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Rural Family Functioning

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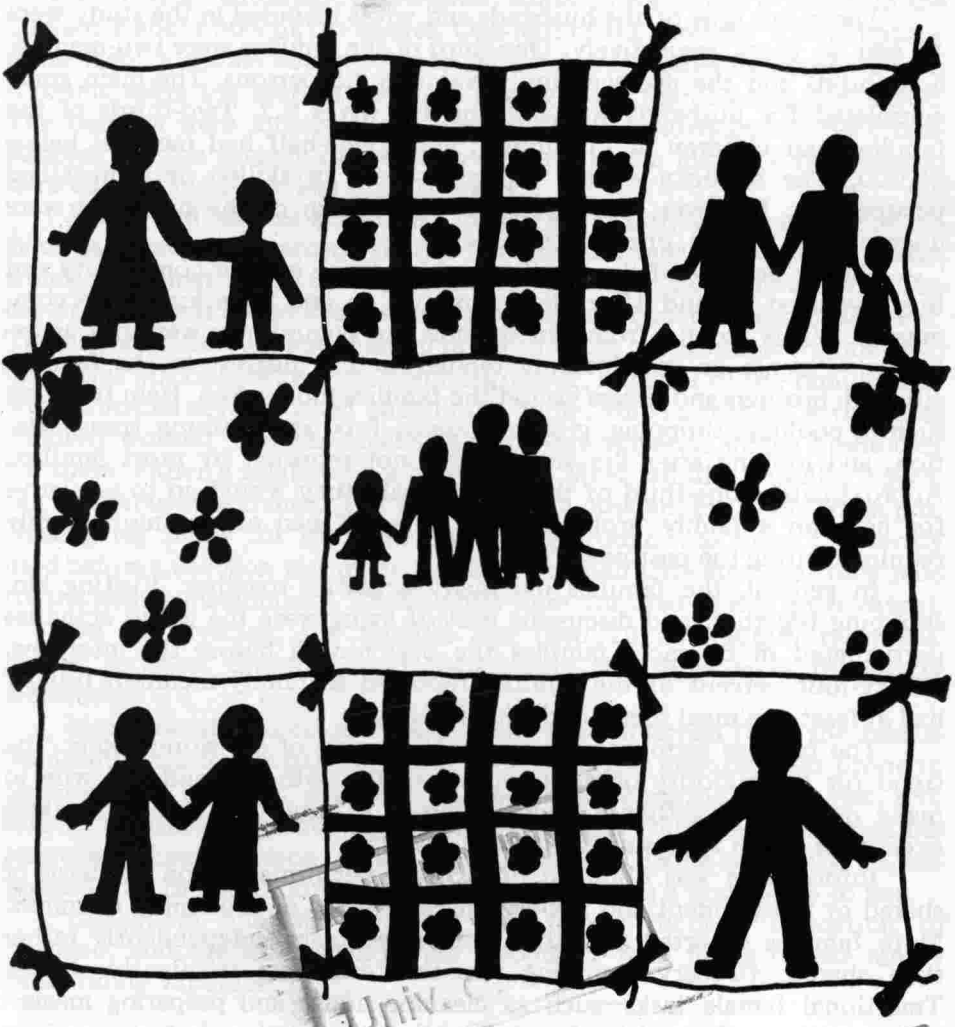

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SUMMARY

This study speaks to the ways Tennessee rural families are functioning in our rapidly changing society. Through examination of family functioning characteristics of 250 families living in rural areas of East Tennessee, a clearer definition of kinship patterns, economic characteristics, housing conditions, community resources, and family interaction patterns is drawn.

The mean ages of the husbands and wives included in the study were 49 and 46 years, respectively. One-third of the families were two-member households and the average family size was 3.3 persons. The main grade completed for husbands was 8.9 and for wives 9.2. Two-thirds of the families had children in the homes; about one-half had incomes below $6,000. The majority of the husbands were in skilled or semi-skilled occupations. However, approximately one-fourth of the husbands were unemployed, retired, or disabled.

Ninety percent of the families had kin living in their community and they averaged 12 and 17 visits per month to and from kin in the community. Visits to and from kin outside the community were not as extensive. Parents or grandparents tended to live nearest to the families although brothers and sisters visited the families most often. Help from kin such as cooking, shopping, gifts of money, food and clothing, transportation, and looking after the elderly, was not reported by most families. Approximately one-third of the families said they would go to a relative for help on a family problem. Over one-half had one or more family reunions during the past year.

In general, the families did many activities together. Visiting kin, shopping together, and discussing cost of living were the group activities participated in by most families the past month before the interview. Ninety-four percent of the families reported all family members usually had at least one meal together during the day.

The families were questioned on 16 aspects of decision-making. The trend for the majority of the families was for both husband and wife to make decisions together. Children were not important decision-makers except for which television programs to watch.

Information was obtained on 15 task performances on the basis of shared or independent and sex-age characteristics of the family members. More families reported that they performed tasks independently rather than shared. Grocery shopping was the task most frequently shared. Traditional female tasks—such as cleaning house and preparing meals—were mostly performed by females, while traditional male tasks—such as mowing yard and washing car—were carried out by males. Fewer tasks were performed by children than adults. This was more noticeable for males than females.

Seventy-five percent of the families had television, radio, telephone,

and car or truck. Slightly over one-half of them took a daily newspaper. These were the communication items studied.

Data obtained on home environment were rather extensive. Electricity was the main source of heat in the home. Air-conditioning was not common. A large proportion, 86%, had a washing machine but slightly less than one-half had a clothes dryer. All of the families had a range, usually electric. All except one had a refrigerator. Over one-half had a freezer but only 7% had an automatic dishwasher. Running water was available in the kitchen in about 90% of the homes. One-half of the families' water supplies came from a public source. Space facilities were generaly adequate with 5 rooms being the average and 78% having more than 1 room per person. The families were mostly home owners. Their residences had been constructed on the average of 24 years earlier and the majority had lived in their current residence less than 10 years.

Wages and salaries accounted for the main source of income for the families. Forty-five percent of the families had one income wage earner which was most often the husband. One-fifth had no wage earners. The car or truck was by far the predominant means of transportation to work. The majority traveled less than 10 miles to work. Approximately one-fifth had wives working away from home. However, one-half of the families had wives who had never worked outside the home. When a mother with young children worked, she was most likely to have someone in the home care for them, either a relative or a baby sitter. Most families had life, health, car, and house insurance. The house was the outstanding asset. When purchasing big items for the home, shopping around was most frequently used before a decision was made and over one-half indicated that they paid for the item in installments. Credit cards were not used to any great extent.

On the average, the families had used 10 community resources. Health services, churches, and banks were the three most frequently mentioned.

Measures of anomia and self-esteem were obtained from the female heads and in a few instances, the male heads. The majority was prone to be anomic—a hopeless, apathetic and powerless condition. However, self-esteem or sense of worth rated relatively high. Only 7% of the families expressed dissatisfaction with their standard of living and only 1% expressed that the neighborhood where they lived was a poor place to live.

Chi-square analysis revealed that family income, education of husband, and age of husband were associated with many of the family functioning variables.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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COVER DESIGN by Nan Scott, a Ph.D. student in Child and Family Studies, University of Tennessee. The design is a patchwork quilt symbolic of rural America; various families are shown as quilt components.

Rural Family Functioning

by

Helen M. Reed and Judith L. Kuipers[1]

INTRODUCTION

The study of family life is particularly important today when many social and technological changes are influencing the family. In **Future Shock** Alvin Toffler argues that individuals are being overwhelmed by change as he discusses the ways in which we adapt, or fail to adapt, to the future. Toffler concludes that man's only hope is to undertake the control of change.[2]

Paul Glick, a demographer with the Census Bureau, has recently reported some adaptive changes in the American family.[3] These include delay in marriage, an increased divorce rate, more single-parent families, fewer children per family, and a wider variety in living arrangements. Family life specialists describe family change in this way:

> . . . changes that take place and will take place are not necessarily pleasing or regretful, good or bad, or constructive or destructive per se. Family changes are likely to be welcomed or rejected depending largely on one's own frame of reference, the groups with which one identifies, and the value orientation to which one adheres.[4]

The family in our society plays a primary role in relating individuals to social change and providing them with ways of coping with these changes. This adaptive function of the family, however, has largely been ignored. If this is true for families in general, it is particularly true for rural family functioning which is less often studied. Family functioning is defined as behavior of the family as a unit or individuals composing the family in roles or activities related to the well-being of the family group.

How are rural families functioning in a changing society? Do they have a strong kinship network? What are their economic characteristics such as source of income, home ownership, and insurance coverage? What kind of housing environments do they have? Do they use community resources?

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[2]Toffler, Alvin. **Future Shock.** Bantam Books, New York, 1970.

[3]Glick, Paul C. **Some Recent Changes in American Families,** Current Population Reports, Special Studies, Series P-23, No. 52, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

[4]Eshleman, J. Ross. **The Family: An Introduction.** Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1974.

To shed light on these questions as well as others, a study was conducted at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the Summer of 1972. Research information of this type is needed in order to better understand rural families and their needs in order to direct change to improve the quality of life in rural areas. The specific objectives of the study were:

1) To determine the level of functioning of a sample of rural Tennessee families in the categories of family interaction and cohesion, housing environment, economic activities, and community resources.

2) To ascertain factors related to their functioning which have implications for intervention programs.

SAMPLING AND PROCEDURE

The sample was drawn from counties in East Tennessee which, according to the 1970 United States Census of Population, were more than 50% rural and were not in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas.[5] The following criteria were considered in dividing the eligible counties into two strata:[6]

1) Rural population—75% or more
2) Change in population since 1960—decrease
3) Median value of owned home—under $7,500
4) Median value of contract rent on home—under $40
5) Plumbing facilities—not available in 30% or more households
6) Cash income—under $3,000 for 30% or more of families
7) Employment in agriculture—30% or more of families in agriculture
8) Newspaper circulation—less than 50 newspapers per 100 households

Stratum 1 consisted of eligible counties with 5 or more of the above characteristics. Stratum 2 included counties with fewer than 5 of the characteristics. The distribution of counties and number of families in each county are given below.

Strata	County	Number of Families
Stratum 1	Bledsoe	1,889
	Campbell	6,840
	Claiborne	5,136
	Grainger	3,785

[5]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, **1970 Census of Population.** Tennessee Advance Report, PC (VI) 44, Table 1.

[6]Criteria items 1 through 5 came from the following source: The University of Tennessee, Center for Business and Economic Research, **Tennessee Population and Housing 1950-70 Part I:** Summary Indicators, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1971, Tables 1, 3. Criteria items 6 through 8 came from the following source: The University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research, **Tennessee Statistical Abstract 1971 (2nd edition),** Knoxville, Tennessee, 1971, Tables 3.4, 11.19, 12.13. The sources were reports from the 1970 United States Bureau of the Census.

	Hancock	1,768
	Johnson	3,191
	Meigs	1,396
	Morgan	3,322
	Polk	3,119
	Scott	3,701
	Union	2,357
	Total	36,504
Stratum 2	Carter	11,621
	Cocke	6,626
	Cumberland	5,375
	Greene	12,755
	Hawkins	9,110
	Jefferson	6,577
	Loudon	6,760
	Marion	5,329
	McMinn	9,631
	Monroe	6,122
	Rhea	4,580
	Sevier	7,808
	Unicoi	4,219
	Washington	18,927
	Total	115,400
	Grand Total	151,944

Scott County from stratum 1 and Hawkins County from Stratum 2 were randomly selected for the sample (Figure 1). The sampling design specified that the number of completed schedules for each sample county should be proportional to the total number of families in all eligible counties. On this basis 60 schedules were obtained from stratum 1 and 190 from stratum 2. Two hundred and fifty schedules were considered enough for the total sample.

The most recent county highway maps with identifiable houses, churches, roads, and other features were used to divide the sample counties into clusters of 20 occupied dwelling units. The clusters were numbered consecutively, starting in the Northeast corner of the county and continuing in a serpentine manner from east to west and reverse. Clusters included in the study were randomly chosen. Allowing for ineligibility and nonresponse, 7 eligible families per cluster were used in estimating the number of clusters in each sample county. Alternate clusters were drawn to be used if needed. Interviewing started with the first cluster drawn and continued until the desired number of schedules had been obtained.

The occupied dwelling units in each sample cluster were delineated and numbered on a sketch map and a listing sheet. The first family interviewed in each cluster was a random number between 1 and the number of occupied dwelling units listed in the cluster. Starting with this number

Figure 1. Tennessee sample counties included in the study.

every other dwelling unit in the cluster was contacted. Any dwelling unit missed during the initial listing was added to the end of the list. The addition of vacant and new dwelling units since the maps were prepared caused the cluster or sampling unit to vary in size. However, the average for all areas surveyed was 7 which was the average expected number. A total of 360 occupied dwelling units were contacted before obtaining the alloted 250 completed schedules. Reasons given for not obtaining schedules from 110 of the families are:

Ineligible	47
Refusal	26
Not at home after 3 calls	29
Unable to give interview (illness, etc.)	8

The study was restricted to family households, with 2 or more persons related by blood or marriage. Households with heads living alone or with non-relatives only were excluded.

The data were collected by personal interview, primarily with homemakers, in the Spring and Summer of 1972. The interviews were conducted by persons who had been given special training and instructions by the project leaders. A schedule of questions was developed and used for the study. In some instances questions from previous surveys were used or modified for use. All the questions were pretested and appropriate changes made before use with the sample families. Home Economics leaders of the Agricultural Extension Service acted as consultants on the questionnaire development.

Percentage distribution and the chi-square test were used in analysis of the data.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE FAMILIES

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the families studied. These characteristics serve as background information for understanding the overall study and many of the characteristics are used as variables in analyzing family functioning.

Family composition — No husband was present in 7% of the families. For those families with a husband and/or wife, the mean age of the husband was 49 years and of the wife 46 years. Fifty-three percent of the families had husbands 45 years of age or older and 49% had wives in this same age group.

One-third of the families were 2-member households; about one-fifth had 5 or more members. About one-half were concentrated in 3-4

Table 1. Distribution of families according to selected characteristics

Characteristics	Number	Percent[a]
Total Sample	250	100
Age of husband (years)		
Under 35	50	20
35-44	50	20
45-54	52	21
55-64	36	14
65 and over	44	18
No husband	18	7
(mean age)[b]	(49)	
Age of wife (years)		
Under 35	71	28
35-44	53	21
45-54	50	20
55-64	38	15
65 and over	34	14
No wife	4	2
(mean age)[b]	(46)	
Size of household		
2 persons	83	33
3-4 persons	113	45
5 and over persons	54	22
(mean size)[b]	(3.3)	
Education of husband		
Under 8 grades	67	27
8-11 grades	85	34
12 and over grades	75	30
Unknown	5	2
No husband	18	7
(mean grade)[b]	(8.9)	
Education of wife		
Under 8 grades	53	21
8-11 grades	116	46
12 and over grades	75	30
Unknown	2	1
No wife	4	2
(mean grade)[b]	(9.2)	

Table 1. Distribution of families according to selected characteristics (continued)

Characteristics	Number	Percent[a]
Religion		
Protestant	227	91
Other	1	c
None	22	9
Family life cycle		
All children under 6 years	26	10
Oldest child 6-12 years	42	17
Oldest child 13-20 years	75	30
Oldest child 21 years and over	24	10
No children, husband and wife or heads under 65	43	17
No children, husband and wife or heads 65 and over	40	16
Family income past calendar year		
Under $3,000	67	27
$3,000-$5,999	59	24
$6,000-$8,999	70	28
$9,000 and over	48	18
Unknown	7	2
Main occupation of husband		
Major professionals, proprietors of large concerns, executives, etc.	0	0
Lesser professionals, proprietors of medium-sized businesses, business managers, etc.	4	2
Minor professionals, administrative personnel, small independent business, etc.	14	6
Clerical and sales workers, technicians, owner of small business, etc.	29	12
Skilled manual employees	56	22
Semi-skilled manual employees and machine operators	57	23
Unskilled employees	13	5
No occupation (unemployed, retired, disabled, welfare)	59	24
No husband	18	7

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Mean based on number of positive responses

[c]Less than 0.5%

person households with the average family size being 3.3 persons. The survey did not include one-person households.

Educational level — In general, the educational level of husbands and wives in the sample was relatively low. Approximately three-fifths of the husbands and two-thirds of the wives had less than a high school education. The mean grade completed was 8.9 for husbands and 9.2 for wives.

Religious background — Most families were of a Protestant religious background with 91% currently affiliated with an active church organization. Affiliations other than Protestant accounted for less than 1% of the families while 9% reported no religious affiliation. The Baptist dominated in memberships but other denominations were also represented.

Family life cycle — The family life cycle stages were defined according to the presence or absence of children in the household and the age of spouses. The six stages are given in Table 1. Two-thirds of the families had children. Almost one-third of the families had children in which the oldest child was between the ages of 13 and 20. This category accounted for the largest group of families with children. Only 10% of the families reported their oldest child under 6 years of age.

Family income — When the families were asked to give information on family income during the past calendar year, only 2% did not respond. In general, the families had limited financial resources. Twenty-seven percent had incomes below $3,000. About one-half had incomes below $6,000. Only 18% reported an income of $9,000 or above. According to the 1970 census data, 51% of husband-wife families in the United States had annual incomes of $10,000 or more in 1969.[7] Although the figures are not exactly comparable, it does show that the sample families were of lower income level than the nation as a whole.

Occupations — The main occupation of the husband was categorized according to the Hollingshead classification of occupational roles.[8] A large proportion of the families had husbands employed primarily in skilled or semi-skilled occupations. Eight percent of the husbands were engaged in high-status occupational roles of professionals or managers of businesses. Five percent were in occupations considered to be unskilled. The majority of the husbands were located in the lower middle range of the status continuum.

SELECTED ASPECTS OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Kinship Network

Kinship network refers to the connection of related individuals or families with one another. Focusing on kinship in this context, several questions were asked of the families with respect to kinship availability, proximity, extent of contact, and aid or advice.

The kinship availability data were obtained by asking the families the number of relatives or kinfolks living in the community within five miles of their home. Absolute numbers were not requested. Seven categories with numbers ranging from 0 to 25 or over were included in the measure. Table 2 gives the data reported.

[7]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, **1970 Census of Population**, PC (2)-8A.

[8]Hollingshead, August B. **Two Factor Index of Social Position**, (copyright 1957), privately printed, 1965. Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut.

Table 2. Kinship availability in the community

Number of kin in community	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
None	26	10
1-4	52	21
5-9	50	20
10-14	34	14
15-19	20	8
20-24	15	6
25 and over	52	21
Unknown	1	a

[a]Less than 0.5%

A kinship network was generally accessible to the rural families in this study. Very few families had no kin living in the community. Over one-fifth had 25 or more relatives nearby.

The extent to which this network of kin came in contact with each other was also explored. The families were asked to give the number of visits to and from relatives in the community the month preceding the interview (Table 3). Seventy-six percent of the families visited relatives in

Table 3. Number of visits to and from kin in the community the past month

Number of visits	To kin		From kin	
	Number and percent of families[a]			
	N	%	N	%
None	33	13	21	8
1-4	76	30	59	24
5-9	28	11	32	13
10-14	27	11	31	12
15-19	12	5	9	4
20-24	9	4	12	5
25-29	26	10	37	15
30 and over	12	5	23	9
No kin	26	10	26	10
Unknown	1	b	0	0
Mean number of visits for families reporting visits	12		17	

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding
[b]Less than 0.5%

the community the past month while 82 percent had visits from relatives. The average monthly number of visits to kin and from kin for those families visiting was 12 and 17, respectively. This could mean that on the average a family either visited or was visited by kin almost every day. However, no information was obtained on the number of visits per day. Visits were identified as formal or informal contacts face-to-face with a family or individuals in a family. The extent of a visit was not ascertained. The visit might have varied from a few minutes to an all-day encounter.

The sample included a considerable number of older families so the larger number of visits from relatives than to relatives may be attributed to this group. Older persons might have been limited in their activities and transportation facilities and could not go visiting as easily as younger persons.

The families were also questioned about the number of visits to and from kin living outside the community. No effort was made to determine the number of relatives outside the community as was done for those living in the community. Sixty-one percent of the families visited kin outside the community with an average number of 5 visits during the past month (Table 4). Seventy-six percent of the families had visits from kin outside the community with an average number of 8 visits. As expected, the visitation pattern showed lowered frequencies for those outside the community than for those inside the community. Proximity is obviously a factor influencing frequency of visitation.

Table 4. Number of visits to and from kin outside the community the past month

Number of visits	To kin		From kin	
	Number and percent of families[a]			
	N	%	N	%
None	96	38	56	22
1-4	113	45	116	46
5-9	25	10	41	16
10 and over	14	6	35	14
No kin	1	b	1	b
Unknown	1	b	1	b
Mean number of visits for families reporting visits	5		8	

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Family contacts with friends in the community were considered in the same manner as that for relatives (Table 5). On the average 10 visits per month were made to friends while there were 15 visits from friends. The visitation pattern with friends in the community tended to be less extensive than with relatives.

Table 5. Number of visits to and from friends in the community the past month

Number of visits	To friends		From friends	
	Number and percent of families[a]			
	N	%	N	%
None	68	27	43	17
Under 5	74	30	78	31
5-9	44	18	26	10
10-14	29	12	37	15
15-19	9	4	6	2
20-24	12	5	18	7
25-29	8	3	21	8
30 and over	5	2	20	8
Unknown	1	b	1	b
Mean number of visits for families reporting visits	10		15	

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

The number of visits to and from kin in the community in relationship to the number of kin in the community was analyzed (Table 6). The pattern was as expected with density influencing frequency of interaction, that is, as the number of kin in the community increased, the number of visits to and from kin also increased.

Table 7 shows the kin living nearest to the families. The largest proportion of families had parents or grandparents living nearest, followed by brothers or sisters, children and aunts, uncles, or cousins. There was a tendency for more of the female heads' kin than the male heads' kin to live closer to the families. This was more pronounced for brothers or sisters than for the other kin groups.

Table 6. Mean number of visits to and from kin in the community the past month in relation to number of kin

Number of kin	Mean number of visits[a]	
	To kin	From kin
	N	%
1-9 (102 families)	8	11
10-19 (54 families)	11	15
20 and over (67 families)	15	22

[a]Mean number of visits based on number of families having kin in the community. The mean number of visits here differs from that reported in Table 3 due to difference in base figures used.

Table 7. Kin living nearest and kin visiting most often

Kin	Kin living nearest			Kin visiting most often		
	Number and percent of families[a]					
	N	%		N	%	
None	1	b		2	1	
Parents or grandparents						
Male heads	38	15		23	9	
Female heads	43	17		35	14	
Total		(81)	(32)		(58)	(23)
Brothers or sisters						
Male heads	28	11		38	15	
Female heads	45	18		55	22	
Total		(73)	(29)		(93)	(37)
Aunts, uncles, cousins and others						
Male heads	18	7		6	2	
Female heads	28	11		21	8	
Total		(46)	(18)		(27)	(11)
Children	49	20		7	28	

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

[b]Less than 0.5%

The pattern changed somewhat for kin visiting most often. Brothers and sisters ranked first, followed by children, parents or grandparents, and then aunts, uncles, or cousins (Table 7). However, the same trend existed regarding the female heads' kin in that for all the groups, the female heads' kin rather than male heads' kin were more likely to visit most often. Perhaps this should be expected since a larger proportion of the females' kin than males' kin lived nearby. Other factors may be that the female head is more likely to be home during the day to accept calls from visitors and she may have become more dependent on her relatives.

Cooking, shopping, gifts of money, gifts of food or clothing, transportation, and looking after the sick and elderly were the types of kin help investigated. Table 8 shows the type and extent of help received by families having relatives living in the communities. Most families reported no help from kin. The largest proportion, about 40%, perceived that they had help in gifts of food or clothing, transportation, and looking after the sick and elderly. Any type of help was more likely to be on a "sometimes" rather than an "often" basis.

Although these rural families did have an extensive visitation pattern from kin, this did not seem to extend to help or aid from them. Evidently the majority of the contacts with the kin was of a social nature. Rural families are known to be independent and not to seek help from outside sources. This independent pride may also be a factor which prevents them from accepting help from relatives.

Table 8. Type and extent of help received from kin

Type of help	Extent of help[a]					
	Often		Sometimes		Never	
	Number and percent of families[b]					
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cooking	18	8	39	17	167	75
Shopping	16	7	40	18	168	75
Gifts of money	7	3	55	25	162	72
Gifts of food or clothing	8	4	82	37	134	60
Transportation	22	10	68	30	134	60
Looking after sick or elderly	23	10	64	29	137	61

[a]Based on families having kin

[b]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Of all the different sources that families could go to for help with family problems, the kin source was the one most frequently mentioned (Table 9). Approximately one-third would seek help from kin compared to one-fourth from a minister and one-fifth from a friend, the next two sources most frequently mentioned. Very few would not ask advice from anyone. Nevertheless, when all nonkinship sources were combined, they outranked a kin source as a means of help in times of trouble. It may be that the families can talk or discuss their problems on a more objective basis with someone outside the family or it may be a matter of individual family privacy.

Table 9. Source of help with problems

Source	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
None	5	2
Kin	80	32
Nonkin		
Minister	62	25
Friend	47	19
Doctor, psychologist, etc.	35	14
Other	9	4
Unknown	12	5

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

The family reunion has been a traditional event for rural families. It is an occasion in which the kin of a particular family get together. In most cases it is an all-day affair. In many instances it is held in a local church. Other times it is held in a relative's home. The family members who participate usually provide food for a shared meal. It is thought that occasions of this nature make the kin more aware of each other and bind the family network more closely together. As indicated in Table 10, just over one-half of the families attended one or more family reunions the past year with a mean number of 2.4.

Table 10. Number of family reunions attended past year

Number of reunions	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
None	116	46
One	59	24
Two	28	11
Three	24	10
Four or more	23	9
Mean number of reunions for families reporting reunions	2.4	

Family Cohesion

Family cohesion was determined by a series of questions about the performance of certain activities of the family as a group. Table 11 charts the positive responses to questions concerning family activities participated in the previous month. The most frequent and consistent activity was the family visiting kin as a group. Two-thirds of the families visited relatives the past month.

Discussion on the cost of living was the next activity participated in jointly by the families followed closely by family shopping. At the time the families were interviewed in the Summer of 1972, the cost of living was a major topic in the media. Families were increasingly aware of the sharp increase in prices at the grocery store.

A sizable proportion, 39%, of the families had gone out together to eat the past month. Eating and shopping were often combined. It may be that some of these rural families were making "going to town" a family event.

Slightly over a third of the families stated that they jointly attended church. Job obligations, illness, and other reasons may have prevented all the family members from attending together. Ninety percent reported protestant affiliation as noted earlier.

Table 11. Family cohesion

Variable	Yes responses Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Family visited kin past month	167	67
Family visited friend past month	114	46
Family went to church past month	88	35
Family went on a picnic past month	48	19
Family went shopping past month	152	61
Family went out to eat past month	98	39
Family talked about cost of living past month	154	62
Family discussed elections past month	107	43

[a]Based on all families in the study

When asked if the family had discussed political elections, about two-fifths of the families gave positive replies. In a few instances the wife volunteered that she and her husband never discussed politics. He had his opinions and she had hers and to prevent disagreements they avoided the subject. More male than female heads of households voted in the last election, 62% of the males compared to 46% of the females.

Picnicking together, an expected group activity, was reported by only one-fifth of the families. The families were also queried on whether they had spent a night away from home the past year and whether they usually played games together. Fifty-six percent indicated they had spent a night away from home while 57% played games together either often or sometimes.

One of the traditional cohesive activities of families has been the family meal. These rural families for the most part had at least one meal together during the day. Only 6% did not have any meals together. Table 12 shows the eating pattern of the sample families. Supper was the meal which most of the families ate together. Approximately one-fourth of the families usually had 3 meals together each day. Lunch was the one meal which the families were least likely to eat together. This seems logical since families with working husbands and wives, and children in school would most likely have one or more members miss the noon meal at home.

Replies to questions about how family members get along together and the extent of talking over their problems are given in Table 13. Almost all of the families responded positively. However, the interviewers expressed doubt that this was the true situation. Respondents probably were sensitive to culturally "expected" responses in reference to this dependent variable.

Table 12. Meals usually eaten together

Number and type of meal	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
One meal	114	46
Breakfast	9	4
Lunch	1	a
Supper	104	42
Two meals	61	24
Breakfast, lunch	3	1
Breakfast, supper	47	19
Lunch, supper	11	4
Three meals	60	24
None	15	6

[a]Less than 0.5%

Table 13. How families get along and talk over problems

Variable	Extent of response					
	Very well		Fairly well		Not well at all	
	Number and percent of families					
	N	%	N	%	N	%
How family members get along together	197	79	52	21	1	a
How well family members talk over problems	184	74	60	24	6	2

[a]Less than 0.5%

Husband and Wife Cohesion

Activities of the husband and wife with or without other family members were also examined. Figures for comparison of these activities are given in Table 14. Expectations were that some of the activities would lend themselves more to husband and wife participation than participation with the entire family. This was found to be particularly true in relation to discussions of the cost of living and political elections. All of the activities except going on a picnic were participated in by a larger proportion of husbands and wives than families.

Task Performance

The performance of household tasks is necessary to meet the physical needs and wants of a family. The tasks may be carried out by any family member, group of members, or persons outside the family. Table 15 pre-

Table 14. Comparison of family and husband and wife cohesive activities

Variable	Yes responses			
	Family		Husband & wife	
	Number and percent of families[a]			
	N	%	N	%
Visited kin past month	154	68	178	78
Visited friends past month	106	47	127	56
Went to church past month	83	36	86	38
Went on a picnic past month	46	20	46	20
Went shopping past month	139	61	163	72
Went out to eat past month	91	40	106	47
Talked about cost of living past month	135	59	200	88
Discussed elections past month	91	42	149	65

[a]Based on husband and wife families only.

sents 15 tasks performed by family members and outside help on a shared and independent basis. An independent task refers to one performed alone with no other person participating. A shared task means involvement of more than one person. No task pertains to families in which the task did not apply or families who never did the task. For example, over one-half of the families reported no task for care of children. This meant that there were no children in the household or the children looked after themselves.

A larger proportion of families indicated that tasks were performed independently than shared. This was true for all tasks under study. Grocery shopping was the most frequently shared task. Perhaps this entailed a trip to town which was more conducive to sharing. Tasks ranking next in importance as being shared were cleaning house and making beds which were equally mentioned by the families. The most extensive use of outside help was for mowing the yard.

Table 16 gives another picture of the tasks performed in the home. It gives the percentage of family members in each sex-age group who performed specific tasks during the past week previous to the interview or the last time performed. In general the tasks were carried out by a larger proportion of adults than children. Cleaning house, washing dishes, making beds, and preparing meals were primarily female tasks although males did participate to some extent. Laundering clothes, ironing, and making clothes were also mostly female tasks. Although a larger percentage of females than males bought groceries, 42% of the males carried out this task. Mowing yard and washing car were more male tasks than female for all age groups. Trash removal was also male-dominated except for adults in which

Table 15. Way household tasks were performed the week preceding the interview or the last time performed

Task	Family members		Outside		No. Task	All[a]
	Shared	Independent	Shared	Independent		
	Percent					
Cleaned house	22	72	4	3	0	100
Washed dishes	17	81	0	2	0	100
Made beds	22	77	1	1	0	100
Prepared meals	16	83	1	b	0	100
Laundered clothes	8	88	1	3	0	100
Ironed	10	84	0	4	2	100
Bought groceries	28	70	1	1	0	100
Made Clothes	4	56	b	0	39	100
Mowed yard	18	66	0	15	1	100
Washed car	12	62	0	8	18	100
Washed windows	15	78	0	5	2	100
Removed trash	16	82	0	2	0	100
Cared for children	11	36	1	b	52	100
Took children places	12	34	b	3	51	100
Paid electric bill	1	98	0	0	1	100

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

females outranked males. Washing windows was more extensively performed by females than males. Caring for children was more a female than a male task performance. However, taking children places was more male- than female-oriented for the children groups although for the adults it still was female-oriented.

On the average the male and female adults performed about the same number of tasks, 9 and 10, respectively. Also, male and female children in the age group 6-12 did not vary much in the average number of tasks. However, there was considerable difference between males and females in the 13-20 age group. Males had an average of 1.9 tasks compared to 8.0 for females. All family members on the average carried out 5.6 tasks.

Table 16. Task performance of family members by sex-age group

Task	Sex-age group						
	Males			Females			
	Adult	Children 13-20	Children 6-12	Adult	Children 13-20	Children 6-11	All[a]
	Percent						
Cleaned house	7	7	7	85	58	26	39
Washed dishes	6	7	5	85	51	25	38
Made beds	5	11	13	89	62	41	42
Prepared meals	6	2	2	91	42	5	37
Laundered clothes	4	0	1	86	27	3	33
Ironed	2	1	1	83	42	13	33
Bought groceries	42	7	0	75	7	0	41
Made clothes	b	0	0	51	36	2	20
Mowed yard	60	59	22	17	13	11	34
Washed car	43	59	14	14	31	7	28
Washed windows	15	7	1	76	27	10	35
Removed trash	30	57	38	51	31	13	40
Cared for children	7	4	0	43	9	3	19
Took children places	15	13	7	35	6	0	18
Paid electric bill	60	1	0	34	2	0	31
Average number tasks	9	1.9	0.8	10	8.4	1.4	5.6

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Decision-making

Respondents reported their perception of who usually made decisions on 16 aspects of family life. Responses included wife, husband, children, other family members such as parents, aunts, and uncles, and a combination of these. The decisions were categorized into 3 types: social interaction, economic, and child-oriented. Also, families were dichotomized according to whether there were children in the household or not. Children included any offspring who lived with the family. Due to the nature of the data, only two-parent families (91% of the total sample) were considered in this analysis.

Social interaction — Respondents were asked who usually made the decisions in their family with respect to the following matters: which relatives to visit, which friends to visit, where to go for fun or an evening out, what television programs to watch, who does the work around the house, and where to go to church. The responses are shown in Table 17.

The majority of the families reported that both the wife and husband usually made the decisions. Two exceptions were that families with children mentioned children as the main decision-makers in what television programs to watch and the wife as the major decision-maker on who does the work around the house. It is interesting to note that about one-third of the families with children indicated that children usually decided which television programs to watch and another one-fourth indicated that both the children and parents made the decision. This was by far the most important decision in which children were involved.

For those families who gave wife alone or husband alone as usual decision-makers, the pattern was somewhat different for the two groups of families. In families with children, husbands tended to be named more frequently than wives as making the decisions except for who does the

Table 17. Social interaction decision-making patterns

Decision	Families with children[a]					Families without children[a]				
	W*	H*	WH*	C*	WHC*	W*	H*	WH*	O*	WHO*
	Percent									
Which relatives to visit	9	10	73	1	7	14	13	81	1	1
Which friends to visit	9	12	71	1	7	10	3	86	0	1
Where to go for fun or an evening out	6	12	66	7	9	15	8	77	0	0
What television programs to watch	8	25	10	31	26	15	30	51	0	4
Who does work around the house	59	3	29	1	8	44	5	50	0	1
Where to go to church	26	8	54	4	7	17	1	81	0	1

[a]Excludes 22 one-parent families; includes only families responding positively to a decision. For example, families without a television do not have a decision to make on what television programs to watch. The number of families for each decision ranged from 128 to 149 for families with children and 62 to 79 for families without children.

*W=wife; H=husband; WH=wife and husband; C=children; WHC=wife, husband, children; O=other; WHO=wife, husband, other.

work around the house and where to go to church. In contrast, in families without children, the wives more often than the husbands were the dominant decision-makers except for what television programs to watch. Other family members played a minor part as usual decision-makers, and this was only in families without children.

Economic — The families were questioned about 5 economic decisions. These were: how money is spent, how much money is spent on big items such as furniture or a car, how much money is spent on everyday items

such as food and household supplies, whether the wife should go to work or quit work, and whether to live here or move. Table 18 gives the economic decision-making patterns.

Only in families with no children did the wife tend to outrank the combination of wife and husband in whether the wife should go to work or quit work. When economic decisions were not shared, it was more likely to be by husband for how money is spent, how much money is spent on big items, and whether to live here or move. How much money is spent on everyday items and whether wife should go to work or quit work was more often made by the wife than the husband.

Children had little influence on economic decisions. Their participation was greatest concerning whether to live here or move and this was shared with parents. Economic decisions by other family members were infrequent.

Table 18. Economic decision-making patterns

Decision	Families with children[a]					Families without children[a]				
	W*	H*	WH*	C*	WHC*	W*	H*	WH*	O*	WHO*
	Percent									
How money is spent	7	21	71	0	1	6	14	79	0	0
How much money is spent on big items	7	35	56	1	1	9	29	62	0	0
How much money is spent on everyday items	34	16	49	1	1	35	6	59	0	0
Whether wife should go to work or quit work	33	30	36	0	0	40	22	36	2	0
Whether to live here or move	9	23	62	0	6	6	24	67	1	1

[a]Excludes 22 one-parent families; includes only families responding positively to a decision. The number of families for each decision ranged from 138 to 148 for families with children and 50 to 81 for families without children.
*W=wife; H=husband; WH=wife and husband; C=children; WHC=wife, husband, children; O=other; WHO=wife, husband, other.

Child-oriented — Respondents were asked who usually made decisions on 5 different dimensions related to children. These included number of children wanted, level of birth control, how to handle children, when children go to a doctor or dentist, and when children can entertain in the home. Only the first 2 items were asked of families without children.

Table 19 shows the child-oriented decisions of the families. As was true for social interaction and economic decisions, the decisions were usually made by both the wife and husband. However, the wife alone rather than wife and husband together was slightly more important as a

decision-maker for when the children go to a doctor or dentist and just as important for when children entertain in the home. Husbands alone and children played minor roles in these two decisions although children making the decisions when they can entertain ranked next in importance to what television to watch. In families without children, the husband alone was much more prevalent than wife alone in making decisions about the number of children wanted and birth control.

Table 19. Child-oriented decision-making patterns

Decision	Families with children[a]					Families without children[a]				
	W*	H*	WH*	C*	WHC*	W*	H*	WH*	O*	WHO*
	Percent									
Number of children wanted	11	6	85	b	b	8	24	68	b	b
Level of birth control	12	5	83	b	b	0	17	83	b	b
How to handle children	17	9	74	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
When children go to a doctor or dentist	46	3	43	6	2	b	b	b	b	b
When children can entertain in the home	38	3	38	19	3	b	b	b	b	b

[a]Excludes 22 one-parent families; includes only families responding positively to a decision. The number of families for each decision ranged from 107 to 127 for families with children and 24 to 25 for families without children.

*W=wife; H=husband; WH=wife and husband; C=children; WHC=wife, husband, children; O=other, WHO=wife, husband, other.

[b]Does not apply.

Communication Dimensions

A number of questions related to the use of communication tools were studied; i.e., television, radio, telephone, newspaper, and car or truck. Since transportation provides communication, car and truck ownership was assessed.

Table 20 shows the proportion of families with a television, with a color television, frequency of watching, frequency of watching during meals, and meals where it was watched most. Over 90% of the families had access to a television set. Approximately two-thirds indicated they had watched it often. About one-half of the families watched it during meals, most often at supper.

The radio was found in about the same number of families as the television but was not used as often as the television (Table 21).

Three-fourths of the families had a telephone. The extent of use varied but about one-third used it 20 or more times a week (Table 22). The living room was the place where most of the phones were located.

The families had less access to a daily newspaper than television, radio, or telephone. Fifty-seven percent indicated they took a daily newspaper (Table 23).

The majority of the families, 87%, owned a car or truck (Table 23). About 40% owned more than one.

Very few of these families were isolated from the outside world. Less than 5% indicated they had no television, radio, telephone, or daily newspaper.

Table 20. Use of television by families

Variable	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Number of televisions in home		
None	17	7
One	172	69
Two	49	20
Three or more	12	5
Number of color televisions in home		
None	175	70
One	73	29
Two	2	1
Frequency of watching television		
Often	159	64
Sometimes	71	28
Never	3	1
No television	17	7
Frequency of watching television with meals		
Never	103	41
Less than 1 time a week	17	7
1-3 times a week	47	19
4-6 times a week	21	8
7 or more times a week	45	18
No television	17	7
Meals where television watched most		
Breakfast	3	1
Lunch	16	6
Supper	98	39
Breakfast and lunch	1	b
Breakfast and supper	5	2
Lunch and supper	4	2
All three meals	3	1
No television and never watch when eating	120	48

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Table 21. Use of radio by families

Variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Number of radios in home		
None	14	6
One	103	41
Two	70	28
Three	42	17
Four or more	21	8
Frequency of using radio		
Often	97	39
Sometimes	132	53
Never	6	2
No radio	15	6

Table 22. Use of telephone by families

Variable	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Telephone ownership		
No	59	24
Yes	191	76
Frequency of using telephone		
No telephone	59	24
Under 5 times a week	14	6
5-9 times a week	31	12
10-14 times a week	54	22
15-19 times a week	17	7
20 or more times a week	74	30
Do not know	1	b
Where telephone located		
No telephone	59	24
Living room	101	40
Kitchen	32	13
Hall	13	5
Bedroom	12	5
Other rooms or combination of rooms	33	13

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Table 23. Families taking daily newspapers and owning cars or trucks

Variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Takes daily newspaper		
No	107	43
Yes	143	57
Owns a car or truck		
None	32	13
One	119	48
Two	79	32
Three	16	6
Four	3	1

Home Environment

The home environment is defined as the setting in which family members live and react to each other as a group or as individuals. The survey dealt with several aspects of the home environment. These included heating, cooling, lighting, plumbing, laundry facilities, food facilities, entertainment, space, and repairs. Data on tenure, age of house construction, and years lived at residence were also obtained.

Heating — Table 24 gives the type of heat in the homes, the families' perception of adequacy of heat in winter and the extent of heating all rooms. Electricity was the main source of heat with 39% of the families having this type. Wood or coal ranked next in importance. About one-fifth of the families had more than one source of heat. In most instances this was a small electric heater in a bathroom as a supplement to the main heating system.

The majority of the families perceived that they had plenty of heat in winter. Only 9% indicated a lack of heat. A small proportion, 4%, had not lived in the home long enough to determine the heating adequacy.

Table 24. Heating in the home

Heating variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Type of heat		
Electric	97	39
Gas	27	11
Wood or coal	67	27
Fuel oil or kerosene	29	12
Electric and gas	3	1
Gas and wood or coal	3	1
Electric and oil	8	3
Electric and wood or coal	13	5
Oil and wood or coal	2	1
Heating system not installed	1	a
Adequate heat in winter		
Yes	218	87
No	23	9
No response	9	4
Rooms heated in winter		
All	172	69
Some	68	27
No response	10	4

[a]Less than 0.5%

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported that all rooms in their home were heated in winter. In most cases those reporting all rooms not heated included large homes in which unused or seldom used rooms were shut-off during the winter months.

Cooling — Seventy-eight percent of the occupied dwellings had no air conditioning (Table 25). Complete cooling systems were more often in recently constructed homes. The location of many dwellings in open spaces with shade trees, in addition to the expense, may account for the low incidence of cooling systems.

Table 25. Cooling in the home

Cooling variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Extent of air conditioning		
All rooms cooled	38	15
Some rooms cooled	17	7
No rooms cooled	195	78

Lighting — Lighting offers a pleasant atmosphere and is important in carrying out activities in the home such as reading, sewing, and cooking. Although 92% of the families indicated they had enough light for their needs, it is doubtful that this proportion had adequate lighting (Table 26). When questioned about the number of lamps (not ceiling lights) in the home, 6% reported none and 9% only one. The average number of lamps per family was 4.

Laundry facilities — The proportion of families with specific laundry facilities is given in Table 27. Although a large proportion of the families had a washing machine of some type, 14% took their laundry to a laundromat or elsewhere. About one-half of the families had an automatic clothes dryer which was slightly less than those with an automatic washer. About one-fifth of the families did their washing of clothes in a laundry or utility room. Other places—particularly the kitchen and porch—were also used. The kitchen was the main place for ironing.

Food facilities — All families had a range of some type, mostly electric, and only one did not have a refrigerator (Table 28). Only 7% of the families reported ownership of automatic dishwashers. However, over one-half owned a freezer. A home garden was also common for the majority of families.

Plumbing — Eighty-nine percent of the families had running water in the kitchen (Table 29). However, slightly fewer (83%) had a bathroom. About one-half of the families received their water supply from a public source. The other one-half used a well or spring as the source.

Space — Space facilities are important for activities and privacy of family members. On the average, the families had 5 rooms in their home and 78% had more than one room per person. More than one room per person is usually considered adequate space for a housing unit. The living room and kitchen were the most frequently used rooms. A bedroom was the one least often used. Bedrooms were also mentioned as the room most

Table 26. Lighting in home

Lighting variable	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Number of lamps		
None	14	6
One	23	9
Two	45	18
Three	46	18
Four	41	16
Five	28	11
Six	15	6
Seven	8	3
Eight	10	4
Nine	6	2
Ten and over	14	6
Average number	(4)	
Adequate light for needs		
Yes	229	92
No	21	8
Ceiling lights have shades		
All	158	63
Some	38	15
None	51	20
No Ceiling lights	3	1
Ceiling lights have switches		
All	206	82
Some	28	11
None	13	5
No ceiling lights	3	1

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

often used for privacy. When questioned on space needs, 70% replied that they had enough space for their needs. Table 30 gives the proportions of families with specific space facilities.

Entertainment — Record players and musical instruments are often considered as prestige or status items as well as items of entertainment for a family. Fifty-nine percent of the sample families had a record player and about one-third had some kind of musical instrument (Table 31).

Repairs past year — Table 32 gives the percentage of families who had specific repair work in the home the past year and the persons in the family who perform home repairs. The predominant repair work was of appliances. The husband or male head was the family member most often mentioned as doing repair work.

Tenure — The majority of families owned their own homes (Table 33). This was not surprising since home ownership has been typical among rural residents.

Table 27. Laundry facilities in home

Laundry facilities variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Type of washing machine		
Automatic	138	55
Non automatic (wringer)	73	29
Automatic and nonautomatic	5	2
None	34	14
Room used for laundry		
Laundry or utility room	55	22
Porch	47	19
Bathroom	15	6
Kitchen	53	21
Basement	30	12
Other rooms or combination of rooms	14	6
Laundromat or elsewhere	36	14
Type of iron		
Electric	246	98
Non electric (flat)	2	1
None	2	1
Room used for ironing		
Kitchen	93	37
Bedroom	45	18
Laundry or utility room	20	8
Living room or den	45	18
Dining room	8	3
Porch	7	3
Basement	3	1
Other rooms or combination of rooms	23	9
Hired outside of home	5	2
No ironing	2	1
Owns clothes dryer		
Yes	119	48
No	131	52

Years house constructed — One-third of the families lived in a house which had been constructed 25 years or longer (Table 34). However, close to a third were living in houses which had been built less than 10 years. The average number of years a house had been constructed excluding unknowns was 24 years.

Years lived at residence — Nearly three-fifths of the families had lived in their current residence less than 10 years (Table 35). About one-fifth had lived there 20 years or over.

Table 28. Food facilities in the home

Food facilities variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Type of range		
Electric	225	90
Gas	10	4
Coal	8	3
Electric and coal	7	3
Range has oven		
Yes	246	98
No	4	2
Owns refrigerator		
Yes	249	100
No	1	a
Owns Freezer		
Yes	134	54
No	116	46
Owns automatic dishwasher		
Yes	17	7
No	233	93
Had home garden		
Yes	163	65
No	87	35

[a]Less than 0.5%

Table 29. Plumbing in the home

Plumbing variable	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Running water in kitchen		
Yes	228	89
No	28	11
Bathroom		
Yes	207	83
No	43	17
Source of water supply		
Public	120	48
Well	101	40
Spring	24	10
Cistern	1	b
Relatives' well or cistern	3	1
Relatives' public water system	1	b

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Table 30. Space facilities in home

Space facilities variable	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Number of rooms		
Four or less	74	30
Five	100	40
Six	50	20
Seven or more	26	10
Average	(5)	
Number of rooms per person		
1 room or less	56	22
More than 1 room	194	78
Room used most		
Living	114	46
Kitchen	77	31
Den or family room	15	6
Kitchen and dining combination	11	4
Bedroom	10	4
Living and kitchen the same	9	4
Other rooms or combination of rooms	13	5
Don't know	1	b
Room not used		
Bedroom	54	22
Other	14	6
No room not used	182	73
Room used for privacy		
Bedroom	148	59
Living room	43	17
Kitchen	7	3
Living and bedroom the same	5	2
Dining room	4	2
Porch	9	4
Other rooms or combination of rooms	24	10
Go outside for privacy	5	2
No response	3	1
Adequate space needs		
Yes	175	70
No	75	30

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Table 31. Entertainment facilities in home

Entertainment variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Ownership of record player		
Yes	147	59
No	103	41
Frequency of use of record players		
Often	27	11
Sometimes	102	41
Never	18	7
No record player	103	41
Ownership of musical instrument		
Yes	82	33
No	168	67

Table 32. Repairs in home past year

Repair variable	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Appliances		
Yes	113	45
No	136	54
No response	1	b
Electric wiring		
Yes	29	12
No	221	88
Plumbing		
Yes	39	16
No	211	84
House (other than those mentioned above)		
Yes	79	32
No	171	68
Family member usually doing home repairs		
Husband or male head	159	64
Wife or female head	5	2
Son or son-in-law	8	3
Husband and sons	6	2
Husband and wife	5	2
Other members in home	3	1
Relatives outside home	15	6

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Table 33. House tenure of families

Type of tenure	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Owners	213	85
Nonowners	37	15

Table 34. Years house constructed

Years	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Less than 5	42	17
5-9	31	12
10-14	25	10
15-19	22	9
20-24	33	13
25-29	16	6
30-29	16	6
40-49	16	6
50 and over	36	14
Unknown	13	5
Average	(24)	

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 35. Years lived at residence by families

Years	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Under 5	90	36
5-9	56	22
10-19	52	21
20 and over	52	21

Economic Activities

Part of a family's well-being depends on the financial resources of the family. Several aspects of economic activities were examined in the study. These included amount and source of income, number of income earners, means of transportation to work, distance traveled to work, reasons for not being employed, child-care arrangements for working wives with children, insurance, assets, and buying patterns.

Income level — Each respondent was asked to estimate the total income from all sources received by the family the calendar year before the interview. This was checked in an income category of $1,000 intervals ranging from under $1,000 to $10,000 and over. Income reported was before income taxes but after expenses for operating a business or farm for all family members who were considered as part of the family on money matters. For purposes of this study the incomes were grouped into 4 levels as follows: 1) under $3,000; 2) $3,000-$5,999; 3) $6,000-$8,999; and 4) $9,000 and over. These levels have been discussed in a previous section.

Income sources — Table 36 shows the sources of income reported by the families. The most common source was from wages and salaries. Social security, interest, and dividends and self-employment in the order mentioned were the next important sources. Approximately one-fourth of the families mentioned these sources. Several of the families had a number of members 65 years or older which accounted for the relatively large percentage receiving social security payments. Other sources ranged from 1 to 11%.

Family earners — The families were queried on the main occupation of husbands or male heads. Those occupations have been discussed in an earlier section. Each respondent was also asked to give the total number working for wages in the family. Table 37 shows the distribution of earners. The highest proportion had only one earner which was usually the husband.

Table 36. Income sources

Source	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Wages and salaries	175	70
Self-employment	60	24
Roomers and boarders	11	4
Rent	23	9
Sale of items in home	5	2
Interest and dividends	62	25
Trust funds, royalties, etc.	2	1
Social security	68	27
Job related benefits	27	11
Armed forces	10	4
Welfare	24	10
Child support, alimony	3	1
Gifts, inheritances	6	2
Other pensions, annuities	20	8
Price supports, farm rent, etc.	23	9

However, close to one-third had two earners which included wife, children, or other relative living with the family. Very few families had more than 2 earners. Approximately one-fifth had no earners. These were mostly retired persons.

Table 37. Number of earners

Number of earners	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
None	53	21
One	113	45
Two	73	29
Three	10	4
Four	1	b

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

[b]Less than 0.5%

Transportation patterns — The families were questioned on the transportation to work for the main occupation of husband or male head. The availability of transportation to and from work is important in obtaining and keeping a job. As expected, the majority of husbands and male heads used their own cars or trucks (Table 38). Other means of transportation were minor in comparison. This means that the car is an important asset to these rural families.

Distance traveled to work — Table 39 gives the distance husbands or male heads traveled to their main jobs. One-fourth traveled less than 5 miles while about one-fifth traveled 5 to 9 miles. Therefore, the majority of working husbands or male heads traveled less than 10 miles to work

Table 38. Means of transportation to work

Means	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Own car or truck	128	51
With family member	6	2
With boss or friend	7	3
Company car or truck	6	2
Walks or works in home	19	8
Car pool	6	2
Public transportation	0	0
No work, no male head	78	31

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 39. Distance traveled to work

Miles	Number and percent of families[a]	
	N	%
Less than 1	27	11
1-4	36	14
5-9	44	18
10-14	18	7
15-19	13	5
20-49	18	7
50 and over	6	2
Varies	10	4
No job, no husband or male head	78	31

[a]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

which is not a long distance for a rural area. However, 7% traveled 20 to 49 miles and 2% over 50 miles. For those families, a considerable amount of time and money was spent in getting to and from work.

Reasons for husbands and wives not working away from home — As expected, the reasons given for husbands not working away from home was quite different than for the wives (Table 40). Approximately 50% of the wives reported never having experienced working away from home. One-fifth of the wives said their families preferred that they not work at all outside the home. Approximately one-fifth of the families had wives working away from home.

Child care — Eleven percent of the families had children 14 years of age or younger to be cared for while the mother worked. Table 41 shows the care arrangements. The predominant arrangement was for someone in the home to care for them—either a relative or a baby-sitter. Very few took their children to relatives or baby-sitters outside the home. A day care center was used by only one family but this may be that day care centers were not available in these rural areas. All of the families except one indicated they were satisfied with the child care arrangements. The exception was when children looked after themselves.

Insurance — Insurance provides financial portection to the family in times of trouble. The families were questioned about five types of insurance protection. Table 42 gives the proportions of families covered by each type. Except for burial insurance, the majority of families had coverage of each type. Health, house, and car protection ranked above life and burial.

Assets — Another means of protecting a family against financial insecurity is to have assets in property, investments, and savings. Table 43 presents the proportion of families with particular types of assets and the proportion which had been inherited or obtained from a family member. Previous conceptions were that rural families may inherit or obtain property through family designation. This proved to be true for the 15%

Table 40. Reasons husbands and wives gave for not working away from home*

Reason	Husband		Wife	
	Number and percent of families			
	N	%	N	%
Retired	41	16	3	1
Disabled	19	8	7	3
Family preferred them not to work	0	0	23	9
Obligation to family, home	0	0	28	11
Unable to find work, laid off	2	1	11	4
Self-employed, farms	13	5	0	0
Never worked	0	0	122	49
No husband, no wife	18	7	4	2
No response	2	1	0	0

*Percentages based on total families in sample; 62% of husbands and 21% of wives were working away from home

Table 41. Child care arrangements

Arrangement	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Mother or mother-in-law in home	3	11
Other relative or husband in home	7	25
Baby sitter in home	6	21
Mother or mother-in-law outside home	4	14
Baby sitter outside home	1	4
Other relative outside home	1	4
Day care center	1	4
Care for themselves, taken with parents on job, older children care for younger	5	18
Total	28	100

Table 42. Insurance protection

Type	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Health	195	78
Car or truck	188	75
House	182	74
Life	163	65
Burial	107	43

of the families who owned a farm. About the same proportion indicated family ownership of a home.

The home was by far the outstanding asset of the family. Other property ranked second with farm third. Twelve percent of the families said they had no assets of any type under question.

Table 43. Family assets

Asset	Owned		Inherited or kept in family	
	Number and percent of families			
	N	%	N	%
Home	213	85	36	14
Farm	80	32	37	15
Business	20	8	3	1
Savings, stocks, bonds, etc.	34	14	0	0
Other property	116	46	13	5

Spending patterns — The respondents were asked to recall the last big item purchased by the family, the decision-making process in purchasing and the way of payment (Table 44). It was thought that this would give some idea of the spending patterns of the families.

Although various items were mentioned, the largest percentage mentioned household appliances or equipment. The majority of families shopped around for the items and paid for them by installment payments.

Credit cards — Approximately one-fourth of the families used credit cards. The cards were mostly for gasoline stations or department stores.

Table 44. Family spending patterns

Variable	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Last big item purchased		
None	5	2
Suite of furniture	24	10
Piece of furniture	11	4
Household appliances, equipment	112	45
Car, truck, trailer, boat, motorcycle	79	32
Carpets, rugs, draperies, dishes, cookware	3	1
Equipment outside home	8	3
House or mobile home	5	2
No response	3	1
Decision-making process in purchasing		
Shopped around	137	55
Received information from friends or relatives	24	10
Received information from tv, radio, newspapers	3	1
Bought from place where we always buy	27	11
Did not plan ahead to buy	45	18
No response	14	6
Way paid for items		
Cash when purchased	41	16
Check when purchased	51	20
Charge and pay at end of month	5	2
Installment	131	52
Money order	1	a
Credit union	1	a
Borrowed from relatives, banks, etc.	8	3
Other	3	1
No response	9	4

[a]Less than 0.5%

Community Resources

The families were asked to check a list of 50 community resources which they had used or were currently using. The respondents could add additional ones not included on the list. Although all the resources may not have been available to the families, a checklist gave some assessment of their activities in the community.

Table 45 presents a list of the resources used by 10% or more of the families. Health services, churches, and banks were the resources most frequently mentioned. Coin laundries and dry cleaners were also mentioned by more than one-half of the families. Agricultural Extension

Service—including 4H Clubs and Home Demonstration Clubs, PTA, Farm Bureau, and civic clubs in the order mentioned—were the community organizations in which the families had been involved. About one-third of the families had used recreational facilities and one-fifth, libraries. On the average, each family had used 10 community resources.

Table 45. Use of community resources

Resource	Number and percent of families	
	N	%
Doctor	244	98
Church	219	88
Hospital	218	87
Dentist	215	86
Bank	191	76
Hospital emergency room	175	70
Coin laundry and dry cleaner	143	57
Agricultural Extension Service	117	47
Recreational facilities	85	34
Free health clinic	82	33
Social Security Administration	64	26
Farmers coop	53	21
PTA	51	20
Library	50	20
Rabies Clinic	43	17
Food stamp program	36	14
Farm Bureau	34	14
Employment agency	29	12
Civic clubs	28	11
Welfare Bureau	27	11

Attitudes and opinions

Several questions were posed to the respondents to obtain information on anomia and self-esteem. They were also asked to give opinions regarding their standard of living and the community where they lived. The findings are briefly discussed in this section.

Anomia — Anomia has been described as a hopeless, apathetic, or powerless condition. Five items developed by Leo Scrole were used in determining anomia.[9] These were:

1) Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

2) In spite of what some people say, the life of the average person is getting worse, not better.

3) It is hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future.

4) These days a person doesn't really know whom he can count on.

5) There is little use in writing to public officials because they often aren't interested in the problems of the average person.

Responses were dichotomous, i.e., agree or disagree with the statements. A score of 1 was given to all agree answers and 0 to all disagree answers. Therefore, the scores ranged from 0 to 5 with the higher range indicating a greater degree of the anomic conditions. The distribution of the scores is given below.

	Score	Percent of families
(Low)	0	7
	1	14
	2	14
	3	18
	4	18
(High)	5	29

According to the responses given, the families were more prone to be anomic. Almost half of them had scores in the higher range.

Self-esteem — Self-esteem refers to how a person feels about himself. This was determined by a measurement developed by M. Rosenberg.[10] The respondents were asked to reply to a series of statements on the basis of four possible answers: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. However, for scoring, the extreme responses of strongly agree and strongly disagree were combined with agree and disagree and scored according to Rosenberg. The scores could range from 1 to 6. The items on the scale were:

1) I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

2) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4) I am able to do all things as well as most other people.

5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

[9]Scrole, Lee. "Anomia Scale" in John P. Robinson and Philip R. Shaver, Eds., **Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes.** Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969, pp. 172-175.

[10]Rosenberg, M. "Self-esteem Scale" in John P. Robinson and Philip R. Shaver, Eds., **Measure of Social Psychological Attitudes.** Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969, pp. 98-101.

6) I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8) I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9) I certainly feel useless at times.
10) At times I am no good at all.

The higher the score the more self-esteem the family showed. In general, the majority of the respondents showed a relatively high score as indicated below.

	Score	Percent of families
(Low)	1	a
	2	2
	3	10
	4	26
	5	33
(High)	6	29

[a]Less than 0.5%.

This may seem contradictory to the findings on anomia. However, this may be typical of rural families. Although they feel hopeless in their condition, they do have high regard for themselves as persons suggesting a positive adaptation and acceptance of their own reality.

Standard of living — The respondents were asked how they felt about their family's standard of living — the kind of house, clothing, car, opportunities for the children, etc. Forty-five percent were very satisfied; 48%, fairly satisfied; and 7% dissatisfied. Even though they evidenced a fatalistic attitude toward life, they reported satisfaction with their standard of living.

Neighborhood — The respondents were also asked if the neighborhood where they lived was a good place for their family to live, about average, or a poor place. Sixty-nine percent responded that it was good; 30% average; and 1% poor.

RESULTS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Chi-square tests were computed to show associations between specific family functioning variables and three socioeconomic variables. The socioeconomic variables were categorized as follows:

Family income past calendar year
- Under $3,000
- $3,000-$5,999
- $6,000-$8,999
- $9,000 and over

Education of husband
- Under 8 grades
- 8-11 grades
- 12 and over grades

Age of husband
- Under 35 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65 and over years

All data were not appropriate for the chi-square test and in some instances the categories were collapsed to allow for a larger number in a cell. Table 46 gives a tabular summary of the associations between family functioning variables and the lower and upper sectors of the socioeconomic variables.

As indicated in this study, a contrast is evident between upper income, higher educated rural families and the lower income, less educated rural families. It appears that the lower income family operates in what has been viewed as the more traditional "kinship" family pattern. Their children live near them, they visit often, kin assist in family activities, and the wife takes the role of primary decision maker in managing their minimal resources (i.e., small homes, no car or truck, burial insurance, no credit card access).

The family just described is in contrast to the upper income rural family who seems to fit a more affluent egalitarian pattern of family functioning. Probably, by virtue of access to a broader variety of resources, these families participated in many more activities outside the home setting (i.e., church, picnics, visiting friends and relatives, restaurants). Upper income families owned a vehicle of transportation, had larger, better equipped homes, and access to credit that lower income families did not have. In addition, their children were more apt to live at a distance which may reflect the fact that these families had resources to provide educational and vocational opportunities that offered a broader range of geographic location. There was greater joint decision-making activity reported on critical problems in upper income families. This finding might simply reflect higher levels of education and experience in decision-making processes on the part of the husband and wife. Chi-square analysis of the husband's educational level in relation to family functioning variables followed a similar pattern.

Findings on the variable of age of the husband as related to family functioning were what one might expect. Families with husbands under 35 years old reported participation in a broader variety of activities with the emphasis on "active." They were more apt to be in the upper income

Table 46. Family functioning variables associated with lower and upper sectors of the socioeconomic variables*

Family functioning variable[a]	Income		Education of husband		Age of husband	
	Under $3,000	$9,000 and over	Under 8 grades	12 and over grades	Under 35 years	65 and over years
Children living nearer	X		X			X
Husband's and wife's parents living nearer		X		X	X	
Children visiting more often	X		X			X
Husband's and wife's parents visiting more often				X	X	
Attended church together past month		X				
Picnicked together past month		X			X	
Went out together to eat past month		X		X	X	
Visited kin together past month				X		
Visited friends together past month				X		
Discussed cost of living together past month						X
Discussed elections together past month						X
Husband & wife together visited kin past month		X		X		
Husband & wife together discussed election past month		X		X		
Husband & wife together visited friends past month				X		
Husband & wife together went out to eat past month		X		X	X	
Husband & wife together went on a picnic past month					X	
Help from kin in shopping	X					X
No help from kin in shopping					X	
Help from kin in looking after sick and elderly						X
No help from kin in looking after sick and elderly					X	
Wife decides how money is spent	X		X			
Wife decides how money is spent on big items	X		X			
Wife decides whether to move	X					
Husband & wife together decide on how money is spent		X		X		
Husband & wife together decide on whether to move		X				

Table 46. Family functioning variables associated with lower and upper sectors of the socioeconomic variables* (continued)

Family functioning variables[a]	Income		Education of husband		Age of husband	
	Under $3,000	$9,000 and over	Under 8 grades	12 and over grades	Under 35 years	65 and over years
Husband decides which kin and friends to visit					X	X
Husband & wife together decide where to go for an evening out					X	
Husband decides whether wife should go to work or quit work					X	
Ownership of car or truck		X		X	X	
No ownership of car or truck	X		X			X
Wood or coal heat in home	X		X			
Electric heat in home		X		X	X	
Running water in kitchen		X		X		
A musical instrument in home	X					X
Subscribing to a daily newspaper		X		X		
Not subscribing to a daily newspaper			X		X	
Watched television often		X		X		
Using telephone 20 or more times a week		X		X	X	
Using telephone under 9 times a week						X
Home with 1-4 rooms	X		X			
Home with 6 or more rooms		X		X		
House constructed over 30 years	X		X			X
House constructed 9 years or under				X	X	
Husband or someone else does home repairs					X	
No one in family does home repairs						X
Had burial insurance	X		X			X
Had life insurance		X		X		
Had health insurance		X		X		X
Had car insurance		X		X		
Had house insurance		X		X		
Had savings				X		
Used credit cards				X		X
Owned home						X
Owned farm						X
Family income $9,000 or over					X	
Family income less than $3,000			X			X
Lived in house 2 years or less					X	
Lived in home 21 years or over						X

*Detailed tables on the significant variables by family income, education, and age of husband may be obtained from the researchers.

[a]Equal to or below .01 or .05 probability level.

bracket as compared to older families. Two interesting contrasts were that the younger families reported "no help from kin" in shopping and in sickness, and that the husband was perceived as the primary decision-maker. Older families reported needing help and joint decision-making activity. The difference may reflect different stages in the family life cycle. The young family is in the expansion stage with focus on independence, self sufficiency, and role clarification; the older family is in the contraction stage with focus on shrinking resources, greater dependency, and role integration.

These comparisons provide some insight into the functioning patterns of the families. Other similarities and differences may be found by studying the tables.

Patterns of family functioning, then, are directly related to or even perhaps determined by age and access to educational opportunity and economic resources. Greater effort should be allocated toward developing and improving programs that deal with differences in terms of age, education, and income in rural areas. Practitioners too often neglect meeting the real needs of many rural residents by approaches directed toward homogenous expectations for individuals. An approach directed toward the needs of one group may fall short of the needs of other groups.

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