The Value of Children to Parents in the United States

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Data from a national survey of the value of children to parents were analyzed to (a) report the satisfactions of parenthood perceived by married American couples in the childbearing years, (b) test the adequacy of the Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) need-based category scheme for conceptualizing the value of children, and (c) examine subgroup differences to test the hypothesis that groups with fewer alternative means for satisfying a particular need will value children more highly for this quality. Results indicated that the Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) scheme was adequate with some modifications. In both structured and unstructured questions, the two most important values were Primary Group Ties and Stimulation and Fun. The alternatives hypothesis received some support: Groups with less access to economic resources (less educated and blacks) gave more importance to economic-utility values than did others; women with traditional sex-role definitions gave more importance to adult status than did others; unemployed women gave more to fun and stimulation; Jews and nonaffiliated more to immortality; urban residents more to purpose in life. The alternatives hypothesis alone did not work as well in other cases, particularly achievement, probably because the intensity of the need was not considered in this analysis.

A theoretical scheme for analyzing the value of children to parents was developed by Hoffman and Hoffman (1973), in which the value of children was conceptualized in terms of the psychological satisfactions they provide for parents. The many satisfactions that children provide, in various societies, were gleaned from the literature and organized according to clusters homogeneous with respect to the need involved. The nine psychologically based categories or general values resulting from this analysis are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Advantages of Having Children[a]

	Parents		Nonparents	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Primary group ties and affection	66.2	60.4	63.9	52.0
Stimulation and fun	60.1	55.3	40.6	34.0
Expansion of the self	35.3	32.6	32.9	31.0
Adult status and social identity	22.0	19.4	14.2	9.0
Achievement and creativity	11.0	9.6	13.2	20.0
Morality	6.9	6.7	6.5	2.0
Economic utility	6.0	9.0	8.1	10.0
Power and influence	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.0
Social comparison	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0
N	1259	356	310	100

[a] A maximum of four answers per respondent were coded. Figures here represent the percentage of respondents expressing a value at least once.

The specific satisfactions of parenthood that would be grouped together under any one of the nine values might be very different in form. What they have in common is the fact that they satisfy the same basic psychological need. For example, children might be valued because they give the parent someone to love and be loved by. This would be included in the category of primary group ties and affection. On the other hand, children might be valued because "they will strengthen the marriage," and this would be included in the same category, because both attitudes involve seeing children as a means of satisfying the same need—love and affection. In other respects, these two kinds of attitudes are very different. They might, for example, have very different effects on the way the parent treats children, and it would not be expected that the person who gave the one answer would be more likely to give the other. For understanding fertility motivations, however, and for analyzing changes over

time with respect to fertility desires, clustering these different moti-
vations and satisfactions according to the common underlying basic
need is useful.

It was hypothesized that the extent to which children were seen
as satisfying any particular need, that is, as providing any particular
general value, would depend on (a) the intensity of the need, (b) the
extent to which children are seen as a potential source of satisfac-
tion for the need, and (c) the availability of alternative sources of
need satisfaction. A number of specific hypotheses were generated
from this scheme predicting the value of children in different
societies and in different subgroups within the United States. This
conceptualization was part of a theoretical model for predicting
fertility motivation in which the costs of having children and the
costs of alternative satisfactions were also considered.

In 1975, an empirical research project was undertaken in seven
countries to investigate the value of children to parents, using the
Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) formulation as a major guide. Identi-
cal interview schedules were administered in Korea, Indonesia, the
Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States. In
each of the countries but Indonesia, the sample was a national
representation of married women under 40 and about one quarter of
their husbands. A pilot study preceded the present investigation in
most of the countries (Arnold, Bulatao, Buripakdi, et al., 1975).

In the United States, the sampling, fieldwork, and coding were
carried out through the facilities of the Institute for Social Research
at the University of Michigan. The sample consisted of 1,569
married women and 456 of their husbands. It was a national
probability sample, excluding Alaska and Hawaii, with respondents
being selected by means of a clustered, multistage sampling
technique that gave every household equal probability of selection.
Interviews were conducted in the respondent's home by members of
the professional, nationwide interviewing staff of the Institute for
Social Research. The questionnaire employed several different kinds
of questions covering the value of children, alternative sources of
satisfactions, the costs and barriers involved in having children and
in the alternative sources of satisfactions, desired family size, sex
preference, family plans, contraceptive behavior, decision-making
processes, and sociodemographic factors. A combination of open-
ended questions, specific probes, and structured items with fixed-
response choices was used. The questionnaire was developed in
collaboration with the principal investigators in each of the par-

ticipating countries. The format and wording of all items in the core questionnaire were agreed upon, but some additional country-specific items were added and placed where they would not affect the context of any of the core questionnaire items. The total interview took about an hour and 20 minutes in the United States.

In this paper some of the findings from the United States will be reported based on two broad measures of the values, an open-ended question about the advantages of having children and a set of structured items concerning reasons for having children. We will first describe the two measures and report the distribution of responses by sex and parent status. Then we will report a test of some of the hypotheses about differences between subgroups based on education, sex-role definitions, race, religion, rural background, and the woman's employment status.

AN OPEN-ENDED MEASURE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF CHILDREN

The open-ended question reads as follows: "I want to ask you about the advantages and disadvantages of having children. First—what would you say are some of the advantages or good things about having children compared with not having children at all?" This was the first question in the interview, following the listing of household members, and was thus unaffected by any other questions. The answers were coded according to a highly specific and differentiated coding scheme. Sixty-five different types of responses were coded, a maximum of four per person. The coding scheme was guided by and organized around the nine value ctaegories, but it also had an empirical element in that it was adapted for the particular responses obtained.

One of the purposes of the cross-national study was to see whether the nine value categories were all-inclusive across cultures, as had been proposed by Hoffman and Hoffman (1973). The final data are not yet available from all the other countries, but the data from the pilot study suggested that the categories were adequate. In the present study in the United States, all responses except those that were too vague or incomplete, such as "You can teach them things"—which might be creativity or power or some other value but is not specific enough to classify—were able to be eccompassed by these categories. Such vague answers were given by less than 4% of the respondents.

Answers to the question about advantages, grouped according to the nine values, are presented in Table 1. Although the nine categories were adequate for all the responses, two of the values were not often evoked. Social Comparison was involved in very few responses. This category was intended to describe the desire for children in order to enhance one's status and gain competitive advantage over significant others. In some cultures, for example, the mother of 12 children may gain considerable prestige from her fertility and have higher status than her less fertile siblings and neighbors. Such answers—even where the social comparison involved the quality of the child and not the quantity—were very rare in the United States, and it now seems more parsimonious to combine the category of Social Comparison with Achievement and Creativity. In the original Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) conceptualization, the former category was intended as indicating a more outer-directed need where comparison with others was necessary, while Achievement and Creativity was a more inner-directed satisfaction. Empirically, however, the two proved very difficult to distinguish and they may operate in a very similar way. Thus, while Social Comparison responses may be more frequent in other social situations than in the United States in 1975, it might still be better to combine the two categories.

However, Power and Influence, the other low-frequency category, still seems theoretically defensible. The idea that children can provide an increased sense of power, particularly for persons who occupy a very low status in society, has been discussed elsewhere (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973). However, this value is not readily elicited by direct questioning, and its investigation may require less direct methods than those used here.

Primary Group Ties and Affection

The affiliative value of children has been reported as particularly important in a wide variety of cultures (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973). The significance of the nuclear family as a bulwark against the impersonalization of modern society has been noted by sociologists and psychologists for many years (Cooley, 1920; Durkheim, 1951). "Avoidance of loneliness" and "for companionship" have been cited as reasons for having children and sometimes specifically for having large families in the United States and other cultures (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973). Several studies have suggested

that, for women, children may be seen as a more important source of affiliative satisfaction than the husband (Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960), particularly in the lower socioeconomic class (Rainwater, 1965), and other studies have found that children are seen as important to cement or augment the bond with the husband (Centers & Blumberg, 1954; Christopherson & Walters, 1958; Lopata, 1971).

In the United States, Primary Group Ties and Affection was the most commonly mentioned value of children as indicated in Table 1. For each of the four groups, mothers, fathers, wives with no children as yet, and husbands with no children as yet, love or family ties were cited by more than 50% of the respondents. The more common specific responses that made up this category can be seen in Table 2.[1] Thirty-five percent of the mothers and 24% of the fathers said specifically that children bring love and companionship. This was worded in terms like "the love they bring" or "You're never lonely."

According to the national sample data thus far available from the other countries, Primary Group Ties and Affection is also the most common value in Turkey, being mentioned by 86% of all respondents there (Kagitcibasi, 1977); in Indonesia, it was second only to Economic Utility, but among urban Sundanese, one of the two largest culture groups in that country, it was the most frequent response category (Meyer & Singarimbun, 1977). Data from the national study in the Philippines show that the Economic Utility value far outstripped Primary Group Ties and Affection there (Bulatao, 1976). The national sample data from Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan are not yet available.

It can be seen in Table 1 that women cite this value more often than men (X 7.6; p .01), finding consistent with a variety of previous studies that indicate that women express more affiliative needs and satisfactions in general than men (Hoffman, 1972), and consistent with the role of the woman as primary caretaker and nurturer of children. In looking at the more specific responses in Table 2, it can

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[1] The percentages reported in Table 1 are not the total of the subparts in Table 2 because a respondent might have given more than one kind of the specific answers. For example, in the Primary Group Tie and Love category, a respondent may have answered by saying, "Children bring love into your life themselves and they also cement the marriage." This would be coded in two categories in Table 2, but would be coded only once in Table 1. Furthermore, some of the respondents who made up the percentages reported in Table 1 gave answers coded in categories not included in Table 2 because fewer than 3% received that specific code.

L. W. HOFFMAN, A. THORNTON, J. D. MANIS

Table 2

Specific Advantages of Having Children[a]

Specific Responses	Parents		Nonparents	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Primary Group Ties and Affection				
Bring love and companionship	34.9%	24.1%	21.7%	12.2%
To have a complete family; for a closer family life	16.4	22.1	20.0	24.4
To benefit or express the husband-wife relationship	13.3	11.9	19.0	14.4
Specifically to give love to the child	12.1	11.0	13.3	12.2
To give to child but not specifically love	4.0	4.8	6.7	3.3
Love and companionship at a later stage in life or in old age	4.4	3.4	7.3	4.4
Stimulation and Fun				
Stimulation, activity, joy, love of children	52.2	47.9	36.3	25.6
The pleasure of watching them grow	16.4	17.0	11.0	13.3
Expansion of Self				
Purpose to life	13.7	11.0	7.3	4.4
Learning experience	11.2	6.8	7.3	3.3
Self-fulfillment	5.1	2.8	6.0	2.2
Part of experiencing life fully	4.0	2.8	4.0	2.2
To recreate myself; a child like me	3.8	6.8	2.7	5.6
Carry on the family name	1.5	4.0	6.0	7.8
Carry on the family line	0.7	2.0	2.0	5.6
Immortality - leaving part of yourself behind	0.0	1.1	1.7	4.4
Adult Status and Social Identity				
Something useful to do	8.6	3.4	4.3	2.2
You feel adult; more mature, more responsible	6.4	6.5	4.0	2.2
Socially expected and/or natural	6.4	5.9	5.3	2.2
Gives man an incentive for working	0.3	4.8	0.3	3.3
Achievement and Creativity				
To create a life, a human being	2.8	2.3	6.7	7.8
Satisfaction from doing a good job	5.2	4.2	7.0	12.2
Economic Utility				
Security in old age	1.8	4.0	5.3	4.4
Help in household chores	3.0	2.3	1.3	1.1
They're an income tax deduction	0.3	2.0	1.3	3.3
Morality				
Children improve one's moral character	4.4	2.5	2.7	0.0
Miscellaneous				
You can teach them (nature of teaching unspecified)	3.0	4.0	2.7	3.3
Vague statement indicating positive attitude	2.3	1.7	4.0	2.2
There are no advantages	0.3	0.6	5.0	6.7
N	1237	353	300	90

[a]Maximum of four responses per person coded. The table includes only those codes used for at least 3% of one of the four groups--mothers, fathers, wives without children, husbands without children.

also be noted that the answer that children bring love and companionship—an answer that ascribes intrinsic value to the child rather than one that sees children as benefitting the marriage relationship or completing the family—is given more by parents than nonparents.[2]

Stimulation and Fun

One of the needs of people is to have change, new experiences, and stimulation. Children can provide this in a number of ways. The advent of a new baby is itself a change, a new experience, and its growth over the years introduces an element of constant change. Children bring stimulation and activity, and in addition they are often seen as fun and a source of joy. This is the value of children that is here labeled as "Stimulation and Fun."

This value is the second in importance in the United States, as can be seen in Table 1. Coded in this category were statements like, "There is always something going on"; "They're fun"; "They bring happiness and joy"; "They keep you young"; and "Just watching them grow—there's something new all the time." About 17% of the parents made a specific reference to the pleasure from watching them grow (Table 2), while 52% of the mothers and 48% of the fathers talked about fun, stimulation, and joy more generally.

This value is cited more by parents than by nonparents (Table 1) for both women ($X^2 = 37.6$; $p < .001$) and men ($X^2 = 13.4$; $p < .001$), and is mentioned somewhat more often by the women than the men in both groups ($X^2 = 4.3$; $p < .05$).

Expansion of the Self

A disturbing aspect of life is its evanescent quality. The briefness and the apparent insignificance of the individual's existence in the context of both time and space has led many people to feel a need to anchor themselves beyond their own lifetime or to find some greater meaning or significance to life. This is a need that is probably highlighted in urban, industrialized, and secularized society, where individuals feel less of an organic tie to the basic life

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[2] Since some of the differences between parents and nonparents might reflect differences in other variables, the comparison discussed in the text were examined using a multiple-classification analysis in which controls were introduced for five background variables: age, education, race, religion, and rural backgrounds. All parent-nonparent differences discussed in this paper persisted after the introduction of these controls.

processes.[3] Religion has been an answer for many, perhaps particularly where it has provided a belief in life after death and the immortality of the soul. But having children is another possible way of satisfying this need.

This value of children was cited by roughly a third of each group (Table 1). While there is little difference between men and women or between parents and nonparents in the frequency with which the general value is cited, there are differences when one looks at specific responses. There are two aspects to this value—one focuses on the need for meaning or expansion in life, the other focuses on the concept of immortality or having some part of the self live on after one is dead. The first four specific answers listed under this category in Table 2—purpose to life, learning experience, self-fulfillment, and part of experiencing life fully—reflect the former; while the last four—to recreate oneself, carry on the family name, carry on the family line, and immortality—reflect the latter. The answers that focus on one's current life, the first four, are more often mentioned as an advantage of children by women than by men, and by parents than by nonparents. The answers that deal with leaving something behind after death are given more often by men than women and by nonparents than parents. Possibly, this reflects the extent to which one is actively involved in the parenting role. Both before and after parenthood, women are more involved with the role of parent than men. It is very much a part of female children's expectations about their adult roles, and it is enacted in childhood play (Hoffman, 1977). In previous research with unmarried college students, it was found that women talked more about carrying out the parent role, while men saw their parenthood more in terms of reproducing themselves (Hoffman, 1973). And, parenthood is more salient to parents than nonparents. This might explain why the first four answers, which involve, to a greater extent than the last four, the active experience of being a parent, are given more by women than men and also more by parents than nonparents. The tendency for men to mention with greater frequency than women the idea of leaving something behind after death may also reflect the fact that the family name passed on is the man's.

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[3] In an earlier publication (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973), we speculated that the rural-urban difference might go in the opposite direction because of a closer tie in the rural area between the purpose of life and reproduction.

Adult Status and Social Identity

Having children is often viewed as the attainment of adult status and full membership in the society. Parenthood has traditionally been a normal outcome of the socialization process, particularly for women, for whom it is often defined as the major adult role (Hoffman, 1977).

About a fifth of the parents gave this response in reporting the advantages of children; it was cited less often by nonparents (Table 1). Among the specific responses in this category (Table 2), note that 9% of the mothers and 4% of the women without children said that being a mother would give them something useful to do. In a modern, industrialized society like the United States, with its streamlined household routines, being an unemployed housewife without children is often not a full-time or highly esteemed job. Thus, for unemployed wives, children may be needed to fill out the day, and this specific answer was given more often by nonworking women $(X^2 = 5.8; p < .02)$.

Achievement, Competence, and Creativity

Parents can gain a sense of achievement, competence, and creativity through having children, not only from the physical process of producing a child, but also from meeting the challenges of rearing one and from observing the child's responses to these efforts. Producing a high-achieving child may be seen as a source of vicarious achievement satisfaction, particularly for parents who have high achievement needs but have been blocked from expressing them directly. The two more common aspects of the Achievement-Competence value of children are listed in Table 2. Vicarious achievement is not included because it was cited by less than 3% of the respondents. Although physical creativity and satisfaction from doing a good job were both cited more often by those who were not yet parents, vicarious-achievement satisfaction was mentioned only by parents. Achievement-Competence is the only value, with the possible exception of Power, that was cited more by nonparents $(X^2 = 5.2; p < .05)$. It may be that the creativity and sense of achievement through parenthood exists more in anticipation than in the actual day-to-day experience of parenting, and for parents the relationship between the effort and the effect may seem less clear.

Economic Utility, Security in Old Age

The Economic Utility value of children has frequently been studied and often linked to high fertility desires. In a highly industrialized country like the United States, however, with a predominantly urban population and with a government-sponsored social-security system, children are less likely than elsewhere to have economic utility. And yet, 10% of the men in the United States sample and a somewhat smaller percentage of the women cited as an advantage of children their economic utility (Table 1). They cited children as providing security for themselves in old age and help with household chores; they even cited the fact that they provide an income-tax deduction (Table 2).

Morality

Being a parent, and particularly motherhood, is often equated with virtue. The responsibilities and caretaking role of parenthood are sometimes seen as involving an end to impulsiveness and egocentrism. In some cases, one's religion may explicitly tie parenthood to morality, but even secular influences like the mass media and the sheer requirements of the role can link parenthood to a concept of altruism and greater moral worth.

Still, moral values were not often cited as advantages of having children in the United States sample. Respondents who did mention them talked about becoming "less selfish" or "a better person." Very few of the answers indicated that children fulfilled a religious prescription.

While morality was not mentioned very often as an advantage of having children, it was mentioned in other contexts. For example, in the last question of the interview respondents were asked, "How is a woman's life (man's life) changed by having children?" To this question, 13% of the women and 11% of the men responded, "You become a better person" or something equivalent. Thus, morality is more salient as a positive effect that results from having children than as a definite advantage of having them.

A STRUCTURED MEASURE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF CHILDREN

A variety of measures were used in the study to tap different aspects of the value of children as well as to see how the values are

peceived in different contexts. The structured question most similar
to the open-ended-advantages question in content was the follow-
ing: "Here is a list of reasons people give for wanting to have
children, in general—that is, why they find it satisfying to have
children. Please tell me how important each one is to you, as a
reason for having children." Respondents were asked to indicate
whether each of 22 reasons for having children was very important,
somewhat important, or not important. Of the 22 reasons, five are
country-specific, included only in the United States. These five were
at the end of the list in the questionnaire so as not to affect the
context of the responses to the cross-national items. The exact
items are listed in Table 3, though not in the order of presentation in
the questionnaire; here they are organized according to the basic
values in the Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) scheme. The items listed
were based in part on pretest answers to the open-ended question
and correspond quite closely to the categories used to code those
responses. Thus, the content tapped by the structured question is
similar to that in the open-ended, but here each respondent indi-
cated the importance of each reason, whereas in the open-ended
question only the most salient values were elicited. Mean ratings for
each reason (based on the numerical codes of 3, 2, and 1 for the
three possible responses) are reported in Table 3.

There is an overall similarity between the answers to the two
measures asking about the general advantages or satisfactions of
having children. As in the open-ended question, the values most
highly endorsed in the United States were in the two categories
Primary Group Ties and Affection and Stimulation and Fun. "Be-
cause children bring love" was the most highly rated reason of the
22 listed, closely followed by "to watch them grow and develop."
The other two reasons under Stimulation and Fun, "because life is
more interesting with children" and "because children are fun,"
were the third and fourth most highly endorsed. Economic Utility,
Power, and Morality received the least endorsement and were the
least frequently mentioned values in the unstructured question. The
Expansion of Self, Adult Status and Social Identity, and Achievement
and Creativity categories fell in between in both measures.
Achievement and Creativity here appears to represent a more impor-
tant value than in the open-ended question, however. This may
reflect the fact that all three of the reasons belonging to this group
are acceptable to most people, even though they may not be salient
as primary advantages. Thus, when they are presented, people

On the structured question, the greatest difference between men and women appears in the ratings of the Adult Status and Social Identity items. Men rated all of these items less important than did women, with the greatest difference being for the item "because it's part of being a woman/man." Apparently, men do not regard having children as a significant aspect of their sex role in the way that women do. Similarly, men rated children as less important for giving them a sense of "doing something important"—presumably because their occupational roles are more likely to fill this need, and perhaps also because they carry less responsibility for the actual care of the children. Secondly, men rated "to be remembered after you are gone" and "to continue the family line" as more important than did women, thus duplicating the effect noted in the open-ended Expansion of Self responses. Men also rated two of the Primary Group Ties and Affection items—"to complete the family" and "to strengthen the bond between you and your husband/wife"—higher than did the women; the first of these items also follows the pattern of differences shown in the open-ended question.

Parents generally rated the items as more important than did nonparents. In particular, nonparents see children as less important as a source of adult status and social identity; they rate children as less important for supplying meaning to life, and as a source of love and companionship; and they are markedly less apt to rate children as important for adding interest and fun to life (see second and third items under Stimulation and Fun).

DIFFERENTIALS IN THE VALUE OF CHILDREN

Empirical research has documented the relationship between several important variables and several aspects of fertility behavior. For example, it has been shown that blacks have more children than whites, Catholics have more children and use less effective means of birth control than Protestants, and Jews have fewer children than either Catholics or Protestants (Kiser, Grabill, & Campbell, 1968; Ryder & Westoff, 1971; Whelpton, Campbell, & Patterson, 1966). Education is inversely related to childbearing and positively related to birth-control effectiveness (Bumpass & Westoff, 1970; Ryder & Westoff, 1971). Furthermore, on the average, working women have fewer children than those who do not work, and women whose

L. W. HOFFMAN, A. THORNTON, J. D. MANIS

sex-role definitions and attitudes orient them away from the home have fewer children than those who define themselves as house-wives and homemakers (Scanzoni, 1975; Waite & Stolzenberg, 1976). The distinction between rural and urban has also had impor-tant fertility implications, with rural residents and those with rural backgrounds having more children than others (Duncan, 1965; Goldberg, 1959).

While the empirical relationships between fertility behavior and various social, economic, and demographic variables are fairly well understood, the causal mechanisms that produce those correlations are still quite obscure. In fact, one of the goals of contemporary fertility research is to identify and estimate the causal mechanisms that produce differences in fertility behavior (Easterlin, 1969; Thornton, 1977). Inasmuch as values concerning children are im-portant elements of models purporting to explain fertility behavior, it seems plausible to expect that these values and their distribution in the population are related to and affect the differentials in actual fertility so often observed. Values concerning children may be one of the important mechanisms producing the largely unexplained differentials in actual fertility behavior. By better understanding the values people perceive in children and the way these perceptions are distributed in the population, it may be possible to gain insights into that behavior.

It was hypothesized that differential experience, social status, and roles influence people to view the advantages of children differently. Our theoretical perspective was that fertility motivations are at least partially determined by the extent to which alternatives to children are available as sources of satisfaction for the various needs identified. The value of children is thus linked to the social structure and can be expected to vary as the structure changes and affects the availability of alternative sources of satisfaction.

METHOD

The operationalization of the variables used in the analysis of group differences was complicated by the fact that two different measures of the value of children were used—an unstructured procedure as well as a structured approach—and there were a substantial number of code categories used in the first approach (Table 2) as well as a large number of items in the second (Table 3). In addition, we had hypothesized that specific elements of the general values were related to other variables in different ways. Therefore, specific categories from the open-ended question

and separate items from the structured question were combined as outlined in Figure 1. For each of the two types of measures a separate variable was created for each of the subvalues shown. For the variables based on the open-ended question, a person was assigned a score of one if that particular value or subvalue was mentioned and a score of zero if that value was not mentioned. Thus, for each of the values or subvalues, a dichotomous variable indicating presence or absence of the value was created. For the variables based on the structured question, the items regarded as measuring a particular value or subvalue were combined in a simple additive fashion.

While the study was designed to investigate specific values, it also seemed wise to take into account the respondent's overall attitude toward children. Two summary measures were therefore created to tap this general orientation. The first consists of the number of responses (0-4) given to the open-ended question about the advantages of children. It thus indicates the number of values, up to four, that are salient to the respondent. The second measure consists of the total score for the 22 structured items. It is interpreted as a general indicator of positive affect toward children, rather than as the sum of the nine specific values. It should be recognized that both measures may be influenced to some extent by extraneous factors: The number of responses to the open-ended question presumably is affected by the respondent's ability to conceptualize and verbalize the values, and the total score on the structured items may be influenced by a desire on the part of the respondent to give answers that agree with or please the interviewer.

The values and subvalues outlined in Figure 1 along with the two summary measures were examined by race, education, religion, rural-urban background, sex-role definitions, labor-force participation, and age. While the primary interest was in the influence of each of the individual background variables on the value of children, it was necessary to take into account each of the other factors. A multivariate approach was used, therefore, which allowed the effect of one variable to be investigated while at the same time controlling the influence of the other variables in the system. The statistical approach used to accomplish the multivariate analysis was Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA), a form of dummy variable regression (Andrews, Morgan, Sanquist, & Klein, 1973).

The bivariate relationships between the explanatory variables and the values and subvalues of children were investigated by comparing the means on the values for the various categories of the independent variables. In addition, an "eta square" (E^2) was computed for each explanatory variable. This measure, the "correlation ratio" obtained through standard one-way analysis of variance, indicates the amount of variation in the dependent variable (value of children) that can be explained or accounted for by each independent variable. The measure is equal to the reduction in variation obtained by measuring variability around the category means

L. W. HOFFMAN, A. THORNTON, J. D. MANIS

Specific Variables	Categories from the Unstructured Advantages Question[a]	Items from the Structured "Importance" Question
Primary Group Ties and Affection		
Affectional ties with the child	−bring love and companionship −to give to child (both love and other) −benefit or express the husband−wife relationship	−children bring love −you will not be lonely −strengthen the bond between you and your husband/wife
Husband−wife relationship	−have a complete family; for a closer family life	−children are needed to complete the family
Completion of the family		
Stimulation and fun	−stimulation, activity, joy, love of children −pleasure watching them grow	−to watch grow and develop −life more interesting with children −children are fun
Expansion of Self		
Purpose and experience	−purpose to life −learning experience −self−fulfillment −part of experiencing life fully	−add purpose to your life
Immortality	−recreate myself −carry on family name −carry on family line −immortality; leaving part of your−self behind	−family line will continue −be remembered after you are gone
Adult Status and Social Identity		
Useful activity	−something useful to do	[no variable used]
Responsibility	−you feel adult; more mature, more responsible	[no variable used]
Natural	−socially expected and/or natural −(part of being a man/woman)	−part of being a man/woman −seem odd not to
Achievement, Creativity	−to create a life, a human being −satisfaction from doing a good job −(vicarious achievement)	−you feel you can do a good job as a parent
Economic Utility, Security in Old Age		
Old age security	−security in old age −so you will not be lonely when old −help in household chores	−to have someone to depend on when you are old −children can work and help the family
Present or general utility	−(other financial, utilitarian)	
Morality		
Better person	[no variable used]	−to be a better person
Religion	[no variable used]	−because of your religion

[a]Categories shown here are those appearing in Table 2. Some variables include other code categories which tapped the same value but were used for very few cases; where necessary for clarity, these additional categories have been included (those enclosed in parentheses).

FIGURE 1

Combinations of Categories and Items Used to Create Specific Value Variables for the Examination of Group Differences

rather than around the grand mean of the dependent variable. The multivariate relationships were examined by estimating a mean for each category of the independent variable while taking into account the other variables in the model. The resulting means, referred to as "adjusted," can be compared just as the "unadjusted" means are. In addition, a "beta square" (B^2) measure was computed for each independent variable. This measure, which is analogous to E^2, indicates the reduction in variability produced by using the "adjusted" means rather than using the "unadjusted" means employed in computing E^2.

In view of the large number of variables to be examined, the multivariate analysis was simplified in two ways: First, the parents and nonparents were grouped together; second, while men and women were examined separately, only the women's data are reported and discussed. It should be noted, however, that while the results for the men differ somewhat from those of the women, the major relationships observed are quite similar for the two sexes.

Education

While the overall patterns of values revealed by the unstructured and structured questions were similar in that the values mentioned most frequently in the unstructured approach were also rated most important in the structured format, important differences emerged when the focus switched to the interrelationships between the values and the other variables. The difference between the two approaches is documented in Table 4, where the bivariate and multivariate relationships between education and the values are shown. The results indicate that education had a moderately negative relationship to the overall summary indicator for the structured items (right panel). Furthermore, almost all of the individual values or subvalues were negatively related to education. That is, the less educated respondents, on average, gave each of the values a more important rating than did those with greater educational attainment. These results would, on the surface at least, seem to indicate that education had an important impact on all of the values, with the less

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[4]The use of categorical dummy variables rather than the interval-level variables of standard multiple regression makes estimation of the sampling variability of multivariate relationships very difficult. Therefore, sampling errors and statistical tests of significance were not computed. Rather, the importance of relationships was evaluated on practical grounds: the magnitude of the differences between groups and whether the independent variable seemed to explain substantively important variation in the dependent variable.

educated valuing children more for all reasons. On the unstructured question, however, the less educated gave fewer responses than did the more educated. Those with 17 or more years of education, for example, gave an average of 2.9 advantages of having children, while those with less than 10 years of education gave only 2.1 advantages (left panel). By this measure, then, the less educated appeared to value children less rather than more compared to those with greater educational attainment.

These apparently contradictory results may simply reflect some of the characteristics associated with education. On the one hand, answers to the individual structured questions may have been influenced by an overall response set concerning children. That is, the less educated, recognizing the importance of children in their lives, may generally be more positive in their judgments concerning children. (A more positive attitude toward parenthood on the part of the less educated is apparent throughout the United States data. With the exception of the unstructured-advantages question, less educated respondents were more likely to indicate positive effects of having children and less likely to give negative effects [Hoffman, in press). This overall recognition of the importance of children may influence the manner in which children are evaluated on each specific value—in other words, there could be a "halo" effect operating that leads the less educated to rate all of the values as more important. At the same time, they may provide fewer responses to the unstructured question because they have less ability to conceptualize and explain their motivations and values concerning children. The unstructured question, therefore, probably should not be thought of as a pure measure of intensity or the overall importance of children but as an indication of those values that are salient to the respondent and can be verbalized in the interview situation. That is, the open-ended question could be an indicator of the values that are salient and considered important, while the structured approach could be tapping an overall importance-of-children dimension as well as specific values, whose ratings are influenced by that overall evaluation (See Bulatao, 1975, for a discussion of similar issues).

Given the fact that education was positively related to the number of responses given and negatively related to the overall importance attached to the values, it was not surprising to find that often it did not relate in similar fashion to the same value measured in the two different ways. There are, however, important areas of

Table 4

Multiple Classification Analysis of the Relationships Between Education and Values of Children for Women[a]

Values	Unstructured Advantages Question[b]								Structured Importance Question[b]							
	Years of Education								Years of Education							
	0-9	10-11	12	13-15	16	17+	Total	E^2 or B^2c	0-9	10-11	12	13-15	16	17+	Total	E^2 or B^2c
Overall, Summary Measure[d]																
Unadjusted Means	2.13	2.24	2.55	2.70	2.58	2.90	2.52	.035	47.94	43.67	42.49	40.57	38.80	37.53	42.11	.077
Adjusted Means	2.14	2.24	2.55	2.69	2.59	2.90		.034	46.38	43.12	42.29	41.07	39.97	39.34		.036
Affectional Ties with Child																
Unadjusted Means	0.47	0.45	0.44	0.36	0.36	0.47	.425	.007	5.20	4.80	4.64	4.37	4.30	4.16	4.60*	.063
Adjusted Means	0.44	0.43	0.44	0.37	0.37	0.50		.006	5.07	4.75	4.62	4.42	4.38	4.33		.035
Husband-Wife Relationship																
Unadjusted Means	0.08	0.06	0.16	0.17	0.18	0.16	.145	.013	1.88	1.76	1.88	1.78	1.75	1.52	1.82	.013
Adjusted Means	0.09	0.06	0.16	0.17	0.19	0.19		.015	1.81	1.75	1.86	1.79	1.82	1.68		.005
Completion of the Family																
Unadjusted Means	0.12	0.13	0.18	0.20	0.18	0.10	.168	.007	2.39	2.28	2.22	2.12	1.85	1.96	2.18	.029
Adjusted Means	0.12	0.13	0.17	0.21	0.19	0.12		.006	2.22	2.20	2.20	2.19	1.97	2.15		.007
Stimulation and Fun																
Unadjusted Means	0.48	0.51	0.59	0.60	0.50	0.55	.563	.007	8.01	7.86	7.70	7.58	7.35	7.22	7.66**	.017
Adjusted Means	0.47	0.51	0.58	0.61	0.53	0.57		.007	7.92	7.86	7.68	7.61	7.43	7.30		.011
Purpose and Experience																
Unadjusted Means	0.13	0.24	0.30	0.36	0.28	0.34	.292	.017	2.40	2.38	2.37	2.22	2.09	1.93	2.30	.031
Adjusted Means	0.14	0.25	0.30	0.36	0.27	0.31		.016	2.34	2.36	2.35	2.24	2.17	2.07		.012
Immortality																
Unadjusted Means	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.10	0.12	0.17	.074	.018	3.51	3.07	2.87	2.66	2.57	2.50	2.86*	.054
Adjusted Means	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.15		.010	3.35	3.03	2.86	2.69	2.68	2.67		.029
Useful Activity																
Unadjusted Means	0.12	0.14	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.04	.076	.014								
Adjusted Means	0.11	0.14	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.05		.012								
Responsibility																
Unadjusted Means	0.02	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.07	.058	.004								
Adjusted Means	0.02	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.07		.003								
Natural																
Unadjusted Means	0.04	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.01	0.07	.076	.010	3.98	3.44	3.38	3.17	2.93	3.07	3.34*	.034
Adjusted Means	0.03	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.01	0.08		.010	3.80	3.38	3.35	3.25	3.05	3.28		.016
Achievement and Creativity																
Unadjusted Means	0.07	0.06	0.11	0.12	0.16	0.24	.115	.017	2.48	2.40	2.37	2.35	2.37	2.24	2.37	.006
Adjusted Means	0.07	0.07	0.11	0.12	0.16	0.23		.012	2.43	2.40	2.36	2.36	2.41	2.27		.005

Table 4 (continued)

Left-hand panel (dichotomous variables)

							Overall mean	E² / B²
Old Age Security								
Unadjusted Means	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.10	0.06	0.09	.071	.003
Adjusted Means	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.05	0.08		.004
Present Economic Utility								
Unadjusted Means	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.01	.041	.012
Adjusted Means	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.01		.006
N	130	189	729	276	153	82		

Right-hand panel (summed codes)

							Overall mean	E² / B²
Old Age Security								
Unadjusted Means	1.73	1.38	1.31	1.29	1.26	1.32	1.35	.039
Adjusted Means	1.66	1.34	1.31	1.31	1.29	1.39		.025
Present Economic Utility								
Unadjusted Means	1.75	1.42	1.31	1.25	1.14	1.12	1.32	.067
Adjusted Means	1.67	1.37	1.31	1.27	1.19	1.20		.039
Better Person								
Unadjusted Means	2.01	1.90	1.86	1.82	1.68	1.46	1.84	.022
Adjusted Means	1.93	1.88	1.85	1.84	1.76	1.57		.008
Religion								
Unadjusted Means	1.39	1.24	1.22	1.26	1.27	1.23	1.25	.007
Adjusted Means	1.31	1.24	1.21	1.27	1.32	1.32		.005
N	130	189	276	728	153	82		

[a] The MCA equation included controls for race, religion, rural-urban background, labor force participation, sex role definition, and age.

[b] Apart from the overall summary measures, figures in the left-hand panels of Tables 4-9 are based on dichotomous variables (1=value mentioned, 0=value not mentioned), and can be interpreted as the proportion of respondents citing a given value. Figures in the right-hand panels are mean scores, based on total scores for the items used to measure each value; that is, where two or more items were combined, codes were summed over items (code: 1=not important; 2=somewhat important; 3=very important). Where two items were combined (range of scores=2-6), the overall mean is marked with one asterisk; where three items were combined (range=3-9), the overall mean is marked with two asterisks. (See Figure 1 for the specific items used to measure each value.)

[c] Entries indicate the percentage of the variance in the value which can be explained by the background variable in question (Tables 4-9). The figure for the unadjusted means (E²) indicates the bivariate explained variance, while the figure for the adjusted means (B²) indicates the multivariate explained variance.

[d] The overall summary measure indicates respectively the total number of responses given to the unstructured question (possible range=0-4) and the total additive score of the 22 structured items (possible range=22-66) outlined in Table 3.

agreement across the two approaches. It was hypothesized that, in general, children would be considered more important for the fulfillment of a need when there were fewer acceptable alternative sources for fulfilling the need. Therefore, a negative correlation between social class (as indicated by education) and valuing children for their economic utility and as security in old age was specifically hypothesized because the lower class has fewer economic resources and more financial insecurity than others. The data are supportive of this hypothesis in two ways. First, while all of the values measured using the structured approach are negatively related to education, the correlation between education and present economic utility was one of the largest ($E^2 = .067$). Second, while the more educated respondents gave more advantages altogether, the utilitarian responses were primarily given by the less educated. Ten percent of those with less than 10 years of education gave present economic utility as an advantage for having children, while only 1% of those with 17 or more years of education mentioned this as an advantage. The data are therefore consistent in supporting the hypothesis of a negative relationship between education and utilitarian values.

Following the suggestion of Rainwater (1960) that for lower-class women, children provide a more solid and rewarding source of affection than is provided by the husband, it was hypothesized that the lower class would place more importance on affectional ties with the child than would others. Conversely, we hypothesized that the lower class would place less emphasis on children as a means for expressing and fulfilling the husband-wife relationship. The data provided consistent support for the first hypothesis. The variable composed of the structured items concerning children bringing love and preventing loneliness had a substantial negative correlation with education. In addition, those with less than a high school education were more likely than others to mention love and companionship as advantages for having children. (However, note that those with 17 or more years of education were also very likely to indicate affiliative ties with children as being an advantage.) The data for the hypothesis concerning children as providing support for the husband-wife relationship are, however, less consistent. A positive association with education had been hypothesized, and as expected the more educated gave this as an advantage having children in the unstructured approach, but in the structured question there was no positive relationship between education and the importance

attached to children for strengthening the marital bond. It is impor-
tant to note, however, that despite the general tendency of the less
educated to rate all of the structured items as more important, with
the multivariate controls there was no *negative* correlation between
education and rating children as important for strengthening the
husband-wife bond. It may be, therefore, that there is a positive
relationship between education and this specific value that is
obscured by the fact that less educated respondents seem to rate all
of the items higher. The pattern of results is, therefore, generally
consistent with the hypothesis that children are valued more for
their companionship and affection in the lower class and more for
the strength they provide the marital relationship itself among the
more educated. Thus, while children are valued for affection and
group ties across all education categories, the specific reasons seem
to differ.

Using the model that children would be valued most for
meeting a particular need when there were fewest alternative
mechanisms for fulfilling the need, it was hypothesized that the less
educated respondents would value children more for signification of
adult status, for their bringing of fun and stimulation, and for their
providing a source of achievement, creativity, and accomplishment.
These hypotheses were based upon the belief that the less educated
would be less apt to have stimulating, enjoyable, and fulfilling
activities outside the home than would those with more education.
The overall pattern of results, however, did not provide substantial
support for these hypotheses.

While the less educated gave fewer responses classified under
fun and stimulation, even with the multivariate controls, they were
also more likely to rate the structured items tapping fun and stimula-
tion as more important than did the more educated. More intensive
analysis, however, showed that these results were due to the fact
that the educated gave more answers to the unstructured question
and had a tendency to rate all the structured items lower. There was,
therefore, no real relationship between education and the two
indicators of the fun-and-stimulation value. These results, con-
sequently, are not consistent with the hypothesis. It is important to
note, however, that these tests of the hypothesis did not take into
account the intensity of the need for fun and stimulation, though
intensity is important in the theory. It is possible that needs form a
hierarchy and that fun-and-stimulation concerns become more im-
portant as other needs are fulfilled, leading one to expect that as

education and access to resources increased so would the intensity of the need for fun and stimulation. If this is true, educational attainment would not be negatively related to this value of children, despite the fact that the more educated have more alternative avenues for the satisfaction of fun-and-stimulation needs.

Although first inspection of the data seemed to indicate support for the hypothesis that the less educated valued children more for signifying adult status, closer inspection indicated this was not the case. Without controls there was a strong inverse correlation between education and rating "the natural adult role" as an important reason for having children, but with the multivariate controls the relationship was substantially reduced. Furthermore, when we took into account the fact that education was generally negatively related to the structured items the relationship became even smaller, suggesting that education has no impact on this value independent of the overall importance attached to children by the less educated and independent of the other variables in the system. This is not to say, however, that the total effect of education on this value was trivial, but only that there was no direct effect.

The relationships between the unstructured adult-status sub-values and education were quite inconsistent. There was no monotonic relationship between either "the natural adult role" or "responsibility" and education. However, there was a substantial and important relationship between education and the "useful activity" variable that persisted with all controls. Here then, is one aspect of the adult-status value that is supportive of the hypothesis in question.

The data provided no support for the hypothesis that those with high educational attainment score lower on the achievement and competence value. While the structured measurement of this value had a negative association with education, this correlation was small, particularly in view of the general tendency of highly educated women to give structured items lower ratings. In addition, the correlation of education with the unstructured variable reveals a very important positive association that holds up with all controls. In fact, more than twice as many of those with 17 or more years of education gave this value as did those with less than a high school diploma. Therefore, the results not only fail to provide confirmation of the hypothesis, they also suggest the opposite conclusion. The observed relationship, however, may be produced by two factors. First, the intensity of the need to achieve is known to vary with

education, and college women have higher achievement needs than noncollege women (Veroff, Atkinson, Feld, & Gurin, 1960). Second, achievement needs, at least under present social conditions, may not be easily satiated for women. The pattern, for example, of even high-achieving professional women bringing their achievement need to many areas of their lives has been pointed out by McClelland (1964). In a study of women scholars at the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study, he was struck by the observation that their achievement needs were expressed in domestic as well as professional areas—in gourmet cooking and excellence in mothering. Therefore, the fact that the highly educated cite achievement and competence values of children more may be because their needs for achievement are higher and because achievement needs are diffuse, at least for women, and the availability of alternatives may not diminish the need. Further evidence of this interpretation was provided when the relationships between female sex-role definitions, labor-force participation, and this value of children were examined. Even though women who had sex-role definitions that permitted activities outside the home and those who were actually engaged in paid employment should have had more alternative sources for achievement, creativity, and accomplishment than others, they were just as likely to mention these things as advantages of children and rated them as important in the structured questions.

Sex Role Definitions

Sex-role definitions, orientations, and attitudes have been hypothesized to play an important role in fertility desires and behaviors. Since children are an integral aspect of the housewife and homemaker role, variations in orientations toward the female role should be related to attitudes toward children. It was hypothesized, in particular, that women who define the female role as being that of housewife and homemaker would value children more for their legitimization of adult status than would women whose definition of the female role includes outside-the-home activities that might also confirm adulthood.

While there are a number of sex-role dimensions that have been tapped in psychological and sociological research, in our opinion the most relevant aspect for fertility and the values associated with bearing and rearing children is the orientation of the woman relative to the home—whether she defines the female role

strictly as being housewife and homemaker or whether she includes activities occurring away from the home in her view of the role of women (Scanzoni, 1975). It is this dimension of roles that would seem to define the extent to which the women would have access to alternative opportunities for fulfilling basic needs for which children are also valued. This dimension was measured by having respondents indicate whether they agreed strongly, agreed slightly, disagreed slightly or disagreed strongly with the statment that "except in special cases the wife should do the cooking and housekeeping and the husband should provide the family with money."

The most important finding concerning sex roles was the strong relationship between the sex-role variable and the overall summary measure of the structured questions (Table 5). Women with traditional sex-role definitions rated the reasons for having children, overall, as more important than did those who were not so traditional. Furthermore, this pattern extended quite consistently across items, with each item being rated as more important by the more traditional. These data, therefore, raise the possibility of the existence of a notable response set: Sex-role definitions are very pervasive, and traditional orientations operate to increase the overall importance of children, thereby causing those with traditional definitions to rate all of the values as being more important. That is, children are such a vital and central part of the lives of housewives and homemakers that these women rate children as being important and valued for many reasons. It will be remembered that a similar hypothesis was suggested to explain the negative correlation between the structured values and education.

Looking at the number of responses given to the unstructured question about the advantages of children, without controls, one notes that the more traditional women gave slightly fewer answers than others. This relationship, however, disappeared in the multivariate analysis because of the correlation between sex roles and education and the powerful effect of education on the number of responses given. Extensive analysis indicated only a few relationships between the individual values or subvalues and sex roles. The most important relationships from the unstructured question were observed for the adult-status value. Those who disagreed strongly with the notion that women should primarily be housewives with husbands providing the family income were much less likely than others to volunteer that it was just natural or socially expected to have children. In addition, those who agreed strongly

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Table 5

Multiple Classification Analysis of the Relationship Between Sex Role Orientation and
Summary Measures of Value of Children for Women[a]

| | Agreement with Unstructured Advantages Question | | | | | | | Agreement with Traditional View of Sex Roles — Structured Importance Question | | | | | | |
Values	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK	Total	E^2 or R^2	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK	Total	E^2 or R^2
Overall Summary Measure[b]														
Unadjusted Means	2.47	2.54	2.61	2.60	1.25	2.52	.010	44.91	41.91	40.39	38.25	36.33	42.11	.098
Adjusted Means	2.50	2.56	2.57	2.53	1.20		.008	44.45	41.89	40.81	38.86	37.80		.067
N	646	340	229	342				613	319	221	328			

[a]The MCA equation included controls for race, religion, rural-urban background, labor force participation, education, and age.
[b]Total number of responses, for the open-ended question; total score, for the 22 structured items.

with the statement were more likely to indicate that having children was important because it provided a useful activity. On the other hand, it was the least traditional women who said that an advantage of having children was that they brought a feeling of greater responsibility. While there is, therefore, one contradiction, the over-all pattern of responses supports the notion that, since women who define the female role as being in the home have access to fewer alternative sources of adult status and identity, they value children more than others for fulfilling this need. This conclusion is further buttressed by the fact that when the adult-status subvalues were combined into an overall adult-status variable, the women with traditional sex-role definitions gave more of these advantages al-together than did other women. In addition, even though all of the structured subvalues were related to sex roles, one of the strongest associations was with the adult-status variable.

In addition to the relationship between sex-role definition and adult status, sex-role definition also related to a subvalue identified as part of the primary group ties-and-attention value. Women agree-ing with the traditional sex-role definition were more likely than others to indicate that "to complete the family" and "to have a closer family life" were advantages of children. The similarity of the relationship of sex roles with this family subvalue to the relationship between sex roles and the adult-status value suggests the hypothesis that completion of the family has an important element of Adult Status and Social Identity. Those who give this response probably view having a family with children as being natural and part of the socially accepted adult role. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that in the structured-question approach, sex-role definition was correlated most strongly with the item that says, "Children are needed to complete the family."

In summary, sex roles primarily influence the overall impor-tance attached to children; the more traditional women, on average, rate all of the reasons for having children as being more important but do not distinguish sharply between the specific reasons. How-ever, the particular values that the more traditional women gave the greatest relative importance to were adult status and identity and the natural and expected aspects of primary-group ties and affection—specifically, the notion that children complete the family.

Race

The data indicate that blacks are different from nonblacks on several of the values (Table 6). Looking first at the values represent-

Table 6

Multiple Classification Analysis of Relationships Between Race and Selected Values of Children for Women[a]

	Race							
	Unstructured Advantages Question				Structured Importance Question			
Value	Nonblack	Black	Total	E² or B²	Nonblack	Black	Total	E² or B²
Affectional Ties with Child								
Unadjusted Means	.41	.57	.425	.007	4.58	4.89	4.60*	.006
Adjusted Means	.41	.56		.005	4.59	4.75		.002
Husband-Wife Relationship								
Unadjusted Means	.15	.07	.145	.003	1.81	1.86	1.82	.000
Adjusted Means	.15	.09		.002	1.82	1.83		.000
Purpose and Experience								
Unadjusted Means	.30	.20	.292	.003	2.30	2.22	2.30	.001
Adjusted Means	.30	.22		.002	2.31	2.18		.002
Immortality								
Unadjusted Means	.07	.08	.074	.000	2.83	3.29	2.86*	.011
Adjusted Means	.07	.10		.001	2.84	3.19		.006
Old Age Security								
Unadjusted Means	.07	.07	.071	.000	1.32	1.67	1.35	.020
Adjusted Means	.07	.05		.000	1.33	1.59		.011
Present Economic Utility								
Unadjusted Means	.03	.14	.041	.019	1.31	1.57	1.32	.013
Adjusted Means	.03	.13		.014	1.31	1.49		.006
N	1463	106			1461	106		

[a]The MCA equation included controls for education, religion, rural-urban background, labor force participation, sex role definition, and age.

ing Expansion of Self, blacks were less likely to give purpose and experience as advantages of having children and also rated "to add purpose to your life" as less important than did whites. On the other hand, blacks mentioned immortality advantages more often than did whites, and felt that "to be remembered" and "to pass on the family name" were relatively more important reasons for having children. Blacks were more likely to mention children as bringing love and companionship and preventing loneliness than were nonblacks. At the same time, blacks were substantially less likely than nonblacks to mention children as contributing to the marital relationship. These two results are consistent with the pattern described earlier for the less educated respondents: Blacks, like less educated women generally, tend to place more emphasis on children as a source of love and affection, rather than focusing on them as a means of producing affection between spouses. Finally, blacks give Economic Utility reasons for having children more than nonblacks. One explanation of this phenomenon might be that blacks generally are of lower social class and therefore have to depend upon relatives more for financial support. However, this explanation can only be part of the answer since the relationship persists (though decreased somewhat) when education is entered as a control. It may be, however, that education does not adequately measure financial status and that blacks are relatively more disadvantaged than their lower educational attainment would suggest, and that this could explain the race differential. It is possible that the position of blacks in this country has been such that relying on the formal provisions of society, like Social Security in old age, medicare, and unemployment insurance may be less reassuring than relying on one's children. Blacks, however, were not more likely than whites to volunteer old-age security as an advantage of having children, but when asked about the topic they rated it as being more important.

Religion

Table 7 indicates that there may be a relationship between religion and Expansion of Self. Jews and those who had no religion (or no specific religious denomination) were most likely to volunteer immortality as a reason for having children in the open-ended

Table 7

Multiple Classification Analysis of the Relationships Between Religion and Selected Values of Children for Women[a]

	Religion													
	Unstructured Advantages Question							Structured Importance Question						
Values	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	None/No Preference	Other	Total	E^2 or B^2	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	None/No Preference	Other	Total	E^2 or B^2
Purpose and Experience														
Unadjusted Means	.29	.28	.38	.36	.29	.292	.002	2.30	2.33	2.19	1.98	2.47	2.30	.009
Adjusted Means	.30	.27	.35	.35	.29		.002	2.28	2.34	2.38	2.11	2.54		.006
Immortality														
Unadjusted Means	.07	.07	.24	.17	.03	.074	.012	2.84	2.90	2.81	2.79	3.40	2.86*	.007
Adjusted Means	.07	.07	.21	.15	.01		.008	2.80	2.95	3.16	2.98	3.42		.012
Better Person														
Unadjusted Means								1.82	1.91	1.38	1.64	2.06	1.84	.011
Adjusted Means								1.81	1.92	1.54	1.75	2.07		.009
Religion														
Unadjusted Means								1.20	1.41	1.33	1.04	1.49	1.25	.034
Adjusted Means								1.19	1.42	1.36	1.08	1.46		.035
N	1068	382	21	58	35			1066	382	21	58	35		

[a]The MCA equation included controls for education, race, rural-urban background, labor force participation, sex role definition, and age.

context. In addition, in the multivariate analysis of the structured question both groups were slightly more likely than Catholics or Protestants to rate this subvalue highly. It may be, therefore, that since Christianity places great stress on life after death, children assume less importance in providing this need than they do for Jews and those with no religion. Also, note that in the unstructured approach, Jews and those with no religion were more likely to indicate purpose and experience as advantages for having children; however, in the structured question, those with no religion rated this reason as less important than did all the other groups listed.

In the Catholic religion, the bearing and rearing of children is viewed as a moral imperative. That is, there are religious proclamations about the importance of having children, and morality is measured, at least somewhat, by the extent to which this moral injunction is heeded. It is therefore plausible to hypothesize that Catholics would express the moral value more than Protestants, Jews, and those with no religion. The data support the hypothesis in that Catholics rated both "because of your religion" and "to be a better person" as more important reasons for having children than did others. The only religions placing more importance on these two subvalues were those that could not be categorized in one of the major groups listed. Thus, it appears that the stress of Catholicism on the morality of childbearing and rearing is reflected in the attitudes and values that Catholics hold.

Rural-Urban Differences

It had been hypothesized that expansion of self would be a more important value in the urban, industrialized, secularized sectors of society, and the correlation of religious preference with that value gives some support to our expectation. In addition, while there does not seem to be a relationship between one's background (rural or urban) and immortality, there is a moderate association between background and purpose and experience (Table 8). Those with extensive rural backgrounds volunteer purpose and experience less often in the unstructured question and also rate the subvalue as less important than others in the structured context. This finding is in line with the general hypothesis that urbanization as well as secularization increase the perception that children help to provide meaning and experience in life.

Table 8

Multiple Classification Analysis of the Relationships Between Rural-Urban Background and Selected Values of Children for Women[a]

	Rural-Urban Background													
	Unstructured Advantages Question							Structured Importance Question						
Values	Rural Always	Rural Youth 10+ Years	Rural Youth <10 Years	Other Rural-Urban Mixture	Urban Always	Total	E^2 or B^2	Rural Always	Rural Youth 10+ Years	Rural Youth <10 Years	Other Rural-Urban Mixture	Urban Always	Total	E^2 or B^2
Purpose and Experience														
Unadjusted Means	.22	.27	.31	.31	.30	.292	.004	2.32	2.31	2.34	2.33	2.26	2.30	.003
Adjusted Means	.26	.27	.32	.31	.29		.002	2.26	2.31	2.30	2.30	2.29		.001
Immortality														
Unadjusted Means	.04	.08	.05	.06	.09	.074	.004	2.97	3.10	2.86	2.84	2.76	2.86*	.013
Adjusted Means	.05	.08	.06	.07	.08		.001	2.81	3.11	2.83	2.83	2.79		.011
Old Age Security														
Unadjusted Means	.07	.09	.06	.06	.07	.071	.003	1.46	1.50	1.25	1.34	1.29	1.35	.019
Adjusted Means	.07	.09	.06	.06	.08		.003	1.39	1.50	1.24	1.33	1.31		.016
Present Utility														
Unadjusted Means	.07	.07	.02	.05	.03	.041	.007	1.56	1.43	1.25	1.37	1.24	1.32	.027
Adjusted Means	.05	.06	.02	.04	.03		.004	1.46	1.42	1.24	1.36	1.27		.015
N	104	260	173	349	657			103	260	173	349	657		

[a]The MCA equation included controls for education, race, religion, labor force participation, sex role definition, and age.

In the United States, as elsewhere, economic utility and security in old age were mentioned more often as advantages of having children by those with rural background than by others. This was true for both subvalues as measured in the open-ended question. It was also true for the structured question: People with rural backgrounds rated both subvalues as more important reasons for having children than did others. These data therefore give support to the hypothesis that as society becomes more industrialized and more urban, children lose their perceived utilitarian value. This hypothesis was also supported by the fact that, in general, utilitarian values receive little endorsement in the United States, whereas, in the cross-cultural data from the less industrialized nations, Economic Utility appears as a much more important value.

Women's Employment

It was hypothesized that the participation of women in the labor force would provide alternative satisfactions that would decrease the salience of the advantages to be derived from children for at least some of the values. It was hypothesized that since paid employment provides an alternative source of adult status, stimulation, and achievement and competence, working women and especially those who work full-time and are fully committed to employment would give fewer answers indicating these values of children and would rate items suggesting these values as less important. While there was weak support for a correlation between Adult Status and employment, introduction of the multivariate controls reduced the association to zero, which suggested that working had no influence above that of education and sex-role definition. However, there was one value of children, Stimulation and Fun, that was strongly related to labor-force participation and at the same time was not particularly associated with either education or sex-role definition. Women who were not working indicated that children provided fun and stimulation more than did those who were working (Table 9). This result provides some support for the alternatives proposition; work and children do appear to be alternatives in supplying this particular need. A control on parity which is related to Stimulation and Fun, as indicated above, and also to employment status was introduced, but this also failed to substantially change the relationship.

Table 9

Multiple Classification Analysis of the Relationships Between Labor Force Participation and Selected Values of Children for Women[a]

Values	Unstructured Advantages Question									Structured Advantages Question								
	Working				Not Working				E^2 or B^2	Working				Not Working				E^2 or B^2
	Fulltime, Rest of Life	Fulltime, Other	Parttime, Rest of Life	Parttime, Other	Wants to Work Soon	Wants to Work Sometime	Does Not Want to work	Total		Fulltime, Rest of Life	Fulltime, Other	Parttime, Rest of Life	Parttime, Other	Wants to Work Soon	Wants to Work Sometime	Does Not Want to work	Total	
Stimulation and Fun																		
Unadjusted Means	.47	.49	.59	.57	.60	.65	.56	.563	.019	7.57	7.61	7.60	7.66	7.72	7.79	7.54	7.66**	.004
Adjusted Means	.47	.49	.58	.56	.63	.65	.57		.020	7.67	7.71	7.65	7.65	7.69	7.71	7.37		.004
N	238	325	122	145	139	428	130			237	325	121	145	139	428	130		

[a]The MCA equation included controls for education, race, religion, rural-urban background, sex role definition, and age.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The data reported here are from a study of the value of children in the United States carried out with a national sample of married couples in the childbearing years. The guiding framework for the study was the conceptualization and theory laid out by Hoffman and Hoffman (1973), in which the value of children was conceptualized in terms of the needs they satisfy for parents. Differences in the particular needs children satisfy were seen as a function of the intensity of the need and the extent to which children were the only source of need satisfaction. The analysis reported here was intended to test the adequacy of the nine categories proposed by Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) for describing the value of children; to report how mothers, fathers, wives without children, and husbands without children value children; and, by examining specific subgroup differences, to test the general hypothesis that a group with fewer alternative means of satisfying a particular need will value children more highly for this quality. Two measures of the value of children were analyzed: an open-ended question about the advantages of having children and a structured set of items in which respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of 22 "reasons for wanting to have children."

Adequacy of the Value Categories

Responses to the open-ended question indicated that the nine categories in the Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) scheme were adequate for coding virtually all of the responses, but two of the categories, Social Comparison and Power, were seldom mentioned and therefore not necessary as categories. It was suggested that Social Comparison could be combined with the category of Achievement, Competence, and Creativity, but Power might still prove useful in future studies, even though respondents did not readily give this advantage of children in the direct-survey approach.

Distribution of the Values by Sex and Parent Status

The two most commonly expressed values of children, in both measures, were those categorized as Primary Group Ties and Stimulation and Fun. Least common, besides Power and Social Compari-

son, were Morality and Economic Utility. The other categories—Expansion of Self, Adult Status and Social Identity, and Achievement and Creativity—fell in between.

In the open-ended question, women gave more Primary Group Tie responses than men, but they did not give higher ratings to such items on the structured measure. The data suggested that a distinction between seeing children as an intrinsic source of love and seeing them as an expression of marital love might be important.

For both the open-ended and structured measures, parents saw children as a source of stimulation and fun more than nonparents; in the open-ended women indicated this value more than men.

There were no significant sex or parent-status differences when the category Expansion of Self was considered as a whole, but subdividing it into those responses that were concerned with meaning and purpose in life and those that were concerned with immortality revealed that in both measures women gave more stress to the former, men to the latter, and that parents gave more stress to the former, nonparents to the latter.

The Alternatives Hypothesis

The relationships between the various values of children and race, religion, education, rural-urban background, sex-role attitudes, and labor-force participation were studied to investigate the general hypothesis that fertility motivations are at least partially determined by the extent to which alternatives to children are available as sources of satisfaction for the various needs identified. The results relevant to an evaluation of this hypothesis were mixed. On the one hand, there were a number of relationships that supported the hypothesis. The less educated and blacks, groups with less access to economic resources, were more likely than others to indicate the importance of the Economic Utility considerations in having children. Women with traditional sex-role definitions, and therefore with less access to alternative sources of adult status, gave Adult Status as an advantage of having children more than did others, and employed women gave less importance to Fun and Stimulation than did nonworking women. Furthermore, those who identified with Christianity rated immortality as being less important than did Jews and those with no religion, and those with rural background were less likely than urban dwellers to rate meaning and purpose as important reasons for having children. While these results are generally consistent with the alternatives framework,

there were other data that were not consistent with the framework. Of crucial importance in this regard were the relationships between achievement and education, sex-role identification, and labor-force status. We had expected that higher education, employment, and egalitarian role definitions would give women alternative sources of achievement, creativity, and competence, but the data indicated that women who had these things were not less likely than others to mention achievement, and in many cases were more likely. In addition, we had expected that the less educated would rate Fun and Stimulation and Adult Status as advantages of children more than the higher educated, but they did not.

Therefore, while the results do not provide consistent support for the alternatives framework, neither do they suggest that the framework should be abandoned. Rather, the results seem to suggest the importance of determining the conditions under which the alternative model operates. While the model suggested that the intensity of the need should be taken into account, the data reported here did not explicitly consider this factor. Since both the intensity of the need and alternatives for fulfilling the need have been hypothesized to influence the value of children, if there are important correlations between the two, the failure to include intensity in the analysis could bias the results dealing with the impact of alternatives. Further analysis will be needed to investigate this possibility.

The amount of variation the individual background variables could explain in the values was usually small, with the largest explained variance being only of moderate magnitude ($E^2 = .098$ and $B^2 = .067$ for the relationship between sex-role attitudes and the overall summary measure based on the 22 structured items). Together, the set of background variables explain somewhat more variation, with the largest multiple R^2 being .136, again for the overall measure based on the structured items. Note, therefore, that while these relationships leave much of the variation in the values unexplained, the predictive power of the background variables (especially sex-role attitudes and education) for some of the values is not trivial. These results, therefore, suggest that these variables have some theoretical and practical importance relative to the values perceived in children.

Structured vs. Unstructured Approach

In the course of the analysis reported here, contrasts were noted in the two measures used. Both the unstructured, open-ended approach and the structured approach have special characteristics that are important to consider for instrument development in future research. The unstructured approach indicates the salience of the values to the respondent. That is, the advantages of having children are elicited in an open and spontaneous way with a minimum of opportunity for the interjection of bias from the interview situation itself. At the same time, however, this approach does not ascertain the respondent's feelings toward values that are not immediately salient, and there may be important values that are not elicited in this framework. Furthermore, as we have already shown, the pattern of responses to this question varies by educational level; those with greater educational attainment give substantially more answers on the average than others. We interpret this finding to indicate that the answers to this question are influenced, to some extent at least, by the respondent's ability and willingness to conceptualize and verbalize attitudes toward children. These characteristics must be considered in interpreting results using this approach.

The structured approach to the measurement of the value of children permits assessment of the importance of each of the values to the respondent. However, as we have seen, the responses to the individual items seem to be affected by an overall response set or method effect; the less educated and those with traditional sex-role definitions rated each of the items as more important than did others. It's true that the effects of sex-role attitudes and education on the responses to these questions may be meaningful in indicating an overall evaluation of children. Nevertheless, since respondents could rate all of the items or none of them as very important, the researcher's ability to discern which of the values the respondent believes is most important is limited. Therefore, we recommend that research utilizing this approach ask the respondents to indicate the two or three values that are the most important to them. This procedure should facilitate interpretation of the data.

Our experience with the two methods of measuring the value of children suggests that it is probably useful to utilize the two ap-

proaches together to gain maximum understanding of the subject. They measure different aspects of the topic—one salience and the other importance—and both have built-in method effects. By using the two measures together it is possible to better assess the value structure.

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