DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 107 285 52 IR 002 031

AUTHOR Gee, Gerald M.
TITLE Urban Information Needs: A Replication. A Report of the Syracuse/Elmira Study.
INSTITUTION Syracuse Univ., N.Y. Center for the Study of Information and Education.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Libraries and Educational Technology (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO BR-2-1301
PUB DATE 74
GRANT OEG-0-72-5405
NOTE 175p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$8.24 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS City Planning; City Problems; Community Information Services; *Information Needs; Information Scientists; Information Seeking; *Information Services; Information Sources; Search Strategies; *Surveys; *Urban Culture; Urban Population
IDENTIFIERS Elmira; New York; Syracuse

ABSTRACT

To determine the information needs of residents of small- and medium-sized cities in the manner previously used for large cities in Baltimore, a multistage survey was conducted of randomly-selected households in Syracuse and Elmira, New York. An information need was defined as "a problem or question recognized by an individual for which either information or services are needed." A detailed questionnaire was administered by trained interviewers to elicit how individuals perceived their needs and how certain population subgroups perceived needs. Findings are summarized in terms of general topic areas of concern, frequency of mention, and whether the response was aided or unaided. In general, findings replicated those of the Baltimore study that "the average U.S. urban resident is suffering from a large and ever-growing information crisis." Recommendations for further information-needs studies are included. Appendixes include the sample design, field procedures, and questionnaire. (SK)

Project No. RD 2-1301

Grant No. OEG-0-72-5405

URBAN INFORMATION NEEDS: A REPLICATION

A Report of the Syracuse/Elmira Study

by

Gerald M. Gee

Submitted by: The Center for the Study of Information and Education;
Donald P. Ely, Director

Prepared for: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Office of Education
Division of Library Programs

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgement in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

The Center for the Study of Information and Education
Syracuse University
1974

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEXT		PAGE
I.	Summary and Acknowledgments	1
II.	Introduction	4
	A. Aim of the Study	4
	1. Statement of the Problem	
	2. Rationale for the Study	
	3. Conceptual Rationale	
	4. Study Objectives	
	B. Study Design	10
	1. Selection of Sites	
	2. Development of Time Frame	
	3. Materials	
	C. Research Methodology	14
	1. Introduction	
	2. Sample Design	
	3. Household Survey	
	4. Presentation of Results	
	a) data preparation	
	b) data analysis	
III.	Findings	32
	A. Economic Feasibility of Replication	32
	B. Utility of Instruments	37
	C. Information Needs in Syracuse & Elmira	40
	1. Universe of Information Needs	
	2. Topic Areas of Need	
	3. Specific Problems/Questions	
	4. How Individuals State Their Needs	
IV.	Recommendations	115
	A. Information Needs Studies	115
	B. Instrument, Procedures, and Costs	116
	C. Needed Further Research	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY		121
APPENDICES		
	A. Sample Design	129
	B. Field Procedures	134
	C. Questionnaire	139

FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

		pages
Figure 1:	Information Needs and the Individual	7
Figure 2:	Comparison of Coder Agreement for selected Content Analysis Schemes in a sample of Questionnaires	27
Figure 3:	Costs of the Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study	35

TABLES

Table 1	Universe of respondents and problem/questions	42
Table 2	Percent of Respondents citing one or more problems/questions by demographic subgroups	44
Table 3	Percent of Respondents citing one or more problems/questions by social network variables	47
Table 4	Ranking of principal subgroups of respondents by percent citing one or more problems/questions	50-52
Table 5	Average number of problems/questions cited by median tract income, race, age, years of education completed, occupation, size of household, and sex	55
Table 6	Average number of problems/questions cited by social network variables	57
Table 7	Ranking of principal subgroups by average number of problems/questions cited	58-60

TABLES (continued)

		pages
Table 8	Distribution of problems/questions among topic areas	62
Table 9	Percent of citations which were aided and unaided by topic area	64
Table 10	Rank of topic areas by categories of response	66-68
Table 11	Importance of problems/questions by topic areas	70
Table 12	Percent of problems/questions designated as most important by topic area and by demographic subgroups of individuals	74-76
Table 13	Most frequently cited specific problems/ questions in each topic area	79-81
Table 14	Most frequently cited unaided problems/ questions (specific)	83-85
Table 15	Number and percent of most important citations for 15 most important problems	88-90
Table 16	Differences among demographic subgroups in citing the fifteen most important problems/questions	94-95
Table 17	Statements of total, aided, and unaided problems/questions	99
Table 18	Statements of the fifteen most important problems/questions	101-103
Table 19	Statements of problems/questions by age, education, occupation, and median tract income	106

I. SUMMARY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study reported in the following pages is an effort at replicating a survey conducted in Baltimore from July 1971 through October 1973. The survey was an attempt to focus on the nature of the needs urban residents have for various kinds of information. The present study seeks to determine and compare the information needs of residents in less-populated cities. It is felt that such studies of (urban) residents and their everyday information needs are desirable for the development and management of information resources and delivery systems which will meet those needs in a more efficient and effective manner.

Two sites were selected as "medium" and "small" locations in which information needs would be studied. Syracuse, New York, was chosen as the medium-sized city, and Elmira, New York, was picked as the small city from which data would be drawn and compared with results of the survey taken in the Baltimore Urbanized Area. As in Baltimore, the research method employed was a multi-stage survey to identify the information needs of randomly-selected household residents in the two cities. The instruments and techniques developed for the survey in

Baltimore required only minor modifications for use in Syracuse and Elmira.

Two major contributions of the Baltimore Study were the development of a conceptual framework for the conduct of information needs studies and the creation of a content analytic methodology for categorizing the information needs of urban residents. The data obtained from the study in Syracuse and Elmira were coded, analyzed, and summarized according to methods formulated for the original study in Baltimore. A computer program for data analysis, suitable for general use in other locations, was produced for the present study.

The project was concerned with the identification of information needs in the two settings, how individuals perceived their needs, and how subgroups of individuals stated their needs. These data were compared with findings from the Baltimore Study. An information need was defined as "a problem or question recognized by an individual for which either information or services are needed." Thus, problems or questions were analyzed in terms of general topic areas of concern, frequency of mention, and manner of inquiry (i.e. whether the response was aided or unaided). Substantive results are summarized at the end of Part III-C of this report. In addition to these urban information

needs, data were collected which will allow for comparison of information-seeking strategies and search outcomes.

The project was guided to completion by Dr. Donald P. Ely, Director of the Center for the Study of Information and Education at Syracuse University. Gerald M. Gee, CSIE research assistant, conducted the study and wrote the final report. Sylvia Faibisoff supervised the collection of the Elmira data. Wilson Drysdale and Susan Henry revised the codebook for the study and coded all data. Martha Baker and Elliot Cole were responsible for creating the SPSS program used in the study and for preliminary data analysis. Ann Bailie and Kathy Rounds produced the tables and typed the report. The Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study is the product of these people and others who contributed along the way.

II INTRODUCTION

A. Aim of the Study

1. The Problem

People need information. But there is a problem when the needs human beings have for information are not universal and objective entities. Because these information needs are formed by individual characteristics and are shaped by environmental circumstances, they are difficult to measure and report in precise, quantifiable language. Further, it would seem that many people find it difficult to conceptualize and then articulate their needs for information, and, as a result, discussions of information needs must proceed from the level of inference.

One inferential indicator of actual needs for information has been the information-seeking behavior exhibited by adults. Thus, many studies purporting to specify information needs actually only investigate the information-seeking behaviors of various groups and patterns of library use.[1] These user studies, though widely employed to plan the information services of

---

[1] One recent unpublished doctoral dissertation from the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University may represent a refreshing change. Douglas Zweizig used several variables, including "information needs," to develop a method for predicting amount of library use. (See item 104 in the bibliography.)

libraries, tend to focus on the "needs" of discrete, identifiable gtoups of users, usually within a specific field, most frequently in the sciences. It is not surprising, then, that advances in information delivery systems have catered to groups of professionals involved in scientific research.

But what of the needs of the aggregate population, the heterogeneous collection of people understood as the "general public"? Can the information needs of citizens in general be measured, or must the needs of a larger population merely be inferred from the assessment of needs of smaller, specialized sub-groups?

2. Rationale for the Study

As a way of finding answers to these questions, the Center for the Study of Information and Education (CSIE) explored, in its initial year of operation, research which had been done on the information needs of various populations.[2] One study, designed to discover the information needs of residents within the Baltimore Urbanized Area, was considered to be

---

2 Faibisoff, S., G. Gee, et. al. An Introduction to Information and Information Needs: Comments and Readings. Report of the Task Force on Information Needs; Center for the Study of Information and Education; 1973.

especially useful. The Baltimore Study[3] paid particular attention to the information needs and information-seeking behavior of lower income groups of urban citizens. Included in the report made by Westat, Inc. for the Baltimore Regional Planning Council was a conceptual framework for relating the urban resident and his information needs. A major contribution of the Baltimore Study was the development of an instrument which could be used to identify the information needs of urban residents.

The survey in Baltimore was based on a probability sample of 1500 households which produced 1000 completed interviews. Researchers noted that their resulting data-base of information needs was somewhat "city-specific" and not generalizable to other large urban areas within the United States without additional data collection. Still, a questionnaire had been developed and a method was perfected for eliciting the information needs of the general public. The CSIE staff asked: "Using the same instrument and similar techniques would it be possible to successfully determine information needs in less-populated locales?"

---

[3]Warner, E.S., Ann Murray, and V.E. Palmour. Information Needs of Urban Residents. Final Report (Dec. 1973) of the Baltimore Regional Planning Council and Westat, Inc., to the Division of Library Programs, Office of Education, USOE. (Contract No. OEC-0-71-4555); hereinafter referred to as "the Baltimore Study."

3. Conceptual Rationale

In the conceptual context developed for the Baltimore Study, Dr. Brenda Dervin identifies four components as the basic elements of a citizen's information system.[4] These components - individual residents, information needs, information sources, and problem solutions - are linked together according to the following model:

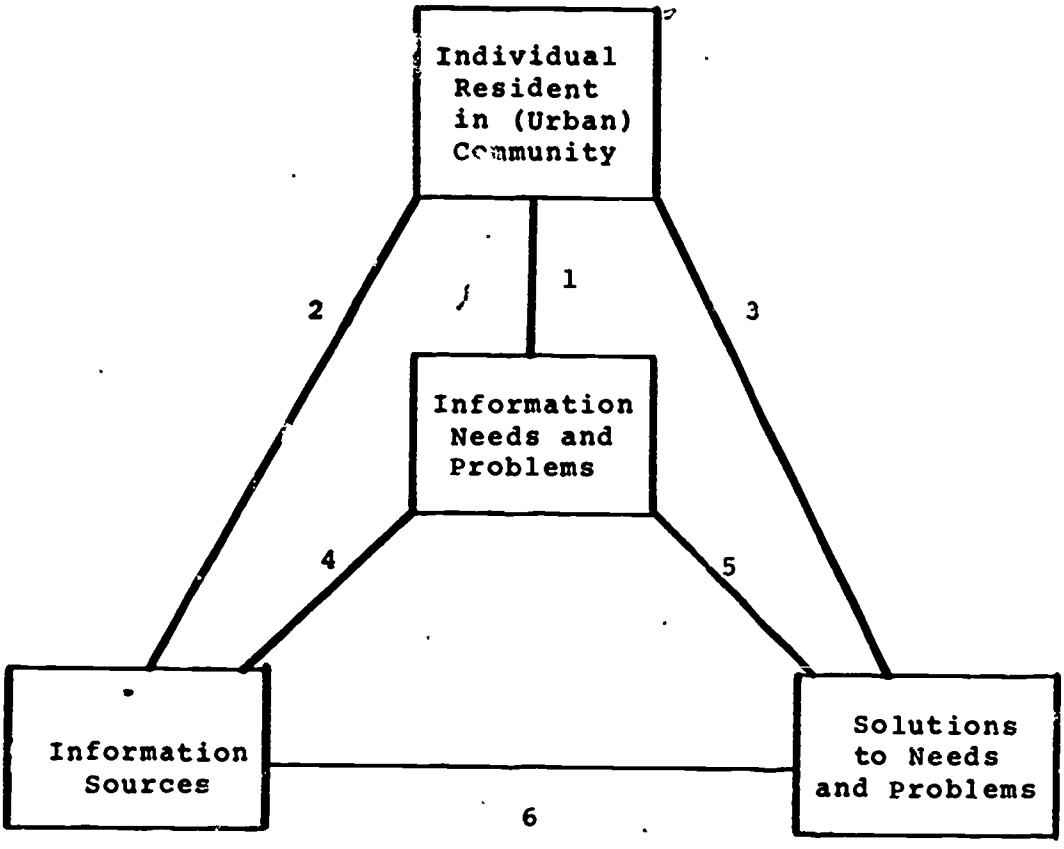

Figure 1: Information Needs and the Individual

[4] Ibid., p. 87.

Since the project undertaken by CSIE was to be a replication of the Baltimore Study, the same basic framework was employed. This model for looking at the individual and his/her information needs specifies six linkages around which data from the survey may be organized:

Linkage 1: Urban Residents and Their Information Needs

Linkage 2: Urban Residents and Their Information Sources

Linkage 3: Urban Residents and the Solutions to Their Needs

Linkage 4: Information Sources and the Information Needs

Linkage 5: Information Needs and the Solutions to Needs

Linkage 6: Information Sources and the Solutions to Needs

Information may be said to be "that which reduces uncertainty." This operational definition is based on the notion that "information can be received only where there is doubt; and doubt implies the existence of alternatives - where choice, selection, or discrimination is called for."[5] An "information need", as operationalized in the Baltimore Study and in research conducted by CSIE, is: "a problem or question recognized by an individual for which either information or services are needed."

---

[5]Colin Cherry. On Human Communication, p.168.

4. Study Objectives

The Center for the Study of Information and Education (CSIE) had four objectives in replicating the Baltimore Study:

1) to determine if information needs studies can be conducted at reduced cost in smaller settings;

2) to validate the use of the questionnaire itself;

3) to discover what information needs exist in a medium-size city (100,000-500,000 population) and a small city (population under 100,000);

4) to compare the information needs in each setting with the data collected in Baltimore.

CSIE sought to test the assumption that persons interviewed in their place of residence in smaller cities would respond as positively as did persons interviewed in Baltimore. Site selection response rates and actual costs will be discussed later in this report.

The particular purposes specified by CSIE for this replication effort on a pilot-study basis are in keeping with the general objectives identified in the Baltimore Study. All studies seeking to improve the quality of existing information delivery systems should address themselves to the following questions:

1) What are the information needs of the (urban) community?

2) How are these information needs presently satisfied?

3) How can institutional forms be devised to better satisfy those needs?

B. Study Design

1. Selection of Sites

One purpose of this project was to replicate the Baltimore Study to see if information needs studies could be done at less cost in smaller settings. This study attempts to apply the procedures developed and used in a large urban area (but appropriately modified to fit the limitations of time and money) in two less densely populated locations.

The medium-sized city chosen for the replication survey of information needs was Syracuse, New York. The Syracuse Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) is considered to be one of the major growth centers in New York State. Syracuse, with its central location and diverse population, is a popular area for market research and product testing. The population of the City of Syracuse is 197,297 of which 11 percent are Black; foreign-born citizens are mainly Italian, German, or Polish. The offices of CSIE are located on the campus of Syracuse University within the city.

The "small city" (popululation under 100,000) selected for this study was Elmira, New York. As the county seat of Chemung County, Elmira dominate the south-central region of New York State as the trade, industrial, financial, and transportation hub of the Southern Tier. The 1970 population of Elmira was 39,945 with 8 percent Black.

2. Development of Time-Frame

CSIE had one year in which to conduct a study which had been done in Baltimore over a two-year period.[6] The original plan was to run the studies sequentially as a way of "recycling" research efforts. Later it was determined to do the surveys in Syracuse and Elmira concurrently rather than consecutively, and the following time frame was developed:

---

[6] The Baltimore Study, p.i. The Baltimore Study ran from July 1971 through October 1973. Though funding for the project conducted by CSIE was granted in July 1973, actual planning for the study commenced in September 1973. The findings reported herein represent preliminary analysis of research conducted on an intensive basis during the 10 month period from September 1973 through June 1974. Additional analysis of this data is being carried out as CSIE continues the exploration of information needs in other areas.

September 1 - December 31: Phase I - Preparations

- receive and review draft of Baltimore Study
- consult with Westat, Inc., about methods and outcomes
- site selection and arrangements
- refine and print questionnaires

January 1 - February 1: Phase II - Preparations

- draw samples for Syracuse and Elmira
- locate and train interviewers in each city

February 1 - March 30: Data Collection

March 1 - April 30: Data Tabulation

April 1 - May 31: Data Analysis

June 1 - June 29: Preparation of Final Report

This schedule was later revised in light of specific problems mostly encountered at the stage of field interviewing.

3. Materials Used

A detailed list of "materials" used in this study includes reports, books, printed forms, machines, and people. Human resources are perhaps the most valuable ingredient in social science research.

Without the generous assistance of Westat, Inc.,

the study could not have been done. Marcia Bellassai, Morris Hansen, and Joe Waksberg gave us good advice in the early stages. Mr. Vernon Palmour was especially helpful in providing a draft copy of the report of the Baltimore Study and providing several opportunities to learn about and profit from their experience. Mark Waksberg helped us train the interviewers and interpret the codebook.

Among others consulted about this project were Dr. Edwin Olsen of the School of Library Science at the University of Maryland, and Dr. Brenda Dervin of the School of Communications at the University of Washington. They helped us to clarify the nature and goals of the research. Members of CSIE's National Advisory Board offered constructive criticism along the way. The CSIE staff was enriched by personnel from the Newhouse School of Public Communications and the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, and enhanced by the use of the University's computing center and the Communications Research Center.

Other basic materials used here

1) the questionnaire
2) city directories for Syracuse and Elmira
3) census data
4) materials for interviewer training
5) forms for conducting interviews

The use of these materials will be discussed in the following pages.

Research Methodology

1. Introduction

The basic method used to discover the information needs of citizens in Syracuse and Elmira was a household interview. This was the method finally selected for the Baltimore Study, which was based upon three major activities:

1) a review of data currently available at various agencies or organizations that provide information services,

2) the conducting of group interviews to generate some preliminary data concerning information needs, and

3) the developing and pretesting of instruments for use in the sample survey.

Because of the intensive nature of the project, the usual constraints of time and money prevented duplicating the steps taken by Westat. Each activity, if taken separately, constitutes a necessary part of a pilot study prior to the finished survey; the group interviews are of special importance for the generation of hypotheses. For present purposes however the entire Baltimore Study was taken as a pilot study in the development of research in the area of information needs. (As more research is done this topic, each prior effort, including this one, may be considered as a pilot study).

After visiting several information services, researchers in Baltimore determined that a sample survey would provide

a less-biased data base of information needs than would the use of available records kept by various services in the city. A cursory check of the various information services available to residents in Syracuse and Elmira revealed the same finding. Too, since a framework for research which cast information needs in terms of problems/questions had finally been adopted in Baltimore, it seemed likely that on-the-scene visits to information services in Syracuse and Elmira would reveal only the use of those services to provide questionable information to some residents who were willing (and able) to negotiate on the basis of need. One underlying hypothesis of information needs research is that there are citzens with real needs who, for one reason or another, are not making use of services. Use of services may be one indicator of information needs, just as information needs may serve as a predictor variable in predicting library use, but in both cases the presence of other measures increases confidence in the results.

As noted above, group interviews are desirable for the development for hypotheses. Two group interviews were conducted in Baltimore. Though no hypotheses, as such, are reported in the Baltimore Study, the findings of the group interviews were significant for the construction of the survey instrument. In retrospect, it would have been wise for CSIE to conduct group interviews during

the first phase of preparations for this study (September-December). However, the larger purpose of the Baltimore group interviews was to provide data which would help in developing and refining the questionnaire, and no group interviews were conducted in Syracuse and Elmira since the same instrument was to be used there with only slight modifications.

Four pretests were conducted in Baltimore as the final phase of instrument development. These pretests, spanning a five-month period, helped to focus on the framework of "problems/questions" as desirable for articulating needs. Further, the pretests helped to refine the methods used to generate spontaneous responses of specific information needs. A third major result of the pretests was the identification of the 15 problem areas in which needs for information seemed to arise with frequency.

One major research goal of the Syracuse/Elmira Study was to determine if the questionnaire developed in Baltimore could be used with similar success in smaller cities. Because modifications only relating to geographic variables were made, no pretests of the instrument needed to be conducted for the present study.

2. Sample Design

The geographical boundary adopted for the medium-sized setting in this study was the city of Syracuse. Using definitions and perameters established by the U.S.

Bureau of the Census, it was determined that the population located within the city limits of Syracuse was "ideal" in that a sample from this population could be drawn without the need for over sampling some areas or weighting individual cases.

In the Baltimore Study, the selection of the Baltimore Urbanized Area, combined with the study objective of investigating the information needs of the urban poor, required a complex sample design to insure a representative sample. There, the stratified multi-stage sampling procedure specified first drawing a probablity sample of blocks, then a sample of individual residents within households. From this sample design, the primary units of analysis were to be individual respondents 18 years of age and older living within the urbanized area.

Blocks were stratified according to size, race, and income variables. As described by the Baltimore researchers: "prior to drawing the sample of blocks, all the blocks in the urbanized area were divided into two segments as follows:

Type I - all blocks with less than $8,000 estimated family income and all blocks wherein the black composition was 50% or more:

Type II - All blocks with estimated family income of $8,000 or higher and less than 50% black population.

Type I blocks were oversampled by a factor of two, or twice their actual proportion of the urbanized area. This type of sample design required that interview results be weighted according to the type of block when combining results from the two types of blocks."[7]

(Elsewhere, the Baltimore Study reports that "since the primary purpose of the tabulations and analyses was to investigate the information needs and information-seeking behavior of *respondents*, it was *not* necessary to project the sample to the total population in the Baltimore Urbanized Area. In other words, the estimates were percentages and averages based on totals *for the sample*. This allowed a weighting procedure that put the samples from the two groups into the proper proportions but *did not project to population totals*."[8])

The decision to draw the sample from the city of Syracuse and not to include the surrounding suburban environs precluded the necessity of duplicating the complex sample design, including weighting procedures,

---

[7] The Baltimore Study, p. 74.

[8] Ibid. p.76 (Italics ours).

adopted in Baltimore. Thus, it was hoped that the results obtained from the Syracuse sample, while subject to some of the same limitations of the Baltimore Study[9], would be generalizable to the larger populations.

As in Baltimore, a multi-stage sampling process was employed in the present study, though without stratification. For the first stage of the Baltimore sample, the probability sample of blocks, a guideline for the selection of a certain number of households had to be developed. To locate eight year-round housing units per block, and assuming a 65-70 percent rate of response, a sample of 1500 households would yield 1000 completed interviews or a sample requiring about 200 blocks.[10] To replicate that response rate (66 percent CSIE expected 189 interview attempts to yield 125 completed interviews.

The final sample size for Baltimore consisted of 1,615 households, from which they hoped to have 1,000 interview completions. Thus, the rate of response would be closer to 62%, a figure with which

---

[9]In general, those limitations of survey research as noted by Babbie (1973) Backstrom and Hursh (1963), Hansen (et. al.) (1953), Kerlinger (1965), Miller (1970), and Parten (1966); and in particular, the limitations specified on p.45 of the Baltimore Study.

[10]Appendix A of the Baltimore Study (pp.221-230) more fully explains the sampling procedure used there.

CSIE was comfortable for the samples in Syracuse and Elmira. On that basis, 202 households in Syracuse needed to be identified.

For economy of effort, cluster sampling was used in Syracuse, according to recommendations developed by Backstrom and Hursh.[11] The first stage of the Syracuse sample, then, consisted of a probability sample of households, followed by identification of particular blocks using U.S. Census Bureau materials on census tracts and block statistics. The final step in the sample design specified the use of a "random respondent" form to select a respondent 21 years of age or older from each household.

Problems associated with the Elmira portion of this study began to surface with the drawing of the sample there. The Center wished to be consistent with the procedures outlined above but necessary materials were either unavailable or obsolete. Nevertheless, it was possible to use a modified two-stage sampling arrangement.

To achieve the 62% rate of return already specified, it was determined that a sample of 121 households would yield 75 completed interviews. CSIE

---

[11]See Chapter 2 of Survey Research by Charles Backstrom and Gerald Hursh (pp.23-66).

was unable to secure detailed census information for Elmira so census tract identification was not possible. Using a City Directory and a pre-determined "skip interval," the 121 households were randomly chosen and located in clusters among four quadrants drawn over a city map. Again, the use of a random respondent form to select a respondent 21 years of age or older from each household helped to increase generalizability due to randomization.

Since only the residents living within the city limits of Syracuse and Elmira were members of the populations from which the samples were drawn, it was not necessary to oversample certain areas to compensate for the inclusion of others. The respective sampling fractions for Baltimore, Syracuse, and Elmira were:

$$\frac{n}{N} = \frac{\text{elements in the sample}}{\text{elements in the population}}: \quad \frac{1,615}{1,579,838} = .1\%$$

$$\frac{202}{197,297} = .1\%$$

$$\frac{121}{39,945} = .3\%$$

A more detailed description of the sampling procedures used in this study may be found in Appendix A.

3. Household Survey

From the households selected in each city, a household member who was 21 years of age or older was randomly

chosen for an interview. In a few large households (i.e. households with more than four members of 21 years or older), more than one member was interviewed. After an initial attempt, as many as three call-backs were required to complete the screening and interviewing at each household. The personal interviews averaged about 50 minutes in length in Syracuse and about 35 minutes each in Elmira.

Interviews were conducted over a four-month period beginning in February, 1974. Interviewers were trained by personnel from CSIE and Westat, using procedures expecially developed for this type of household interviewing; each interviewer spent an average of 4 hours in training and practice interviewing. In most cases, interviewers were racially matched with respondents. Telephone validation of interviews was conducted by both the supervisors of the interviewing service and by CSIE staff. Overall, 15 percent of the completed questionnaires were validated.

In Baltimore, a total of 1000 interviews were completed, resulting in a weighted completion rate of 64 percent.[12] Following the methods described above,

---

[12]Case weighting was considered necessary because of the use of differential sampling fractions in the sample design in Baltimore. No such procedure was necessary for Syracuse or for Elmira.

107 interviews were completed in Syracuse and 61 in Elmira. Pertinent percentages are as follows:

	Baltimore	Syracuse	Elmira
Sample size	1593	198	118
Discovered Households	22	4	3
Vacancies(%)	3.8	3	17
Completed Interviews	1000	107	61
Refusal Rate(%)	16	13	24
Response Rate(%)	64	63	84

A more detailed account of field procedures is contained in Appendix B of this report.

4. Presentation of Results

A. Data Preparation

1. Coding procedures

The task of coding was one of turning the questionnaire data into number codes so that they could be punched on standard 80-column IBM cards for machine reading and manipulation. Since a part of the replication effort carried on by CSIE involved the use of an instrument for which a codebook had already been developed in the Baltimore Study, it was not necessary for the Center to create a whole new codebook for the present study. Certain modifications were made, however, to accomodate

the use of a computer program developed for data analysis and to allow for variations in the data obtained.

The total number of questionnaires completed for this study was 168 (107 from Syracuse, 61 from Elmira). Assignment of code numbers to responses was performed by two coders with graduate training in communications, trained and supervised by a master coder and the CSIE project director. In the Baltimore Study, the questionnaires were coded section-by-section, with time spent for training at the beginning of each section. A total of 72 hours was spent in training for the coding operation in Baltimore, so that an average time of 40 minutes was taken to code each questionnaire. In the present study, questionnaires were coded in their entirety, and training was much shorter. As a result, each questionnaire took an average of 65 minutes to code and check, so that a total of more than 180 hours was spent in this endeavor.

Coder reliability for the Baltimore Study was measured as "intercoder agreement," where agreement was defined as "the assignment of the same code to a response by the coder and the codebook developers."[13]

---

[13] The Baltimore Study, p.272.

To determine intercoder agreement, 10 percent of the questionnaires were selected to be coded first by the codebook developers and then by coders working independently. This means of checking on the accuracy of the coding of open-ended responses provided a means of valuable feedback: "every disagreement was discussed so that problems of interpretation and judgment which would otherwise have continued throughout the coding were corrected immediately."[14]

Intercoder agreement was high in the Baltimore Study: "there were only six content analysis schemes where the intercoder agreement fell below 80 percent. The variation in agreement is accounted for primarily by the differences among questions in terms of the precision with which the coding categories could be described and differentiated."[15]

Since it was unnecessary to make severe modifications to the codebook developed for the Baltimore Study, reliability in the present study was determined not by measuring agreement reached between coders and codebook developers but by observing and testing agreement between the coders themselves. Two coders were employed

---

[14] Ibid.

[15] The Baltimore Study, p.272-276.

to code all questionnaires from the respondents in Syracuse and Elmira. A 12 percent random sample of the 168 total questionnaires was selected for analysis of coder agreement.

Overall coder agreement was very high when the Syracuse and Elmira subsamples were combined and the results were compared with agreement in coding in the Baltimore Study. On only one content analysis scheme did the coder agreement fall below sharply 80 percent. Coder judgements agreed almost 93 percent of the time. A comparison of coder agreement for selected content analysis schemes is shown in Figure 2. One must realize that not all questions can be relied upon to the same degree, and proper caution must be exercised in interpreting the tabulated results of data from the studies.

2) keypunching and editing

To reduce errors in keypunching, coders had coded directly onto coding sheets rather than in the margins of the questionnaire. Before data could be analyzed, it was necessary to perform two editing operations as well as the standard keypunching.

Coding sheets were manually edited to check the consistency of skip patterns (where a particular answer to one question would determine if subsequent questions were to be asked and answered). As errors in either

Figure 2 Comparison of Coder Agreement for selected Content Analysis Schemes in a Sample of Questionnaires *

Content Analysis Scheme	Syracuse		Elmira	
	% Exact Code	# Codes	% Exact Codes	# Codes
CA - A1 Counting Pbs/Qsts.	90	30	100	30
CA - A2 Classifying Pbs/Qsts.	90	48	96	24
CA - A3 Problem Jdgmts. (1st)	92	48	100	24
(2nd)	88	48	100	24
(3rd)	77	48	92	24
CA - B Basis Personal Knowledge	100	9	100	3
CA - C Occupation	82	28	96	24
CA - D Organization Affiliation	93	14	100	4
CA - E Reason Source Selected	59	17	100	5
CA - V Qual. of Info. (1st jdgmt.)	92	25	100	14
(2nd jdgmt.)	100	25	100	14
(3rd jdgmt.)	84	25	93	14
(4th jdgmt.)	68	25	93	14
CA - L Type Nwsp. Article	100	5	100	4
CA - M Newspapers	95	18	95	22
CA - I TV Stations	100	2	100	4
CA - H TV Programs	100	2	100	4
CA - O Magazines	91	22	100	17
CA - R Reason not using Library	75	16	94	16
CA - Q Libraries	89	9	100	7
CA - W Plans to Solve Probs.	89	36	100	32
CA - S Mem. in Organizations	89	9	100	5
CA - U Convenient time to Phone	75	12	100	10

* See The Baltimore Study, pp 273-275.

the skip patterns or the number of entries were discovered, the editor went directly to the original questionnaire to recode the columns that were in error.

Using sheets prepared by the coders, the coded responses to all questions were punched onto standard 80-column IBM cards. Because the questionnaire used in this study contained several open-ended questions requiring complex coding systems, the keypuncher used only the coding sheets provided and did not have to refer to individual questionnaires. As in Baltimore, each questionnaire required nine IBM cards to record all the information; the Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study thus used a total of 1512 cards.

Before any tabulations were made, a computer edit was performed on all cards. Range checks were made across several fields to identify non-allowable codes, and consistency checks were made wherever possible. Skip patterns and logical progressions were again subjected to scrutiny. All error messages printed during this phase of the editing were recoded and repunched correctly prior to analysis.

B. Data Analysis

1. programming

CSIE requested and received from Westat a copy of

the Control Data Corporation (CDC) program used to analyze the most important problems/questions of respondents. Unfortunately the tape was mailed without documentation, and was considered to be unsuitable for the analysis of data drawn from the Syracuse and Elmira samples. The CDC FORTRAN-language program does present data in attractive form (found in Appendix C of the April, 1973 draft of the Baltimore Study), but was felt to be too rigid for studies of information needs in smaller settings. In addition, use of the CDC special program in Syracuse would have required more time than was allowed for this replication study.

Considering the difficulties presented by the CDC program, it was decided that a new program for data analysis of information needs should be written. This program, tailored to the commonly used IBM 370/155 computer, would be of a more general nature and, thus would be suitable for studies conducted in other locations. The new program was to adhere to specifications of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a favorably competitive, general-purpose computer software.[16]

---

[16] See William D. Slysz "Evaluation of Statistical Software in the Social Sciences," in Communications of the ACM, Vol. 17, No. 6 (June 1974), pp. 326-332.

A primary step in the creation of an SPSS program suitable for IBM Fortran was the identification of variables and specification of corresponding values. It was necessary to modify the codes used to identify the values generated in the CDC program, while retaining the basic categories of the coding schemes developed for data analysis. The three units of analysis were:

a) problems/questions
b) sources (2 kinds: people, non-people)
c) people (respondents)

2. tabulations

Because the present study was conducted on two discrete samples, it was hoped that inferences could be drawn from the samples to their respective populations. Since the Baltimore sample was not projected to the total population, it was possible to use a case weighting procedure in the Baltimore Study. The stated purpose of the Baltimore Study was "to investigate the information needs and information-seeking behavior of respondents." Thus, "estimates were constructed by multiplying the reported characteristic for each respondent by the appropriate weight and summing over all responses. The 1,000 completed interviews are representing a sample of 2,189 persons. The tabulations are in terms of these weighted sample responses on the

basis of 2,189 respondents."[17]

Figures reported for the Syracuse and Elmira samples are actual figures representing non-weighted responses; respective response rates were reported earlier. It should be noted that comments made about sampling variability in the Baltimore Study may also apply to replication efforts[18], though care must be taken to distinguish between percentages based on inflated figures and percentages figured on actual respondents.

The SPSS program produced a variety of cross-tabulations of responses, sources, and respondents against several demographic variables. The basic banners included:

Total All Respondents

Race of Respondent
- White
- Non-White

Occupation of Respondent
- Professional/Manager
- Clerical/Sales
- Blue Collar or Service
- Housewife
- Not Working
- Other/Don't Know/Not Applicable

---

[17] For the discussion of response rates and weighting procedures, see the Baltimore Study, p. 279 f.

[18] Ibid. p. 78.

Median Income of Respondent's Census Tract*
  Under $4,000
  $4,000 - $7,999
  $8,000 - $14,999
  over $14,999

Sex of Respondent
  Male
  Female

Years of Education for Respondent
  0 - 6
  7 - 11
  12
  13 - 15
  16 +

Median Family Income
  (same as under Income of Census Tract, above)

Age of Respondent
  Under 25
  25 - 64
  over 64

(*Census data not available for Elmira)

III. FINDINGS

A. Economic Feasibility of Replication

One purpose of replication studies is to determine the utility of methods and procedures used in prior research. The cost of the Baltimore Study was approximately $200,000 of which roughly 20% or $40,000 was spent to develop the instrument used in the household interviews. CSIE budgeted $17,350 to see if studies made to discover the expressed needs people have for information could be conducted with relative ease and minimal expense. Major items in the study were anticipated and planned in advance. Direct and indirect costs were dis-

tributed among six areas of the research study:

- Reproduction of materials
- Sample design
- data collection
- data preparation
- data analysis
- report of the study

Unexpected factors made adjustments of the budget necessary as the study progressed.

Since the Center was testing the questionnaire used in Baltimore, it was not necessary to spend a sizeable portion of the budget for instrument development; only minor modifications were needed to reproduce the forms used in the survey in Baltimore. At the conclusion of the project, a small sum was spent in the writing and reproduction of the report. The items at the extreme ends of this study cost the least money.

The major cost area of the study was in field interviewing. As originally planned, the study called for the surveys to be taken by college or university students who would receive academic credit and valuable research experience in return for their services. When these arrangements could not be made, it became necessary to recruit and train students and other personnel who were paid for their work. Interviewers in Elmira, who did earn some course credit, were trained by one person but supervised from a distance by another. This may account for the quantity and quality of the Elmira data. Problems

with data collection, similar to those encountered in Baltimore, also occurred in Syracuse, with the result that an interviewing service had to be contracted to complete that phase of the study at greater expense.

Coding and keypunching costs were about $1600. Sample design and data analysis each cost $2500. A breakdown of the approximate costs for each part of the project appears below, and the total costs for the six areas of the Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study are shown in Figure 3.

Elements of the study and approximate expenses:

Element	Syracuse	Elmira	Totals
1) reproducing materials (questionnaires, forms, etc.)	400	100	500/ 500
2) sample design			
a) consultants	800	200	1000
b) CSIE staff	800	200	1000
c) other	300	200	500/ 2500
3) data collection			
a) training	150	150	300
b) supervision	1000	1000	2000
c) field interviewing	2500	1500	4000
d) other	1000	1000	2000
e) contingency	800	800	1600/ 9900
4) data preparation			
a) coding	500	500	1000
b) keypunching	100	50	150
c) other	200	200	400/ 1550
5) data analysis			
a) consultants	750	250	1000
b) computer time	750	250	1000
c) other	300	200	500/ 2500
6) reporting the study	200	200	400/ 400
TOTALS	10,550	6,800	17,350

Costs of the Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study

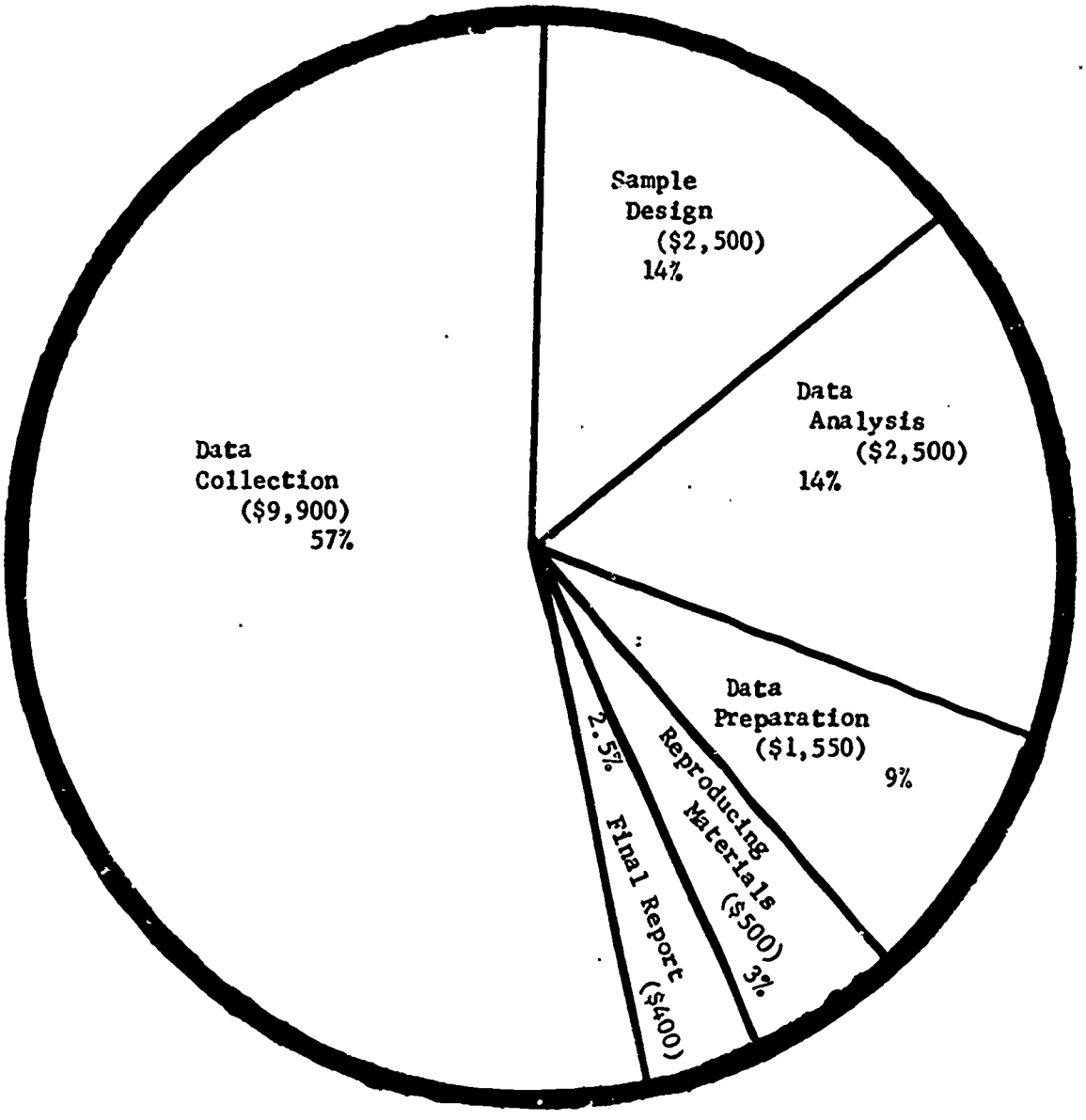

Figure 3

While the cost analysis is based on best estimates in some cases (e.g. percentage of total personnel salaries assigned to this study) it does provide a fairly reliable approximation of costs to conduct a valid information needs study. Some developmental costs are still evident (e.g. in creating a new computer analysis program from the existing one). It would be safe to say that this study could be replicated again, in another region, using the same instrument, coding manual and analysis procedures for just under $100.00 per interview.

As difficulties were encountered in both locations at the point of field interviewing, the time frame developed for the survey (see page12) had to be revised. After preparations for the study concluded in 1973, the survey was conducted according to the new time frame:

January 1 - February 1	locate and train interviewers on both sites
February 1 - April 30	data collection
April 1 - May 30	data preparation
May 1 - June 20	data analysis
June 17 - June 30	final report

Recommendations for further studies of information needs are contained in Part IV of this report.

B. Utility of the Codebook and Questionnaire

In conducting a replication of the Baltimore Study in Syracuse and Elmira, CSIE wanted to verify the precision of the terminology found in two items created especially for the original study. Accordingly, part of the purpose of the Syracuse/Elmira Study was to test the utility of the codebook and the questionnaire developed to elicit and assess information needs.

In many places, the codebook appeared to be ambiguous or incomplete; in some places it was just plain difficult to understand. Before the coding operation began, CSIE coders had to complete sections of the codebook which lacked full instructions or finished codes. This was done concurrently with geographic modifications so that coders could concentrate on the content analysis schemes. These schemes seemed rigid at some points and very general at others. As might be expected, the most difficult sections to code involved judgments: several problems seemed to fit between two of the listed classifications, which was probably inevitable. Actual problem judgments were difficult for two reasons: they were not exclusive and they did not deal well with tenses. Certain categories were expanded to include timely topics (e.g. the gas shortage and problems connected

with leash laws.)

As anticipated, therefore, the codebook developed for the Baltimore Study required certain modifications for use in other areas. It needed to be supplemented by group and/or personal decisions, extra explanations of particular sections, or other additions. The CSIE coders state that "other people using the codebook should be alerted to the fact that it is not complete, that personal judgments will be required, and that some frustration is inevitable."

Interviewers who have used the questionnaire are in an excellent position to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument. In instances of field interviewing, CSIE personnel found that:

1) the procedure for selecting a random respondent from each designated household, though necessary for the sample design, often specified a respondent who was unwilling or not at home rather than an initial contact who was willing to be interviewed.

2) The length of the household interview (average time: 45 minutes) was both a strength and a weakness. It gave the interviewer time to establish a relationship of trust with the respondent and helped respondents be more involved. But it is difficult for people to

commit themselves to 45 minutes of uninterrupted time, and that kind of commitment on the part of the respondent is desirable because of the logical development of the questions.

3) The questionnaire was strong in design of Section I (unaided and aided problems/questions) but required a highly competent and well-trained interviewer who took seriously the purposes of the study.

4) The format of the questionnaire was favorably received by interviewers; the natural progression, section-by-section, helped the respondent to remember and reassess his situation. In many cases, interviewers found that respondents were becoming involved with their own situations.

5) Section III proved most difficult. Respondents were hard-pressed to decide on numbers of personal conversations and categories of self-esteem.

6) The questions in Section IV and V were well-formulated. The question about family income is especially well-placed.

The questionnaire was found to be generally suitable for surveying information needs in the medium and small cities selected for this study. The instrument developed by Westat for identifying urban information

needs seems to be generalizable to smaller settings, though no research has been done to test the instrument on rural populations.

Appendix C contains a copy of the questionnaire used in the Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study.

C. Information Needs in Syracuse, Elmira, and Baltimore

To determine the universe of information needs, which subgroups of people have what needs, and how different individuals perceive their needs, the concept of "information needs" was broadly defined in terms of problem-solving. In the Baltimore Study, the definition of an information need as "a problem or a question recognized by an individual for which either information or services are needed" provided a basis for querying respondents about their questions needing answers and/or problems needing solutions.

The questionnaire employed two procedures to obtain mention of problems/questions. Open-ended questions were used to evoke spontaneous or unaided recall of problems/questions. Secondly, a more directed approach was employed, in which general topic areas such as education, health, etc. were named to aid the respondent's recall.

The unit of analysis was "problems/questions" which were coded into the general topic areas and

subdivided into specific categories within topic areas. Comparisons were drawn between aided and unaided mentions of problems. Thus, the importance of problems/questions was related to topic areas and specific categories of need, to whether the problems/questions were aided or unaided, and to respondent characteristics. Data are measured and presented in four sections:

- The universe of information needs (Who has information needs? How many needs do the have?);
- Topic areas of need;
- Specific problems/questions; and
- How individuals state their needs.

1. The Universe of Information Needs

The figures in Table 1 indicate that 89 percent of the Baltimore sample, 95 percent of the Syracuse sample, and 66 percent of the Elmira sample cited at least one problem/question. Perhaps one explanation of the Elmira response percentage is that the city was widely surveyed in the aftermath of the flood in the Spring of 1972. CSIE interviewers in Elmira reported that many people seemed "resigned" to their situations - an observation perhaps attributable to the psychological damage caused by the flood - and that few people could or would articulate their concerns. The low percentage

Table 1 Universe of respondents and problems/questions.

	Number			Percent of Total		
	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total Respondents	2,189	107	61	100	100	100
Respondents citing one or more problems/questions	1,945	102	40	89	95	66
Respondents citing one or more unaided problems/questions	1,080	58	14	49	54	23
Respondents citing one or more aided problems/questions	1,868	100	39	85	94	64
Respondents citing no problems/questions	245	5	21	11	5	34
Total Problems	8,932	628	169	100	100	100
Unaided problems	1,705	101	24	19	16	14
Aided problems	7,227	527	145	81	84	86

of unaided problems (14%) bears this out; unaided problems in Syracuse and Baltimore were 16 and 19 percent respectively. In contrast, Elmira respondents mentioned 145 problems/questions when helped, representing 86% of the total problems mentioned there. Table 1 also shows that Elmira had a significantly higher percentage of respondents citing no problems or questions.

Of those persons mentioning one or more problems/questions, do some individuals have more information needs than others? Tables 2, 3, and 4 examine subgroups of respondents having information needs according to demographic and social network characteristics. Tables 5, 6, and 7 illustrate the number of information needs people have in relation to demographic and social network variables.

As in Baltimore, the percentages of respondents citing problems/questions in Syracuse and Elmira did not vary considerably with the race or sex of the respondent (Table 2). But differences did appear among the samples along other demographic variables. Because of the small sample sizes, only cells in which seven or more cases appeared were felt to be adequate

Table 2 Percent of respondents citing one or more problem/questions by demographic subgroups.

Demographic Variable	Subgroup with Highest Response (percentage)			Subgroup with Lowest Response (percentage)		
	Baltimore	Syracuse	Elmira	Baltimore	Syracuse	Elmira
Race	89.1 White	100 Non-white	*	88.5 Non-white	96 White	64 White
Sex	88.8 Female	97 Male	66 Female	88.75 Male	94 Female	64 Male
Age	97.0 Under 25	100 Under 25, Over 65	67 25 - 64 years	82.00 64+ years	93 25 - 64 years	58 65+ years
Education Completed	95.0 16+ years	100 7 - 11 years	75 12 years	83.00 0 - 6 years	86 12 years	47 7 - 11 years
Occupation Of Respondent	97.0 Professional/ Managerial	100 Professional/ Managerial	*	87.00 Housewife/Other not working	92 Blue Collar	65 Not working
Median Tract Income	94.0 $15,000+	96 $4,000-$8,000	**	86.00 $4,000-$7,999	95 $8,000-$14,000	**
Family Income	95.0 $15,000+	100 $4,000-$8,000; Over $15,000	75 $4,000-$8,000	87.00 $4,000-$7,999	93 $8,000-$14,000	59 $8,000-$14,000
Family size	90.0 2+ persons	96 2+ persons	67 2+ persons	84.00 1 person	95 1 person	*
Age by race	98.0 White; Under 25 years	100 White; Under 25, Over 65	64 White; 25 - 64 years	81.00 White; 64+ years	93 White; 25 - 64 years	*

*Because of the small sample sizes (102 in Syracuse and 40 in Elmira citing 1 or more problems/ questions) only cells in which 7 or more cases appeared were considered to be stable enough for comparing response rates of demographic subgroups. Where there were more than 2 such qualifying cells with equal percentages of response rate, the subgroup was chosen with the greatest number of cases per cell.

**census data not available for Elmira

for presentation. Consequently, several cells showing characteristics of Elmira respondents were not subject to analysis. In Baltimore respondents most likely to cite problems/questions (when compared to the overall sample percentage of 89%) were most likely to be:

- young (under 25)
- highly educated
- receiving high incomes and living around others with high incomes
- in professional or managerial occupations

In Syracuse, however, respondents most likely to cite problems/questions (95% of the sample there) tended to be:

- either young (under 25) or old (over 65)
- not high school graduates
- holding professional or managerial jobs
- receiving lower incomes and living around others earning the same income

This result may be due to the fact that suburbs were not sampled in the Syracuse Study.

Table 3 shows how the respondents citing problems/questions varied according to social network measures: gregariousness, opinion leadership, and membership in organizations. Social network categories used were those developed in the Baltimore Study:

1. Gregariousness. Based on the number of contacts with other persons in a one week period (see questionnaire item III-1, p. 16), this variable

describes the amount of personal interaction experienced by respondents in a typical week. Respondents were classified into three subgroups as follows:

Low personal interaction = less than 10 contacts
Moderate personal interaction = 11-50 contacts
High personal interaction = 51 or more contacts

2. Opinion Leadership. This variable is an index of self-designated opinion leadership (see questionnaire item III-2, p. 16). Each respondent was asked whether his opinion on seven different topics was sought more often, less often, or about as often as that of friends. Measurement was based on a rating of:

More often = 1
Same = 2
Less often = 3

Each respondent was classified into two subgroups based on the sum of his ratings for the seven topics.

High opinion leadership = 7-14 points
Low opinion leadership = 15-21 points

3. Membership in organizations. Each respondent was further classified in terms of the number of organizations he belonged to (see questionnaire item III-3, p. 17):

High = 3 or more memberships
Moderate = 1-2 memberships
Low = no memberships

According to Table 3, Baltimore respondents reporting fewest personal contacts per week (low gregariousness) are least likely to report a problem or question. This is also true for both Syracuse and Elmira (7% and 64% respectively). Conversely, respondents in

Table 3 Percent of respondents citing one or more problems/questions by social network variables

	Total			Gregariousness									Opinion Leadership						Membership in Organizations								
				High			Moderate			Low			High			Low			High			Moderate			Low		
	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total Respondents*	2189	107	61	508	21	13	1245	56	34	433	30	14	660	38	16	1522	66	43	388	20	14	912	44	21	888	42	26
Percent citing one or more problems/ questions	89	95	66	90	95	77	90	96	74	83	93	36	94	95	75	87	96	60	93	95	64	89	98	67	87	93	65
Percent citing unaided problems/questions	49	54	23	56	57	23	49	48	24	44	63	21	55	66	38	47	46	16	53	65	14	49	46	24	48	57	27
Percent citing aided problems/questions	85	94	64	87	100	77	88	95	74	76	87	29	92	97	75	82	92	58	93	95	64	86	96	67	81	90	62
Percent citing no problems/questions	11	5	34	10	5	23	10	4	26	17	7	64	6	5	25	13	4	40	7	5	36	11	2	33	13	7	35

*All respondents did not respond to all questions

Baltimore who rated themselves high on opinion leadership or who belonged to many organizations were more likely to cite problems/questions than were other respondents. But in Syracuse there is not strong differentiation between low and high opinion leadership among those respondents with problems/questions. In Elmira, as in Baltimore, opinion leaders seemed to cite one or more aided or unaided problems while those respondents citing no problems/questions were more likely to have low self-proclaimed opinion leadership.

In Syracuse, persons citing one or more problems/questions tended to be moderate "joiners" of organizations. This was true of Elmira respondents also, but was not the case in Baltimore. The conclusion of the Baltimore Study, that "those who have many personal contacts, those who consider themselves opinion leaders, and those who belong to many organizations tend to mention information needs more often than the typical respondents,"[19] can be neither strongly supported nor conclusively rejected on the basis of the data from Syracuse and Elmira appearing in Table 3.

---

[19]The Baltimore Study, p.87. The Study clearly notes that "not all memberships have the same value in this respect."

Some of the main demographic and social network subgroups are ranked in Table 4 with respect to the percentage of respondents in each subgroup who cited problems/questions. Baltimore data forms a model table, with sex and race subgroups falling at the median of the sample and other variables (such as subgroups representing the extremes) appearing consistently above or below the median. Baltimore respondents who were more likely to cite problems/questions, when compared with other subgroups, tended to:

- be young (under 25 years old);
- work in white-collar occupations;
- live in the highest or lowest income tracts;
- have at least some college education;
- consider themselves to be opinion leaders;
- have interactions with 10 or more people in a week;
- belong to three or more organizations.

Respondents in Syracuse who were most likely to cite problems/questions tend to be classifiable only according to the same aforementioned demographic variables (see p.45), though many of those respondents belonged to only one or two organizations. Data in Table 4 show that Elmira respondents who were more likely to cite problems/questions were also:

1- high school graduates earning between $4,000 - $8,000 income;

2- likely to have interactions with 10 or more people in a week (though probably not through organizational affiliations, since this variable fell below the median);

Table 4 Ranking of principal subgroups of respondents by percent citing one or more problems/questions.

City: Baltimore

Rank	Percent Citing Problems/ Questions	Demographic and Social Network Subgroups
1.5	97	Age - Under 25 years
1.5	97	Occupation - professional or managerial
3	95	Education - 16+ years completed
5	94	Opinion leadership - high
5	94	Median tract income - $15,000+
5	94	Education - 13-15 years completed
7	93	Membership in organizations - high
8	91	Median tract income - under $4,000
10	90	Gregariousness - high
10	90	Gregariousness - moderate
10	90	Occupation - Clerical or sales
14.5	89	Membership in organizations - moderate
14.5	89	Sex - female
14.5	89	Sex - male
14.5	89	Median tract income - $8,000-$14,999
14.5	89	Race - white
14.5	89	Race - non-white
18.5	88	Age - 25-64 years
18.5	88	Education - 12 years completed
22	87	Opinion leadership - low
22	87	Membership in organizations - low
22	87	Education - 7-11 years completed
22	87	Occupation - blue collar
22	87	Occupation - housewife
25	86	Median tract income - $4,000-$7,999
26	85	Occupation - not working
27.5	83	Gregariousness - low
27.5	83	Education - 0-6 years
29	82	Age - 64+ years

Table 4 Ranking of principal subgroups of respondents by percent citing one or more problems/questions.

City: Syracuse

Rank	Percent Citing Problems/ Questions	Demographic and Social Network Subgroups
1	100	Race - non-white
1	100	Age - Under 25 years; 65+ years
1	100	Education 7-11 years completed
1	100	Occupation - professional/managerial
1	100	Family income - $4,000-$7,999; $15,000 and over
6	98	Membership in organizations-moderate
7	97	Sex - male
8	96	Race - white
8	96	Median tract income - $4,000-$7,999
8	96	Family size - 2 or more
8	96	Gregariousness - moderate
8	96	Opinion leadership - low
13	95	Median tract income - $8,000-$14,999
13	95	Family size - 2+
13	95	Gregariousness - high
13	95	Opinion leadership - high
13	95	Membership in organizations - high
18	94	Sex - female
19	93	Gregariousness - low
19	93	Memberships in organizations - low
19	93	Age - 25-64 years
19	93	Family income - $8,000-$14,999
23	92	Blue collar workers

Table 4 Ranking of principal subgroups of respondents by percent citing one or more problems/questions

City: Elmira

Rank	Percent Citing Problems/ Questions	Demographic and Social Network Subgroups
1	77	Gregariousness - high
3.5	75	Opinion Leadership - high
3.5	75	Education - 12 years completed
3.5	75	Family income - $4,000-$7,999
5	74	Gregariousness - moderate
7.5	67	Family size 2+
7.5	67	Membership in Organizations - moderate
7.5	67	Age - 25-64 years
9	66	Sex - female
10.5	65	Occupation - housewife and other not working
10.5	65	Membership in organizations - low
13.5	64	Race - white
13.5	64	Sex - male
13.5	64	Membership in organizations - high
15	60	Opinion leadership - low

3- felt to be opinion leaders on a variety of topics.

To find out how many information needs each respondent reported, the total number of problems/questions is divided by the number of respondents citing one or more problems/questions:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF NEEDS		
Baltimore:	8,932/1,945*	= 4.59
Syracuse:	628/102	= 6.16
Elmira:	169/40	= 4.23

Averages of aided and unaided resposes may be similarly computed from Table 1:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF AIDED CITATIONS		
Baltimore:	7,227/1,868	= 3.87
Syracuse:	527/ 100	= 5.27
Elmira:	145/ 39	= 3.72

*This figure represents 89% of the Baltimore total of 2,189 respondents, a figure determined by weighting the results of completed interviews with 1,000 persons. It should be remembered that percentages based on the Syracuse and Elmira samples are derived from actual totals rather than weighted responses.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF UNAIDED CITATIONS	
Baltimore:	1,705/1,080 = 1.58
Syracuse:	101/ 58 = 1.74
Elmira:	24/ 14 = 1.71

Thus, in Baltimore and elmira aided response is more than twice as great as unaided response, per respondent citing problems/questions in these categories. (The Syracuse rate is three times as great.) The overall average number of problems/questions varied according to the demographic characteristics shown in Table 5.

Persons with the greatest number of information needs (i.e. those with highest average number of citations of problems/questions) in Baltimore were individuals living in tracts with the highest median incomes, having the most years of education, and employed in clerical or sales positions. They also tended to be young and white. Conversely, persons with the lowest average number of citations tended to be non-whites, elderly, unemployed, and living in low income treacts.

Respondents in Syracuse citing the highest average number of citations were white, young, highly educated, working in blue collar or service positions, and living in middle-income ($8,000-$14,999) neighborhoods.

Table 5 Average number of problems/questions cited by median tract income, race, age, years of education completed, occupation, size of household, and sex.

Respondent Characteristic	Average Number of Problems/ Questions Per Respondent Citing Problems/Questions					
	Unaided			Total		
	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total	.88	1.78	1.71	4.59	6.14	4.22
Median Tract Income*						
Under $4,000	.93	1.00		3.96		
$4,000 - $7,999	.81	1.67		3.80	5.28	
$8,000 - $14,999	.89	1.91		4.75	6.81	
$14,999 and over	.91	1.00		5.35	4.00	
Race						
White	.91	1.76	1.73	4.82	6.27	4.11
Non-white	.79	1.86	1.66	3.94	5.62	5.00
Age						
Under 25	.85	2.08	2.00	4.87	7.11	4.25
25 - 64 years	.89	1.70	1.67	4.70	6.46	4.41
Over 64 years	.87	1.64	2.00	3.48	4.24	3.43
Education Completed						
0 - 6 years	.93	2.50	0.00	3.72	3.50	2.00
7 - 11 years	.90	1.47	1.00	4.03	5.85	3.56
12 years	.89	2.00	1.83	4.68	6.23	4.11
13 - 15 years	.98	1.43	2.00	5.38	6.86	3.29
16+ years	.88	2.00	2.33	5.29	7.40	7.60
Occupation of Respondent						
Professional or manager	.95	1.80	3.00	4.89	6.89	6.00
Clerical or sales	.98	1.62	1.00	5.14	5.93	4.00
Blue collar or service	.71	2.20	1.00	4.33	8.42	4.00
Housewife	.95	1.62	1.62	4.54	5.61	4.06
Not Working	.72	1.82	1.50	3.65	5.46	4.00

*census data not available for Elmira

As in Baltimore, persons in Syracuse with fewer information needs tended to be unemployed, elderly, non-white, and living in low income tracts. Although it was not possible to compare incidence of need by median tract income in Elmira, those most likely to have the greatest number of information needs there seem to be highly educated, middle-aged (25-64 years) persons working in professional or managerial occupations. (The slightly higher total of non-whites in Elmira indicating information needs is based on only 5 cases.)

Social network variables were also predictive of the number of citations (Table 6). In all three cities, persons who reported many personal interactions, those who considered themselves opinion leaders, or who belonged to many organizations cited a greater number of problems/questions than did other respondents.

Table 7 presents data which provide summary answers as to which subgroups have how many information needs. Again, information needs are measured across social and demographic variables according to the average number of problems/questions cited by respondents. The social network characteristics of memberships in many organizations, high gregariousness, and a high index of opinion leadership are associated with relatively high rankings. In Baltimore, subgroups

Table 6 Average number of problems/questions cited by social network variables.

Respondent Characteristic	Average number of problems/questions per respondent citing problems/questions					
	Unaided			Total		
	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total	.88	1.78	1.71	4.59	6.14	4.22
Gregariousness						
High	.98	2.08	2.67	5.19	7.15	4.70
Moderate	.87	1.63	1.62	4.68	6.07	4.36
Low	.76	1.79	1.00	3.57	5.54	2.60
Opinion Leadership						
High	1.00	1.60	1.83	5.37	7.11	5.17
Low	.82	1.83	1.71	4.22	5.70	3.81
Membership In Organization						
High	1.03	1.92	3.00	5.60	6.84	5.11
Moderate	.84	1.60	2.00	4.46	5.79	3.93
Low	.84	1.83	1.14	4.28	6.23	4.00

Table 7 Ranking of principal subgroups by average number of problems/questions cited
City: Baltimore

Rank	Average Number of Citations	Social Network Subgroups	Demographic Subgroups
1	5.60	Membership in organizations - high	
2	5.38		Education completed - 13-15 years
3	5.37	Opinion leadership - high	
4	5.35		Median tract income - $15,000+
5	5.29		Education completed - 16+ years
6	5.19	Gregariousness - high	
7	5.14		Occupation - clerical or sales
8	4.89		Occupation - professional or managerial
9	4.87		Age - Under 25 years
10	4.82		Race - white
11	4.75		Median tract income - $8,000-$14,999
12	4.72		Sex - female
13	4.70		Age - 25-64 years
14	4.68	Gregariousness - moderate	
15	4.68		Education completed - 12 years
	4.59	ALL RESPONDENTS	
16	4.54		Occupation - housewife
17	4.46	Membership in organizations - moderate	
18	4.42		Sex - male
19	4.33		Occupation - blue collar or service
20	4.28	Membership in organizations - low	
21	4.22	Opinion leadership - low	
22	4.03		Education completed - 7-11 years
23	3.96		Median tract income - under $4,000
24	3.94		Race - non-white
25	3.80		Median tract income - $4,000-$7,999
26	3.72		Education completed - 0-6 years
27	3.65		Occupation - not working
28	3.57	Gregariousness - low	
29	3.48		Age - 64+ years

Table 7 Ranking of principal subgroups by average number of problems/questions cited.

City: Syracuse

Rank	Average Number of Citations	Social Network Subgroups	Demographic Subgroups
1	8.42		Occupation - Blue collar or service
2	7.40		Education - 16+ years
3	7.15	Gregariousness - high	
4.5	7.11		Age - under 25 years
4.5	7.11	Opinion leadership - high	
5	7.00		Median tract income - under $4,000
6	6.89		Occupation - professional or manager
7	6.86		Education completed - 13-15 years
8	6.84	Membership in organizations - high	
9	6.81		Median tract income - $8,000-$14,999
10	6.46		Age - 25-64 years
11	6.27		Race - white
12.5	6.23		Education completed - 12 years
12.5	6.23	Membership in organizations - low	
	6.14	ALL RESPONDENTS	
14	6.07	Gregariousness - moderate	
15	5.93		Occupation - clerical or sales
16	5.85		Education completed - 7-11 years
17	5.79	Membership in organizations - moderate	
18	5.70	Opinion leadership - low	
19	5.62		Race - non-white
20	5.61		Occupation - housewife
21	5.54	Gregariousness - low	
22	5.46		Occupation - not working
23	5.28		Median tract income - $4,000-$7,999
24	4.24		Age - 64+ years
25	4.00		Median tract income - $14,999+
26	3.50		Education completed - 0-6 years

Table 7 Ranking of principal subgroups by average number of problems/questions cited.

City: Elmira

Rank	Average Number of Citations	Social Network Subgroups	Demographic Subgroups
1	7.6		Education completed - 16+ years
2	6.00		Occupation - professional or manager
3	5.17	Opinion leadership - high	
4	5.11	Membership in organizations - high	
5	5.00		Race - non-white
6	4.70	Gregariousness - high	
7	4.41		Age - 25-64 years
8	4.36	Gregariousness - moderate	
9	4.25		Age - under 25 years
	4.22	ALL RESPONDENTS	
10.5	4.11		Race - white
10.5	4.11		Education completed - 12 years
12	4.06		Occupation - housewife
14.5	4.00	Membership in organizations - low	
14.5	4.00		Occupation - clerical or sales
14.5	4.00		Occupation - blue collar or service
14.5	4.00		Occupation - not working
17	3.93	Membership in organizations - moderate	
18	3.81	Opinion leadership - low	
19	3.56		Education completed - 7-11 years
20	3.43		Age - 64+ years
21	3.29		Education completed - 13-15 years
22	2.60	Gregariousness - low	
23	2.00		Education completed - 0-6 years

ranking highest in terms of percentage citing problems/questions (Table 4) generally ranked highest also in terms of the average number of citations. While this generalization cannot be made of respondents in Syracuse and Elmira, it is possible to say that, in all three cities, persons who cite the fewest problems/questions on the average tend to be elderly, unemployed, those who have few personal interactions on a day-to-day basis, and individuals with the least education.

2. Topic Areas of Need

In Baltimore, respondents mentioned a total of 8,932 problems/questions; totals for Syracuse and Elmira were 628 and 169, respectively. These totals were coded into 14 general topic areas as shown in Table 8. The table reflects the most frequently cited topic areas according to the Baltimore Study; 52 percent of all problems/questions mentioned fell into four topic areas: neighborhood, consumer, housing and household maintenance, and crime and safety. The same four topic areas accounted for 48 percent of all problems/questions mentioned by respondents in Elmira. While Table 8 shows that concerns about health were slightly more prevalent than crime and safety citations for both Syracuse and Elmira, the more notable finding is that Elmira respondents

Table 8 Distribution of problems/questions among topic areas

TOPIC AREA	Number cited			% of all citations		
	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total	8,932	628	169	100	100	100
Neighborhood	1,140	91	28	16	14	17
Consumer	1,199	98	36	13	16	21
Housing and Household Maintenance	1,145	65	13	13	10	8
Crime and Safety	878	50	10	10	8	6
Education	583	48	13	7	8	8
Employment	586	39	12	6	6	7
Transportation	545	46	11	6	7	6
Health	513	56	12	6	9	7
Miscellaneous	487	28	4	5	4	2
Recreation	470	24	9	5	4	5
Discrimination	368	23	8	4	4	5
Financial Matters	316	34	9	4	5	5
Legal Problems	214	20	2	2	3	1
Public Assistance	207	6	2	2	1	1

mentioned more problems/questions in the topic areas of education, employment, and health, than in the area of crime and safety. One might hesitantly conclude that crime and safety is less of a problem in smaller cities, where people are more concerned about jobs, schools, and training.

The following pages present discussion on:

- how mentions of topic areas were affected by the two methods of inquiry (i.e., aided versus unaided responses);
- which topic areas were considered most important by respondents; and
- which topics were most important for subgroups of individuals.

Table 9 illustrates that some topic areas were more likely to be mentioned spontaneously than others. Among those topic areas which included a higher proportion of spontaneous mentions were:

Baltimore	Syracuse	Elmira
Public Assistance	Health	Legal Problems (2)
Miscellaneous	Public Assistance (6)	Miscellaneous (4)
Legal Problems	Financial Matters	Financial Matters (9)
Housing and Household maintenance	Miscellaneous	Health

On the other hand, topic areas more likely to have been cited in response to more direct questioning included:

Table 9 Percent of citations which were aided and unaided by topic area

Topic Area	Total Number*			Percent Unaided			Percent Aided		
	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total	8932	628	169	19	16	14	81	84	86
Neighborhood	1440	91	28	18	4	11	82	96	89
Consumer	1199	98	36	23	19	19	77	81	81
Housing & Household Maintenance	1145	65	13	29	17	8	71	83	92
Crime and Safety	878	50	10	8	4	0	92	96	100
Education	583	48	13	9	12	15	91	88	85
Employment	568	39	12	12	13	0	88	87	100
Transportation	545	46	11	10	15	0	90	85	100
Health	513	56	12	20	34	25	80	66	75
Miscellaneous	487	28	4	36	29	75	64	71	25
Recreation	470	24	9	9	4	0	91	96	100
Discrimination	368	23	8	7	9	0	93	91	100
Financial Matters	316	34	9	25	32	33	75	68	67
Legal Problems	214	20	2	31	20	100	69	80	0
Public Assistance	207	6	2	45	33	0	55	67	100

*each figure represents 100% of the total

Baltimore	Syracuse	Elmira
Discrimination	Neighborhood	Employment
Crime and Safety	Crime and Safety	Transportation
Education	Recreation	Crime and Safety
Recreation	Discrimination	Recreation (9)

Numbers in parentheses indicate the actual count of citations of problems/questions in certain topic areas. In some instances, data from Elmira cannot be interpreted because the response was so small. For instance, all of the mentions of problems/questions concerning public assistance were aided responses, but this figure (100%) is based on only 2 cases or citations.

Although variations are evident for the different questioning procedures, three topic areas (neighborhood, consumer, housing and household maintenance) were the most frequently cited in Baltimore regardless of whether the questions elicited aided or unaided responses (Table 10). Two of these areas (consumer and neighborhood) were likewise consistent in Syracuse and Elmira. The category of housing and household maintenance did rank third in Syracuse in terms of over-all citations, as was true in Baltimore, and third among topic areas with the greater number of unaided responses of problems/questions. But health was the topic area cited more

Table 10 Rank of topic areas by categories of response.

City: Baltimore

Topic Area	Rank (by number of citations)		
	Total Problems	Unaided Problems	Aided Problems
Neighborhood	1	3	1
Consumer	2	2	2
Housing and Maintenance	3	1	3
Crime and Safety	4	9	4
Education	5	12	5
Employment	6	8	6
Transportation	7	11	7
Health	8	5	9
Miscellaneous	9	4	11
Recreation	10	13	8
Discrimination	11	14	10
Financial Matters	12	7	12
Legal Problems	13	10	13
Public Assistance	14	6	14

Table 10 Rank of topic areas by categories of response.

City: Syracuse

Topic Area	Rank (by number of citations)		
	Total Problems	Unaided Problems	Aided Problems
Consumer	1	2	1
Neighborhood	2	1	2
Housing and Maintenance	3	3	4
Health	4	8	3
Crime and Safety	5	5	5.5
Education	6	6	5.5
Transportation	7	4	9
Employment	8	7	7
Financial Matters	9	11.5	8
Miscellaneous	10	9	10
Recreation	11	11.5	11
Discrimination	12	11.5	12.5
Legal Problems	13	13	12.5
Public Assistance	14	14	14

Table 10 Rank of topic areas by categories of response

City: Elmira

Topic Area	Rank (by number of citations)		
	Total Problems	Unaided Problems	Aided Problems
Consumer	1	1	1
Neighborhood	2	2	2
Education	3.5	6.5	4.5
Housing	3.5	6.5	4.5
Employment	5.5	3.5	7.5
Health	5.5	10	3
Transportation	7	3.5	11
Crime and Safety	8	3.5	12.5
Financial Matters	9.5	8.5	7.5
Recreation	9.5	8.5	7.5
Discrimination	11	11.5	6
Miscellaneous	12	13.5	7.5
Legal Problems	13.5	13.5	12.5
Public Assistance	13.5	11.5	14

often than housing and household maintenance in terms of aided problems mentioned. The rank order of topic areas by categories of response in Elmira show several occuring with the same frequency. Again, it must be kept in mind that certain topic areas include only a very small number of actual citations of problems/questions in Elmira. In general, though, the topic areas of consumer, housing and household maintenance, and neighborhood problems/ questions tended to rank fairly high in occurrence of total problems/questions, both aided and unaided, when compared with other topic areas in all three cities.

Respondents citing more than one problem/question were asked to designate one of these as being of greatest importance, and when only one problem/question in total was mentioned by a respondent, that particular problem/ question was coded as most improtant (See Section II, question 1. A, p. 6 of the questionnaire). Table 11 presents figures indicating the importance of topic areas to respondents and the variation of respondents' single most important problem/question by aided and unaided respcnses.

Considering only the percentage of total problems/

Table 11 Importance of problems/questions by topic areas

Topic Area	Total			Percent of Total Designated as Most Important			Percent of Unaided Designated as Most Important			Percent of Aided Designated as Most Important		
	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E
Neighborhood	1,440	91	28	22	19	36	27	18	20	23	82	80
Consumer	1,199	98	36	19	19	28	26	16	20	17	84	80
Housing and Household Maintenance	1,145	65	13	27	20	0	38	31	0	26	69	0
Crime and Safety	878	50	10	31	20	20	34	10	0	32	90	100
Education	583	48	13	22	12	8	35	17	0	21	83	100
Employment	568	39	12	26	28	25	40	27	0	25	73	100
Transportation	545	46	11	15	4	27	43	0	0	12	100	100
Health	513	56	12	22	14	42	23	88	60	23	12	40
Miscellaneous	487	28	4	13	21	0	14	17	0	14	83	0
Recreation	470	24	9	10	0	11	9	0	0	10	0	100
Discrimination	368	23	8	16	9	12	33	50	0	19	50	100
Financial Matters	316	34	9	19	24	44	21	25	25	19	75	75
Legal Problems	214	20	2	30	15	50	35	33	0	28	67	100
Public Assistance	204	6	2	33	0	0	52	0	0	19	0	0
Total	8,932	628	169	22	17	24	30	26	22	22	74	78

questions designated as "most important" by respondents in Baltimore, public assistance, crime and safety, and legal problems seemed to be areas of greatest concern, and problems/questions grouped under the "miscellaneous" topic area were least likely to be designated as most important.

In Syracuse, a greater percentage of concerns about employment, financial matters, and those classified as miscellaneous were considered most important when compared with other topic areas; problems with or questions about recreation or public assistance were not designated as most important by any of the Syracuse respondents, To properly interpret data from Elmira, only percentages based on 12 or more citations of actual problems/questions are mentioned. Thus, it appears that respondents in Elmira were more likely to cite consumer, neighborhood, and health concerns as most important problems/questions, and least likely to mention housing and household maintenance problems/questions as most important when compared with other topic areas.

From Table 11 it may also be noted that, in Baltimore, a greater proportion of unaided responses than of aided responses was considered important. This was not the

case in Syracuse, where aided responses were designated as most important almost three times more than unaided mentions were. Elmira respondents stipulated aided responses as being most important compared with unaided responses by a margin closer to four-to-one. The topic area containing the single most important problem/ question, in terms of greatest percentage of unaided and aided responses, is shown below:

	UNAIDED	AIDED
Baltimore:	public assistance	crime and safety
Syracuse:	health	transportation
Elmira:	health	crime and safety

To summarize: the importance of problems/questions for respondents was related to the 14 general topic areas as well as to whether or not the mentions of problems/ questions were spontaneous or in response to probes. As the Baltimore Study reports, "those topic areas mentioned most frequently by respondents in the sample were not necessarily those which were considered most important by them."[20] Baltimore data offers the extreme example: 52 percent of all spontaneous mentions of

---

[20] The Baltimore Study, p. 100.

problems/questions concerning public assistance were considered most important, although that topic area was mentioned least frequently. In Syracuse, legal problems was ranked 13th among the topic areas in terms of response, yet 67 percent of all aided mentions of legal problems were felt to be most important. Finally, consumer problems, which ranked first in Elmira among all topic areas and in terms of both aided and unaided responses of problems/questions, accounted for only 28 percent of all mentions of most important problems/questions. One general conclusion of the Baltimore Study, that "problems/questions which were mentioned spontaneously tended to be considered important more frequently when compared with problems/questions cited in response to more directed questioning by interviewers,"[21] was not supported by data from Syracuse and Elmira.

Topic areas cited as most important by subgroups of individuals are shown in Table 12. As might be expected, demographic subgroups of individuals selected different topic areas as most important to them. In Baltimore, the finding that "young respondents were less

---

[21] Ibid.

Table 12 Percent of problems/questions designated as most important by topic area and by demographic subgroups of individuals

City: Baltimore

Topic Area	Percent of All Problems/Questions Designated as Most Important	Subgroup(s) with the Lowest Response (percentage)	Subgroup(s) with the Highest Response (percentage)
Neighborhood	17	4 - Under 25 years of age	22 - 64+ years of age
Housing and Household Maintenance	16	10 - professionals or managers	22 - non-white 36 - median tract income of less than $4,000
Crime and Safety	14	8 - under 25 years of age 8 - 0-6 years of education 8 - median tract income of less than $4,000	25 - median tract income of $15,000+
Consumer	11	3 - median tract income of less than $4,000	17 - clerical or sales 13 - family income of $15,000+
Education	7	4 - 0-6 years of education	18 - 16+ years of education
Public Assistance and Financial Matters	7	2 - family income of $15,000+	16 - family income of less than $4,000

Table 12 Percent of problems/questions designated as most important by topic area and by demographic subgroups of individuals.*

City: Syracuse

Topic Area	Percent of All Problems/Questions Designated as Most Important	Subgroup(s) with the Lowest Response (percentage)	Subgroup(s) with the Highest Response (percentage)
Consumer	18	7 - education completed - 7-11 years	17 - white 17 - family size - 2+ people
Neighborhood	16	7 - median family income of $4,000-$8,000	14 - female
Housing and Household Maintenance	12	7 - median family income of $8,000-$14,000 7 - age - 25-64	12 - white
Employment	10	7 - median family income of $4,000-$8,000	10 - family size of 2+ people
Crime and Safety	10	7 - male	8 - white
Public Assistance and Financial Matters	7	7 - white	8 - age - 25-64 years

*Because of the small sample sizes (102 in Syracuse and 40 in Elmira citing 1 or more problems/questions) only cells in which 7 or more cases appeared were considered to be stable enough for comparing response rates of demographic subgroups. Where there were more than 2 such qualifying cells with equal percentages of response rate, the subgroup was chosen with the greatest number of cases per cell.

Table 12 Percent of problems/questions designated as most important by topic area and by demographic subgroups of individuals.*

City: Elmira

Topic Area	Percent of All Problems/Questions Designated as Most Important	Subgroup(s) with the Lowest Response (percentage)	Subgroup(s) with the Highest Response (percentage)
Neighborhood	24	20 - female	24 - family size - 2+ people
Consumer	24	17 - age - 25-64 years	24 - white

*Because of the small sample sizes (102 in Syracuse and 40 in Elmira citing 1 or more problems/questions) only cells in which 7 or more cases appeared were considered to be stable enough for comparing response rates of demographic subgroups. Where there were more than 2 such qualifying cells with equal percentages of response rate, the subgroup was chosen with the greatest number of cases per cell.

likely than elderly respondents to cite neighborhood problems/questions as most important" possibly reflects the fact that "young persons are more mobile and capable of leaving unsatisfactory neighborhoods than are elderly individuals."[22] But not all the data can be explained that easily. For instance, Elmira respondents citing neighborhood problems as their most important concerns were more likely to have larger families and less likely to be female. In Syracuse, females were more likely to cite neighborhood concerns as their most important problems.

3. Specific Problems/Questions

To determine some of the specific problems/questions of respondents, all problems/questions within the 14 topic areas were coded into 109 particular categories, developed using a random sample of questionnaires from Baltimore. A complete listing and detailed description of the 109 specific categories, including their respective rankings, may be found on pps. 103-108 of The Baltimore Study.

According to the Westat report, "34 of the specific categories accounted for 58 percent of all 8,932 citations. As can be seen from Table 13, the three most frequently

---

[22] Op. Cit., p. 102.

cited problems/questions were general statements of fear of crime, rental problems, and complaints about children in the neighborhood."[23] Table 13 also shows data from Syracuse, where 107 respondents mentioned a total of 628 particular problems/questions, almost 57 percent of which fell withing 31 of the specific categories. The three problems/questions cited most frequently by Syracuse respondents were the high price of food, availability of housing, and specific concerns about personal health. Just over half of the 169 total problems or questions mentioned by the 61 Elmira respondents fell withing 19 specific categories. There, residents were most concerned about high prices in general, the price of food in particular, and various undesirable conditions in their neighborhoods.

Since some differences were noted earlier for those problems/questions mentioned as a result of differences in the two questioning procedures (aided or unaided), Table 14 presents the specific problems/questions which were most frequently mentioned spontaneously (unaided responses). The 33 specific categories for unaided problems/questions accounted for 64 percent of all unaided citations in

---

[23] The Baltimore Study, p. 109.

Table 13 Most frequently cited specific problems/questions in each topic area.
City: Baltimore

Topic Area	Specific Problem/Question	Percent of All Citations
Neighborhood	Complaints about children	4
	Traffic and parking	3
	Complaints about neighbors	3
Consumer	Food prices too high	3
	Product quality bad	3
	Prices too high	2
Housing and Household Maintenance	Rental problems	4
	Househunting	3
Employment	Unemployed - looking for job	2
	Complaints about present job	1
Education	Complaints about the school system	2
	Need information about education	2
Health	Complaints about maladies	1
	Need health information or advice	1
	Health insurance	<1
Transportation	Inadequate bus service	3
	Other transportation problems	<1
Recreation	Too little for children or teens	2
	Too little for adults	1
Financial Matters	General gripe - insufficient money	1
	Property taxes too high	<1
Public Assistance	Problems with the Department of Social Services	<1
	Medical assistance	<1
Discrimination and Race Relations	Racial tensions	1
	Racial discrimination	1
	Sex discrimination	1
	Blacks moving in	1
Legal Problems	Need for legal services	1
	Legal contract disputes	1
Crime and Safety	General statement of fear	4
	Specific crime problems	2
Miscellaneous	Need child care	1
	Discussion of news events	1
	Need names, addresses	1
Total		58

Table 13 Most frequently cited specific problems/questions in each topic area

City: Syracuse

Topic Area	Specific Problem/Question	Percent of All Citations
Neighborhood	Complaints about neighbors	2.9
	Other undesirable conditions	2.7
	Complaints about dogs	2.4
Consumer	Food prices too high	3.5
	Prices too high	2.7
	Product quality bad	1.8
Housing and Household Maintenance	Looking for housing	3.3
	Rental problems	2.4
Employment	Looking for employment	2.1
	Barriers to employment	1.3
Education	Complaints about the educational system	2.5
	Miscellaneous educational problems/questions	1.9
Health	Specific malady	3.3
	No or inadequate care	2.1
Transportation	Miscellaneous transportation issues	1.9
	Inadequate bus service	1.6
Recreation	No or too few children's areas	1.0
	No or too few general areas	1.3
Financial Matters	General gripe - too little money	1.9
	Difficultie getting loans or credit	1.0
	Miscellaneous financial problems/questions	1.0
Discrimination and Race Relations	Racial discrimination	1.1
	Miscellaneous discrimination	1.0
Legal Problems	Miscellaneous legal problems	1.1
	Divorce	.6
Crime and Safety	Generalized fear	2.4
	Specific instance of crime and resulting fear	2.4
Miscellaneous	Need for day care	1.0
	Need names, addresses	1.0
	Other miscellaneous	.8
Public Assistance	Unemployment compensation	.8
Total		56.8

Table 13 Most frequently cited specific problems/questions in each topic area.

City:Elmira

Topic Area	Specific Problem/Question	Percent of All Citations
Neighborhood	Other undesirable conditions	4.1
	Complaints about dogs	3.0
Consumer	Food prices too high	5.5
	Prices too high	8.7
Housing and Household Maintenance	Looking for housing	2.4
Employment	Looking for employment	2.4
	Barriers to employment	1.8
Education	Miscellaneous educational complaints	2.4
Health	Need information or advice	1.8
	No or inadequate care	1.8
Transportation	Miscellaneous transportation problems	2.4
Recreation	No or too few general areas	3.0
Financial Matters	General gripe - too little money	1.8
	Miscellaneous financial complaints	1.8
Discrimination and Race Relations	Miscellaneous discrimination complaints	1.8
Legal Problems	Divorce	.6
Crime and Safety	Generalized fear	2.4
Miscellaneous	Other miscellaneous	1.2
Public Assistance	Medical Assistance	.6
Total		50.6

Baltimore, where the four most frequently mentioned unaided responses were:

- complaints about city services in the neighborhood;
- rental problems;
- needs for names and addresses; and
- needs for information about consumer services.

In Syracuse all unaided citations of problems or questions could be grouped under 52 specific categories, while all of the spontaneous mentions of problems/questions in Elmira were included in 21 particular categories. Syracuse respondents spoke of personal health problems, poor quality of service for products, inadequate health care, and a need for names and addresses as their most important unaided problems/questions. Those problems or questions which most concerned Elmira residents responding to questions without probes were: needs for information or advice about health, financial matters other than getting loans or credit, and a host of miscellaneous problems.

As shown in Table 11, there was a greater percentage of unaided responses designated as most important within the 14 general topic areas when compared to the percent of aided "most important" citations in Baltimore. This was not true for Syracuse of for Elmira. While there is not a direct correlation between those unaided citations considered as most important when grouped in general

Table 14 Most frequently cited unaided problems/questions (specific)

City: Baltimore

Topic Area	Specific Problem/Question	Percent of Unaided Citations
Neighborhood	Complaints about city services	5
	Complaints about children	3
Consumer	Need information about services	4
	Complaints about "rip-offs"	3
	Services unavailable, inconvenien.	2
	Product quality bad	2
Housing and Household Maintenance	Rental Problems	5
	Utilities Service	3
	Househunting	3
Employment	Unemployed - looking for job	1
	Complaints about present job	1
Education	Need information about education	1
	Questions about adult education	<1
Health	Need health information or advice	2
	Health insurance	2
Transportation	Auto insurance	<1
	Need information on public transportation	<1
	Inadequate bus service	<1
Recreation	Need information on recreation	1
	Too little for children and teens	<1
Financial Matters	Need information on income tax	1
	Property taxes too high	<1
	Loan or credit difficulties	<1
Public Assistance	Problems with the Department of Social Services	2
	Food Stamps	1
Discrimination and Race Relations	Racial tensions	<1
	Racial discrimination	<1
Legal Problems	Need for legal services	2
	Need for legal documents	<1
Crime and Safety	Specific crime problems	1
	Lax law enforcement	1
Miscellaneous	Need names, addresses	5
	Discussion of news events	2
Total		64

Table 14 Most frequently cited unaided problems/questions (specific)

City: Syracuse

Topic Area	Specific Problem/Question	Percent of Unaided Citations
Neighborhood	Complaints about children	1
	Complaints about city services	1
	Traffic and parking problems	1
	Other problems	1
Consumer	Need information about products	4
	Service quality bad	5
	Services unavailable, inconvenient	4
	Need information about services	4
	Food prices too high	1
	Prices too high (cost of living)	1
Housing and Household Maintenance	Househunting	2
	Rental problems	4
	Barriers to finding new housing	2
	Other problems	1
	Utilities service	1
	Cost of heating fuel	1
Employment	Want a change in job	1
	Unemployed - looking for a job	4
Education	Complaints about adult education	1
	Need information about education	3
	Complaints about educational system	1
	Other problems	1
Health	Problems with mental health	2
	Complaints or questions about health insurance	1
	Inadequate health care	5
	Need health information or advice	3
	Complaints about maladies	7.9
Transportation	Fear of using public transportation	1
	Need information about public transportation	3
	Gas availability	1
	Other problems	2
Recreation	Too few opportunities or areas	1
Financial	Property taxes too high	2
	Loan or credit difficulties	2
	Need information on income tax	1
	Need information on retirement	1
	Talk of stocks and investments	1
	Complaints about making ends meet	3
	Talk of buying or selling properties	1
Public Assistance	Unemployment	1
	Social security	1
Discrimination	Talk of Blacks moving into neighborhood	1
	Other problems	1
Legal	Legal contract problems	1
	Need legal services	1
	Leash Law complaints from dog owners	1
	Other problems	1
Crime and Safety	Law law enforcement	1
	Other problems	1
Miscellaneous	Need names, addresses	5
	Talk of gas crisis	1
	Other problems	1
Total		100

Table 14 Most frequently cited unaided problems/questions (specific)
City: Elmira

Topic Area	Specific Problem/Question	Percent of Unaided Citations
Neighborhood	Complaints about children	4.2
	Traffic and parking problems	4.2
	Other problems	4.2
Consumer	Product quality bad	4.2
	Products unavailable	4.2
	Need information on products	4.2
	Service quality bad	4.2
	Services unavailable	4.2
	Need information on Services	4.2
	Food prices too high	4.2
Housing	Rental problems	4.2
Education	Complaints about the educational system	4.2
	Other problems	4.2
Health	Questions about health insurance	4.2
	Need health information or advice	8.3
Financial Matters or Assistance	Difficulties getting loans or credit	4.2
	Other problems	8.3
Legal Problems	Divorce laws	4.2
	Other problems	4.2
Miscellaneous	Need names of people, addresses	4.2
	Other problems	8.3
TOTAL		100.0

topic areas and those specific problems/questions mentioned most frequently as spontaneous responses, it is important to note the differences in the specific categories when unaided citations (Table 14) are compared with all citations of most frequent problems/questions. Thus, while 19 of the specific categories are included for all citations and for unaided citations in the Baltimore Study, a greater number of categories specifying the need for information is included in the list of unaided citations (Table 14). On the other hand, "specific categories which might be considered 'complaints' were more often included among all problems/questions than among unaided problems/questions." (Table 13) Comparable data from Syracuse and Elmira lend credence to the conclusion of The Baltimore Study on this point: "the most probable explanation for these differences is the bias in the questioning procedures used for aided vs. unaided problems/questions. The questioning of unaided responses emphasized needs for information, while the more directed questioning for aided responses placed relatively more emphasis on complaints."[24] This would seem to indicate that respondents' *spontaneous* mentions of problems/questions

---

[24]The Baltimore Study, p. 114.

would be closer to *actual information needs* than would either general or specific complaints elicited in response to aided questions or probes used by interviewers.

To determine the importance of specific problems/questions for subgroups of individuals, the data in Table 15 and 16 are concerned with the problems/questions considered most important by respondents and with the specific categories of response most frequently cited as most important. Thus, Table 15 shows that eight topic areas containing 15 specific problems/questions accounted for 956 of the most important citations in Baltimore. This compares to 231 most important citations which were distributed among 14 specific categories within seven topic areas in Syracuse. In Elmira, eight topic areas contained the 13 most important specific problems/questions representing 59 citations.

Among the number of most important problems designated in each city, mentions of specific problems/questions falling within the topic area of neighborhood concerns were more frequent than were specific concerns articulated in other topic areas. The four topic areas most heavily represented (neighborhood, housing, crime and safety, and consumer) accounted for the greatest number of specific problems/questions considered most important by respondents in Baltimore and Syracuse, and three of these (neighborhood,

Table 15 Number and percent of most important citations for 15 most important problems.

City: Baltimore

Rank	Specific Problem/Question	Topic Area	Number of Most Important Citations	Percent of Most Important Citations
1	General Fear	Crime and Safety	133	14
2	Househunting	Housing and Household Maintenance	106	11
3	Rental Problems	Housing and Household Maintenance	85	9
4	Complaints About Children	Neighborhood	71	7
5	Traffic and Parking	Neighborhood	69	7
6	Specific Crime	Crime and Safety	62	7
7	Product Quality Bad	Consumer	61	6
8	Unemployed, looking	Employment	58	6
9	Complaints About School System	Education	51	5
10	Complaints About Neighbors	Neighborhood	47	5
11	City Services	Neighborhood	46	5
12	Food Prices Too High	Consumer	45	5
13	Other Neighborhood Problems	Neighborhood	45	5
14	Inadequate Bus Service	Transportation	39	4
15	Complaints About Maladies	Health	38	4
Total For Baltimore			956	100

Table 15 Number and percent of most important citations for 14 most important problems.

City: Syracuse

Rank	Specific Problem/Question	Topic Area	Number of Most Important Citations	Percent of Most Important Citations
1.0	Food Prices Too High	Consumer	22	9.5
2.5	Househunting	Housing and Household Maintenance	21	9.1
2.5	Complaints About Maladies	Health	21	9.1
4.0	Complaints about Neighbors	Neighborhood	18	7.8
5.5	Other Neighborhood Problems	Neighborhood	17	7.4
5.5	Prices Too High - Cost of Living	Consumer	17	7.4
7.0	Complaints About School System	Education	16	6.9
8.5	Specific Complaints About Dogs	Neighborhood	15	6.5
8.5	Rental Problems	Housing and Household Maintenance	15	6.5
8.5	General Fear Of Crime	Crime and Safety	15	6.5
8.5	Specific Crime	Crime and Safety	15	6.5
13.5	Traffic and Parking Problems	Neighborhood	13	5.6
13.5	Unemployed - Looking for a Job	Employment	13	5.6
13.5	Health Care Services	Health	13	5.6
Total for Syracuse			231	100.0

Table 15 Number and percent of most important citations for 13 most important problems.

City: Elmira

Rank	Specific Problem/Question	Topic Area	Number of Most Important Citations	Percent of Most Important Citations
1.0	Food Prices Too High	Consumer	11	15.9
2.0	Prices Too High - Cost of Living	Consumer	8	11.6
3.0	Other Neighborhood Problems	Neighborhood	7	10.1
5.5	Specific Complaints About Dogs	Neighborhood	5	7.2
5.5	Inadequate Recreation Areas for Children	Recreation	5	7.2
5.5	Product Quality Bad	Consumer	5	7.2
7.5	City Services	Neighborhood	4	5.8
7.5	Complaints About Neighborhood Conditions	Neighborhood	4	5.8
7.5	House Hunting	Housing and Household Maintenance	4	5.8
7.5	Unemployed - Looking for a Job	Employment	4	5.8
7.5	Other Education Problems	Education	4	5.8
7.5	Other Transportation Problems	Transportation	4	5.8
7.5	General Fear of Crime	Crime and Safety	4	5.8
Total for Elmira			59	100.0

consumer, and housing) were also the most frequently mentioned among all problems/questions cited in Baltimore, Syracuse, and Elmira.

Illustrative differences among demographic subgroups citing most important problems/questions are shown in Table 16. The information contained in this table was analyzed according to the number of topic areas represented by the number of most important problem/questions cited in each city (Baltimore = 8/15, Syracuse = 7/14, Elmira = 8/13), and the data are discussed in terms of the eight topic areas in The Baltimore Study.[25]

- Neighborhood: In Baltimore, complaints about neighborhood children were most frequent among the elderly and those living in low-income tracts, and complaints about neighbors were frequent among those with little education. Problems about traffic and parking in the neighborhoods were more frequent among whites than non-whites, and city services were of concern to housewives more than to other subgroups.

  In Syracuse, complaints about neighbors and other neighborhood problems were frequent among whites, as were specific complaints about dogs and problems with traffic and parking. This finding possibly reflects the fact that only the city area was surveyed in this study.

---

[25] See The Baltimore Study, pp. 116-120. Because of the small numbers of respondents in Syracuse and Elmira citing one or more problems/questions, Table 16 indicates only the stable cells used for comparing response rates of demographic subgroups. Data from Elmira were especially sparse for purposes of analysis at this point.

•Housing and Household Maintenance: Non-whites in Baltimore were most likely to mention difficulties finding a place to live, while Syracuse respondents with some problem in househunting were most likely to be white. Rental problems were least frequent among the elderly in Baltimore, and least frequent among Syracuse respondents with 7-11 years of education.

•Crime and Safety: Concerns in this topic area varied especially with regard to education and median tract income in both Baltimore and Syracuse. In Baltimore, those respondents most likely to report a general fear of crime and to cite specific incidences were at "upper levels" among demographic subgroups (i.e. persons with higher levels of education, "better" jobs, and living in tracts with the highest median incomes), while those subgroups with the lowest response in this category were among the "lower levels" of society. In the city of Syracuse, respondents least likely to mention either general fears or specific instances of crime were in the "middle levels" of education and income.

•Consumer Problems: The poor quality of products was of most concern to persons in clerical or sales positions in Baltimore, while the cost of food was of great concern to the elderly and of small concern to younger people there. Syracuse respondents bothered least by the price of food and the high cost of living were those who had completed high school and were working blue-collar or service occupations (and who may, therefore, benefit from union-negotiated contracts which often build in allowances for inflation.) In Elmira, persons least likely to cite high food prices as their most important problem were consumers between the ages of 25 and 64; whether this is an indication of feelings of powerlessness and resignation in the face of this problem is unclear.

•Employment: Finding work was of greatest concern to the young and those who were not working at the time the survey was conducted in Baltimore. Persons citing fewest concerns with unemployment were the

elderly and those in professional or managerial positions in Baltimore, and those respondents living in tracts with a median income between $4-8,000 in Syracuse.

- Education: In this topic area, complaints about the school system comprised the specific problem/question cited as most important by respondents. Again, those least likely to offer such complaints in Syracuse were those living in tracts with a median income of $4-8,000. However, Baltimore respondents living in tracts with incomes under $4,000 were least likely to complain about schools. Most complaints about schools in Baltimore came from persons with the most education and the greatest income.

- Transportation: Persons having particular problems in this area (e.g. inadequate bus service) were the elderly in Baltimore and individuals in sales or clerical jobs there. Apparently, there were fewer problems with transportation in Syracuse and Elmira, as no subgroups in those cities mentioned a significant number of complaints.

- Health: Among persons citing health care as an important concern in their lives in Syracuse, those living in tracts with incomes between $4-8,000 were least likely to report problems with health care. Complaints about maladies were least likely to come from persons in Syracuse with 7 to 11 years of education and from younger persons and those in professional or managerial positions in Baltimore.

Although the information contained in Table 16 may seem obvious in some cases-and thus provide a base for post-hoc explanations-it may help specify, in certain instances, which subgroups should be the primary target for the dissemination of particular kinds of information and which groups might not need the same information. An example is provided in The Baltimore Study: Although

Table 16 Differences among demographic subgroups in citing the fifteen most important problems/questions

City:Baltimore

Specific Problem/Question	Percent of the 15 Most Important (N = 956)	Subgroup(s) with the Lowest Response (percentage)	Subgroup(s) with the Highest Response (percentage)
General fear of crime	14	7 - not working (excluding housewife, students, retired) 9 - 7-11 years of education 9 - median tract income of $4,000-$7,999	22 - professional or manager 21 - 13-15 years of education 32 - median tract income of $15,000+
Househurting	11	8 - 64+ years of age 7 - white 9 - 16+ years of education completed 5 - median tract income of $15,000	19 - under 25 years of age 21 - non-white 20 - 0-6 years of education completed 20 - not working (excluding housewife, student, retired) 24 - median tract income of less than $4,000
Rental problems	9	4 - 64+ years of age	14 - under 25 years of age
Complaints about neighborhood children	7	3 - under 25 years of age 5 - median tract income of $15,000+	14 - 64+ years of age 17 - median tract income of under $4,000
Traffic and parking	7	2 - non-white	10 - white
Specific crime	6	5 - median tract income of under $4,000	13 - median tract income of $15,000+
Product quality bad	6	2 - professionals or managers	14 - clerical or sales
Unemployed - looking for a job	6	0 - 64+ years of age 3 - professionals or managers	15 - under 25 years of age 33 - not working (excluding housewife, retired)
Complaints about the school system	5	1 - 7-11 years of education 0 - median tract income of under $4,000	16 - 16+ years of education 13 - median tract income of $15,000+
Complaints about neighbors	5	1 - 16+ years of education 0 - median tract income of $15,000+	8 - 0-11 years of education 10 - median tract income of $4,000-$7,999
Complaints about city services	5	2 - blue collar and service workers	10 - housewife
Food prices too high	5	1 - under 25 years of age	7 - 64+ years of age
Other neighborhood problems	5	0 - median tract income of under $4,000	13 - median tract income of $15,000+
Inadequate bus service	4	2 - professionals or managers 4 - 25-64 years of age	8-clerical or sales 7 - 64+ years of age
Complaints about maladies	4	2 - under 25 years of age 2 - professionals or managers	11 - 64+ years of age 12 - retired

Table 16 Differences among demographic subgroups in citing the fourteen most important problems/questions*

City: Syracuse

Specific Problem/Question	Percent of the 14 Most Important (N = 231)	Subgroup(s) with the Lowest Response (percentage)	Subgroup(s) with the Highest Response (percentage)
Food prices too high	9.5	4 - 12 years of education completed	9 - white
Househunting	9.1	3 - blue collar and service workers	8 - white
Complaints about maladies	9.1	3 - 7-11 years of education completed	8 - white
Complaints about neighbors	7.8	3 - housewife	7 - white
Other neighborhood problems	7.4	3 - 12 years of education completed	6 - white
Prices too high (cost of living)	7.4	4 - blue collar or service workers	7 - white
Complaints about the school syatem	6.9	3 - median tract income of $4,000-$8,000	6 - white
Specific complaints about dogs	6.5	4 - 25-64 years of age	6 - white
Rental problems	6.5	4 - 7-11 years of education completed	6 - white
General fear of crime	6.5	4 - 12 years of education completed	5 - white
Specific crime	6.5	4 - median tract income of $8,000-$14,999	6 - white
Traffic and parking	5.6	4 - median tract income of $8,000-$14,999	5 - white
Unemployed	5.6	3 - median tract income of $4,000-$7,999	5 - white
Health care	5.6	4 - median tract income of $4,000-$7,999	5 - white

*Because of the small sample sizes (102 in Syracuse and 40 in Elmira citing 1 or more problems/questions) only cells in which 7 or more cases appeared were considered to be stable enough for comparing response rates of demographic subgroups. Where there were more than 2 such qualifying cells with equal percentages of response rate, the subgroup was chosen with the greatest number of cases per cell.

Table 16 Differences among demographic subgroups in citing the one most important problem/question*

City: Elmira

Specific Problem/Question	Percent of the 1 Most Important (N = 59)	Subgroup(s) with the Lowest Response (percentage)	Subgroup(s) with the Highest Response (percentage)
Food prices too high	15.9	10 - 25-64 years of age	16 - white

*Because of the small sample sizes (102 in Syracuse and 40 in Elmira citing one or more problems/questions) only cells in which 7 or more cases appeared were considered to be stable enough for comparing response rates of demographic subgroups. Where there were more than 2 such qualifying cells with equal percentages or response rate, the subgroup was chosen with the greatest number of cases per cell.

"finding another place to live is of little concern to the elderly, children who cause disturbances in their neighborhoods have resulted in less than ideal housing situations for them. Obviously, the most appropriate solution for the elderly would be information on how to effect some change in their present neighborhoods."[26] The data for Syracuse and Elmira may be ambiguous for these purposes, though one might conclude, for example, that Syracuse residents living in middle-income neighborhoods would not respond with overwhelming enthusiasm to a municipal campaign to prevent crime and solve parking problems in their areas.

4. How Individuals State Their Needs

In the early stages of the Baltimore Study it was discovered that "individuals differed in the ways in which they articulated their needs." As the Westat report states, "some respondents clearly expressed a need for information or advice. Others suggested that their needs could only be met through the actual help or action of some outside party. Some respondents tended to express their needs in the form of complaints while others did not."[27]

A content analysis scheme, created for the original

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] Op. Cit., pp. 120-121.

study, allowed coders to make three dichotomous judgments for each problem/question mentioned by respondents. Thus, coders were to approach each problem/question to determine whether or not the respondent

- complained about or lamented a problem/question of social or personal concern;
- stated a need for information or advice;
- suggested a need for actual help, assistance, or action to answer the question or to solve the problem.

By making each judgment independently, all combinations of "yes" and "no" decisions could be made for each problem/question. It was then possible to examine these judgments in relation to three previously-employed criteria: aided vs. unaided responses, specific problems/questions, and subgroups of individuals. The results of these respective comparisons are found in Tables 17, 18, and 19.

The Baltimore Study states that: "in interpreting these data, it is necessary to bear in mind that the judgments were made on the basis of the respondents' statements of their needs, not on the basis of expert judgments as to the appropriate solutions for their needs."[28] However, it should be noted that coders in the present study had some difficulty with this particular content analysis scheme, which called for them to make judgments about the respondents' statements of "needs" as recorded by the

---

[28] Ibid.

interviewers. In spite of the design of the questionnaire, and the use of Westat personnel to train interviewers in Syracuse and Elmira, a number of the respondets's statements did not lend themselves to the simple kind of decision-making required by the analysis scheme. Although certain arbitrary judgments must be made in any analysis of content, those who coded the data from Syracuse and Elmira felt that future replication studies should perfect measures to reduce ambiguities which might occur here.[29]

Statements of unaided and aided problems/questions were influenced by differences in the questioning procedures, and these differences are reflected in the results shown in Table 17. For example, probes used to obtain unaided mentions of needs were biased in favor of needs for information. As might be expected, data from all three cities indicate a greater percentage of "needs for information or advice" among unaided problems/questions as compared to aided responses. In Baltimore, almost half of the unaided responses were stated as needs for information (compared with only 18 percent for aided problems/questions), and in Elmira 88 percent of the unaided problems/questions were judged to be statements of information needs (in

---

[29] The literature on survey research and content analysis contain many helpful suggestions and procedures, and the reader is invited especially to consult those works cited in the bibliography.

Table 17 Statements of total, aided, and unaided problems/questions*

Problems/Questions Stated As:	Percent of All Problems/ Questions (B: N=8,932 S: N=628 E: N=169)			Percent of Unaided Problems/ Questions (B: N=1,705 S: N=101 E: N=24)			Percent of Aided Problems/ Questions (B: N=7,227 S: N=527 E: N=145)		
	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E
Complaints	87	97	95	75	94	88	89	98	96
Needs for information or advice	24	45	48	47	59	88	18	42	41
Needs for actual help	16	65	52	22	83	79	15	62	48

*Multiple responses allowed.

contrast to the 41 percent of aided responses).

Conversely, queries used to elicit directed mentions of problems or questions emphasized complaints, and, not surprisingly, complaints were more frequent among aided than unaided problems/questions in all three cities.

Respondents' statements of needs for actual help were more likely to be unaided than aided. Thus, the differences in the way respondents stated their problems/questions in Syracuse and Elmira may be attributed somewhat to the actual wording of the questionnaire itself.[30]

Whether, and to what degree, the manner in which problems or questions were stated varied according to specific kinds of problems/questions is shown in Table 18 with respect to the number of most important problems/questions stated in each city.

In Syracuse and Elmira there were no cases where specific problems or questions were stated only as complaints. Such a situation would have implied a feeling of resignation or helplessness, as noted in the Baltimore Study where, in particular, "respondents seemed to view high food prices as something they could do nothing about."

---

[30]The Baltimore Study reaches the same conclusion (p.121). One should note that the percentages reported above are related to varying base figures.

Table 18 Statements of the fisteen most important problem/questions

City: Baltimore

Specific Problems/ Questions	% of Problems/Questions Stated as:		
	Complaints	Needs for Information or Advice	Needs for Help
Total (N = 956)	93	20	17
Complaints about the school system	100	0	30
Complaints about neighbors	100	0	28
Food prices too high	100	0	0
General fear of crime	100	6	16
Complaints about children	100	3	4
Specific crime	100	6	11
Product quality bad	100	9	42
Other neighborhood problems	100	16	17
Complaints about maladies	100	13	18
Traffic and parking	99	3	15
Rental problems	95	19	22
City services	93	7	22
Inadequate bus service	93	8	21
Househunting	70	80	13
Unemployed - looking for a job	65	91	7

Table 18 Statements of the fourteen most important problems/questions

City: Syracuse

Specific Problems/ Questions	% of Problems/Questions Stated as:		
	Complaints	Needs for Information or Advice	Needs for Help
Total (N = 231)	97	43	61
Complaints about the school system	100	31	62
General fear of crime	100	67	67
Other neighborhood problems	100	24	53
Cost of living	100	24	47
Health Care	100	69	85
Rental problems	100	33	60
Complaints about dogs	100	38	47
Traffic and parking	100	15	31
Food prices too high	96	32	50
Househunting	95	38	57
Complaints about neighbors	94	33	56
Specific Crime	93	60	80
Unemployed - looking for a job	92	85	92
Complaints about maladies	90	52	71

Table 18 Statements of the thirteen most important problem/questions

City: Elmira

Specific Problems/ Questions	% of Problems/Questions Stated as:		
	Complaints	Needs For Information or Advice	Needs for Help
Total (N = 59)	96	36	36
Food prices too high	100	18	0
General fear of crime	100	25	0
Product quality bad	100	40	60
Cost of Living	100	12	25
Complaints about dogs	100	0	20
Complaints about neighborhood condition	100	25	0
Other neighborhood problems	100	57	57
Househunting	100	75	75
Transportation problems	100	25	50
Unemployed - looking for a job	100	50	50
Complaints about recreation	80	60	60
City services	75	50	50
Complaints about education	75	75	75

All mentions of food prices were complaints while no such mentions suggested a need for information or a need for help. The fact that no respondents voiced the problem of high food prices in term of possible solutuions may indicate a feeling of helplessness in the face of rising prices as well as an inability to view this problem in terms of alternatives or possible solutions."[31] The difference in attitudes of respondents in the two studies, on this particular point at least, may be due not so much to a decrease in the price of food over the time elapsed between the studies as to the rise of interest during that same period, in "consumerism," a movement which seeks to prevent such feelings of helplessness.

In contrast to the example of high food prices in Baltimore, other problems or questions which were uniformly stated as complaints in all three cities were sometimes stated as needs for information or needs for help. Specific problems/questions which were less likely to be stated as complaints were more likely to be stated as needs for information, advice, or actual help.

---

[31] The Baltimore Study, pp. 122-123.

Finally, the way in which subgroups of individuals stated their needs (as monitored by the aforementioned coder judgments) is shown in Table 19. Baltimore respondents least likely to state their problems/questions as complaints were those with the most education, working in professional or managerial capacities, and/or living in tracts with the highest median incomes. Individuals in Elmira who were least likely to complain were alsc the most highly educated and those who were professionals or managers (neighborhood incomes could not be computed because census data was unavailable for Elmira). A similar situation existed in Syracuse, although among occupational subgroups students were the least likely to complain. In Baltimore and in Syracuse, young respondents and students were less likely to complain and more likely to express a need for information; Baltimore respondents who were elderly and retired complained more frequently and tended to express a need for information less frequently than did other respondents. Elmira respondents who were retired stated all of their problems/questions as complaints, and only four percent of those respondents over 65 in Elmira had any needs for information or advice.

Of the total number of specific problems/questions

Table 19 Statements of problems/questions by age, education, occupation, and median tract income.

Specific Problems/ Questions	% of Problems/Questions Stated as:								
	Complaints			Needs for Information or Advice			Needs for Help		
	B	S	E	B	S	E	B	S	E
Total B: N=8,932 S: N=628 E: N=169	87	97	95	24	45	48	16	65	52
Age									
Under 25	82	88	100	30	68	24	13	88	24
25 - 64	87	99	93	23	37	59	18	59	65
65+	92	100	100	16	48	4	12	63	0
Education Completed									
0 - 6 years	91	100	100	22	0	0	12	46	0
7 - 11 years	91	100	100	19	25	28	14	66	34
12 years	87	94	100	23	58	45	15	66	50
13 - 15 years	84	100	100	27	35	26	22	55	30
16+ years	79	93	76	29	72	87	18	79	87
Occupations									
Professionals or managers	78	94	70	30	60	77	21	62	83
Clerical or sales	86	100	100	23	30	42	18	52	42
Blue collar or service	87	96	100	20	32	25	13	63	70
Housewife	89	100	100	25	48	58	16	69	53
Student	81	85	0	29	72	0	20	72	0
Retired	95	100	100	13	59	0	17	67	0
Other not working	92	-	-	27	-	-	19	-	-
Median Tract Income*									
Under $4,000	91	100		27	100		16	100	
$4,000 - $7,999	90	96		22	49		15	74	
$8,000 - $14,999	87	97		23	41		17	59	
$14,999 and over	78	100		29	0		18	100	

*census data not available for Elmira

in Syracuse and Elmira, a higher percentage were stated as needs for help rather than as needs for information or advice, although expressions of the need for actual help did not present consistent variation among subgroups of individuals in all three cities.

The findings of the Syracuse/Elmira study, as far as age, education, and occupational subgroups are concerned, tend to uphold a conclusion of the Baltimore Study, namely that the data suggest that when individuals can see the solutions to their problems or questions in terms of information, they are less likely to complain about or lament their situations. Results from Baltimore indicated support for this relationship between needs for information and complaints with respect to two specific problems/questions there (see Table 18).

In Baltimore, Syracuse, and Elmira older respondents generally were more likely than younger ones to complain and less likely to consider information (or advice) as a means of obtaining an answer to their questions or a solution to their problems. Thus, the present study supports an hypothesis suggested by the Baltimore Study: "if information were more frequently considered an effective means of obtaining solutions

by individuals, some psychological barriers to problem-solving might be removed."[32]

5. Summary and Discussion

As shown below, there was a high incidence of information "needs" (i.e. mentions of at least one problem/question by a respondent) within each of the sample populations (from Table 1):

City	Baltimore	Syracuse	Elmira
Respondents citing Information Needs	1,945	102	40
Percent of Total Respondents	89%	95%	66%
Average Number of Needs per Person	4.59	6.16	4.23
Total Identifiable Needs	8,932	628	169

The Syracuse/Elmira Information Needs Study confirmed the fact that "some individuals were more likely than others to mention information needs to interviewers,"[33]

[32] The Baltimore Study, pp. 125-126.

[33] Ibid., p. 126.

although it would be wrong to assume that the data from Syracuse and Elmira were in complete agreement with the results of the Baltimore Study. For instance, those persons most likely to have (or at least report) information needs in Baltimore were young, highly educated, earning the highest incomes, gregarious individuals who were members of several organizations, and who considered themselves opinion leaders on many topics, whereas in Syracuse a higher incidence of needs for information was reported by persons who were elderly, had some high school education, had either very low or very high incomes, and who were "moderate" joiners of organizations; mentions of information needs in Elmira occurred more frequently from respondents who had completed high school, were earning modest incomes, and who were high in social contact and opinion leadership.

The Baltimore Study states that "those subgroups who would be expected to *have* the most needs *reported* the fewest needs. Although one might conclude that these individuals have fewer needs, it is more logical to attribute this finding to *other factors* such as the inability or unwillingness of these individuals to

articulate their needs or to their resignation to a poor quality of life."[34] While dissimilar data from Syracuse and Elmira do not permit such a precise statement regarding the expectations of needs subgroups might have, the "other factors" noted in the Baltimore report seem plausible and worthy of further study.

The most frequently cited problems/questions for all three cities generally fell within three major topic areas. Neighborhood problems, consumer concerns, and needs regarding housing and household maintenance were ranked as the top three categories of responses in Baltimore, Syracuse, and Elmira. These particular topic areas accounted for almost half of the problems or questions reported in each city. Concerns about crime and safety seemed to decrease in importance as the sampled populations decreased in size; that topic area ranked fourth in Baltimore, fifth in Syracuse, and eighth in Elmira.

Some variations were noted for aided vs. unaided responses of problems/questions, though again the data

---

[34] Ibid. Italics -- not a part of The Baltimore Study report -- have been added for emphasis.

from Syracuse and Elmira do not conform to interpretations made on the results from Baltimore. The Baltimore Study reports that "the more salient or urgent areas of needs such as public assistance, housing, and legal problems, were more likely to be mentioned spontaneously, whereas less pressing areas of needs such as recreation and discrimination were reported when a more direct questioning sequence was used to aid recall."[35] The support for this interpretation, that " a greater percentage of unaided than aided problems/questions were designated as most important by respondents," was not a result of the present study.

Since the same questionnaire was employed in the Syracuse/Elmira Study as was used in Baltimore, it seems likely that results from the medium and small cities would add support to the discovery that the wording of the questionnaire itself accounted for variations in aided and unaided responses. Questions to elicit unaided responses tended to emphasize actual needs for information

---

[35] The Baltimore Study, p. 127. Judgments that certain areas of needs are more or less urgent are relative and perhaps misleading. Among all topic areas ranked by number of citations, legal problems and public assistance were "on the bottom" in all cases except among the unaided problems cited in Baltimore (See Table 10).

or advice; where more directed questioning or probes were used, complaints tended to be emphasized. By looking at the specific categories of aided and unaided responses in the Baltimore Study it appears that "more problems/ questions indicating needs for specific kinds of information were found among unaided responses than among aided responses; conversely, what might be considered 'complaints' were more prevalent among aided responses."[36] While the data from Elmira are too ambiguous to be helpful here, some support for above conclusion was found in Syracuse. Thus, the wording of the questionnaire used in the present study was also a factor in the kinds of responses which occurred.

Besides variation in terms of response, there were also variations among subgroups of individuals as to concern about some topic areas. In terms of information services, Tables 12 and 13 present data showing which specific "target" groups have what particular needs. For instance, persons with relatively higher incomes in Baltimore cited crime and safety most frequently as generally including their most important problems or questions, while

---

[36] Ibid.

concerns about housing appeared most frequently among low-income respondents and nonwhites there.

Data from the Baltimore Study established an inverse relationship between complaints and statements implying a need for information. This relationship was not uniformly supported in the Syracuse/Elmira Study, although in all three cities "aided" problems/questions (i.e., those mentioned in response to probes) were more frequently expressed as complaints and less frequently expressed as needs for information than were "unaided" responses. The inverse relationship did not hold for specific problems/questions, nor for subgroups of individuals. However, a suggestion in The Baltimore Study, that "when the possible solution to a problem or question is seen in terms of information, some of the psychological barriers to problem solving may be removed,"[37] deserves continued attention.

In conclusion, data from Syracuse and Elmira do not wholly support certain inferences drawn from the data in the Baltimore Study. More research should be conducted to determine if there is agreement with the contention that "those subgroups of individuals who occupy the most disadvantaged positions in our society are the least likely to articulate information or resource needs, and report

---

[37]The Baltimore Study, p. 128.

fewer problems/questions than other individuals. It would be hasty to conclude that these disadvantaged individuals have fewer needs for information or services than the more advantaged segments of the population" because it might be that "individuals with multiple unmet needs of long duration become so accustomed to them, and to their inability to solve them, that they no longer consciously regard them as problems/questions, and report only problems that are new and/or urgent. In addition, many of these respondents may well be less articulate or less willing to articulate their needs than more advantaged respondents."[38] Some of the directions this additional research might explore are discussed below.

---

[38] Ibid., p. 93.

IV RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Information Needs Studies

A conceptual context for examining the needs urban residents have for various kinds of information is of central importance to the conduct of information needs studies. Dr. Brenda Dervin designed such a scheme for the Baltimore Study,[39] and the replication effort carried out by the Center for the Study of Information and Education utilized the concepts developed by Dr. Dervin. From her own review of the literature, Dervin has gained the impression that "the average U.S. urban resident is suffering from a large and ever-growing information crisis," but notes that "none of the research has been done comprehensively across the universe of everyday information needs." CSIE monitored the literature on information and information needs and reached the same conclusions. The Baltimore Study, the Syracuse/Elmira Study, and Dervin's continued explorations are representative of initial remedies to this paucity of research.[40]

---

[39] See The Baltimore Study, p. 87.

[40] The quotations are from pages 18 and 20 of The Baltimore Study. The reader is referred to the CSIE report mentioned on p.5 (Faibisoff, et.al., pp 64-73), and to citations to Dervin in the Bibliography.

Noting the two basic requirements of information management (viz., access to appropriate information sources and access to appropriate information solutions), Dervin contends that the management of information pertains as much to the everyday needs of the general public as to sophisticated delivery systems developed for and by "professionals." To improve the quality of existing information services and to systematically design new services to respond to the problems or questions of the average citizen, much more than the abstract inferences drawn from information-seeking behavior is needed. Studies which endeavor to determine the actual needs people have for information, and which attempt to build upon the excellent conceptual and methodological base developed in the Baltimore Study, will greatly alleviate the impoverishment of knowledge in an information-rich environment. The Center for the Study of Information and Education recommends that proposals for such studies receive high priority.

B. Instruments, Procedures, and Costs

Comments about the methods and costs of the Syracuse/Elmira Study and the questionnaire used in this replication project have been made at other places in this report. However, certain observations can and should be made on the

basis of experience gained in this research.

The questionnaire developed for the Baltimore Study is felt to be a valid instrument for determining the information needs of urban residents. The questionnaire required only minor modifications for use in two less-populated urban areas, and those changes have been discussed elsewhere. Further refinement of Section III, where people are asked to give a number of conversations they have had recently and to rank themselves in several categories, is recommended; perhaps respondents could be handed a card on which would be printed ranges of numbers and categories from which they could choose.

Although some difficulties were encountered in conducting the household interviews in Syracuse and Elmira (see, for example, pp. 38-39), it is felt that the general methodology of survey research is well-suited to the task of assessing what need people in urban contexts have for information. Further, in spite of more stringent requirements for thorough training and satisfactory field supervision, the personal interview using the questionnaire described above still is better than other methods of data collection. Dervin's preliminary survey of information needs in Syracuse (25) used telephone interviews with a random sample of listings in the phone book; this study was limited by sampling bias (only those listed in

the book could appear in the sample) and by lack of face-to-face encounter (a very desirable technique for eliciting response on this subject). However, methods other than household surveys may be deemed appropriate in other contexts; participant observation, for example, should be explored as another way of gathering data on information needs. Too, various populations should be studied. The present project merely replicated the landmark survey of a large urban area; rural settings, the so-called "new towns," and entrenched ghetto populations all represent relatively unexplored territories with respect to studies of information needs.

A final word should be mentioned about costs. CSIE feels that where government funds are invested for research there is more value in longitudinal studies using essentially the same instrument and similar procedures. Studies to determine the information needs of the general public should build upon the data-base accruing from the Baltimore Study and the Syracuse/Elmira Study and should profit from the experience gained in research already conducted. It may not be necessary to "re-invent the wheel," but merely to add more wheels so that research into information needs may help libraries and other delivery systems move closer to satisfying their various publics. CSIE recommends that future studies of information needs plan for adequate personnel to coordinate and conduct the survey;

given the same instument, similar procedures, and satisfactory help, an information needs study could be conducted for less than $100. per completed interview.

C. Needed Further Research

There is a pressing need for more research into the area of information needs, especially with regard to "non-professional" populations. With respect to the Baltimore Study and the Syracuse/Elmira Study, additional research is needed which will:

- use essentially the same procedures and instrumentations to determine what further refinements should be made;
- build on the tradition already established with minimal variation from setting to setting;
- produce comparable data;
- survey various populations such as those mentioned above;
- generate new hypotheses and further probe the questions.

Research is needed which will not only explore the nature of information needs but which will also aid in the conduct of studies on the subject. For instance, could a self-instructional program be developed which would help train a member of a library staff to do an information needs survey? CSIE believes that "improved library public relations" should not be considered an end in itself. Rather, surveys

should be undertaken which will:

- help citizens become aware of their own needs for information;
- demonstrate that libraries and other information services are concerned about citizens and their needs;
- serve as an empirical basis for modifications which will result in improved existing services and/or creation of new services.

Libraries and other institutions must consider not only the users or clients they are presently serving but also those persons whom they are not serving. Information, above all, must be available to people who need solutions to their problems or answers to their questions or concerns. However, not all people are active information-seekers; thus, studies of information-seeking behavior are narrow in scope. Studies of the everyday needs people have for information, on the other hand, may help reduce the many barriers to accessibility which stand between people and the information they need.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Ackoff, R.K. Toward a behavioral theory of communication. Management Science, Vol. 4, 1958, pp. 218-234.

2. Alexander, C. et. al. A pattern language which generates multiservice centers. Berkeley: Center for Environmental Structure, 1968.

3. Allen, T. J. Sources of ideas and their effectiveness in parallel R & D projects. Cambridge, Research Program on the Management of Science and Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, July 1965 (Report No. 130-65).

4. Ascroft, J. Modernization and communication: Controlling environmental change. (Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University). East Lansing: 1969.

5. Babbie, Earl R. Survey Research Methods. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., 1973.

6. Backstrom, Charles H. and Hursh, G. D. Survey Research. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1963. (Handbooks For Research in Political Behavior, James A. Robinson, general editor.)

7. Berelson, B. The library's public. New York: Columbia University, 1949

8. Bernard, S. E., Kurtagh, E. and Johnson, H. R. The neighborhood service organization: specialist in social welfare innovation. Social Work, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1968, pp. 76-84.

9. Block, C. E. Communicating with the urban poor: An exploratory inquiry. Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47, No. 1, Spring 1970, pp. 3-11.

10. Bowes, J. Information control behaviors and the political effectiveness of low-income urban adults. (Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University). East Lansing: 1971

11. Brownson, H. L. Research on the handling of scientific information. Science, Vol. 132, December 30, 1962, pp. 1922-1930.

12. Budd, Richard W., Thorp, R. K., and Donohew, Lewis. Content Analysis of Communications. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967.

13. Bundy, M. L. Urban information in public libraries. Library Journal, January 15, 1972, pp. 161-169.

14. Campbell, A. and Metzner, C. A. Public use of the library and other sources of information. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1950.

15. Cangelosi, V. E., Robinson, D. M., and Schkado, L. L. Information and rationale choice. Journal of Communication, Vol. 18, June 1968, pp. 131-143.

16. Caplovitz, D. The poor pay more. New York: The Free Press, 1963.

17. Cherry, Colin. On Human Communication. Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1966.

18. Clark, K. B. Dark ghetto: dilemmas in social power. New York: Harper, 1967.

19. Cohn, A. K. and Hodge, H. M. Characteristics of the lower blue collar class. Journal of Social Problems, Vol. 10, No. 4, Spring 1963, pp. 103-134.

20. Cole, S. and Cole J. Visibility and the structural basis of awareness of scientific research. American Sociological Review, Vol. 33, 1968, pp. 397-412.

21. Davies, J. R. The problem of information exchange and complete information center concept. The Information Scientist, 1970, Vol. 4, pp. 39-45.

22. Davis, James A. Elementary Survey Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971.

23. Dervin, B. and Greenberg, B. S. The communication environment of the urban poor. In Kline, Gerald and Philip Tichenor, Current perspectives in mass communication. Beverly Hills: Sage Communication Research Annuals, Vol. I., 1972.

24. Dervin, B. Communication behaviors as related to information control behaviors of black low-income adults. (Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University) East Lansing: 1971.

25. Dervin, B. Report on information needs survey -- Seattle and Syracuse. Seattle: School of Communications, University of Washington, ditto, January 1973.

26. Dervin, B., Zweizig, D., and Bowes, J. Information Control: The Use of Information in Everydat Problem Solving. Sage Annual Review of Communications Research, Vol. II, F. Gerald Kline and Peter Clark, eds. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1974.

27. Dervin, B. The Everyday Information Needs of the Average Citizen: A Taxonomy for Analysis. In Kochen, Manfred and Joseph Donohue, Information for the Community. Chicago: Amer. Lib. Assoc., 1974.

28. Dervin, B. The Development of Strategies for Dealing with the Information Needs of Urban Residents. Seattle: School of Communications, Univ. of Washington, (mimeographed proposal), April 1974.

29. Dexter, Lewis A. Elite and Specialized Interviewing. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970.

30. Dordick, H. S., Chesler, L. G., Firstman, S. I., and Bretz, R. Telecommunications in urban development. Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, July 1969.

31. Eisenstadt, S. N. Communication systems and social structure: An exploratory comparative study. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 19, Summer 1955, pp. 153-167.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (continued)

32. Etzioni, A. Toward a theory of guided societal change. Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 3, December 1969, pp. 749-754

33. Faibisoff, S., G. Gee, et. al. An Introduction to Information and Information Needs: Comments and Readings. Report of The TaskForce on Information Needs, Center for the Study of Information and Education (CSIE), 1973. Prepared for U.S. Office of Education, Division of Library Programs. (Project No. RD 2 - 1301; Grant No. OEG -0-72-5405.)

34. Faibisoff, S. and Ely, D.P. Information and Information Needs. (Unpublished manuscript prepared by The Center for the Study of Information and Education, 1974.

35. Franklin, B.J. and Osborne, H.W. Research Methods: Issues and Insights. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1971.

36. Frey, F. Political development, power, and communications in Turkey. In L.W. Pye, Communication and Political Development. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, Chapter 17.

37. Furman, S., Connell, S., and Goldman, J. The indirect values of information and referral services. Social Work Practice. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.

38. Furman, S., Sweat, L., and Crocetti, G. Social class factors in the flow of children to out-patient psychiatric clinics. American Journal of Public Health, Vol. 55, No. 3, March 1965, pp. 12-18.

39. Goldberg, Edward M. Urban Information Systems and invasions of privacy (pp. 201-208). The City in the Seventies. ed. by Robert K. Yin. Itasca, Ill: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1972.

40. Greenberg, B.S., and Dervin, B. The use of the mass media by the urban poor. New York: Praeger Press, 1970.

41. Greenleigh Associates, Inc., Diagnostic survey of tenant households on west side urban renewal area of New York City. New York: Greenleigh Associates, 1965.

42. Grunig, J.E. Communication in community decisions on problems of the poor. Journal of Communication, March 1972, pp. 5-10.

43. Hansen, M.H., Hurwitz, W.N., and Madow, W.G. Sample Survey Methods and Theory Vol. 1: Methods and Applications. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1953.

44. Havelock. R. G. Planning for innovation: through dissemination and utilization of knowledge. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, 1971.

45. Hayashi, Yujiro "The Information-Centered Society." In The Fututists, ed. by Alvin Toffler. New York: Random House, 1972.

46. Health and Welfare Council of Central Maryland, Inc., Description of operation of the information and referral service. 1962-1971, Baltimore, Maryland; October, 1971.

47. Heidt, S. Knowledge and its consequences: The impact of information on a family planning program. American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 12, No. 3, November 1968, pp. 43-47.

48. Herzog, E. Some assumptions about the poor. Social Service Review, Vol. 38, No. 4, December 1963, pp. 389-402.

49. Hill, R. Judgment and consumership in the management of family resources. Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 47, 1963, pp. 446-60.

50. Hiltz, S. Black and white in the consumer financial system. American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 76, May 1971, pp. 987-98.

51. Hirschi, T. and Selvin, H. C. Principles of Survey Analysis. New York: The Free Press, 1973.

52. Hirschleifer, J. Private and social value of information and the reward of inventive activity. American Economic Review, Vol. 61, Spring 1971, pp. 561-74.

53. Janda, Kenneth. Data Processing: Applications to Political Research. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1969.

54. Josephson, E. Resistance to Community Surveys. The City in the Seventies, ed. Yin, R. K. Itasca, Ill: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1972. pp. 238-249.

55. Kahn, A. J. et. al. Neighborhood information centers: a study and some proposals. New York: Columbia University School of Social Work, 1966.

56. Katz, E. The two-step flow of communication: An up-to-date report on an hypothesis. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 21, Spring 1957, pp. 61-78.

57. Katz, E. and Lazarsfeld, P. F. Personal influence. Glencoe Free Press, 1955.

58. Kilpatrick, P. Source Book of a Study of Occupation Values and the Image of the Federal Service. The Brookings Institution: 1964, pp. 20-24.

59. King, D. W. and Bryant, E. C. The Evaluation of Information Services and Products. Washington, D. C.: Information Resources Press, 1971.

60. Kline, F. G. Media time budgeting as a function of demographics and life style. Journalism Quarterly. 1971, Vol. 2, Summer, pp. 211-221.

61. Kline, F. G. and Tichenor, P. J. Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research. Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research Vol. I. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972.

62. Kurtz, N. R. Gatekeepers: Agents in acculturation. Rural Sociology, Vol. 33, No. 1, March 1968, pp. 63-70.

63. Levin, J. and Taube, G. Bureaucracy and the socially handicapped: a study of lower-class tenants in public housing. Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 54, No. 2, January 1970, pp. 209-219.

64. Levine, S. L., White, P. E., and Paul, B. D. Community interorganizational problems in providing medical cate and social services. American Journal of Public Health, Vol. 53, No. 8, August 1963, pp. 1183-1195.

65. Levine, F. J. and Preston, E. Community resource orientation among low-income groups. Wisconsin Law Review, Vol. 80, No. 1, 1970, pp. 80-115.

66. Lin, Nan. The Study of Human Communication. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1973.

67. McIssac, H., and Wilkinson, H. Clients talk about ther caseworkers. Public Welfare. Vol. 23, No. 4, July 1965, pp. 147-154.

68. Mendolsohn, H. Operation Gap-Stop: A study of the application of communcation techniques in reaching the unreachable poor. University of Denver, Communication Arts Center, February 1968.

69. Menzel, H. The information needs of current scientific research. The Library Quarterly. Vol. 24, 1964, pp. 4-19

70. Meyer, P. Precision Journalism. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1973.

71. Miller, D. C. Handbood of Research Design and Social Measurement. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1970.

72. Morris, C. Aproposed taxonomy for communication research. Department of Communication, Michigan State University, East Lansing (mimeo), 1969.

73. National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee. Advising the Citizen. London, National Council of Social Services, 1961.

74. Noble, J. H., and Wechsler, H. Obstacles in establishing community-wide information systems in health and welfare. Welfare in Review, Vol. 8, No. 6, 1970, pp. 18-26.

75. Ogg, E. Tell me where to turn: the growth of information and referral services. New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1969.

76. Parker, E. B., and Paisley, W. J. Patterns of adult information seeking. Stanford University, Institute of Communications Research, 1966.

77. Parten, M. Surveys, Polls and Samples: Practical Procedures. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1966.

78. Pratt, L. Level of sociological knowledge among health and social workers. Journal of Health and Social Behavior. Vol. 10, No. 1, 1969, pp. 59-65.

79. Price, J. L. The use of new knowledge in organizations. Human Organization, Vol. 23, No. 3, Fall 1964, pp. 224-234.

80. Rainwater, L. Comment...looking back and looking up. Transaction, Vol. 6, No. 9, 1969.

81. Regional Health and Welfare Council, 5,400 inquiries and those who made them. Kansas City, Missouri: Regional Health and Welfare Council, December, 1965.

82. Reiss, Albert J., Jr. Servers and served in service. The City in the Seventies, ed., Yim, R.K. Itasca, Ill: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1972, pp. 105-109.

83. Rieger, J. H., and Anderson, R. C. Information sources and need hierarchies of an adult population in five Michigan counties. Adult Education Journal, Vol. 18, 1968, pp. 155-177.

84. Roe, A. Communication resource centers. American Psychologist, Vol. 25, 1970, pp. 1033-1040.

85. Rotter, J. B. Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Psychological Monographs, Vol. 80, (1, whole no. 609), 1966.

86. Scott, R. A. The selection of clients by social welfare agencies: The case of the blind. Social Problems, Vol. 14, Winter 1967, pp. 248-257.

87. Seeman, L. Alienation, membership, and political knowledge. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol 30, 1966, pp. 353-367.

88. Sjoberg, G., Brymer, A., and Farris, B. Bureaucracy and the lower class. Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 50, April 1966, pp. 325-336.

89. Slonim, Morris J. Sampling. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967.

90. Spitzer, S. F. and Denzin, N. K. Levels of knowledge in an emergent crisis. Social Forces, Vol. 44, 1965-66, pp. 234-37.

91. Stark, F. B. Barriers to client-worker communication at intake. Social Casework. Vol. 40, April 1959, pp. 177-183.

92. Tichenor, P. J. et.al. Mass media flow and differential growth in knowledge. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 34, Summer 1970, pp. 159-170.

93. Tull, Donald S. and Albaum, G. S. Survey Research: A Decisional Approach. New York: Intext Educational Publishers, 1973.

94. Udell, J. G. Prepurchase behavior of buyers of small electrical appliances. Journal of Marketing, Vol. 30, No. 4, 1966, pp. 50-52.

95. U. S. Government. Records, Computers, and the Rights of Citizens. Report of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Automated Personal Data Systems, U. S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. M.I.T., 1973.

96. Voos, H. Information needs in urban areas: A summary of research in methodology. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969

97. Wade, S., and Schramm, W. The mass media as sources of public affairs, science, and health knowledge. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 2, Summer 1969 pp. 197-209.

98. Waisensen, F. B., and Durlak, J. T. Mass media use, information source evaluation, and perception of self and nation. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 31, 1967.

99. Warner, E. S., Murray, A., and Palmour, V. E. Information Needs of Urban Residents. Final Report, The Baltimore Regional Planning Council and Westat, Inc. Prepared for U.S. Office of Education, Division of Library Programs (Contract No. OEC-0-71-4555).

100. Westley, B. H., and Severin, S. J. Some correlates of media credibility. Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 41, Summer 1964, pp. 325-335.

101. Wilson Library Bulletin, Voice of experience, September 1970, pp 45-53.

102. Yamane, T. Elementary Sampling Theory. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice - Hall, Inc., 1967.

103. Zucker, M. Citizen's Advice Bureaus: The British Way. Social Work, Vol. 10, No. 4, October 1965, pp. 85-91.

104. Zweizig, D. L. Predicting Amount of Library Use: An Empirical Study of the Role of the Public Library in the Life of the Adult Public. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation; the Graduate School of Syracuse University, 1973.)

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE DESIGN

1. Description of the Populations

The Baltimore Study of Urban Information Needs was conducted by Westat, Inc., in the Baltimore urbanized area as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. That area had a population of over 1,500,000 persons in 1970, and 512,000 year-around housing units. One objective of the Baltimore Study was to sample the suburbs as well as the more central part of the city, and oversampling of some areas was required.

To avoid the need for oversampling and for weighting of individual cases in reporting the results, the geographical areas selected for the present study were two cities, Syracuse and Elmira. The study was to be conducted in a medium-size city (population between 100,000 and 500,000) and a small city (population under 100,000). The 1970 population of Syracuse was 197,297 with 71,773 year-around housing units. Elmira, the small city, had a 1970 population of 39,945 of which 37,027 were living in 13,639 year-around housing units.

2. The Syracuse Sample

Census data including tract information and block statistics were available for Syracuse, and the 1973 City

Directory (Polk) was also used to draw the sample. Following the multi-stage sampling design used in the Baltimore Study, a probability sample households was first selected. It was determined that with 202 households in the sample a 62 percent rate of return would yield 125 completed interviews.

Since the study director was also to serve as the field supervisor in Syracuse, and since limited funds were available, the 202 households were grouped in clusters of three, for a total of 67 clusters. The sample was then drawn following procedures outlined by Charles Backstrom and Gerald Hursh in Survey Research (6). A sheet containing 11 columns was constructed in this manner:

Column A	(1)	- Numeric listing of clusters 1-67 (202 units÷3 per cluster = 67)
Column B	(307)	- specified housing unit in cluster (begin with random number [307], add "skip interval" [1071] determined by number of housing units [71,773] by number of clusters [67])
Column C	(311)	- cumulated total housing units (added from census tract information)
Column D	(2-203)	- location of sample cluster (census tract and block number)
Column E	(21)	- number of housing units in block (from census tract information)
Column F	(4-5-6)	- location of housing units in block (C-B=F')
Column G	(3-SE-C)	- corner start selection and counting direction (random number [1309] gives corner: 1=NW, 3=SE, 0=SW, 9=NE; c=clockwise, cc=counter-clockwise)

Column H	(4-5-6)	- actual count to find units in cluster (does not always agree with Col. F)
Column I	(1-2-3)	- case numbers assigned to sample
Column J	(128-2)	- page in city directory and column number on that page containing location of specific blocks and household numbers
Column K	(even)	- probable status of house number (moving away from center of city, odd numbers are on left side, even numbers on right side).

The ultimate sampling units were particular households in the city of Syracuse. The primary sampling unit was a specific person within each household. These individual respondents were determined by using a "random respondent form" as shown in Appendix B.

Four of the 202 households in the Syracuse sample were "discovered" by interviewers in the field. From the total number of households in the sample, 32 refusals and vacancies were subtracted. Thus, 107 completed interviews resulted in a 63 percent rate of response.

3. The Elmira Sample

Some of the numerous problems associated with the small-city portion of this replication effort occurred at the stage of sample design for two reasons. First, the Elmira sample was drawn from a distance rather than on location in the city itself. Second, the sample was drawn from a 1970 City

Directory and a city map, the only materials furnished CSIE staff. It was soon discovered that the City Directory contained much inaccurate information; a major flood as a result of Hurricane Agnes in 1972 had drastically altered the geography of the city (and had a profound psychological impact on many of its residents). It was possible to make some adjustments, but the lack of census data for the city made necessary a sample design different from Syracuse.

A probably sample of households was still in order, as the ultimate sample units and primary sample units were the same as in Syracuse. Similarly, a 62 percent response rate meant that the sample should contain 121 households. These were randomly chosen by selecting every 113th and 114th housing unit listed in the City Directory (13,639 housing units÷121 attempts); clustering in groups of two was used for economic reasons. These were then located within four quadrants on the city map.

At the conclusion of the "regular" sample, the street names of certain selected clusters did not appear in the "Index to Elmira Street Names" accompanying the Chemung County Map Guide. These street names were listed in the indexes to West Elmira and Southport, though the 1970 City Directory did not differentiate. Accordingly, the regular sample was expanded, by continuing the established direction count, to include additional listings which were verified

as belonging to the City of Elmira.

Of the 121 households in the Elmira sample, three were "discovered" by interviewers. 48 households either were vacant or listed as nonresponses. Interviewers were able to complete 61 interviews for an 84 percent response rate, though many of the completions were irregular in quality.

Various methods of sampling and techniques of survey research are noted in citations to the literature on p. 19 of this report.

APPENDIX B: FIELD PROCEDURES

Constraints of time and money precluded duplication of extensive field procedures carried out in the Baltimore Study.[41] The listing operation described in the Westat report was omitted in the CSIE project. Studies in other major urban areas should follow the listing methods outlined in The Baltimore Study, though surveys in smaller areas may not need to. Prelisting would have been an asset, especially in the Elmira situation, but was just not possible.

The questionnaires were administered successfully to 107 persons in Syracuse and 61 persons in Elmira. The range in length of time each personal interview required varied between the cities. In Syracuse, as in Baltimore, personal interviews averaged about 50 minutes each, whereas the interviews in Elmira only took about 35 minutes on the average.

The wide range in the length of the interview, as reflected in the different averages in each city, is attributable to two factors. First, there was some variation in the number of information needs identified

---

[41] See The Baltimore Study, pp. 231-238.

per respondent; this was generally true in both locales. Secondly, the time spent in interviewing on the subject of information needs may also vary according to the interest and commitment of the interviewer as well as the respondent. Thus, in most cases, the quality of the interview was directly proportional to the time required by the interview. It appears that maximum results were obtained when the interview averaged closer to 50-55 minutes in length. For purposes of analysis, the data from Syracuse, where interviews averaged the same time as those conducted in Baltimore, were higher in quality than results obtained from Elmira, where several interviews took only 15-20 minutes each.

Two factors were also responsible for the brevity of interviews in Elmira. For one thing, Elmira is an over-surveyed city. In the wake of the severe flood caused by Hurricane Agnes in 1972, researchers flocked to Elmira to measure the economic and psychological damage caused by the catastrophe. (One finding: personal income in Elmira dropped 16 percent from the previous year, while the nation as a whole averaged an 8.9 percent increase in personal income in 1972.) Elmira residents seemed to experience additional shock as the subjects of so much research, and interviewers in the CSIE study discovered very few persons who were willing and/or able to respond completely to the questionnaire. The other problem which

affected the quality of interviews in Elmira was that interviewers there were supervised from a distance of 30 miles. It is felt that adequate control (especially under the circumstances existing in Elmira) is achieved when interviewers receive more direct supervision and support.

The initial interviewers in Syracuse and Elmira were college students, many of whom had prior experience in survey research. In Syracuse, as in Baltimore, a local interviewing service was contracted to complete the interviews. In the Syracuse/Elmira Study attempts were made to racially match interviewers with respondents, though these attempts were not always successful.

Interviewers in both cities received four hours of training which included an introductory description of the purposes of the study, an explanation of procedures for random respondent selection using the screening form, a detailed review of the questionnaire, and a mock interview. In addition, many interviewers were asked to conduct a trial interview to complete their training.

Many of the procedures described in Appendix B of The Baltimore Study were followed at several stages of the Syracuse/Elmira Study. For example, the screening procedures required each interviewer to list all members of a household who were 21 years old or older. This list was

then matched with a pattern number assigned to each household, so that a particular respondent could be selected in a random manner. After the initial attempt, up to three calls were required to complete the screening procedure and the interview. The use of this screening method, while insuring final randomization of the sample, was particularly difficult for some interviewers who were frustrated in callback attempts. The screening form used in this survey is attached to this appendix.

CSIE provided interviewers with a packet containing a manual of specific interviewing instructions, an identification card showing the interviewer's name and CSIE phone number, a cover letter of introduction (included in this appendix), a list of specific assignments, a personal income card, screening forms, and questionnaires. Various methods were used to pay interviewers; some were paid by the hour and others were paid on the basis of completed interviews. In some cases, a bonus was paid as an incentive to complete several interviews.

In addition to field supervision (which was not altogether satisfactory), the work of interviewers was validated by telephone to check on the quality of the conduct of the interview and to correct interviewing errors. This method of in-process editing of questionnaires was

found to be helpful both to supervisors and to interviewing staff. Overall, 15 percent of the 168 total questionnaires were subject to telephone validation by the study director. A copy of the form used for this purpose is included here.

Center for the Study of
Information & Education
131 Huntington Hall
Syracuse, New York 13210

SCREENING FORM

SYRACUSE/ELMIRA INFORMATION STUDY

INTERVIEWER'S NAME _____

SEGMENT NO. _____ TRACT NO. _____

BLOCK NO. _____ HOUSEHOLD NO. _____

RESPONDENT'S ADDRESS _____

CITY OR COUNTY _____

THIS SCREENING FORM SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH A RESPONSIBLE ADULT AGE 21 OR OVER WHO IS A MEMBER OF THIS HOUSEHOLD.

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I'm _____ from _____.
We are doing a study for The Center for the Study of Information and Education. We are talking to people in all areas of _____.
(Explain study)

May I speak to an adult member of this household?

	DATE	TIME	RESULT OF CALL (Specify)
1ST CALL			
2ND CALL			
3RD CALL			
4TH CALL			

Result of Call Legend
I - Interview
A - Appointment made
NA - No responsible adult at home
NH - No one at home
V - Vacant
R - Refusal

In order to know which question to ask of whom, I need to know a little bit about the members of your household. Could you tell me:

1. How many members of this household are 21 years of age or older? _____

   Have you included any roomers or boarders who might be living here? Have you included yourself in the number you gave me?

IF NO, CORRECT ABOVE

2. Now I wonder if you could tell me the first names and ages of the *(give number)* persons who are 21 years of age and older starting with the youngest.

RECORD FROM YOUNGEST TO OLDEST NAMES IN COLUMN A AND AGES IN COLUMN B OF SCREENING TABLE.

	COLUMN A Names of Persons 21 and older	COLUMN B Age	COLUMN C Selected Respondents
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

USE RANDOM RESPONDENT SHEET TO SELECT RESPONDENT AND PLACE A CHECK MARK IN COLUMN C BESIDE EACH SELECTED RESPONDENT.

Center
for the Study of
Information and
Education

CSIE

Dear Citizen:

The Center for the Study of Information and Education (CSIE) is conducting a survey of persons in Elmira in an effort to determine their needs for information, the way in which they seek information, and the kinds of responses they receive from information sources. It is hoped that the responses and comments obtained from those persons interviewed will help public agencies provide reliable and timely information to all citizens.

Your household was selected from all those in Elmira to receive this visit from our interviewer this month. It is important that each household selected be represented in the final results, so we would very much appreciate your cooperation in talking with this CSIE interviewer. You may be sure that your individual responses and comments will remain strictly confidential. If you have any questions about this study, please call or write to me at our Syracuse office, or you may speak with Mrs. Mary Ann Launt at Elmira College (734-3911, Ext. 294).

Thank you for your help with this important matter.

Sincerely,

Gerald M. Gee

Gerald M. Gee
Associate Director

GMG/mm

130 Huntington Hall | Syracuse University | Syracuse, New York 13210 | (315) 423-2153

Center
for the Study of
Information and
Education

130 Huntington Hall
Syracuse University
Syracuse, N.Y. 13210

PHONE: 315-423-2153

STUDY NO._____

AREA:_____

TELEPHONE VALIDATION FORM

Date_____

Time_____ AM _____ PM

Name of
Interviewer_____

RESPONDENT:_____

ADDRESS:_____

AREA CODE_____ PHONE NO._____

Hello, this is the Center for the Study of Information and Education. We are checking on the work of our representative who interviewed you recently concerning_____. Are you the person who was interviewed? (IF NOT, ASK TO SPEAK TO THAT PERSON).

Would you mind answering a few questions?

1. Was the interviewer courteous at all times?_____
2. Did you understand all the questions?_____
3. About how long did the interview take?_____

_____

4. Do you recall what your most important problem or question was?_____

_____

_____

5. _____

_____

6. Would you mind telling me your date of birth?_____
7. Sex (circle one): Male Female

Thank you for your cooperation!

[illegible]lidated by:_____

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

SYRACUSE/ELMIRA

INFORMATION STUDY

INTERVIEWER'S NAME _____ DATE _____

SEGMENT NO. _____ TRACT NO. _____ TIME INTERVIEW BEGAN _____ AM PM

BLOCK NO. _____ HOUSEHOLD NO. ____ TIME INTERVIEW ENDED _____ AM PM

RESPONDENT'S ADDRESS _____

CITY OR COUNTY _____

LINE NUMBER FROM

SCREENING FORM _____

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION
Syracuse University
130 Huntington Hall
Syracuse, New York 13210

with permission of Westat, Inc., Research Division, Rockville, Maryland

INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm _____ from _____.
doing a study for the Center for the Study of Information and Education at Syracuse University. We are talking to people living in all areas of Syracuse/Elmira. In this study we want to find out what kinds of questions come up in people's lives that they have trouble getting answers to. We are interested in finding out about questions that come up on any subject.

Only people like yourself can give the information we need. Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential; in fact, we are not asking for the last name of any person we interview. If I could have a few minutes of your time, I'd like to explain a little more about what we're doing.

SECTION I

1. I'd like you to think back over the past few days or weeks and tell me if you can think of an instance when you needed useful and reliable information about something and you found it difficult to get. Can you think of something like that?

   ☐ NO → *PROBES:* We're interested in questions you've had on any subject.

   For example, has anything come up when you've needed some help *(PAUSE)* or you've needed to know what to do *(PAUSE)* or maybe you just needed some information.

IF NO, GO TO Q.2 ON PAGE 2

A. DESCRIPTION OF QUESTION OR PROBLEM: *(Get a thorough description using probes such as: What information did you need? What else did you need to know about this?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PROBE: Can you think of anything else like that - an instance when you've found it difficult to get information to answer a question or solve a problem?

B. DESCRIPTION OF QUESTION OR PROBLEM: *(Get a thorough description using probes such as: What information did you need? What else did you need to know about this?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

PROBE: Anything else?

C. DESCRIPTION OF QUESTION OR PROBLEM: *(Get a thorough description using probes such as: What information did you need? What else did you need to know about this?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

INTERVIEWER: IF A TOPIC AREA WAS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED BY THE RESPONDENT, INSERT WORDING IN ITALICS FOR Q.2-6.

NEIGHBORHOOD

2. Let's talk for a minute *(a little more)* about your neighborhood. Some other people we've talked to in _____ have complained about problems in their neighborhoods. Think about your own neighborhood - can you think of anything in this neighborhood that you personally or members of your family have had questions or concerns about recently *(that you haven't already mentioned)*?

☐ NO ——→ *Go to Q.3*

Could you tell me about it? *(Get a thorough description of a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

CONSUMER

3. Today people need to make every dollar go a long way. Sometimes they have questions about what products to buy or complaints about things they've bought. Have you personally or members of your family had any questions or concerns like this recently *(that you haven't already mentioned)*?

☐ NO ——→ *Go to Q.4*

Could you tell me about it? *(Get a thorough description of a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

HOUSING

4. Let's talk *(again)* about housing. Some other people we've talked to are looking for another place to live or are trying to improve their current housing. Have you personally or members of your family had any questions or concerns about housing recently *(that you haven't already mentioned)*?

☐ NO ——→ *Go to Q.5*

Could you tell me about it? *(Get a thorough description of a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

EMPLOYMENT

5. Now let's talk *(again)* about jobs. Has anything come up recently where you have had questions concerning a job or employment for yourself or members of your family *(that you haven't already mentioned)*?

☐ NO ——→ *Go to next page*

Could you tell me about it? *(Get a thorough description of a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

We've talked about neighborhood conditions, housing, employment, and getting the most for your money. These are just a few of the things people have questions about. I have a list of subjects that people in_____ have mentioned in talking about the kinds of questions that have recently come up in their lives. I'd like to know if you've had questions recently about any of these topics.

6. How about *(EACH TOPIC)*. Have you personally or have any members of your family had any questions or concerns about *(EACH TOPIC)* lately *(that you haven't already mentioned)*?

Education and schooling	☐ NO
Health.	☐ NO
Transportation.	☐ NO
Recreation and culture.	☐ NO
Financial matters or assistance	☐ NO
Discrimination.	☐ NO
Day care.	☐ NO
Family planning/birth control .	☐ NO
Legal problems.	☐ NO
Crime and safety.	☐ NO
Anything else?.	☐ NO

FILL IN A SECTION BELOW FOR ANY TOPIC RESPONDENT SAYS HE HAS HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT. MARK "NO" TO EACH TOPIC IN THE LIST THAT RESPONDENT HAD NO QUESTIONS ABOUT.

A. *Topic:* _____

What were these questions or concerns? *(PROBE for a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

B. *Topic:* _____

What were these questions or concerns? *(PROBE for a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. *Topic:* _____

What were these questions or concerns? *(PROBE for a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

D. *Topic:* _____

What were these questions or concerns? *(PROBE for a SPECIFIC problem/question.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION II

You've mentioned several questions that you've had recently - *(Name problems/questions mentioned by respondent in Q.1 - Q.6).*

1. A. If you had to pick one of these, which one would you say has been the most important to you; that is, the one that you have been concerned about most during the past few days or weeks?

   (Describe problem/question) _____

   B. And which one would you say has been the second most important question you've had in the past few days or weeks?

   (Describe problem/question) _____

I'd like to discuss one of these questions in a little more detail with you. Let's take *(problem/question mentioned as most important).*

2. How long has it been since this problem/question first came up?

   _____ # days or _____ # weeks or _____ # months or _____ # years

3. Have you tried to get information from anyone about this?

   ☐ YES ——→ *Go to Q.5 in the middle of page 7*
   ☐ NO ——→ *PROBE:* For instance, have you talked to anybody about it or have you done anything to get an answer to this question or solution to this problem?

      ☐ YES ——→ *Go to Q.5 in the middle of page 7*
      ☐ NO ——→ *Ask Q.4, top of page 7*

4. A. Do you think there is anyone who would have information about this?

☐ YES ——→ Who? *(Specify)* _____

_____

_____

How do you know that *(person/organization mentioned above)* might have this information?

_____

_____

_____

☐ NO ——→ *Go to page 12*

B. Is there any particular reason why you haven't tried to get this information yet?

☐ YES ——→ What reason? _____

_____

_____

☐ NO ——→ *Go to page 12*

5. Could you tell me how you've gone about it - that is, who have you contacted and what have you done? *(Record verbatim the respondent's description of what he did and who he spoke to.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS PERSONS HE CONTACTED (INCLUDE PERSONS CONTACTED AT ORGANIZATIONS, FRIENDS, RELATIVES, CO-WORKERS, ETC.), ASK Q.6. OTHERS GO TO Q.7 ON PAGE 12.

6. You mentioned some contacts you made to get information about this problem/question. Altogether, how many people have you spoken to or contacted to get some information?

_____

Now, I'd like to find out a little about each contact you made. Let's take the first person you contacted. *(Ask A-J in the table for each person contacted.)*

	A		B		C	D	E
	Is this person a male or female?		Is he/she someone you knew personally?		*If Yes to B:* How do you happen to know him/her? *(Specify friend, relative, co-worker, family doctor, etc.)*	What is his/her occupation? *(Specify also not working, housewife, student, retired)*	*If Person Works:* What kind of a place does he/she work in? *(Probe for name of organization and type of industry)*
	M	F	YES	NO			
1st							
2nd							
3rd							

F	G			H			I	J
What information or suggestions did he/she give you? *(Probe for specific information given or solutions recommended.)*	Was this information very helpful, helpful, or not so helpful?			How did you contact him/her - by phone (PH), in person (P), or by letter (L)? *(Check all that apply)*			How many times have you contacted him/her about this question/problem? *(Record number of times)*	How did you know to contact this person about your question/problem? *(Probe for how respondent heard or knew that this person might be able to help.)*
	VH	H	NH	PH	P	L		

6. *(Continue asking A-J for each person contacted.)*

	A		B		C	D	E
	Is this person a male or female?		Is he/she someone you knew personally?		*If Yes to B:* How do you happen to know him/her? *(Specify friend, relative, co-worker, family doctor, etc.)*	What is his/her occupation? *(Specify also not working, housewife, student, retired)*	*If Person Works:* What kind of a place does he/she work in? *(Probe for name of organization and type of industry)*
	M	F	YES	NO			
4th							
5th							
6th							

F	G			H			I	J
What information or suggestions did he/she give you? *(Probe for specific information given or solutions recommended)*	Was this information very helpful, helpful, or not so helpful?			How did you contact him/her - by phone (PH), in person (P), or by letter (L)? *(Check all that apply)*			How many times have you contacted him/her about this question/problem? *(Record number of times)*	How did you know to contact this person about your question/problem? *(Probe for how respondent heard or knew that this person might be able to help)*
	VH	H	NH	PH	P	L		

ALL RESPONDENTS

Now I'd like to talk about some other ways you may have gotten some information about this question/problem.

	7 TELEVISION	8 RADIO	9 NEWSPAPER
A.	Have you seen anything on a <u>television</u> program concerning this kind of question/problem? ☐ NO ——→ *(GO TO 8)* ☐ YES	Have you heard anything on the <u>radio</u> about this kind of question/problem? ☐ NO ——→ *(GO TO 9)* ☐ YES	Have you read anything in a <u>newspaper</u> concerning this kind of question/problem? ☐ NO ——→ *(GO TO 10)* ☐ YES
B.	What kind of program was that? What station?	What kind of program was that? What station?	What newspaper? What kind of article?
C.	What was said about this kind of question/problem?	What was said about this kind of question/problem?	What was said about this kind of question/problem?
D.	Was this information: Very helpful?. . . 1 Helpful? . . . . . 2 Not so helpful?. . 3	Was this information: Very helpful?. . . 1 Helpful? . . . . . 2 Not so helpful?. . 3	Was this information: Very helpful?. . . 1 Helpful? . . . . . 2 Not so helpful?. . 3

10 MAGAZINE	11 BOOKS
Have you seen anything in a magazine concerning this kind of question/problem? ☐ NO ——————→ *(GO TO 11)* ☐ YES	Was there anything else you saw or read in a book or in a pamphlet about this kind of question/problem? ☐ NO ——————→ *(GO TO 12)* ☐ YES
What magazine? What kind of article?	What book/pamphlet was it?
What was said about this kind of question/problem?	What was said in the book/pamphlet?
Was this information: Very helpful?. . . 1 Helpful? . . . . . 2 Not so helpful?. . 3	Was this information: Very helpful?. . . 1 Helpful? . . . . . 2 Not so helpful?. . 3

12. Did you use a library to get any information or materials concerning this question/problem?

☐ YES

A. Which library? Where is it located?

_____

_____

_____

ASK C

☐ NO

B. Is there any particular reason why you didn't go to a library to get information?

_____

_____

_____

GO TO NEXT PAGE

C. What kind of information or materials? *(Specify whether books, newspapers, magazines, or other.)*

_____

_____

_____

D. Did you find this information:

Very helpful? 1
Helpful?. 2
Not so helpful? 3

E. In getting this information, were you assisted by a librarian or other staff member?

No. . . . . *(GO TO NEXT PAGE)*. 1
Yes 2

F. Was this assistance:

Very helpful?. 1
Helpful? 2
Not so helpful?. 3

INTERVIEWER - REFER BACK TO Q. 6-12 AND CHECK ONE:

☐ RESPONDENT USED NO SOURCES OF INFORMATION. GO TO Q.14.

☐ RESPONDENT GOT INFORMATION FROM ONLY ONE SOURCE (E.G., FROM ONE PERSON ONLY OR FROM A MAGAZINE ONLY). GO TO Q.14.

☐ RESPONDENT GOT INFORMATION FROM TWO OR MORE SOURCES (E.G., FROM TWO PERSONS OR FROM A PERSON AND A TV PROGRAM). ENUMERATE EACH SOURCE RESPONDENT USED IN LEAD-IN AND ASK Q.13.

LEAD-IN:

We've talked about various ways you've tried to get information -

- o *each person contacted from Q.6*
- o *television from Q.7*
- o *radio from Q.8*
- o *newspaper from Q.9*
- o *magazine from Q.10*
- o *books/pamphlets from Q.11*
- o *library materials and/or library staff from Q.12*

13. Which one of these things you've tried has given you the best information - that is, which one has been most helpful to you in getting an answer to this question or a solution to this problem? *(Specify the source of information, i.e., the particular person spoken to or the specific newspaper article and so on.)*

_____

14. In your opinion do you feel that you have gotten a satisfactory answer to your question or solution to your problem at the present time?

Yes, definitely . . . . *(GO TO SECTION III, page 16).*	1
Yes, sort of.	2
No, still working on it	3
No.	4

15. What else do you plan to do to get a satisfactory answer to your question or solution to your problem? *(PROBE:* Anything else?)

_____

_____

_____

SECTION III

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your day-to-day contacts with other people:

1. Please think for a moment of the people you've seen and talked to in the past week. How many people have you had conversations with in the past week who are:

   A. Relatives and in-laws not living in your household?. . . . ___

   B. Your present neighbors?. . . . . ___

   C. Friends or personal acquaintances? . . . . . ___

   D. People you work with? (*PROBE* - only the ones you had conversations with last week.) . . . . . ___

   E. People who are not friends, relatives, neighbors, or co-workers - just other people you had conversations with?. . . . . ___

2. Compared with other people that you are friends with, would you say that you are more or less likely than most of them to be asked for information or advice about:

   A. Things that go on in the neighborhood?

   More . . 1
   Same . . 2
   Less . . 3

   B. Local politics in _____

   More . . 1
   Same . . 2
   Less . . 3

C. Where to go to buy things?

More . . 1
Same . . 2
Less . . 3

D. Financial matters such as getting credit, filing taxes, or questions about insurance, or investments?

More . . 1
Same . . 2
Less . . 3

E. Health problems such as what to do when people are sick or where to get the proper care?

More . . 1
Same . . 2
Less . . 3

F. Making home repairs?

More . . 1
Same . . 2
Less . . 3

G. Bringing up children?

More . . 1
Same . . 2
Less . . 3

3. Are you a member of any organizations, clubs, or other groups? These might include church groups, unions, professional associations, school organizations, neighborhood groups, and so on.

☐ NO ——→ *Go to SECTION IV on page 18*
☐ YES ——→ Could you please give me the names of these groups? *(List names below)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION IV

Next I'd like to ask you some questions about other ways people sometimes get information such as by going to libraries, reading magazines and newspapers, and so on.

1. A. When was the last time you went to a library or contacted a library?

Less than a year ago. . . . . *(GO TO Q.2)*. 1
A year or more ago. 2

B. *IF A YEAR OR MORE AGO:* Is there any particular reason why you haven't used a library since then?

_____

_____

_____

GO TO Q.4 ON PAGE 19

2. A. Could you tell me the names of the libraries you've used in the past year and where they are located? *(Record in Col. A of table below.)*

B. *For each library*: About how many times have you been to *(each library)* in the past year? *(Record in Col. B of table below.)*

C. *For each library*: What means of transportation do you usually use to get to *(each library)? (Specify private automobile, public transportation, taxi, walk, etc. Record in Col. C of table below.)*

D. *For each library*: Did you ever contact *(each library)* by telephone in the past year? *IF YES*: About how many times? *(Record in Col. D of table below.)*

	A Name Libraries and Location	B Times Visited	C Transportation	D Times Phoned
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

3. What do you usually go to or contact a library for? *(Check all that apply)*

To take children. . . . . ☐
To get materials for leisure use. . . . . ☐
To get information. . . . . ☐
To use as a place of study or work. . . . . ☐
Other (Specify) _____ ☐

_____

4. Are there any magazines that you read regularly (that is, spend 20 minutes or more with most issues)?

☐ NO ——→ *Go to Q.5*
☐ YES ——→ Which ones? *(List names below)*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

5. Are there any newspapers that you read regularly (that is, spend 10 minutes or more with most issues)?

☐ NO ——→ *Go to Q.6*
☐ YES ——→ Which ones? *(PROBE also for neighborhood or community newspapers)*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

6. A. Suppose you had to get some information about your income tax or about some personal matter or something like that and the only time you could call to get the information you needed was between 8:30 in the morning and 4:30 in the afternoon on weekdays. Would it be difficult for you to use a telephone to call during these hours or weekdays?

Yes. 1
No . . .*(GO TO C)*. 2

B. *IF DIFFICULT*: Why would it be difficult?

_____
_____
_____

C. When would be the most convenient time for you to make such a phone call? *(PROBE for times and days of the week)*

_____
_____

7. Do you have a telephone in working order here at home?

Yes. . . 1
No . . . 2

8. A. Do you have any television sets in working order?

YES. How many? _____. 1
NO . . . . . *(GO TO Q.9)*. 2

B. *IF YES*: Is any set equipped to receive UHF broadcasts, that is, channels 14 to 83?

Yes. . . 1
No . . . 2

9. Do you have any radios? *(Include car radios)*

YES. How many? _____. . . 1
NO 2

10. A. Do you or members of your family own any cars?

YES. How many? _____. . . 1
NO 2

B. What is your major means of transportation?

_____

SECTION V

We need to get some background information about all the people we're interviewing. I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself and your family.

1. A. How many members of your family are living here including yourself? *(Include only persons related to respondent.)*

_____ *(If only one member, go to Q.2 on page 24)*

B. Are there any persons under 21 in your family who are living here with you? *(Include respondent's children and children related to respondent.)*

YES. How many? _____. . . 1
NO 2

C. Are there any persons 65 or older in your family living here with you? *(Exclude respondent)*

YES. How many? _____. . . 1
No 2

D. Who is the head of this family?

Respondent. . . . . *(GO TO Q.2 ON PAGE 24).* 1
Respondent's spouse 2
Respondent's mother or father 3
Respondent's brother or sister. 4
Other related to respondent *(Specify)* . . . 5

_____

E. What is his/her occupation? *(PROBE for job title. If not working, retired, student, or housewife, specify and go to Q.2 on page 24.)*

_____

_____

F. *IF WORKING*: What kind of work does he/she do? *(PROBE for specific kind of work, for example: What are his/her most important duties?)*

_____

_____

G. *IF WORKING*: What kind of place does he/she work in? *(PROBE for type of industry.)*

_____

_____

2. A. What is your occupation? *(PROBE for job title. If not working, retired, student, or housewife, specify and go to Q.3.)*

_____

_____

B. *IF WORKING*: What kind of work do you do? *(PROBE for specific kind of work, for example: What are your most important duties?)*

_____

_____

C. *IF WORKING*: What kind of place do you work in? *(PROBE for type of industry.)*

_____

_____

3. Are you married, widowed, divorced, separated or have you never been married?

Married. 1
Widowed. 2
Divorced 3
Separated. 4
Never been married . . 5

4. What was the highest grade in school you completed? *(Circle "12" for a GED or high school equivalency degree.)*

Elementary: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
High School: 9 10 11 12
College: 13 14 15 16
Post Graduate: 17+

5. A. Are your living quarters owned or rented?

Owned (or being bought by family) 1
Rented. 2
Other *(Specify)* _____ 3

_____

B. *CHECK BY OBSERVATION (ASK IF NECESSARY):*

One-family house. 1
A building for two or more families 2

C. How long have you lived in this house (or apartment)?

_____ # months or _____ # years *(If less than 5 years, ask D. Others go to Q.6.)*

D. How many times have you moved in the last five years?

Times moved _____

6. What is your date of birth?

____ ____ ____
month day year

7. I need to know approximately your annual family income before taxes. *(Show income card)* In which of these broad groups does your total family income from all sources fall. Just give me the letter on the right. Be sure to include your own income as well as income of members of your family who live with you.

If respondent gives wages based on a weekly, monthly, or other time period which is not annual and has no other source of family income record gross wages and time period below:

$_____ *per* _____
round to nearest dollar *time period*

A. Under $2,000. 1
B. $ 2,000 - $ 3,999 2
C. $ 4,000 - $ 5,999 3
D. $ 6,000 - $ 7,999 4
E. $ 8,000 - $ 9,999 5
F. $10,000 - $14,999 6
G. $15,000 - $19,999 7
H. $20,000 and over. 8

8. Is there a telephone number where you can be reached so that my supervisor can verify that I was here?

Telephone Number _____

INTERVIEWER COMPLETE AFTER INTERVIEW:

1. Sex
Male. 1
Female. 2

2. Race
White 1
Black 2
Other ethnic *(Specify)*. 3

_____

Section V. "Discovered Households" *

9. Are there any other living quarters, either occupied or vacant, at this address?

a) No

b) Yes, vacant

c) Yes, occupied *

Interviewer:

Circle the letter of the proper response. If (c), use the following pattern numbers, in sequence, for selecting respondents in these discovered hsehlds.

*Pattern No:

9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14