



Perceived Changes in Quality of Life of Open-Country Residents in Six Mississippi Counties

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A substantial majority of both black and white respondents in six Mississippi counties (Clay, Coahoma, Lawrence, Holmes, Neshoba and Tunica) perceived an improvement in the situations of young people, old people, blacks and the poor in their counties between 1960 and 1973. This also was true for the two overall quality of life items---quality of life for most people and of their county as a place to live.

Knowledgeables in the six counties generally agreed with household respondents that quality of life had improved. Crime and law enforcement, real income and agriculture and land use were areas where the percentage of respondents perceiving an improvement was substantially higher for knowledgeables than for household respondents. The situation was reversed for the quality of public schools and the situation and opportunities for young people, old people and blacks.

More than one half of the household respondents in seven other southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee) felt that there had

been no improvements in eight quality of life categories ---all three county government items, real income, the two environment items, church and religion and recreational opportunities. The percentage of respondents expressing the belief that quality of life had improved was higher for Mississippi than for the other southern states for items that both groups felt had improved.

A majority of respondents in Mississippi rated quality of all but three items "good" in 1973. Exceptions were citizens' obedience to laws (black respondents), real income and recreational opportunities (white respondents). More than one half of the respondents in the six other southern states rated quality of six items "fair". For categories that both groups rated "good", the percentages were higher in Mississippi than in the other southern states, with the exception of the situation and opportunities for blacks.

Respondents' expressions of fears and hopes for the future provide insights into the improvements in quality of life that open-country Mississippi residents desire for their families. Concerns

about how to earn money, how to get on welfare and that their car would break down were expressed more often by blacks than by whites. Concerns about being unable to pay bills, a possible depression and a business or farm failure were expressed more often by whites than by blacks. Whites also were more concerned about the future of their children.

Hopes for economic improvement were mentioned most often by blacks and whites. Both groups also ranked other hopes in the same order. Hopes for better housing, better health and better opportunities for children were expressed frequently.

Results of the study indicate that the respondents view their quality of life situation with some degree of accuracy. That is, their perception of quality of life corresponds closely to quality of life as determined by objective measures. Therefore, given the limited time and resources for conducting surveys to develop subjective measures, use of objective measures of quality of life by elected officials and other public servants is realistic.

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Objective measures of quality of life (e.g., income, education and employment levels) are relatively easily defined units that do not require evaluation by the individuals for whom quality of life is being assessed. Use of objective community measures assumes that quality of life of the individuals in a community improves or worsens as the objective measures improve or worsen; e.g., quality of life is considered to have improved if measures of education and health services go up and measures of

unemployment and crime go down. In short, objective measures are used as proxies for the subjective experiences of individuals.

As Campbell, Converse and Rogers point out "... we do not know how well objective measures like these represent underlying psychological states or how well social indicators can be taken to represent the quality of life experience."¹ Using rooms per person as an objective measure, for example, may not accurately reflect perceived quality of life because the

size of a house may not coincide with the satisfaction a dweller derives from living in it.

Objective measures² are helpful in determining the quality of life of an individual, but a more meaningful determination requires that they be supplemented with subjective measures; i.e., what the individual perceives his (or her) quality of life to be. As W. I. Thomas pointed out: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."³

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Elected officials and other public servants are faced with the problem of determining where available resources can be used to serve the public interest most effectively. Decisions on how to use public funds for attaining maximum social and economic benefits can be based on experience and on objective measures of success of past and current programs.

However, the ultimate political success of public programs is not what public servants perceive it to be and not what objective measures show it to be, but on what members of society perceive it to be. In short, citizens will support public programs and the public servants behind them if they believe programs are serving their needs but will mandate change if they

believe they are not.

The purpose of this study was to determine quality of life as perceived by rural Mississippians. The information gained is presented as a guide to decision-makers in better identifying, understanding and alleviating conditions that foster a low level of quality of life or impede improvement in quality of life.

PROCEDURE

The six Mississippi counties included in the study were divided systematically into small-area segments,⁴ and a random sample of

these segments was drawn for each county.⁵ Households were selected randomly from each sample segment and the household head

(and/or homemaker) was interviewed. For Regional Project S-79, similar procedures were followed in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky,

¹See page 10 for explanatory notes 1-11.

Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

The positional and reputational approaches were used to select local "knowledgeables" from each of the six counties. Knowledge of

their county in general and of certain areas in particular (e.g., government, education, welfare) was the major criterion for their selection.⁶ Not all knowledgeable selected were leaders in their coun-

ty (i.e., part of the power structure), but the selection procedure assured that they were influential in their county.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

All six of the Mississippi counties included in the study experienced a decline in nonwhite population, but only three---Coahoma, Holmes and Tunica---showed a similar trend in the white population (Table 1). The other three counties---Clay, Lawrence and Neshoba---actually experienced slight increases in the number of white residents. Except for Tunica County, the rural non-farm population increased as a percentage of total population in each county, while the farm pop-

ulation decreased.

Median age and median family income of the population increased in the sample counties between 1960 and 1970 (Table 2). Median years of schooling of both males and females was higher in each county in 1970 than in 1960.

The 331 household respondents in the Mississippi survey were predominantly females. More than one half of all respondents were more than 50 years of age, had less than a high school education and

were in low-skill jobs (Table 3). Slightly more than 40% of all respondents were retired or disabled.

Eighty-five percent of the 221 knowledgeable were white, 14% were black and 1% were Indian.⁷ The majority of the knowledgeable were between 35 and 49 years of age and had occupations in the manager and proprietor categories.

Table 1. Population of the six Mississippi counties selected for Southern Regional Project, S-79, by race and place or residence, 1960 and 1970.

County	Population							
	White		Non-White		Rural Non-Farm		Rural Farm	
	1960 ^a	1970 ^b	1960 ^a	1970 ^b	1960 ^c	1970 ^d	1960 ^c	1970 ^d
Numbers				Percent				
Clay	9,214	9,517	9,719	9,323	29.2	40.4	25.6	14.0
Coahoma	14,630	14,232	31,582	26,215	28.2	33.2	26.2	13.3
Holmes	7,595	7,345	19,501	15,775	42.7	59.0	37.2	17.3
Lawrence	6,354	7,553	3,861	3,584	67.9	81.9	32.1	18.1
Neshoba	15,026	15,091	5,901	5,711	35.0	48.6	41.0	20.7
Tunica	3,505	3,225	13,321	8,629	65.0	48.4	35.0	51.6
Mississippi	1,257,546	1,393,283	915,743	815,770	37.4	43.7	24.9	11.8

Sources:

^aU.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960. General Population Characteristics Final Report PC (1)-26B Mississippi. USGPO, Washington, D.C. 1961.

^bU.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1970. General Population Characteristics Final Report PC (1)-B26 Mississippi. USGPO, Washington, D.C. 1971.

^cU.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960. General Social and Economic Characteristics Final Report PC (1)-26C Mississippi. USGPO, Washington, D.C. 1961.

^dU.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1970. General Social and Economics Characteristics Final Report PC (1)-C26 Mississippi. USGPO, Washington, D.C. 1972.

Table 2. Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of the six Mississippi counties selected for Southern Regional Project, S-79, 1960 and 1970.

County	Median Age		Median Family Income		Median of Years School Completed By Persons 25 Years Old and Older				Family with Income Less than Poverty Level	
	1960 ^a	1970 ^b	1960 ^c	1970 ^d	Males		Females		1960 ^c	1970 ^d
	Years	Years	\$	\$	Number	Number	Number	Number	%	%
Clay	23.2	24.5	2,851	6,228	8.7	9.9	9.1	10.8	51.9	25.9
Coahoma	21.6	22.1	2,101	4,304	6.6	8.3	7.8	8.9	77.6	42.8
Holmes	21.3	23.0	1,453	3,089	6.9	8.1	8.1	8.9	77.9	53.0
Lawrence	26.2	27.0	2,422	5,049	8.4	9.9	9.0	10.6	59.6	36.6
Neshoba	27.3	29.3	2,384	5,504	8.7	9.9	9.3	10.6	50.8	29.9
Tunica	18.8	19.9	1,260	2,885	4.2	6.0	6.2	8.0	71.8	55.6
Mississippi	24.2	25.1	2,884	6,071	8.6	10.4	9.3	10.9	52.0	28.9

Sources: See Table 1.

Table 3. Selected characteristics of the Mississippi open-country household respondents selected for Southern Regional Project, S-79

	Total	Blacks	Whites
	%		
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	40	43	38
Female	60	57	62
<u>Age</u>			
Under 35	16.0	12.2	19.1
35 - 49	20.0	20.9	19.2
50 - 64	31.7	32.4	31.1
65+	32.3	34.5	30.6
<u>Education</u>			
Less than 9th Grade	55.0	81.8	33.3
Some high school	21.5	12.3	29.0
High School Diploma	12.4	3.4	19.7
1 - 4 Years of College	10.8	2.5	17.5
Master's Degree or Above	0.3	---	0.5
<u>Occupation</u>			
Homemaker	3.0	4.1	2.2
Farm Operator or Manager	9.7	4.7	13.7
Farm Laborer or Foreman	15.7	27.7	6.0
Manager, Proprietor (except farm, professional, technical)	1.5	---	2.7
Sales	3.0	0.7	4.9
Clerical	0.3	---	0.5
Craftsman and Foreman	3.3	---	6.0
Operatives	5.7	8.1	3.8
Service Workers	1.5	0.7	2.2
Domestic Service	1.0	2.0	---
Labor	13.6	11.5	15.3
Disabled	15.1	18.2	12.6
Retired	25.7	21.6	29.0
Unemployment	0.3	0.7	---
No Information	0.6	---	1.1
	Number		
<u>Total</u>	331	148	183

PERCEIVED CHANGES IN QUALITY OF LIFE FROM 1960 to 1973

Six general dimensions or areas of quality of life were examined---county government, education, income and employment, county services, over-all quality of life, the physical environment and the quality of life of selected sub-populations (the young, the old, the poor and blacks). Only the responses of those who had lived in the county for most of the 10 years before 1973 are included in this report because respondents were asked about changes since 1960. Therefore, data are reported for only 233 respondents---106 blacks and 127 whites.⁸

Household respondents were asked whether they felt that each quality-of-life area had improved, remained about the same or worsened since 1960. A larger percentage of black respondents expressed the belief that there had been an improvement in all aspects of county government than was the case for white respondents (Table 4). Examination of the educational items indicates that a larger percentage of black respondents thought the quality of public schools had improved. There were only minor black-white differences with regard to the other two educational items.

Black-white comparisons of the income and employment items indicate that a majority of blacks felt that real income had improved while a majority of whites did not. About the same percentages of blacks and whites felt that incomes of people who work for wages had improved, and a larger percentage of whites felt that employment opportunities had improved. The percentage of respondents expressing the belief that the agriculture and land use situation had improved was higher for whites than for blacks, while a larger percentage of blacks felt that quality of the physical environment had improved.

Table 4. Changes in quality of life as perceived by black and white open-country residents of Clay, Coahoma, Holmes, Lawrence, Neshoba and Tunica counties, Mississippi, by quality of life item, 1960 to 1973.

Quality of Life Item	Type of Perceived Change Between 1960 and 1973					
	Improved		Remained the Same		Gotten Worse	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT						
Quality of county government						
Blacks	77.8	(77)	18.2	(18)	4.0	(4)
Whites	61.4	(70)	28.9	(33)	9.7	(11)
Politics and political parties						
Blacks	76.7	(69)	20.0	(18)	3.3	(3)
Whites	50.5	(50)	32.3	(32)	17.2	(17)
Crime and law enforcement						
Blacks	64.0	(64)	22.0	(22)	14.0	(14)
Whites	44.1	(52)	26.3	(31)	29.6	(35)
EDUCATION						
Quality of public schools						
Blacks	86.0	(80)	11.8	(11)	2.2	(2)
Whites	53.8	(56)	8.7	(9)	37.5	(39)
Quality of private schools						
Blacks	84.3	(59)	12.8	(9)	2.9	(2)
Whites	90.1	(82)	7.7	(7)	2.2	(2)
Opportunities for education and training beyond high school						
Blacks	92.5	(87)	7.5	(7)	0.0	(0)
Whites	85.7	(96)	11.6	(13)	2.7	(3)
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT						
Real income						
Blacks	62.8	(59)	14.9	(14)	22.3	(21)
Whites	40.3	(46)	16.7	(19)	43.0	(49)
Income for people who work for wages						
Blacks	88.2	(91)	10.7	(11)	0.1	(1)
Whites	89.9	(107)	7.6	(9)	2.5	(3)
Employment opportunities in the county						
Blacks	74.5	(76)	17.7	(18)	7.8	(8)
Whites	84.5	(98)	11.2	(13)	4.3	(5)
ENVIRONMENT						
Agriculture and land use situation						
Blacks	61.9	(60)	13.4	(13)	24.7	(24)
Whites	69.9	(79)	15.9	(18)	14.2	(16)
Quality of the physical environment						
Blacks	77.4	(65)	16.7	(14)	5.9	(5)
Whites	61.3	(65)	28.3	(30)	10.4	(11)
SERVICES						
Quality of roads and transportation system						
Blacks	83.5	(86)	14.6	(15)	1.9	(2)
Whites	84.1	(106)	12.7	(16)	3.2	(4)
Public utilities						
Blacks	88.0	(88)	12.0	(12)	0.0	(0)
Whites	81.0	(98)	18.2	(22)	0.8	(1)
Quality of medical care and health services						
Blacks	90.4	(94)	5.8	(6)	3.8	(4)
Whites	75.6	(93)	11.4	(14)	13.0	(16)
Quality of church and religion						
Blacks	60.8	(62)	24.5	(25)	14.7	(15)
Whites	56.5	(69)	32.0	(39)	11.8	(14)
Welfare programs						
Blacks	86.1	(87)	9.9	(10)	4.0	(4)
Whites	80.0	(84)	9.5	(10)	10.5	(11)
Effectiveness of government housing programs						
Blacks	90.0	(90)	8.0	(8)	2.0	(2)
Whites	87.5	(98)	10.7	(12)	1.8	(2)
Recreational opportunities						
Blacks	58.6	(51)	36.8	(32)	4.6	(4)
Whites	54.1	(60)	38.7	(43)	7.2	(8)
SUBPOPULATIONS						
Situation and opportunities for young people						
Blacks	91.1	(93)	7.8	(8)	0.1	(1)
Whites	82.2	(97)	16.1	(19)	1.7	(2)
Situation and opportunities for old people						
Blacks	86.5	(90)	10.6	(11)	2.9	(3)
Whites	68.3	(84)	26.0	(32)	5.7	(7)
Quality of life for the poor						
Blacks	82.7	(86)	12.5	(13)	4.8	(5)
Whites	90.1	(109)	7.4	(9)	2.5	(3)
Situation and opportunities for blacks						
Blacks	94.2	(98)	3.9	(4)	1.9	(2)
Whites	98.4	(118)	0.8	(1)	0.8	(1)
OVER-ALL QUALITY OF LIFE						
Quality of life for most people						
Blacks	76.4	(81)	17.9	(19)	5.7	(6)
Whites	81.9	(104)	8.7	(11)	9.4	(12)
County as a place to live						
Blacks	89.4	(93)	10.6	(11)	0.0	(0)
Whites	83.0	(103)	14.5	(18)	12.5	(3)

Most respondents indicated that county services had improved. There were no major differences in opinions of blacks and whites except for medical service and health care.

A substantial majority of both black and white respondents believed there had been an improvement in the situations of young people, old people, blacks and the poor. This also was true for the two overall quality of life items--quality of life for most people and of their county as a place to live. Black-white differences for the subpopulations and overall quality of life items were not very large, except for situations and opportunities for old people---more than 86% of the blacks stated that the situation had improved while only about 68% of the whites responded positively.

Knowledgeables generally agreed with household respondents^{9,10} that quality of life had improved. However, less than 50% of the knowledgeables believed there had been improvement in quality of county government, the physical environment and church and religion (Table 5).

Crime and law enforcement, real income and agriculture and land use were areas where the percentage of respondents perceiving an improvement was substantially higher for knowledgeables than for household respondents. The situation was reversed for the quality of public schools and the situation and opportunities for young people, old people and blacks.

More than one half of the household respondents in the other southern states felt that eight items had not improved---all three county government items, real income,

Table 5. Changes in quality of life as perceived by open-country residents and knowledgeables of Clay, Coahoma, Holmes, Lawrence, Neshoba and Tunica counties, Mississippi by quality of life item, 1960 to 1973.

Quality of Life Item	Type of Perceived Change Between 1960 and 1973					
	Improved		Remained the Same		Gotten Worse	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT						
Quality of county government						
Household respondents	69.0	(147)	23.9	(51)	7.1	(15)
Knowledgeables	49.1	(108)	50.0	(110)	0.9	(2)
Politics and political parties						
Household respondents	63.0	(119)	26.4	(50)	10.6	(20)
Knowledgeables	61.9	(135)	34.9	(76)	3.2	(7)
Crime and law enforcement						
Household respondents	53.2	(116)	24.3	(53)	22.5	(49)
Knowledgeables	74.7	(165)	23.1	(51)	2.2	(5)
EDUCATION						
Quality of public schools						
Household respondents	69.0	(136)	10.2	(20)	20.8	(41)
Knowledgeables	50.2	(111)	10.0	(22)	39.0	(80)
Opportunities for education and training beyond high school						
Household respondents	88.8	(183)	9.7	(20)	1.5	(3)
Knowledgeables	91.7	(200)	7.3	(16)	1.0	(2)
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT						
Real income						
Household respondents	50.5	(105)	15.9	(33)	33.6	(70)
Knowledgeables	70.6	(156)	27.6	(61)	1.0	(4)
Employment opportunities in the county						
Household respondents	79.8	(174)	14.2	(31)	6.0	(13)
Knowledgeables	80.0	(176)	14.5	(32)	5.5	(12)
ENVIRONMENT						
Agriculture and land use situation						
Household respondents	66.2	(139)	14.8	(31)	19.0	(40)
Knowledgeables	86.2	(187)	10.6	(23)	3.2	(7)
Quality of the physical environment						
Household respondents	68.4	(130)	23.2	(44)	8.4	(16)
Knowledgeables	20.0	(44)	63.6	(140)	16.4	(36)
SERVICES						
Quality of roads and transportation system						
Household respondents	83.8	(192)	13.6	(31)	2.6	(6)
Knowledgeables	85.0	(187)	11.8	(26)	3.2	(7)
Public utilities						
Household respondents	84.2	(186)	15.4	(34)	0.4	(1)
Knowledgeables	87.7	(192)	11.4	(25)	0.9	(2)
Quality of medical care and health services						
Household respondents	82.4	(187)	8.8	(20)	8.8	(20)
Knowledgeables	84.6	(187)	14.5	(32)	0.9	(2)
Quality of church and religion						
Household respondents	58.4	(131)	28.6	(64)	13.0	(29)
Knowledgeables	31.2	(67)	65.6	(141)	3.3	(7)
Welfare programs						
Household respondents	83.0	(171)	9.7	(20)	7.3	(15)
Knowledgeables	81.0	(175)	11.1	(24)	7.9	(17)
Recreational opportunities						
Household respondents	56.0	(111)	37.9	(75)	6.1	(12)
Knowledgeables	56.4	(124)	32.3	(71)	11.3	(25)
SUBPOPULATIONS						
Situation and opportunities for young people						
Household respondents	86.4	(190)	12.3	(27)	1.3	(3)
Knowledgeables	70.5	(155)	26.8	(59)	2.7	(6)
Situation and opportunities for old people						
Household respondents	76.7	(190)	18.9	(43)	4.4	(10)
Knowledgeables	63.2	(139)	35.4	(78)	1.4	(3)
Quality of life for the poor						
Household respondents	86.7	(195)	9.8	(22)	3.5	(8)
Knowledgeables	88.4	(190)	8.8	(19)	2.8	(6)
Situation and opportunities for blacks						
Household respondents	96.5	(216)	2.2	(5)	1.3	(3)
Knowledgeables	82.3	(182)	14.5	(32)	3.2	(7)
OVER-ALL QUALITY OF LIFE						
Quality of Life for most people						
Household respondents	79.4	(185)	12.9	(30)	7.7	(18)
Knowledgeables	96.8	(214)	2.3	(5)	0.9	(2)

the two environment items, church and religion and recreational opportunities (Table 6). The percentage of respondents expressing the belief that quality of life had improved was higher for Mississippi than for the other southern states, for all items.

PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN 1973

A majority of respondents in Mississippi rated quality of all but three items "good" in 1973. Exceptions were citizens obedience of laws (black respondents), real income and recreational opportunities (white respondents). The quality of life of the various subgroups also was rated "good" by a majority of both black and white respondents, the one exception being the situation and opportunities for blacks (Table 7).

More than one half of the respondents in the seven other southern states rated the quality of six categories as only "fair" in 1973—all three county government items, real income, the agricultural and land use situation and recreational opportunities (Table 8). For categories that a majority of both groups rated "good", the percentages were higher in Mississippi than in the other southern states, with the exception of the situation and opportunities for blacks.

FEARS AND HOPES OF MISSISSIPPI RESPONDENTS¹¹

The S-79 project was not designed to determine respondents' perceptions of future changes in quality of life in their county; however, household respondents were asked to express their fears and hopes for the future of their families. The results provide insights into the improvements in

Table 6. Changes in quality of life as perceived by open-country residents of Mississippi and of seven other Southern States,* by quality of life item, 1960-1973.

Quality of Life Item	Type of the Perceived Change Between 1960 and 1973					
	Improved		Remained the Same		Gotten Worse	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT						
Quality of county government						
Mississippi	69.0	(147)	23.9	(51)	7.1	(14)
Other states	35.0	(486)	47.5	(658)	17.5	(242)
Politics and political parties						
Mississippi	63.0	(119)	26.4	(50)	10.6	(20)
Other states	23.6	(299)	51.9	(658)	24.5	(311)
Crime and law enforcement						
Mississippi	53.2	(116)	24.3	(53)	22.5	(49)
Other states	29.2	(438)	35.4	(532)	35.4	(532)
EDUCATION						
Quality of public schools						
Mississippi	69.0	(136)	10.2	(20)	20.8	(41)
Other states	58.0	(848)	13.1	(191)	28.9	(422)
Quality of private schools						
Mississippi	87.6	(141)	9.9	(16)	2.5	(4)
Other states	74.8	(255)	16.7	(57)	8.5	(29)
Opportunities for education and training beyond high school						
Mississippi	88.8	(183)	9.7	(20)	1.5	(3)
Other states	81.9	(1192)	14.9	(216)	3.2	(47)
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT						
Real income						
Mississippi	50.5	(105)	15.9	(33)	33.6	(70)
Other states	34.3	(499)	28.2	(410)	37.5	(545)
Income for people who work for wages						
Mississippi	89.2	(198)	9.0	(20)	1.8	(4)
Other states	81.9	(1255)	14.2	(218)	3.9	(59)
Employment opportunities in the county						
Mississippi	79.8	(174)	14.2	(31)	6.0	(13)
Other states	69.8	(1069)	18.6	(284)	11.6	(178)
ENVIRONMENT						
Agriculture and land use situation						
Mississippi	66.2	(139)	14.8	(31)	19.0	(40)
Other states	47.3	(620)	24.8	(325)	27.9	(366)
Quality of the physical environment						
Mississippi	68.4	(130)	23.2	(44)	8.4	(16)
Other states	31.9	(447)	45.2	(633)	22.9	(321)
SERVICES						
Quality of roads and transportation system						
Mississippi	83.8	(192)	13.6	(31)	2.6	(6)
Other states	75.6	(1204)	14.9	(237)	9.5	(152)
Public utilities						
Mississippi	84.2	(186)	15.4	(34)	0.4	(1)
Other states	74.0	(1080)	20.3	(296)	5.7	(84)
Quality of medical care and health services						
Mississippi	82.4	(187)	8.8	(20)	8.8	(20)
Other states	61.9	(956)	19.5	(302)	18.6	(287)
Quality of church and religion						
Mississippi	58.4	(131)	28.6	(64)	13.0	(29)
Other states	40.7	(604)	39.9	(592)	19.4	(289)
Welfare programs						
Mississippi	83.0	(171)	9.7	(20)	7.3	(15)
Other states	58.1	(717)	20.4	(251)	21.5	(265)
Effectiveness of government housing program						
Mississippi	88.7	(188)	9.4	(20)	1.9	(4)
Other states	80.2	(1045)	13.0	(169)	6.8	(89)
Recreational opportunities						
Mississippi	56.0	(111)	37.9	(75)	6.1	(12)
Other states	47.5	(655)	36.3	(500)	16.2	(224)
SUBPOPULATIONS						
Situation and opportunities for young people						
Mississippi	86.4	(190)	12.3	(27)	1.3	(3)
Other states	63.9	(969)	22.9	(347)	13.2	(201)
Situation and opportunities for old people						
Mississippi	76.7	(174)	18.9	(43)	4.4	(10)
Other states	55.7	(840)	31.4	(474)	12.9	(195)
Quality of life for the poor						
Mississippi	86.7	(195)	9.8	(22)	3.5	(8)
Other states	69.3	(1038)	21.0	(314)	9.7	(145)
Situation and opportunities for blacks						
Mississippi	96.5	(216)	2.2	(5)	1.3	(3)
Other states	84.9	(1074)	11.9	(150)	3.2	(41)
OVER-ALL QUALITY OF LIFE						
Quality of life for most people						
Mississippi	79.4	(185)	12.9	(30)	7.7	(18)
Other states	69.5	(1122)	18.5	(299)	12.0	(194)
County as a place to live						
Mississippi	86.0	(196)	12.7	(29)	1.3	(3)
Other states	72.4	(1134)	23.5	(369)	4.1	(64)

*Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.

quality of life that open-country Mississippi residents desire for their families.

No fears were expressed by 108 (37.5%) of the 288 interviewees who responded. Fears were expressed by 87 (65.9%) of the black respondents and 93 (59.6%) of the white respondents. The 87 blacks mentioned 111 fears. The 93 whites mentioned 93 fears (Table 9).

Economic fears (concerns about how to earn money, how to get on welfare and that their car would break down) were mentioned most often by blacks, followed by fears about their children and about family health (Table 9). Health fears were mentioned most often by whites, followed very closely by economic fears (concern about being unable to pay bills, a possible depression and a business or farm failure).

No hopes were expressed by 56 (17.9%) of the 312 interviewees who responded to this question. Hopes were expressed by 114 (83.2%) of the black respondents and 142 (81.2%) of the white respondents. The 114 blacks mentioned 189 hopes. The 142 whites mentioned 164 hopes (Table 10).

The rank order of hopes was the same for blacks and whites. Hopes for economic improvement were mentioned most often, followed by hopes for better housing, better health and better opportunities for children.

Table 7. Rating of quality of life in 1973 by black and white residents of Clay, Coahoma, Holmes, Lawrence, Neshoba and Tunica counties, Mississippi, by quality of life item.

Quality of Life Item	Current Rating ¹			
	Fair		Good	
	%	No.	%	No.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT				
Quality of county government				
Blacks	33.0	(32)	67.0	(65)
Whites	42.0	(47)	58.0	(65)
Politics and political parties				
Blacks	42.4	(38)	57.8	(52)
Whites	38.4	(38)	61.6	(61)
Citizens' obedience of laws				
Blacks	61.1	(63)	38.9	(40)
Whites	47.8	(56)	52.2	(61)
EDUCATION				
Quality of public schools				
Blacks	18.3	(17)	81.7	(76)
Whites	39.0	(39)	61.0	(61)
Quality of private schools				
Blacks	19.1	(13)	80.9	(55)
Whites	6.5	(6)	93.5	(86)
Opportunities for education and training beyond high school				
Blacks	17.0	(16)	83.0	(78)
Whites	19.0	(21)	81.0	(89)
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT				
Real income				
Blacks	49.4	(46)	50.6	(47)
Whites	62.6	(72)	37.4	(43)
Income for people who work for wages				
Blacks	30.1	(31)	69.9	(72)
Whites	20.5	(24)	79.5	(93)
Employment opportunities in the county				
Blacks	42.1	(43)	57.9	(59)
Whites	22.6	(26)	77.4	(89)
ENVIRONMENT				
Agricultural and land use situation				
Blacks	40.2	(39)	59.8	(58)
Whites	29.2	(33)	70.8	(80)
Quality of the physical environment				
Blacks	31.0	(26)	69.0	(58)
Whites	26.7	(28)	73.3	(77)
SERVICES				
Quality of roads and transportation system				
Blacks	38.4	(40)	61.6	(64)
Whites	27.8	(35)	72.2	(91)
Public utilities				
Blacks	28.0	(28)	72.0	(72)
Whites	16.5	(20)	83.5	(101)
Quality of medical care and health services				
Blacks	17.8	(18)	82.2	(83)
Whites	21.9	(27)	78.1	(96)
Quality of church and religion				
Blacks	34.3	(35)	65.7	(67)
Whites	15.7	(19)	84.3	(102)
Welfare programs				
Blacks	28.7	(29)	71.3	(72)
Whites	31.5	(33)	68.5	(72)
Effectiveness of government housing program				
Blacks	27.0	(27)	73.0	(73)
Whites	16.2	(18)	83.8	(93)
Recreational opportunities				
Blacks	31.0	(27)	69.0	(60)
Whites	53.2	(59)	46.8	(52)
SUBPOPULATIONS				
Situation and opportunities for young people				
Blacks	27.5	(28)	72.5	(74)
Whites	26.2	(31)	73.8	(87)
Situation and opportunities for old people				
Blacks	43.3	(45)	56.7	(59)
Whites	43.9	(54)	56.1	(69)
Situation and opportunities for blacks				
Blacks	51.9	(54)	48.1	(50)
Whites	13.4	(16)	86.6	(103)
OVER-ALL QUALITY OF LIFE				
County as a place to live				
Blacks	32.7	(34)	67.3	(70)
Whites	14.5	(18)	85.5	(106)

¹"Fair" and "Poor" responses are combined into one Fair category while the "Good" and "Very Good" responses are combined into the Good category.

Table 8. Rating of quality of life in 1973 by open-country residents of Mississippi and of seven other Southern States*, by quality of life item.

Quality of Life Item	Current Rating			
	Fair		Good	
	%	No.	%	No.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT				
Quality of county government				
Mississippi	37.8	(79)	62.2	(130)
Other states	59.0	(822)	41.0	(570)
Politics and political parties				
Mississippi	40.2	(76)	59.8	(113)
Other states	67.4	(857)	32.6	(414)
Citizens' obedience of laws				
Mississippi	54.0	(119)	46.0	(101)
Other states	57.2	(861)	42.8	(644)
EDUCATION				
Quality of public schools				
Mississippi	29.0	(56)	71.0	(137)
Other states	41.8	(608)	58.2	(848)
Quality of private schools				
Mississippi	11.9	(19)	88.1	(141)
Other states	30.1	(115)	69.9	(268)
Opportunities for education and training beyond high school				
Mississippi	18.1	(37)	81.9	(167)
Other states	26.1	(377)	73.9	(1063)
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT				
Real income				
Mississippi	56.7	(118)	43.3	(90)
Other states	66.7	(953)	33.7	(484)
Income for people who work for wages				
Mississippi	25.0	(55)	75.0	(165)
Other states	35.4	(532)	64.6	(971)
Employment opportunities in the county				
Mississippi	31.8	(69)	68.2	(148)
Other states	45.4	(691)	54.6	(832)
ENVIRONMENT				
Agricultural and land use situation				
Mississippi	34.3	(72)	65.7	(138)
Other states	51.0	(661)	49.0	(635)
Quality of the physical environment				
Mississippi	28.6	(54)	71.4	(135)
Other states	44.4	(616)	55.6	(772)
SERVICES				
Quality of roads and transportation system				
Mississippi	32.6	(75)	67.4	(155)
Other states	37.5	(592)	62.5	(985)
Public utilities				
Mississippi	21.7	(48)	78.3	(173)
Other states	32.8	(473)	67.2	(968)
Quality of medical care and health services				
Mississippi	20.1	(45)	79.9	(179)
Other states	41.6	(643)	58.4	(902)
Quality of church and religion				
Mississippi	24.2	(54)	75.8	(169)
Other states	42.1	(620)	57.9	(850)
Welfare programs				
Mississippi	30.1	(62)	69.9	(144)
Other states	45.9	(571)	54.1	(673)
Effectiveness of government housing program				
Mississippi	21.3	(45)	78.7	(166)
Other states	33.5	(421)	66.5	(835)
Recreational opportunities				
Mississippi	43.5	(86)	56.5	(112)
Other states	60.1	(819)	39.9	(544)
SUBPOPULATIONS				
Situation and opportunities for young people				
Mississippi	26.8	(59)	73.2	(161)
Other states	47.0	(706)	53.0	(797)
Situation and opportunities for old people				
Mississippi	43.6	(99)	56.4	(128)
Other states	48.7	(729)	51.3	(768)
Situation and opportunities for blacks				
Mississippi	31.4	(70)	68.6	(153)
Other states	25.6	(318)	74.4	(923)
OVER-ALL QUALITY OF LIFE				
County as a place to live				
Mississippi	22.8	(52)	77.2	(176)
Other states	24.0	(374)	76.0	(1186)

*See footnote, Table 6.

Table 9. Expressed fears of 87 black and 93 white open-country residents of Clay, Coahoma, Holmes, Lawrence, Neshoba and Tunica counties, Mississippi, 1973

Type of Fear	Frequency of Expression					
	Total Sample		Blacks		Whites	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Economic	34.2	(70)	37.0	(41)	31.2	(29)
Health	27.0	(55)	21.6	(24)	33.3	(31)
Children	23.5	(48)	27.9	(31)	18.3	(17)
Crime	4.9	(10)	2.7	(3)	7.5	(7)
Other	10.3	(21)	10.8	(12)	9.7	(9)
Total Fears Mentioned	100.0	(204)	100.0	(111)	100.0	(93)

Table 10. Expressed hopes of 114 black and 142 white open-country residents of Clay, Coahoma, Holmes, Lawrence, Neshoba and Tunica counties, Mississippi, 1973

Type of Hope	Frequency of Expression					
	Total Sample		Blacks		Whites	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Economic	26.4	(93)	28.6	(54)	23.8	(39)
Housing	21.2	(75)	20.1	(38)	22.6	(37)
Health	20.7	(73)	20.1	(38)	21.3	(35)
Children	18.1	(64)	19.6	(37)	16.5	(27)
Religion	7.7	(27)	6.3	(12)	9.1	(15)
Other	5.9	(21)	5.3	(10)	6.7	(11)
Total Hopes Mentioned	100.0	(353)	100.0	(189)	100.0	(164)

¹Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse and Willard L. Rodgers, *The Quality of American Life* Sage Foundation: New York, 1976. p. 3.

²See Preface for objective quality of life reports for Mississippi.

³W. I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl*, Harper and Row, Publishers: New York, 1967. p. xii.

⁴These segments had been selected for the S-44 project, a predecessor of the S-79 project. For a more detailed discussion of the sampling procedure, see "Sampling Design for the Regional Rural Sociology Project, S-44" unpublished paper, Department of Statistics, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, Spring, 1960.

⁵For further information on the sampling procedure, see, for example: A. L. Coleman, C. M. Coughenour, A. V. Gabbard and D. Zeirath, "Rural Development and the Quality of Life in Harlan, Perry, Whitley and Wolfe Counties: Summaries of Data from Surveys of Households in 1961 and 1973;" mimeographed papers, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky, December, 1973; H. G. Pieper, N. A. Holt and H. M. Miller "Perceptions of Quality of Life in Open-Country Areas: A Case Study," published in *Rural Sociology in the South: 1974*, Proceedings (Rural Sociology Section) Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Memphis, Tennessee, February, 1974.

⁶For more details on the selection of knowledgeable, see: Tatree Nontasak, "Community Knowledgeables' Attitudes Concerning Changes in Selected Socioeconomic Activities of Certain Counties in Mississippi," unpublished Masters thesis, Department of Sociology and Rural Life, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi, December 1973, pp. 24-29; Gerald O. Windham and Tatree Nontasak, "Attitudes of Knowledgeables Toward Community Change," published in *Rural Sociology in the South: 1974*, Proceedings (Rural Sociology Section) of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Memphis, Tennessee, February 1974; and Virginia Steelman, "Knowledgeables' Opinions of Changes in the Quality of Life in Twenty-six Southern Counties, 1960-1972: S-79 Regional Research Project," published in *Rural Sociology in the South: 1975*, Proceedings (Rural Sociology Section) of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Memphis, Tennessee, February 1974.

⁷Although one of the Mississippi counties contained an Indian Reservation and some of the knowledgeable from that county are Indians, there were no Indians in the Mississippi household sample. It should be noted that Indian reservations were not included in the S-79 sampling universe.

⁸The actual household respondent interviewing started in 1972 and continued into 1973. For ease of presentation we will refer to it as 1973 data.

⁹Answers for four of the items elicited from the household respondents were not obtained from the knowledgeable (namely, the quality of private schools, the income for people who work for wages, county as a place to live, and the effectiveness of the government housing programs) so of necessity these are excluded from our analysis.

¹⁰For a comparison of black and white household respondents' and knowledgeable's perceptions of changes in the quality of life using Mississippi S-79 data see: Tatree Nontasak and Wolfgang Frese "Perceptions About Changes in the Quality of Life in Rural Mississippi: A Comparison Between Knowledgeables and Household Respondents" published in *Rural Sociology in the South: 1975* the Proceedings (Rural Sociology Section) of the Annual Meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, New Orleans, Louisiana, February, 1975.

¹¹It should be noted that using family hopes and fears to estimate the situation in the county must be done with caution and that we do so for heuristic purposes only.

In conformity with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Dr. T. K. Martin, Vice President, 610 Allen Hall, P. O. Drawer J, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762, office telephone number 325-3221, has been designated as the responsible employee to coordinate efforts to carry out responsibilities and make investigation of complaints relating to nondiscrimination.

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