



Rural Montanans attitudes toward child rearing education, social life and recreation  
by Donna Rogers Herdina

Montana State University  
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Abstract:

Attitudes toward child rearing, education, social life and recreation were investigated in a random sample of rural Montanans. Respondents were 134 males and 198 females age 18 or older who lived in 12 randomly selected counties, representing all six geographic regions of the state. The survey instrument included data related to the above elements and to personal background information.

Males, those who were older, Protestants, those with larger numbers of children, and those with less extensive education appeared to be more authoritarian in their child rearing attitudes. Mean scores for the sample revealed generally positive attitudes toward education; no personal variables significantly effected this finding. Income and level of education were found to have a significant influence on social satisfaction. Social interaction was significantly effected by sex, marital status, church attendance, number of children, and children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home.

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Date May 28, 1976

RURAL MONTANANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CHILD REARING  
EDUCATION, SOCIAL LIFE AND RECREATION

by

DONNA ROGERS HERDINA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Home Economics

Approved:

Robert W. Lind  
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Mary Dee Kewer  
Head, Major Department

Henry L. Persons  
Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

June, 1976

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

For his professional competency, willingness to freely give of his time, and moral support, I feel very indebted to my Committee Chairman, Dr. Robert W. Lind. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Marjorie B. Keiser, Director of Home Economics, Dr. Howard Busching, and Dr. John Schneider for their helpful assistance on the Graduate Committee.

Enough appreciation cannot be extended to my husband for his love, patience, and encouragement during the past months of preparation. My accomplishments, to a large extent, are due to his support.

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## ABSTRACT

Attitudes toward child rearing, education, social life and recreation were investigated in a random sample of rural Montanans. Respondents were 134 males and 198 females age 18 or older who lived in 12 randomly selected counties, representing all six geographic regions of the state. The survey instrument included data related to the above elements and to personal background information.

Males, those who were older, Protestants, those with larger numbers of children, and those with less extensive education appeared to be more authoritarian in their child rearing attitudes. Mean scores for the sample revealed generally positive attitudes toward education; no personal variables significantly effected this finding. Income and level of education were found to have a significant influence on social satisfaction. Social interaction was significantly effected by sex, marital status, church attendance, number of children, and children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The family as the basic social unit of our society is the institution in which the earliest social and psychological development of the child occurs (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957; Photiadis, 1964; Salk & Kramer, 1969; Schlater, 1970; Kelley, 1974). It has been stated that the child learns in his early years, patterns of behavior and emotional response that will be his for the rest of his life (Kelley, 1974). In other words, the kind of home in which the child receives training in these early years will determine in large part the kind of individual he will become.

In the past, beliefs concerning child rearing have usually had a strong parental orientation; parents reared their children according to their own needs and values as parents (Miller & Swanson, 1968). Rapidly occurring social change, however, is resulting in a transition in child care (Photiadis, 1964; Ritchie & Koller, 1964; Miller & Swanson, 1968; LeMasters, 1970). Working mothers, for example, may have to rely on persons outside of the family for help in caring for the child. The child, as a result, becomes subjected to a set of values different from those of his parents. Pre-schools and/or day care centers introduce the child to different parent models with different values. Social organizations in the community (church,

school organizations, etc.) may also influence the child's socialization. Due to technological advances parents may have more time to involve themselves in leisure and social activities; thereby acquainting their children with a variety of circumstances.

Rural and urban people alike are being effected by the social changes going on in the United States (Ritchie & Koller, 1964). According to LeMasters (1970), however, rural parents are in a more difficult position than urban parents. Farm children are being subjected more and more to urban values and the urban way of life, increasing social distance between them and their parents. Many farm parents are having to prepare their children for a more urban world; a world they really do not understand themselves. Kelley (1974) stated:

The basic economic unity and interdependence characteristic of the traditional farm family no longer hold family members together. School, church, and community, together with economic factors, peer groups, television and mass media, and recreational activities, pull the family in many different directions (p. 536).

Economic, technological, and population changes taking place in rural America may offer an explanation. It has been stated that "Only the well-educated, well-financed farm youth can hope to survive in the agricultural world of tomorrow (LeMasters, 1970, p. 201)." Rising costs of land and machinery have made it very difficult for people to engage themselves in agriculture. The mechanization of

the farm has also been a factor in the decline of the American population engaged in agriculture (LeMasters, 1970). Parents rearing their children on a farm may realize the hardships their children could face if they were to follow in their parents' footsteps. Raising children according to parents' own needs and values may not necessarily prepare children for a kind of life different from their own. A population shift is also taking place. In 1974, more people moved to rural areas than moved out (Rodale, 1975). This does not mean that people are moving to the farm, but it does mean they are moving to more sparsely populated areas. The impact of greater numbers of people all with different values and life styles may have an effect on the rural family.

A significant portion of Americans live in rural settings even though there has been a decline in the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture. Nationwide, 20 per cent of the population live in such areas; in Montana 46 per cent (323,733) of the total population has been reported as being rural (Johnson, 1974). Little research, however, has been done involving rural family life styles, particularly in the rural west. If the changes taking place in rural America are effecting the family it seems essential that we learn what these effects are and the attitudes of those involved.

It is important that we try to isolate individuals' attitudes regarding family life. Only when the problem areas are identified can help be given to deal more effectively with our changing social system. In the coming decades, many issues of concern to individuals and families will require new knowledge about the interrelationships between man and his physical and social environment (Schlater, 1970).

It seems that the availability and quality of education and social and recreational resources would help to enrich family life. It is necessary to discover what people believe about education and about their social and recreational life before we can assess their needs with any degree of accuracy.

If outside social forces have an effect on the family, altering basic goals and values, the child will also be effected.

Children in today's America grow up without the comfort and support of a single, unified, and consistent value system. . . . Any problem which faces the child may be solved differently by his peers, by his parents, and by his teachers, to name just three. . . . This situation puts great importance on our need to know. . . . how community life affects family life and family life affects community life (Kerckoff, 1961, p. 9).

#### Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and

recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

### Hypotheses

The following specific hypotheses were chosen for the study:

1. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward:
  - a. education
  - b. social life and recreation
2. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and the personal variables of:
  - a. sex
  - b. age
  - c. marital status
  - d. income
  - e. religion
  - f. church attendance
  - g. number of children
  - h. children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home
  - i. children 18 and over living in the home
  - j. level of education
3. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and attitudes toward social life and recreation.
4. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and the personal variables of:
  - a. sex
  - b. age
  - c. marital status
  - d. income
  - e. religion
  - f. church attendance
  - g. number of children

- h. children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home
  - i. children 18 and over living in the home
  - j. level of education
5. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward social life and recreation and the personal variables of:
- a. sex
  - b. age
  - c. marital status
  - d. income
  - e. religion
  - f. church attendance
  - g. number of children
  - h. children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home
  - i. children 18 and over living in the home
  - j. level of education

#### Definitions

For the purposes of this study the following definitions were used:

Rural: Farm and non-farm communities with a population of less than 2,500 people (Gould & Kolb, 1964).

Attitudes toward child rearing: The expression of values and beliefs in relation to the caretaking of children. These expressions were referred to as either authoritarian (traditional) or democratic (equalitarian).

Authoritarian: The expression of an attitude which views parents primarily as authority figures in the child rearing relationship.

Traditional: The term will be used interchangeably with authoritarian.

Democratic: The expression of an attitude which views children as equals in their rights and responsibilities as family members.

**Equalitarian:** The term will be used interchangeably with democratic.

**Attitudes toward education:** The expression of feelings in relation to the effects education has upon one's life. These expressions range from the positive effects possessing an education has upon leisure time and economic opportunity to conflict between education and work.

**Attitudes toward social life and recreation:** The expression of feelings with regard to social interaction and social satisfaction.

**Social interaction:** The involvement of the respondent with relatives, friends, and neighbors living in the community.

**Social satisfaction:** The expression of an attitude involving general friendliness of the community, a sense of belongingness, and overall tone of family life.

**Age:** Each respondent was placed in one of six age groups: under 21, 21-28, 29-35, 36-50, 51-65, over 65.

**Marital status:** Levels of response referred to whether the participant had never married, was presently married, divorced, or widowed.

**Income:** Response levels categorized income as follows: over \$25,000, \$20,000-\$24,999, \$15,000-\$19,999, \$10,000-\$14,999, \$7,000-\$9,999, \$5,000-\$6,999, \$3,000-\$4,999, and under \$3,000.

**Religion:** The four response levels included Roman Catholic, Protestant, another religion, and no religious preference.

**Church attendance:** Responses comprised four categories: three or more times per month, once or twice per month, a few times per year, and never.

**Number of children:** This variable refers to the total number of children each respondent had.

**Children between the ages of 0-17:** The number of children of this age group presently living in the home.

**Children 18 and over:** The number of children of this age group presently living in the home.

Level of education: Categories for educational attainment are as follows: less than eighth grade, completed eighth grade, completed high school, attended college, completed bachelors degree, college beyond bachelors degree, masters degree, doctors degree, finished business college, and finished trade school.

### Limitations and Delimitations

This study focuses on only a small portion of the total study titled "Rural Family Life Styles in Montana." The total survey deals with housing and homemaking, marital roles, marital communication, family planning and sex knowledge, child rearing, nutrition knowledge, consumer knowledge, education, and social life and recreation. The number of questions, therefore, pertaining to each of the areas are delimited.

The study is limited by two factors: sample size and previous research. Sample size prohibits the use of direct observation which places limitations on the type of data that can be derived. Minimal research pertaining to rural family life styles in the west limits the amount of information from which to build.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

#### History of Child Rearing Practices

. . . a study of child-rearing ideas of the past. . . can help to make us aware of the precedents which remain dynamically related to our own work in the upbringing and education of children (Sunley, 1955, p. 151).

#### Early Attitudes Toward Children

It is difficult to imagine that in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist. That is to say, a child was not distinguished from an adult (Thompson, 1952; Aries, 1962; Kessen, 1965; Lefrancois, 1973). The infant was, in effect, regarded as a miniature adult. He differed from adults only quantitatively (Lefrancois, 1973). Since the infant was too small and fragile to take part in adult activities, he simply didn't count (Aries, 1962).

That children were viewed in this manner is one of the reasons there are so few accounts of child rearing practices in earlier times.

According to Lefrancois (1973), there are two other possible explanations. One is that animals of a lower phylum were easier to understand and therefore much easier to study. Another is the place a child held in the affection of adults. Children were not necessarily loved or wanted and if they were wanted, it may have been only for economic reasons. It is easier to understand this lack of love and affection when it is remembered that a child was regarded as an ill-formed adult, incapable of carrying out adult activities.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, a new concept of childhood appeared. A child became the symbol of sweetness and simplicity; for the adult, a source of relaxation and amusement (Aries, 1962). It is interesting to note that this concept was most popular among women, even though the entire responsibility for the care of the child rested with them. In spite of the changing attitude toward children on the part of many, the child was still absorbed into the world of adults between the age of five and seven.

At the same time, men of the church came to regard children as "fragile creatures of God who needed to be both safeguarded and reformed (Aries, 1962, p. 133)." Later in the seventeenth century, as this idea became more prevalent, so also did interest in education and the concept of a long childhood. Although the literature reviewed is inconclusive, it may be attributable, at least in part, to the sex

difference in parents and to changing social attitudes toward education in general.

### Early Child Rearing Practices

Kessen (1965) stated that before 1750 the odds were three to one against a child completing five years of life. This may have been due partly to a lack of information regarding children's needs, inadequate nutrition, and less than adequate medical skills. As reported by Kessen (1965), not until late in Western history were there any experts in child care. Many parents relied on the midwife and the teacher for advice.

According to Rogers (1969), during the period between 1550 and 1750, European parents became somewhat permissive in their child rearing practices. This varied somewhat according to geographic, religious, and socio-economic factors, but generally speaking, a wave of permissiveness in child care was reported to have appeared.

In North America, on the other hand, the colonial family was reported to have been very stern and subjective in their attitudes regarding children (Queen & Habenstein, 1967). In some households children were not allowed to sit during mealtime. They ate whatever was handed them and were taught it was sinful to complain.

Many believed the child was born with perverse tendencies (Queen & Habenstein, 1967; Rogers, 1969; Thompson, 1952). In order

to break down these undesirable qualities, severe and inflexible disciplinary methods were used. Discipline was not only the responsibility of the home, but of the school and state as well. Stern laws were enacted to enforce strict obedience. A Connecticut statute, for example, decreed that: if a rebellious son sixteen years or older did not obey his parents or heed their punishment, he could be brought before the magistrates assembled in court, and be put to death (Trumbull, 1876, pp. 69-70).

This stern code of discipline was thought to be associated with current religious beliefs and to reflect the difficult conditions under which these people lived. The usual pattern of family life was patriarchal, making the support and conduct of family members the responsibility of the male head of the house. The woman, on the other hand, was also responsible for a wide range of activities. It was her duty to tend to the children as well as help till the soil. Most of the time was spent doing chores, so there was little time for social life or recreation for any family members, even for the children. Boys, however, were permitted to go to school (Queen & Habenstein, 1967).

The colonial period seems to have been a time of masculine dominance. Families were viewed essentially as economic institutions (Queen & Habenstein, 1967). It appears that these two factors, along with a lack of social life, largely accounted for the strongly

authoritarian view of child rearing in this period of our history. According to Rogers (1969) this attitude prevailed from the colonial period up to the beginning of the twentieth century.

A marked interest in children and in child rearing problems developed during the nineteenth century. According to Sunley (1955), this interest was brought about by several reasons. First of all, a rapid rise of industry was taking place. This shift was disrupting not only established patterns of living, but patterns of child rearing as well. Along with increasing industrialization came the growing belief in the power of man to control his environment. Man was becoming capable of directing the future and became more conscious of his ability to mold his children. Finally, an increased emphasis was being placed on the child as an extension of his parents' ambitions.

As man came to realize the control he had over himself and his environment, the concept of character development became even more important. Since it was the mother who was considered the principal person in forming character, her role became paramount (Sunley, 1955). By mid-nineteenth century, the father played only a small part in the upbringing of his children. According to the literature, the father's responsibility rested almost solely with the administering of corporal punishment, if and when it was considered necessary.

Due to the many changes taking place in the social system between 1850 and 1900, a substantial amount of literature appeared on the subject of child rearing. In this literature three general theories seemed to prevail. One prescribed that parents should enforce absolute obedience. This would break the child's will and help free him "from the hold of his evil nature (Sunley, 1955, p. 163)." Dwight, writing in 1834, stated: "No child has ever been known since the earliest period of the world, destitute of an evil disposition -- however sweet it appears (p. 31)." Another theory advocated the idea of children becoming "strong, vigorous, unspoiled men, like those in the early days of the country (Sunley, 1955, p. 161)." A third theory endorsed gentle treatment of the child, making corporal punishment undesirable as a means of disciplining children. Advocates of this theory recommended that understanding and justice be used by parents in rearing their children.

Even though the literature of the times expressed varied feelings concerning child rearing practices, it was not until the latter half of the 1930-1940 decade that a great deal of attention was given to permissive procedures (Stendler, 1973; Rogers, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1970). It has been reported that two-thirds of the articles written on child rearing promoted the idea of parental permissiveness (Winch, 1952). Baby and Child Care by Spock (1946) became very popular. In it, Spock advised parents to act according

to instinct. Whatever the parents felt was best would probably be best for the child (Stendler, 1973; Rogers, 1969).

The concept of permissiveness did not hold a dominant place very long. The fifties and sixties brought a new mode of thought and action which affected peoples' lives all over the world. With it came many transitions in personal goals and values and consequently, a new and yet unclear trend in child rearing (Rogers, 1969). Child care once again became a blend of conflicting theories.

Today, many adhere to the democratic way of rearing children. ". . . that is, that parents probably know best in many things, but children know something, too (Papalia & Olds, 1975, p. 377)."

### Child Rearing Studies

Little research has been done in the rural west, especially with respect to the family. Research which has been done has dealt primarily with agriculture. Since the rural family has been given little attention, it has been difficult to identify as a variable in many of the studies dealing with child rearing.

### Rural

Researchers conducting a study on family social interaction in rural Michigan (Michigan State University Experiment Station, 1957) found that family members spent little time together, with very

few activities being shared in the home. In general, mothers spent more time with their children than did fathers. These findings were not correlated, however, with specific child rearing attitudes.

Extensive interviews of urban, suburban, and farm wives living in Michigan comprised the population for a study by Blood and Wolfe (1960). The results tended to indicate very little difference in child rearing problems from city to country.

Wilson and Sperry (1961) conducted a study which dealt with child rearing techniques of rural mothers. Significant relationships to techniques of guidance were found to exist on the basis of the mother's age and level of education. The use of affection by the mothers as a guidance technique tended to decrease as her age increased. The demonstration of affection also decreased as the mother's level of education increased.

#### Non-Rural

Several studies, though not dealing with a rural population, have been found which indicate a number of personal variables to be directly related to child rearing attitudes. Among these variables is socio-economic status (SES) or social class, which has been given considerable attention in its relationship to child rearing attitudes and techniques. Social class becomes relevant when broken into its major component parts: income and level of education, both of which are variables in the present study.

Havighurst and Davis (1955) compared major studies done at Harvard and in Chicago and found that there were differences in child rearing practices based upon social class. On the basis of social class, middle class parents appeared to have higher educational expectations of their children than did lower class parents.

Jordan (1970), examining the influence of age and social class on authoritarian family ideology, found less authoritarianism for the higher social classes. Permissiveness increased as age increased, indicating a higher degree of permissiveness on the part of the older.

Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) also found differences in child rearing practices between the social classes. Working class mothers seemed to use more rigid disciplinary techniques with their children than did middle class mothers. The researchers attributed this difference not only to social class but to the number of children each family had. They suggested the possibility that "if we compared working-class families who had a certain number of children with middle-class families having the same number, there would be little or no difference between them in their child-training methods (p. 435)." Findings were the same whether mothers were compared on the basis of their educational attainment or on the basis of their SES. An explanation for this finding may lie partly in the fact that level of education often comprises a large part of SES.

The relationship between SES and a mother's behavior toward children was analyzed in the Berkeley Growth Study (Bayley & Schaefer, 1960). Findings indicated only a slight increase of warmth, understanding, and acceptance toward children as SES of mothers rose. Although mothers of a lower status tended to be slightly more punitive and controlling, the differences in behavior were much more evident for those mothers having sons than for those having daughters. According to Bronfenbrenner (1972), parental behaviors differentiated by sex of the child are pronounced only in the lower middle class. As the SES of a family rises, both parents tend to relate to sons and daughters similarly.

It seems important to note at this point that child rearing attitudes in relation to the sex of the child are not important to the present study. It appears, however, to be one of two factors that could in part be responsible for differences in child rearing which are often attributed to social class alone. Historically, families of lower SES have had more children than those of the middle class (Sears, et al., 1957). According to Clausen (1966), "The size of a group markedly influences the patterning of interactions and relationships among members (p. 9)." As a family increases in size, explicit rules concerning duties, responsibilities, and behavior become more characteristic. Leadership becomes increasingly centralized. It seems that an increase in family size would also

increase the likelihood of varied sex composition. According to Elder (1962), the sex composition of a large family might in itself dictate or control the amount of parental dominance exercised.

Bartow (1962) also examined family size in relation to child rearing practices and found no significant relationship between them. The differences in findings between Elder and Bartow might be partly accounted for by sample composition. Elder's study was based on adolescents' perceptions of their parents, while Bartow's dealt directly with parents.

A program of research on adolescence at the University of North Carolina (Elder, 1962) displayed only slight evidence that lower class parents were more dominant than middle class parents. Significant relationships to child rearing practices were found to exist on the basis of family size, level of education, sex, and religion. Parents of a larger family were viewed as being more authoritarian than those of a small family. An equalitarian attitude seemed to be most characteristic of those parents having completed one or more years of college. Parents with a ninth grade education or less, however, were perceived as being authoritarian. Mothers were more likely to be permissive or equalitarian in the child rearing relationship than fathers. Fathers most often were perceived as being the dominant figure. The results suggested a tendency of Catholic fathers to increase their control and restrictiveness

as their children became older. Among Protestant fathers, the tendency reversed.

As pointed out by the studies previously cited, there is some evidence that social class is at least partly responsible for differences in child rearing. According to Bronfenbrenner (1961), however, ". . . the gap between the social classes in their goals and methods of child rearing appears to be narrowing. . .(p. 6)."

By and large, parents of the working class are assuming not only social and economic values similar to the middle class, but also similar child rearing techniques.

Anders (1968) found the less educated more likely to express a punitive attitude toward child rearing. Findings also indicated women to be more permissive in child rearing attitudes than men. Although Anders' study dealt with three religio-ethnic groups (Anglo-Saxon Protestant, Negro-Protestant, and French Catholic), the findings are similar to those of Elder (1962).

An examination of data cited by Bronson, Katten, and Livson (1959) points to a somewhat different finding with regard to parental role differentiation. According to these researchers, the father is becoming increasingly more affectionate and less authoritarian in the child rearing relationship, while the mother's role as disciplinarian is increasing. In an analysis of childcare attitudes of two generations of mothers (Cohler, Grunebaum, Weiss, & Moran,

1971), there did not appear to be a significant difference between the attitudes of the older and younger mothers. Findings seemed to be directly related to the comparative constancy in the society's value system.

The review of the literature has revealed a considerable amount of material dealing with child rearing. At the same time, it has revealed that writings relating this topic to rural Montanans or to rural Americans anywhere are virtually non-existent. The review of literature has served to confirm the need for a study of child rearing in a rural population.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

#### Sampling Procedure

The present study focuses on a portion of a larger project, titled "Rural Family Life Styles in Montana." Following is a description of procedures employed relating to the entire project, including the portions which are the subject of this study.

Boundaries suggested by the Montana Cooperative Extension Service divide the state of Montana into six districts. These districts are not based upon population, but represent relatively equal amounts of land area. To insure representation of each geographic sector in the state, two counties were randomly selected from each of the six districts.

Communities within the selected counties were randomly chosen and persons from those communities were selected at random to be

invited to participate in the study. By this process 60 from each county, or 720 in all, were asked to take part in the study.

### Method of Collecting Data

#### Communication

To encourage a better rate of participation in the study, a news release about the project appeared in virtually all of Montana's daily and weekly newspapers. A letter, explaining the purpose and sponsorship of the project, was then sent to the potential participants, asking for their cooperation. An acceptance form and return envelope were enclosed with each letter. Those individuals who agreed to participate in the study were sent a survey booklet. Some time later, a follow-up reminder was sent to those who had not responded.

#### Instruments

Since the plan for the total project called for all the data to be collected at one time, the test instruments for each phase of the study were compiled and bound into a survey instrument booklet. This task was completed prior to the present investigator's involvement in the project.

Whenever possible, scales authenticated by previous research were used. It was necessary in certain cases, however, to devise an instrument which would more adequately suit the purposes of this

investigation. In such cases, appropriate resource persons at Montana State University were consulted. The instruments were then pretested with students for content validity. Copies of the instruments employed in those portions of the study which are the subject of the present report are contained in the appendix.

In order to gather information with regard to the respondent's background, a general information section was devised. From this section, the following variables were used: sex, age, marital status, income, religion, church attendance, number of children, children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, children 18 and over living in the home, and level of education.

The portion of the survey instrument dealing with child rearing provided an index to parental style. It was adapted from "A Survey of Opinions Regarding the Discipline of Children" developed by Itkin in 1952. Reliability of Itkin's scale was estimated by the split-half method to be .95. According to Shaw and Wright (1967), validity was determined by item analysis data and the correlation between attitude scores and self-ratings of parents; the correlation was .26.

Attitudes toward education were determined by the use of a scale developed by Rundquist and Sletto in 1936. The items are broad in content, ranging from the effects of possessing an education upon one's leisure time and upon economic opportunity to conflict between education and work (Shaw & Wright, 1967). Split-half reliabilities

of .82 and .83 have been reported as well as test-retest reliabilities of .84 and .85. According to Shaw and Wright (1967), the scale has good content validity for measuring attitudes toward a high school education. It is somewhat restricted, however, in measuring attitudes toward a college education.

The instrument dealing with social life and recreation was constructed by the project leader and his graduate assistant. Questions primarily dealt with the respondents' interactions with relatives, friends, and neighbors living in the community.

#### Analysis of Data

Items on the attitude scale of child rearing were scored in such a way that higher scores reflected authoritarian attitudes toward child rearing, while lower scores represented the more permissive or equalitarian attitudes. With the highest possible value being three points for each question, the highest score that could be obtained was 60.

Higher scores on the attitude scale of education indicated a positive attitude toward the effects of possessing an education, while low scores were indicative of a negative attitude. The scale was composed of 22 items, which when scored could produce a possible score of 66.

The 20-item social life and recreation scale could provide a possible value of 81. Higher scores indicated less social interaction and satisfaction with one's social life, while lower scores reflected greater amounts of interaction and satisfaction.

Data derived from items concerning personal background information and the various scales were coded and transferred to electronic data processing equipment at Montana State University Computing Center. The primary statistic employed in the analysis of data was the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

#### Description of Sample

A total of 720 persons, each chosen at random, were invited to participate in the study. Of the 479 who confirmed their desire to participate, 332 (46.1%) actually completed and returned the survey booklets (Johnson, 1974).

Table 1 provides a description of the sample. The 332 individuals who agreed to participate in the study were predominantly female (59.6%). The sample leaned toward middle age, with the median being in the 36 to 50 age group. Only 18.2 per cent of the sample represented the under 21 to 28 age group.

Nearly seven-eighths of the respondents (84.6%) were married. Family size, with regard to number of children, ranged from zero to ten. In general, families were not large; 2.5 was the mean number of children. One might have expected families to be larger in a

TABLE 1  
Description of Sample

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
Sex			Number of Children		
Male	134	40.4	None	52	15.7
Female	198	59.6	One	43	13.0
*Age			Two	78	23.5
Under 21	12	3.6	Three	68	20.5
21-28	48	14.6	Four	41	12.3
29-35	48	14.6	Five	31	9.3
36-50	91	27.7	Six	12	3.6
51-65	102	31.0	Seven or more	7	2.1
Over 65	28	8.5	One or more children living at home		
Marital Status			Age 0-17	167	50.3
Never married	23	6.9	Age 18 +	55	16.6
Married	281	84.6	Educational Level		
Divorced	5	1.5	8th grade or less	18	5.4
Widowed	23	6.9	Attended high school	45	13.6
*Income			Completed high school	89	26.8
Over \$25,000	45	14.9	Attended college	85	25.6
20,000-24,999	11	3.6	Completed bachelor degree	40	12.0
15,000-19,999	34	11.2	College beyond bachelor degree	14	4.2
10,000-14,999	74	24.4	Masters degree	7	2.1
7,000-9,999	59	19.5	Doctors degree	3	.9
5,000-6,999	32	10.6	Finished busi- ness college	10	3.0
3,000-4,999	22	7.3	Finished trade school	21	6.3
Under 3,000	26	8.6			
*Religion					
Roman Catholic	57	17.5			
Protestant	243	74.5			
Other	6	1.8			
No religion	20	6.1			
*Church Attendance					
Three or more times per month	126	38.0			
Once or twice per month	52	15.7			
A few times per year	98	29.5			
Never attend	47	14.2			

\*Totals of these categories do not equal 332 because of participants not responding. Percentages are based on the number of respondents, not the total sample number.

rural area, since children in the past have been necessary for farm production. There appears, however, to be a trend toward smaller family size with over half of the sample (52.2%) having two children or less.

The table reveals over half of the respondents (54.1%) having some education beyond high school. Persons of this sample were slightly ahead of the average for Montana of 12.2 years of schooling (1970 Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1973).

#### Examination of Data

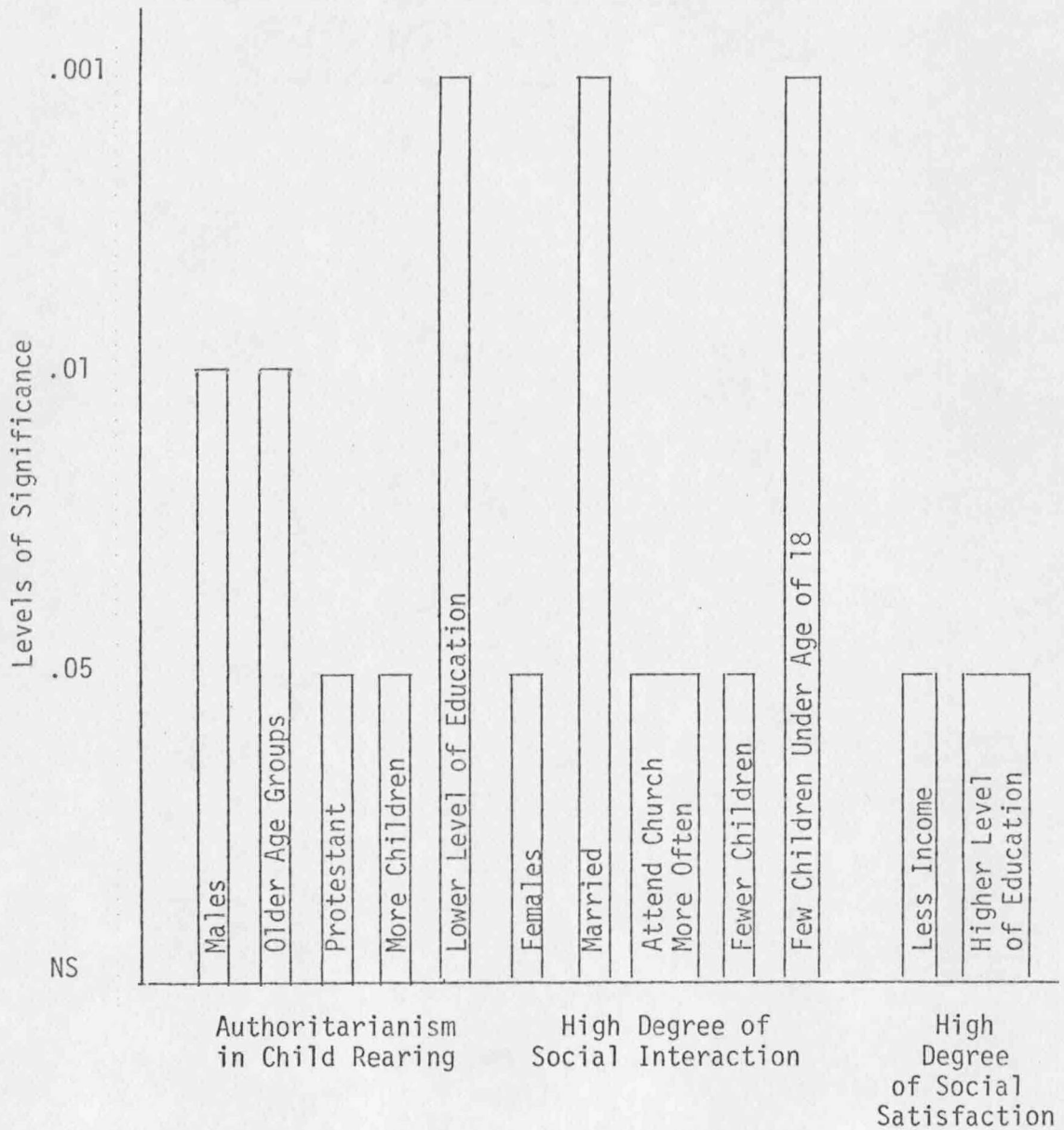
Total scores on the child rearing scale, the education attitude scale, and the social life and recreation scale were tested against each other by means of a correlation matrix (see Table 2). It was then possible to determine significant relationships among the various attitudes. Total scores on each of the three scales were also correlated with ten personal variables: sex, age, marital status, income, religion, church attendance, number of children, children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, those 18 and over living in the home, and educational level (see Table 3). Childrens' ages were divided into two groups since those between 0-17 are generally school age or younger and perhaps more dependent on family resources than those who are in the young adult group (18 and over). Data were analyzed by means of the Pearson product-moment coefficient

TABLE 2  
Correlation Matrix

	Child Rearing	Education	Social Interaction	Social Satisfaction
Child Rearing	----			
Education	.001	----		
Social Interaction	NS	NS	----	
Social Satisfaction	.003	NS	.001	----

TABLE 3

Correlation of Personal Variables



of correlation. The .05 level was set as the criterion for determination of significant relationships.

### Child Rearing Attitudes

Higher scores on child rearing indicated a more authoritarian, traditional attitude in relation to care and discipline. In other words, the parent was regarded primarily as an authority figure in the child rearing relationship. Lower scores indicated more of a democratic, equalitarian attitude; children were regarded as equals in their rights and responsibilities as members of the family. Scores ranged from 25 to 55; the highest score that could be attained was 60. The mean, median, and mode were 38, indicating almost an equilibrium between authoritarian and democratic attitudes.

Hypothesis 1 stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward (a) education and (b) social life and recreation. The testing supported hypothesis 1.

A positive relationship was found to exist between traditional child rearing attitudes and a positive outlook toward education (see Table 2, page 30). One might view such an attitude toward education as being more progressive or liberal. If so, it does not seem likely that those leaning toward traditionalism in rearing their children would tend to be more liberal with regard to their children's

education. An association has been found to exist between authoritarian child rearing attitudes and generally conservative parents (Boshier & Izard, 1972).

Total child rearing score was the only correlation which produced a significant result in its relationship to total education score. An examination of Table 3 (page 31), however, indicates a positive relationship between number of children and child rearing score. As the tendency for larger families increased, so did the tendency for traditional views regarding child rearing. Those families having more children may recognize an economic necessity for education. Farming and ranching is the chief occupation of many of these people (Lind, 1975). Several children may have greater difficulty in prospering from the land in years to come than one or two. Realizing this, parents with a larger number of children may look more positively on the side of education.

A greater amount of social satisfaction was significantly related to a democratic or equalitarian attitude regarding child rearing. The characteristics of those individuals displaying a democratic child rearing attitude may aid in interpreting this finding. Those in the lower age groups tended to score lower on child rearing, as did those with fewer children, and those having attained a higher level of education. Those having fewer children also tended to be more actively involved in the community. Involvement in the community

perhaps has more to do with social satisfaction than any one of the other variables. Level of education has a significant negative correlation with both total child rearing score and social satisfaction score. In other words, as child rearing attitude becomes more democratic, level of education increases; as social satisfaction increases, so does level of education. It seems that those persons who tend to be more relaxed with regard to child rearing practices may also tend to enjoy and be more satisfied with their social lives.

Hypothesis 2 stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. Hypothesis 2 a, b, e, g, and j were confirmed by the data; hypothesis 2 c, d, f, h, and i were rejected.

Sex. Males tended to be more authoritarian (traditional) in their attitudes toward child rearing than females (see Table 3, page 31). According to Photiadis (1964), this has been more or less a distinct characteristic of the rural family. Typically, family decision making and authority have rested with the male head of the household. Although this and other characteristics of rural living

may be beginning to disappear in some areas (Photiadis, 1964), it does not seem to be the case in this Montana sample.

Montana is geographically isolated from any of the major population centers. It is also one of the most sparsely populated, per square mile, while being the fourth largest in geographic space. Although news media and communication systems may have an effect on the attitudes and beliefs of rural residents, it seems that the relative isolation which characterizes daily life may have an even greater effect. If so, the isolation of these families may play a significant part in the traditionalism of attitudes regarding child rearing.

The results of a study by Anders (1968), although non-rural in scope, seem to support those of the present study. Anders sampled three distinct religio-ethnic groups: Anglo-Saxon Protestant, Negro-Protestant, and French-Catholic. The male, in each of these groups, appeared to be the dominant figure of authority in the child rearing relationship. Traditionally, each of these religio-ethnic groups have been male oriented. Tradition may play an important role in many rural Montanans' lives, as indicated by the way in which their responses compare to those of the Anders' study.

Elder (1962) shows similar findings in a non-rural study dealing with adolescents' perceptions of their parents. The adolescents

reported their mothers to be more permissive or equalitarian and their fathers to be more dominant with regard to child rearing.

Results from a non-rural study involving patterns of authority and affection by Bronson, Katten, and Livson (1959) have shown that the relative position of the father and mother is shifting. The father was seen as becoming more affectionate and less authoritarian, and the mother as becoming more important as the agent of discipline. It is difficult to determine whether these findings agree or contradict with those of the present study because of the use of the term "becoming." Only current attitudes were measured in the Montana sample, not future trends. Bronson, et al. (1959) studied parental style from birth of the child through the eighteenth year. The period of time involved, the ages of the parents, and the number of children born during those 18 years all may have had an effect on the finding. Parents' attitudes regarding child rearing may swing from one end of the pendulum to the other over a period of that many years, a fact which cannot be ascertained in a cross-sectional study, unless it is longitudinal.

Age. As age of the participants increased, the likelihood of an authoritarian (traditional) attitude toward child rearing also increased (see Table 3, page 31). One might expect to find a traditional attitude among persons of an older generation.

Jordan (1970), in a study dealing with authoritarian family ideology, however, found just the opposite. Results from the study indicated a higher degree of permissiveness to exist among the older participants. Two distinct differences in sample composition existed between Jordan's study and the present one. In Jordan's study, mothers of newborn infants comprised the sample. The mean age of the mothers was 25. In the present study the mean age group was between 36 and 50; half of the respondents (50.3%) had one or more children under the age of 18 living in their home. Perhaps young mothers of newborn infants, because of lack of experience and a heightened sense of responsibility, are indeed more authoritarian in an effort to do the "right thing" where the child is concerned.

Much of the literature dealing with the rearing of children indicates that child rearing practices run in fashionable and even faddish cycles (Winch, 1952; Ritchie & Koller, 1964; Papalia & Olds, 1975). The attitudes of persons from particular age groups may be influenced by this factor. Today, according to Papalia and Olds (1975), many adhere to the democratic way of rearing children. The fact that many of the respondents were middle aged and their child rearing years nearly over may have had a bearing on the authoritarian attitude displayed. Ideas in vogue at the time a child is born may be more influential than the age of the parents in determining parental attitudes toward child rearing.

Religion. As religious preference moved from Catholic to Protestant, so did the likelihood of an authoritarian (traditional) attitude toward child rearing. The same tendency may have existed for those respondents indicating "other religion" or "no religious preference," however, only 26 respondents (7.9%) comprised the latter groups. The small number of respondents in these two groups may have, by chance, skewed the result in the direction of authoritarian attitudes. The term Protestant includes many different religious groups with varied values and beliefs. It may be that the more fundamental Protestant groups are representative of this rural sample, contributing to the traditional child rearing attitudes reported.

Although religious preference had an effect on child rearing attitudes, church attendance did not. Church attendance is significantly related only to social interaction (see Table 3, page 31). It appears that going to church and having direct contact with the church does not have an effect on many of these peoples' attitudes. It could be that the church is not dealing with day to day problems that are a part of these peoples' lives or simply that basic beliefs and philosophies adhered to by many are very strong and not easily challenged.

Number of children may also play a part in relation to this finding. According to Elder (1962), the combined effect of both denomination and family size substantially effects the likelihood

of parental dominance in the child rearing relationship. Large families are more often associated with Catholics, so in this light, one might have expected the Catholic respondents to lean more toward traditionalism. In the present study, however, this did not prove to be the case. The small number of Catholic respondents (57) may have skewed the result. Mean number of children for the whole population was quite low (2.5), so again the finding may have been effected. Perhaps if a balance had existed between Protestants and Catholics, the finding would have been altered.

Number of children. Attitudes toward child rearing were significantly influenced by the number of children in the family. The tendency toward a greater number of children was related to the tendency toward more authoritarian attitudes regarding child rearing (see Table 3, page 31). Characteristically, as groups increase in size, there becomes a centralization of leadership and the development of explicit rules (Clausen, 1966). As a family becomes larger, then, leadership and decision making tend to come more and more from the top. It may be easier, in many cases, for large families to operate in this manner since there are so many individuals to look out for and for whom to be responsible. Explicit role differentiation may be necessary to keep family operations running more smoothly. Elder and Bowerman (1963) support the finding.

Although the number of children had an effect on child rearing attitudes, the ages of the children living in the home did not. Regardless of whether there were newborn infants, toddlers, or teenagers in the home, child rearing attitudes were not significantly effected.

Level of education. Increasing levels of education attained by the respondent produced an increasingly democratic (equalitarian) attitude toward child rearing (see Table 3, page 31). Those respondents having spent a greater number of years in school may have come into contact with a greater number of alternatives, including those related to the rearing of children. Rather than adhering to traditional, authoritarian views, those with a higher education may tend to experiment with other alternatives. By so doing, they may become more democratic or equalitarian in their attitudes toward child rearing.

More than half of the respondents (54.1%) had some kind of formal education beyond high school. Slightly over half of the respondents (55.4%) scored at or below the mean on the child rearing scale, indicating a tendency toward a democratic attitude. There may be a relationship between those respondents in the two groups. It could have been those same respondents with the higher education that scored low on child rearing, indicating a democratic attitude.

Elder (1962) found a ninth grade education or less to be associated with authoritarian child rearing practices; in contrast one or more years of college he found to be characteristic of democratic and equalitarian parents. Anders (1968) has associated punitive child rearing practices with the less educated. Both findings support those of the present study.

### Education Attitudes

Higher scores tended to reflect a positive attitude toward education while lower scores indicated a more negative attitude. The highest possible score that could be attained was 66. Scores ranged from 25 to 66, with the mean being 53.

Hypothesis 1 a stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward education. The testing supported hypothesis 1 a (refer to child rearing attitudes section).

Hypothesis 3 stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and attitudes toward social life and recreation. The data rejected hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between

the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

Attitudes toward education were not found to be significantly influenced by any of the personal variables. It was the only one of the attitude scales not effected by religion, number of children, or level of education. One might at least expect to find a significant correlation between attitudes toward education and level of education, since persons of this sample were slightly ahead of the average for Montana of 12.2 years of schooling (1970 Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1973). Those respondents having some formal schooling beyond high school comprised 54.1 per cent of the total sample. Perhaps this has bearing on the finding.

The mean was extremely high and yet more than half of the respondents (52.7%) of this sample scored above it. There were actually very few low scores. Since those few respondents having low scores came from a variety of circumstances, it was not possible to point to any one factor predisposing toward their low opinion of education. Generally speaking, this sample of rural Montanans, whether young or old, rich or poor, college educated or not are very much aware of the value of education.

### Social Interaction

That portion of the instrument dealing with the participant's social life and recreation was examined in two parts: social interaction and social satisfaction. Social interaction was comprised of the respondent's involvement with relatives, friends, and neighbors living in the community. It was dealt with not only quantitatively but also as an attitude. Social satisfaction, on the other hand, involved general friendliness of the community, a sense of belongingness felt, and overall tone of family life. By dividing the original scale in this manner, two scores were derived. Each of the scores represented a separate, yet related characteristic of the participant's social life.

High scores on social interaction indicated less involvement with relatives, friends, and neighbors living in the community. Scores ranged from 9 to 45, with the mean being 28, and the highest attainable score 55.

Those who had more social interaction also tended to have greater social satisfaction (see Table 2, page 30). It seems that those individuals who get involved with others in the community also enjoy their social life more. A high percentage of respondents appear to be socially active and generally satisfied with the community and their family life.

Hypothesis 1 b stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward social life and recreation. The hypothesis was examined in light of both social interaction and social satisfaction. The data support hypothesis 1 b, however only in terms of social satisfaction, not in terms of social interaction (refer to child rearing attitudes section).

Hypothesis 3 stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and attitudes toward social life and recreation. The testing rejected hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 5 stated: There is a significant relationship between social life and recreation and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. Hypothesis 5 a, c, f, g, and h were significant in terms of social interaction; hypothesis d and j were significant in terms of social satisfaction. The testing rejected 5 b, e, and i.

Sex. Males tended to indicate less social interaction than females. Since the study deals exclusively with a rural population, it may be that the primary occupation, farming and ranching (Lind, 1975), lends itself to social interaction for females more so than

for males. Male members of the family quite possibly spend more of their time working in the fields, with cattle, etc.

Examination of two specific questions, however, shows something quite different. In response to the question: "How much do male members of the family go out to fish, hunt, bowl, or golf, leaving the women and smaller children at home?", 77.1 per cent (256) of the sample replied, either "not too often" or "hardly ever." On the other hand, in responding to: "How often does the lady of the house go out to clubs, parties, etc., leaving father and the children at home?", 81.9 per cent (272) replied either "not too often" or "hardly ever." The difference in the responses is not great; however, it may be due to the limiting effect of the question concerning male interaction. That particular question includes only four types of recreation; the question concerning female interaction is actually unlimited as to type of recreation by its use of "etc."

Responses to the two questions are significantly related to each other at the .001 level. In other words, the more males are involved in activities outside the home, the more women tend to be involved in activities outside the home.

As either male members of the family or the lady of the house went out more leaving other family members at home, the quality of family life tended to decrease. In like manner, feelings tended to be more negative with regard to amount of social interaction; the

home was regarded as loving and warm to a lesser degree. This seems to point to the idea that all types of social interaction do not necessarily have positive effects on family life. It appears that family members may feel a stronger bond if social interactions are together.

It is interesting to note that 77.1 per cent (256) of the respondents felt their home was either extremely or quite loving, warm, and happy. The same percentage of males, 77.1, responded that they seldom or rarely went out leaving the others at home.

Two findings were significantly related to female interaction, but not to male interaction. Those women having better quality relationships with their relatives tended to go out less to clubs, parties, etc. At the same time, it also appears that as women went out more, the tendency to be invited out for dinner and visiting decreased. Those women spending more time in activities outside the home probably also have close friends engaged in the same activities. If so, these women may not have had the time nor the inclination for additional socializing through dinner invitations.

Marital status. As marital status moved from single to married, there was a tendency for a greater amount of social interaction. The same tendency may have existed for those respondents who were either divorced or widowed; however, only 28 respondents (8.4%) comprised the

latter groups. It may be that the small percentage represented by these two groups skewed the results in the direction of a greater amount of social interaction.

Age, ability, companionship, and availability of activities in the community may have played an important role in the amount of social interaction reported by the respondent. Single persons, young and old alike, may have been less active socially due to a lack of companionship and/or places to go and things to do in the community. Mackay (1973) in a study of the aged found a slight relationship between being single and participating less in organizations. Since the sample had a very high percentage of married persons (84.6%), those who were single may not have felt they had similar interests with others living in the community. Single persons not among those in the younger age groups may have had difficulty in getting out, due to physical health and/or restrictions, therefore limiting their outside involvement with others. Divorcees and widowers, on the other hand, once married and perhaps having children, may have had more social contacts than those in the single group.

Church attendance. As frequency of church attendance increased, so did social interaction. Church and church related activities seem to have an influence on the amount of interaction among those persons

who attend. Perhaps church provides a non-threatening atmosphere in which people can meet and become acquainted.

Although church attendance is significantly related to social interaction, it is not related to the amount of satisfaction felt regarding family and community life. It appears that having a place in which to meet and interact with others is not enough. The satisfaction derived from this type of activity may depend on the number of family members participating together, whether it is viewed as an obligation or personal choice, and the degree to which the participants become involved.

Number of children. Social interaction decreased as the number of children increased. This is a somewhat curious finding since one might expect school and other organizational activities in which children are involved to also involve parents. Perhaps those children from larger families do not tend to be active in organizations, because of costs involved, therefore not involving their parents. On the other hand, those with more children may find themselves with less time for involvements outside the family.

The finding may be viewed in yet another way. Those having fewer children tended to be more democratic in their child rearing attitudes (see Table 3, page 31). A relationship was also found to exist between those leaning toward democratic child rearing attitudes

TABLE 4

## Correlation of Social Interaction with Use of Telephone

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Component	Use of Telephone
Number relatives in community	.013
Quality of relationship with	NS
Social interaction with	.019
Friends living in community	.001
Invite people for dinner and visiting	.001
"Drop in" at friends	.001
Invited out to dinner and visiting	.001
Friends "drop in"	.001
Satisfaction with social interaction	NS
Total child rearing score	.005

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and greater use of the telephone for visiting (see Table 4). It appears there may be a positive relationship between smaller family size, greater social interaction, democratic child rearing attitudes, and greater use of the telephone as an instrument of social interaction.

A positive relationship also exists between visiting by phone and the following: social interaction with relatives, the frequency of friends "dropping in" to visit, the frequency with which people are invited to the respondent's house for dinner and visiting, the frequency with which friends are visited, and the frequency with which the respondent is invited to someone's house for dinner and visiting (see Table 4). This finding points to the idea that the telephone may not necessarily be used as a substitute for face-to-face interaction with others, but may perhaps be used as a tool for inviting or encouraging others out. On the other hand, if a relationship does exist between number of children and visiting by phone, it seems that childrens' activities and like involvements of parents may warrant greater use of the phone. In so doing, more social contacts may be made.

Children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home. Social interaction decreased as the number of children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home increased. It was not related however to the

number of children over the age of 18. It appears from this finding that younger children do tend to tie parents down. Time and resources involved in the care of children may decrease the amount left for other activities.

Although social interaction was effected by children of high school age and younger, satisfaction with home and community life was not. It appears, in this instance, that a greater amount of interaction among friends and relatives was not an indication of a satisfying social life. Perhaps staying at home with other family members was indeed as satisfying for many as actively involving themselves with outside obligations.

#### Social Satisfaction

High scores on social satisfaction indicated a less positive attitude toward the community in general; a decreased sense of belongingness, and less satisfaction with one's home and family life. Scores ranged from 3 to 16, with 26 being the possible high; mean, median, and mode all were nine.

In general, this sample displayed a fairly high degree of social satisfaction. There was a high percentage of respondents reporting a very favorable feeling toward their community and family life (see Table 5). These same elements of social satisfaction (friendliness of community, acceptance in community, quality of family

TABLE 5

## Components of Social Interaction and Social Satisfaction

Component	N	%
Relatives:		
2 or more families living in the community	178	53.7
Very good to good relationship with	205	61.7
More than half of social interaction with	122	36.7
Friends:		
At least 4-5 families living in community	231	69.6
At least once/mo. invite people for dinner & visiting	156	47.0
At least once/mo. "drop in" at friends to visit	213	64.2
At least once/mo. invited out to dinner & visiting	137	41.2
At least once/wk. friends "drop in" to visit	223	67.2
At least 3 times/wk. visit by telephone	228	68.7
Community:		
Quite to extremely friendly	220	66.3
Very well accepted in	243	73.2
About right amount of social interaction	190	57.2
Family Life:		
Very good to the best	207	62.4
Home - loving, warm	256	77.1

life, and atmosphere of the home) were found to have a significant positive relationship with many of the components of social interaction (see Table 6).

It is curious that as the number of relatives living in the community increased, the tendency for the home to be considered loving, warm, and happy decreased. It appears that having relatives in the community adds to the friendliness and belongingness felt, but not to quality of the home and family life. Friends, not relatives, living in the community did not have the same effect.

Hypothesis 1 b stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward social life and recreation. The hypothesis was examined in light of both social interaction and social satisfaction. The data support hypothesis 1 b, however only in terms of social satisfaction, not in terms of social interaction (refer to child rearing attitudes section).

Hypothesis 3 stated: There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and attitudes toward social life and recreation. The testing rejected hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 5 stated: There is a significant relationship between social life and recreation and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between

TABLE 6

## Matrix of Social Interaction and Social Satisfaction

Component	Friendliness of community	Acceptance in community	Quality of family life	Home - loving, warm
No. relatives in community	.001	.001	NS	-.021
Quality of relationship with	NS	NS	.009	.003
Social interaction with	.044	.001	NS	NS
Friends living in community	.001	.001	.003	NS
Invite people for dinner & visiting	NS	NS	.012	NS
"Drop in" at friends	.009	.001	.001	NS
Invited out to dinner & visiting	.003	.001	.005	NS
Friends "drop in"	.001	NS	NS	NS
Visit by telephone	.002	.001	.043	NS
Friendliness of community	----	.001	.005	NS
Acceptance in community	.001	----	.001	.042
Satisfaction w/social interaction	.003	.039	.031	NS
Quality of family life	.005	.001	----	.001
Home - loving, warm	NS	.042	.001	----

the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. Hypothesis 5 a, c, f, g, and h were significant in terms of social interaction; hypothesis 5 d and j were significant in terms of social satisfaction. The testing rejected 5 b, e, and i.

Income. Those individuals in the higher income brackets indicated significantly less social satisfaction than did those with lower incomes. It appears that having more money to go places and do things does not necessarily lend itself to the satisfaction one derives from his or her social life. Perhaps those having higher incomes were not satisfied with the social options available to them in the community.

Satisfaction with the respondents' social interactions are significantly related to a sense of belongingness in the community (see Table 6). Table 1 (page 28) shows 29.7 per cent of the respondents to be in the \$15,000 to over \$25,000 income bracket. In responding to the question, "How much do you feel that you 'belong' in your community?", 26.5 per cent replied "only somewhat" or "somewhat shunned, left out, or rejected." The percentages of those respondents in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 income bracket and those not feeling accepted in the community are very nearly the same. If those persons in the higher income brackets did not feel their social needs were being

met, perhaps those same people did not feel a strong sense of belongingness in their community.

Level of education. As social satisfaction increased, level of education increased. It appears that those with less education in this sample were not those in the lower income brackets, since there was a significant relationship between having less income and being more satisfied socially.

Over half of the respondents (54.1%) in this study have some education beyond high school (see Table 1, page 28). If a large percentage of persons in the community are in this group it may very well have an influence upon the kinds of activities available in the community and upon the various kinds of social interactions which take place. Those persons having fewer years of formal education may feel a slight stigma against them; they may also not be interested in what's available as far as social options in the community. These feelings could contribute to the tendency toward less social satisfaction.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The major purpose of this research was the investigation of rural Montanans' attitudes toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation. These were correlated with one another and also with the personal variables of sex, age, marital status, income, religion, church attendance, number of children, children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, children 18 and over living in the home, and level of education.

Participants for the study were 332 rural Montanans from twelve randomly selected counties: Fergus, Musselshell, Powder River, McCone, Roosevelt, Phillips, Blaine, Teton, Madison, Meagher, Flathead, and Sanders. The sample was predominantly female (59.6%), the mean age group was 36-50, and nearly seven-eighths (84.6%) of the respondents were married.

The present investigator was not involved in the collection of data which took place in 1973. For the purposes of this paper, four instruments from the original data were used: a general information section, A Survey of Opinions Regarding the Discipline of Children by Itkin, Attitudes Toward Education by Rundquist and Sletto, and a social life and recreation scale developed by the project leader

and his graduate assistant. The instruments were evaluated and scored by the present researcher; the data were coded for transferring to electronic data processing equipment.

Five hypotheses were judged using the .05 level of significance as the criterion for the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses throughout. This yielded the following results:

Hypothesis 1: A significant relationship exists between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward (a) education and (b) social life and recreation. A significant positive relationship was found to exist between authoritarian child rearing attitudes and a positive attitude toward education. Authoritarian child rearing attitudes were also significantly related to less social satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: A significant relationship exists between attitudes toward child rearing and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. A significant positive relationship was found to exist between authoritarian child rearing attitudes and males, those who were older, Protestants, those having a larger number of children, and those having attained a higher level of education.

Hypothesis 3: A significant relationship exists between attitudes toward education and attitudes toward social life and recreation.

Hypothesis 3 was rejected by the data.

Hypothesis 4: A significant relationship exists between attitudes toward education and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. The data rejected all of hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5: A significant relationship exists between attitudes toward social life and recreation and the personal variables of (a) sex, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) income, (e) religion, (f) church attendance, (g) number of children, (h) children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, (i) children 18 and over living in the home, and (j) level of education. Social interaction was found to be less for those who were male, those who were single, those who attended church less frequently, those with more children, and those with more children under the age of 18 living in the home. Social satisfaction was found to be less for those respondents in the higher income brackets and those with less extensive education.

Conclusions

Data from the analysis of the hypotheses support these conclusions:

Conclusion 1: The respondents of this sample, who leaned toward authoritarianism in their child rearing views, also leaned toward a more positive outlook toward education. Hypothesis 1a showed that a significant relationship existed between child rearing attitudes and attitudes toward education.

Conclusion 2: Montanans of this sample reporting democratic child rearing attitudes also tended to report a higher degree of social satisfaction. Hypothesis 1b showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward social life and recreation.

Conclusion 3: In this sample, males appeared to be more authoritarian in their attitudes toward child rearing than females. Hypothesis 2a showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward child rearing and sex.

Conclusion 4: Those who comprised the older age groups in this sample seemed to be more traditional or authoritarian in their child rearing attitudes than the younger participants. Hypothesis 2b showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward child rearing and age.

Conclusion 5: The rural Montanans of this sample who had a larger number of children tended to hold more authoritarian views of child rearing while those with fewer children tended to be more democratic. Hypothesis 2g showed that a significant relationship existed between child rearing attitudes and number of children.

Conclusion 6: Among the participants in this sample, more equalitarian or democratic views of child rearing were related to higher levels of education. Hypothesis 2j illustrated that a significant relationship existed between child rearing attitudes and level of education.

Conclusion 7: With reference to this sample it can be said that there were no personal variables which influenced the attitudes held toward education. The rejection of hypothesis 4 supports this conclusion.

Conclusion 8: Among the participants in this sample, males appeared to interact socially less than females. Hypothesis 5a showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward social life and recreation and sex.

Conclusion 9: Respondents of this sample comprising the higher income brackets seemed less satisfied with their social lives than those in the lower income brackets. Hypothesis 5d showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward social life and recreation and income.

Conclusion 10: Rural Montanans representative of this sample who attended church more often appeared to be active socially in other respects as well. Hypothesis 5f showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward social life and recreation and church attendance.

Conclusion 11: Those respondents in this sample having a larger number of children did not appear as socially active as those with fewer children. Hypothesis 5g showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward social life and recreation and number of children.

Conclusion 12: With respect to this sample, having children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home was related to a lesser amount of social interaction. Hypothesis 5h showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward social life and recreation and children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home.

Conclusion 13: Among the participants in this sample, a higher degree of social satisfaction was related to more extensive education. Hypothesis 5j showed that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward social life and recreation and level of education.

#### Recommendations

Conclusions were not based on significant relationships involving marital status and religion. The percentages of respondents

representing the groups: never married (6.9%), married (84.6%), divorced (1.5%), and widowed (6.9%) were so disproportionate that further study is necessary to assess the finding with any accuracy. The percentages of respondents comprising the groups: Roman Catholic (17.5%), Protestant (74.5%), other (1.8%), and no religious preference (6.1%) were also quite disproportionate. On the basis of the large concentration in one group (Protestant) further study is also necessary to provide accuracy in interpreting the data.

The participants of this study, for the most part, seemed to regard education very highly. It seems that further investigation might be helpful in determining the relationship between a favorable attitude such as this one and actual behavior. In other words does a significant positive relationship exist between having a favorable attitude toward education and support of the local schools and/or teachers? Participation in school activities (ball games, concerts, PTA, etc.), attendance at school board meetings, and the passage of special levies are also areas of concern in their relationship with attitudes toward education.

In terms of social life and recreation, it appeared from the study that those having a larger number of children were not as active socially as those with fewer children. It seems that youth groups in the community such as FHA, 4-H, Scouts, etc., could provide free babysitting services from time to time so parents could get out more

easily. An exchange of services might contribute to the well-being of both parents and youth. Members from such groups could exchange an hour or more of their time babysitting for the same amount of time from the parents in helping with the organization. Students of high school home economics could get practical experience and academic credit by making themselves available for a few hours in the same kind of situation.

Another possible means of helping to increase social interaction and satisfaction might be the development of special interest groups (gourmet cooking, macrame, parenting, fly tying, soft ball, back packing, etc.). It would be especially helpful if there could be something for each family member to be involved in, perhaps helping to strengthen both family and community life. Resource persons might include: teachers, extension agents, retired persons, local craftsmen, homemakers with professional skills, etc.

To gain a wider perspective on rural family life styles it would be helpful for the present study to be replicated in other rural areas outside the state of Montana. In so doing, there would be a greater amount of information on which to build. Regional and cultural differences could also be examined. An investigation of those living in urban Montana would be helpful in determining any differences that might exist between an urban and rural population.

There are other questions which are also pertinent. Research is needed to provide answers such as:

What is the relationship between parental attitudes, child behavior and personality?

What is the effect of child rearing seminars, classes, etc. on parental attitudes and/or child rearing techniques?

Is there consistency between what parents report their child rearing attitudes to be and their behavior when observed in interaction with their children?

Is there consistency between the way children perceive their parents and actual parental attitudes?

The present study suggests that it is possible to research questions such as the above, and to provide some reliable data in answer to them.

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APPENDIX

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Regardless of your age or sex, and whether married or single, answer all of the items on the following pages as they apply to you. If certain items do not at all apply to your situation, omit them and go on to the next item that does apply to you. If we have not included enough possible answers to certain items, please write in the answer you feel would be the best one for you.

It is important to remember that there is no such thing as a right or wrong answer to any question in this survey. We simply are seeking the opinions of rural Montana people, so the only possible "right" answer is your honest opinion.

1. Your sex:  Male  Female
2. Age:  Under 21  21-28  29-35  36-50  
 51-65  Over 65

3. Have you ever been:

	No	Yes	If yes, how many times
Engaged			
Married			
Divorced			
Widowed			

4. Check the category that represents the income you reported for your 1972 tax returns. (This will include earnings of both man and wife.)

over \$25,000  \$7,000 - 9,999  
 \$20,000 - 24,999  \$5,000 - 6,999  
 \$15,000 - 19,999  \$3,000 - 4,999  
 \$10,000 - 14,999  Under \$3,000

5. Religion:  Roman Catholic  Protestant (  )  
 Other religion (  )  
 No religion
- Denomination  
specify

6. Frequency of church attendance:

Once or twice per month       Three or more times per month  
 Never attend church       A few times per year

7. Total number of children you have ever had:

Sons                       Daughters

8. Number of children now living in your home: Age 0-17  Boy  Girl

9. Number of children now living in your home: Age 18 or older

Boy  Girl

10. Check the highest level of education you have attained:

Completed less than eighth grade

Completed eighth grade

Attended high school

Completed high school

Attended college

Completed bachelor degree

College beyond bachelor degree

Masters degree

Have doctors degree

Finished business college

Finished a trade school

## CHILD REARING

Read each item carefully and then circle the A, D, or U to indicate whether you agree, disagree or are undecided as to how you feel about the statement. Do not spend much time on any one item and remember there is no right answer except the one that most honestly represents your feelings.

- A D U 1. Parents should demand complete obedience from their children.
- A D U 2. Children should not be allowed to argue with their parents.
- A D U 3. Children these days are usually given too much freedom.
- A D U 4. Parents seem to be reluctant or afraid to discipline their children.
- A D U 5. Children should receive some pay for chores they do around the home.
- A D U 6. Parents should take away a child's privileges, such as watching a favorite television program, as punishment for misbehavior.
- A D U 7. A child who misbehaves should be spanked.
- A D U 8. A child's own feelings and desires are relatively unimportant; the important thing is for him to do as he is told.
- A D U 9. Children should be required to do certain tasks without pay.
- A D U 10. An important aspect of discipline is that the child should not know what to expect next of his parents.
- A D U 11. A parent ought not place very much trust in a child.
- A D U 12. Children are not capable of making any of their own decisions much before the age of 12.

- A D U 13. If a child does something wrong and gets in trouble with the school or the law, the parents should try to "get him off the hook."
- A D U 14. A four-year-old should be severely punished for bed-wetting.
- A D U 15. If the children are fighting the parents should break it up at once and in some way punish the one who started it.
- A D U 16. The more freedom you give a child the worse he gets.
- A D U 17. Parents are not required to explain to children the reasons for parental actions or commands.
- A D U 18. Children should have a voice in family decisions that affect them, such as moving to a new town.
- A D U 19. A child who is unusual in any way should be encouraged to be more like other children.
- A D U 20. Parents have to crack down harder on children if our nation's moral standards are to be saved.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

Read each item carefully and then circle the A, D, or U to indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are undecided as to how you feel about the statement. Do not spend much time on any one item, and remember there is no right answer except the one that most honestly represents your feelings.

- A D U 1. A person can learn more by working for four years than by going to school.
- A D U 2. The more education a person has the better he is able to enjoy life.
- A D U 3. Education helps a person to use his leisure time to better advantage.
- A D U 4. A good education is a great comfort to someone who can't find a job.
- A D U 5. Only subjects like reading, writing, and arithmetic should be taught at public expense.
- A D U 6. Education is no help in getting a job today.
- A D U 7. Most young people are getting too much education.
- A D U 8. An education is worth all the time and effort it requires.
- A D U 9. Our schools encourage an individual to think for himself.
- A D U 10. There are too many fads and frills in modern education.
- A D U 11. Education only makes a person discontented.
- A D U 12. School training is of little help in meeting the problems of real life.
- A D U 13. Education tends to make a person less conceited.

- A D U 14. Solution of the world's problems will come through education.
- A D U 15. High school and college courses are too impractical.
- A D U 16. A person is foolish to keep going to school if he can get a job.
- A D U 17. Savings spent on education are wisely invested.
- A D U 18. An educated person can advance more rapidly in business and industry.
- A D U 19. Parents should not be compelled to send their children to school.
- A D U 20. Education is more valuable than most people think.
- A D U 21. An education makes a person a better citizen.
- A D U 22. Public money spent on education during the past few years could have been used more wisely for other purposes.

## SOCIAL LIFE AND RECREATION

In this series of questions we are most interested in learning what your usual practice is with respect to interactions with relatives, friends, and neighbors who live near you. For the purpose of answering these questions please do not take into account the visiting back and forth that you may do with friends and relatives who do not live in your community. Place an X in front of the statement that is most appropriate for you.

1. How many families of your relatives (considering both sides of the family) are there living in your community?

\_\_\_\_\_ 6 or more    \_\_\_\_\_ 4-5    \_\_\_\_\_ 2-3    \_\_\_\_\_ 1    \_\_\_\_\_ None

2. What is the quality of your relationship in general, with these relatives?

\_\_\_\_\_ Very good    \_\_\_\_\_ Good    \_\_\_\_\_ Fair    \_\_\_\_\_ Poor    \_\_\_\_\_ Very poor

3. How many families living in your community, not counting relatives, do you consider to be very close friends?

\_\_\_\_\_ Over 20    12-19    \_\_\_\_\_ 6-11    \_\_\_\_\_ 4-5    \_\_\_\_\_ 3    \_\_\_\_\_ 2  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1    \_\_\_\_\_ 0

4. What is your feeling about the general friendliness of your community?

\_\_\_\_\_ Extremely friendly    \_\_\_\_\_ Quite friendly    \_\_\_\_\_ About average  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not very friendly    \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely unfriendly

5. With whom do you have most of your social interaction?

\_\_\_\_\_ Almost entirely with relatives  
\_\_\_\_\_ About half with relatives  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mostly with friends and neighbors  
\_\_\_\_\_ Only with friends and neighbors  
\_\_\_\_\_ We have no social interactions

6. How often do friends "drop in" to visit at your house?
- We have 2 or more callers per week       About once a week  
 Once or twice a month       A few times a year  
 Never
7. How often do you invite people to your house for dinner and visiting?
- At least once a week       Once or twice a month  
 A few times a year       Once a year  
 Never
8. How often do you "drop in" at friends' homes to visit?
- At least once a week       Once or twice a month  
 A few times a year       Once a year  
 Never
9. How often are you invited to someone's house for dinner and visiting?
- Once or more per week       Once or twice a month  
 A few times a year       Once a year  
 Never
10. How frequently do you visit by telephone with friends or neighbors?
- Several times daily       About one call a day  
 3-4 calls per week       Once a week  
 Once a month       Hardly ever  
 Never
11. How much do you feel that you "belong" in your community?
- Feel we are very well accepted  
 Feel we are somewhat accepted  
 Feel we are somewhat shunned  
 Feel we are left out and rejected

12. How do you feel about the amount of social interaction you have?  
(You may check more than one)

I wish we had more visitors come to our house  
 I wish we would visit other people more often  
 I feel we have about the right amount  
 I wish people would not come to our house so often  
 I wish we would not go to visit others so often  
 I wish our relatives would leave us alone

13. How much do male members of the family go out to fish, hunt, bowl, or golf, leaving the women and smaller children at home?

Far too often     Frequently     Not too often  
 Hardly ever

14. How often does the lady of the house go out to clubs, parties, etc., leaving father and the children at home?

Far too often     Frequently     Not too often  
 Hardly ever

15. What would you say is the overall tone or quality of your family life?

The best     Very good     Satisfactory  
 Not very good     Poor     Very poor

16. To what extent do you feel that your home and family is a loving, warm, and happy one?

Extremely so     Pretty much so  
 Not very much so     It's unsatisfactory  
 It's very unsatisfactory     About average

NOTE: Items 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14, comprised the social interaction scale. Items 2, 4, 11, 15, and 16 comprised the social satisfaction scale.



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