



THE CENTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A Working Paper*

**Rural Nebraskans' Quality of Life: Trends and
Contributing Factors**

1998 Nebraska Rural Poll Results

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Executive Summary

Nebraska's economy and population have shown growth during recent years. Agricultural producers are experiencing change as well with the implementation of a new farm program. How have these changes affected rural Nebraskans at a local level? How do they perceive their quality of life? Do their perceptions differ by the size of their community, the region in which they live or by their occupation?

This report details results of 4,196 responses to the 1998 Nebraska Rural Poll, the third annual effort to take the pulse of rural Nebraskans. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their general well-being and their satisfaction with specific aspects of well-being. Trends are examined by comparing data from the two previous polls to this year's results. In addition, comparisons are made among different subgroups of the respondents, e.g., comparisons by age, occupation, income, etc. Based on these analyses, some key findings emerged:

- ***Rural Nebraskans show continued optimism about their current and future situations.*** In 1996, thirty-six percent of the respondents said they were better off compared to five years ago. This increased to forty-one percent in 1998. This pattern continued when asked how they thought they would be ten years from now. Thirty-two percent believed they would be better off ten years from now in 1996; in 1998, forty-two percent thought they would be better off.
- ***More than half of rural Nebraskans are very satisfied with the following: their marriage, their family, and greenery and open space.***
- ***Items receiving the highest proportion of very dissatisfied responses include financial security during retirement, current income level and job opportunities for the respondent.*** The rank ordering of these items has been relatively stable since 1996.
- ***Farmers and ranchers are not as optimistic about the future as respondents with other occupations.*** Only thirty-one percent of farmers or ranchers felt they would be better off ten years from now, compared to fifty-one percent of the respondents with professional/administrative occupations.
- ***The belief that people are powerless to control their own lives is affected by size of the respondent's community, household income, age, and education.*** A multiple regression analysis revealed that respondents living in smaller communities, those with lower income levels, older respondents, and those with less education were the groups most likely to think that people are powerless.
- ***Overall, household income, age and occupation (whether or not a farmer) affect general well-being.*** Multiple regression analyses revealed the primary influences on well-being were household income, age and occupation. As age increases, well-being scores decrease. Household income had a positive relationship with well-being; as income levels increase so do well-being scores. Farmers report lower well-being scores than non-farmers.

- ***Farmers and ranchers were more likely than other occupational groups to be satisfied with clean air and water.*** Eighty-eight percent of the farmers/ranchers report being satisfied with clean air and water, compared to seventy-five percent of the manual laborers.
- ***Satisfaction with respondent's housing was related to age.*** Older respondents were more likely to be satisfied with their housing compared to the younger respondents. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents age 65 and older stated they were satisfied with their housing; only sixty-eight percent of the respondents between the ages of 19 and 29 were satisfied with their housing.
- ***Respondents living in the North Central and Northeast regions of the state were more likely than those living in other regions to feel that people are powerless to control their lives.*** Approximately 35% of the respondents in these two regions agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that people are powerless to control their own lives, compared to twenty-seven percent of the people living in the Panhandle.

Introduction

Nebraska's economy has been fairly strong in recent years. The state unemployment rate has been among the lowest in the nation (2.0 percent in April 1998, compared to 4.3 percent nationally). Also, the gap between Nebraska's per capita income and the national average has closed slightly in the past six years. In 1991, the state's per capita income was 92.2 percent of the national average; this increased to 93.0 percent in 1997. In addition to the economic gains, Nebraska's population has also increased during the past seven years. Between 1990 and 1997, county-level estimates show growth in 42 of Nebraska's 93 counties¹.

However, the state's farm economy has not been faring as well. Agricultural commodity prices have declined during the past year. The April 1998 Index of Prices received by Nebraska farmers (based on the January - December 1977 average) was down 19 points from May 1997².

Given all of these changes, the question remains, "How are rural Nebraskans doing in their everyday lives?" Are the changes we've described in rural Nebraska positively impacting residents at a local level? How do they perceive their quality of life? When they look to their future, do they see a positive or negative one? Are residents of smaller communities seeing a similar or different future when they look ten years down the road? Are farmers seeing an

¹ Source: Recent Nebraska Economic Trends, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, June 11, 1998.

² Source: Nebraska Agri-Facts, Issued by Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service, Issue 11/98 Released 6/2/98.

optimistic future? Do regions in the state differ as to their current level of satisfaction with their lives? This paper provides a detailed analysis of these questions. We also examine changes over time of rural Nebraskans' perceptions of their quality of life and satisfaction with issues most important to them.

The 1998 Nebraska Rural Poll is the third annual effort to take the pulse of rural Nebraskans. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their well-being and their satisfaction with various items that may influence their well-being. Trends will be examined by comparing data from the two previous polls to this year's results.

Methodology and Respondent Profile

This study is based on 4,196 responses from Nebraskans living in non-metropolitan counties in the state. A self-administered questionnaire was mailed to approximately 6,500 randomly selected households in March. Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy and Washington. All of the other 87 counties in the state were sampled. The 14 page questionnaire included questions pertaining to well-being, community, work, taxes and school financing, and pork production. This paper reports only results from the well-being portion of the survey.

A 65% response rate was achieved using the total design method (Dillman, 1978). The sequence of steps used were:

1. A pre-notification letter was sent requesting participation in the study.
2. The questionnaire was mailed with an informal letter signed by the project director seven days later.
3. A reminder postcard was sent to the

entire sample approximately seven days after the questionnaire had been sent.

4. Those who had not yet responded within approximately 14 days of the original mailing were sent a replacement questionnaire.

The average respondent was 51 years of age. Ninety-five percent were married (Appendix Table 1³) and fifty percent lived in a town or village. On average, respondents had lived in their current town or village 29 years and had lived in Nebraska 44 years. Seventy-two percent were living in or near towns or villages with populations less than 5,000.

Fifty percent of the respondents reported their approximate household income from all sources, before taxes, for 1997 was below \$39,999. Thirty-two percent reported incomes over \$50,000. Ninety-five percent had attained at least a high school diploma.

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents report working in a professional/technical or administrative occupation. Sixteen percent indicated they were farmers or ranchers. Twenty-five percent reported their spouses or partners being in professional/technical or administrative occupations, while nineteen percent of the spouses/partners were in farming or ranching.

Organization of Report

This particular report focuses on two different aspects of well-being: General Well-Being, as assessed by four broad questions (three related to how the individual

respondent assesses his/her overall situation and another question on “powerlessness”); and Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Life (e.g., satisfaction with health, housing, family and 17 other specific items). And, as was noted earlier, these data on the two different aspects of well-being – the general and specific – are available for the past three years. Finally, the data were collected in a manner that allows for comparisons among different subgroups of the respondents, e.g., comparisons by age, occupation, etc. Hence, this report is divided into four sections:

1. Trends in well-being (both the general and specific dimensions of well-being) during the past three years.
2. General well-being in 1998 by subgroups of respondents.
3. Specific aspects of well-being in 1998 by subgroups of respondents.
4. Regional variation within Nebraska in general and specific aspects of well-being.

Trends in Well-Being (1996 – 1998)

This is the third annual Nebraska Rural Poll and therefore comparisons are made between the data collected this year to the two previous studies. As data continue to be collected over time, a clearer picture emerges of the trends occurring in the well-being of rural Nebraskans. It is important to keep in mind when viewing these comparisons that these were independent samples (the same people were not surveyed each year).

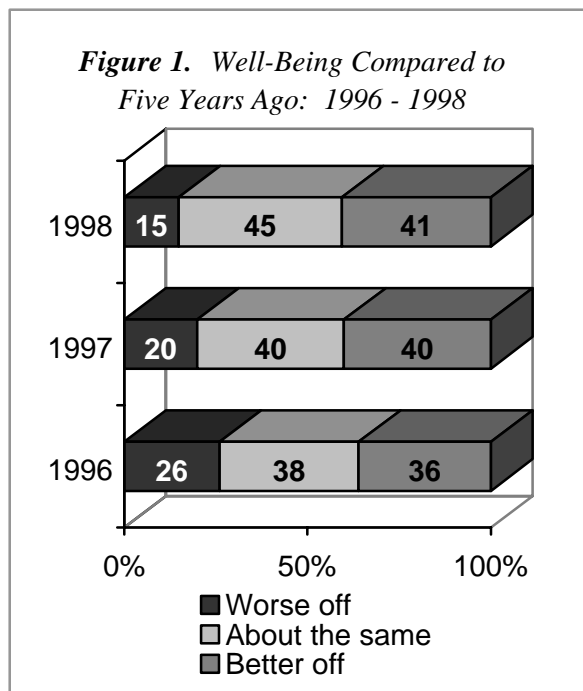
³ Appendix Table 1 also includes demographic data from previous rural polls, as well as similar data based on the entire non-metropolitan population of Nebraska (using 1990 U.S. Census data).

General Well-Being

To examine perceptions of general well-being, respondents were asked four questions.

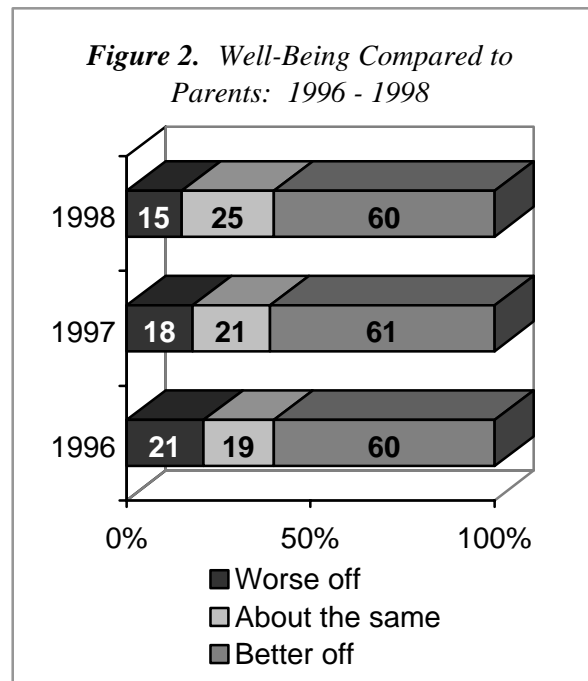
1. "All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than you were five years ago?" (Answer categories were worse off, about the same, or better off.)
2. "All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than your parents when they were your age?"
3. "All things considered, do you think you will be better or worse off ten years from now than you are today?"
4. "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

Rural Nebraskans have continued to view life more positively since the original study conducted in 1996. Thirty-six percent of the 1996 respondents said they were better off than they were five years ago; this increased to forty percent in 1997 and forty-one

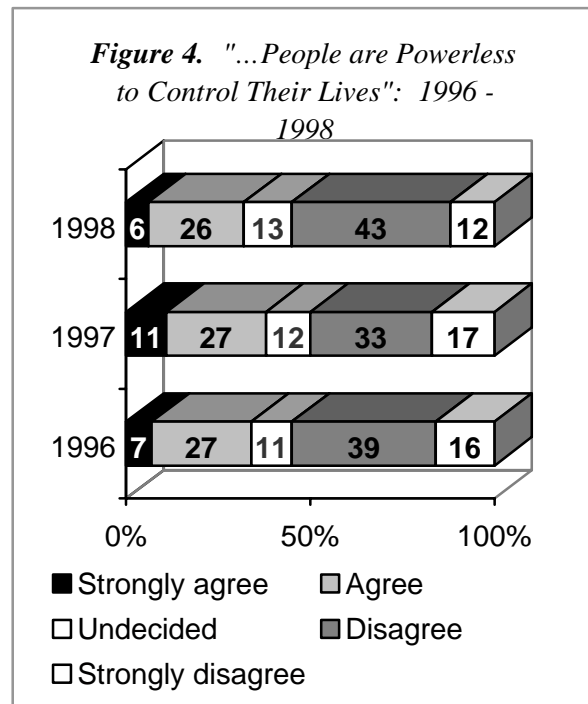
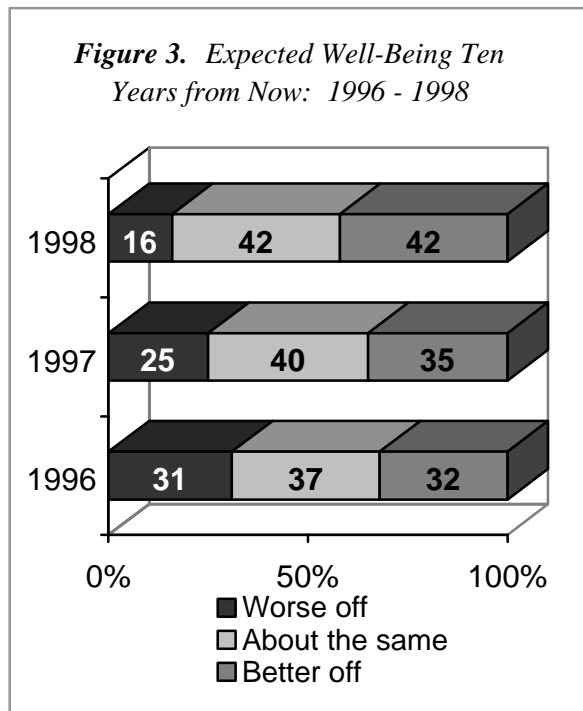


percent in 1998 (Figure 1). Conversely, the percent of respondents who felt they were worse off compared to five years ago has steadily decreased (from 26% in 1996 to 15% in 1998).

This same pattern is evident when respondents compared themselves to their parents when they were their age (Figure 2). The percentage who felt they were worse off than their parents has steadily decreased since 1996 (from 21% to 15% in 1998). The proportion stating they were better off than their parents, however, has remained fairly constant all three years.



The optimism continued when asked how they thought they would be ten years from now (Figure 3). In 1996, thirty-two percent of the respondents felt they would be better off ten years from now. This increased to thirty-five percent in 1997 and to forty-two percent in 1998. The proportion feeling they would be worse off has steadily decreased from 1996 to 1998 (from 31% to 16%).



We have just seen that rural Nebraskans are more optimistic about their current and future situation than they were in previous studies. But how much control do they perceive they have over their lives? To measure this, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

In 1998, 32% of the respondents either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with this statement, and 55% "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with this statement (Figure 4). These proportions were almost identical to those reported in 1996. Responses in 1997 differed slightly from these other two years in that respondents in 1997 tended to feel a bit more "powerless". For example, 11% of the 1997 respondents "strongly agreed" with the powerlessness statement, compared to 6-7% in the other two years.

Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Life

Respondents were given a list of items that can affect their well-being and were asked to indicate how satisfied they were each using a five-point scale (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied). They were also given the option of checking a box to denote "does not apply."

This same question was also asked in the 1996 and 1997 Rural Polls, but the list of items was not identical each year. Table 1 shows the proportions "very satisfied" with each item. Although the rank ordering of the items is relatively stable, it appears that there is a pattern of increased satisfaction over time. For example, data on satisfaction were available in both 1996 and 1998 for 19 of the items listed in Table 1. In 18 of the 19 cases the percent of respondents reporting "very satisfied" increased during this time period. As another measure, data are available for 15 of the items for all three

Table 1. Proportions of Respondents “Very Satisfied” With Each Factor, 1996 - 1998.

| Item | 1998 | 1997 | 1996 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Your marriage | 64 | NA | NA |
| Your family | 62 | 61 | 50 |
| Greenery and open space | 52 | NA | NA |
| Your religion/spirituality | 48 | 47 | 41 |
| Your friends | 47 | 46 | 37 |
| Clean air and water | 41 | NA | NA |
| Health of your family | 37 | 51 | 37 |
| Your housing | 35 | 33 | NA |
| Education of your children | 35 | 35 | 27 |
| Your health | 29 | 34 | 25 |
| Your spare time * | 29 | NA | 13 |
| Your education | 27 | 26 | 22 |
| Respect from others | 26 | 32 | 24 |
| Your job satisfaction | 21 | 21 | 17 |
| Your job security | 21 | 20 | 15 |
| Your community | 16 | 20 | 17 |
| Current income level | 12 | 15 | 11 |
| Ability to relocate | 11 | 9 | 6 |
| Financial security during retirement | 9 | 13 | 9 |
| Job opportunities for you | 9 | 10 | 7 |
| Vacation time | NA | 17 | 14 |
| Certainty concerning your future | NA | NA | 9 |

Note: The list of items was not identical in each study. “NA” means that item was not asked that particular year.

* Worded as “time to relax during the week” in 1996 study.

years. In 8 of these 15 cases the percent reporting “very satisfied” increased or stayed the same between 1996-1997 and 1997-1998. Equally important, there was not a single case in which the percentage reporting “very satisfied” decreased between 1996-1997 and 1997-1998.

General Well-Being in 1998

In this section, 1998 data on the four general measures of well-being are first summarized and are then examined in terms of any differences that may exist depending upon size of the respondent’s community, income, age, gender, education and occupation. Two different approaches are used to examine

these differences. First, the data are simply presented for these six characteristics or categories of respondents. Second, a more sophisticated analytic approach called multiple regression is used to gain a clearer understanding as to how each of these six factors may influence general measures of well-being.

The four general well-being questions asked the respondents how they are doing compared to five years ago, how they are doing compared to their parents when they were their age, how they expect to be ten years from now and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that people are powerless to control their own lives. The

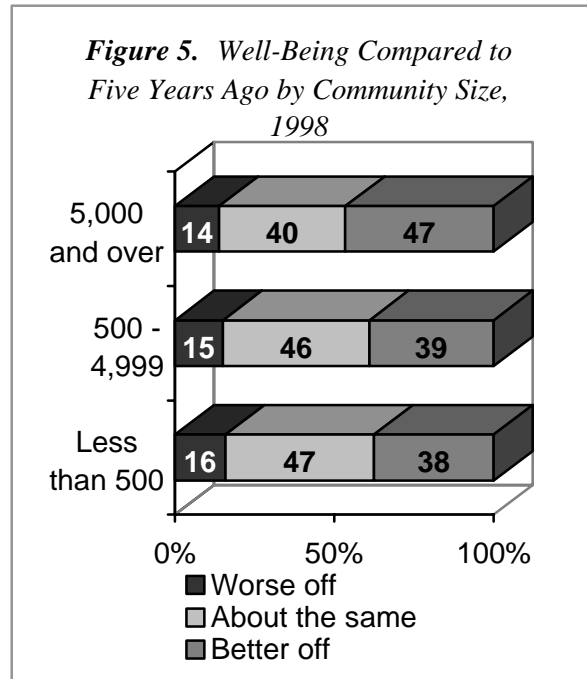
specific question wordings are included on page 3 of this report. Overall responses to these questions can be viewed in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Generally, rural Nebraskans appear optimistic about their current situation. Forty-one percent feel they are better off than five years ago and sixty percent feel they are better off than their parents were when they were their age. This optimistic attitude extends to their future situation as well, with forty-two percent stating they feel they will be better off ten years from now. When asked about their feelings of control over their lives, fifty-five percent either “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” that people are powerless to control their own lives.

Now, we will examine various demographic subgroups to see if these same attitudes are shared by all respondents. Responses were analyzed according to size of the respondent’s community, household income, age, gender, education, and occupation. Appendix Table 2 shows these subgroups’ assessments of their overall situation. Several of these subgroups differ in their responses to these questions.

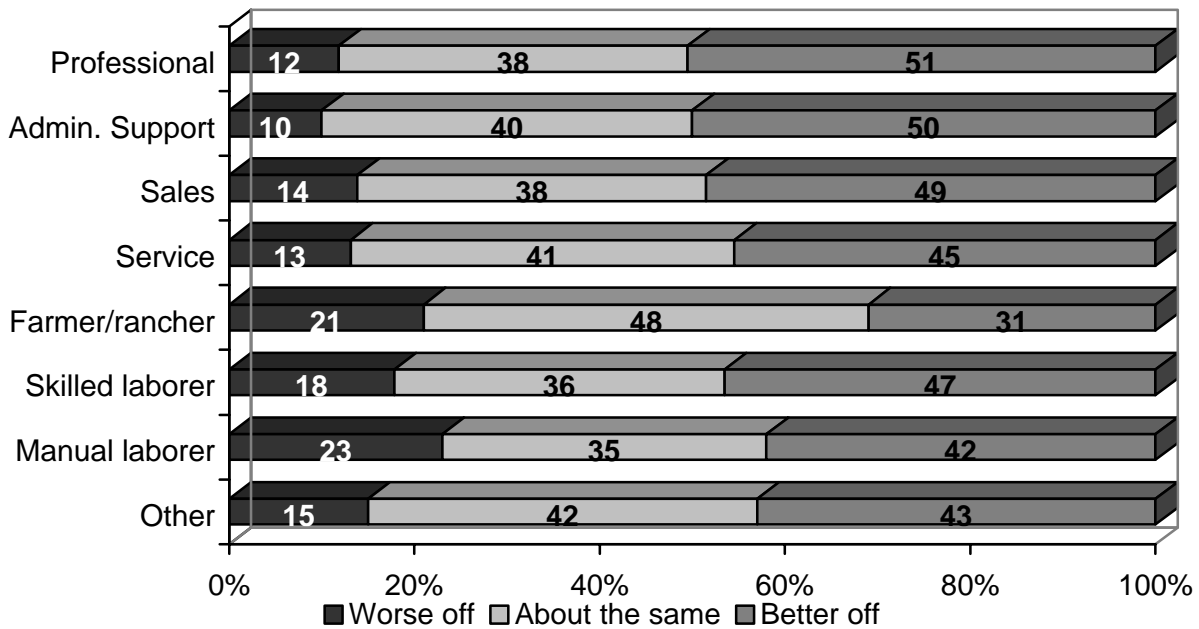
The respondents’ general assessments of their life compared to five years ago and how they view their life in the future differed according to the size of their community. Those living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to see themselves as better off compared to five years ago and better off ten years from now. Forty-seven percent of respondents from communities with populations greater than 5,000 feel they are better off than they were five years ago; while only thirty-eight percent of the

respondents from communities with populations less than 500 felt the same (Figure 5).



Occupation is another area where differences in groups emerge. Respondents holding professional, technical or administrative jobs were more likely than the other occupation groups to feel they were better off compared to the past and would be better off in the future. For example, fifty-one percent of the respondents with professional occupations felt they would be better off ten years from now, but only thirty-one percent of the farmers or ranchers felt the same (Figure 6). Manual laborers were the occupation group most likely to feel they would be worse off ten years from now (23%), with farmers or ranchers close behind (21%). These same patterns emerged when asked how they were doing compared to five years ago (see data in Appendix Table 2).

Figure 6. Expected Future Well-Being by Occupation, 1998



Income, age and education groups also showed statistically significant⁴ differences when assessing their current and future situations. Respondents with higher income levels, those age 19 to 29, and people with a college degree were the groups most likely to feel they were better off compared to five years ago and would be better off ten years from now.

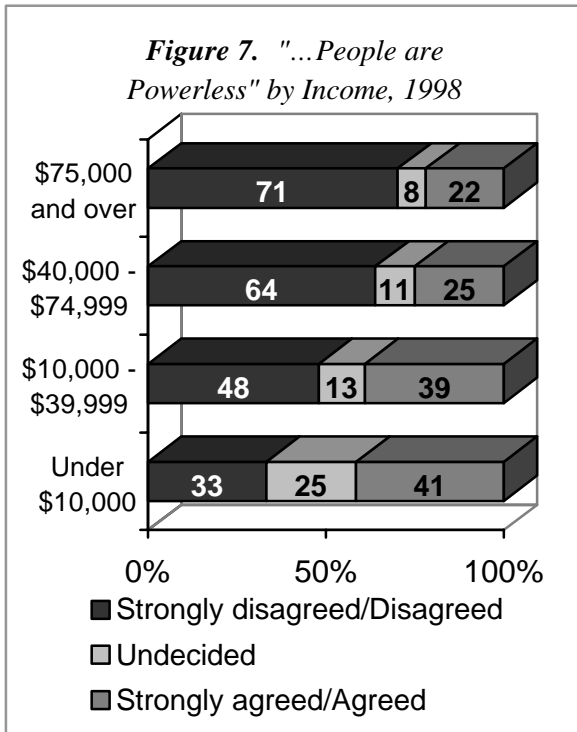
These same demographic groups are analyzed to see if differences emerged in their feelings of powerlessness (Appendix Table 3). Certain groups were more likely to agree with this statement than others.

Respondents living in smaller communities were more likely than those living in larger communities to agree that people are powerless. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents living in communities with populations less than 100 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; only twenty-six percent of those living in communities with more than 10,000 people shared this opinion.

Persons with lower income levels were more likely to agree with the statement, compared to those with higher incomes. Forty-one percent of respondents with incomes less than \$10,000 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (Figure 7). On the other hand, only twenty-two percent of respondents with incomes greater than \$75,000 agreed or strongly agreed.

Age, education and occupation also influenced feelings of powerlessness. Older respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree that people are powerless, as

⁴ Statistically significant at the .05 level.



compared to the younger respondents. Forty-three percent of the respondents age 65 and older agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; in contrast, only twenty-one percent of the respondents under 30 years of age agreed or strongly agreed. Respondents with no high school diploma and respondents who were manual laborers were the education and occupation subgroups more likely to agree with the statement.

What really influences general well-being?

It was noted earlier that community population, household income, age, gender, education and occupation all are related to respondents' well-being compared to five years ago. However, many of these characteristics are also related to each other. For example, older respondents are more likely to have lower household income levels,

lower educational levels and are more likely to be involved in farming or ranching. Given that, is it this combination of factors that influence well-being of rural Nebraskans; or does age have an effect on well-being independent from education and household income?

To determine how each variable affects well-being compared to five years ago, a multiple regression analysis was performed. Multiple regression helps determine the effects of each variable on well-being while holding the effects of the other variables constant.

The "beta coefficients" represent the effect of each variable on the well-being score. Because these coefficients are standardized units, this allows one to directly compare the effects of each variable. The significance level indicates whether or not the relationship of each variable can be generalized to the general population from which the survey sample was drawn (in this case, all rural Nebraskans).

The R² value indicates how much of the variance in the well-being scale is explained by the variables chosen for the analysis. In this case, only 8.3% of the variance in the well-being scale is explained by age, household income, education, gender, occupation and community size.

To see which of these individual and community characteristics have the largest influence on the respondents' sense of well-being compared to five years ago, we will examine the beta coefficients for each variable. First of all, by looking at the significance levels we find that only age, household income and occupation (whether a farmer or non-farmer) are statistically

Table 2. Prediction of Well-Being Compared to Five Years Ago by Individual and Community Characteristics

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>Beta coefficient</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Age | -.128 | .000 |
| Household income | .231 | .000 |
| Education | -.002 | .930 |
| Gender | .012 | .511 |
| Farmer | -.040 | .031 |
| Community size | -.018 | .311 |
| $R^2 = .083$ | | |

significant variables. These are the only three variables which appear to have an effect on well-being compared to five years ago for rural Nebraskans once the other variables under consideration are held constant.

Age has a negative relationship with well-being compared to five years ago. This means that as age increases, the scores on the well-being scale decrease. Household income has a positive relationship with the well-being scale. Therefore, as one moves into higher categories of household income, well-being scores tend to increase. The farmer variable has a negative relationship with well-being, indicating that farmers are more likely to report lower well-being scores than non-farmers. Of these three variables, the beta coefficients indicate that

household income has the largest effect on well-being, followed by age and then by occupation.

Even though gender, education and community size had statistically significant relationships with well-being scores when analyzed separately, when all the variables are included in the analysis these relationships are no longer apparent.

A similar analysis can be performed to see which characteristics influence expected future well-being. The individual and community characteristics used in this analysis are the same ones used in analyzing well-being compared to five years ago. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3. These variables together account for 17.6%

Table 3. Prediction of Expected Future Well-Being By Individual and Community Characteristics

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>Beta coefficient</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Age | -.360 | .000 |
| Household income | .143 | .000 |
| Education | .010 | .562 |
| Gender | -.029 | .094 |
| Farmer | -.042 | .018 |
| Community size | -.011 | .514 |
| $R^2 = .176$ | | |

of the variation in expected future well-being. The same relationships hold for expected future well-being as did for well-being compared to five years ago. Specifically, age, household income and occupation were the primary influences on expected future well-being. As age increases, expected future well-being decreases. As income increases, well-being also increases. Farmers reported lower expected well-being scores than non-farmers.

In this analysis, however, age has the largest influence on expected future well-being. Household income has the next largest effect, followed by occupation. Once again, when age, household income, and occupation were taken into account, community size and education no longer had statistically significant relationships with expected future well-being.

A third multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which variables have the most influence on feelings of powerlessness. The results are shown in Table 4. The individual and community characteristics chosen for this analysis account for 8% of the variation in feelings of powerlessness.

Age, household income, education and community size are the significant predictors of feelings of powerlessness. Age and powerlessness have a positive relationship; the older a person gets, the more powerless they feel. Household income, education and community size had negative relationships with powerlessness. As people obtain higher levels of household income, higher educational levels and live in larger communities, the less likely they are to believe that people are powerless. Gender and occupation had no significant effect. When comparing the respective beta coefficients, we find that education and household income have the largest effects on feelings of powerlessness.

Specific Aspects of Well-Being in 1998

Respondents were given a list of items that may influence their well-being and were asked to rate their satisfaction with each. The complete ratings for each item are listed in Appendix Table 4. More than half of the respondents were very satisfied with the following: their marriage (63%), their family (62%) and greenery and open space (52%). Items receiving the highest proportion of very dissatisfied responses

Table 4. *Prediction of Feelings of Powerlessness By Individual and Community Characteristics*

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>Beta coefficient</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Age | .107 | .000 |
| Household income | -.134 | .000 |
| Education | -.136 | .000 |
| Gender | .019 | .284 |
| Farmer | .027 | .153 |
| Community size | -.038 | .039 |
| $R^2 = .080$ | | |

include: financial security during retirement (18%), current income level (13%) and job opportunities for you (12%).

The top ten items people were satisfied with (determined by the largest proportions of “very satisfied”) will now be examined in more detail by looking at how different demographic subgroups viewed each item.

Satisfaction with the respondents’ marriage had a statistically significant relationship with only one of these characteristics, occupation.

Respondents with occupations classified as “other” and farmers/ranchers were the groups most likely to report they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their marriage (Appendix Table 5).

Statistically significant differences emerged between income, age, education and occupation subgroups in their satisfaction with their family. Respondents with higher income levels, younger respondents and those with more education were more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their family. Respondents with sales or service occupations were less likely to report being very satisfied or satisfied of the occupation groups.

Satisfaction with greenery and open space differed for respondents with regard to the size of their community and their educational levels. Respondents in smaller communities (populations less than 5,000) were more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with greenery and open space as compared to the respondents in larger communities. Also, respondents with higher educational levels were more likely than those with lower educational levels to be very satisfied or satisfied with greenery and open space.

Respondents of different ages, gender,

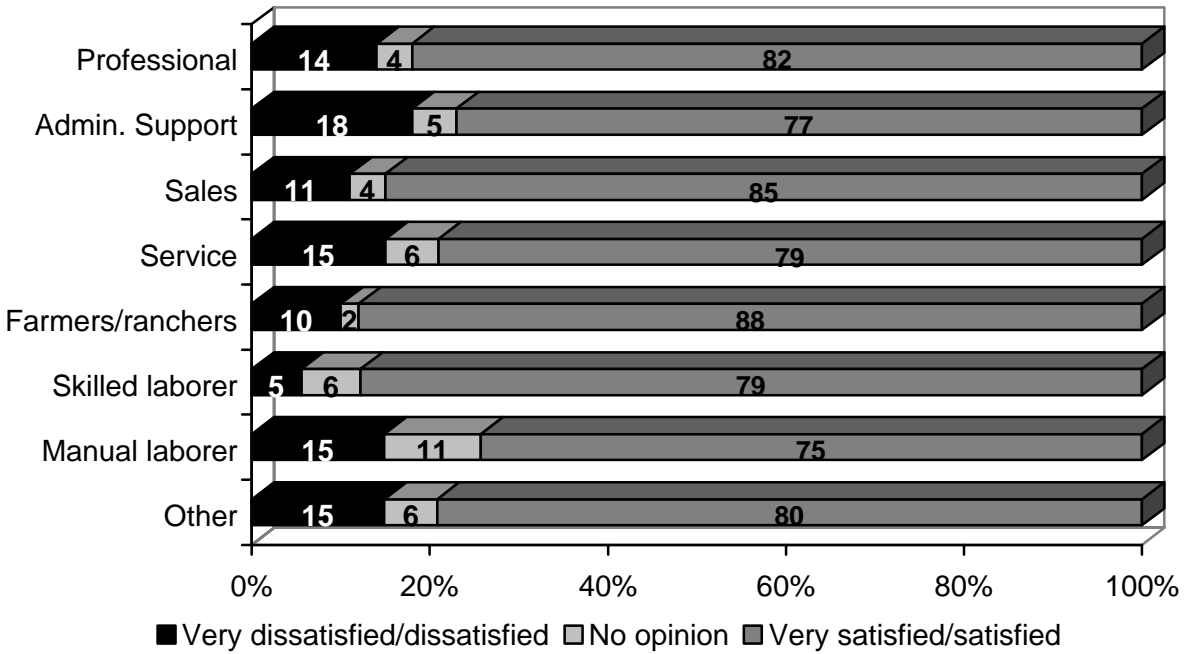
educational levels and occupations differed in their satisfaction levels with their religion/spirituality. Respondents between the ages of 30 and 49 were less likely to report being very satisfied or satisfied with their religion/spirituality, when compared to the other age groups. Females and respondents with some college education were more likely to express satisfaction with their religion. Of the occupation groups, the skilled and manual laborers were less likely to be satisfied.

Each of the characteristics included in Appendix Table 5 had statistically significant relationships with satisfaction with friends, except for age and occupation. Respondents living in communities with populations between 100 and 999 were more likely than those living in communities of other population sizes to be very satisfied or satisfied with their friends. Other groups more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with friends include: those with higher income levels, females and respondents with higher educational levels.

Satisfaction with clean air and water was related to income, education and occupation. Respondents with higher income levels and those with higher educational levels were more likely to express satisfaction with clean air and water than the other income and education groups. Of the different occupations, farmers and ranchers were the group most likely to be satisfied with clean air and water. Eighty-eight percent of the farmers/ranchers were satisfied or very satisfied with clean air and water, compared to seventy-five percent of the manual laborers (Figure 8).

Income, age, gender and education all had statistically significant relationships with respondents’ satisfaction with the health of

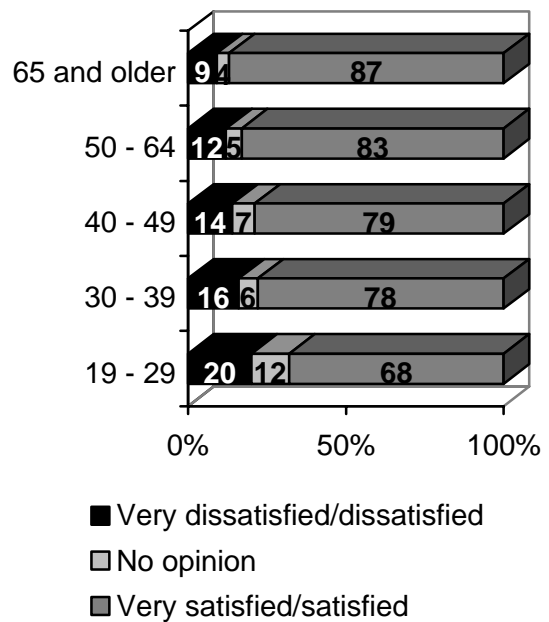
Figure 8. Satisfaction with Clean Air and Water by Occupation, 1998



their family. Respondents with higher income levels, younger respondents, females and respondents with higher educational levels were the groups most likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with the health of their family.

Respondents' satisfaction with their housing differed by community size, income, age and occupation. Respondents with higher income levels and respondents with sales occupations were more likely to be very satisfied or satisfied with their housing than the other income and occupation groups. Also, older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to report satisfaction with their housing. For example, eighty-seven percent of the respondents older than 65 were satisfied with their housing; but only sixty-eight percent of respondents between the ages of 19 and 29 were satisfied (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Satisfaction with Housing by Age, 1998



Respondents' satisfaction levels with the education of their children had statistically significant relationships with income, age and occupation. Older respondents and farmers/ranchers were more likely to be very satisfied or satisfied with the education of their children, compared to the other age and occupation groups. No clear pattern emerged within the income groups.

Satisfaction with respondents' health differed for all six of the characteristics included in Appendix Table 5. Younger respondents, females, those with higher educational levels and those with professional occupations were the groups most likely to express satisfaction with their health. Also, respondents with higher income levels were more likely than those with lower incomes to be very satisfied or satisfied with their health. For example, only sixty-five percent of respondents with incomes below \$10,000 were very satisfied or satisfied with their health, compared to

eighty-two percent of the respondents with incomes greater than \$75,000 (Figure 10).

Regional Variation within Nebraska in General and Specific Aspects of Well-Being

Differences among respondents living in various regions in rural Nebraska were also analyzed. The counties included in each region can be seen in Figure 11. When examining general well-being, regional differences were only detected when respondents compared themselves to their parents when they were their age and when they reported their feelings of powerlessness.

Respondents in the Panhandle region were more likely than respondents in other regions of the state to feel they were worse off than their parents at their age. Nineteen percent of the Panhandle respondents felt they were worse off, compared to twelve percent of the respondents in the Southeast region (Appendix Table 6).

Regional differences were also detected when examining respondents' feelings of powerlessness. Respondents in the Panhandle region were more likely to strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that "...people are powerless to control their own lives." Sixty-two percent of the people in the Panhandle region strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, compared to fifty-two percent of the respondents in the North Central region (Figure 12).

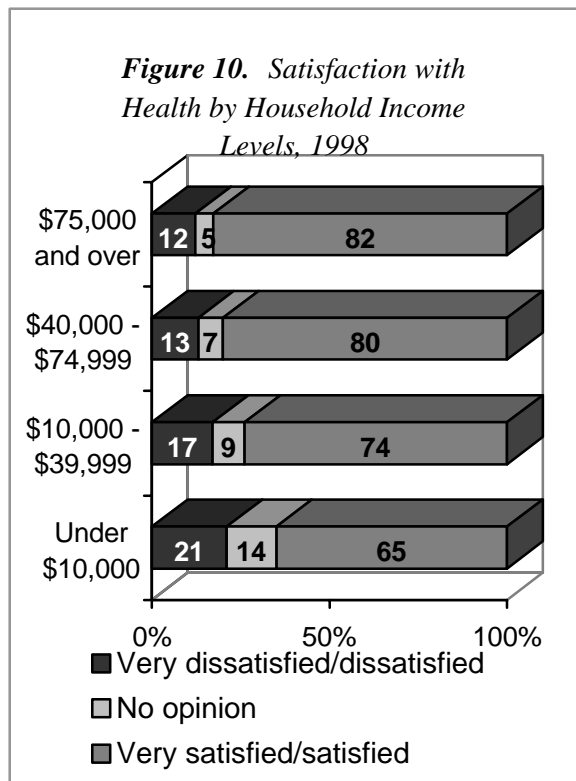


Figure 11. Regions of Nebraska

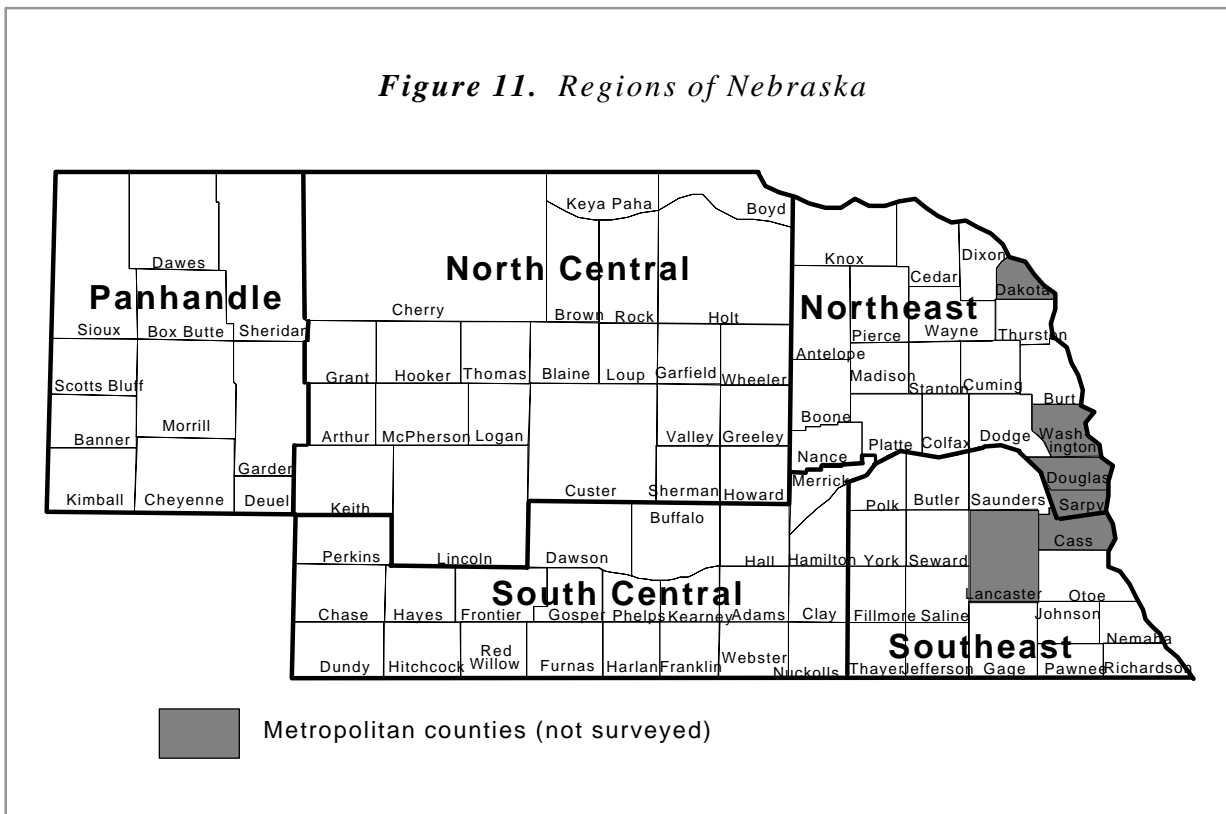
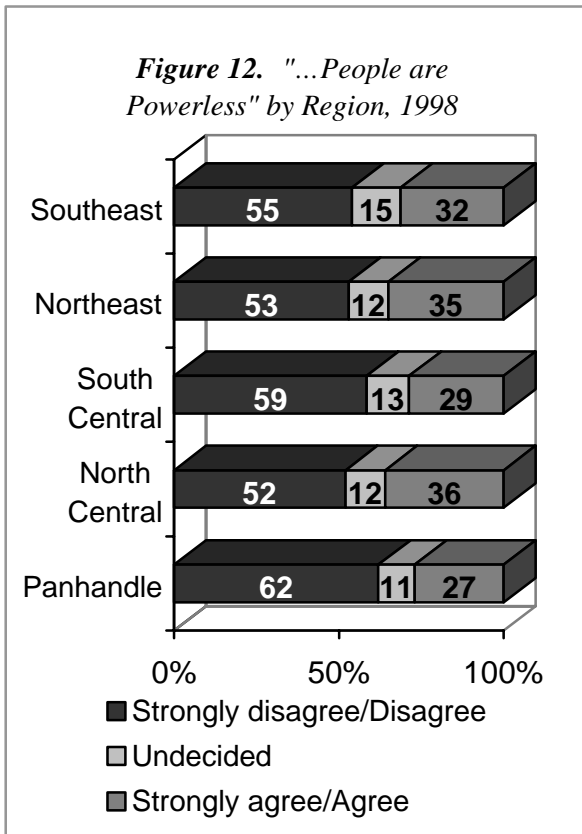
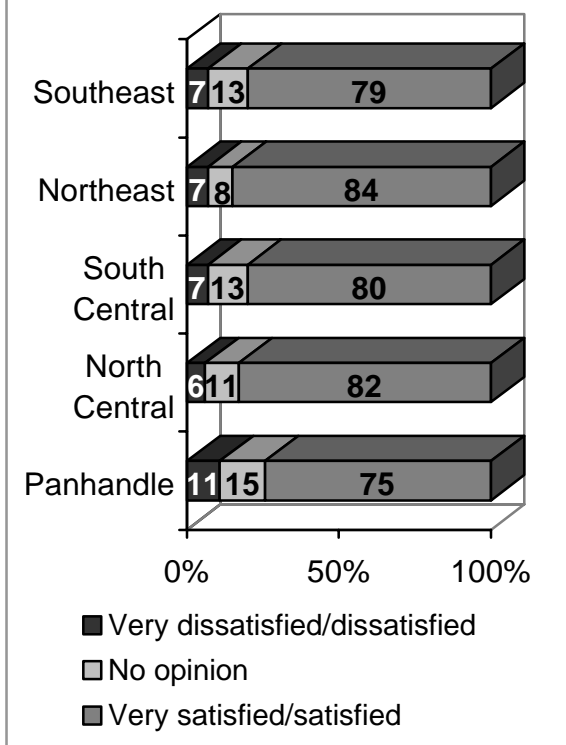


Figure 12. "...People are Powerless" by Region, 1998



Region was also related to respondents' satisfaction with their friends, clean air and water, and their religion/spirituality. Respondents in the North Central region were more likely than the other regions to be very satisfied or satisfied with clean air and water (Appendix Table 8). When asked about their satisfaction with their religion/spirituality, respondents in the Northeast region were more likely to be satisfied. Eighty-four percent of the Northeast respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their religion/spirituality, compared to seventy-five percent of the Panhandle respondents (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Satisfaction with Religion/Spirituality by Region, 1998



Conclusion

The analysis of rural Nebraskans' level of well-being and satisfaction with life suggests that optimism continues to be prevalent among rural people. In 1996, 36 percent believed they were better off than five years ago and 41 percent of the 1998 respondents believed they were better off.

A dramatic increase in overall optimism towards the future (ten years from now) also occurred. In 1996, 32 percent believed they would be better off ten years from now; by 1998, 42 percent believed they would be better off.

Do rural Nebraskans feel powerless as the changes of a global economy are felt in

Nebraska? According to the 1998 results, only 6 percent strongly agreed that people are powerless to control their lives, a 5 percent decline since 1997.

Overall, rural Nebraskans are satisfied with their marriage, open spaces, family and religion. They also continue to be dissatisfied with job opportunities, financial security during retirement and their current income level.

The 1998 respondents that were farmers and ranchers are more pessimistic about the future than non-agricultural producers. Only 31 percent of producers believe they will be better off in the future, compared to 51 percent of those rural Nebraskans who have white collar occupations.

Overall, household income, age and occupation are influencing general well-being. These findings indicate that while overall optimism and satisfaction with life in rural Nebraska continue to improve, older respondents, those with lower incomes and farmers/ranchers do not see their future as positive as do the other rural residents.

Appendix Table 1. Demographic Profile of Rural Poll Respondents Compared to 1990 Census

| | <i>1998 Poll</i> | <i>1997 Poll</i> | <i>1996 Poll</i> | <i>1990 Census</i> |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Age : ¹ | | | | |
| 20 - 39 | 25% | 24% | 22% | 38% |
| 40 - 64 | 55% | 48% | 49% | 36% |
| 65 and over | 20% | 28% | 29% | 26% |
| Gender: ² | | | | |
| Female | 58% | 28% | 27% | 49% |
| Male | 42% | 72% | 73% | 51% |
| Education: ³ | | | | |
| Less than 9 th grade | 2% | 5% | 3% | 10% |
| 9 th to 12 th grade (no diploma) | 3% | 5% | 5% | 12% |
| High school diploma (or equivalent) | 33% | 34% | 34% | 38% |
| Some college, no degree | 27% | 25% | 26% | 21% |
| Associate degree | 10% | 8% | 7% | 7% |
| Bachelors degree | 16% | 14% | 14% | 9% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 9% | 9% | 10% | 3% |
| Household income: ⁴ | | | | |
| Less than \$10,000 | 3% | 7% | 8% | 19% |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 10% | 16% | 17% | 25% |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 17% | 19% | 19% | 21% |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 20% | 18% | 18% | 15% |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 18% | 14% | 15% | 9% |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 12% | 10% | 9% | 5% |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 10% | 7% | 7% | 3% |
| \$75,000 or more | 10% | 8% | 7% | 3% |
| Marital Status: ⁵ | | | | |
| Married | 95% | 73% | 75% | 64% |
| Never married | 0.4% | 8% | 7% | 20% |
| Divorced/separated | 1% | 9% | 8% | 7% |
| Widowed/widower | 3% | 10% | 10% | 10% |

¹ 1990 Census universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.

² 1990 Census universe is total non-metro population.

³ 1990 Census universe is non-metro population 18 years of age and over.

⁴ 1990 Census universe is all non-metro households.

⁵ 1990 Census universe is non-metro population 15 years of age and over.

Appendix Table 2. Measures of General Well-Being in Relation to Community Size and Individual Attributes, 1998.

| | <i>Compared to Five Years Ago</i> | | | | <i>Compared to Parents</i> | | | | <i>Ten Years from Now</i> | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | <i>Better Off</i> | <i>Same</i> | <i>Worse Off</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Better Off</i> | <i>Same</i> | <i>Worse Off</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Better Off</i> | <i>Same</i> | <i>Worse Off</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Size | (n = 4076) | | | | (n = 4069) | | | | (n = 4033) | | | |
| Less than 100 | 33 | 52 | 15 | | 61 | 22 | 17 | | 39 | 44 | 17 | |
| 100 - 499 | 39 | 46 | 16 | | 58 | 27 | 15 | | 40 | 44 | 16 | |
| 500 - 999 | 40 | 46 | 14 | | 58 | 26 | 16 | | 40 | 42 | 18 | |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 39 | 46 | 15 | | 59 | 26 | 15 | | 40 | 43 | 17 | |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 43 | 40 | 17 | $\chi^2 = 30.87$ | 64 | 21 | 15 | $\chi^2 = 17.11$ | 45 | 39 | 16 | $\chi^2 = 23.17$ |
| 10,000 and up | 49 | 40 | 12 | (.001) | 66 | 21 | 13 | (.072) | 49 | 38 | 13 | (.010) |
| Individual Attributes: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | (n = 3814) | | | | (n = 3805) | | | | (n = 3785) | | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 20 | 50 | 30 | | 55 | 26 | 18 | | 25 | 46 | 30 | |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 21 | 56 | 23 | | 50 | 28 | 23 | | 23 | 53 | 24 | |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 30 | 50 | 20 | | 52 | 28 | 20 | | 31 | 46 | 23 | |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 35 | 50 | 15 | | 53 | 29 | 18 | | 41 | 42 | 17 | |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 48 | 39 | 13 | | 63 | 25 | 12 | | 48 | 39 | 13 | |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 54 | 37 | 9 | | 69 | 21 | 11 | | 54 | 36 | 10 | |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 58 | 33 | 9 | $\chi^2 = 306.15$ | 69 | 21 | 9 | $\chi^2 = 145.74$ | 55 | 39 | 6 | $\chi^2 = 246.29$ |
| \$75,000 and over | 62 | 29 | 9 | (.000) | 78 | 13 | 8 | (.000) | 60 | 32 | 8 | (.000) |
| <i>Age</i> | (n = 4114) | | | | (n = 4104) | | | | (n = 4069) | | | |
| 19 - 29 | 63 | 29 | 8 | | 57 | 30 | 13 | | 77 | 20 | 4 | |
| 30 - 39 | 56 | 34 | 10 | | 57 | 25 | 18 | | 65 | 30 | 6 | |
| 40 - 49 | 43 | 41 | 16 | | 58 | 26 | 17 | | 56 | 34 | 11 | |
| 50 - 64 | 37 | 46 | 17 | $\chi^2 = 250.36$ | 60 | 25 | 16 | $\chi^2 = 48.10$ | 30 | 48 | 22 | $\chi^2 = 767.01$ |
| 65 and older | 23 | 61 | 16 | (.000) | 69 | 23 | 8 | (.000) | 10 | 61 | 28 | (.000) |
| <i>Gender</i> | (n = 4118) | | | | (n = 4107) | | | | (n = 4071) | | | |
| Male | 41 | 43 | 17 | $\chi^2 = 9.00$ | 61 | 23 | 16 | $\chi^2 = 5.96$ | 42 | 41 | 18 | $\chi^2 = 5.46$ |
| Female | 41 | 46 | 13 | (.011) | 60 | 26 | 14 | (.051) | 42 | 43 | 15 | (.065) |

Appendix Table 2 Continued.

| | <i>Compared to Five Years Ago</i> | | | | <i>Compared to Parents</i> | | | | <i>Ten Years from Now</i> | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | <i>Better Off</i> | <i>Same</i> | <i>Worse Off</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Better Off</i> | <i>Same</i> | <i>Worse Off</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Better Off</i> | <i>Same</i> | <i>Worse Off</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| | (n = 4008) | | | | (n = 3999) | | | | (n = 3969) | | | |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | | | |
| Less than 9 th grade | 21 | 68 | 11 | | 76 | 20 | 4 | | 10 | 61 | 30 | |
| 9 th to 12 th grade | 24 | 56 | 21 | | 61 | 18 | 21 | | 24 | 47 | 29 | |
| H.S. diploma | 36 | 49 | 15 | | 62 | 25 | 13 | | 36 | 45 | 19 | |
| Some college | 41 | 44 | 16 | | 58 | 26 | 17 | | 42 | 43 | 16 | |
| Associate degree | 45 | 40 | 15 | | 57 | 26 | 17 | | 52 | 39 | 9 | |
| Bachelors degree | 52 | 36 | 12 | $\chi^2 = 95.63$ | 61 | 25 | 14 | $\chi^2 = 28.05$ | 56 | 34 | 10 | $\chi^2 = 157.71$ |
| Grad/prof degree | 50 | 36 | 14 | (.000) | 65 | 24 | 12 | (.005) | 48 | 39 | 13 | (.000) |
| | (n = 3393) | | | | (n = 3386) | | | | (n = 3366) | | | |
| <i>Occupation</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Professional/ technical/admin. | 53 | 36 | 12 | | 65 | 23 | 12 | | 51 | 38 | 12 | |
| Admin. support | 47 | 41 | 12 | | 61 | 26 | 14 | | 50 | 40 | 10 | |
| Sales | 42 | 45 | 13 | | 58 | 25 | 17 | | 49 | 38 | 14 | |
| Service | 42 | 43 | 15 | | 57 | 29 | 14 | | 45 | 41 | 13 | |
| Farming/ranching | 34 | 46 | 20 | | 54 | 26 | 20 | | 31 | 48 | 21 | |
| Skilled laborer | 42 | 42 | 16 | | 58 | 23 | 19 | | 47 | 36 | 18 | |
| Manual laborer | 28 | 51 | 21 | $\chi^2 = 94.49$ | 45 | 33 | 22 | $\chi^2 = 55.53$ | 42 | 35 | 23 | $\chi^2 = 80.19$ |
| Other | 38 | 51 | 11 | (.000) | 66 | 23 | 12 | (.000) | 43 | 42 | 15 | (.000) |

Appendix Table 3. Life Has Changed So Much in Our Modern World that Most People Are Powerless to Control Their Own Lives, 1998.

| | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Undecided</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Community Size:</u> | | | <i>Percentages</i> | | | |
| <i>Population</i> | | | (n = 4072) | | | |
| Less than 100 | 12 | 35 | 15 | 31 | 7 | |
| 100 - 499 | 9 | 43 | 14 | 26 | 8 | |
| 500 - 999 | 11 | 42 | 12 | 28 | 7 | |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 13 | 43 | 13 | 26 | 5 | |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 12 | 45 | 13 | 24 | 6 | $\chi^2 = 52.22$ |
| 10,000 and up | 17 | 46 | 10 | 21 | 5 | (.000) |
| <u>Individual Attributes:</u> | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | | | (n = 3810) | | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 8 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 16 | |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 6 | 35 | 16 | 35 | 9 | |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 9 | 38 | 12 | 32 | 10 | |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 11 | 40 | 14 | 28 | 7 | |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 13 | 46 | 12 | 24 | 5 | |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 14 | 52 | 12 | 20 | 2 | |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 20 | 52 | 8 | 17 | 3 | $\chi^2 = 238.07$ |
| \$75,000 and over | 22 | 49 | 8 | 18 | 4 | (.000) |
| <i>Age</i> | | | (n = 4108) | | | |
| 19 - 29 | 20 | 44 | 15 | 19 | 2 | |
| 30 - 39 | 16 | 48 | 13 | 19 | 4 | |
| 40 - 49 | 16 | 47 | 11 | 21 | 6 | |
| 50 - 64 | 11 | 41 | 11 | 31 | 7 | $\chi^2 = 198.09$ |
| 65 and older | 5 | 35 | 18 | 33 | 10 | (.000) |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | (n = 4112) | | | |
| Male | 15 | 41 | 11 | 26 | 7 | $\chi^2 = 21.94$ |
| Female | 11 | 45 | 14 | 25 | 6 | (.000) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | (n = 4004) | | | |
| Less than 9 th grade | 3 | 24 | 28 | 37 | 8 | |
| 9 th to 12 th grade | 5 | 29 | 21 | 34 | 12 | |
| H.S. diploma | 8 | 39 | 16 | 29 | 9 | |
| Some college | 12 | 44 | 10 | 28 | 7 | |
| Associate degree | 15 | 51 | 10 | 20 | 4 | |
| Bachelors degree | 21 | 51 | 10 | 16 | 2 | $\chi^2 = 255.58$ |
| Grad/prof degree | 19 | 50 | 9 | 19 | 4 | (.000) |

Appendix Table 3 Continued.

| | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Undecided</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Percentages (n = 3393)</i> | | | | | |
| Professional/ technical/admin. | 19 | 49 | 10 | 18 | 3 | |
| Admin. support | 11 | 53 | 8 | 22 | 6 | |
| Sales | 10 | 47 | 13 | 26 | 4 | |
| Service | 13 | 44 | 13 | 26 | 5 | |
| Farming/ranching | 12 | 37 | 13 | 31 | 8 | |
| Skilled laborer | 10 | 39 | 14 | 29 | 9 | |
| Manual laborer | 6 | 30 | 17 | 37 | 10 | $\chi^2 = 151.94$ |
| Other | 11 | 50 | 12 | 22 | 6 | (.000) |

Appendix Table 4. Satisfaction with Items Affecting Well-Being, 1998.

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Does not apply</i> | <i>Very dissatisfied</i> | <i>Dissatisfied</i> | <i>No opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Very satisfied</i> |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Your marriage | 5% | 2% | 3% | 3% | 23% | 63% |
| Your family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 29 | 62 |
| Greenery and open space | 0* | 2 | 3 | 4 | 38 | 52 |
| Your religion/spirituality | 1 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 32 | 48 |
| Your friends | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 39 | 47 |
| Clean air and water | 0* | 4 | 10 | 5 | 41 | 41 |
| Health of your family | 1 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 47 | 37 |
| Your housing | 1 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 45 | 35 |
| Education of your children | 7 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 40 | 35 |
| Your health | 1 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 47 | 29 |
| Your spare time | 1 | 5 | 17 | 7 | 42 | 29 |
| Your education | 2 | 2 | 13 | 10 | 46 | 27 |
| Respect from others | 1 | 2 | 9 | 12 | 50 | 26 |
| Your job satisfaction | 14 | 4 | 12 | 11 | 38 | 21 |
| Your job security | 16 | 6 | 13 | 13 | 32 | 21 |
| Your community | 0* | 3 | 15 | 13 | 53 | 16 |
| Current income level | 3 | 13 | 25 | 9 | 38 | 12 |
| Ability to relocate | 16 | 4 | 12 | 36 | 22 | 11 |
| Financial security during retirement | 8 | 18 | 24 | 12 | 29 | 9 |
| Job opportunities for you | 14 | 12 | 22 | 20 | 23 | 9 |

* Less than 1 percent.

Appendix Table 5. Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Well-Being By Community Size and Individual Attributes, 1998.*

| | <i>Your marriage</i> | | | <i>Your family</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | |
| | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | |
| Community Size: | (n = 3839) | | | (n = 4015) | | |
| Less than 100 | 5 | 1 | 95 | 7 | 8 | 86 |
| 100 - 499 | 5 | 5 | 90 | 5 | 4 | 91 |
| 500 - 999 | 6 | 1 | 93 | 5 | 2 | 93 |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 6 | 3 | 91 | 4 | 4 | 91 |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 6 | 4 | 90 | 6 | 4 | 90 |
| 10,000 and up | 6 | 4 | 90 | 5 | 3 | 92 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 18.08$ (.054) | | | $\chi^2 = 15.02$ (.131) |
| Individual Attributes: | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | (n = 3601) | | | (n = 3778) | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 10 | 1 | 89 | 6 | 7 | 86 |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 6 | 5 | 89 | 5 | 8 | 87 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 6 | 5 | 90 | 7 | 4 | 90 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 6 | 3 | 91 | 5 | 3 | 92 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 6 | 3 | 91 | 6 | 3 | 91 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 7 | 3 | 90 | 4 | 2 | 94 |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 7 | 3 | 90 | 5 | 2 | 93 |
| \$75,000 and over | 6 | 3 | 91 | 3 | 3 | 94 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 11.41$ (.654) | | | $\chi^2 = 41.47$ (.000) |
| <i>Age</i> | (n = 3879) | | | (n = 4063) | | |
| 19 - 29 | 2 | 2 | 96 | 4 | 1 | 95 |
| 30 - 39 | 5 | 3 | 92 | 3 | 2 | 95 |
| 40 - 49 | 7 | 4 | 89 | 4 | 3 | 93 |
| 50 - 64 | 6 | 3 | 91 | 7 | 4 | 89 |
| 65 and older | 5 | 3 | 92 | 6 | 6 | 88 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 15.03$ (.059) | | | $\chi^2 = 42.38$ (.000) |
| <i>Gender</i> | (n = 3883) | | | (n = 4067) | | |
| Male | 5 | 3 | 92 | 5 | 4 | 91 |
| Female | 6 | 4 | 90 | 5 | 3 | 92 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 1.52$ (.467) | | | $\chi^2 = 1.88$ (.390) |
| <i>Education</i> | (n = 3784) | | | (n = 3955) | | |
| No H.S. diploma | 6 | 5 | 89 | 6 | 7 | 88 |
| High school diploma | 5 | 4 | 91 | 6 | 5 | 89 |
| At least some college | 6 | 3 | 91 | 5 | 3 | 93 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 3.83$ (.430) | | | $\chi^2 = 28.99$ (.000) |
| <i>Occupation</i> | (n = 3241) | | | (n = 3360) | | |
| Prof./technical/admin. | 8 | 2 | 90 | 5 | 2 | 93 |
| Admin. support | 8 | 2 | 90 | 6 | 2 | 92 |
| Sales | 6 | 4 | 91 | 4 | 6 | 90 |
| Service | 7 | 3 | 90 | 6 | 5 | 90 |
| Farming/ranching | 5 | 2 | 93 | 5 | 3 | 92 |
| Skilled laborer | 4 | 5 | 91 | 4 | 3 | 93 |
| Manual laborer | 5 | 7 | 88 | 2 | 8 | 91 |
| Other | 4 | 2 | 94 | 5 | 2 | 93 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 30.92$ (.006) | | | $\chi^2 = 31.11$ (.005) |

Note: The satisfied and dissatisfied categories in this table have been redefined to include the very satisfied and very dissatisfied responses.

Appendix Table 5 Continued.*

| | <i>Greenery and open space</i> | | | <i>Your religion/spirituality</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Significance</i> | |
| | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Percentages</i> | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | |
| Community Size: | (n = 4013) | | | (n = 3995) | | |
| Less than 100 | 5 | 4 | 91 | 11 | 14 | 75 |
| 100 - 499 | 4 | 4 | 93 | 7 | 11 | 83 |
| 500 - 999 | 6 | 3 | 92 | 7 | 10 | 83 |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 4 | 5 | 90 | 7 | 13 | 81 |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 8 | 6 | 86 | 8 | 14 | 79 |
| 10,000 and up | 8 | 5 | 87 | 9 | 12 | 79 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 32.67$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 13.79$ (.183) |
| Individual Attributes: | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | (n = 3771) | | | (n = 3759) | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 7 | 11 | 82 | 9 | 11 | 80 |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 6 | 5 | 89 | 8 | 14 | 79 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 6 | 4 | 91 | 6 | 11 | 83 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 5 | 4 | 91 | 8 | 12 | 81 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 6 | 5 | 89 | 8 | 12 | 80 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 6 | 5 | 90 | 8 | 12 | 80 |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 6 | 3 | 91 | 7 | 11 | 82 |
| \$75,000 and over | 6 | 2 | 91 | 8 | 12 | 80 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 23.41$ (.054) | | | $\chi^2 = 4.77$ (.989) |
| <i>Age</i> | (n = 4059) | | | (n = 4043) | | |
| 19 - 29 | 7 | 6 | 88 | 7 | 12 | 82 |
| 30 - 39 | 5 | 5 | 90 | 8 | 15 | 77 |
| 40 - 49 | 6 | 5 | 90 | 8 | 13 | 79 |
| 50 - 64 | 6 | 3 | 92 | 6 | 11 | 83 |
| 65 and older | 5 | 5 | 90 | 7 | 9 | 84 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 12.04$ (.149) | | | $\chi^2 = 20.71$ (.008) |
| <i>Gender</i> | (n = 4064) | | | (n = 4047) | | |
| Male | 6 | 5 | 89 | 7 | 17 | 76 |
| Female | 5 | 4 | 91 | 7 | 9 | 84 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 4.61$ (.100) | | | $\chi^2 = 55.06$ (.000) |
| <i>Education</i> | (n = 3954) | | | (n = 3937) | | |
| No H.S. diploma | 6 | 8 | 86 | 9 | 19 | 73 |
| High school diploma | 5 | 5 | 90 | 7 | 15 | 78 |
| At least some college | 6 | 4 | 91 | 7 | 10 | 83 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 11.06$ (.026) | | | $\chi^2 = 30.91$ (.000) |
| <i>Occupation</i> | (n = 3367) | | | (n = 3342) | | |
| Prof./technical/admin. | 5 | 4 | 91 | 8 | 11 | 81 |
| Admin. support | 7 | 5 | 88 | 8 | 7 | 85 |
| Sales | 6 | 5 | 90 | 7 | 10 | 83 |
| Service | 4 | 5 | 91 | 10 | 13 | 77 |
| Farming/ranching | 4 | 3 | 93 | 8 | 11 | 81 |
| Skilled laborer | 7 | 3 | 90 | 7 | 20 | 73 |
| Manual laborer | 6 | 6 | 89 | 9 | 18 | 73 |
| Other | 7 | 5 | 88 | 5 | 10 | 85 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 16.07$ (.309) | | | $\chi^2 = 48.80$ (.000) |

Note: The satisfied and dissatisfied categories in this table have been redefined to include the very satisfied and very dissatisfied responses.

Appendix Table 5 Continued.*

| | <i>Your friends</i> | | | <i>Clean air and water</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>No</i> |
| | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | |
| Community Size: | (n = 4009) | | | (n = 4017) | | |
| Less than 100 | 7 | 13 | 81 | 11 | 4 | 85 |
| 100 - 499 | 5 | 7 | 88 | 13 | 5 | 83 |
| 500 - 999 | 6 | 5 | 89 | 12 | 5 | 84 |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 6 | 8 | 86 | 13 | 5 | 82 |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 9 | 9 | 83 | 18 | 6 | 76 |
| 10,000 and up | 8 | 7 | 86 | 15 | 5 | 80 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 22.32$ (.014) | | | $\chi^2 = 15.03$ (.131) |
| Individual Attributes: | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | (n = 3775) | | | (n = 3779) | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 6 | 14 | 81 | 13 | 8 | 79 |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 6 | 12 | 82 | 16 | 5 | 80 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 7 | 9 | 85 | 14 | 5 | 82 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 5 | 7 | 87 | 12 | 7 | 81 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 7 | 7 | 86 | 18 | 4 | 79 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 5 | 7 | 87 | 11 | 5 | 84 |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 8 | 7 | 86 | 12 | 3 | 85 |
| \$75,000 and over | 7 | 5 | 87 | 11 | 3 | 87 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 25.27$ (.032) | | | $\chi^2 = 33.87$ (.002) |
| <i>Age</i> | (n = 4057) | | | (n = 4065) | | |
| 19 - 29 | 6 | 4 | 90 | 13 | 9 | 78 |
| 30 - 39 | 6 | 7 | 87 | 14 | 5 | 81 |
| 40 - 49 | 7 | 8 | 86 | 13 | 5 | 82 |
| 50 - 64 | 6 | 9 | 85 | 14 | 5 | 82 |
| 65 and older | 6 | 7 | 87 | 13 | 4 | 83 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 6.91$ (.546) | | | $\chi^2 = 10.86$ (.210) |
| <i>Gender</i> | (n = 4060) | | | (n = 4070) | | |
| Male | 7 | 9 | 84 | 12 | 5 | 83 |
| Female | 6 | 6 | 88 | 15 | 5 | 81 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 19.49$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 4.68$ (.096) |
| <i>Education</i> | (n = 3952) | | | (n = 3960) | | |
| No H.S. diploma | 7 | 11 | 83 | 16 | 7 | 77 |
| High school diploma | 7 | 9 | 84 | 15 | 6 | 80 |
| At least some college | 6 | 7 | 88 | 13 | 4 | 83 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 11.51$ (.021) | | | $\chi^2 = 14.04$ (.007) |
| <i>Occupation</i> | (n = 3353) | | | (n = 3366) | | |
| Prof./technical/admin. | 7 | 6 | 87 | 14 | 4 | 82 |
| Admin. support | 7 | 6 | 87 | 18 | 5 | 77 |
| Sales | 5 | 8 | 87 | 11 | 4 | 85 |
| Service | 7 | 10 | 84 | 15 | 6 | 79 |
| Farming/ranching | 6 | 6 | 89 | 10 | 2 | 88 |
| Skilled laborer | 6 | 11 | 83 | 15 | 6 | 79 |
| Manual laborer | 7 | 9 | 84 | 15 | 11 | 75 |
| Other | 6 | 7 | 87 | 15 | 6 | 80 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 16.93$ (.260) | | | $\chi^2 = 42.26$ (.000) |

Note: The satisfied and dissatisfied categories in this table have been redefined to include the very satisfied and very dissatisfied responses.

Appendix Table 5 Continued.*

| | <i>Health of your family</i> | | | <i>Your housing</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>No</i> | | <i>Significance</i> | <i>No</i> | | <i>Significance</i> |
| | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | |
| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | |
| Community Size: | (n = 3998) | | | (n = 3982) | | |
| Less than 100 | 5 | 6 | 89 | 12 | 10 | 78 |
| 100 - 499 | 11 | 6 | 84 | 12 | 7 | 82 |
| 500 - 999 | 9 | 4 | 88 | 14 | 5 | 81 |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 11 | 4 | 85 | 13 | 7 | 80 |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 11 | 6 | 84 | 16 | 6 | 78 |
| 10,000 and up | 10 | 5 | 85 | 12 | 3 | 84 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 12.13$ (.277) | | | $\chi^2 = 21.84$ (.016) |
| Individual Attributes: | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | (n = 3757) | | | (n = 3750) | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 21 | 10 | 69 | 15 | 7 | 78 |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 14 | 8 | 78 | 17 | 8 | 75 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 12 | 5 | 83 | 15 | 7 | 78 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 9 | 5 | 86 | 16 | 7 | 77 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 11 | 4 | 85 | 13 | 5 | 83 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 9 | 3 | 88 | 11 | 6 | 83 |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 9 | 3 | 88 | 8 | 3 | 89 |
| \$75,000 and over | 7 | 3 | 89 | 10 | 3 | 88 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 51.93$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 50.87$ (.000) |
| <i>Age</i> | (n = 4045) | | | (n = 4028) | | |
| 19 - 29 | 6 | 4 | 90 | 20 | 12 | 68 |
| 30 - 39 | 6 | 3 | 91 | 16 | 6 | 78 |
| 40 - 49 | 9 | 5 | 86 | 14 | 7 | 79 |
| 50 - 64 | 13 | 5 | 82 | 12 | 5 | 83 |
| 65 and older | 15 | 6 | 79 | 9 | 4 | 87 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 61.96$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 51.43$ (.000) |
| <i>Gender</i> | (n = 4050) | | | (n = 4032) | | |
| Male | 11 | 6 | 83 | 13 | 7 | 81 |
| Female | 11 | 4 | 86 | 13 | 5 | 82 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 14.36$ (.001) | | | $\chi^2 = 4.86$ (.088) |
| <i>Education</i> | (n = 3943) | | | (n = 3926) | | |
| No H.S. diploma | 14 | 10 | 76 | 11 | 5 | 84 |
| High school diploma | 13 | 7 | 81 | 13 | 7 | 80 |
| At least some college | 9 | 3 | 88 | 13 | 5 | 82 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 50.64$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 8.24$ (.083) |
| <i>Occupation</i> | (n = 3355) | | | (n = 3355) | | |
| Prof./technical/admin. | 10 | 3 | 88 | 13 | 5 | 82 |
| Admin. support | 9 | 3 | 88 | 16 | 7 | 77 |
| Sales | 12 | 4 | 84 | 10 | 5 | 86 |
| Service | 11 | 6 | 83 | 17 | 6 | 77 |
| Farming/ranching | 9 | 4 | 87 | 11 | 7 | 83 |
| Skilled laborer | 9 | 6 | 85 | 18 | 7 | 76 |
| Manual laborer | 10 | 7 | 84 | 17 | 10 | 73 |
| Other | 10 | 5 | 85 | 13 | 4 | 83 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 17.22$ (.245) | | | $\chi^2 = 30.68$ (.006) |

Note: The satisfied and dissatisfied categories in this table have been redefined to include the very satisfied and very dissatisfied responses.

Appendix Table 5 Continued. *

| | <i>Education of your children</i> | | | <i>Your health</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Dissatisfied opinion</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| | <i>No</i> | | | <i>No</i> | | |
| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | |
| Community Size: | (n = 3700) | | | (n = 3995) | | |
| Less than 100 | 11 | 5 | 85 | 13 | 16 | 71 |
| 100 - 499 | 12 | 6 | 82 | 15 | 10 | 75 |
| 500 - 999 | 10 | 6 | 84 | 14 | 7 | 80 |
| 1,000 - 4,999 | 12 | 7 | 81 | 16 | 8 | 76 |
| 5,000 - 9,999 | 15 | 7 | 78 | 18 | 8 | 74 |
| 10,000 and up | 12 | 9 | 79 | 14 | 6 | 80 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 13.26$ (.210) | | | $\chi^2 = 27.43$ (.002) |
| Individual Attributes: | | | | | | |
| <i>Income Level</i> | (n = 3493) | | | (n = 3761) | | |
| Under \$10,000 | 16 | 11 | 73 | 21 | 14 | 65 |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 9 | 11 | 80 | 22 | 12 | 66 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 14 | 10 | 77 | 17 | 9 | 74 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 11 | 6 | 83 | 15 | 8 | 77 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 17 | 4 | 79 | 14 | 7 | 79 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 7 | 5 | 87 | 12 | 7 | 81 |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 12 | 7 | 81 | 14 | 5 | 80 |
| \$75,000 and over | 12 | 7 | 81 | 12 | 5 | 82 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 54.35$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 53.71$ (.000) |
| <i>Age</i> | (n = 3746) | | | (n = 4045) | | |
| 19 - 29 | 7 | 20 | 74 | 7 | 5 | 88 |
| 30 - 39 | 12 | 8 | 81 | 10 | 7 | 84 |
| 40 - 49 | 16 | 5 | 79 | 14 | 8 | 78 |
| 50 - 64 | 11 | 6 | 83 | 18 | 9 | 73 |
| 65 and older | 9 | 8 | 84 | 21 | 10 | 70 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 58.85$ (.000) | | | $\chi^2 = 68.58$ (.000) |
| <i>Gender</i> | (n = 3752) | | | (n = 4049) | | |
| Male | 12 | 7 | 81 | 15 | 10 | 74 |
| Female | 12 | 7 | 81 | 15 | 7 | 79 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = .27$ (.876) | | | $\chi^2 = 18.66$ (.000) |
| <i>Education</i> | (n = 3655) | | | (n = 3943) | | |
| No H.S. diploma | 10 | 11 | 78 | 23 | 18 | 60 |
| High school diploma | 12 | 7 | 80 | 17 | 10 | 73 |
| At least some college | 12 | 6 | 82 | 14 | 6 | 80 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 7.61$ (.107) | | | $\chi^2 = 66.32$ (.000) |
| <i>Occupation</i> | (n = 3135) | | | (n = 3350) | | |
| Prof./technical/admin. | 12 | 7 | 81 | 13 | 5 | 83 |
| Admin. support | 15 | 7 | 78 | 13 | 6 | 82 |
| Sales | 11 | 4 | 85 | 15 | 10 | 75 |
| Service | 14 | 8 | 79 | 14 | 10 | 77 |
| Farming/ranching | 9 | 5 | 86 | 14 | 11 | 75 |
| Skilled laborer | 15 | 11 | 75 | 16 | 11 | 74 |
| Manual laborer | 13 | 8 | 79 | 15 | 11 | 74 |
| Other | 9 | 6 | 85 | 19 | 7 | 75 |
| | | | $\chi^2 = 29.88$ (.008) | | | $\chi^2 = 46.42$ (.000) |

Note: The satisfied and dissatisfied categories in this table have been redefined to include the very satisfied and very dissatisfied responses.

Appendix Table 6. General Well-Being by Region, 1998

| Region | Compared to Five Years Ago | | | | Compared to Parents | | | | Ten Years from Now | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|------|-------|-----------------|---------------------|------|-------|------------------|--------------------|------|-------|------------------|
| | Better | Same | Worse | Significance | Better | Same | Worse | Significance | Better | Same | Worse | Significance |
| | Off | | Off | | Off | Off | Off | | Off | Off | | |
| | (n = 4118) | | | | (n = 4107) | | | | (n = 4071) | | | |
| Panhandle | 42 | 42 | 16 | | 59 | 22 | 19 | | 41 | 41 | 18 | |
| North Central | 39 | 46 | 14 | | 58 | 26 | 16 | | 38 | 45 | 17 | |
| South Central | 42 | 43 | 15 | | 59 | 26 | 15 | | 45 | 40 | 15 | |
| Northeast | 40 | 45 | 15 | $\chi^2 = 6.38$ | 61 | 24 | 14 | $\chi^2 = 17.31$ | 43 | 43 | 15 | $\chi^2 = 10.31$ |
| Southeast | 42 | 46 | 13 | (.605) | 64 | 24 | 12 | (.027) | 41 | 42 | 17 | (.244) |

Appendix Table 7. Feelings of Powerlessness by Region, 1998

| <i>Life has changed so much in our modern world that people are powerless to control their own lives.</i> | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------|------------------|
| Region | Strongly | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly | Significance |
| | Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Agree | |
| | Percentages (n = 4110) | | | | | |
| Panhandle | 18 | 44 | 11 | 19 | 8 | |
| North Central | 11 | 41 | 12 | 28 | 8 | |
| South Central | 14 | 45 | 13 | 23 | 6 | |
| Northeast | 12 | 41 | 12 | 29 | 6 | $\chi^2 = 47.13$ |
| Southeast | 10 | 45 | 15 | 27 | 5 | (.000) |

Appendix Table 8. Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Well-Being by Region, 1998

| | <i>Region</i> | | | | | <i>Significance</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | <i>Panhandle</i> | <i>North Central</i> | <i>South Central</i> | <i>Northeast</i> | <i>Southeast</i> | |
| | <i>Percent within each region</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Your marriage</i> | (n = 3880) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | $\chi^2 = 7.95$ (.439) |
| No opinion | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | |
| Satisfied | 89 | 91 | 90 | 91 | 92 | |
| <i>Your family</i> | (n = 4061) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 4 | $\chi^2 = 14.78$ (.064) |
| No opinion | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | |
| Satisfied | 91 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 93 | |
| <i>Greenery and open space</i> | (n = 4059) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | $\chi^2 = 12.09$ (.147) |
| No opinion | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | |
| Satisfied | 90 | 93 | 89 | 90 | 90 | |
| <i>Your religion/spirituality</i> | (n = 4041) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 11 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | $\chi^2 = 27.77$ (.001) |
| No opinion | 15 | 11 | 13 | 8 | 13 | |
| Satisfied | 75 | 82 | 80 | 84 | 79 | |
| <i>Your friends</i> | (n = 4053) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 5 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 5 | $\chi^2 = 22.16$ (.005) |
| No opinion | 9 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 7 | |
| Satisfied | 86 | 86 | 86 | 86 | 88 | |
| <i>Clean air and water</i> | (n = 4064) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 11 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 13 | $\chi^2 = 21.01$ (.007) |
| No opinion | 6 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 6 | |
| Satisfied | 83 | 86 | 81 | 79 | 81 | |
| <i>Health of your family</i> | (n = 4045) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 9 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 | $\chi^2 = 5.09$ (.748) |
| No opinion | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | |
| Satisfied | 85 | 83 | 85 | 84 | 86 | |
| <i>Your housing</i> | (n = 4024) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 11 | $\chi^2 = 12.93$ (.114) |
| No opinion | 7 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 6 | |
| Satisfied | 79 | 78 | 82 | 82 | 83 | |
| <i>Education of your children</i> | (n = 3746) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 13 | 13 | 13 | 11 | 11 | $\chi^2 = 7.05$ (.532) |
| No opinion | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | |
| Satisfied | 79 | 82 | 80 | 82 | 83 | |
| <i>Your health</i> | (n = 4042) | | | | | |
| Dissatisfied | 14 | 13 | 17 | 17 | 14 | $\chi^2 = 7.99$ (.435) |
| No opinion | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | |
| Satisfied | 78 | 79 | 75 | 75 | 78 | |

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