - $11,999
12 M. $12,000 - $13,999	13 N. $14,000 - $16,999	14 O. $17,000 - $19,999
15 P. $20,000 - $24,999	16 Q. $25,000 - $34,999	17 R. $35,000 OR MORE

G13. (CARD 6, TAN) How much of this total did you yourself earn in 1970?

00 A	01 B	02 C	03 D	04 E
05 F	06 G	07 H	08 I	09 J
10 K	11 L	12 M	13 N	14 O
15 P	16 Q	17 R		

G14. Do you ever worry that your total family income will not be enough to meet your family's expenses and bills?

YES — 5. NO -- GO TO G15

G14a. Would you say that you have worries like this all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, or just now and then?

1. ALL
2. MOST
3. SOME
4. JUST NOW AND THEN

G15. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) The things people have -- housing, car, furniture, recreation and the like -- make up their standard of living. Some people are satisfied with their standard of living, others feel it is not as high as they would like. How satisfied are you with your standard of living? *Which number comes closest to how you feel?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

G16. (CARD 3, WHITE) How satisfied are you with your family's situation so far as savings and investments are concerned? *Which number comes closest to how you feel?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION H

H1. We have talked about some of the things you do and some of the things you have, now I have some other kinds of questions. First, what about your friendships: Would you say that you have a good many very good friends that you could count on if you had any sort of trouble, an average number, or not too many very good friends?

[1. GOOD MANY] [3. AVERAGE NUMBER] [5. NOT TOO MANY]

H2. How interested would you say you are in meeting new people and making new friends? Would you say you are <u>very</u> interested, <u>somewhat</u> interested, or <u>not very</u> interested?

[1. VERY INTERESTED] [3. SOMEWHAT INTERESTED] [5. NOT VERY INTERESTED]

H3. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how satisfied are you with your friendships -- with the time you can spend with friends, the things you do together, the number of friends you have, as well as the particular people who are your friends? *Which number comes closest to how you feel?*

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]

H4. All right, now let's talk about your family. First, are your father and mother both still living? (IF NO, PROBE TO CLARIFY WHETHER ONE IS STILL LIVING.)

[1. BOTH] [5. NEITHER] [2. MOTHER ONLY] [3. FATHER ONLY]

TURN TO H5

ASK H4b ABOUT LIVING (OR KNOWN) PARENT

H4a. Do you feel closer to your father, or to your mother, or do you feel equally close to both of your parents?

[1. CLOSER TO FATHER] [2. CLOSER TO MOTHER] [5. EQUALLY CLOSE TO BOTH]

ASK H4b ABOUT PARENT TO WHOM R FEELS CLOSER, OR ABOUT BOTH IF EQUALLY CLOSE

H4b. Would you say that you feel closer to your (father/mother/parents) than most people your age do, that you are about average, or that you feel less close than most?

[1. CLOSER] [3. ABOUT AVERAGE] [5. LESS CLOSE]

ASK EVERYONE:

H5. Do you have any brothers or sisters living? (INCLUDE STEP BROTHERS AND SISTERS IF R WAS RAISED WITH THEM.)

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO H6

H5a. How many of each do you have?

__________ BROTHERS __________ SISTERS

H5b. Would you say that you feel closer to your (SIBLINGS) than most people your age do, that you are about average, or that you feel less close than most? (IF FEELS CLOSER TO SOME THAN TO OTHERS, TRY TO GET AN OVERALL ANSWER.)

[1. CLOSER] [3. ABOUT AVERAGE] [5. LESS CLOSE]

H6. Are you married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never married?

1. MARRIED	2. WIDOWED	3. DIVORCED	4. SEPARATED	5. NEVER MARRIED
	TURN TO PAGE 34, H24	TURN TO PAGE 34, H18	TURN TO PAGE 34, H18	TURN TO PAGE 36, SECTION J

H7. How long have you been married? ____________________

H8. Is this your first marriage?

[1. YES] -- TURN TO H9 [NO]

H8a. Did your last marriage end by death or by divorce?

[3. DEATH] [5. DIVORCE]

H9. Is your (husband/wife) doing any work for money now?

[1. YES] -- GO TO H9b   [NO]

H9a. Has (he/she) done any work for money in the past twelve months?

[3. YES]   [5. NO] -- GO TO H10

H9b. What is (his/her) main occupation -- that is, what sort of work does (he/she) do? ____________________

H9c. (IF NECESSARY) Tell me a little more about what (he/she) does.

____

H9d. What kind of (business/industry) is that? ____________________

____

H10. (HAND R CARD 7, GRAY) How often do you disagree with your (husband/wife) about how much money to spend on various things -- never, rarely, sometimes, often, or very often?

[1. NEVER] [2. RARELY] [3. SOMETIMES] [4. OFTEN] [5. VERY OFTEN]

H11. How well do you think your (husband/wife) understands you -- your feelings, your likes and dislikes, and any problems you may have; do you think that (he/she) understands you very well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?

[1. VERY WELL] [2. FAIRLY WELL] [3. NOT VERY WELL] [4. NOT WELL AT ALL]

H12. And how well do you think <u>you</u> understand your (husband/wife) -- very well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?

[1. VERY WELL] [2. FAIRLY WELL] [3. NOT VERY WELL] [4. NOT WELL AT ALL]

H13. How much companionship do you and your (husband/wife) have -- how often do you do things together -- all the time, very often, often, sometimes, or hardly ever?

[1. ALL THE TIME] [2. VERY OFTEN] [3. OFTEN] [4. SOMETIMES] [5. HARDLY EVER]

P A S T E   P I N K   S H E E T   H E R E

(HAND R THE PINK SHEET.) Here is another sheet, with three questions for you to answer. Just answer each one by putting an X in one of the boxes.

PINK SHEET:

H14. HAVE YOU EVER WISHED YOU HAD MARRIED SOMEONE ELSE?

[1] YES, OFTEN   [2] YES, SOMETIMES   [3] YES, ONCE IN A WHILE

[4] YES, BUT HARDLY EVER   [5] NO, NEVER

H15. HAS THE THOUGHT OF GETTING A DIVORCE EVER CROSSED YOUR MIND?

[1] YES, OFTEN   [2] YES, SOMETIMES   [3] YES, ONCE IN A WHILE

[4] YES, BUT HARDLY EVER   [5] NO, NEVER

H16. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR MARRIAGE? WHICH NUMBER COMES CLOSEST TO HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED YOU FEEL?

[1]—COMPLETELY SATISFIED   [2]   [3]   [4]—NEUTRAL

[5]   [6]   [7]—COMPLETELY DISSATISFIED

H17. INTERVIEWER CHECK POINT -- WAS R'S SPOUSE PRESENT WHEN ANY OF QUESTIONS H6 THROUGH H16 WERE ASKED?

[1. YES, FOR ALL]   [3. YES, FOR SOME]   [5. NO] -- TURN TO PAGE 35, H26

H17a. DID R'S SPOUSE SEE THE PINK CARD?

[1. YES, AND SAW R'S ANSWERS]

[3. YES, BUT DID NOT SEE R'S ANSWERS]

[5. NO, DID NOT SEE THE PINK CARD]

TURN TO PAGE 35, H26

IF R IS DIVORCED OR SEPARATED (ASK FOR MOST RECENT MARRIAGE):

H18. How long have you been (divorced/separated)? ______________

H19. How long were you married and living together? ______________

H20. (HAND R CARD 7, GRAY) Now I have some questions about your marriage before you were (divorced/separated). First, how often did you disagree with your (husband/wife) about how much money to spend on various things -- never, rarely, sometimes, often, or very often?

1. NEVER	2. RARELY	3. SOMETIMES	4. OFTEN	5. VERY OFTEN

H21. How well do you think your (husband/wife) understood you -- your feelings, your likes and dislikes, and any problems you may have had from time to time; do you think that (he/she) understood you very well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?

1. VERY WELL	2. FAIRLY WELL	3. NOT VERY WELL	4. NOT WELL AT ALL

H22. And how well do you think <u>you</u> understood your (wife/husband) -- very well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?

1. VERY WELL	2. FAIRLY WELL	3. NOT VERY WELL	4. NOT WELL AT ALL

H23. How much companionship did you and your (husband/wife) have -- how often did you do things together -- all the time, very often, often, sometimes, or hardly ever?

1. ALL THE TIME	2. VERY OFTEN	3. OFTEN	4. SOMETIMES	5. HARDLY EVER

TURN TO H26

IF R IS WIDOWED:

H24. How long ago did your (husband/wife) die? ______________

H25. How long had you been married? ______________

H26. INTERVIEWER CHECK POINT -- FROM COVER SHEET LISTING, DOES R HAVE ANY CHILDREN WHO ARE LIVING IN THE SAME DU?

[1. YES] [5. NO]

H26a. Do you have any children who are not living with you here?

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO H27

H26b. How many children do you have altogether? ______

H26c. Do you have any children?

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION J

H26d. How many children do you have? ______

H27. Compared to most children would you say your children have given you <u>a lot</u> of problems, <u>quite a few</u> problems, <u>some</u> problems, <u>only a few</u> problems, or haven't they given you any problems at all?

[1. A LOT] [2. QUITE A FEW] [3. SOME] [4. ONLY A FEW] [5. HAVEN'T GIVEN ANY PROBLEMS]

H28. Would you say that in your case, being a (father/mother) has <u>always</u> been enjoyable; that it has <u>nearly</u> always been enjoyable; that it has <u>usually</u> been enjoyable; that it has <u>sometimes</u> been enjoyable; or that being a (father/mother) has <u>hardly ever</u> been enjoyable?

[1. ALWAYS] [2. NEARLY ALWAYS] [3. USUALLY] [4. SOMETIMES] [5. HARDLY EVER]

H29. Have you ever wished that you could be free from the responsibilities of being a (father/mother)?

[YES] [5. NO] -- TURN TO NEXT PAGE, SECTION J

H29a. Have you felt this way <u>often</u>, or just sometimes?

[1. OFTEN] [3. SOMETIMES]

SECTION J

J1. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) All things considered, how satisfied are you with your family life -- the time you spend and the things you do with members of your family? *Which number comes closest to how you feel?*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

P A S T E B L U E S H E E T H E R E

J2. (GIVE R BLUE SHEET) Here is a list of some of the things we have been talking about. Most of these things are important to all of us, but each person feels that some of these things are more important than others, and what one person considers most important, someone else may think is less important.

At the top of the list is a scale with numbers from 1 through 5, where 1 means "Extremely important" and 5 means "Not at all important." Think about each thing on the list and write in the number from the scale to show how important that thing really is to you. WHEN R RETURNS SHEET, CHECK THAT R ANSWERED EACH ITEM. THEN RETURN SHEET TO R AND ASK:

Now would you look back over this list and tell me which two things are most important of all to you personally. Just give me the letters of the two most important things.

A. A HOUSE OR APARTMENT THAT YOU LIKE TO LIVE IN

B. A CITY OR PLACE WHERE YOU LIKE TO LIVE

C. A GOOD COUNTRY TO LIVE IN: A COUNTRY WITH A GOOD GOVERNMENT

D. AN INTERESTING JOB

E. A LARGE BANK ACCOUNT, SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MONEY

F. THINGS YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT WORKING -- HOBBIES, AND THINGS LIKE THAT

G. ORGANIZATIONS YOU WANT TO BELONG TO

H. A HAPPY MARRIAGE

I. A GOOD FAMILY LIFE -- HAVING FAMILY MEMBERS YOU CAN ENJOY BEING WITH

J. HAVING GOOD FRIENDS, AND THE RIGHT NUMBER OF FRIENDS

K. BEING IN GOOD HEALTH AND IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION

L. HAVING A STRONG RELIGIOUS FAITH

P A S T E   G R E E N   S H E E T   H E R E

J3. Now I am going to show you again the list of areas of life that we have talked about. First I want you to think about the things you like about each area of your life, and how much satisfaction you get from this area of your life. Then I want you to think about the things you dislike about that part of your life, and how much dissatisfaction you get from this area of your life.

(HAND R GREEN SHEET AND POINT OUT THE TWO SIDES AS YOU READ INSTRUCTIONS:) Please write in two numbers for each item, on the lines on both sides of the item--one for how much satisfaction you get from the area, the other for how much dissatisfaction you get.

(INTERVIEWER: IF R HAS TROUBLE WITH THIS QUESTION, GO THROUGH THE EXAMPLE ON THE BACK OF THE GREEN SHEET WITH HIM:) *Here is an example of what I mean. This is what a person who had a pet dog said about pets. He liked the companionship and protection the dog gave him, so he said he got "quite a bit" of satisfaction. But the dog sometimes chewed on his shoes, which he didn't like, so he said that he got "a little" dissatisfaction, also.*

GREEN SHEET ITEMS:

A. YOUR HOUSE OR APARTMENT

B. THE CITY OR PLACE YOU LIVE IN

C. OUR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

D. YOUR WORK

E. YOUR NON-WORKING ACTIVITIES--HOBBIES, AND SO ON

F. YOUR RELIGION

G. ORGANIZATIONS YOU BELONG TO

H. YOUR MARRIAGE

I. YOUR FAMILY LIFE

J. YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

K. YOUR HEALTH AND PHYSICAL CONDITION

L. YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION

WHEN R RETURNS SHEET, CHECK THAT R ANSWERED EACH ITEM FOR BOTH SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION. IF R FEELS THAT SOME ITEMS ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR HIM (E.G., MARRIAGE FOR SINGLE PERSONS), MARK THESE "INAP."

J4. (HAND R CARD 3, WHITE) We have talked about various parts of your life, now I want to ask you about your life as a whole. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? *Which number on the card comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your life as a whole?*

$\boxed{1}$ $\boxed{2}$ $\boxed{3}$ $\boxed{4}$ $\boxed{5}$ $\boxed{6}$ $\boxed{7}$

SECTION K

K1. Now, I have some questions of a different kind. Have you usually felt pretty sure your life would work out the way you want it to, or have there been times when you haven't been sure about it?

[1. PRETTY SURE] [5. HAVEN'T BEEN SURE]

K2. Is there anything about your life these days that makes you feel frightened or worried?

[1. YES] [5. NO] -- GO TO K3

K2a. What kinds of things make you feel frightened or worried?

____

____

____

K3. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

[1. MOST PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED] [5. CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL]

K4. Would you say that most of the time, people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?

[1. TRY TO BE HELPFUL] [5. LOOK OUT FOR THEMSELVES]

K5. Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?

[5. TAKE ADVANTAGE] [1. TRY TO BE FAIR]

K6. Do you think it's better to plan your life a good way ahead, or would you say life is too much a matter of luck to plan ahead very far?

[1. PLAN AHEAD] [5. TOO MUCH LUCK TO PLAN]

K7. When you do make plans ahead, do you usually get to carry things out the way you expected, or do things usually come up to make you change your plans?

[1. THINGS WORK OUT AS EXPECTED] [5. HAVE TO CHANGE PLANS]

K8. Some people feel they can run their lives pretty much the way they want to; others feel the problems of life are sometimes too big for them. Which one are you most like?

1. CAN RUN OWN LIFE | 5. PROBLEMS OF LIFE TOO BIG

K9. Some people have so many problems in their everyday life that they worry they might have a nervous breakdown. Do you ever worry about that?

1. YES | 5. NO

K10. Up to now, have you been able to satisfy most of your ambitions in life or have you had to settle for less than you had hoped for?

1. SATISFIED MOST OF AMBITIONS | 5. HAVE HAD TO SETTLE FOR LESS | OTHER: ____________

GO TO K11

K10a. What are the main things that stood in your way?

____

____

____

K11. Do you think you have had a fair opportunity to make the most of yourself in life, or have you been held back in some ways?

1. HAVE HAD FAIR OPPORTUNITY | 5. HAVE BEEN HELD BACK

TURN TO K12

K11a. How is that? ________________________________

____

____

K12. Compared to other people you know would you say that you have enjoyed your life up to now more than most people, about the same, or less than most people?

[1. MORE] [3. ABOUT THE SAME] [5. LESS]

K13. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days -- would you say you're very happy, pretty happy or not too happy these days?

[1. VERY HAPPY] [3. PRETTY HAPPY] [5. NOT TOO HAPPY]

Now, I am going to read a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. As I read each one, tell me whether the statement is true or false as it applies to you personally.

K14. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

[1. YES, TRUE] [5. NO, FALSE]

K15. No matter who I am talking to, I am always a good listener.

[1. YES, TRUE] [5. NO, FALSE]

K16. On a few occasions I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.

[5. YES, TRUE] [1. NO, FALSE]

K17. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing something.

[5. YES, TRUE] [1. NO, FALSE]

K18. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

[1. YES, TRUE] [5. NO, FALSE]

K19. I sometimes feel resentful when I do not get my way.

[5. YES, TRUE] [1. NO, FALSE]

SECTION L: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Now we would like a little background information.

L1. What is your date of birth? ____________ MONTH ________ DAY ________ YEAR

L2. In what state did you live mostly while you were growing up?

STATE (OR COUNTRY IF NOT U.S.A.): ______________________________

L3. Was that in a large city, a suburb of a large city, a small city, a small town, or in the country?

[1. LARGE CITY] [2. SUBURB] [3. SMALL CITY] [4. SMALL TOWN] [5. COUNTRY]

4. SMALL TOWN — GO TO L4

5. COUNTRY — GO TO L4

L3a. (What city was that?/What city was that a suburb of?)

____

L4. Did you always live with both your mother and father until you were 16 years old? (DON'T COUNT INTERRUPTIONS OF LESS THAN A YEAR.)

[0. YES] -- TURN TO L5 [NO]

L4a. What happened?

[1. MOTHER DIED]

[2. FATHER DIED]

[3. SEPARATION, FATHER LEFT THE HOME]

[4. SEPARATION, MOTHER LEFT THE HOME]

[5. DIVORCE, FATHER LEFT THE HOME]

[6. DIVORCE, MOTHER LEFT THE HOME]

[7. RESPONDENT LEFT HOME]

[8. OTHER, SPECIFY: ______________________________]

L4b. How old were you when that (first) happened? __________ YEARS OLD

L5. In what state or country was your father born? (IF R DOES NOT KNOW FATHER, ASK ABOUT MALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD WHEN R WAS GROWING UP, IF ANY)

STATE (OR COUNTRY IF NOT U.S.A.): ______________________

IF NOT R'S FATHER, SPECIFY RELATION TO R: ______________

L6. Where was your mother born?

STATE (OR COUNTRY IF NOT U.S.A.): ______________________

IF NOT BLACK:

L7. How many of your grandparents were born in the United States?

0. NONE | 1. ONE | 2. TWO | 3. THREE | 4. ALL FOUR

L7a. Aside from being American, what nationality do you think of your family being mainly? ______________

ASK L8–L9 ABOUT R'S FATHER, OR PERSON SPECIFIED IN L5, OR MOTHER IF NONE IN L5

L8. What was your father's main occupation while you were growing up -- what sort of work did he do?

____

____

L9. What was the highest grade of school your father completed?

Grade School: 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8

High School: 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 -- HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

College: 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 -- COLLEGE GRADUATE | 17 +

D.K.

L9a. Would you guess that he had less than seven years of school, between seven and twelve years of school, finished high school, or had some schooling past high school?

1. LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS | 2. BETWEEN SEVEN AND TWELVE YEARS

3. FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL | 4. SOME SCHOOLING PAST HIGH SCHOOL

ASK L10 FOR ALL MALE RESPONDENTS; FOR FEMALES GO TO L11

L10. Were you ever in the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines?

1. YES   5. NO -- GO TO L11

L10a. When was that? FROM: ______________ TO: ______________

L10b. What rank did you have at the time of your discharge?

____

L10c. Were you overseas at all?

YES   5. NO -- GO TO L11

L10d. Were you ever in combat during war?

1. YES   3. NO

L11. That is all the questions I have. Is there anything you would like to add to any of the subjects we've discussed? ______________________________

____

____

____

____

INTERVIEWER: CHECK PAGE 3 OF COVER SHEET TO SEE IF YOU SHOULD ASK R FOR TELEPHONE NUMBER.

SECTION M: BY OBSERVATION ONLY

M1. IF ANYONE WAS PRESENT DURING THE INTERVIEW OTHER THAN R AND INTERVIEWER GIVE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS FOR EACH:

		PERSON 1	PERSON 2	PERSON 3
M1a.	Age, approximately			
M1b.	Relationship to R			
M1c.	Present for how much of the interview?			
M1d.	How closely was (s)he listening?	1. CLOSELY 2. CASUALLY 3. HARDLY AT ALL	1. CLOSELY 2. CASUALLY 3. HARDLY AT ALL	1. CLOSELY 2. CASUALLY 3. HARDLY AT ALL
M1e.	Did (s)he make any comments on R's answers?			

M2. R's Race? 1. WHITE 5. BLACK OTHER: ______________ (Specify)

M3. Rate R's physical appearance:

1. STRIKINGLY HANDSOME OR BEAUTIFUL
2. GOOD-LOOKING (ABOVE AVERAGE FOR AGE AND SEX)
3. AVERAGE LOOKS FOR AGE AND SEX
4. QUITE PLAIN (BELOW AVERAGE FOR AGE AND SEX)
5. HOMELY

M4. How tall would you say R was? ________ FEET ________ INCHES

M5. Rate R's apparent intelligence?

1. VERY HIGH 2. ABOVE AVERAGE 3. AVERAGE 4. BELOW AVERAGE 5. VERY LOW

M6. How suspicious did R seem to be about the study, <u>before</u> the interview?

1. NOT AT ALL 3. SOMEWHAT 5. VERY SUSPICIOUS

M7. Overall, how great was R's interest in the interview?

1. VERY HIGH 2. ABOVE AVERAGE 3. AVERAGE 4. BELOW AVERAGE 5. VERY LOW

M8. How sincere did R seem to be in his answers, especially to the ones using the CARD 3?

1. COMPLETELY SINCERE | 2. USUALLY SINCERE | 3. OFTEN SEEMED TO BE INSINCERE

M8a. Were there any particular parts of the interview for which you doubted R's sincerity? If so, name them by section or question numbers: ______________________

____

M9. How clean was the interior of the DU?

1. VERY CLEAN | 2. CLEAN | 3. SO-SO | 4. NOT VERY CLEAN | 5. DIRTY

M10. How much reading material was visible in the DU?

1. A LOT | 2. SOME | 3. NONE

M11. TYPE OF STRUCTURE IN WHICH FAMILY LIVES:

01. TRAILER
02. DETACHED SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE
03. 2-FAMILY HOUSE, 2 UNITS SIDE BY SIDE
04. 2-FAMILY HOUSE, 2 UNITS ONE ABOVE THE OTHER
05. DETACHED 3-4 FAMILY HOUSE
06. ROW HOUSE (3 OR MORE UNITS IN AN ATTACHED ROW)
07. APARTMENT HOUSE (5 OR MORE UNITS, 3 STORIES OR LESS
08. APARTMENT HOUSE (5 OR MORE UNITS, 4 STORIES OR MORE)
09. APARTMENT IN A PARTLY COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE
10. OTHER (SPECIFY) ______________________

M12. NUMBER OF STORIES IN THE STRUCTURE, NOT COUNTING BASEMENT:

1 | 2 | 3 | MORE THAN 3: ______________________ (SPECIFY)

M13. NEIGHBORHOOD: Look at 3 structures on each side of DU but not more than 100 yards or so in both directions and check as many boxes as apply, below.

- 00. VACANT LAND ONLY
- 01. TRAILER
- 02. DETACHED SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE
- 03. 2-FAMILY HOUSE, 2 UNITS SIDE BY SIDE
- 04. 2-FAMILY HOUSE, 2 UNITS ONE ABOVE THE OTHER
- 05. DETACHED 3-4 FAMILY HOUSE
- 06. ROW HOUSE (3 OR MORE UNITS IN AN ATTACHED ROW)
- 07. APARTMENT HOUSE (5 OR MORE UNITS, 3 STORIES OR LESS)
- 08. APARTMENT HOUSE (5 OR MORE UNITS, 4 STORIES OR MORE)
- 09. APARTMENT IN A PARTLY COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE
- 10. WHOLLY COMMERCIAL OR INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE
- 11. PARK
- 12. SCHOOL OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING
- 13. OTHER (Specify) ____________

ANSWER M14 - M16 BOTH FOR THE STRUCTURE IN WHICH R LIVES AND FOR THE STRUCTURES REFERRED TO IN M13; IF LATTER ARE MIXED, ANSWER FOR THE MOST COMMON:

M14. How old do the structures seem to be?	R's STRUCTURE	NEIGHBORHOOD
1. LESS THAN 5 YEARS OLD.	☐	☐
2. 5 TO 25 YEARS OLD.	☐	☐
3. MORE THAN 25 YEARS OLD	☐	☐

M15. How well kept are the structures?	R's STRUCTURE	NEIGHBORHOOD
1. VERY WELL.	☐	☐
2. MIXED -- COULD USE A PAINT JOB	☐	☐
3. POORLY -- NEED PAINTING AND MINOR REPAIRS.	☐	☐
4. VERY POORLY -- DILAPIDATED	☐	☐

M16. How well kept up and cared for are the yards and/or sidewalks in front of the structures?	R's STRUCTURE	NEIGHBORHOOD
1. VERY WELL.	☐	☐
2. FAIRLY WELL.	☐	☐
3. POORLY	☐	☐
4. VERY POORLY.	☐	☐

M17. Did R's estimate of the value of his DU (Page 7, B9), seem out of line to you?

8. INAP -- R DID NOT ANSWER B9

1. SEEMED MUCH TOO HIGH
2. SEEMED A LITTLE TOO HIGH
3. SEEMED ABOUT RIGHT
4. SEEMED A LITTLE TOO LOW
5. SEEMED MUCH TOO LOW

M18. Is this DU located in a public housing project? 1. YES 5. NO

M19. What is the weather like today (the day of this interview)?

1. CLOUDY
2. MOSTLY CLOUDY
3. MOSTLY SUNNY
4. SUNNY

M20. What (is/was) the highest temperature outside today? ______ °F

M21. Where did you take this interview?

1. INSIDE R's DU
2. ON A PORCH OF R's DU
3. IN THE YARD OF R's DU

OTHER (SPECIFY) ________________________________

M22. How comfortable was the temperature and humidity in the place where you took the interview?

1. VERY COMFORTABLE
2. FAIRLY COMFORTABLE
3. SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE
4. VERY UNCOMFORTABLE

M23. THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Anything else about the respondent, the interview situation, the house, or the neighborhood that seems important.

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