



3 1293 10452 2028



RETURNING MATERIALS:

Place in book drop to  
remove this checkout from  
your record. FINES will  
be charged if book is  
returned after the date  
stamped below.

P <del>2024</del>	132	
----------------------	-----	--

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY INTO THE SOCIAL LIVES  
OF PERSONS FORMERLY CLASSIFIED AS  
BEING MENTALLY RETARDED

By

Robert Frank Williams

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Anthropology

1980



## ABSTRACT

### AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY INTO THE SOCIAL LIVES OF PERSONS FORMERLY CLASSIFIED AS BEING MENTALLY RETARDED

By

Robert Frank Williams

This dissertation reports on an anthropological study carried out with a group of adults who had been classified as mentally retarded during their youth.

In previous studies it has been noted that individuals classified during their childhood or youth as being mildly or educably retarded seem to "disappear" into the community upon leaving school. The most common assumption drawn from such disappearances has been that outside of an academic environment these individuals are no longer recognized as being mentally retarded, and that the intellectual and educational deficiencies which they exhibited in school do not, even if they continue to exist, constitute a significant handicap for them in adult life.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate what in fact happens to such individuals once they grow up and "disappear" into the community, and whether their intellectual and educational deficiencies continue to affect their social/community adaptation as



adults. Thirty-one Caucasian adults who had been classified during their youth as being mildly or educably retarded (IQ range, 50 to 75) were the primary subjects of this study. These subjects, who were between 26 and 28 years of age when first located, were interviewed and observed over a two-year period. During this time a wide variety of information was collected from the subjects regarding their social behavior and perceptions.

Among the major findings of this study which are described and analyzed in some detail:

IQ Scores.--The subjects' current IQ scores are an average 13 points higher than their school-age IQ scores (78.4 vs. 65.4), meaning that many of the subjects can no longer be considered mentally retarded.

Education and Schooling.--While the subjects do not consider themselves to be, or have been, mentally retarded, most feel their placement in special education classes was justified because they were "slow learners" while in school. Consistent with this feeling, the subjects consider their continuing academic deficiencies and not the stigma of their special education placement to be the primary legacy of their schooling.

Employment and Income.--While the subjects were experiencing an extraordinarily high rate of unemployment during the study the financial assistance provided by family and friends allowed almost all of them to maintain a fairly normal working-class life style. An analysis of the subjects' work histories suggests that the

primary factor affecting their employment and earnings was not IQs nor job skills, but who the subjects worked for.

Social and Family Life.--The higher IQ subjects in this study were significantly more apt to have been married, and to have remained married than the lower IQ subjects. In addition, in comparison with the higher IQ subjects the lower IQ subjects were to an extraordinary degree without close friends and, except for their families, without any regular social ties to the community at large.

World View and Religion.--The social universe of the subjects tends to be rather restricted and concrete in nature, with family and work being considered matters of prime importance. In turn, while the subjects are not church-goers, the value they place on social reciprocity can be considered an unarticulated religious theme in their lives.

In essence, this study found that subjects formerly identified as being mildly or educably retarded are able, as adults, to lose their mentally retarded label and live independently in the community. For most of these individuals, however, their over-all social and personal adjustment to the community can be considered rather marginal, with their most severe adjustment difficulties existing in the area of interpersonal relationships.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My first thanks go to the subjects of this study, individuals who I came to know and respect. Their tolerance and support for my research efforts went far beyond that which I had any right to expect.

A great deal of thanks also goes to the members of my committee, each of whom contributed in a particular and important way to this dissertation. To Harry Raulet I owe thanks for his patience and for his numerous insights into this field of study, most of which I am only now beginning to fully appreciate. William Derman offered timely suggestions and support throughout the writing of this dissertation. Susan Scheiner, in turn, deserves thanks for attempting the arduous task of making me write this dissertation in a clear, logical, and concise manner.

I am grateful to the College of Human Medicine, Michigan State University, for their financial support of this study. Bernard Gallin also deserves thanks for helping make this support possible.

Richard Warren of the Keeler Public School System deserves thanks for his support of this study. His assistance and enthusiasm were invaluable in getting this study started.

I am fortunate to have numerous individuals to whom I can offer thanks for their "informal" role in this work. My parents,

Frank and Vivian Williams, provided the support that only loving parents can. Laura DeLind and Celeste Resh demonstrated why they are such valuable friends by proof-reading this dissertation. Jim Resh and Doug DeLind, in turn, proved equally valuable with their unfailing supply of bad jokes and good coffee.

I also want to thank Jo Grandstaff for typing this dissertation, and for her cheerfulness even in the face of such a task.

Last, but not least, I want to thank Mary Marrah. No words can adequately express my appreciation for her love and attention during the writing of this dissertation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM DEFINITION .....	1
Background to Present Study .....	2
Objectives of Study .....	11
Organization of Dissertation .....	12
II. COMMUNITY SETTING, METHODOLOGY, AND SUBJECTS OF STUDY .....	15
Community Setting .....	15
Historical Accounts of Keeler and General Area .....	15
Contemporary Description of Keeler and General Area .....	20
Methodology .....	23
Selection of Sample Population .....	23
Data Collection .....	29
General Characteristics of Subjects .....	33
Family Background .....	34
School .....	39
Social Life as Juveniles .....	40
Marriage .....	41
Employment .....	44
Health .....	45
Social Lives as Adults .....	48
Religion .....	51
Most Important Matters in the Subjects' Lives .....	53
III. SCHOOLING .....	58
The Social Context of the Subjects' Schooling .....	58
The Subjects' Perspective on School .....	62
Background Information on the Subjects' Schooling ..	62
General Perspectives on School and Teachers .....	64
Perspectives on Special Education Classes and Teachers .....	76
Relevance of the Special Education Curriculum to the Subjects' Current Lives .....	93

Chapter	Page
Labeling in School and its Social Consequences .....	105
Labeling Theory: A Review .....	106
Labeling and Its Consequences: The Subjects' Perspective .....	108
Renegotiating the Retarded Label: An Analysis and Summary .....	117
The Subjects' Schooling: General Conclusions .....	122
IV. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME .....	125
Introduction .....	125
Employment Situation of Subjects .....	130
Earnings and Income .....	133
Determinates of Employment and Income .....	138
Societal Perceptions Regarding the Meaning of Employment and Income .....	162
Subjects' Perceptions Regarding Employment and Income .....	168
Income and Wages .....	171
Jobs .....	179
Concluding Remarks .....	195
V. SOCIAL LIFE .....	199
Introduction .....	199
Description and Analysis of Subjects' Social Lives ...	202
Family and Marriage .....	203
Anti-Social Behavior .....	220
Citizenship .....	229
Social Group Participation .....	236
Organizational Activities .....	259
Summary and Conclusions .....	261
VI. WORLD VIEW AND RELIGION .....	263
Introduction .....	263
A Theoretical Perspective on World View and Religion, and its Implications for the Mentally Retarded .....	263
The Subjects' World View and Religious Orientation ...	270
World View .....	270
Religious Orientation .....	287
The Invisible Religion: Matters of Ultimate Concern in the Lives of the Subjects .....	304
VII. GENERAL ANALYSIS OF DATA: TOWARD A THEORY OF INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE .....	316
Focus of This Analysis .....	316

Chapter	Page
Background to This Analysis .....	317
General Theoretical Orientation .....	318
Intelligence and Social Competency .....	321
Social Competence .....	321
Empathy .....	323
Summary Remarks .....	342
VIII. CONCLUSION .....	344
Summary of Findings .....	344
General Themes in the Subjects' Lives .....	350
Implications and Suggestions for Future Research ....	359
APPENDICES .....	369
A. Intelligence Testing, Intelligence, and the Subjects' IQs .....	370
B. The Kiddie Mach Test: Machiavellianism Among the Subjects .....	389
C. Consent Form .....	405
REFERENCES .....	407

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 General Data on the 105 Potential Subjects in the Study .....	25
2.2 Comparative Data on the Six Groupings of Individuals in the Sample Population .....	26
2.3 Order and Subject-Matter of Structured Interviews ....	31
2.4 Parental Education Levels .....	36
2.5 Family Size and Birth Order .....	37
2.6 Current Marital and Reproductive Rates .....	43
2.7 Most Important Things in the Subjects' Lives .....	54
3.1 Years of School Completed by Subjects .....	64
3.2 How Subjects Think School Has Helped the Most .....	71
3.3 What Subjects Would Want to Learn about Most if They Were to Return to School .....	71
3.4 Qualities Subjects Mentioned as Making for a Good Teacher .....	73
3.5 Qualities Subjects Liked Most in the Teachers They Had Had in School .....	74
3.6 Qualities Subject Mentioned as Characterizing Poor Teachers .....	74
3.7 Qualities Subjects Disliked Most in Their Teachers ...	75
3.8 Grade Subjects Entered Special Education Program .....	79
3.9 General Feelings of Subjects to Their Special Education Placement .....	84
3.10 Activities in Which Subjects Used Math the Most .....	98



Table	Page
4.1 Usual Occupation of Subjects .....	132
4.2 Source and Amounts of Non-Earned Income .....	135
4.3 Total Earnings and Income for Subjects .....	136
4.4 Unemployment Rate in County Area .....	146
4.5 Employment Figures for Employed and Unemployed Subjects .....	147
4.6 Occupational Grouping .....	155
4.7 Length of Time Subjects Have Held Present Job .....	157
4.8 Percentage of Time Employed Since Leaving School .....	158
4.9 Reasons for Leaving Jobs .....	159
4.10 Average Wages According to Occupational Group .....	160
4.11 Hypothetical and Real Wage Rates .....	172
4.12 General Job Satisfaction Rating .....	181
4.13 Desired Occupations .....	184
4.14 Characteristics of "Boring" and "Exciting" Jobs .....	188
5.1 IQ Scores of Married, Divorced, and Single Subjects .	205
5.2 Marital Rates for Subjects and Census Counterparts ...	206
5.3 Factors Seen by Subjects as Most Influential in a Successful Marriage and in Causing Divorce .....	217
5.4 Factors Seen by Subjects as Most Important in Causing People to Become Criminals .....	226
5.5 Recreational Activities of Subjects .....	238
5.6 Leisure Activities of Subjects .....	239
5.7 Subjects' Favorite Informal Social Activities .....	250
5.8 Where Subjects Initially Met Their Present Friends ...	256
5.9 Most Important Quality in a Friend .....	257

Table		Page
6.1	The Most Important Things in the Lives of the 31 Subjects .....	273
6.2	What Subjects Wish for in Their Lives .....	275
6.3	Major Causes of People Being Good .....	278
6.4	Major Causes of People Being Bad .....	280
6.5	Major Causes of People's Imperfections .....	281
6.6	Subjects' Perceptions Regarding the Nature of God ....	293
6.7	Subjects' Views on Why People go to Heaven or Hell ...	294
A-1	The Subjects' Current and School-Age IQ Scores .....	379
A-2	Classification of Subject's Current IQ Scores .....	380
B-1	Group Characteristics .....	397
B-2	Differences in Mach Scores Between the Groups .....	399

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

In recent years studies have repeatedly noted that many individuals classified during their childhood or youth as being mildly or educably retarded (IQs from 50 to 75) seem to simply disappear into the community upon leaving school. Typically, the assumption drawn from such disappearances is that outside of an academic environment these individuals are no longer recognized as being mentally retarded, and that the intellectual and educational deficiencies they previously exhibited in school do not, even if they continue to exist, constitute a significant handicap for them in adult life. Reflective of this assumption is Cobb's summary comment that

mildly retarded men and women have, with surprising frequency, assumed a wide range of semi-skilled and even skilled jobs and have assimilated totally into the normal community, marrying, raising children and maintaining stable and self-sufficient homes not at all characterized as culturally deficient (1972:1).

Given the widespread support this assumption has received, it would appear that another study concerning the social adaptation of persons classified as mildly retarded would be needless. However, as Edgerton has pointed out, studies done with mildly retarded individuals characteristically have two major shortcomings which leave

this assumption's validity in doubt; they are superficial and impersonal:

These studies relate a host of details about marriage statistics, occupation, law violation, and, almost inevitably, some measure of "success" or "failure" in community living. Few, however, go beyond a statistical, demographic survey of the most gross and impersonal sort . . . most do not even interview the retardates themselves, but instead concentrate upon their parents, guardians, teachers, or employers (1967:8).

Unfortunately, in the years since Edgerton wrote this statement relatively little has changed in the way social studies with the mentally retarded are carried out. Hence, there continues to be a definite need for studies of the type described in this dissertation; a two year study which has sought not only to better understand the social lives of a group of individuals previously classified as mildly retarded, but also the perceptions these individuals have developed about themselves and their lives. In undertaking this study a better understanding was also sought to the issue of their possible "disappearance" into the community--i.e., whether they have adapted to adult life in a normal fashion and whether they continue to have any intellectual or educational deficiencies which adversely affect their social adaptation.

### Background to Present Study

Although the existence of severely retarded individuals has been recognized throughout the history of Western societies, it was not until the development of intelligence tests during the first part of the twentieth century that large numbers of individuals with less severe intellectual impairments also came to be clearly recognized as

being mentally retarded. The discovery that mentally retarded individuals made up a much more significant percentage of the population than heretofore recognized, coupled with the prevailing belief that such individuals were genetically prone to asocial or anti-social behavior, quickly led to mental retardation being considered a "social problem of the highest magnitude" (Begab 1975:5).

While these pessimistic, and at times hostile, views on mental retardation and the mentally retarded abated somewhat in the following decades, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that it became popular among those working in the field of mental retardation to assume that the less severely retarded--i.e., the mildly retarded--were capable of living fairly normal social lives. In support of this assumption it became increasingly popular to argue that the intellectual and school achievements of the mildly retarded were of minimal importance in determining their adaptation to the community, and that many, if not most, of the social deficiencies they exhibited were the result, not of their being mildly retarded, but of their being identified and treated as such.

One result of this changing perspective toward the mildly retarded has been a growing skepticism about the validity and reliability of IQ tests as measures of these people's overall intellectual functioning. However, a more immediate result has been the changes which have occurred in the way mental retardation is defined, and by extension, who can and cannot continue to be classified as mentally retarded.

Although the term mental retardation has been used for over a century to describe a variety of related mental conditions, a formal consensus as to its definition appears to have been reached only in 1959 when the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD) offered the following definition:

Mental retardation refers to subaverage general intellectual functioning which originated during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior (Heber 1961:3).

While this definition of mental retardation had the virtue of brevity, it also possessed two major shortcomings. The first of these was that there was no accompanying definition for "general intellectual functioning." Rather, it was simply noted that intellectual functioning could be inferred from IQ test scores, i.e., IQ tests (Sellin 1979:5). The second shortcoming took on just the opposite form, with a definition for adaptive behavior being proposed which would be appropriate for use with the majority of retarded adults--i.e., the mildly retarded adults who lived in the community. Moreover, as Conley has noted, even the definition for adaptive behavior was rather broad and open to various interpretations:

Among school-age children adaptive behavior is measured by ability to learn, and among adults it is measured by social adjustment, i.e., "the degree to which the individual is able to maintain himself independently in the community and in gainful employment as well as by his ability to meet and conform to other personal and social responsibilities and standards set by the community" (1973:7-8).

While these shortcomings in the 1959 definition were not corrected, they were instrumental in bringing about a new and more restrictive definition for mental retardation in 1973:

Mental retardation refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period (Grossman, 1973:11).

Two important changes were incorporated in this new AAMD definition of mental retardation, both reflecting the growing doubts among educators and psychologists during this period that individuals with less severe intellectual impairments should be classified as mentally retarded. The first of these changes involved the use of IQ scores in classifying people as mentally retarded. Whereas in the 1959 definition individuals with IQ scores of up to 85 could be considered mentally retarded, in the 1973 definition only those with IQ scores below 70 were considered sufficiently subaverage in their intellectual functioning to warrant being classified mentally retarded.

The second important change in the AAMD's definition of mental retardation was that whereas in 1959 "there was the inclination to view intelligence as causing adaptive behavior," in 1973 adaptive behavior came to be viewed as "a separate, distinct factor, a converging set of variables that operate with intelligence" (Sellin 1975:5). In essence, the 1973 definition formalized the growing assumption that, especially among those defined as mildly retarded (IQs of 55 to 69) or of borderline intelligence (IQs of 70 to 84), an individual's subnormal intellectual functioning did not necessarily preclude his normal social adaptation.

Although it could be logically assumed that the 1973 changes the AAMD made in its definition of mental retardation reflected new

empirical data which had been accumulated in the preceding fourteen years on individuals with IQ scores between 55 and 84, this was not the case. In fact, since the early 1920s, and well before the 1959 definition of mental retardation was drawn up, the research done with adults having IQ scores between 55 and 84 had been rather consistent in reporting that a high proportion of them, even those with IQs in the low 60s, met minimal standards of social adaptation, and that their success in meeting these standards was only marginally correlated with their IQ scores (Cobb 1972). Instead, the changes in the 1973 definition of mental retardation appear to have reflected, not any growing certainty as to what mental retardation is or who the mentally retarded are, but a growing uncertainty as to how well this phenomenon or population could be measured or identified.

The reason for this growing uncertainty is readily apparent, and is firmly rooted in the wider controversy over whether significant discrepancies exist between (1) what is commonly and traditionally defined as intelligence, and (2) what is measured on most intelligence tests. Regarding the general agreement which has developed concerning the essential character--i.e., definition--of intelligence, Sellin has written:

Rowland observed that intelligence, at least in Western thought, is defined as a developmental sequence of increasing complexity of adaptation. All sources--Aristotle, Bruner, or Piaget--agree that intelligence is adaptation and response to environment, and that it is developmental, passing through stages, or levels, of attainment over time (1979:87).

Amplifying on this general recognition that intelligence cannot be defined or measured in any absolute sense, but only in terms



of a particular environment (e.g., a specific culture, subculture, etc.) and the adaptive demands it poses, Cryns has written:

Intelligence and intelligent behavior are culturally specific. The physical and socio-cultural conditions of an environment reinforce certain primary abilities as most significant for adjustment to the problems posed by it, and these in particular become the true diagnostics of intelligence within that environment (1962:297).

Regarding the second point, what intelligence tests actually measure, it needs to be recognized that the development of the intelligence test by Binet and others was not, as some critics contend, an abandonment of the general concept of intelligence as adaptation and response to the environment. However, as has often been noted, Binet and his co-workers did not attempt to use their research with intelligence tests to develop a more precise theory or definition of intelligence, a decision that has helped create a situation where, as Fischer writes, "our current scientific literature is about IQ, not intelligence" (1973:13).

Interestingly enough, while Binet and later developers of psychometric intelligence tests have made few claims that such tests actually measure intelligence (since they make little pretense of knowing what intelligence "really is"), the IQ scores from psychometric exams have tended to correlate reasonably well with other measures of intellectual or cognitive development which have evolved out of specific theories on intelligence and/or cognition. For example, while noting that Binet's test should not be considered a test of intelligence since it measures "the results of previous activities and acquisitions" and not the intellectual reasoning which

underlies these activities and acquisitions, Inhelder nevertheless acknowledged that when used with mentally retarded individuals the MA scores they obtain on IQ tests correspond with their attainment of different Piagetian stages of cognitive development (1968:44). In fact, while "moderate correlations are usually reported between mental age and Piagetian performance" (DeVries 1974:747), these correlations appear to be much more evident and significant in studies in which individuals of average and subaverage intelligence--IQs--are compared (Goodnow and Bethon 1966; Yudin 1966).<sup>1</sup>

One perspective for viewing the relationship between different tests of intelligence is found in the conclusion reached by DeVries in her research:

This evidence indicates that intelligence as defined by Stanford-Binet mental age overlaps to a moderate degree with Piagetian intelligence, but that they are not identical. Therefore, the theoretical differences between Piagetian and psychometric intelligence do seem to correspond to real differences in cognitive measurement (1974:750).

Implicit in this conclusion is the recognition that it is not possible to consider either the psychometric or Piagetian approach to intelligence as being somehow more valid or adequate than the other, but that the differing results they obtain reflect somewhat different theoretical perspectives on the nature of intelligence. However, what appears to be at the root of the controversy over the use of IQ tests, especially their use in classifying individuals as being mildly retarded, is not the issue of whether such tests measure an individual's intellectual functioning in accordance with their distinctive theoretical perspective on intelligence, but why IQ test

scores do not appear to correlate more closely with the broader historical definition given intelligence as level(s) of adaptation and response to the environment. That is, while it is generally acknowledged that intelligence test scores correlate well with people's adaptation to a school environment, the overall validity and reliability of these tests as measures of "intelligence" are called into question by the fact that so many persons identified by IQ tests as being intellectually deficient--i.e., mentally retarded--subsequently "disappear" into the community, and presumably make a satisfactory adaptation to its demands.

Unfortunately, if follow-up studies with people earlier identified as mentally retarded have raised questions about the use of IQ tests in assessing such people's general "intellectual"--i.e., adaptive-functioning, most of these studies have such glaring shortcomings that they leave these questions unanswered. One of the most common of these shortcomings is that, in spite of a general recognition that "measures of intellectual competence taken in childhood cannot be assumed to describe intellectual competence in adult years" (Cobb 1972:145-146), and that an individual's intellectual status can, and frequently does, change markedly over time, follow-up studies often use IQ scores as much as twenty to thirty years old to assert that their subjects are mentally retarded and that their measured intellectual functioning has little correspondence with their level of social adaptation. While such studies do illustrate the obvious limitations of using IQ scores from one time period and social

context to predict later IQ scores or levels of adaptation, they do not, in fact, provide any data to indicate what, if any, contemporaneous association may exist between IQ scores and social adaptation in adulthood.

A second shortcoming common to most follow-up studies is that in using superficial and impersonal criteria to assess social adaptation they fail to give adequate recognition to the fact that adaptation is situationally defined, and may thus vary significantly among individuals and groups and from one time period to another. While this shortcoming has no doubt resulted in some erroneous or misleading conclusions being drawn about the adaptive success experienced by individuals previously deemed mentally retarded, it can be argued that what is needed to rectify this shortcoming is not a new definition of social adaptation but a wider recognition that community standards of adaptation are not homogeneous but vary widely along such dimensions as age and social class.<sup>2</sup>

What these shortcomings serve to illustrate is that, regardless of the claims by many previous follow-up studies that no association exists between IQ scores and social adaptation in adults previously considered mildly retarded, the existence or non-existence of such an association is still an unresolved question. Reflective of this, a major question addressed throughout this study is the extent to which the current IQ scores of persons earlier identified as mentally retarded correspond with their current adaptation to the community environment. More specifically, this question is not

concerned with whether the childhood IQ scores which led the subjects of this study to be identified as mentally retarded were predictive of their current level of social adaptation, but whether their current adult IQ scores have any correspondence with their concurrent social adaptation.<sup>3</sup>

### Objectives of Study

The primary objective of this study is to provide a broad ethnographic and theoretical basis for understanding the social lives of adults who in their childhood were identified as being mentally retarded. To obtain the ethnographic material for this study, a group of former special education students who had had school-age IQs of between 50 and 75 were contacted and interviewed over a two-year period.

As befitting any subject-matter in which the controversial issues are so many and the available empirical data so limited, the strategy adopted in this study has been to engage in research that is basically exploratory in nature. In this respect the objective of this study has not been to research some particular aspect of the subjects' social lives in detail but to investigate their behavior and perceptions in four broad areas of social life: (1) schooling and the use of academic skills in adult life, (2) employment and income, (3) social life--i.e., participation in community and inter-personal activities, and (4) religion and world view. In addition to this investigative effort, the subjects were also given an IQ test (the WAIS) during this study to determine whether, and to what extent, their IQs have changed since early adolescence.

In describing the wide-range of data gathered during this study, special attention is given to three issues. The first concerns the differing degrees of social adjustment/adaptation that the individual subjects have attained in their adult lives. The second involves the degree to which the subjects' behaviors and perceptions correlate with their current IQ scores and various social aspects of their lives. The third, in turn, concerns the various theoretical perspectives within which the subjects' social lives and their degree of social adjustment can be understood.

By giving special attention to these particular issues the emphasis of this study is clearly upon exploring the relationship between the subjects' level of intellectual functioning and their social behaviors and perceptions. Such an emphasis, however, should not be construed as meaning that non-intellectual factors are irrelevant or insignificant in any complete understanding of these people's social lives, but simply that even the most exploratory of studies must limit the range of variables to be examined and emphasized.

#### Organization of Dissertation

The presentation of this dissertation is organized so that it proceeds from a general description of the subjects and their social lives to a specific analysis of the problems they face in maintaining interpersonal relationships and the contribution of various intellectual and social factors to these problems. Chapter II introduces this study with a description of its community setting, the

methodology used, and the general characteristics of its subjects. This is followed by separate chapters which describe and analyze in greater detail the subjects' lives in the areas of schooling, employment and income, family and social life, and world view and religion. Included in each of these chapters is a description of the subjects' views on these areas of social life, as well as an analysis of the social and intellectual factors which appear to be most influential in determining the subjects' behaviors and views in these areas.

Utilizing the data presented in these four chapters regarding the relative degree of social adaptation/adjustment which the subjects can be considered to have experienced in different areas of social life, the seventh chapter offers a theoretical analysis of the social difficulties experienced by the lower IQ subjects in this study. In this analysis a number of interrelated theoretical perspectives are advanced to illustrate how an individual's intellectual deficiencies can adversely effect his or her ability to interaction with others in a socially competent manner. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings and hypotheses of this study, and discusses some of the major issues raised in this study which appear to be most in need of further study and analysis.

## CHAPTER I: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>In more general terms this correlation can be seen in the findings by Stephens and McLaughlin (1974) that, unlike their normal counterparts, mentally retarded persons (IQs 50-75) do not achieve the level of formal operational thought. While the exact correlation between intellectual development (IQ) and cognitive development (à la Piaget) in mentally retarded persons is not an issue in this study, it is important in later chapters that recognition be given to the existence of some correlation between the two. This is especially important in Chapter VIII, where the hypothesis is presented that the relatively low level of social competency exhibited by mildly retarded adults (and others of subnormal intelligence) in certain areas of social life is attributable in part to their relatively low level of cognitive development (as reflected in deficiencies in their empathic, or role-taking, skills).

<sup>2</sup>In the present study no attempt is made to go beyond the definition of adaptive behavior (or social adaptation) offered by Conley on page 4 except to note that (1) within a community setting the criteria used in defining social adaptation or adaptive behavior can vary significantly between different groups and settings, and (2) even within a particular social situation the criteria to be used in evaluating an individual's behavior is subject to negotiation, a process in which the individual is typically an active participant. Beyond these general additions, however, this study does not attempt to offer any more exacting definition of social adaptation. Rather, an attempt is made throughout this study to examine the different criteria that the subjects--and the public at large--consider important in evaluating their social lives. In this respect, this study does not attempt so much to define social adaptation or adaptive behavior objectively, but to describe it subjectively in the context of the subjects' lives.

<sup>3</sup>Although discussed at greater length in Appendix A, it is worth noting early-on in this dissertation that among the 31 subjects given IQ tests (WAIS) during this study their current IQ scores (mean, 78.4) were on the average 13 points higher than were their childhood IQ scores (mean, 65.4).



## CHAPTER II

### COMMUNITY SETTING, METHODOLOGY, AND SUBJECTS OF STUDY

#### Community Setting

##### Historical Accounts of Keeler and General Area

The general area in which all the interviewed subjects of this study presently reside was first settled by whites during the 1830s. Although, or perhaps because, the area was then described as "good swampland," it experienced little population growth until the state government decided to relocate the state capital in the area and chose the township of Keeler as the new site. In the late 1850s, ten years after the new state capital had been located within its boundaries, the township of Keeler became incorporated as a city with an estimated population of 3,000. Two years later the Keeler Public School System was organized and reported an enrollment of 700 children in its first year.

While being the site of the state capital gave the Keeler area a certain economic stability during the latter part of the nineteenth century, two other events occurred during this period which would have equally profound effects on the character of the area in later years. The first of these was the establishment of a state financed college on the outskirts of Keeler which until the 1920s

maintained itself in a relative state of obscurity. The second event, which would have perhaps the greatest impact on the development of contemporary Keeler, was the establishment in the area of numerous firms involved in the carriage and steam engine businesses. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century these businesses were directly linked with the growing agricultural productivity in the area, but by 1910 these and other new firms had responded to the advent of the automobile by becoming major suppliers of engines and body parts for many of the new car and truck manufacturers springing up throughout the state.

While this period was distinguished primarily by the rapid growth a number of local manufacturing firms experienced, the businesses and population of the area as a whole also exhibited steady growth. By 1900 the population of Keeler stood at 16,485, and the Keeler Public School System claimed a student enrollment of over 3,000.

Between 1910 and 1930, with the automobile becoming a mainstay in the lifestyle of Americans, the Keeler area underwent its most dramatic period of growth. This was a result not only of the solid expansion in the area's automobile related industries, but also of a growing industrial diversification taking place within the area. However, while much of this diversification reflected the growing needs of a rapidly expanding urban area, there was a continuing emphasis on "heavy industry," as exemplified first by a growing number of drop forge plants and then later by the opening of many new tool and die shops.

The rapid rise of Keeler as an industrial center during these two decades had a profound effect on the community's make-up. By 1930 the population of Keeler was listed as being 78,397, almost a fivefold increase over 1900. This influx of new people into the area was accompanied by a housing boom, and the houses in many lower- and middle-class neighborhoods of present-day Keeler can be dated back to this period. The schools in Keeler also experienced similar growth, going from a student enrollment of 3,072 in 1900 to an enrollment of 17,133 in 1930.

In response to the educational needs of a rapidly expanding school age population, and to new pedagogical theories gaining popularity throughout the country, the Keeler School District in 1918 took the little noticed action of establishing "special rooms" for mentally disabled students. Even less attention, however, was apparently given to the actual operation of these "rooms" during the following years, for after 1918 no explicit mention is made of them again in the school district's historical records until 1952.

Following the Wall Street financial crash of 1929, business in the Keeler area, as elsewhere in the country, declined sharply. As might be expected, the rapid population growth of earlier decades was not repeated and Keeler had a population increase of only 396 people during the 1930s. The Keeler School District, in turn, reported a drop in student enrollment during this decade of 233 persons, with an enrollment figure of 16,900 in 1940.

With the entry of the United States into World War II local industries quickly curtailed their production of automobile parts

and began manufacturing a wide variety of military items, everything from airplane parts to cannon shells. To meet the demands for these military items many of the local industrial firms expanded their plant facilities and hired more workers, resulting once again in a major influx of people into the Keeler area.

With the war over in 1945, local firms quickly returned to the production of automobiles and automobile parts in vast quantities. While the automotive industries continued to grow and maintain their position as the largest group of employers in the Keeler area, their growth was not as spectacular in the post-war era as it had been previously. However, both employment and population figures for the Keeler area continued to climb steadily. Whereas the population of Keeler was 78,793 in 1940, it grew to 92,129 in 1950 and then reached 107,807 in 1960.

One reason for the area's continued growth and prosperity during this period lies in the fact that the state college on the outskirts of Keeler was undergoing a rapid transformation which would change it from a college of 7,000 students in 1940 to one of the largest single-campus universities in the world by 1970. The rapid increase in student enrollment, in turn, brought increasing amounts of money into the local economy and also resulted in the college (and then later, university) becoming one of the largest employers in the region. A second reason was that during this period the regulatory and service roles of the state government were also expanding rapidly, events which led to the state government becoming a large as well as a prominent employer of local residents. In fact,

by the 1960s the various state government departments had collectively become the second largest employer in the area.

The continuing growth of the Keeler area in the post-war period was also shared by the Keeler School District, not only in terms of total students enrolled, but also in a rise in the percentage of persons attending public schools. Interestingly enough, during much of this period the school system's special education program (formerly, "special rooms") did not experience the same rate of growth as did the school system as a whole, for according to school records there were only five teachers and 45 pupils involved in the program in 1952. In the next decade, however, the special education program was expanded and took on most of the characteristics it had during the time of the present research. These included (1) the introduction in the early 1950s of one of the nation's first work-study programs ("co-op") for retarded students, a vocational skills program which led to a high school diploma upon its completion; (2) the hiring of full-time staff psychologists to evaluate students prior to their possible placement in special education classes, and to monitor the progress of students enrolled in such classes; and (3) an expansion of the special education program into almost all the schools in the Keeler School District. By the early 1960s this expansion resulted in roughly 2.5 percent of the school's students being enrolled in special education programs, a figure which had remained stable up through the 1970s.

### Contemporary Description of Keeler and General Area

By 1965, the year most of the subjects graduated or left school, Keeler had grown into one of the state's major metropolitan areas. Not only had the city of Keeler's population grown to over 125,000 persons, but the adjacent suburban areas were experiencing even faster rates of growth, pushing the county's population total in 1965 to 231,300. During this same period the area was continuing to become more industrially and commercially diversified, and the unemployment rate dropped to only 2.2 percent in 1965. All in all, Keeler had become what civil organizations are given to euphemistically describing as "a center of culture and commerce."

During the next ten years, between the time the subjects left school and when they were contacted to take part in this research, the Keeler area continued to grow, though at a slower pace than in previous decades. In 1975 the city of Keeler reported a population of 130,640, while the county's population was estimated to have reached 270,900. However, this constant growth could no longer be considered to be an unmitigated blessing by the community as Keeler, like many other urban areas throughout the country, began to experience increasingly serious economic and social problems. The most obvious of these problems for the Keeler area was the degree to which it continued to be dependent upon the automobile industry for its economic stability. This dependency was made dramatically evident during the first half of the 1970s when there was a significant decline in automobile sales throughout the United States, an event

which helped send the area's unemployment rate up to 10.6 percent by 1975.

The social and physical make-up of Keeler has also been undergoing major changes during the last few decades as the older, more central areas of the city have increasingly been abandoned by the "middle-class" home-owners and shoppers for the suburbs. While the decline of Keeler's central business and residential areas appears to present the city and the surrounding areas with some severe long-term social and economic problems, the immediate effects have been somewhat mixed. For a number of residential neighborhoods in the central district of Keeler, housing was deteriorated almost to the point of being uninhabitable. In turn, the potential for similar deterioration in numerous other neighborhoods in Keeler has resulted in their property values being depressed, even though the housing remains in good condition. In the case of these latter neighborhoods the consequences have been that while home-owners have tended to suffer financially, many renters (including a number of the subjects in this study) have found the situation to be at least temporarily ideal, with large, well-constructed and maintained houses often renting for very low rates.

If the decline of Keeler's central districts has had some effects on the character of the area as a whole, the rapid growth of Keeler's suburbs and its adjoining cities and townships have had even greater, and more tangible, influence on its present-day make-up. While this growth in the suburban areas surrounding Keeler can be perceived as having taken place to some extent at the

expense of Keeler's central business and residential sections, a major impetus for this growth has also been the rising influx of middle-class people into the area, attracted by the expanding number of "white-collar" jobs available with such employers as the state government and the university. Although Keeler proper remains very much an industrial, "blue-collar" city, one result of this suburban growth has been to give the area as a whole the appearance of having some of the amenities typically associated with large metropolitan areas.

In summary, then, the community setting in which the subjects attended school and continue to live can be described as being a fairly large industrial and government center which has undergone a number of social and economic changes in recent decades that have directly affected the subjects' lives. The two most notable, and perhaps significant, of these changes for the subjects have been (1) the fact that as children they entered school just as the Keeler School District began its comprehensive special education programs and thus were the first large group of students to have gone completely through this program; and (2) the abrupt changes in the area's employment situation. When the subjects left school in the mid-1960s they entered an unusual labor market situation in which job opportunities were plentiful and the unemployment rate was one of the lowest in Keeler's history. Ten years later, however, the employment situation had reversed itself as a number of local manufacturing firms were forced out of business and most other businesses (including government agencies) were experiencing an economic depression



and attempting to cut-back or maintain at a stable level the number of people they employed. This situation not only raised the general unemployment rate in the area to above 10 percent, but caused even greater employment and economic difficulties for unskilled and semi-skilled workers and their families, a category of person within which almost all of the subjects in this study can be included.

In terms of the history of Keeler, then, it can be stated that in the last ten years the subjects have experienced "the best of all times, the worst of all times." In this study the subjects are described as they live through the community's "worst of all times."

### Methodology

#### Selection of Sample Population

Given that the primary objective of this study was to examine the social lives of persons identified as being mildly retarded (IQs, 50 to 75) and how their intellectual deficiencies may have effected their social adaptation to the community, the choice of a sample population was rather limited. To minimize the effect various extraneous factors might have on the study's results, a number of criteria were established early-on for the selection of potential subjects which further defined the sample population. These criteria were that the potential subjects (1) all be caucasian; (2) have no significant physical or psychiatric abnormalities; (3) have lived continuously in a community environment (e.g., never been placed in an institution for the mentally retarded, lived in a

"half-way" house, etc.); (4) had all been identified as being mildly retarded by the same institution or agency; and (5) were no longer formally identified in the community as mentally retarded persons.

Given criteria 3 and 4, it was decided that the best possible agency from which to secure a sample population would be one particular school system. In 1973 the Keeler School District agreed to assist in this study by providing the names of its former special education students who potentially met these criteria. Although it had been originally desired that individuals in their 30s and 40s be included in this study, in 1974 when the school district actually began selecting the names of potential subjects from its file it was discovered that adequate records for the special education program had been maintained for only the last 10 years. This fact meant that, for the most part, the oldest group of individuals available for inclusion in this study were then between 26 and 28 years of age (having graduated not more than 10 years previously). The decision was then made to select potential subjects only from this age range on the assumption that they had, to a greater extent than their younger counterparts, established a stable "life style." On the basis of these combined criteria the Keeler School District was able to provide a list of 105 potential subjects. A summary of the known data on this group of potential subjects is listed in Table 2.1.

During the next two years as many of these 105 individuals were located as was possible, and attempts were made to interview all of those who were found to be residing within a 50-mile radius of the interviewer's home. At the end of this two year period, of

TABLE 2.1.--General Data on the 105 Potential Subjects in the Study.

	Male	Female	Total
Number of Subjects	52	53	105
Average IQ	66.6	67.8	67.2
S.D.	(6.96)	(5.97)	(6.48)

the 105 potential subjects 48 had been located and interviewed at least once, 30 had been located but not interviewed, and 27 had not been located. A further breakdown of this sample population into six groupings is found in Table 2.2

In comparing the available data on these six groupings, two findings stand out regarding the extent to which the interviewed subjects can be considered typical of the larger sample population. First, based on the results of the last reported IQ test given each of the subjects while in school, the three categories of individuals not interviewed had, as a group, higher scores than did the interviewed individuals. While this difference in their scores is not large, it is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). A partial explanation for this difference may be that, as Baller, Charles, and Miller (1967) found in their study, persons with lower intelligence test scores tend to move out of their neighborhoods less often than their higher scoring counterparts did, making it somewhat easier for them to be located and interviewed. However, as can be seen by comparing

TABLE 2.2.--Comparative Data on the Six Groupings of Individuals in the Sample Population.

Group	Sex	Number of Subjects	Average IQ
1. Completed All Interviews		31	65.4
	Males	23	65.4
	Females	8	65.4
2. Interviewed, Not Completed		17	65.5
	Males	7	62.2
	Females	10	67.7
3. Not Interviewed, Located Within 50 Miles		15	69.4
	Males	7	67.7
	Females	8	70.9
4. Not Interviewed, Located Over 50 Miles Away		13	67.5
	Males	5	70.6
	Females	8	65.5
5. Not Located		27	69.0
	Males	9	69.3
	Females	18	68.8
6. Deceased		2	66.0
	Males	1	70
	Females	1	62

the different categories of individuals in Table 2.2, the utility of this explanation is not clearcut in the present case, and its applicability would appear to be restricted to males in the sample population.

The second finding was that females in the sample population were less likely than their male counterparts to be located or to

agree to take part in the study. Given that over two-thirds of the females located (but not necessarily interviewed) had married and changed their last name, the failure to locate 35 percent of the females in the sample population does not appear excessive. This is especially true given the minimal amount of information typically available for use in locating the potential subjects.

The explanation for why many of the females who were located did not agree to participate, or participated in only one interview, is more complex but appears to have often involved two interrelated factors. First, and this is a subjective evaluation gained primarily from the initial contacts made with the potential subjects, it appears that the females in the sample population were much more reluctant to get involved in any type of conversation with a stranger at their door (i.e., the interviewer) than were males, much more evasive in their responses, and more openly worried about answering any questions regarding their lives. Although this pattern of responses might well characterize female-male differences in the general population as a whole, these behaviors appeared to have been accentuated among the females contacted during the study.

The second factor in explaining the low female participation rate was the importance spouses or boyfriends had in determining the willingness of females to participate. In the case of the four married females who completed all the interviews the interest of the husbands in the study was a significant and very obvious feature in the continued participation of three of them. Among the females who did not participate or were interviewed only once, in roughly half of

those cases where a reason was obtained for their non-participation it concerned the unwillingness of husbands or boyfriends to have them be interviewed. In five of these instances the females contacted expressed an initial willingness to take part in the study (and three of them were actually interviewed once), but later explained that their husbands or boyfriends did not approve of their participation in any study. While this male influence on the decision making of many of the women can in some of the cases be explained in terms of the husband or boyfriend being a "benefactor"--a "normal person" providing "welcome assistance with the practical difficulties of coping with everyday problems" (Edgerton 1967:172), it appears equally true that some of the other females contacted were simply intimidated by their husbands or boyfriends, and restricted by them from having much contact with persons outside the family.

In summary, what is perhaps best illustrated by the low number of female subjects in this study is the fact that while efforts were made to have a subject population which was representative of the full population sample, this did not prove to be entirely feasible. In this respect, rather than being the product of a random sample, the subject population of this study is best described as being an available and self-selecting population (i.e., they were found living within 50 miles of Keeler, and they were willing to participate in the study).

### Data Collection

The field research upon which this study is based was conducted over a 26 month period from October 1974 to December 1976, during which time the author resided in Keeler. During the initial contact potential subjects were told that the primary objective of the study was to determine what effect their academic achievements and/or shortcomings have had on their lives as adults. No specific mention of their former placement in special education classes or of their having been classified mentally retarded as children was made by the author at this point, nor during any of the later interviews unless the subject first mentioned these matters on their own.

If the individual contacted agreed to take part in this study they were given a consent form for them and a relative or adult friend to sign (Appendix C), and were told that they would be paid for every interview they agreed to partake in. With the exceptions noted in the previous section, the potential subjects were surprisingly willing to take part in this study and were cooperative throughout in answering a wide range of questions about their past and present lives.

In organizing the contacts and interviews with these subjects two considerations were of paramount importance. First, there was a need to give the subjects ample opportunity to talk about whatever interested them or whatever they considered to be most important in their lives. Secondly, in addition to gathering such in-depth social and personal data on each of the subjects, there was also the need to collect sufficient quantitative data on each of the individual

subjects to allow for objective intra-group comparisons to be made. To secure both the qualitative and quantitative data on the subjects, a number of methodological approaches were adopted in this study.

For the most part the quantitative data obtained on the subjects during this study were collected during the course of five structured interviews and one WAIS test session.<sup>1</sup> Each of these core interviews was organized around a series of standard questions dealing with some aspect of the subjects' social lives. On the average these interviews took between one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours to complete. Table 2.3 indicates the order in which these interviews took place and their basic subject-matter.

Some additional quantitative data on the subjects and their social environment were obtained from school records (obtained prior to locating the subjects) and from census material. However, to maintain the focus of this study on the subjects' own perceptions regarding their social lives, no concerted efforts were made to elicit any information on the subjects from other persons.

As with the quantitative data, much of the qualitative data obtained in this study was gathered during the five structured interviews with the subjects. This was made possible by adopting an interview method similar to that developed by Piaget (the "semi-clinical interview," a method of interviewing that Elkind, 1964, describes as having sufficient flexibility to enable the interviewer to follow the meandering stream of a particular individual's thought, yet with sufficient standardization to enable the interviewer to reach the same destination with many different individuals).



TABLE 2.3.--Order and Subject-Matter of Structured Interviews.

Order of Interviews	Title of Questionnaire	Major Subject-Matters Covered in Interview
1st	Life History	Vital statistics; basic questions on most areas of their social lives (e.g., employment, schooling, family life, etc.)
2nd	Employment	Employment and income history; employment goals for future; perceptions on wages, job tasks, bosses, etc.
3rd	School	Subjects' schooling; perceptions on teachers, special education programs, value of formal education; utilization of academic skills in adult life.
4th	Machiavellianism	Subjects' views (i.e., values and tactics) regarding interpersonal relationships.
5th	World View	Subjects' views on basic nature of mankind; religious beliefs and practices.

Essentially, this method of interviewing utilized the standard questions in the structured interviews as starting points to probe the subjects' thinking on particular issues more fully (e.g., "why do you think that's true?" "Do you think most people would agree with you on this . . . why/why not?").

Although following up many of the standardized questions with further questions did not normally lead to any surprising or unusual revelations, this procedure not only served to clarify--and

to some extent verify--the subjects' initial responses but in many cases also proved to be crucial in discovering how the subjects' thoughts on various matters were interrelated. In addition, once the subjects began to realize that their responses to the standardized questions were typically followed up by further questioning, most of them began to elaborate on their responses without any prompting.

If much of the qualitative data on the subjects' were obtained from these "semi-clinical" interviews, a great deal of information was also obtained by simple observation, through participant-observation, and during relatively unstructured interviews. These different methods of data collection were most commonly utilized in the following circumstances:

1. Home and family environment. By scheduling many of the contacts with the subjects at times when other members of the family would be present, and by extending many of these contacts out over lengthy periods of time, it was possible over time to observe many of the types of interactions engaged in by the subjects and their families.

2. Social activities. Although the author did not, as a rule, initiate social interactions with the subjects outside of the home, he did participate whenever asked. Such interactions, involving participant-observation by the author, were engaged in with slightly more than half of the subjects (primarily the males). The most common of these social interactions involved going to bars or bowling, although such diverse activities as participating in

motorcycle club rallies, attending the county fair, and going to garage sales were also engaged in.

3. Assistance. Because many of the subjects were at some point in the study eligible for some type of government assistance (unemployment benefits, food stamps, vocational training, etc.), whenever this became known to the author he would inform them of their eligibility and assist them, if asked, in procuring this assistance (the author having previously been a social worker with a knowledge of the eligibility requirements for most common assistance programs). Typically, this involved explaining how and where they could apply for assistance and accompanying them to the relevant agency office. At this point, however, the author made no attempt to actively intervene in the application process but simply observed the subject's efforts on his/her own behalf.

4. Unstructured interviews. After a certain rapport was established with the subjects, a common practice was to make an appointment to see the subjects a week or so after the scheduled interviews. This practice typically gave the author a chance to explore on a more informal basis the various issues raised during the scheduled interviews, as well as to engage in conversation and activities of a more social nature.

#### General Characteristics of Subjects

The description of the 48 subjects presented here is based primarily on information obtained during the first interview which used a revised version of the "Life History Questionnaire" developed

by Baller, Charles, and Miller (1967) in their longitudinal study of mentally retarded adults. Altogether, nine general topic areas were covered during this initial interview, which typically lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours. These topic areas are as follows:

- a. Family Background
- b. School
- c. Social Life as Juvenile
- d. Marriage
- e. Employment
- f. Health
- g. Present Social Life
- h. Religion
- i. Most Important Matters in the Subjects' Lives

Although the topics of schooling, employment, adult social life, and religion are dealt with at greater length in following chapters, the purpose of covering all nine characteristics of the 48 subjects in this section is to provide a general introduction to the subjects and some of the basic issues which are involved in a study of their lives. In addition, because most of the information dealt with in these following chapters concerns only the 31 subjects who completed all the interviews rather than all 48 subjects, whenever appropriate separate descriptions of these two overlapping groups of subjects are given (these two groups are hereafter referred to as the "31" group and the "48" group).

### Family Background

According to numerous studies dealing with the epidemiology of mental retardation the incidence of mental retardation increases as socio-economic status declines, with the vast majority of mildly retarded individuals coming from lower-class families (Heber, Dever,

and Conry 1968; Mercer 1973). These findings are replicated in this study, with 88 percent of the subjects (94 percent of "31" group) being from families in which the father's employment was, or is, as either an unskilled or semi-skilled worker (e.g., factory worker, janitor, truck driver, etc.). In only six cases (12 percent, or 6 percent of "31" group) could the subject's family be described as middle- or upper middle-class (e.g., store owner, engineer, college professor, etc.).

The lower-class background of most of the subjects is also apparent in the educational achievements of their parents. Based on the statements of 39 of the subjects, their fathers had completed an average of 9.3 years of school, and mothers an average of 10.4 years (the other nine subjects did not know what grades their parents had completed; these figures were 9.2 and 10.3 years, respectively, for "31" group). In 1940, when the subjects' parents were typically young adults, their educational levels were almost identical to the median educational level for the Keeler area (9.4 years for males, 10.4 years for females). However, by 1960, when the subjects were typically entering seventh or eighth grade, their parents' education levels were, on the whole, substantially below that of the average adult in the area (median school years completed, 12.1 years for males and 12.1 years for females over the age of 25; see Table 2.4 for parental education figures).

In looking at the family size and birth order of the subjects it was found that the females in this study were, on the average, the 3.8th child in a family of 6.3 children, while the males were, on the

TABLE 2.4.--Parental Education Levels.

Group	Sex	Average Grade Completed (and range of grades completed)	
		Father	Mother
Group of "31"	Males	9.3 (5-13)	11.4 (8-16)
	Females	8.8 (3-12)	7.6 (3.2)
	TOTAL	9.2 (3-13)	10.3 (3-16)
Group of "48"	Males	9.7 (5-16)	11.2 (7-16)
	Females	8.4 (3-12)	9.3 (3-16)
	TOTAL	9.3 (3-16)	10.4 (3-16)

average, the 2.6th child in a family of 5.1 (see Table 2.5 for specific figures). When combined, the relatively large number of children (ego plus siblings) in the 48 subjects' families (average of 5.6) can be seen in the fact that, in comparison with the subjects' mothers, Keeler mothers of a similar age have had an average of only 3.1 children. While it is not possible to determine from the census material whether the family size of the subjects is significantly larger than that of comparable families, the large family size of the subjects is consistent with previous studies which show that, other things being equal, the prevalence of mental retardation increases along with family size (Heber, 1970).

TABLE 2.5.--Family Size and Birth Order.

Group	Sex	Average Number of Children in Family (includes subject)	Birth Order Position of Subject
Group of "31"	Males	5.2	2.8
	Females	5.1	3.1
	TOTAL	5.2	2.8
Group of "48"	Males	5.1	2.6
	Females	6.3	3.8
	TOTAL	5.6	3.1

Among the 48 subjects the average age of their parents at the time of their birth was 33.6 years for fathers and 27.0 years for mothers. Although the parents of the female subjects were slightly older than were those of the male subjects this difference was not significant (parental age figures for "31" group almost identical to those of "48" group). These figures are in keeping with the findings reported by Heber (1970), which indicate that the age distribution for mothers of familial mentally retarded is "generally similar to that for mothers in the general population" (age of father not seen to have any significance).

The data gathered on the births of the subjects, and of their parents, also indicates that the subjects' families are for the most part "geographically stable." Among the subjects 73 percent were

born in Keeler proper, 17 percent were born outside Keeler but within the state, and only 10 percent were born outside the state. However, only one of these latter individuals was living outside the Keeler area at the beginning of their school years, arriving in Keeler at the age of 13. The parents of the subjects also tended to have grown up in the area, with 28 percent reportedly born in Keeler, 53 percent born within the state, and 19 percent born outside the state.

Although comparative data for families in the Keeler area is not available, it can be suggested that the subjects do not appear to have experienced, on the average, any abnormal level of family instability during their school years. Seventy-one percent of the subjects reported that their parents were married throughout their childhood (0-18 years). Thirteen percent, in turn, reported that their parents were divorced and their mothers married again during their childhood, while 8 percent stated that their parents separated but did not remarry. For 8 percent of the subjects, one of their parents died during their childhood, and in half of these cases the remaining parent married again during the subject's childhood.

In essence, the data provided by the subjects on their families suggest that they typically grew up in blue-collar homes which were perhaps most unusual in terms of the large number of children and the relatively low level of education acquired by the parents. However, there is nothing in the data to indicate that the families of the subjects could be viewed as having deviated significantly from community standards.



### School

The 48 subjects interviewed in this study all entered school during a period in which the special education program in the Keeler School District was being vastly enlarged and restructured. Two concerns of this revised special education program were to increase the vocational training provided the mentally retarded students and increase their opportunities for obtaining a high school diploma--both of which were seen as increasing the employability of the students once they left school. Twenty-eight (58 percent) of the subjects did, in fact, eventually graduate from high school, with males graduating in somewhat larger numbers than females (63 percent vs. 50 percent). Almost identical graduation figures were found in the "31" group (61 percent vs. 50 percent).

When asked to give a brief evaluation of their school experience, slightly more of the 48 subjects described it in negative terms than in positive ones (44 percent vs. 40 percent). Negative judgments were especially marked among the female subjects, with 65 percent of them expressing unfavorable opinions about their schooling while only 30 percent had favorable opinions. Males, on the other hand, were more likely to express positive opinions about their years in school than they were negative ones (43 percent vs. 33 percent). Not surprisingly, those subjects who had stayed in school until they graduated were more likely to express favorable judgments about their schooling than were those who had dropped out (62 percent vs. 21 percent).

### Social Life as Juveniles

In recent years increasing attention has been given to the social lives of retarded children, both in and out of the classroom. According to numerous studies cited by Gottlieb (1975), mentally retarded children are significantly more apt to be socially rejected by their school peers than are non-retarded children, regardless of whether they attend special classes or are integrated into regular classes. In Baller, Charles, and Miller's followup study of retarded adults they report that "over 40 percent reported that they had no friendships among their peers while they were in school and another 40 percent reported little interaction with the friends they had (1967:273).

Although using most of the same questions as did Baller, Charles, and Miller in their study, the information obtained in this study on the subjects' adolescent social life is, at best, nebulous, and often-times contradictory. On the whole, subjects mentioned having an average of 5.5 friends during their school-years, with only one subject stating that he had had no friends as an adolescent. However, it was impossible to determine from the subjects' remarks the degree of intensity their friendships had, or whether such friendships might often be more correctly described as acquaintanceships. One finding relevant to this question was that only six of the subjects (all in the "31" group) still see any of their friends from their schooldays with any degree of regularity.

Regardless of the possible confusion over the number of friends the subjects actually had during their adolescence, the

impression left by them in discussing their adolescent years was that, for most of them anyway, the significant feature of their social life was not the friendships they had, but rather their feelings of being excluded from many of the activities that their peers in the community were participating in. In this sense, then, their adolescence did not so much appear to be one of social isolation as it did of social segregation.

### Marriage

The sexual and marital behavior of the mentally retarded has often been a topic of special interest. Much of this interest can be traced back to the "eugenics scare" during the first part of the twentieth century when it was believed that mental retardation was transmitted genetically from generation to generation. As Stoddard wrote:

Feeble-mindedness is . . . highly hereditary, and unfortunately it is frequently associated with great physical strength and vitality, so that feeble-minded persons usually breed rapidly, with no regard for consequences. In former times the numbers of the feeble-minded were kept down by the stern processes of natural selection, but modern charity and philanthropy have protected them and have thus favored their rapid multiplication (1922:93-94).

While the resulting fears of this period about the propensity of mentally retarded individuals to marry and procreate can still be seen in the laws of many states, the findings of this study do nothing to substantiate such fears. Specifically, the marital and reproductive rates among the subjects in this study are as follows:

(1) 45 percent of the males and 61 percent of the females interviewed were married and living with their spouses at the time of their first

interview. On the other hand, 36 percent of the males and 17 percent of the females interviewed have never been married. (2) The females in this study typically married in greater numbers and at an earlier age than did their male counterparts (average age at first marriage, 18.6 years for females and 21.6 years for males). However, unlike many of the retarded females in other studies, all the females in the present study married men of ages similar to their own, and their current marriages appear to be, on the whole, somewhat more stable than are those of the male subjects. (3) Considering that the subjects were interviewed while still in their late twenties, the divorce rate among both the males and females can only be described as extremely high. At the time of the first interview 20 percent of the male subjects and 22 percent of the female subjects were currently divorced. Another 6.6 percent of the males and 5.5 percent of the females had been divorced in the past, but are presently married for the second time. These figures can be compared with census figures for 1970 which show that for 25 to 29 year old persons in the Keeler area 9.7 percent of the males and 13.6 percent of the females have at some time in their lives been divorced, and (4) the female subjects were reproducing at a substantially higher rate than were the male subjects. Among married female subjects (including those presently divorced) there has been an average of 2.4 children per woman, while married males have averaged only 1.1 children. Taken in its larger context, these reproductive rates translate into an overall average of 2.0 children per female subject and 0.7 children per male subject. Although the total number of

children born to the subjects will undoubtedly increase in coming years, the current birthrate among the female subjects closely approximates that for females of similar age in the Keeler area as a whole (1.8 children per woman, age 25 to 29). A summary of the marital and reproductive rates among the subjects is shown in Table 2.6.

In addition to these findings on the marital patterns of the subjects, two generalizations can be made regarding the spouses of the married subjects. First, in the majority of cases the subjects have completed more years of schooling than have their present or previous spouses. Among male subjects, the women they have married have averaged 11.4 years of school, while for the female subjects their husbands have completed an average of 10.6 years. These findings

TABLE 2.6.--Current Marital and Reproductive Rates.

Group	Sex	Married	Divorced	Single	Number of Offspring
Group of "31"	Males	11(48%)	6(26%)	6(26%)	20 ( .87 per)
	Females	4(50%)	3(38%)	1(12%)	16 (2.00 per)
	TOTAL	15(48%)	9(29%)	7(23%)	36 (1.16 per)
Group of "48"	Males	13(43%)	6(20%)	11(36%)	21 ( .70 per)
	Females	11(61%)	4(22%)	3(17%)	36 (2.00 per)
	TOTAL	24(50%)	10(21%)	14(29%)	57 (1.18 per)

are somewhat ironic since all of the subjects have, at some time in their past, been diagnosed as having learning disabilities, whereas, with only one known exception, all the subjects' spouses attended "regular" classes for normal students while in school. What the spouses' educational achievements do not reflect, however, and what is of greater importance in the marriage relationship, is the clear impression gained in the interviews that the spouses are at least as intelligent and competent as the subjects they have married, and in many cases they are definitely more intelligent.

The second generalization is that the subjects' marriages have had little, if any, effect on their socioeconomic status. In all but one case where the spouse is employed full-time the spouse's occupation can be considered semi-skilled (e.g., steel worker, janitor, clerk, etc.). Since all but one of the married subjects come from "working class" backgrounds, their spouses' occupations have not appreciably changed their social status. The only notable exceptions were a female subject who married a store manager and now lives in a pleasant middle-class neighborhood, and a male subject from an upper-middle class family who is now a janitor married to a file-clerk.

### Employment

A separate chapter in this study examines in some detail the employment situations of the subjects in particular, and of mentally retarded persons in American society more generally. However, a brief summary of the information gained during the first interview with the 48 subjects on their employment circumstances can be noted.

First, of the 30 male subjects interviewed only 14 (47 percent) of them were currently employed in regular full-time jobs. Among the 18 female subjects 7 (39 percent) of them were found to be working full-time at paying jobs. This high unemployment rate is in large part reflective of the unemployment experienced by the subjects in the "31" group, among whom only 9 out of the 23 males (31 percent) and 1 out of the 8 females (12 percent) are employed full-time.

Although all but two of the unemployed subjects can be considered as potentially employable, only 5 out of the 16 unemployed males and 2 of the 11 females could in any way be viewed as actively seeking or even highly desirous of employment. For the remainder, most of the women are actively engaged in being housewives, while for the men family financial support and/or some type of governmental assistance has allowed most of them to "drop out" of the labor market.

Of the 21 employed subjects all are working at jobs best described as being unskilled or semi-skilled. For the male subjects the most common occupations are as assembly-line workers and janitors, while among the female subjects they are as clerks and assembly-line workers. As discussed in the chapter on employment, no correlation was found to exist between the 48 subjects' IQ scores from school and their present employment status.

### Health

It has repeatedly been shown that the incidence of various physical abnormalities and disabilities is extremely high among the mentally retarded (Mercer 1973). Among the mildly retarded alone,

it has been estimated that roughly 25 percent have some type of physical disability (Conley 1973). In addition to hereditary and birth-related disabilities it has been suggested that mildly retarded individuals also experience abnormally high illness and accident rates, although serious difficulties exist in trying to determine whether these are directly related to their intellectual impairments or more indirectly to the environmental conditions within which they typically must work and live. One indication of the scope of the health related problems thought to face the mildly retarded can be found in Charles' (1953) followup study of mildly retarded adults in which it was discovered that they had an accidental death rate five times higher than expected.

In the selection of the sample population for this study all of those individuals whose school records showed them to have any serious physical or psychiatric abnormalities were excluded, and for this reason it was not expected that the subjects would have any disproportionate number of health related problems. In certain respects this expectation proved to be accurate, as few of the subjects have suffered from any major illnesses or organic impairments since early adolescence. The two exceptions were a male who is now diabetic and a woman suffering a partial hearing loss.

A high number of debilitating injuries due to accidents, however, was found among the subjects. Outside of one woman who has been involved in three serious automobile accidents without incurring any permanent injuries, all of these accidental injuries were sustained by male subjects. In all, seven (23 percent) males have



been in accidents serious enough to disable them at least temporarily. Two of these men are permanently disabled (but now fully ambulatory), two suffer from back injuries severe enough to limit the amount and kind of work they can perform, and the remaining three males have had back injuries which resulted in their having been disabled for a minimum of one year. In three of these seven cases the injuries were the result of automobile accidents, another three the result of occupational accidents, and the seventh was sustained when the individual slipped on the steps as he left a bar.

Considering the high rate of accidents among the subjects and their presumed susceptibility to illnesses (Charles 1953, for example, reported that his subjects experienced twice as many serious illnesses as did a control group), the subjects' responses to a brief series of questions on the kinds of health practices they engage in is worth mention. First, although nothing unusual was noted in their responses to how they hypothetically would react to various types of illnesses and accidents, it was found that a higher percentage of the subjects than expected had medical attention readily available. Three-fourths ( $n = 36$ ) of the subjects stated that they have a regular doctor that they see, and 40 out of the 48 subjects have some type of comprehensive hospitalization and medical insurance (31 of these have "private" insurance, while 9 are insured through a variety of state government programs).

Another discovery was that a number of the subjects actually suffered from organic impairments dating back at least to early childhood, though these were not mentioned in the school records.

Two male subjects each have a club foot, while the medical history of six of the subjects strongly suggests that their perceived mental deficiencies may be at least partially due to organic injury (e.g., extreme fever during infancy, possible oxygen deficiency during birth, etc.). In spite of the various health problems they have encountered, however, 47 out of the 48 subjects were able, with some degree of justification, to state that in general they considered themselves to be in either good or excellent health.

### Social Lives as Adults

For the most part, studies on the social lives of mildly retarded adults have emphasized the monetary aspects of social adjustment; specifically, the ability of the individual to find employment and live independently without undue financial assistance from others. Recently, however, Edgerton and Bercovici have suggested that mildly retarded adults give greater weight to personal satisfaction and interpersonal relationships than to financial considerations in evaluating their own social adjustment. As they note of the mildly retarded subjects they interviewed:

There was no particular evidence of alienation from work of the kind Terkel so vividly documented for some Americans, but only a preoccupation with things other than work. They had become devoted to enjoying life and most of them had quite convincingly relegated work to a purely instrumental role. Many of these 30 persons have developed varied and rewarding styles of life involving many friends, activities, and pastimes (1976:493).

Given the possible applicability of these findings to the subjects of this study, it should be evident that a thorough knowledge of their social activities may be crucial in understanding their

overall social adjustment. Although this study has attempted to deal with the social lives of the subjects in some detail, the description presented in this chapter on the social activities of all 48 subjects is necessarily brief because of the short time spent discussing this topic during the first interview. However, the information obtained does allow several general patterns in the social lives of the subjects to be perceived.

The first and most obvious feature of the social lives of the subjects is that they neither "go out" very often nor do they typically belong to any social groups or clubs. When asked how often they "go out," the responses ranged from 3 to 4 times a week to almost never. However, if visits to friends' and relatives' houses are excluded, then "going out" becomes a social activity that subjects, with the exception of a few unmarried individuals, typically engage in only infrequently. Questioning also revealed that only eight subjects belong to any type of social group or club (e.g., two belong to bowling leagues, and one each to a car club, the JC's, the Mooses, an ongoing women's cooking "class," a church movie club, and a motorcycle club). For these subjects membership in such social organizations appears to have provided them with a major opportunity to socialize with non-relatives on a recurrent basis, and because of their participation in club or group activities they were noticeably more active socially than were their non-member counterparts in this study.

A second pattern noted reflects the other side of the coin, so to speak, of the subjects' social lives. This is that most of the

social activities the subjects mentioned engaging in are informal ones undertaken with relatives or a few close friends. When asked what activities they characteristically engage in when they go out, the most common response was that they "visit" friends or family, followed by the mention of going out drinking with either friends or relatives. Interestingly, subjects almost never mentioned "going out" either alone or with just their spouse. Not so surprising, however, was the finding that when the activities the subjects engage in were correlated with the people they did them with, it was determined that in almost all the cases where subjects mentioned doing something with their families these activities were free, whereas approximately half the activities the subjects engaged in with friends required the expenditure of money. This finding suggests that while "reliance on kinsmen as sources of interpersonal gratification" is supposedly a characteristic of working-class families (Blum 1964), at least among the subjects this tendency to restrict their social activities to relatives and a few friends may be as much a financial as it is a social class phenomenon.

The final dimension to the social lives of the subjects which is discernible from the information gathered during the course of the first interview is the extent to which their leisure time is given over to watching television. For 75 percent of the subjects the most time consuming activity that they are involved in on any given evening is watching television, while for another 12 percent it is the second most common activity of their evening. While there is no doubt about the enjoyment the subjects often obtain from

watching television (police and soap operas being their favorite type of television programs), other factors also appear to have a bearing on the amount of time they spend in this fashion. One partial explanation is that from the viewpoint of the subjects there is a dearth of available alternatives to television. For example, when asked what kinds of activities they enjoy most when they go out, subjects most often mentioned the movies and dancing/drinking at nightclubs, typically adding that they do not get to do these things nearly as often as they would like. However, given the financial costs of partaking in such activities by the subjects (and, perhaps not insignificantly, by those friends or relatives who usually accompany them), there appears little likelihood that television could be replaced by these other activities except on a very limited basis.

In summary, it is suggested that the social lives of the subjects can perhaps be best characterized by their television watching rather than the other activities they engage in. This is not simply because of the amount of time they devote to this activity, but also because in certain respects it can be taken to symbolize the relative degree of social and financial isolation that they experience in their day-to-day lives.

### Religion

It has often times been argued that religion is a uniquely human attribute, one which requires a certain minimal competence in symbolic thought and the use of language (Wallace 1966; Geertz 1966).

Assuming the general validity of this perspective it is perhaps revealing of the status of mentally retarded persons in Western society that, while the religious lives of almost every other conceivable group of people have been studied, there has been no known study done of their religious beliefs and practices. This deficiency is even more striking when it is realized that one of the membership divisions in the 101 year old American Association on Mental Deficiency is specifically organized for individuals doing religious work with the mentally retarded.

Because of this lack of prior research into the religious lives of mentally retarded persons it was difficult to determine what questions could, and ideally, should be asked of subjects during their initial interview that would provide some insight into their religious orientation. While a separate interview was eventually devoted specifically to the religious beliefs and "world view" of the subjects (dealt with in a separate chapter), only three questions regarding church attendance and membership were asked of all 48 subjects. Beyond the general information they provided, these questions also served the purpose of allowing some impressions to be gained regarding the significance religion has in the subjects' lives and their sensitivity in discussing such matters.

Based on the kinds of responses given to these questions on church participation there was apparently no need for timidity in discussing religious matters with the subjects. Only 8 of the 48 subjects claimed that they were currently attending church regularly,

while another 11 subjects stated that in the last few years they had been occasionally attending church. The subjects' present level of church attendance appears to be especially low considering the fact that 34 of them claimed that they had "often" attended church as children. Part of this drop in the subjects' church attendance as they became adults may be related to their parents' church attendance for only 20 subjects stated that their parents had also attended church regularly as they were growing up and, for the most part, it is these same subjects who presently attend church on either a regular or occasional basis.

#### Most Important Matters in the Subjects' Lives

The final question asked of the subjects, which both terminated the first interview and set the stage for subsequent interviews, was a purposely vague one asking the subjects to describe what they considered to be the most important things in their lives. The question itself was prefaced by a statement to the effect that the interview they were completing was part of a study to determine how former Keeler students were getting along in life as adults, and to insure that future interviews deal with topics relevant to their life-styles it was important to find out what they thought were the most important things in their lives at this time. This question, incidently, was the only one not found in one variation or another in the "Life History Questionnaire" by Baller, Charles, and Miller (1967).

Of the 48 subjects in this study, 45 responded to this question by mentioning a total of 73 particular things that they felt were very important in their lives. Their responses are outlined in Table 2.7.

TABLE 2.7.--Most Important Things in the Subjects' Lives.

	Male		Female	
	Married*	Single	Married*	Single
Family:				
"Family"	6		8	
Spouse	4		1	
Children	2		3	
Job	5	6	1	3
Nice Home			3	
Material Wealth		1	2	
Friends	1	1	1	
Health	2	1		
Getting Married		1		1
Parents	1	1	1	
Education	1	1		
"Life"	1	1		
"Living Day to Day"	1	1		
Car Racing		1		
Sports	1			
Going into Army		1		
Working with Animals		1		
Getting Out and Enjoying Life	1			
Being Normal, Average Person	1			
"To Be Skinny Again"			1	
Not Worry So Much			1	
To Be Courteous to People		1		
"Women"	1			

\*Married here includes divorced individuals with children.  
Divorced individuals without children included under single category.



While it might be expecting too much of one question to produce any unusually insightful replies from a group of persons being interviewed for the first time, nevertheless the most noticeable aspect to the subjects' responses is their apparent predictability. Taken in their proper context, none of the subjects' responses could be construed to be inappropriate or bizarre, and it would appear that their tendency to mention family and jobs most often is probably typical of most adults in the United States. It may be, in fact, the very normality of the subjects' responses that makes it difficult to readily perceive their significance. However, Rainwater's writings on the life-styles of working-class families in the United States can be considered especially appropriate in understanding the value orientation that apparently underlies the subjects' responses. To quote Rainwater on the importance of jobs and family among working-class people:

The central life goal of the stable working class is the creation of a comfortable and secure place for oneself and one's family (1971:206).

. . . the preferred world of the stable working class is one in which the individual minds his own business and avoids larger entanglements than those of work and family. They feel that the challenges and the energy required for working and family life are more than enough to ask of any man or woman. And what more can a nation ask of its citizens than that a man work and be productive and that men and women together raise a next generation that is also productive and responsible? (1971:211).

The social capital needed to make the good life is, in working-class logic, perfectly straightforward. In order to enter the mainstream, you simply make a family by combining a man who is a good and faithful provider with a woman who is a sensible, responsible, and loving housewife-mother. All other things (such as economic conditions and personal health)

being normal, this combination and the children the man and the woman have are assumed to produce a family that enjoys the good American life by dint of applying hard work and good sense (1971:207-208).

If establishing, nurturing, and enjoying a family is what life is all about for the working-class man and woman, then earning and spending money are the two principal instrumental activities through which this central goal is accomplished. . . . The division of labor that sits most comfortably with the working-class style is one in which the husband earns the money and the wife spends it (1971: 212, 214).

One point worth noting is Rainwater's contention that jobs should be recognized as being instrumental goals for most working-class people rather than as end-goals, a point which, as mentioned earlier, is apparently not fully comprehended by most persons doing research on mentally retarded persons. This point also may partially explain why subjects, once they are married, are less apt to mention jobs as the most important thing in their lives than are single subjects. In this sense, then, jobs are mentioned by the single subjects more often than by married subjects because, while their long-term goals and interests remain indefinite, their jobs are the most salient feature in their lives.

## CHAPTER II: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The rationale for using the WAIS to obtain the subjects' current IQ scores was that this particular scale was developed and standardized for use with different aged adult populations, and is the IQ test most commonly used with adult subjects in the United States. For more information on the test and its administration in this study see Appendix A.

## CHAPTER III

### SCHOOLING

#### The Social Context of the Subjects' Schooling

Although the objectives and implementation of special education programs in the Keeler School System--and in the United States more generally--have changed somewhat in recent years, it appears that adequate descriptions of their nature during the years the subjects attended school can be found in a variety of works from that period. One such work is G. Orville Johnson's (1963) widely cited book on the education of "slow learners." Regarding what he perceives to be the basic objectives of high school programs for mildly retarded students, Johnson writes:

The academic skill instruction that has such an important position in the primary, intermediate, and junior high school programs may largely vanish in the senior high school program. . . . by the time most slow learners have entered tenth grade they have either achieved or so nearly achieved their mental maturity that any additional skill development will be so small as to not be worth the effort (1963:175).

Having dismissed the worthwhileness of any further efforts to promote academic skills in mildly retarded students, Johnson goes on to suggest some meaningful curriculum objectives which can be pursued in educating such students:

The senior high school program should be developed around broad unit-type experiences designed to achieve two primary objectives--good citizenship and adequate vocational adjustment . . . .

In broad outline the program consists of approximately 50 percent of the time being devoted to in-school adjustment, social, citizenship, and vocational activities and 50 percent to out-of-school systemically planned vocational experiences (1963:180-181).

In more recent years these same basic objectives in the education of mildly retarded students have continued to be reiterated with a certain aura of historical respectability added to it. For example, Kolstoe, in outlining the purposes of education as they were set forth by the National Education Association in 1938, writes:

The National Education Association classifies: (1) economic efficiency; (2) worthy home membership; (2) worthy citizenship; and (4) self-realization as nearly all conceivable goals of education. However, with mentally retarded youngsters, it would appear that unless some measure of economic efficiency can be achieved, all the other aims of education are unsupported. Economic efficiency, on the other hand, can make a substantial contribution to the other aims. For many retarded individuals, work success may actually be self-realization. That is, their sense of identity may be tied to the contribution they can make through their work. Similarly, they exercise good citizenship largely by not becoming burdens upon society, rather than by positive civic activities. Being worthy home members may depend upon their economic contribution or even upon so simple a fact as spending a major portion of their time at work, thus freeing the parents or guardians from the responsibility of total supervision. At a more independent level, most of the educable mentally retarded can be trained to be independent in their living and even maintain families of their own. Realistically, the goals of vocational competence and independent living are not only attainable, but once achieved will probably fulfill the aims of education enunciated by the NEA. The program of special education for the educable mentally retarded, therefore, should be the maximum development of the intellectual, personal, social, emotional, and motor skills necessary for vocational competence and independent living (1976:32-33).

Given the general consensus reached among educators regarding the crucial importance of vocational training in the education of mildly retarded students, it is not surprising that the Keeler

School System gave considerable emphasis to vocational training in expanding their special education program during the 1950s. This emphasis on vocational training, however, was anything but reluctant--for as noted earlier, the Keeler School System was the first public school system in the country to establish a "work experience program" as an integral part of the high school education of its mentally retarded students.

This program, which typically involved students going to school half-time (approximately 3 to 4 hours) while working at a job in the community, had two major and immediately obvious consequences. First, the work experience program legitimized work as an educational experience by giving special education students class credits for the time they spent working, and by allowing these credits to be used in meeting the Keeler School System's requirements for high school graduation. The second consequence of this program was that it mimized the amount of time special education students would be expected to spend in school studying "academic" subjects, thus institutionalizing an educational perspective which assumed that academic skills had little importance--either currently or potentially--in the community adaptation of mildly retarded students.

Whatever its long-term vocational benefits, it appears that this emphasis on vocationalism in school programs for the mentally retarded has had a negative effect on their overall academic abilities. While data is not available for students who have been in the Keeler School System's special education program, studies

done in other parts of the country have shown that the academic skills of special education students are, as a rule, significantly below that which would be expected on the basis of their mental ages. Summarizing the findings of numerous studies regarding the relatively low level of academic abilities found in special education students, Quay has written:

On the basis of the size of the discrepancy between actual achievement and expected achievement calculated from MA, the order of skills is as follows: reading, arithmetic reasoning, writing, spelling, and arithmetic computation. Even in the studies in which discrepancies were not significant, reading showed a greater absolute discrepancy than arithmetic (1963:681).

Although there has apparently been no research done to determine whether the academic shortcomings found among special education students is directly attributable to the emphasis schools place on vocational rather than classroom experiences, this possibility was noted by Quay:

Both Thurstone and Groelle raise the question of whether the schools are as effective in teaching academic skills to older retardates as they are in teaching them to younger retardates. These findings might also suggest that schools are emphasizing areas other than academic ones to the detriment of older groups. This consideration is particularly relevant in view of Boyle's findings that emphasis on reading was effective with retarded adolescents and in view of the incidental observation of Klausmeier et al. that children were able to acquire and retain arithmetic learnings considerably beyond those in their present curriculum. These findings suggest that the curriculum at every level needs further evaluation (1963:684).

In essence, then, it can be hypothesized that while the emphasis given to vocational training in educating mentally retarded students may have the beneficial consequences envisioned by proponents of "vocationalism," by de-emphasizing the training they

receive in various "academic" skills this approach may also have a number of detrimental consequences for the mentally retarded in their community adaptation which are not adequately recognized by many of those working in the field of special education. Put in other terms, it seems obvious that the relatively slow rate of learning found among mentally retarded students makes it necessary that schools de-emphasize certain skills in their special education programs so as to allow adequate time to be given others. However, what has not been adequately demonstrated, and what is not so obvious except to its many proponents, is that vocational training--as opposed to training in the more "academic" skills--is necessarily the best allocation of time and resources in the schooling of the mildly retarded.

### The Subjects' Perspective on School

#### Background Information on the Subjects' Schooling

In most respects the circumstances surrounding the 31 subjects' schooling can be characterized as stable and uneventful. Almost all of the subjects grew up in the Keeler area and attended Keeler schools without interruption. The health of the subjects, according to their own reports, was normal during their school years, with only two subjects reporting that they had had medical problems which were serious enough to have kept them out of school for any extended period of time. Apparently the behavior of the subjects while in school was similarly undramatic, with only three subjects reporting that they skipped school with any frequency, and only



five mentioning that they had ever been suspended from school (primarily for fighting with other students).

Outside of the fact that almost all of the subjects were at one time or another enrolled in special education classes, it is perhaps their low graduation rate that continues to most distinguish the schooling of the subjects from that of their peers. As noted in the second chapter only 61 percent of the male and 50 percent of the female subjects ever graduated from high school, even though as special education students the standards most of them had to meet for graduating from high school were rather minimal (see Table 3.1). When questioned about the reasons for their having stayed or not stayed in school until graduation, most of the subjects who had graduated mentioned either the encouragement and/or prompting (coercion at times?) of their parents (63 percent) or the employment advantages of a diploma (16 percent). Among the subjects who had left school before graduating the most common reasons given for doing so were having problems with the teachers (33 percent), the need to go to work (25 percent), and a dislike--or boredom with--school (17 percent). While none of the subjects mentioned their friends as having any influence on their decision to leave or remain in school until graduation, it is worth noting that 84 percent of the subjects who graduated and only 27 percent of the subjects who did not graduate stated that most of their school friends had graduated.

TABLE 3.1.--Years of School Completed by Subjects.

School Years Completed	Subjects		Average Age of Subjects on Leaving School
	Male*	Female	
Ungraded	1	0	22
Seventh	1	0	15
Eighth	0	0	--
Ninth	0	1	16
Tenth	4	1	16.4
Eleventh	2	2	17.5
Twelfth	14	4	18.4

Average number of grades completed (n = 29) = 11.2

Average age on leaving school (n = 30) = 17.9

---

\*One male subject was unsure of what grade he had completed in the special education program, or his age on leaving.

### General Perspectives on School and Teachers

Although all of the subjects in this study were "eligible" to participate full-time in the Keeler School System's special education program, for most of the subjects their actual participation was only part-time and/or during the last years of their schooling (e.g., from seventh or tenth grade on). As a result, the views the subjects have developed on their school experiences generally are, as a rule, more inclusive than are their views on the special education classes and teachers they had. In keeping with this, this section will focus on the subjects' views toward schools and teachers generally, followed by sections dealing with the subjects'

pe

an

th

Sc

sc

th

du

in

wi

in

ei

"s

wi

sc

at

ha

se

ex

"p

ev

de

in

st

perspective on special education classes and teachers specifically and last, on the subjects' perspectives regarding the relevance of the classes they had taken in school to their current life situations.

### School

In discussing with the subjects their views on school and schooling a number of different issues were addressed. The first of these concerned how the subjects had generally "felt" about school during their youth. The initial response to this line of questioning was an almost equal distribution of positive and negative remarks, with three subjects stating that while they were growing up they had, in effect, "hated" school, nine stating that they "didn't like it," eight that they had had mixed or neutral feelings about school (e.g., "so-so"), three that school had been "all right," and eight claiming without any reservations that they had "liked" school.

However, when the subjects were asked whether they had found school mostly boring or interesting this balanced stance was abandoned, with 18 of the subjects (58 percent) claiming that they had for the most part considered school as "boring," while only seven subjects had thought of it as being mostly "interesting or exciting" (23 percent) and six (19 percent) that school had been "half-and-half." One of the most striking features of the subjects' evaluations of school along this boring-interesting continuum is the degree to which they agreed on what were the most boring and interesting aspects of school. For example, classes in which students were required to "just sit there" . . . "listening to the

teacher talk"--often "about their own personal or family lives"--were considered by over three-fourths of the subjects to be the most boring part of school. In terms of classes, this viewpoint was reflected in the fact that a majority of subjects mentioned their Social Studies and English classes as being the most boring ones they took.

Although there was less overt agreement among subjects as to what general factors made school more interesting and/or exciting for them, when asked about specific classes that they had found to be the most interesting the subjects most often mentioned either gym class (8 male and 3 female subjects) or shop classes (5 male subjects). Although susceptible to multiple interpretations, taken by themselves these remarks suggest the rather simple idea that subjects have a tendency to perceive a high level of physical activity, especially when coupled with the opportunity to make things "by hand," as being one if not the most important factors in making school interesting for them.

Given the consistency with which the various subjects' comments support this suggestion, it is interesting to note that when these questions on school were asked in slightly different form at a later point (what were the "best" and "worst" parts of school rather than what were the most interesting/exciting and boring) there was a change in the subjects' general response to the first but not the second of these questions. That is, subjects indicated that sitting around listening to teachers was not only the most boring part of school but also the worst. However, while no reference was made to

socializing with friends as being an interesting/exciting part of school, in response to the second question nine subjects mentioned it as being the best part of school (while ten others reiterated their fondness for gym and shop classes in this new context).

In trying to understand these evaluative comments it can be said that much of the educational research done with mentally retarded persons is supportive of the idea that mentally retarded students, like so many of their normal working-class counterparts, place greater emphasis and value on manual skills and physical activities than do normal middle-class students, who are perceived as giving relatively greater value to the acquisition of "academic" skills. However, while this value orientation is commonly perceived to be a product of various socio-economic factors when exhibited by working-class students, among mentally retarded students such a value orientation is much more apt to be attributed to their low level of intellectual development. For example, like so many of his colleagues Kolstoe gives some implicit recognition and support to this intellectual explanation for the mentally retarded's emphasis on manual rather than academic skills by characterizing them thusly:

They seem to have a limited ability to abstract, difficulty in understanding cause and effect, faulty concept formation, imprecise perceptions, limited incidental learning, impoverished language, and difficulty in generalizing. Their thought processes can be described as concrete, discrete, unrelated, immediate, and obvious (1976:20-21).

In this context, then, the subjects' emphasis on physical activities and manual skills in making school interesting can be attributed to the convergence of two factors. First, the working

class background of most of the subjects can be seen as significantly promoting their adoption of such an emphasis while, secondly, the subjects' intellectual disabilities can in any case be viewed as effectively preventing most of them from successfully adopting any alternative--i.e., more academically-oriented--emphasis. In this same context, in turn, it can be argued that in addition to whatever factors the subjects have in common with their normal peers that would prompt them to consider socializing with friends as being the best part of school, this consideration may have been significantly prompted by the subjects' relative inability to find much satisfaction in most other, more "academically-oriented," aspects of school.

That these subjects' comments can be readily taken as reflecting a broad emphasis on the physical and social activities of school is an assumption that would be perhaps more fully justified were it not for other comments made by the subjects regarding school and education. As will be seen, while these latter comments do not necessarily conflict with those made initially by the subjects, they do point out that many of the subjects differ markedly in the way they evaluate their own school experiences and schooling more generally. For example, while most subjects had some rather negative things to say about their own particular schooling, almost all of the subjects (89 percent) agreed that it was imperative that children be sent to school so that they'd "learn something" and "wouldn't be dummies." This viewpoint was rather well illustrated by one male subject (IQ = 81) who, after going on at some lengths about how much he had "hated school" (except for gym), stated that "everything you

learn in school is important" and that he was going to make sure that his children went to school regularly since, as he put it, "I don't want my kids to turn out like I did."

The subjects' support for school as an important institution in rearing children properly, however, went beyond such vague statements. When questioned about what they personally thought were the most important things that people should learn in school subjects overwhelmingly mentioned such "academic" skills as reading, math, writing, and/or spelling (mentioned by 15, 12, 11, and 3 subjects, respectively). This emphasis on academic skills, though, appears to have its basis less in the realities of school as the subjects experienced them than in what they have come to perceive school as being in its ideal state.

For example, when questioned about the relative importance of school in helping them to adapt to adult life, most subjects (22 out of 27 answering) claimed that they had actually learned more since leaving school than they had while in school. For most of these individuals this post-school learning consisted primarily of achieving more "maturity" or a "sense of responsibility," or of gaining some type of job skill. While subjects were more non-committal (or less sure) about the degree to which their schooling had helped them--eight claiming that it had helped them "a lot," 17 that it had helped "some," five that it had "not helped very much," and one that it had "not helped at all"--this sense of having gained more maturity since leaving school was readily apparent during later conversations. In these conversations subjects repeatedly explained that it was



their own fault that they had not learned more in school, that their teachers had made efforts to help them but that they "hadn't tried," "weren't ready to settle down," etc.

If subjects were willing to put aside the negative feelings that they had earlier expressed about their own schooling to claim that it was probably their own fault that they had not learned more while in school, the majority of them were similarly able to put aside their disaffection with formalized class instruction to claim that the most important thing that school had done for them had been to help them acquire some type of "academic" skill such as math or reading (see Table 3.2). This emphasis on academic skills was reiterated to some extent in a later interview where, when asked what they would want to learn about most if they were to return to school, subjects most often mentioned a desire to learn how to read and write better (see Table 3.3). Although in no way conclusive, the fact that subjects more often mentioned "academic" skills in the context of these two questions than they did vocational skills and training suggests that many of them have come to see their lack of academic skills to be a more obtrusive handicap for them in their current life situations than is their relative lack of vocational skills.

Based on the various comments subjects made regarding school a number of tentative conclusions can be drawn. The first is that while few subjects considered the normal acquisition of academic skills--by means of sitting in a classroom listening to a teacher--to have any interesting or pleasurable connotations, upon reflection

TABLE 3.2.--How Subjects Think School Has Helped the Most.

Particular Endowment	Number of Times Mentioned		
	Male	Female	Total*
Math	8	3	11
Reading and Writing	3	3	6
History and Government	3	1	4
Shop (wood and metal)	8	0	8
Home Economics	0	1	1
Art	0	1	1
Driver's Education	1	0	1
Don't Know	3	1	4
Didn't Help	2	1	3

\*Some subjects mentioned two different "endowments," which results in total exceeding 31.

TABLE 3.3.--What Subjects Would Want to Learn about Most if They Were to Return to School.

Topic to be Studied	Number of Times Mentioned		
	Male	Female	Total
Math	0	1	1
Reading and Writing	9	3	12
History and Government	1	1	2
Auto Mechanics	5	1	6
Drafting	2	0	2
Welding	1	0	1
Tool and Die Making	1	0	1
Arts and Crafts	0	1	1
Family Life	1	0	1
Sports	1	0	1
Don't Know	2	1	3

most consider their failure to acquire these skills to be their primary regret with regard to school and--at least in a hypothetical situation--the one which they would most like to rectify.

The second tentative conclusion is that subjects place the greatest responsibility for their not having learned more in school upon themselves. In doing so, however, they do not generally attribute their educational shortcomings to any intellectual disabilities per se that they may have--as others may be prone to do--but rather to a number of factors which they consider to have been essentially peculiar to their childhood and adolescence (e.g., lack of maturity, inattentiveness, etc.). This viewpoint is an especially intriguing one in that the subjects, while accepting primary responsibility for their educational shortcomings and failures, tend to place them in a temporal context which eliminates many of their more devastating personal connotations.

### Teachers

If discrepancies appeared between what the subjects perceive to be the most important aspects of school and what they actually found to be most interesting, no such discrepancies appeared in the way they view teachers. Rather, the qualities they consider most important in making for a good teacher in theory are also those qualities which they liked most in the teachers they had actually had in school. As can be seen in Table 3.4 subjects most often described an ideal teacher as being one that treated students with respect and understood their need for individual help in learning

TAB

Qua

Tak

Und

Exp

Giv

Lis

All

Doc

Eas

Tea

Tea

Is

the

sub

tea

for

men

sic

sub

the

the

TABLE 3.4.--Qualities Subjects Mentioned as Making for a Good Teacher.

Qualities	Number of Times Mentioned
Takes time to work with each student	10
Understands your problems, helps you with them	7
Explains things fully	4
Gives attention, praise	3
Listens to students	2
Allows students to do things at their own pace	2
Doesn't yell at students	2
Easy to get along with	2
Teaches you more	1
Teaches the "basics"	1
Is nice to students	1

the class material. These qualities, in turn, are also those which subjects referred to in explaining why they especially liked certain teachers they had personally had in school (Table 3.5).

This consistency was maintained when asked about what makes for a poor--or bad--teacher as almost all the subjects responded by mentioning qualities which was just the reverse of those they considered important in a good teacher (see Table 3.6). Although the subjects' characterization of teachers they had had in school that they had disliked were somewhat more specific and idiosyncratic, these same qualities appeared to have underlaid their

TABLE 3.5.--Qualities Subjects Liked Most in the Teachers They Had Had in School.

Qualities	Number of Times Mentioned
Understood your problems, took time to help you	9
Gave special attention to you when you needed it	5
Explained things more, could ask them questions	5
Good natured, got along with kids	4
Treated you with respect	3
Helped you find work	1
Had "easy class"	1
Was well-organized	1
Didn't talk about their families	1

TABLE 3.6.--Qualities Subject Mentioned as Characterizing Poor Teachers.

Qualities	Number of Times Mentioned
Don't care, don't try to help students	9
Ignore all but the best students	4
"Discipline stuff"	4
"Riding students all the time"	3
Yells, shouts at students	3
Don't have patience	2
Are distant from their students	2
Don't put full effort into teaching	2
Treat you like you're stupid	1
Too much homework	1
Expect too much out of you	1
Upset if students needs help repeatedly	1
Don't give enough individual attention	1
Too easy	1

characterizations (see Table 3.7). Interestingly enough, while a number of subjects had claimed that teachers talking about their personal lives in class was the most boring part of school, none mentioned it as being symptomatic of a poor teacher.

TABLE 3.7.--Qualities Subjects Disliked Most in Their Teachers.

Qualities	Number of Times Mentioned
Slapped you or hit you with paddle	5
Yelled at you	4
Ignored you if he (she) didn't like you	4
Won't help individual students	3
Expected more out of students than students could do	3
Made you look stupid in class	2
Picked on people	2
Didn't really know what they were talking about	1
Never got down to teaching us	1
Argued with students	1
Too much homework	1
Made students memorize poems	1

Having so often and consistently commented on the various shortcomings of schools and teachers, it was somewhat surprising to find that when finally asked to evaluate the overall quality of the teachers they had had throughout their school years subjects tended to give them positive, though not rave reviews. Of the 30 subjects

who gave general evaluations regarding their teachers, 16 gave them good grades (e.g., "liked 'em all," "they were mainly good," etc.). Nine subjects, in turn, gave their teachers essentially neutral or equivocal evaluations (e.g., they were "so-so," "fair," "half good and half poor," etc.), while five considered the teachers they had had to have generally been of "poor" quality (e.g., "they were mostly not interested," "didn't care," etc.).

These positive and negative comments on teachers, taken together with various remarks made regarding school, suggest that in reflecting on school and teachers the subjects are making some general type of distinction between what they consider the most interesting aspects of their education and what they consider to be the most important. Perhaps, as was implicit in the discussion of the subjects' remarks on school, a basis for making such a distinction is that the criteria subjects use in deciding what was most interesting and exciting about school has not changed since leaving it, whereas the things they consider to be most important in a person's education have been significantly altered by their experiences as adults. In this sense, the subjects can be seen as reinterpreting certain parts of their school experiences so as to make them more relevant to their present lives and the world-views they have acquired.

#### Perspectives on Special Education Classes and Teachers

In attempting to understand the perspectives the subjects have regarding special education classes and teachers it is important



that initial recognition be given to the fact that such perspectives are an integral part, albeit a large one, of the perspectives subjects have developed toward education and teachers more generally. That is to say, the subjects exhibited a definite tendency to evaluate special education classes and teachers in accordance with criteria they consider to be relevant to the education of all people, and not just those assumed to have significant learning disabilities. Although other studies indicate a similar tendency among former special education students to evaluate their school experiences against some generalized concepts of what an education entails (e.g., Gozali 1972), persons writing on special education programs are prone to describing them as if they were sufficiently distinct from "regular" educational programs as to make the criteria used in understanding and evaluating such regular educational programs irrelevant and inappropriate in understanding the nature of special education programs. Something of this distinction that is made between "special" and "regular" education can be seen in MacMillan's comments:

. . . there has long been an assumption that retarded children should be taught different subject matter. Although there is no standard EMR curriculum, special classes have usually followed the pattern of the Illinois Curriculum Guide, which emphasizes the development of social and vocational skills. Basic tool subjects (e.g., math, social studies) are presented in a context resembling that in which the child is expected to apply those skills and, in general, less emphasis is placed on knowledge for knowledge's sake than is true in the general curriculum.

Although this subject has received little attention in all the excitement over mainstreaming, we must face the problem that by placing a retarded child in a regular classroom, we are presenting him with a curriculum that may not be appropriate for him. It could be argued that

the regular curriculum in most schools lacks relevance for many normal students who will not go on to higher education since it tends to overemphasize academics. If so, the greater vocational emphasis of the secondary EMR program and its tendency to teach tool subjects in a realistic context might be preferable for a sizable proportion of the school population who have never been considered retarded and whose IQs may even approach 100. Although for years the question has been "What is special about special education?" we could turn it around and ask "What is so great about general education?" (1977:451-452).

Put in the context of how former special education students evaluate their schooling, perhaps the most serious consequence of adopting such a distinctive view on special education programs is the distortions it can prompt in interpreting these people's comments. For example, there is a common tendency among educators to emphasize the distinctive attributes of their special education programs--e.g., their small pupil to teacher ratios, or more often their isolating and stigmatizing effects--in trying to explain the relative success or failure achieved by former students. However, as Gozali (1972) discovered, former special education students are themselves more apt to perceive the strengths and weaknesses of their education in terms that are more fully consistent with a regular academic education; namely, whether the schools actually "educated" them, whether they helped them "to really learn how to read and write."

In essence, then, it is important in reviewing the subjects' comments on their special education classes and teachers to recognize that they are not simply discussing the specific and peculiar aspects of their own school experiences, but are also providing important indices of how they perceive schooling more generally. This is not to suggest that there is nothing special about the

special education they received, a notion the subjects' remarks quickly disabuse the listener of, but rather that the subjects nevertheless continue to evaluate their special education primarily in terms of what they considered to be its general educational qualities.

#### Special Education Classes

Among the subjects in this study the most common point for them to begin taking special education classes was the seventh grade-- i.e., upon their entry into junior high school (see Table 3.8). Although not statistically significant, there was some tendency for subjects with lower IQs to have been placed in special education classes earlier than those with higher IQs.

TABLE 3.8.--Grade Subjects Entered Special Education Program.

Grade	Male	Female	Total
Elementary	7	1	8
Seventh	9	4	13
Eighth	-	1	1
Ninth	1	-	1
Tenth	1	1	2
Eleventh	1	-	1
Never Enrolled	4	1	5

Five subjects, in turn, apparently never took any special education classes. While eligible, it appears that two of them avoided special education classes by never having had any learning problems that were considered serious enough to warrant their removal from regular classes (though serious enough to warrant special testing), whereas the other three subjects appear to have simply dropped out of school before they could be placed in special education classes. Therefore, of the 31 subjects interviewed only 26 were able to comment personally on the special education classes and teachers in the Keeler School System.

In discussing their having been in special education classes subjects were questioned primarily on three basic issues: Why had they been placed in these classes, did such placement help them learn better, and how did they feel about being in special education classes?

With respect to the first of these questions--why were they placed in special education classes?--almost all of the subjects (23 of 26) acknowledged without any noticeable reservations that it was because they were having serious difficulties in coping with regular schoolwork (e.g., "I was a little bit slower than regular students," "I was slow in reading . . . couldn't spell," "I couldn't do regular work," "I was slow, for one thing"). Although their readiness to acknowledge their personal learning difficulties constitutes something of an open admission on their part that their special education placement was justified, as will be discussed in the later section on labeling, such acknowledgments may be considered

as tactical maneuvers which serve to defuse the subjects' special education placement of its more onerous personal implications. In any case, the subjects' acknowledgement eight to ten years after leaving school that they had had learning difficulties does not provide any basis for assuming that they were so willing to admit to such difficulties while they were students. Rather, as a number of studies (e.g., Edgerton and Bercovici 1976, Jones 1972) would suggest, it is probable that for most individuals the negative implications of being placed in a special education program are so personally threatening to them that it is only after a significant period of time that a willingness to discuss with any openness the justifications for such placement may be expected.

If the subjects accepted their placement in special education classes in theory, they were somewhat less willing to endorse it in practice. In fact, three-fifths (15 of 25) of the subjects stated that had they been given the choice they would have preferred being in regular rather than special education classes. While two subjects explicitly mentioned that they would have liked being in regular classes so as to avoid the teasing so many of the subjects experienced, 10 of the 15 subjects claimed that their preference was based on the fact that their special education classes tended to go too slow for them, and that they felt that they would have learned more by being in regular classes. Of the ten subjects who did not express any regrets about being in special education classes, nine of them explained that they had needed the help that they had received in these classes and would no doubt have failed in a

regular school program (the tenth subject, in contrast, said that he had enjoyed special education classes because they were so easy that he had not had to work). Of interest here is that neither the subjects' present nor school-age correlated with their feelings toward special education.

Similar sentiments were expressed in response to questions about how much help special education classes actually provide their students. Of the ten subjects who thought that special education classes had gone too slow for them, seven stated that these classes had been little, if any, help to them in learning. The other three subjects, however, moderated their previous stance by declaring that such classes had actually helped them more than regular classes could have since they would probably have found the work in regular classes too hard for them to keep up with. While this latter judgment was repeated by various other subjects, an equally common response among subjects was to say that they had learned more by being in special education classes because of their smaller size and the individual attention and understanding they received from their special education teachers.

Overall, with regards to the first two issues it can be concluded that most subjects felt that their placement in special education classes had been justified, and that while many thought that such classes had gone too slow for them personally, most subjects concluded that under existing circumstances they had actually received a better education in their special education classes than they would have in regular classes.

It is on the third issue--how they felt about being in special education classes--that subjects responded most strongly. As can be seen in Table 3.9, subjects for the most part remember that as students they had disliked being in special education classes. However, their dislike for these classes does not appear to be as striking as that found in other groups of former special education students. Gozali (1972), for example, reported that 85 percent of the mildly retarded adults interviewed in his study "perceived their special-class experiences as degrading and useless," while only 15 percent saw it as having been a "positive" experience.

In an attempt to estimate how strongly the subjects in this study felt about having been placed in special education classes, both presently and while in school, a number of questions were raised about their willingness to tell others of their school placement. Ten subjects responded to this line of questioning by saying that at the present time they had no real reservations about telling others of their special education placement, whereas 14 subjects stated either that they would never tell others of this fact (8) or that they would only tell "sometimes" (6). As might be expected from the subjects' earlier comments, the different positions taken on this question by the individual subjects appears to be less a reflection of any continuing guilt or embarrassment they may have about their special education placement per se than it does a pragmatic concern with how others would respond to such a disclosure. That is, subjects who were agreeable to telling others about their special education placement typically stated that they would do so because they

TABLE 3.9.--General Feelings of Subjects to Their Special Education Placement.

	Male	Female	Total
<u>Positive:</u>			
Enjoyed it, liked it	1	1	$\frac{2}{2}$
<u>Neutral</u>			
O.K.	1	1	2
No problem	1	-	1
Didn't bother me	-	1	1
Not too bad	1	-	$\frac{1}{5}$
<u>Mildly Negative</u>			
Alright, except for teasing, etc.	2	1	3
Didn't bother me too much	-	1	1
Sometimes felt funny not being in regular classes	-	1	$\frac{1}{5}$
<u>Negative</u>			
Makes a person feel foolish, so low	-	1	1
Ashamed	3	-	3
Always teasing, calling me dumb, stupid, etc.	5	-	5
Felt stupid, like I was mentally retarded	2	-	2
Didn't like it at all	1	1	2
Didn't learn much	1	-	$\frac{1}{12}$
<u>Unknown, no comment</u>			
			$\frac{2}{2}$



were "not ashamed" or bothered by this part of their past. Those who were hesitant about divulging such information, on the other hand, expressed the fear that others might--erroneously--think that they were "dumb" or "no good."

When subjects were asked, in turn, whether they had been willing as students to tell others about being in special education classes it was hoped that their responses would provide some indication as to whether they had been more sensitive to their special education placement as youth. While the answers given by some of the subjects suggest that this was in fact the case, most subjects saw this as an irrelevant question since it was claimed that most other students already knew about their being in special education classes anyway.

Something of the realities of this claim was conveyed by the fact that most subjects mentioned teasing and name-calling by other students as being one of the worst, if not the worst, part of their being in special education classes. In fact, of the 26 subjects who attended such classes, only four said that they had not experienced any real teasing or harassment because of their placement.

In talking about how they felt regarding their special education placement many of the subjects were also given to commenting on what caused them to feel this way. Although their comments were too varied and at times too indefinite to allow any easy generalizations to be drawn, a number of factors were mentioned enough times by individual subjects as having influenced their feelings toward special education to suggest that these same factors may have

likewise influenced most of the other subjects feelings in this respect. Of these factors the one most commonly mentioned was the tendency of school officials to segregate special education students from the rest of the student body, not only by having separate classes for them but also by having these classes typically meet in a separate part of the school (which, as it invariably turned out, was quickly identified by other students as being set aside for such classes). This practice, which was apparently most prevalent in junior high schools, was remarked on not only by those who suffered most from it but by a number of subjects who stated that they had had relatively few problems with teasing, etc., because they had had some regular as well as special education classes.

A second factor which was mentioned by relatively few subjects, but which no doubt had a significant effect on how most of them felt about being in special education classes, was that of friends. With only one exception, subjects mentioning their friends in this context implied that friends had made it easier for them to accept their special education placement by not teasing or making fun of them on this account. As one female subject commented, her friends "didn't think anything about it" (her being in special education classes), nor would they have said anything since "friends stick by you."

One fact, however, that complicates making any generalizations about the role friends may have had in alleviating--or inducing--any embarrassment or shame the subjects may have developed about being in special education classes is that for the majority of

subjects most of their friends were "regular" students. On the one hand, as the subjects' comments suggest, having friends who are regular students may significantly reduce the special education student's feelings of social isolation and allow him to see himself as being a "six-hour" special education student--one whose differences and difficulties do not extent beyond school. On the other hand, it was these same subjects who appear to have chafed most at being in special education classes since it kept them from being with their regular class friends during the school day. Unfortunately, the subjects' discussions on their school experiences did not provide sufficient information to establish whether this latter situation was more of a simple annoyance for the subjects or if it was in fact a source of some embarrassment or shame to them.

A third factor, which was not directly mentioned by any of the subjects in terms of having influenced their feelings toward special education, was their perception of what other special education students were like. Something of the potential importance this factor can have in determining how the subjects felt about and/or interpreted for themselves their special education placement can be seen in a study done by Edgerton and Sabagh. In this study they point out that while placing mildly retarded individuals in an institution for the mentally retarded typically leads to an initial degradation of the self, such institutions may also provide numerous subsequent opportunities for these individuals to reject suggestions that they are retarded and to instead define themselves as

essentially normal (an "aggrandizement of the self"). As Edgerton and Sabagh note, these opportunities include:

. . . (1) The presence of manifestly severely retarded patients with whom comparisons of intellectual ability may profitably be made, (2) peer-group relationships that, in comparison with pre-hospital relationships, support an acceptable 'nonretarded' conception of self . . . (1962:267).

When applied to the students in special education classes, Edgerton and Sabagh's work suggests that they will be more successful in rejecting the personal implications of their school placement if (1) there are other, less intelligent students in their classes, and/or (2) there are classmates similar to themselves with whom they can "mutually validate their mental normality and find a common foe against whom they can express their resentment" (e.g., the special education program and its teachers).

To various degrees these suggestions were reflected in the actual comments made by the subjects on their special education classmates. In commenting on the academic abilities of their classmates, for example, nine subjects (38 percent) characterized them as being slower than they were, 14 (58 percent) saw them as having about the same level of abilities as themselves (e.g., "same problem as me," "same problems and interests . . . slow in some things," etc.), while only one subject offered that he was "slower" than most of the other special education students ("they worked a lot faster than me"). Interestingly enough, the subjects' evaluation of their classmates was the only aspect of their special education experience that had any notable correspondence with their IQ scores, and even here the correspondence was only found among male subjects (i.e.,

male subjects with higher IQs--average of 83 vs. 75--were more likely to see their classmates as being "slower" than themselves rather than of similar abilities).

While higher IQ male subjects were thus given to making intellectual comparisons with their classmates which would enhance their self-image, most subjects chose to maintain a positive self-image by identifying themselves as being similar to their classmates not only in terms of having a learning problem but along other dimensions as well. For two of these latter subjects maintaining a positive self-image entailed the claim that they, like most of their classmates, were "almost average" and except for some minor learning difficulties didn't really need to be in special education classes. In a somewhat similar fashion, while many of the other subjects acknowledged that they, like their classmates, were slow, they were usually quick to point out--or more commonly to imply--that this did not make them like the mentally retarded students who also attended special education classes.

Whether individual subjects considered themselves intellectually superior or intellectually similar to their fellow special education students, however, one evaluation they were prone to make of these students at one time or another was that they were nice people (e.g., "friendlier than most," "nice," "mostly good kids," etc.). While such evaluations may reflect a certain underlying animosity the subjects felt toward regular students as a result of their teasing, they also serve, without having to actually deny their academic "slowness," to focus attention on certain personality

characteristics that they as special education students have which are more flattering to one's self-image (the importance the subjects place on being seen as nice people, those who fulfill their social obligations, is dealt with in the chapter on religion and world view).

In essence, the subjects' comments on how they felt about special education classes suggest that while they generally disliked having been placed in such classes, they had to all outward appearances minimized the negative implications it had for their self-image without requiring them to deny that there was any justification for such placement. Although other factors not introduced into the discussions on special education classes by either the subjects or the interviewer may have had a significant role in how the subjects evaluated their special education experience (e.g., their families), it would appear that beyond friends and school policies it was the subjects' perceptions of their classmates that played a central role in allowing them to discount the more derogatory implications of their special education placement.

#### Special Education Teachers

As noted earlier, subjects tended to consider the worth of teachers to be determined primarily by their willingness to work with students on an individual basis and to understand their particular problems. As subsequent remarks showed, subjects tended to use these same criteria in evaluating the relative worth of special education teachers as well.

In reviewing the subjects' evaluations of their special education teacher a preliminary argument can be raised that their evaluations are only one subjective measure of a teacher's competence, and one which almost totally ignores the specialized training and expertise that these teachers possess. However, it can also be contended that--as the subjects' remarks tend to imply--the same things which make for a good regular teacher are also those which make for a good special education teacher. In trying to place the subjects' evaluations within the context of these contending arguments, though, it should be recognized that there has been little serious effort made to objectively determine what makes for a good special education teacher (Kaufman and Alberto 1976). Perhaps the best summation of this controversy is found in MacMillan's remark that:

The curriculum, instructional strategies, and teacher qualifications vary from one special class to another. In a given special class with an excellent teacher, a given EMR child is probably far better off than he would be in a regular class with a poor teacher, and vice versa. In all probability, too much importance is ascribed to the administrative arrangement in this debate and too little emphasis on what is done once children are in an alternate placement (1977:431).

Although MacMillan's statement can be considered somewhat innocuous, it does appear to reflect the basic position taken by most subjects on special education teachers. In discussing the special education teachers they had had most subjects gave them relatively good marks, with 72 percent (18 of 25) claiming that these teachers had been of more help to them in learning than had regular teachers. In contrast, 24 percent of the subjects claimed

that regular teachers had done a better job of teaching them than had their special education teachers. In any case, while a minority of subjects divided over whether special education teachers were intrinsically better or worse than regular teachers (four subjects thought that special education teachers "cared more," "understood you better," etc. than did regular teachers, while five subjects argued that they were "not as good teachers," that they "didn't care" and "didn't try to teach"), the majority of subjects voiced the opinion that the greater effectiveness of special education teachers was due to the smaller size of their classes rather than to any particular teaching talents they may have had. As one subject amply summarized this latter view, special education teachers "could give you individual attention because the classes were small."

If most subjects saw little intrinsic difference between special education and regular teachers in their abilities, motivation, etc., subjects were nevertheless given to commenting repeatedly on the existence of such differences in individual special education teachers. This was perhaps most dramatically exemplified by the fact that the same three special education teachers were mentioned by ten different subjects as having been the best teacher they had ever had, the one who in comparison with other teachers had shown so much personal interest in them and concern with their education.

Together with other comments made by them, then, the subjects' description of some of the special education teachers they had had allow the general conclusion to be made that (1) subjects use the same criteria--individual attention and understanding--in evaluating



the relative worth of both special education and regular teachers, and (2) that they view the difference in the teaching performance of these teachers to be primarily the result of environmental--i.e., classroom--factors. Put in a somewhat different light, the subjects' comments on special education teachers provide little evidence to suggest that as a group they possess any personal or professional attributes which make them more effective in teaching special education students than regular teachers. Taken even further, it can be suggested--if only for the irony of it all--that given the major controversy still raging over the effectiveness of special education programs generally, the evaluations the subjects provide of special education teachers and classes have to be given as much credence as those being presently offered by many of the researchers in the field of special education.

#### Relevance of the Special Education Curriculum to the Subjects' Current Lives

While subjects often mentioned the job-related benefits of an education most subjects considered the primary purpose of schools, and the one they benefited most from personally, to be the teaching of such academic skills as reading, writing, and, of course, arithmetic. However, proponents of vocationalism in the schools may well argue that such comments are little more than idle speculation on the part of the subjects, that they are more a reflection of certain basic cultural beliefs Americans have about education and schooling than they are indicative of any of the realities former special education students typically encounter as adults. The

propensity of many educators working with the mentally retarded to de-emphasize the importance of academic skills in meeting what they consider to be the crucial prerequisite for a satisfactory adult "adjustment"--employment--is typically justified by findings such as Kolstoe's that "above a 2.5 grade level in reading achievement" the reading competency of mentally retarded persons has little bearing on their employability" (1976:34).

While studies such as Kolstoe's have been repeatedly cited by vocationalists to substantiate their contention that the mentally retarded have comparatively little need for acquiring academic skills in preparation for adulthood, almost all of them have serious weaknesses. For example, in his own work Kolstoe acknowledges that since the range of jobs held by the retarded does not extend much beyond those of a semi-skilled nature there is presently little opportunity to study the "exact relationship" between the employability of mentally retarded persons and their academic and intellectual abilities. A similar weakness in many studies is that while the range of academic competence among mentally retarded persons is potentially rather wide, the subjects studied usually have such relatively serious and uniform academic deficiencies that the variability among them is essentially irrelevant in drawing any general conclusions about the effects academic skills have on the social and employment adjustment of these people. In essence, the present research done with mentally retarded persons does not justify the contention of the vocationalists, but only the more modest--and rather self-evident--contention that individuals with relatively few

academic skills tend to obtain jobs which require relatively few such skills. Put somewhat differently, the data put forth by vocationalists to support their position often does little more than substantiate its circularity: The mentally retarded characteristically possess only minimal academic skills, but this should not lead educators to place an undue emphasis on improving their level of academic competence since it has been repeatedly demonstrated that as adults they rarely engage in any social or employment activities that require more than the minimal academic skills that they have already come to possess.

In turning to the subjects' comments on this matter, then, it should be recognized that whatever the shortcomings in their arguments the vocationalists have raised significant questions about the actual importance that the acquisition of academic skills has in the lives of mentally retarded adults. However, if the vocationalists have not substantiated their position neither have they validated the reverse contention that academic skills actually have a crucial bearing in the adult adjustment of mentally retarded persons.

Given such sweeping criticism of the vocationalists' position, it is perhaps only poetic justice that the subjects began their comments on the relevance of school to their current life situations by noting that the vocational training many of them received in school has been of help to them in their adult lives. Of the 20 subjects who had been in the Keeler School System's "co-op" program (a vocational training program in which students attend school part-time and work part-time), 80 percent (16) were of the opinion that

this program had been of later benefit to them. The most commonly cited reasons for this opinion were (1) that the co-op program had given them work experience and skills which had proven to be of direct help to them in obtaining employment after leaving school (5); (2) that it had helped them "plan ahead" and develop "a sense of responsibility," factors which they thought had later helped them in finding and keeping jobs (5); and (3) that it had helped convince them to stay in school and get the high school diploma they would need in applying for many jobs (3). Although few subjects expressed any real enthusiasm over the co-op program as they had experienced it, most seemed to feel that it was a legitimate part of their schooling, especially insofar as there appeared to be a consensus among them that--whatever its merits--the vocational training given students could and should be improved.

In terms of formal classroom instruction, subjects were questioned at various lengths about what they considered to be the current relevance of the classes they had taken in science, math, health, physical education, art and music, social studies, English, and home economics. While only basic information was sought, and only rather minimal and inconclusive information was obtained on the relevance of most of these classes, somewhat more information was gathered on how and to what extent subjects presently utilized the basic skills taught in math and English classes.

In looking initially at the way subjects use math (or arithmetic) in their present lives it is worth reiterating the previous finding that subjects were most likely to view their greatest

academic deficiency to be in the area of math. This viewpoint was given some objective support by the finding that of the eleven tests in the WAIS, the subjects made their second lowest showing in "arithmetical reasoning" (their worst average score being on the test of "information"). Regardless of the particular means by which the subjects have come to be aware of their relative lack of mathematical skills, however, it would appear that the self-consciousness they express about their deficiencies in this area is principally a result of the emphasis and value that is placed on basic mathematical skills by society as a whole. As Matarazzo has pointed out, the use of arithmetical problems on the WAIS are to a great extent a reflection of this societal emphasis:

Most adults regard arithmetic questions as a task worthy of a grownup. They may be embarrassed by their inability to do certain problems, but they almost never look upon the questions as unfair or inconsequential (1972:203).

Perhaps, as the subjects' comments suggest, the reason arithmetical skills are seen as being such "consequential" skills for adults to possess is the importance they are assumed to have in managing one's financial transactions competently. Asked when they personally used math or arithmetic most in their lives, roughly half of the subjects mentioned some type of activity which directly involved the handling of money (see Table 3.10).

Based on these initial comments, and on the presumption that in American society how one handles his/her money is considered a key measure of their social competence, the subjects were asked a number of questions regarding their financial activities. This line

TABLE 3.10.--Activities in Which Subjects Used Math the Most.

Activity	Number of Responses
Budgeting one's money ("adding my bills up," "figuring out my earnings" . . .)	9
Purchasing goods (making change, figuring costs of goods, etc.)	6
Job (reading blueprints, figuring mileage, etc., for logbook, counting out items, etc.)	4
Recreation (cards, bowling)	2
Cooking	1
Home Repair	3
No Comment	1
"Don't really need it much"	5

of questioning revealed that half of the subjects have never borrowed money from any financial institution, and that 61 percent (19) have never had any credit cards or store charge accounts. In addition, it was found that only nine subjects currently have checking accounts, all of which are joint accounts in which the task of "balancing the checkbook" is handled by a spouse. The importance of a spouse in determining the subjects' ability to maintain a checking account was underscored by the fact that of eight subjects who had previously had checking accounts half had given them up when they

separated from their spouses while the other half had closed theirs because they were "too confusing" (e.g., "too many mistakes," "had too many overdrafts," etc.). A related, if less significant, indication of the extent to which subjects have avoided and/or minimized the personal use of mathematical--or bookkeeping--skills in their financial lives is the finding that none of the subjects have ever done their own income tax returns, relying instead on relatives or professionals to do this for them.

Though certainly not complete, this information on the subjects' financial activities is suggestive of how mathematical skills may be influential in affecting their overall level of community adaptation. First, it would appear that most of the subjects have, even as adults, experienced little real need to possess any mathematical skills beyond those involved in counting up their bills and making change. Based on this finding alone it could be argued, as vocationalists no doubt are apt to do, that mentally retarded persons can get by in the community without having any more than a rudimentary knowledge of mathematics.

However valid this claim may be it slights the important difference between just "getting by" and being successful in one's community adaptation, a difference which it may be contended (or more correctly hypothesized) is significantly influenced by whether the individual possesses sufficient competence in mathematics to understand and successfully manipulate his/her personal financial situation and resources. More specifically, the ability to meet the financial prerequisites for social "success" in the community is not

viewed as being determined solely by one's ability to attain a certain level of earnings, but also by such abilities as those of budgeting one's earnings effectively and utilizing other people's money for one's own long-term benefit (e.g., through the use of loans, credit, etc.). With reference to the subjects, such a contention can be taken to suggest that the subjects' relative lack of mathematical abilities places most of them at a distinct disadvantage in utilizing their financial resources to their greatest social advantage.

The contention that mathematical skills, while not absolutely necessary for community living, may facilitate one's social adaptation, is one which appears to have similar validity when restated in terms of English language skills. This latter contention, however, is given little direct support in the subjects' own comments, as many of them appear to have no clear idea of either how well they can read and write or what the needs for such skills are in their lives. Illustrative of this is the fact that over 70 percent of the subjects described their reading skills as being "fair" to "good." Yet, even while lacking any objective indices, it was readily apparent from observing the subjects over an extended period of time that many of these self-proclaimed "fair" to "good" readers actually had serious reading problems. For a sizable number of these subjects, in turn, it appeared that their reading problems were sufficiently serious to consider them as being functionally illiterate in any but the simplest and most basic reading tasks (e.g., there were three or four subjects who appeared able to



identify words correctly but had great difficulty in reading sentences when asked to do so).

Whatever the extent of the reading problems among the subjects, however, there is nevertheless a sizable number who read regularly if not necessarily well. Of the 31 subjects, 12 reported that they read newspapers and/or magazines on a regular basis, while 10 said that they do so "sometimes," "occasionally," etc., and nine that they never read any newspapers or magazines. In addition to other types of reading, 13 of the subjects also stated that they had read a full-length book within the last year (adventure-mystery and romance being the most popular).

In looking at who reads what and how often it was found that while their sex does not differentiate readers from non-readers, IQ scores do to varying degrees. Significant IQ differences were found between those subjects who never read newspapers and magazines and those who did so regularly or at least sometimes (average IQs, 73 vs. 81 and 73 vs. 80,  $p < .05$  and  $p < .10$ , respectively). A similar, though non-significant, difference was also noted between the book reading and non-book reading subjects (average IQs, 81 vs. 77, respectively). On a rather limited scale and with a more restricted IQ range these findings approximate those of Mercer, Butler and Dingman (1964), who reported that one of the activities which best differentiated adults with low intelligence from the population at large was how often--i.e., how infrequently--they read newspapers, magazines, and books.

Perhaps the most interesting finding with respect to the subjects' language skills was that when asked when they need to know how to read the most, subjects mentioned reading for enjoyment more than they did any utilitarian tasks (see Table 3.11). These particular responses, though, do not appear to fully reflect the relative importance that reading has--or could have--as an enjoyable leisure-time activity in the subjects' lives. This latter possibility, that reading has the potential of becoming a pleasurable activity for many of the subjects, was nicely illustrated by the comments of one subject who worked as a long-distance truck driver. Stating that his reading skills were "fair" and that he regularly read Field and Stream magazine, he nevertheless expressed the wish that he could read well enough to be able to read books since he is often "laid over" in truck stops for days at a time with nothing to do. A similar opinion was expressed by another male subject who considered himself a very poor reader. Stating initially that the reason adults need to be able to read is so that they can read the want ads in the newspaper, he then stated that the reason he personally would like to be able to read was so that he would read Western novels when he didn't have anything else to do (which appeared to be much of the time).

In reviewing the subjects' comments on reading, it can be said that--as was the case with their mathematical skills--the subjects had a tendency to mention relatively simple tasks, ones that they were already able to accomplish, as being those in which reading skills were needed the most. Again, as was the case with

math, these initial comments on reading provide a strong enticement to conclude that however little reading ability the subjects had acquired in school, they are adequate for the type of lives the subjects are presently leading. Such a conclusion, however, must be seen as giving a rather limited and potentially erroneous understanding to the subjects' current social circumstances, especially insofar as it accepts the inevitability of these circumstances while ignoring the possibility that an improvement in the subjects' English skills could significantly enhance the amount of personal satisfaction, if not over-all social success, they experience in their lives.

If these contentions put forth regarding vocational training and math and English skills are expanded to include the schooling they received more generally two tentative conclusions or hypotheses can be made as to the relevance of the subjects' special education to their present life circumstances. First, while the subjects claimed--and there is no reason to doubt them--that the vocational training they received in the special education program was of some help to them in later years, it can also be argued that given the subjects' "mild" learning disabilities this training was actually too basic and rudimentary to have been a major factor in their later vocational achievements. In fact, as will be suggested more fully in the chapter on employment, perhaps the most important vocational training that could have been provided most of the subjects in this study (and could be provided mildly retarded students more generally) is in teaching them how to select an appropriate company to work for

rather than in teaching them how to perform some unskilled or semi-skilled job with a little greater efficiency.

The second conclusion that can be reached, one which at least partially vindicates the vocationalist's position, is that if the relatively slower rate at which the subjects have been found to learn is accepted as essentially unalterable, then there appears to be little basis for assuming that an increased emphasis on teaching basic academic skills in special education classes would have had any dramatic effect on their overall vocational and social success as adults. This conclusion, however, does not discount the real possibility that an improvement in their academic skills may effectively increase the quality of the subjects' lives--i.e., increase the personal satisfaction and feelings of adequacy that the subjects experience in their social lives. Rather, it merely states the obvious, that given the significant influence other factors--e.g., economic, social, and personal--have in their lives it is difficult to imagine that any realizable improvement in the subjects' academic skills would by itself have any overwhelming impact on the relative standing of the subjects in society--i.e., the quantitative aspects of their social existence, their SES, etc. In this sense, improving their level of academic competency is not perceived as a cure-all, a panacea, for the subjects' learning disabilities, but as a means of improving the subjects' ability to cope with and made a satisfactory adjustment to many of the personal and social expectations placed on them as adults.

### Labeling in School and its Social Consequences

In recent years special education personnel have increasingly emphasized the value of school programs which attempt, as near as possible, to "normalize" the opportunities and experiences provided students who have been diagnosed as mentally retarded. Concurrent with this trend is the increased concern which has been expressed about the consequences that being labeled mentally retarded and placed in special education classes has for such students, especially as it may effect their eventual chances of leading "normal" social lives in the community (Richardson 1975; Gottlieb 1975). Despite this growing emphasis and concern, little conclusive evidence is yet available regarding what long-term effects being labeled mentally retarded may actually have on individuals (MacMillan, Jones, and Aloia 1974). Nevertheless, an assumption which appears to be held by many persons in the field of special education is that labeling an individual as mentally retarded has certain irreversible deleterious effects (Dexter 1962; Catterall 1972).

However little or much significance the mentally retarded label will eventually be found to actually have on the life chances of students with learning deficiencies, the fact that it is presently the most controversial issue in the field of special education means that no study of former special education students could be considered anywhere near complete without at least attempting to address this issue. Such an attempt will therefore be made in this section, dealing with both the theoretical aspects of this issue and with the

practical implications it has for understanding the subjects' present views on themselves and their learning difficulties.

### Labeling Theory: A Review

The labeling approach to deviance which has gained recent prominence within the field of mental retardation provides a useful paradigm within which the labeling process and its consequences may be viewed. In essence, this labeling approach focuses upon the process whereby a "primary deviant" becomes a "secondary deviant" (Lemert 1951). In the case of the mentally retarded the primary deviance is viewed as arising from a large number of biological and environmental sources, and which expresses itself initially and foremost as a learning disability (MacMillan, Jones, and Aloia 1974). Although the recognition and labeling of this primary deviance as mental retardation usually proceeds easily when the learning disability is severe, in the majority of cases the learning disability exhibited is not so pronounced as to immediately lead to its being labeled mental retardation (Mercer, Butler, and Dingman 1964). In this situation a negotiating process takes place which may or may not eventually lead to the label mental retardation being applied (Mercer 1973). The outcome of this negotiation process involves the interaction of numerous social factors, among them being (1) the extent to which the learning disability visibly exceeds the parameters of tolerance existing within the school or community, (2) the existence of alternative labels which may be applicable to the perceived disability, (3) the presence and willingness of "mandated

labelers" such as teachers, psychologists, and medical doctors to engage in the labeling process, and (4) the ability and desire of the individual or others to resist the labeling attempts (Mercer 1973).

Although the evidence is sparse and conflicting at this point, a number of authors, using examples from studies on other types of deviancy, have suggested that once an individual becomes labeled as mentally retarded a sequence of events generally follow which results in the development of secondary deviancy. First, the definition of the labeled individual held by others tends to change to conform more closely with existing attitudes and stereotypes held toward the mentally retarded in general (Schur 1971). Social interactions with the labeled individual, in turn, become more limited and superficial, as others come increasingly to expect the individual to act in a manner consistent with their stereotypes (Richardson 1975). In this situation behavior which does not conform with other's new expectations for the labeled individual tends to be either ignored or discounted (Davis 1961). The labeling process, and the development of a secondary deviance, is then considered complete when, as a consequence of these actions by others, the individual labeled as retarded assumes a self-concept and acts in a manner which is compatible with the definition of him held by those with whom he/she interacts.

As MacMillan has noted, this progression of events leads to the final tenet of labeling ("deviance") theory, that "due to the differential treatment accorded to the individual as a result of his

label, it becomes virtually impossible for him to return to the normal patterns of social interaction" (1977:252). That is, within the framework of labeling theory there is an assumption that labeling acts as a "self-fulfilling prophecy" that the individual is essentially unable to overcome.

Given the theoretical assumptions that abound regarding the final outcome of this labeling process, it is surprising to note that little research has been undertaken to determine whether being labeled as mentally retarded actually has the expected effect of altering the individual's behavior and self-concept over an extended period of time. Studies by Edgerton (1967) of formerly institutionalized persons, and Jones (1972) of former special education students, however, suggest that adults who were labeled as mentally retarded during their childhood are acutely aware of the negative attitudes associated with this label and attempt to deny either having once been so labeled or its current appropriateness. Whether this denial of the retarded label is an indication that these individuals never really perceive themselves as being mentally retarded, regained a "normal" self-concept once removed from the labeling situation (as suggested in Edgerton and Bercovici's follow-up study, 1976), or is merely an attempt to pass and avoid any further loss of self-esteem remains, though, at this point unclear.

#### Labeling and Its Consequences: The Subjects' Perspective

Given the lack of empirical data regarding how special education students are made aware of being labeled mentally retarded



and the long-term consequences being so labeled has on their social adaptation, a wide variety of questions were put to the subjects in this study in an attempt to delineate as nearly as possible what labeling experiences they had encountered as school students and the effects these have had on them, both as students and later as adults. The subjects' responses to these various lines of questioning are discussed under a number of headings, organized in such a way as to convey a sense of how in recent years many of the subjects have been able to minimize the personal implications of their special education placement by renegotiating for themselves a new, more positive label.

#### Remembrance of School Days Past

As noted earlier, of the 26 subjects in this study who had attended special education classes during their youth, 23 of them thought that their placement in these classes had been justified by their inability to keep up with the school work in regular classes. In spite of this rather benign view of their school placement, the subjects were also quick to point out that being in special education classes had caused them to be repeatedly teased and made fun of by other students, and that for most of them this teasing was one of the worst, if not the worst, part of school. While the emotional impact this teasing had on the subjects appears to have varied a good deal from individual to individual, its overall potential was illustrated by six subjects who mentioned that the teasing they received from other students in school had sometimes made them feel like they were "mentally retarded."

The frequent mention subjects made of being teased by fellow students whenever they were asked about their special education placement can be taken to suggest that whatever school personnel did to impart the mentally retarded label on the subjects (e.g., by classifying them as having serious learning disabilities or as being mildly retarded, by placing them in separate classes away from other students, etc.), it was to the "informal" labeling done by peers that subjects exhibited their greatest susceptibility. Put somewhat differently, it is suggested that while the terms used by other students to "label" the subjects (e.g., "dummie," "stupid," etc.) lacked the precision of those utilized by school officials, they had similar connotations; an overlapping of meanings in which the school's treatment of the subjects was less significant in imposing a label upon them than in reinforcing the informal labels that their peers had attached to them.

Additional support for suggesting that the "informal" labeling done by their peers may have had substantially more impact on the subjects than did any "formal" labeling undertaken by school personnel is found in the comments subjects made about the special educationa teachers that they had "liked" the most. In describing these teachers the subjects had not only remembered them as having treated students with respect and understanding, but in many cases of having also made efforts to counteract the negative feelings that they--the students--had developed about themselves and their special education placement.

The implication of these comments, that teachers often reneged on their supposed role as labeling agent, was given some additional support by the teachers themselves. Based on a number of conversations held with special education teachers who had taught in the Keeler School System during the period the subjects had been students, it appears that except for the "formal" labeling done by the school psychologists there was no consistent policy among the various school personnel during that period regarding how to label special education students, either among themselves or when meeting with the students and/or their families. In essence, both the conversations with the teachers and the subjects' comments suggest that the impact any "formally" imposed mentally retarded label may have on special education students can be, and in the case of the subjects often times was, significantly moderated by discordant behavior within the labeling agency--i.e., the school system.

Whatever ultimate validity these suggestions on informal and formal labeling may have, they are currently given little support in the literature, if only because almost all of the research done on the labeling of special education students up to the present has focused solely on the formal labeling done by recognized agencies in the community. Nevertheless, the suggestion made above, that informal labeling can have--and in the case of the subjects has had--a greater impact on special education students is one which has been recognized by a number of researchers in the field of special education. In fact, MacMillan's questioning remarks on informal and

formal labeling can serve equally as well as a tentative conclusion regarding this issue:

Would the formal label attached by an amorphous body like the school have as great an impact as such informal labels attached by one's peers? . . .

Even though we cannot yet say how potent informal labeling is, we cannot assume that formal labeling takes place in a vacuum and is the only factor causing self-devaluation. Informal labeling goes on, too, and may exert as much and sometimes even more influence on certain outcomes (1977:268).

### Post-School Experiences

If the learning disabilities the subjects exhibited during their student years caused most of them to become both formally and informally labeled as persons who are somehow subnormal, in the years since leaving school most of the subjects have been able to remove themselves from such intense labeling situations and have found themselves free to reinterpret their past and present lives without much fear of contradiction from these previously imposed labels. Nevertheless, this freedom of interpretation is not absolute, for the self-acknowledged realities of having been in special education classes and of having continuing difficulties in math, reading, etc., limit the subjects' ability to minimize (let alone deny) the existence of their previously recognized learning difficulties. As will be outlined, the response by many of the subjects to these situational opportunities and restrictions has been to engage in a process wherein efforts are made to rid themselves of the derogatory labels previously attached to them (e.g., mentally retarded, stupid, etc.) by exchanging or renegotiating them for another label which is both descriptively adequate and much less stigmatizing.

Denial of Previously Imposed Labels.--As noted earlier, while more subjects would now openly admit to having been in special education classes, almost all continue to be sensitive to the connotations and the potentially stigmatizing effects that such school histories have. In one fashion or another, however, almost all of the subjects in this study made some effort to deny that the derogatory implications attached to being in special education classes had any applicability to them personally. For those who would continue not to tell others about their special education placement, for example, there was a shared opinion that if they did so most people would make the erroneous assumption that they were in some way mentally subnormal. As one subject succinctly put it when asked if he would not tell others of his special education placement, "No, I don't figure that I'm mentally retarded."

On the other hand, among those subjects who would not tell of their special education placement most appeared to take a rather more nonchalant attitude toward it, apparently feeling that it had little relevance to their present life situations. This attitude, which can be taken as one indication that these subjects have relatively little fear that they may in fact be mentally retarded, is perhaps best illustrated by one subject's statement that while he was "ashamed" of his special education placement at the time, he was no longer ashamed, figuring that it was "just a part of growing up." (No significant correspondence was found between subjects' willingness to tell and past or present IQ scores.)

Regardless of whether or not the subjects were reticent to publicly disclose their status as former special education students, it is important to recall that most of them exhibited no hesitancy in acknowledging that they had ongoing "academic" deficiencies. In essence, what the subjects appear to be doing in their comments is conceding, within limits, that they have some learning difficulties while at the same time rejecting the more all-encompassing labels and/or connotations which these learning difficulties typically engender.

Emasculating the Derogatory Labels.--In discussing their school experiences each subject was asked to define the terms "smart," "educated," "uneducated," and "stupid" (the latter a surrogate for the term "mental retardation" which the subjects had exhibited some reticence to talk about openly). The purpose of these requests was to obtain some explicit comments regarding what, if any, relationship the subjects considered there to be between "academic" achievement and intellectual abilities.

In responding to the first three of these terms the subjects almost invariably gave what can be considered rather simple and conventional definitions. For example, "smart" was typically defined in terms of a person who knows a lot, can do a lot of different things, can figure out problems better than most anyone, or less often as one who has a very good job. The word "educated" was also described in similar terms, although most of the subjects also noted that an individual could be smart without being educated, and visa versa.

The term "uneducated," in turn, was commonly defined simply as a lack of schooling (a term which somewhat surprisingly only a few subjects who had dropped out of school mentioned as being applicable to themselves).

The term "stupid," however, appeared to have more personal connotations for the subjects than did the other three terms and was given a wider variety of definitions. Two underlying orientations to the term "stupid," though, seemed to be expressed in almost all of the subjects' responses. The first of these, found in the remarks of eight of the subjects, was to define "stupid" as simply a derogatory term, that in fact no one was actually "stupid." As one subject commented, "I never believed in 'stupid,' its just a password when people get mad." The second orientation was to define "stupid" in an extremely restrictive sense, one in which "stupid" was meant to imply an almost total inability to do or learn anything correctly. Given that most of the subjects have been accused on numerous occasions of "stupidity," what is most noteworthy about both of these definitions of "stupid" is that they unfailingly exclude the subjects from their descriptive categories.

Labeling of Self.--A basis for understanding the subjects' willingness to acknowledge continuing deficiencies in school-related skills while rejecting the appropriateness of any stigmatizing label such as "stupid" or "mentally retarded" appears to exist in their use of the term "slow learner" when describing themselves. Altogether, two of the five subjects who had never attended special

education classes, and 18 of the 25 who had, referred to themselves in various situations as being slow learners. Because the frequent use of this particular term was not anticipated, an analysis of its meaning for the subjects is not as complete as might be desired. However, a study of the contexts in which the term "slow learner" was used strongly suggests that it has at least three attributes which are generally recognized by the subjects.

Briefly, these three attributes are: (1) "slow learner" is perceived as a term which describes individuals who have learning problems which are for the most part restricted to school related skills. That is, the term does not have any widely accepted implications as to how competently the individual is able to function in the community except when confronted by specific situations which require some degree of skill in reading, arithmetic, etc., which the "slow learner" lacks; (2) being a "slow learner" is not generally considered to be reflective of any basic incompetence. Hence, this label lacks the role-engulfing characteristics usually associated with the term "mentally retarded" (Edgerton 1967), and can be utilized without any serious self-degradation; and (3) the label "slow learner," while descriptive of a learning disability, is not in and of itself seen as having any serious negative connotations. Rather, it appears that many of the subjects tend to view being a "slow learner" as a shortcoming of theirs which is comparable to many of the shortcomings found in others. For example, the admission by the subjects that they were "slow" in school was often times coupled with the assertion that many other people, on the other hand,



lacked the skills that they possessed in repairing cars, cooking, doing various types of work, etc.

What makes the subjects' use of the term "slow learner" in describing themselves especially intriguing is that, as far as could be ascertained, this term was not widely used by school personnel during the subjects' youth to describe special education students, nor did the interviewer initiate the use of this term in conversations with the subjects. However, given that "slow learner" appears to be a rather common layman term there is no reason to doubt that the subjects had been exposed to it numerous times prior to their using it in describing themselves. In fact, the meaning the subjects impute to the term "slow learner" is strikingly similar to that found to be given it by the public-at-large (Hollinger and Jones 1970).

#### Renegotiating the Retarded Label: An Analysis and Summary

In adopting the slow learner label to describe themselves the majority of the subjects in this study have, either by design or accident, undertaken an action that is ideally suited to explaining many of their ongoing deficiencies without raising any serious questions regarding their overall mental capabilities. Given the long-term consequences that many educators have attributed to the labeling of special education students, the subjects' action raises some rather basic and not insignificant issues; namely, what theoretical interpretation can be given to their adoption of the

"slow learner" label and what applicability does it have for special education students and mildly retarded persons more generally.

The first point that can be made regarding the subjects' efforts to renegotiate their student labels is that while they appear to have been more sensitive to the derogatory comments (the informal labeling) of their peers than to their classification and treatment (the formal labeling) by school personnel, it can be hypothesized that during their youth both types of labeling combined to effectively prevent the subjects from publicly disavowing their retarded "image" in many social situations. That is, once identified and labeled by school personnel and their peers as being "dumb," "retarded," etc., the subjects would have discovered that these labels served to minimize the chances that their other--and perhaps more normal--behaviors and attributes had of altering these people's subsequent evaluation of them (a consequence of labeling that has been described in detail by Goffman, 1963).

The second point to be made is that once the subjects left school, once they left behind their constant contact with peers and school personnel who knew of their learning deficiencies and began dealing increasingly with an unsuspecting public, they were presented with the opportunity to engage in various forms of information control that permitted them to more readily disavow the retarded image and/or label they had acquired in school and to begin successfully renegotiating (or exchanging) this label for one more acceptable to them personally. As noted earlier, given the general

intractability of their learning deficiencies, the term "slow learner" is an ideal one to adopt in this renegotiation process.

A third and crucial point concerns the meanings attached to the terms "slow learner" and "mentally retarded" by the public-at-large. In their study Hollinger and Jones noted that:

In general, there was confusion about the meaning of the terms slow learner and mentally retarded. Mental retardation was frequently associated with physical disability and mental illness, while slow learning was often seen as being characterized by a slowness which did not involve mental capacity. Few of the respondents saw the terms slow learner and mental retardate as similar or overlapping (1970:22).

Hollinger and Jones go on to suggest that because of this confusion "considerable public education is needed in regard to both terms." Such a move, however, must be recognized as totally inimical to the subjects' efforts to shed their "retarded"/"stupid" label, since it is this very confusion and misunderstanding over the symptomatic differences between "slow learners" and the "mentally retarded"--specifically the mildly retarded--that has allowed the subjects to redefine themselves as "slow learners" without eliciting any significant public resistance or skepticism. That is, if the public were to become so well "educated" in their use of these terms that they could clearly and consistently distinguish between those individuals who they considered to be merely "slow" (a temporary condition) and those who are mentally--or mildly--"retarded" (a permanent affliction), many of the subjects would have confronted overwhelming difficulties in attempting to renegotiate a more positive public image for themselves. Although not immediately relevant to the subjects in this study, similar undesirable

consequences could be expected to occur in those states (e.g., Ohio) where the term "slow learner" is officially applied to persons elsewhere defined as "educable retarded," since any public education of this fact would undoubtedly prompt a major devaluation of this term in the public's mind and leave special education students without any widely recognized term with which they could more positively identify and relabel themselves.

Taken together the various points and facts presented above allow for two basic, if somewhat general, conclusions to be made regarding the labeling of persons defined as "mildly retarded." First, regardless of the "evidentness" of the symptoms--i.e., the learning disabilities--exhibited by these individuals, their labeling should not be considered as something that occurs automatically, nor as something that is necessarily accepted or recognized by all groups concerned. For example, while school systems are usually organized in a way that allows for them to quickly negotiate a "retarded" label for those students who exhibit serious learning disabilities, when other groups (e.g., the students' peers, their families, etc.) are exposed to these same learning disabilities they may instead choose to apply different labels to these students or to not label them at all. In such a context the labeling of an individual as mentally retarded cannot be viewed as a one-time process, but as one which must be undertaken repeatedly as the individual moves from one social setting to another and comes into contact with new and widely divergent social groups and agencies. Given this

temporal dimension in the labeling process it can be similarly reasoned that unless concerted efforts are made to insure that the "mentally retarded" label is consistently applied to these individuals (e.g., by placing them in institutions or workshops clearly designated for mentally retarded persons), many of them will literally and figuratively outgrow this particular label by simply leaving school and moving out into the larger community (a phenomenon that educators have often erroneously assumed meant that such individuals had shed or overcome their learning disabilities as well).

The second conclusion that can be reached regarding the labeling process is that while labels can significantly change people's behavior and perceptions, these labels are themselves subject to constant change and reinterpretations according to the contexts within which they are used. For example, the term "developmentally disabled," while not immediately pejorative, has shown definite signs of becoming so as a result of its public use by school and mental health officials in describing people more widely perceived to be "mentally retarded," "stupid," etc. In contrast to this recent turn of events, the ambiguities surrounding the term "slow learner" have allowed the subjects in this study to successfully manipulate this term--or label--in quite a different manner; to wit, to enlarge the label's referent population to include themselves without causing any concomitant depreciation in the label's positive connotations.

In essence, in reviewing the labeling process experienced by the subjects it can be tentatively concluded that while most of

them were humiliated by the labels attached to them during their youth, labels which no doubt had some effect on their behavior and self-images during this period, there is little to indicate that this initial labeling continues in its own right to be a major factor in how these subjects behave and think about themselves as adults. This is not to say that having previously been labeled "mentally retarded," "stupid," etc. has had no long-term consequences of any kind for the subjects in this study, but simply that the information gathered on them does not suggest that their present lives would be substantially different if no labels had been applied to them during their years in school. Once again MacMillan's review of labeling research provides a favorable context within which this study's conclusions can be viewed:

According to the opponents of labeling, children don't like being called mentally retarded; the label lowers their self-concept and peer acceptance and decreases their chances for success once they leave school. But some studies have demonstrated the opposite: although children clearly do not like to be formally labeled, the effects they cite may only be rationalizations for failures they would have had even without the label . . . . Once they leave school, mildly retarded people won't do as well as nonhandicapped people in finding jobs and making successful marriages, just as they were never as well-accepted as normal students in school. But there is some evidence that those who were labeled EMR and placed in special classes may have a slight edge over people of similarly low IQ who were never labeled and given special class help (1977:277-278).

#### The Subjects' Schooling: General Conclusions

In looking at the nature and consequences of schooling in the subjects' lives a number of basic conclusions were drawn and analyzed. The first of these concerned the strong emphasis educators have given

to vocational rather than "academic" training in the education of persons defined as mentally retarded, an emphasis which was nicely, if only partially, illustrated by Gunzburg's pungent remark that:

It is realized that mastery of reading or spelling results very often in the acquisition of a meaningless skill which cannot be put to good use because of the trainee's mental limitations and that teaching time is out of proportion to results (1965:331).

The second basic conclusion reached was that the subjects in this study tended to take a rather more traditional view toward their education; that is, to view the primary purpose of public education to be the acquisition of basic competencies in the areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic. When questioned more closely about their views on education, in turn, it was noted that the same criteria the subjects used to evaluate schooling and teachers generally were also those used to their special education experiences more specifically, and that while most of the subjects disliked having been in the special education program they felt that their placement was justified and for the most part beneficial.

The third basic conclusion reached was that while most of the subjects had as students been labeled and made fun of because of their learning deficiencies, the effects of this labeling and name-calling did not appear to have had any devastating and long-lasting effects on them as prophesied by many labeling theorists. Rather, once leaving school the subjects renegotiated for themselves a new label--"slow learner"--which in effect provided an explanation for their ongoing deficiencies without arousing in the public's mind any immediate questions regarding their essential normality.

Upon reflection, perhaps the most basic conclusion that can be drawn about the subjects' schooling is that it didn't harm them nearly as much as might be inferred from the writings of many educational critics, nor, unfortunately, was it nearly as "special" as the advocates of special education programs would have liked it to be.



## CHAPTER IV

### EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

#### Introduction

Studies done with mentally retarded adults living in various community settings have tended to focus almost exclusively upon their employment record and wage-earning abilities as they compare with those of normal adults. This focus on the vocational aspect of the mentally retarded individual's life usually has as its stated basis the desire of schools and other public agencies to determine whether their programs provide adequate employment training and counseling for retarded persons. However, the justification for placing such a strong emphasis on the employment of these individuals to the exclusion of other aspects of their social lives is almost invariably left unstated. Those few studies, in turn, which do attempt to provide some justification for the importance they place on the employment status of the retarded have a noticeable tendency to do so almost solely with a series of platitudes.

Characteristic of this tendency is the statement found in one article on employment among the mentally retarded which reads:

Democracy implies individual responsibility which, in the economic area, is associated with a degree of self-sufficiency, with contribution exchanged for earnings (Bobroff 1965a:525).

The apparent conclusion to be drawn from statements such as this is that within a democratic society (i.e., the United States) one's relative ability to be economically self-sufficient is not only an indication of vocational skills, but more importantly a basic measure of one's overall competency and self-worth as a person. Regardless of the general validity of these statements about the role of work in most people's lives, however, they do tend to ignore the fact that their relevance is dependent in part upon these individuals, as well as other members of their society, perceiving employment in such "democratic" terms. Yet, as will be shown in the following pages, the mass of statistical data accumulated on the employment status of retarded adults provides little substantial evidence to indicate whether or not the retarded actually hold a "democratic" orientation toward work.

If the numerous studies dealing with the retarded have given little attention to the attitudes the retarded have toward employment, they have provided a great deal of information both on the objective employment situation of retarded adults in American society and, more indirectly, on the significance employment has for those people studying or working with the mentally retarded. In general, studies giving data on the employment situation of mentally retarded persons have tended to report a fairly high rate of employment for them during their adult years. Although specific employment information from the various studies will be mentioned throughout this chapter they typically find full-time employment rates for

the mildly retarded male to be between 76 and 93 percent (Conley 1973). While these employment rates provide some cause for optimism that the retarded can lead normal, productive lives, they also provide evidence that for most retarded adults their employment usually consists of unskilled jobs with little security and minimal pay. As Farber summarized it: "compared with persons of normal intelligence, the mildly retarded are marginal members of the labor force" (1968:238).

The fact that an employment rate of 76 to 93 percent, one which among normals would be considered tragically low, is often a source of optimism when found among the retarded strongly suggests that many people view employment of any kind as a major, if not the major social achievement to which the mentally retarded can attain. It is as if, as inferred from the previously quoted statement, that the ultimate objective measure of the retarded person's competence as a human resides in whether he can successfully find an employer who will hire him. This value orientation has been interpreted by many educators working with the mentally retarded to imply that "the end product of successful education in our culture is successful occupation" (Halpern and Berard 1974:273).

In addition to the fact that employment allows the retarded individual to fulfill certain role expectations for adults in their society, work is also viewed to be of great importance for the retarded because of the social and psychological benefits it directly provides the individual. For many of the mentally retarded

living in a community setting, work is seen by them as "the quintessential means of proving themselves to be normal, worthy human beings" (Edgerton and Bercovici 1976:491). In addition to the feelings of self-respect the individual is felt to gain by being a working member of his society, it is typically noted that work also provides an individual with a major opportunity for desired social interactions with others. As Wilensky states it: "participation in community life is a natural extension of participation in the labor market; orderly and pleasant experiences in the latter provide motive and opportunity for the former" (1961:522). In essence, employment in the United States is perceived to be the major source of those economic and psycho-social resources necessary to participate fully in the American social system.

If work, in theory, has a large number of desirable social and psychological attributes, whether the employed mentally retarded person is actually a recipient of them is unclear. A review of much of the literature on the employment situation of the mentally retarded clearly suggests that for many of them the benefits they accrue from working are significantly overrated. For example, the tendency of many studies on the employment of the mildly retarded is to simply determine whether or not the individual is employed and self-sufficient without listing their actual earnings. However, Conley (1973) in a review of the major studies on the employment of the retarded, estimated that the average earnings of employed mildly retarded persons was 86 percent of that for normals, and that the earnings of employed retardates with IQs

between 40 and 50 were only 20 percent of that for normal adults. Beyond its purely financial ramifications, the effects of the mentally retarded's lower earning, and thus spending, ability has can be seen in its larger social context by Jencks, et al.'s statement that:

the "cost of living" is not the cost of buying some fixed set of goods and services. It is the cost of participating in a social system. The cost of participation depends in large part on how much other people habitually spend to participate. Those who fall far below the norm, whatever it may be, are excluded (1972:5).

The fact that the retarded are usually employed in low paying jobs and thus are financially handicapped, however, may not be as important as other employment factors in preventing their equal participation in the social system with their normal counterparts. For example, a number of studies have noted that the retarded are commonly found in jobs which do not involve much contact with other people (Edgerton 1967) and/or involve teasing and ridicule by fellow workers (Kirk, quoted in Conley 1973), conditions which suggest that they probably do not receive as much social satisfaction from their jobs as do normals. As a result, retarded people appear to develop fewer personal and socially supportive contacts within their employment situation. This, in turn, would appear to decrease their access to possible further social exchanges and resources, providing an additional reason for their marginal economic position.

Assuming that a general consensus exists as to the marginal employment position of the mentally retarded in American society, there remains a central question as to why such optimism continues

to greet the reports of high employment among the mildly retarded. The most plausible answer appears to be that there continues to exist a widely held opinion in the population, and subtly expressed by many educators in their writings, that the mentally retarded are intellectually incapable of succeeding in most "normal" types of employment. However, the fact that most mildly retarded are relatively successful in finding employment within the community in turn raises a further question: have the retarded found employment because they in some manner acquired more education and skills than they are typically thought capable of, or is it because many of the jobs in American society have been overrated in terms of the intellectual skills necessary for their performance? Such questions have no simple answers but must be dealt with if any valid understanding of the mentally retarded's employment situation is to be gained.

#### Employment Situation of Subjects

The first and most striking fact about the employment situation of the subjects interviewed in this study is the extremely high rate of unemployment presently experienced by them. At the time the 48 original subjects were first interviewed only 47 percent of the males (14) and 39 percent of the females (7) were employed full-time. Among the 31 individuals interviewed repeatedly, the employment figures were even lower, with only 39 percent of the males (9) and 12 percent of the females (1) working full-time during the period of their initial interview. By the time of the last interviews with these 31 individuals in January 1976, their

employment rate had dropped even further, with three additional males having lost their jobs while one more female had gained full-time employment.

The high unemployment rates found in these two overlapping groups of individuals appears to be rather unique in several respects. First, in none of the numerous studies on the employment of the mildly retarded reviewed by either Cobb (1972) or Conley (1973) were the unemployment rates found to be nearly as high as that in this study. As mentioned in the introduction, the unemployment rates for mildly retarded males has usually been reported to run between 7 and 24 percent, with an average unemployment rate taken from nine of these studies to be approximately 18 percent.

The unemployment rate for the retarded subjects in this study is also unusually high when compared with that of all adults living in the same community. According to census data for the county area in which all but two of the subjects reside the unemployment rate for the labor population as a whole was 4.4 percent in 1973, 7.7 percent in 1974, and 10.6 percent in 1975. While the unemployment rate for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, categories into which all the subjects fall, is typically higher than that for the population as a whole, it is probably not significant when attempting to explain the subjects' extraordinary unemployment rate.

While the present unemployment rate provides a dramatic introduction to the employment/unemployment situation of the subjects, a better understanding of this situation is actually gained in noting the particular types of employment they have obtained. A

list of the "usual" occupation each of the subjects has had since leaving school is found in Table 4.1. What this listing, like similar ones found in other studies on the employment of the mentally retarded, does is confirm the fact that the mildly retarded are able to find a wide variety of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs which are commensurate with their abilities. While many of these jobs appear, at least superficially, to be quite similar, as will be shown in some detail in the following pages, it is the nature of the particular job that the individual obtains which has perhaps the greatest impact on his present employment situation.

TABLE 4.1.--Usual Occupation of Subjects (parenthesis indicates number of subjects in "31" group).

Occupation	Number	
custodian	8	(5)
auto and truck assembly	7	(4)
waitress	4	(2)
cafeteria work	4	(2)
clerk	3	(0)
unskilled assembly work	2	(2)
common laborer	2	(1)
groundsman	2	(2)
auto mechanic	1	(0)
parking lot attendant	1	(0)
babysitter	1	(1)
carwash	1	(1)
welder	1	(1)
furniture repairman	1	(1)
painter	1	(1)
linen worker	1	(1)
truck driver	1	(1)
machinist	1	(1)
carnival work	1	(1)
never worked	1	(1)
housewife*	4	(3)

\*Only listed as housewife if never held any full-time employment.



### Earnings and Income

Although employment is recognized as having important extrinsic benefits associated with it, it is the intrinsic financial benefits which provide the most significant means by which the relative employment success of the individual worker can be objectively measured. As a group the nine males in this study that were employed full-time during the course of this study earned an average (i.e., a mean) of \$170.56 a week (note: except where otherwise noted, the earnings and income figures pertain to the "31" group). This is 88 percent of what the average worker in the county area was estimated to be earning during this time (\$194.84 according to the Michigan State Economic Record, Vol. 17, 1975), a figure which conforms exactly with Conley's (1973) estimates of what the mildly retarded males in the United States as a whole earn in comparison with their normal counterparts. However, within this group of nine the individual earnings vary widely, with two who are union members working for large industries earning an average of \$215 a week, three who are civil service workers earning \$176 a week, while three have "minimal wage" jobs at which they earn only an average of \$126 a week although working an average of 47 to 48 hours a week.

Among the eight female subjects only one is employed full-time. She receives the minimum wage of \$2.00 an hour, or \$80 a week. However, the four married women, while not earning any income as housewives, are married to men who have an average gross income of \$209.13 a week, or 107 percent of what the average worker in the

area earns. If, as is often done in follow-up studies of retarded adults, these housewives are considered to be employed they are, based on their husbands' incomes, among the highest paid individuals in this study.

In addition to the earning received by the employed subjects, almost all of the subjects have income from sources other than employment. This income not only increases the gross income for the employed subjects but is the major means of support for the other subjects.

Among the nine employed males, three have working wives who earn an average of \$109 a week, raising the total family income for the employed males to an average of \$207 a week. For the unemployed males their average gross income is \$46.83 a week, although this varies widely depending upon the source of their income. For example, one physically injured subject receives social security and food stamp benefits for his family of six which totals \$662 a month, while another individual receives only \$23 a month social security for his intellectual impairment because he is considered a dependent of his parents who also receive social security.

Table 4.2 shows the sources and amounts of non-earned income for the male and female subjects.

A summation of the earnings and gross income for the 31 subjects in this study, plus some comparative data for area residents as a whole, is found in Table 4.3.

TABLE 4.2.--Source and Amounts of Non-earned Income ("31" group).

Source of Income	Number of Subjects	Average Monthly Income
<u>Males</u>		
Room and board	(4)	---
Social Security benefits (intellectual impairments)	(4)	\$121
Spouse's earnings	(3)	109
Social Security benefits and ADC (physical disabilities)	(2)	588
Social Security benefits and Food Stamps (physical disability)	(1)	214
Unemployment benefits	(2)	221
Unemployment benefits and wife's earnings	(1)	420
<u>Females</u>		
Husband's income	(4)	906
Room and board	(1)	---
ADC and Food Stamps	(1)	492
General Relief and room and board	(1)	96

What the earnings and gross income figures presented above indicate is that for the employed males and the married females in this study their financial situation appears to be quite similar to that of area working-class families in general. For the unemployed males and single females, however, their incomes appear to allow for little more than the purchase of basic necessities. What is perhaps most unexpected given these latter individuals' incomes is that except for one single male none of the subjects appear, on a subjective basis, to be destitute.

TABLE 4.3.--Total Earnings and Income for Subjects ("31" group).

	Number of Subjects	Monthly Income
<u>Earnings</u>		
Male: employed full-time	(9)	\$738.52
Female: employed full-time	(1)	346.66
<u>Gross Income</u>		
Male: all male subjects	(23)	469.91
employed full-time	(9)	896.33
unemployed	(14)	203.00
married males	(11)	810.36
single males	(12)	166.25
(a) living with family	(8)	93.63
(b) independent	(4)	311.50
Female: all female subjects	(8)	579.00
married females	(4)	906.25
single females	(4)	251.75
<u>Comparative Data for Area Residents* (1974)</u>		
Average earnings from employment		843.66
Income per capita		490.00
Median family income (white)		945.42

\* Verway, 1976.

This judgment, though, is more the result of social rather than purely economic or employment factors. This can be seen in the fact that among the unemployed subjects only one, a woman with three children receiving welfare, does not live with either parents, spouses, or adult friends who provide some type of economic assistance for them. Among the four females and three males who are married and unemployed, all depend on their spouses' earnings or welfare payments for the greatest part of their family income. For the fourteen unemployed single subjects, nine of them live with their families who provide them with room and board, while three subjects have their room and board given them by friends. Thus, only two unemployed subjects, the woman mentioned above on welfare and a male receiving unemployment insurance benefits, actually live solely on the income they personally receive.

Although it would be possible for statistical purposes to place a monetary value on the room and board the subjects receive, and thus consider it additional income, in most cases this would be misleading. For while the families of two subjects are obviously wealthy enough to provide their offspring with room and board without any financial difficulties, for most of the families or friends their apparent generosity is not without some measure of financial sacrifice, and most of the subjects usually spend part of their income to help defray household expenses. As a whole, the net effect of family and friends in providing the subjects with various types of support is to allow them to maintain themselves in roughly the same social and economic position as their benefactors. For the

majority of these unemployed individuals this translates into a working-class environment, the same as that in which the employed subjects live.

### Determinates of Employment and Income

#### Individual Factors Influencing Employment and Income

Studies dealing with the employment of the mentally retarded have looked at a wide variety of individual factors in an attempt to determine what differentiates employed and unemployed retarded persons. Most of these factors have been described as falling within one of three categories: level of intelligence, personality characteristics, and specific vocational skills (Appell, Williams, and Fishell 1962). Because of the complexity involved in measuring vocational skills this study limited itself to looking only at the possible effects intelligence and a number of personality characteristics have on the employment of the subjects.

In addition, prior studies have taken differing positions on the employment classification of women who are engaged full-time as housewives. For purposes of simplicity, therefore, the employment of the female subjects in this study will be dealt with in a separate section, with only the 23 male subjects utilized here in analyzing individual factors as they may effect employment and income.

Intelligence.--Studies on the employment of retarded adults in this country almost inevitably tend to focus first upon the possible effects their intelligence (i.e., IQ) has upon their relative success in finding employment. Although the evidence is still somewhat inconclusive, most studies have not found IQ, at least among the mildly retarded, to be significantly correlated with employment.

Among the males in this study there was, as with most previous studies, no significant correlation exhibited between IQ and current employment status (i.e., full-time employed vs. unemployed; correlation being  $r = .22$ ), although there appeared to be a baseline effect present with no individual having an IQ below 75 ( $n = 6$ ) currently employed in a full-time job. Given the unusually low number of subjects in this study who were currently working, though, these findings should not be considered as being especially significant.

Using the employment histories of the 23 male subjects, however, it was found that a slight but significant correlation existed between the subjects' IQs and the percentage of time they have been employed since leaving high school ( $r = .55$ , significant at the .01 level for a two-tailed test). This correlation seems to be due to two factors. First, there is a slight, though insignificant, correlation between IQ and the number of jobs held since high school ( $r = .28$ ); and secondly, a similar correlation exists between IQ and the average length of time each job was held ( $r = .35$ ). In essence, a slight tendency exists for the higher IQ

subjects to have held more jobs, and for longer periods of time, than lower IQ subjects.

Although the data collected in this study does not, by itself, provide sufficient evidence to make any conclusions as to the nature of the relationship between IQ and employment success, a number of other studies have drawn conclusions which are relevant. Farber (1968), in discussing employment difficulties experienced by the mildly retarded, has stated that the main problems occur in interpersonal areas rather than in the tasks themselves. Deno came to a similar conclusion, stating that "the problem was how to modify social behavior and not the lack of employable levels of academic skill" (1970:5). Neither of these individuals, however, made any concerted effort to explore the possibility that these "interpersonal" difficulties experienced by the retarded might be related to their relatively low IQs. If this were shown to be the case then the relationship between IQ and employment success might be understood in terms of the greater ability that high IQ individuals have in dealing with the social aspects of their jobs.

As to a possible relationship between intelligence and income, no significant correlation was found between intelligence (IQ) and either earnings or total income. Given the correlation between intelligence and the percentage of time the various subjects have been employed over the last ten years it may also be that a correlation exists between intelligence and total income over this period of time. However, the subjects' recollection of their



prior earnings was not exact enough to warrant attempting such a correlation.

Personality Characteristics.--Although the personality characteristics of the mentally retarded have repeatedly been shown to have a significant bearing on their employment success (Peck and Stephens 1964; Conley 1973), the only measure used in this study which can be construed as being concerned with the personality characteristics of the subjects is the Kiddie Mach test. Since the nature of this test is dealt with more thoroughly elsewhere in this study (Appendix B), only the results of this test which appear to bear directly on employment are discussed here.

The total point score on the Kiddie Mach test is viewed as a measure of the extent to which individuals perceive social relationships as being flexible and open to manipulation, with high scores indicating a less rigid and more "pragmatic" orientation toward social interaction. Among the subjects no significant correlation was found between their total Mach scores and their present employment status. However, a small but significant positive correlation between high Mach scores and the percentage of time the subjects have been employed was found ( $r = .48$ ). Two particular items on the test were also shown to be positively related with the percentage of time the subjects have been employed, disagreement with item 11 ("successful people are mostly honest and good,"  $r = .78$ ) and agreement with item 18 ("sometimes you have to cheat a little to get what you want,"  $r = .62$ ).

While these correlations can be perceived as implying that subjects who cheat or at least condone cheating are more apt to be employed, it appears more likely that their answers simply reflect a subjective feeling, or even a more objective judgment, that in order to compete successfully in the labor market an individual must be willing to compromise and, at times, "bend the rules." If this conclusion is correct it would suggest that an orientation toward employment and social relationships which is useful in promoting the employment of non-institutionalized retardates who have been substantially employed. This suggestion is partially based on Peck and Stephens (1964) research which found that among graduates of various state-run vocational rehabilitation programs for the retarded successful long-term employment was most highly correlated with a conforming level of character development. However, it might well be that in studies such as Peck and Stephens', where the individuals studied were either in state institutions or in government run vocational programs, the subject variables which they found to be significantly correlated with employment success may be in large part simply variables which promote the greatest amount of agency assistance in their efforts to secure and maintain employment. That is, a certain amount of self-assertativeness which may be necessary for non-institutionalized retardates in obtaining jobs on their own may, in turn, be highly maladaptive for institutionalized retardates who are typically more dependent upon the assistance of various agency personnel in gaining employment.

These differences between the findings of this study and those of other studies on personality characteristics associated with employment raises the more general question of whether individual factors which correlate with employment success in any one population of retarded persons necessarily have applicability to retarded people in general. Writing on the methodological issues involved in research on the employment of the mentally retarded Butler and Browning refer to this question, stating:

The emphasis given differential prediction results in one questioning the assumption that groups who are either successful or unsuccessful on jobs are homogeneous.

There may be subject variables which are essential for success across most jobs held by the retarded. However, the significance of these variables to specific jobs may vary. Thus, as a predictive schema, there may be a hierarchy of general subject predictive variables which are differentially related to the success and failure groups across many jobs. However, the position or value of each of the predictors in the hierarchy may vary for different jobs (1970:55-56).

#### Social Factors Influencing Employment and Income

Perhaps due to the fact that the most striking difference between retarded and normal individuals lies in the perceived intellectual deficiencies of the former, little attention has been given to non-subject or situational variables as they affect the employment status of retarded persons (Butler and Browning 1970). However, there is ample evidence to indicate that non-subject factors do, in fact, have a critical bearing on the employment success of the mentally retarded. In this section three environmental factors are reviewed as to the effects they have on the

employment of the subjects; family and social ties, general economic trends and differentiating occupational characteristics.

Family and Social Ties.--Shister (1956) reports that among Americans seeking jobs for the first time over 75 percent obtain their jobs through relatives or personal friends, through previous part-time work, or by random application at various jobs. Although family and friends lose some of their importance in obtaining jobs for experienced workers Shister found that they remain the single most likely source by which individuals find employment throughout their lifetime.

In questioning the male subjects as to how they obtained their most recent job this national trend was repeated, with 76 percent of the subjects ( $n = 21$ ) reporting that they heard about their job either through relatives ( $n = 10$ ) or friends ( $n = 6$ ). The remaining subjects either obtained their most recent jobs through random application at numerous firms ( $n = 2$ ) or through the assistance of high school counselors ( $n = 3$ ).

Given this importance family and friends have for the subjects in obtaining work, it is interesting to note that when asked how they would go about looking for future jobs only three subjects mentioned family or friends as possible sources of job information. Rather, subjects most often mentioned the newspaper ( $n = 15$ ), random job applications ( $n = 12$ ), or the unemployment office ( $n = 8$ ) as ways of learning about job openings. From further conversation with the subjects, however, it appears that these latter three sources

were mentioned most often not because they were considered the best source of job information, but rather because family and friends are perceived to be fortuitous sources of employment over which the subjects have no personal control.

Although there was not sufficient data to draw any definite conclusions, there were enough subjects who mentioned their in-laws as being the source of their most recent job to suggest that one reason married subjects have a higher employment rate than their unmarried counterparts is that their marriage significantly increases the number of people who will pass on to them information about possible job opportunities. In addition, any other actions on the part of the subjects which will increase the number of social ties he has, or strengthen existing ties, will also, in all likelihood, increase the probability of their hearing of suitable employment.

General Economic Trends.--It has been repeatedly noted that changes in the level of economic activity have a greater effect on the employment of the retarded than on the general population (Conley 1973). Among those who view the mentally retarded as an economic surplus population there has been a tendency to explain this fact in terms of the retarded being, like other minority groups, "the last hired and the first fired." However, research by Halpern suggests that this explanation is only partially correct. After studying the employment records of a large number of recent special education graduates, Halpern noted that while mentally retarded people will find it "very difficult" to find jobs when the level

of unemployment is high, those already employed during such periods "are not necessarily in jeopardy of losing their jobs" (1973:127).

In order to determine the applicability of Halpern's findings to this study the employment histories of the subjects were compared with the general unemployment rates for the area in which they live. Table 4.4 shows the general unemployment rate for the area from 1970 through 1975. It indicates that during 1974-1975, when the interviewing of subjects took place, the unemployment rate was almost double that of the previous four years. Table 4.5, in turn, shows average employment figures for both the presently employed and unemployed subjects up to the start of the interviewing in 1974.

Extending the figures in Table 4.5 through the years 1974-1975 would suggest that the 11 physically able unemployed subjects could be expected to find approximately 8.5 jobs during this period. However, only two subjects found employment during this period, and both were temporary, lasting for periods of three and six months.

TABLE 4.4.--Unemployment Rate in County Area.

Year	Rate of Unemployment
1970	5.9%
1971	5.6%
1972	5.5%
1973	4.4%
1974	7.7%
1975	10.6%

TABLE 4.5.--Employment Figures for Employed and Unemployed Subjects (by group).

	Employed Group <sup>a</sup>	Unemployed Group <sup>b</sup>
Average number of jobs obtained	2.1 per year	4.2 per year
Average number of jobs lost	1.3 per year	4.2 per year
Average length of time each job held	4.1 years	.9 years

<sup>a</sup>This group consists of the 9 employed male subjects.

<sup>b</sup>This group consists of the 11 unemployed male subjects who are physically able to work full-time.

The employed subjects, on the other hand, could be expected on the basis of their prior employment histories to lose an average of 2.5 jobs during 1974-1975. In fact, during the course of the interviews for this study three of these individuals lost their jobs (one fired, two laid-off). These estimates tend to conform with Halpern's research, with the subjects apparently experiencing no significant increase in losing jobs because of the low level of economic activity during the period of 1974-1975, but having a dramatic downturn in their ability to reenter the ranks of the employed.

The explanation for this employment situation appears to reside in the differing employment histories of the employed and

unemployed subjects. The employed subjects on the average had acquired what appears to be sufficient seniority in their current jobs (average: five years) so that they were no more likely to lose their jobs during an economic recession than they would be at other times. The unemployed subjects, however, typically had worked shorter periods of time at each of their jobs and once unemployed found it nearly impossible to obtain work during the economic downturn of 1974-1975. These findings also suggest that over extended periods of time the unemployment problems of many of the retarded are similar to those experienced by other populations with high unemployment rates (i.e., blacks, high school drop-outs, etc.). As Hall notes, "the problem of the hard-core unemployed is that they are unable to find stable jobs, not that they are unable to find work at all" (quoted in Blustein 1976:32).

#### Differentiating Occupational Characteristics

While neither the social ties of the subjects nor the general level of economic activity had any perceivable relevance in explaining the differing wages the subjects received for their labor, a number of occupational features associated with the subjects' current or most recent jobs appear to have significant bearing on both their current employment status and the amount they receive in wages. In the following section the employed and unemployed subjects have been grouped into a series of categories based on certain features of their occupations which are felt to



have the greatest significance in explaining their current employment status.

Employed Subjects.--The employed subjects in this study have been loosely grouped into four categories which have been delineated on the basis of perceived features of their jobs which appear to be most significant in explaining why these individuals have been able to keep them during a period of high unemployment. That is, these categories do not indicate the presence of related job skills, but rather of features promoting job permanence. These are:

(1) Civil Service. Of the 21 individuals in the original sample of 48 who were found to be employed full-time, six of them had government jobs which for all practical purposes had exempted them from the threat of lay-offs during periods of economic recession. All had reasonably good paying jobs as either custodians or grounds-men, and had worked an average of 5.5 years at their present job. These jobs can be described as basically non-competitive in nature and not overly demanding on the individual's abilities, although one male with six years seniority was finally fired during the course of this study for excessive absenteeism over the last two years.

(2) Union. Five individuals were employed by large manufacturing firms where as unskilled or semi-skilled workers they were required to join a strong national labor union. Although all five individuals had experienced temporary lay-offs because of fluctuations in the economic success of their employers, their union

membership and job seniority have provided them with a relatively high degree of job security. They had been employed by these firms for an average of almost five years and received the highest wages of any group of subjects in this study.

(3) Minimal Wage. Nine of the employed subjects were working at jobs best characterized by their low pay and high job-turnover. Because the low pay and social status of these jobs make them undesirable as permanent employment for most people, those individuals willing to keep such jobs for any length of time are typically valued for their reliability and able to retain their jobs for extended periods of time. In addition, as many of these subjects pointed out, their jobs have a degree of security built into them because they typically involve tasks which must be performed regularly regardless of fluctuations in the business activities of the company (e.g., linen worker in a hospital, janitor for a large department store). In spite of their low pay most of the jobs in this group appear, at least superficially, to require skills and ability which are comparable to those found in the "union" and "civil service" jobs. The nine subjects working in these jobs had had their jobs for an average of just over four years, with two subjects having kept their same jobs in excess of ten years.

(4) Other. Only one individual fell into this group, a male who had worked at many different "minimal wage" jobs in the past, but who had found a job where the employer trained him as a

skilled welder. Although he subsequently left this employer he had continued to find work with various firms as a well paid welder.

Unemployed Subjects.--The four major groupings used to categorize the unemployed in this section were chosen on a somewhat different basis than were the groupings for the employed subjects. For the unemployed the groupings were based not only on certain occupational features of their usual type of employment, as was done in the previous section with the employed subjects, but also upon a number of social or personal features which were viewed as limiting their desire or ability to return to their prior type of work. These latter features are introduced in this section on employment because of the strong interaction they have with occupational features in promoting the current unemployment of many of the subjects. These groupings are as follows:

(1) Physically Disabled. Four individuals, all male, are permanently disabled and receiving Social Security payments for their various physical disabilities. Prior to their injuries all had been employed fairly constantly at jobs requiring a good deal of manual labor, and three of the four men were disabled as a result of injuries occurring at these jobs. While there is no evidence to indicate that their disabilities are less severe than reported, two of these individuals continue to work part-time at their usual occupation (housepainter and auto mechanic) to supplement their disability payments.

(2) Intellectually Impaired. Five of the original 48 subjects were unemployed and receiving Social Security benefits based, at least in part, on their intellectual impairments. Prior to their receiving disability benefits, four of the five had worked as janitors, although only one of them actually succeeded in keeping his job for more than a few months. While these four individuals were vague in explaining the reasons for their dismissal, in all these cases their families volunteered the information that the subjects were dismissed from their jobs because they were unable to do them adequately without constant supervision. All five of these individuals currently live with their parents, and two of them now participate in sheltered workshop programs for the mentally retarded.

(3) Minimal Wage. The individuals included in this category are subdivided into three groupings according to the most obvious feature which minimizes their chances of returning or entering into the labor market as unskilled workers. These are:

- (a) Housewives: Seven women are presently married and maintaining households on a full-time basis. Three of these women have previously held full-time jobs, but only one woman expressed any real desire to find employment, and this appeared due entirely to the financial difficulties the family was then encountering. Four other married women interviewed in this study worked full-time and have been included in the various employed categories.

- (b) Welfare: Three women, two of them divorced with children and one single woman without any children, receive welfare payments as the sole means of support for themselves and their families. The single woman has only a sporadic work history and has been periodically dependent on her parents for support. During the period of this study she was living with friends and attending adult education classes to gain her high school diploma.

The two divorced women had worked only briefly prior to their marriages, and had not worked at all while married. Since their divorces they have been totally dependent upon welfare to support themselves and their children. Because of their lack of employment skills both women viewed welfare as a financially superior arrangement to work because of the low probability that they could find jobs which would earn them enough to support their families.

- (c) Miscellaneous: Five unemployed males are included in this grouping. Three of them have worked for only very limited periods of time at unskilled, minimal wage jobs, and based on available information there is reason to believe that at least two of these individuals would probably qualify for disability benefits based on their intellectual impairments if they were to apply for them. During the course of this study none of these individuals

were known to actively seek work, nor did there appear to be much financial incentive for them to do so as their parents provided them with room and board and sufficient money to meet their living expenses. The fourth subject in this group had worked steadily for seven years, but one year before the study began had simply quit his busboy job, citing its low pay and hard work as reasons for his decision. Since that time he has not looked actively for another job, but has rather relied on unemployment benefits and his family for his support. The fifth individual also had a long employment history of working at low paying jobs, but he was fired from his last full-time job because of numerous mistakes made in his work. For the last three years he has been unsuccessful in finding any but part-time jobs and has relied on his wife's earnings as their means of support.

(4) Sporadic Employment. Two unemployed males have usually been employed in occupations which pay fairly well, but in which the demands for their labors are quite sporadic. One of these is an unskilled laborer who has had numerous jobs working on pipe-line construction, and the other is a truck driver who has been employed by a variety of firms. During this study the laborer has been unable to find any but part-time jobs and currently lives with a family who, for all practical purposes, has adopted him. The trucker, who was

married twice during the course of this study, supported himself and his wife(s) primarily with unemployment benefits, but was able to find one six-month job as a long-distance trucker which earned him approximately \$15,000.

Table 4.6 provides a listing of the number and percentages of subjects included in each of the differing occupational groups mentioned according to their sex and "membership" in either the "31" or the "48" group.

TABLE 4.6.--Occupational Grouping.

	"31"		"48"	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Employed</u>				
Civil Service	3	0	5	1
Union	2	0	4	1
Minimal Wage	3	1	4	5
Other	1	0	1	0
<u>Unemployed</u>				
Physically Disabled	3	0	4	0
Intellectually Impaired	4	0	5	0
Minimal Wage				
(a) housewives	0	4	0	7
(b) welfare	0	2	0	3
(c) other	5	0	5	0
Sporadic Employment	2	0	2	0
<u>Percentages</u>				
Employed	39%	13%	47%	39%
Unemployed	61%	87%	53%	61%

The descriptions of the subjects' usual occupations, while brief, appear adequate to justify a number of general statements about the differing occupations insofar as they aid or hinder the retarded subjects' long-term employment prospects. First, the kind of jobs the employed subjects have usually held tends to confirm Baller, Charles, and Miller's findings that the mildly retarded have their greatest occupational success when "they either (a) joined big, paternalistic organizations early and stayed with it, usually in the same job or one quite similar; or (b) learned a single skill early and continued without a change or break" (1967:304). They also note that the least successful individuals "on the other hand had drifted from job to job, usually worked for one person or a small firm rather than for large, well-established, and continuing organizations."

The validity of Baller, Charles, and Miller's findings to the subjects in this study can be shown in a breakdown of their employment histories. Table 4.7 shows the length of time employed subjects ("48" group) have held their present job, and indicates that those who have worked for large manufacturing firms or governmental agencies have stayed longer at their jobs than have the other employed subjects.

As might be inferred from the data presented in Table 4.7, the individuals working at manufacturing or government jobs have also worked, on the average, a greater percentage of the time since leaving school than have either the other employed subjects or those



TABLE 4.7.--Length of Time Subjects Have Held Present Job ("48" Group).

	Average Time
Civil Service (n = 6) (8, 7, 7, 7, 4, and .1 years)	5.5 years
Union (n = 5) (9, 5.5, 5, 5, and 4 years)	5.7 years
Minimal Wage (n = 9) (11, 10, 7, 5, 4.5, 4, 2, .5, .1, and .1 years)	4.4 years
Other (n = 1) (2 years)	2.0 years

who are presently unemployed. This can be seen in Table 4.8, although here only the "31" subjects were used in computing the percentages of time individuals have been employed because of the need for complete employment records.

One study which appears to offer a partial explanation for the findings that retarded adults generally have their greatest chance for long-term employment success with "big, paternalistic" companies is that by Hartlage (1965), in which he reports that it is this same kind of company which tends to be the most receptive to hiring the retarded in the first place. While the present study made no attempt to determine the willingness of various local

TABLE 4.8.--Percentage of Time Employed Since Leaving School  
("31" Group).

	Number	Average %
<u>Employed</u>		
Civil Service	4	98
Union	2	88
Minimal Wage	4	77
Other	1	Uncertain
<u>Unemployed</u>		
Physically Disabled*	3	90
Intellectually Impaired	4	26
Minimal Wage		
Housewife	4	Not Applicable
Welfare*	2	28
Other	5	40
Sporadic Employment	2	86

\* Percentages based on amount of time subjects available for work (i.e., excludes time injured or working full-time as housewife).

employers to hire retarded persons, there is some indirect evidence to suggest that employer receptivity to hiring the retarded is not a significant factor in explaining why the subjects in this study have obtained jobs with large manufacturers or governmental agencies.

First, in interviews with a number of school vocational guidance workers, it was indicated that while they perceive certain governmental agencies as being fairly receptive to hiring retarded persons they did not think this was true for most of the large manufacturing firms in the local area. Secondly, in reviewing the reasons subjects gave for leaving jobs (see Table 4.9) it can be

TABLE 4.9.--Reasons for Leaving Jobs.\*

	All Jobs	Union-Government Jobs
Quit	41 (49%)	2 (20%)
Laid-off	12 (14%)	- --
Injured	6 ( 7%)	1 (10%)
Fired	15 (18%)	2 (20%)
Still Employed	9 (11%)	5 (50%)

\*Based on 83 incidents where reason for leaving could be determined with some degree of accuracy.

seen that regardless of any hypothetical receptivity large firms have toward hiring the retarded they are not distinguishable from other employers in the rate at which they have fired the retarded subjects in this study.

If the available evidence does not indicate any significant variation in the "receptivity" of different employers, the data in Table 4.9 does strongly suggest that a major factor in the success retarded subjects have in working with large firms or agencies is their willingness, or desire, to continue working for such employers. Not only have the individuals presently holding "union" or "civil service" jobs unanimously expressed the desire to continue at their present jobs, but most of the other subjects have also talked of them as being among the best jobs they could hope to obtain. Even

the two subjects who quit such jobs expressed some regret at their decisions.

In viewing the employment situation of the subjects from a different perspective, that of their earnings, it is apparent that the same occupational features that promote job permanency are also associated with higher wages. Although the exact earnings of all the employed subjects in the "48" group were not obtained, the earnings for the ten subjects in the "31" group who were employed full-time averaged \$161.90. Using the same categories as before to group these ten employed subjects indicates that the two individuals working for large manufacturing firms received the highest average wages of any of the subjects while those working for governmental agencies also received wages somewhat above the average for all the subjects (see Table 4.10).

TABLE 4.10.--Average Wages According to Occupational Group.

Occupational Group	Average Weekly Wages	Percent of Total Average
Union	\$215	133
Civil Service	176	109
Minimal Wage	115	71
Other	200	123
Total	162	100

Based on numerous studies of labor economics in the United States it is apparent that a positive relationship between the subjects' wages and their longevity at particular occupations which appears to exist is to be expected. As Mabry has noted, there is evidence to indicate that as wage rates rise there is a decline in the rate of labor turnover. One explanation for this situation which is offered by Mabry is that from the employee's perspective the "employees who earn high wage rates are faced with fewer opportunities to improve their economic position through job changes" (1973:428). On the other hand, employers, especially large firms or agencies, are often able and willing to pay higher wages to their employees to avoid the costs incurred from high labor turnover.

In summarizing this section on employment and income it is apparent that the data obtained from the subjects does not justify the making of many conclusive statements regarding the importance various personal and social factors have in determining their current employment situation. The one irrefutable conclusion to be made, however, is that the subjects in this study have employment and wage rates which are significantly below that of their "normal" counterparts. Although the intellectual level (IQ) of the subjects appears to have some bearing on their employment success, the data more strongly supports a tentative conclusion being made that for the subjects employment success is based not so much on what you do as it is on who you do it for.

Societal Perceptions Regarding the Meaning  
of Employment and Income

In reviewing the subject of employment and income it is apparent that two distinct and often conflicting viewpoints as to what they considered the basic determinants, and hence the meaning, of employment and income are prevalent in American society. Both of these viewpoints, or orientations, are significant in understanding how society, as well as the subjects in this study, typically perceives employment. Although these two orientations have acquired numerous different labels they will be referred to in this paper as "merit based" and "market based."

The first of these orientations, "merit based," tends to focus on differences in individual abilities and skills as they effect employment and earnings. According to Robin Williams, it is this orientation toward work which has been dominant in most segments of American society throughout its history. As Williams describes this merit based orientation:

In a society of equality of opportunity and competitive marketplace individuals should rise or fall according to his own merits, his position determined by what he is and does or can do as an individual. . . .

Money, in turn, comes to be valued not only for itself and for the goods it will buy, but as symbolic evidence of success and, thereby, of personal worth (1956:457).

While Williams' writings imply that American society is rather unique in the emphasis it places on individual merit as the basis of one's social and economic position, it has also been argued by others that a merit based system of rewards is to some extent a universal feature of stratified societies (e.g., Davis and Moore 1945).

In American society, this merit based orientation is felt to manifest itself in the general desire of workers to receive wages which they perceive are commensurate with their individual talents and training. Writing about job satisfaction among American workers, Vroom argues this position in stating that:

A . . . starting point is represented in the assumption that persons do not strive to maximize the attainment of desired outcomes like money but rather strive to obtain an equitable or fair amount. Basic to this position is the belief that individuals are guided by a moral system which has as a basic tenet the fair distribution of rewards. If a person receives less than a fair amount he feels that an injustice has been done him; if he receives more than the fair amount he feels guilty.

In effect, this point of view would lead us to regard job satisfaction as a function of the amount of difference between the amount of reward that the person believes he should receive and the amount of reward which in fact he does receive. The greater the difference between these two amounts, the greater the tension or disequilibrium experienced by the person (1964:168).

Although a "merit based" orientation has utility in explaining many types of economic and labor activities, it is, as Vroom notes, essentially a moral orientation to human behavior. In this sense it is an orientation which does not so much reflect actual labor market activities as it is a perception of how the labor market should function if widely held social concepts of right and wrong are to make sense.

In contrast to this "merit-based" orientation is the "market-based" orientation which focuses upon the importance impersonal supply and demand factors have in determining peoples' employment and income. Within this orientation individual talents and training are not conceived to be the sole, nor even necessarily the primary

determinant of one's employment. Rather, employment and income are viewed as being dependent upon numerous factors which influence the marketplace's demand for a given individual's skill and the relative availability of persons (or machines) in supplying the desired skills.

Although a high degree of competition and mobility have traditionally been thought to characterize the American economy, economists have increasingly been able to delineate factors within the economic system which dramatically alter both the supply and demand for labor from that which would be found in a "perfect"--i.e., merit based--labor market. A number of the resultant "imperfect" labor market conditions appear to have special significance for the employment and earnings of retarded persons. Summarizing the findings of various economists, these are:

(1) Employees in concentrated industries receive higher wages on the average than do workers with similar skills in more competitive industries (Mabry 1973).

(2) Unionization, by effecting the supply of labor available to employers, can result in higher wages for union members (Weiss 1966). However, Reder (in Mabry 1973) suggests that the major influence unions have on their members' wages is their ability to prevent wage reductions during periods of high unemployment, rather than in raising wages during periods of economic expansion and low unemployment.



(3) Employees working for governmental agencies receive slightly higher wages than do their counterparts working in the private sector, while also being more impervious to job lay-offs due to economic fluctuations (Zerhart 1975:260).

In addition to "imperfect" labor market conditions which promote high wages among certain groups of employees there are also various "imperfect" labor conditions which are associated with individuals receiving relatively low wages and benefits for their occupational skills. Among these are two which appear to be directly relevant to the employment situation of most retarded adults in the United States. They are:

(1) As Finkel and Tarascio point out, "low wages are caused basically by the same forces that bring about high wages--the supply of labor and the demand for labor" (1971:200). Beyond this, however, they note that restrictions on the supply of labor which promote high wages in certain industries and occupations (e.g., union restrictions on hiring, educational restrictions, etc.) will typically lead to significant increases in the supply of labor competing for low paying, unskilled jobs. During periods of economic recession this relatively large supply of labor competing for unskilled types of work will be further augmented by the downward mobility of individuals from more "restricted" and skilled occupations. For the unskilled worker, though, their bargaining position is not necessarily improved greatly during periods of economic expansion since even a small increase in wages paid for unskilled labor will typically induce persons residing outside the

labor market (e.g., those on welfare, unemployed, or in school) to seek such employment, thus once again expanding the available supply of labor (Finkel and Tarascio 1971:200).

In addition to the high elasticity in the supply of unskilled labor, persons in unskilled occupations are also subject to employment and wage pressures brought about by the generally static demands for their labor. This inelasticity in the demand for unskilled labor, even during periods of economic growth, is seen to be attributable to the fact that the "marginal product of these people would fall quite rapidly as more and more are employed" (Finkel and Tarascio 1971:200).

(2) Wage discrimination is also an "imperfect" labor market condition which can result in comparatively low wages for the individual employee. While perhaps not a significant feature in many occupations and industries, its applicability to the mentally retarded may be substantial. Mabry has described wage discrimination thus:

When wage discrimination is practiced, two conditions usually exist. (1) Each worker is paid a wage sufficient to keep him from actively seeking employment elsewhere--it is the minimum alternative cost wage. This wage is normally less than the employer would pay rather than to risk losing the employee. (2) The wage each person receives is known only to himself. The trick, of course, is to keep employees from sharing wage information with one another . . . . One way is that the employee is led to believe that he is being paid what he is worth a smaller sum than someone else, therefore, carries with it the implication that the lower-paid employee is inferior to the high-paid employee. Vanity might easily persuade an employee to keep his wage a secret (1973:273. *Italics added*).

The different "imperfect" market conditions cited above point to two features regarding the employment of mentally retarded adults which have typically been seriously underemphasized in most previous studies on this subject: (1) that the mentally retarded, like their normal counterparts, often find their employment and earnings greatly influenced by supply-and-demand factors which are only minimally related to the talents and training they possess, and (2) that the mentally retarded, as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, are primarily recipients of the negative consequences of "imperfect" market conditions such as low employment and wage rates. The widespread occurrence of such "imperfect" market conditions in the American economy also make it evident that a "market-based" orientation provides a more comprehensive and empirically based perspective for understanding the general employment situation of mentally retarded persons than does a "merit-based" orientation.

Perhaps the greatest source of confusion in attempting to understand the particular relevance each of these two orientations have in analyzing the employment of mentally retarded individuals exists in the fact that "imperfect" labor conditions are repeatedly described, explained, and/or rationalized in terms having definite "merit" connotations. An example of this can be seen in Mabry's statement on wage discrimination, which clearly indicates that this "imperfect" market activity can only be perpetuated when employees erroneously believe their wages to be determined on the basis of "merit." Farber, in turn, has taken this line of thinking even further. Writing on the social context of mental retardation he

argues that American economic institutions require a labor population in excess of the number of persons that can be employed at any one time to maximize their efficiency and profits. He then goes on to state that:

The presence of organizationally surplus populations creates the necessity (a) to justify classifying particular population segments as "surplus" and (b) to develop procedures for identifying these segments. In a society that values individual competence in complex political, economic, and educational activities, intellectual ability provides one basis for labeling population segments as "surplus" (1968: 15. *Italics added*).

At the risk of overstating Farber's position somewhat, it would appear that two fundamental propositions are embedded in his quote. First, that within American society it is not sufficient that labor market activities be explained simply in terms of supply and demand, but rather need to be justified ultimately in terms of "merit." Secondly, that labor market conditions have a significant influence in determining the definition society gives to "merit" and, in turn, to intellectual ability. The application of Farber's position leads directly to the conclusion that for a large percentage of the mildly retarded adults in this society their perceived intellectual incompetence may be regarded as being as much a consequence as it is the cause of the employment status.

#### Subjects' Perceptions Regarding Employment and Income

As has been alluded to previously in this chapter, employment is typically viewed as the most important means by which individuals in this society integrate themselves into the larger social

systems of the community and develop public self-definitions as to who they are. Super, in fact, has made the widely quoted assertion that "vocational development is essentially that of developing and implementing a self concept" (1953:189). While this statement, taken by itself, may be viewed as giving undue weight to the opportunities individuals have in freely choosing their occupations while neglecting the importance societal factors have in limiting one's occupational choices, there appears to be little doubt that in American society a person's concept of self is intimately linked with his employment. As Steffire has remarked:

The occupational persona and the self-concept have a symbiotic relationship that moves them toward congruence. If the individual stays in the occupation, he will change either himself or the conditions of his employment so that the way he behaves on the job and the way he really is tend to become more harmonious (1970:216).

Assuming the general validity of such arguments, it would appear that the perceptions the mentally retarded have of their employment and income provide a unique and unparalleled source of information for understanding both how they view their economic situation and themselves in relationship to other members of American Society. However, as is often noted in the relevant literature, the relationship between occupation and self-concept is not necessarily a direct or simple one. Rather, the relationship may vary widely among individuals as a result of numerous differentiating occupational and/or personality characteristics.

Although little attention has been given to the possible meanings that mentally retarded persons attach to employment, or how

these may relate to the concepts they have of themselves, two studies dealing with "normals" in differing occupations provide some pertinent information on this subject-matter. The first of these studies, by Morse and Weiss, found that the meaning given to work by individuals in middle class occupations differed noticeably from those given by unskilled and semi-skilled workers. As they concluded:

For many of those in the middle class occupations working means having something interesting to do, having a chance to accomplish things and to contribute. Those in working class occupations view working as virtually synonymous with activity, the alternative to which is to lie around and be bored or restless (1955:195).

Similar in scope to this study is a second one by Centers and Bugental (1970) which focused on the relative value individuals place on the intrinsic and extrinsic features of their work. Their study indicated that for white-collar workers it is the intrinsic features of their jobs which they valued most highly (e.g., the work is interesting, allows one to use his skills or talent, etc.), whereas unskilled and semi-skilled workers place a greater value on the extrinsic aspects of their work (e.g., pay, security, good co-workers, etc.).

By extrapolating the findings of these studies to the mentally retarded it may be inferred that they, as semi-skilled and unskilled workers, place a good deal of emphasis and value on the amount of physical activity associated with their work and the "extrinsic" benefits they receive from it. In turn, it can be hypothesized that for the mentally retarded worker what they do for a living may not be as important in the development and maintenance

of their self-concepts as is the amount they get paid for their labors. In the following analysis of the subjects' perceptions of employment and income these possibilities, among others, will be examined.

### Income and Wages

Since "pay" is considered to be the most important feature of employment by a majority of American workers (Centers and Bugental 1970), it seems appropriate that a review of the subjects' perceptions regarding employment begin by focusing upon their views toward the monetary aspects of work. To facilitate this review the subjects' responses to a variety of income related questions are briefly described, followed by a general summary (see Table 4.11 for listing of subjects' responses to most of these questions).

(1) Present or most recent wage rate. As noted earlier, the nine employed males in this study were earning an average of \$4.26 an hour at their current jobs (or \$4.16, see footnote 1, Table 4.11), while the one employed female was receiving \$2.00 an hour. Of the 14 unemployed males there were sufficiently complete work records for 11 of them to determine that they had received an average of \$2.98 an hour at their last full-time job. However, the sporadic and temporary nature of the seven unemployed females' work experience made it impossible to determine with any accuracy what the average earnings were for them at their last full-time employment.

TABLE 4.11.--Hypothetical and Real Wage Rates.

Employed Male Subjects	Wage Rate (dollars per hour)				
	Present	Ideal	Average	Family	Minimum
Number of subjects responding	9	6	9	9	9
Average (dollars/hour)	\$4.16 <sup>a</sup>	\$4.75	\$4.76	\$4.59	\$3.33
(Percentage of AWTCA) <sup>b</sup>	(85%)	(98%)	(98%)	(94%)	(68%)
Unemployed Male Subjects	Previous	Ideal	Average	Family	Minimum
Number of subjects responding	11	11	14	13	14
Average (dollars/hour)	\$2.98	\$3.39	\$3.70	\$2.64	\$2.45
(Percentage of AWTCA)	(61%)	(70%)	(76%)	(54%)	(50%)
Total Male Subjects	Previous or Present	Ideal	Average	Family	Minimum
Number of subjects responding	20	17	23	22	23
Average (dollars/hour)	\$3.51	\$3.87	\$4.11	\$3.43	\$2.79
(Percentage of AWTCA)	(72%)	(79%)	(84%)	(70%)	(57%)
Female Subjects	Present	Ideal	Average	Family	Minimum
Number of subjects responding	1	5	8	6	7
Average (dollars/hour)	\$2.00	\$2.71	\$3.54	\$3.65	\$2.09
(Percentage of AWTCA)	(41%)	(56%)	(73%)	(75%)	(43%)

<sup>a</sup>\$4.16 is actual average hourly wage; the figure \$4.26 quoted elsewhere is weekly gross wages divided by 40. The difference is due to the fact that two subjects tend to work slightly more than 40 hours a week, although 40 was used to compute hourly wages because they were not sure of actual number of hours worked each week.

<sup>b</sup>Percentage of AWTCA is the percentage of \$4.87/hour, the Average Wage for the Tri-County Area.



(2) Evaluation of current pay as average, below or above.

Following the question on current earnings, each of the employed subjects was asked whether he/she considered their pay to be average, below or above average for workers in this area. Seven of the employed males (average hourly earnings, \$4.46) judged their earnings to be average, while two (average hourly earnings, \$3.12) considered their earnings to be below average. The one employed female subject (hourly earnings, \$2.00) judged her earnings to be about average.

Based on census data available for 1975, the actual average earnings for workers in the three county area in which all the employed subjects worked was \$4.87 an hour (Michigan Statistical Abstract, 11th edition, 1976).

(3) Estimated average earnings for workers in this area. The third question asked each of the subjects to estimate as closely as they could the actual average earnings of employees in this area. These estimates could, in turn, be considered to be highly suggestive in two respects: first, as an index of how informed the subjects were of actual wage conditions in the local labor market, and second, in conjunction with answers to questions 4, 5 and 6, as a rough measure of how they subjectively evaluate their worth as employees against other workers.

As an index of how aware the subjects were of actual wage conditions, it is interesting to note that the employed males' estimates of average wages paid in this locality were only two percent below the actual average wage rate, while unemployed males

were 24 percent and the females 27 percent below the actual average wage rate in their estimates (see Table 4.11). In attempting to determine what factors might be most important in the subjects' estimates of the average wage rate, correlations were made between their estimates and numerous other subject variables. The one variable which had a high correlation with the male subjects' estimate of average wage rate was the percentage of time employed since leaving school ( $r = .75$ ; i.e., the higher the percentage, the higher the estimated average wage). Since neither present nor prior pay rates, nor the mean income in the subjects' neighborhood were correlated highly with the male subjects' average wage estimates, a tentative assumption can be made that the subjects gain a "realistic" estimation of wage conditions primarily through their association with others at work.

(4) Ideal wages. This question asked the subjects to estimate, without regard to any particular job, what they thought would be an ideal wage for themselves, one in which they didn't think they were being either under or over paid. Although the validity of this procedure is unknown, it was felt that by asking this question immediately following their answer to what they thought other people on the average earned it would provide some insight into the evaluation the subjects have of themselves as employees. In comparing the responses of the subjects who answered both of these questions it was found that the employed male subjects, on the average, gave as their ideal wage a figure which was only two percent below that which

they thought people on the average actually earned. For the unemployed male subjects their average ideal wage was 18 percent below what they thought others on the average earned, while for the female subjects their ideal wage was on the average 26 percent below what they estimated others earned.

When the ideal wage the males gave was compared with their present or most recent wage rate, the figures showed that on the average the employed subjects were being paid 86 percent of what they considered to be their ideal wage, while for the unemployed subjects their prior pay was 92 percent of what they now considered ideal wages. Taken as a whole, the responses the subjects made to this question suggest that neither the employed nor the unemployed subjects have received quite as much in pay as they consider themselves worth, but that only the employed males estimate their worth as employees to be as high as that of "average" people.

(5) Income needed to support a family of four. This question involved asking the subjects to estimate both the minimum income needed to live alone, and to support a family of four (i.e., provide all the basic necessities, but few if any luxuries). This, in turn, was followed by a series of more detailed questions regarding the specific costs of various items, such as food, housing, etc. The intent in asking these questions was to determine if any correlation might exist between what the subjects perceived to be their "cost of living" and either their real wages or their "hypothetical" wage estimates. No correlations, however, were found. Instead, their

responses suggested to the author that many of the subjects lacked even a rudimentary knowledge of the costs involved in either supporting themselves or a family. Not surprisingly, the married subjects tended to give somewhat more coherent answers to this series of questions than did single subjects (and had higher average estimates, \$4.39 vs. \$2.43), although even here there was little discernible pattern to their estimates.

It might be noted in reviewing the subjects' estimates to this question that the U.S. Bureau of the Census lists the poverty cut-off for a family of four in 1975 to be \$5,502 a year, which in terms of a 40 hour work week is equivalent to a wage of \$2.64 an hour.

(6) Minimum wage. This question involved determining what the subjects considered to be the minimum wage they would accept in taking a regular, full-time job. It was administered by asking the subjects if they'd accept a job paying \$1.00 an hour, and then progressively increasing the sum by fifty cents an hour until they said yes. While this question was, in a sense, a hypothetical one, the discussions which tended to accompany this question strongly indicated that for most of the subjects their estimates involved a good deal more than "idle speculation." Except for two employed male subjects who claimed that they would accept \$1.00 an hour in wages if it meant the difference between having and not having a job, neither the employed nor the unemployed male subjects seemed willing to accept another job if it meant taking a large cut in pay from what they were or had previously been paid. Excluding the two

subjects mentioned, the minimum wage given by the employed male subjects was, on the average, only 11 percent below that of their present wage, whereas for the unemployed minimum wage estimates averaged only 10 percent below what they had received at their most recent job.

For the female subjects their minimum wage estimates were ostensibly based on two considerations. First was the fact that six of the seven females answering this question did not need to work to support either themselves or their families, resulting in a situation where wages were not considered to be as important as other factors (e.g., effects on family life, work hours, etc.) in determining whether or not they would be willing to accept a job. Second, the female subjects were, at least overtly, much more conscious of minimum wage laws than were the male subjects in making their estimates, and tended to give as the minimum wage for which they'd work a figure which closely approximated whatever they thought was the current legal minimum wage (in 1975 this was \$2.00 an hour for most workers).

(7) Money as the reason for working. Following the above mentioned series of questions regarding wages, the subjects were asked directly whether the real reason they work is for the money. Seventy-nine percent of the males and 88 percent of the females responded positively to this question, suggesting at first glance that money is the major motivation for working among the subjects. However, there is danger in misinterpreting or over-generalizing

their answers, as was made clear by the subjects' responses to another question on employment. This question asked the subjects if they would work even if there were no financial need to do so. Seventy-eight percent of the males and 86 percent of the females stated that they would, and with only one exception all of these subjects gave almost identical explanations for doing so: namely, the need to work to avoid "getting bored sitting around doing nothing."

The responses to these two questions strongly suggest that they reflect two different but complementary perceptions the subjects have toward work. First, work is viewed as an important means of avoiding boredom and inactivity, and second, money is seen as the major reward gained by engaging in work activities. This orientation toward work is similar to that which Morse and Weiss found to be typical among "working class" individuals. As they noted: "The major reason for working at a particular job may be monetary, even though the reasons for wanting to continue to work are not" (1955:196).

Examination of the subjects' responses to the questions on wages and income leads to two general observations. The first of these regards the tendency of the subjects to substantially underestimate the average wages paid to workers, and to give rather low estimates for the amount of income needed to support either themselves or a family. This tendency may reflect a conscious or unconscious desire on the part of the subjects to limit any possible wage comparisons only to those having somewhat similar economic statuses

as themselves, or may simply represent a limited exposure by the subjects to higher-income individuals or groups. However, regardless of the possible social and/or psychological causes for the subjects' underestimations, it appears to have the effect of moderating any feelings of economic deprivation or doubts as to their occupational worth which might result from their relatively low economic and occupational standing.

The second observation is that the subjects have what can only be considered to be rather modest and realistic wage aspirations. While their answers to question 4 indicate that the subjects tend to view their past or present wages as being slightly below that which they think themselves "ideally" worth, without exception these ideal wages appear to be well within the range of wages currently being paid to unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the community. Taken as a whole, it can be suggested that the subjects' ideal wage rates do not so much represent any nebulous evaluations they might make as to their merit or worth as human beings, as it is a pragmatic estimate of what they might be able to get for their labors under existing market conditions.

### Jobs

In recent years it has often been suggested that "work for many people has become more and more simply a means toward the end of earning a living" (Morse and Weiss 1955:191). In turn, it is thought that this phenomenon is becoming especially prevalent among unskilled and semi-skilled workers. While the subjects' responses

to questions on employment did not discount the existence of such a trend in their lives, they did make clear that the subjects view work as having (in fact and/or ideally) numerous significant aspects other than the economic one

In setting out the views of the subjects toward work they have been arranged under two general topic areas, job satisfaction and job strategies.

### Job Satisfaction

The issue of job satisfaction was raised with the subjects during the first two schedule interviews. When the subjects were asked to give a general rating as to how satisfied/dissatisfied they were with their present or most recent job they tended to give them fairly satisfactory ratings, with the women giving the most favorable ratings, followed by the employed males and last by the unemployed males (see Table 4.12).

Although not specifically requested, most of the subjects gave one or more reasons for the satisfaction/dissatisfaction they felt toward their jobs. Most often mentioned as a source of job satisfaction were the people the subjects worked with, while the second most mentioned reason involved the challenge and/or diversity of tasks performed in the work. Interestingly enough, the subjects also most often mentioned the people they work with (including supervisors) as the primary source of job dissatisfaction, with pay and the repetitious nature of their work being the second most mentioned reasons for dissatisfaction.



TABLE 4.12.--General Job Satisfaction Rating.

Rating	Subjects				
	All	Female	Male	Employed Male	Unemployed Male
Completely Satisfied	14	7	7	4	3
Mostly Satisfied	6	1	5	2	3
Half-and-half	8	0	8	2	6
Mostly Dissatisfied	2	0	2	1	1
Completely Dissatisfied	1	0	1	0	1

While the subjects rarely mentioned their bosses or supervisors in talking about their jobs, and then almost always in disparaging terms, when asked directly to evaluate their bosses or supervisors it turned out that most of the subjects felt that they were (or had been) fairly good. Perhaps not surprisingly, the employed males evaluated their bosses more highly than did the unemployed males, with the females giving the bosses ratings which appeared to fall somewhere between those of the male groups. While only seven subjects offered any direct criticism of their bosses, in all cases this involved statements to the effect that their bosses were constantly "ridin' you," complaining of minor mistakes. On the other hand, the most common praise the subjects had for their bosses

was that they were personally friendly with them and helped out during busy periods.

Given the obvious importance that the subjects ascribe to people as a source of job satisfaction and interest, it is somewhat paradoxical that almost half of the subjects (14 of 30) stated that they would prefer working alone rather than in a group, and more than half stated that they would prefer working with machines rather than people. Although there are a number of plausible explanations for this situation, one which appears especially intriguing is that found in "Herzberg's theory." According to Herzberg's research, feelings of job satisfaction tend to be closely related to job-centered factors (e.g., interesting work, responsibility, recognition, etc.) whereas feelings of job dissatisfaction are more frequently related to context-centered factors (e.g., bad supervision, poor working conditions, etc.; Ewen 1964). Assuming the relevance of Herzberg's findings to the subjects in this study it would appear that the fact that the subjects mentioned other persons most often as the major source of job dissatisfaction is exactly what would be predicted. However, the subjects also mentioned people more often as a source of job satisfaction than they did various job features (i.e., diversity of tasks, etc.), a finding which is opposite to that predicted in Herzberg's theory. This discrepancy may indicate a serious weakness in the applicability of Herzberg's argument to the subjects, although it may be at least partially resolved in (1) the subjects' claims of satisfaction with their jobs are not

taken too literally, and/or (2) it is assumed that for many of the subjects their jobs have such little salience that other people were, for all practical purposes, mentioned as the major source of job satisfaction primarily by default, rather than on their merits. This latter position, while not without its possible errors, has the virtue of making it more understandable why in later statements the subjects could say that they would prefer, given the choice, to work with machines rather than people (and often alone). It is also generally more compatible with numerous other statements the subjects made about their work which strongly suggest that most of them did not find their jobs satisfying or interesting so much as they did simply something to be tolerated.

While the job-centered/context-centered dichotomy exemplifies certain difficulties experienced in trying to adequately understand how the subjects view their current (or most recent) employment, their choices regarding "desired" occupations provide some indication of underlying criteria which the subjects use more generally in evaluating jobs (see Table 4.13). One of the most obvious of these criteria involves the delineation of occupations as being appropriate for either males or females. This is manifest in the fact that male subjects almost unanimously desired occupations having definite masculine connotations, while female subjects tended to select occupations traditionally conceived to be appropriate for their sex.

Another criterion, related in certain respects to that of "sex-appropriateness," which can be discerned in the subjects' choices of desired occupations involves the concept of status. As

TABLE 4-13.--Desired Occupations.

Males		Females	
Occupation	Times Mentioned	Occupation	Times Mentioned
Auto Mechanic	6	Gardener	2
Heavy Equipment Driver	4	Housekeeper	1
Groundsman	2	Nurse's Aid	1
Raising Animals	2	Computer Programmer	1
Policeman	1	Beautician	1
Conservation Officer	1	Auto Mechanic	1
Welder	1	Artist	1
Computer Repairman	1		
Lathe Operator	1		
Truck Driver	1		
Janitor (own boss)	1		
Carpenter	1		

suggested by Sennett and Cobb in their study The Hidden Injuries of Class, how people define status provides an important basis for understanding what kind of jobs they desire and what kind of tasks within a particular job they will tend to find most satisfying. To quote Sennett and Cobb:

. . . people measure the status of the ordinary occupations just as they measure status at the top. Occupations in which the individual possesses some degree of autonomy--that is, some degree of freedom from authority and from having to define his own functions in terms of the shifting demands of others--are more desirable than jobs where a person has to deal with others and respond to them. . . .

The values that determine the relative status given to jobs influence as well the actual satisfaction men and women can have within any one category of work. The last chapter mentioned Blauner's finding that the more autonomy a worker has in regulating the time for his duties, the happier and less alienated he feels in performing them.

Other studies of work-isolated versus people-involving jobs show that those who work alone find more satisfaction in their labor than those who must deal with other people.

. . . In general, then, a higher ranking is given to those who can perform in isolation, who do not need or depend on others. Increased status in the American industrial order thus appears as an increase in individualistic behavior, in a flight from rubbing upon or against others in the economic terms of market exchange (1973:235-237).

This assertion that American workers closely associated job satisfaction and job status with autonomy appears to be reflected in the findings of Morse and Weiss (1955) that workers most commonly mention going into business for themselves as the most desirable alternative to their present work. Although the selection of desired jobs by male subjects in this study suggests a similar desire for and appreciation of those jobs and skills which allow an individual to have a fair degree of autonomy in his job (i.e., "be his own man," have little supervision in doing his work), only one subject actually mentioned any desire to establish his own business. This latter fact may suggest that even under ideal circumstances the subjects' desire for autonomy in their work is moderated by countervailing desires for job security, the end-result of which is that the subjects desire jobs in which individuals are seen as typically working alone while being in the employment of others.

The possibility that security may, in fact, be a factor of overriding concern for the subjects in evaluating jobs under both "ideal" and actual life circumstances is evident in their replies to another question regarding hypothetical jobs, that being whether, given the choice, they would prefer a job with security or one they

found exciting and interesting. The response of 19 out of 23 males and 5 out of 8 females was that security was more important than personal interest in selecting a job. The explanations offered by the subjects clearly indicated that the major factor affecting their responses to this question was the belief that adults (especially males) are obligated to provide some type of financial security for themselves and their families, and that this takes precedence over any personal interests they may have in selecting employment. While this orientation appears, at least at first glance, to be a rather altruistic one, the act of financially supporting oneself and others can also be seen as providing the individual with an important, and often desirable, means of publicly demonstrating his ability to fulfill some of the role expectations of normal adulthood. In this sense, then, job security may well be the most important factor in understanding the employment situation of the subjects, both because this security insures the subjects of the financial resources necessary for "normal" participation in their community and also because it provides them with a social status which, in a sense, "legitimizes" such efforts at normal community participation.

Although the emphasis on security, and to a lesser extent autonomy, in evaluating jobs suggest that having an "exciting" job is not a factor of central importance for the subjects, this should not be taken to imply, as is too commonly done with mentally retarded persons in general, that they are somehow not susceptible to the boredom which is typically associated with many unskilled, repetitious jobs. Rather, it can be hypothesized that the

significance they give to security in their employment lives results in the subjects being willing to tolerate a substantially greater amount of boredom in their work than could otherwise be expected. Some indirect support for such a hypothesis can be derived from the subjects' descriptions as to what they felt constituted boring and exciting jobs, which do not appear to be noticeably different from what might be expected of normal working-class individuals (see Table 4.14).

Two aspects of the subjects' descriptions on what they thought made jobs either boring or exciting are worth mention. These are: (1) That while, as expected, the subjects almost unanimously perceived jobs as boring if they involved repetitious work and/or long periods of standing around between tasks they also, with a fair degree of frequency, tended to use "desk jobs" as their example of boring work. This fact may be explainable in terms of Morse and Weiss' (1955) general position, mentioned earlier, that working-class people tend to associate the lack of physical activity in a job with boredom. However, this perceived distaste for desk jobs may also be more specifically a result of their prior experiences with what they consider to be similar kinds of tasks while in school. (2) Underlying the differing statements about what were considered exciting jobs there appeared to be a shared perspective among many of the subjects that to be exciting a job should involve an ongoing process in which the worker is continually learning and mastering new job skills. Given that the subjects were identified as having

TABLE 4.14.--Characteristics of "Boring" and "Exciting" Jobs.

"Boring"	Times Mentioned	"Exciting"	Times Mentioned
<u>Male Subjects:</u>			
Repetitious work	5	Involves numerous	5
"Desk work"*	4	different tasks	
Standing around	3	Interacting with	4
often between tasks		different people	
tasks		Presents a challenge	3
Working alone	1	Keeps you busy	2
Physically tiring	1	Involves outdoor work	2
		Fixing cars	2
		Travel	1
		Being self-employed	1
		Prestige job	1
<u>Female Subjects:</u>			
Repetitious work	1	Interacting with	4
"Office Work"*	2	different people	
"Factory Work"*	2	Learning new things	1

\* Although not included under heading of "repetitious work," these items could reasonably be considered as subcategories of same.

learning difficulties when they were in school, the fact that many of them apparently find the challenge of learning new job skills exciting might be taken to suggest a greater degree of motivation on the subjects' part to learn employment vs. "academic" skills and/or fewer failure experiences in prior job-related learning endeavors.



## Job Strategies

Assuming that the interviews have correctly elicited the more relevant criteria by which the subjects evaluate different occupations, there remain important theoretical and practical questions regarding how and to what extent these "values" are actually incorporated into the employment behavior of the subjects. One intriguing perspective within which these questions can be viewed, and perhaps to some extent answered, is that provided by Farber in his writings on the mentally retarded. According to Farber persons in the higher socioeconomic levels of American society can be characterized as having "determinate career patterns"; that is, a career pattern in which a person "starts at the bottom in an occupation, and, by observable degrees, moves from position to position within that occupation until he arrives at a point he deems 'success'" (1968: 235-236). Lower class persons (and hence, most mentally retarded persons), however, tend to have indeterminate career patterns in which the individual moves from one typically unskilled or semi-skilled job to another, never sure of how long he may remain in a particular job or occupational field.

Based on these differing characteristics of upper- and lower-class people, Farber writes:

The implication is that if the lower-class individual could stay on a single job and maintain a single skill he would do so. This point of view therefore implicitly regards the lower-class individual who shifts from occupation to occupation as being inferior to the individual who stays with a particular occupation. This perspective elevates specialization in occupation into an ethic.

But lower socioeconomic populations, as organizationally surplus, may take a different point of view. The primary

task of individuals, according to lower-class perspective, is to survive. The uncertainty of any single occupation makes it desirable to be proficient in a number of occupations. Having once worked in a particular occupation, the individual can then claim this experience in seeking future employment. The aim in an occupational career under these conditions is not to achieve greater specialization in a particular occupation but to learn a variety of skills that might increase employability. Without specialized skills, an individual may find paths to upward social mobility closed. At the same time, however, he finds a variety of generally unskilled or semiskilled jobs open to him because of his diversity of experience.

Diversity as opposed to specialization as a mode of occupational socialization has a variety of consequences. First of all, the individual must regard his work and his avocations in terms of the marketable experience that they will provide. Second, he inevitably sees himself as manipulated by the whims of the labor market and his employers. Accordingly, economic considerations such as wages, job security, and fringe benefits achieve greater importance in choosing one's "life's work" than personal interest, compatibility of the work with his personality, and special qualifications. Third, he develops a distaste for those individuals who rely upon specialization in particular occupations which carry them through their entire careers. His opinion is that these individuals do not have diverse kinds of work experience as insurance against economic adversity. A "real man" can do anything (1968:236-237).

Although Farber's statement would appear to indicate that the mentally retarded, as members of the lower socio-economic population, acquire a set of values ideally suited to their particular economic circumstances, a growing body of literature suggests that such assumptions often provide an incomplete, and hence partially inaccurate, description of a group's values. This latter point is especially prominent in Rodman's article "The Lower-Class Value Stretch," in which he postulates that lower-class individuals "share the general values of the society with members of other classes, but in addition they have stretched these values, or developed

alternative values, which help them to adjust to their deprived circumstances" (1965:277). Thus, it may be that in emphasizing the values of the mentally retarded which are most congruent with their current behavior and circumstances there will be a tendency to ignore the possibility that they also have other, perhaps conflicting, values which will become evident only under differing circumstances.

In order to determine the job strategies of the subjects, then, it appears necessary not only to identify those values by which they judge current employment situations, but also those values which are relevant to them in evaluating employment opportunities under potentially quite different circumstances. Taking the criteria mentioned in the previous section to be indicative of those values by which the subjects orient their current employment behavior it is apparent that, as Farber hypothesized, the subjects place the greatest value on certain extrinsic features of their work (i.e., job security, pay, etc.). However, a number of additional questions were included in the interviews to explore the possibility that other criteria have greater significance to the subjects in looking at their long-term employment prospects. Briefly, these were:

- (1) Do you think it's better to know how to do many different jobs, or to know how to do one job really well?
- (2) If you needed to get a job, what kind of job would be easiest for you to get?
- (3) Do you think that for you that you should try to keep just one job, or switch jobs whenever a better one comes along?

In response to the first of these questions two-thirds of the subjects claimed that it was better to have a number of different job skills, rather than to be skilled only in one job. Two themes were apparent in the majority's responses: first, that if you get bored with one job you could more easily get another job if you have experience in that field; second, that if you get fired from one job knowing how to do another helps your employment chances. Those who mentioned that it was better to stick with one occupation tended to reply in terms of already having a job and staying with it because of the difficulties in finding other work.

The apparent assumption of most of the subjects, that having diverse job experiences increases one's chance of finding future employment, also appears to manifest itself in the answers to the question regarding the easiest kind of job for the subjects to obtain. For three-quarters of the subjects (5 females and 15 males) the easiest jobs for them to obtain were thought to be unskilled jobs which they had already had some experience with. For the remaining subjects, the most common response was to choose an unskilled job which they thought had a high employee turnover rate (e.g., dish washing, car wash, etc.).

Given the nature of the subjects' responses to these questions, it is noteworthy that when asked if they thought that they should try to keep just one job, or switch jobs whenever a better one came along, the majority of the subjects (14 of 22 males, 3 of 7 females) chose staying with one job. The typical explanations for preferring to stay with one job were: (1) acquiring

seniority and avoiding layoffs, (2) opportunity to "work way up," and (3) get used to one job--less worry about mistakes, "goof-ups." For those who would switch jobs there was a clear tendency to perceive "better jobs" in terms of better pay, although three male subjects gave responses that implied that they would switch primarily for purposes of bettering their careers.

Although the subjects' responses to the three questions are susceptible to a number of different interpretations, it is suggested here that they are best understood in terms of a value stretch, a la Rodman. Briefly, this position holds that the subjects share with the rest of society a commitment to the value of a "determinate career pattern," but that this commitment is primarily expressed in comments made regarding how they would like to act under ideal circumstances. However, as unskilled and semi-skilled workers especially vulnerable to lay-offs many of the subjects have little opportunity to pursue a career within one particular occupation. As a result of this situation there is also a tendency among the subjects to acquire a healthy appreciation for an "indeterminate career pattern" which, while not allowing an individual to maximize his career potentials, has the practical advantage of increasing his employability in the unskilled and semi-skilled labor market.

In summary, an analysis of the subjects' remarks indicate that they have acquired strategies for obtaining employment which are fairly representative of both their actual employment circumstances and, in a large context, their general social standing

within the community. Basically, such strategies reflect the subjects' recognition that their educational and employment skills have only minimal value in the labor market, and that as a consequence of this they must adjust their employment behavior to the demands of the "marketplace" rather than to personal desires or values.

While the tendency of the subjects, and mentally retarded persons in general, to exhibit indeterminate career patterns might, from the viewpoint of the subjects, be simply considered a realistic adaptation to their employment circumstances, as Farber (1968) has noted, the interpretation of their behavior by others can vary widely. According to Farber, the middle-class' emphasis on determinate career patterns results in middle-class people perceiving the mentally retarded persons' tendency to move from one occupation to another as not only an indication of their mental deficiency, but also of a marked propensity to engage in deviant behavior. From the middle-class perspective, then, the solution to the employment problems faced by the mentally retarded requires that they not only be further trained in employment skills but also, in the truest sense of the word, be rehabilitated. On the other hand, from the lower-class perspective the employment patterns of the retarded can be considered normal and highly adaptive, with the only difference between "normals" and mentally retarded being the degree of competency they exhibit.

### Concluding Remarks

Based on the information obtained during interviews with the subjects a number of tentative conclusions were made regarding their employment. Perhaps the most significant of these for understanding the general employment situation of the subjects were: (1) that the IQs of the subjects are positively correlated with the percentage of time they have been employed since leaving school, although this correlation is of a low magnitude and has little predictive value within any particular time period (e.g., there is no significant correlation between IQ and current employment status), (2) while lacking statistical support for this conclusion, it is argued that the major single factor influencing wage and employment status among the subjects appears to be the nature of the companies for whom they work (or previously worked), and (3) the employment values and strategies expressed by the subjects appear to be reflective of both the general society in which they live and of their particular employment circumstances. However, there is no significant evidence to support the idea that the subjects' value orientation has any major influence in determining the actual employment behavior manifested by them.

In addition to these conclusions, a final point regarding the employment of the subjects, and of mentally retarded adults in general, demands mention. This deals with the common contention that the mentally retarded experience much greater employment difficulties in a highly industrialized society such as the United States than they would in less industrialized societies. As Kratter argues,

"the more intricate the mechanization and automation in industry becomes, the higher will be the number of people falling by the roadside of economic and cultural competition" (quoted in Wolfensberger 1967:234-235). Similarly, in discussing the status of mentally retarded person in a technological society Ginzberg states that "the nature of an affluent society, its income levels, the capital equipment that it works with, all make it increasingly difficult to absorb labor of modest skills" (1965:7). Ginzberg then goes on to conclude in rather idyllic terms that "the farm is a wonderful place to absorb people of lesser competences and to fit them into the economy" (1965:7).

While the idea that modern industrial societies demand greater intellectual competences in their workers than do small, technologically simple societies appears to have a special appeal among those persons who have argued that mental retardation in American society is, to a large extent, a social rather than a personal problem, there is, as Edgerton (1970) has noted, no substantial evidence to support such an idea. In fact, the research done by anthropologists in "primitive" societies often suggests just the opposite, that the demands for competence are higher in non-industrialized societies than in industrial ones. This position is clearly seen in the writings of Sahlins in which he states:

For the greater part of human history, labor has been more significant than tools, the intelligent efforts of the producer more decisive than his simple equipment. The entire history of labor until very recently has been a history of skilled labor. Only an industrial system could survive on the proportion of unskilled workers as now exists . . . (1972:81).



While Edgerton does not commit himself on whether industrial or primitive societies require higher levels of competence, instead suggesting that "every society . . . makes substantial demands upon its members for competencies of all sorts" (1970:549) his writings do attempt to underscore the importance intellectual skills have for individuals in non-industrialized societies. As he states:

Economic requirements are seldom simple matters, especially not among the world's most primitive, technologically deprived peoples. In many African tribal societies, for example, economic matters are immensely complicated. A man must know the names of hundreds of cattle, their genealogical backgrounds, their personal histories, and their relative worth in a fluctuating non-money market. He must know, as well, the details of literally hundreds of economic deals involving people, animals, land and other goods, most of which include partial and deferred payments and a bewildering number and variety of hidden contingencies. What is more, a man faces the constant dangers of war, dangerous animals, weather, crop failures, witchcraft, and supernatural malevolence. A woman must contend with a world that is no less complex and dangerous. Indeed, women must often know all that their husbands do, and then some (1970:549).

Unfortunately, regardless of whether "primitive" societies actually place greater intellectual demands on their members than do modern societies in no way alleviates the real difficulties experienced by the mentally retarded in this society. However, a recognition of the fact that the idea that the employment difficulties of the mentally retarded are unique to highly industrialized societies is based more on certain ethnocentric prejudices than any objective data should lead to a further realization: namely, that simply because the vocational difficulties of the mentally retarded can be correlated with particular social features within a society does not mean that the elimination of such features will

necessarily result in these individuals being perceived as competent. To assume otherwise necessitates a certain ignorance as to the complexity of human social life.

## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL LIFE

#### Introduction

Although studies into the social lives of mildly retarded adults who had grown up in the community (i.e., former special education students) began appearing as early as the 1920s, these early studies were primarily concerned with measuring the occupational success of their subjects, while, as Cobb notes, other types of "demographic information were not reported in much detail" (1972:22). The first major effort to study the community adjustment of mildly retarded adults along a variety of social dimensions was that undertaken by Baller in 1935, a study which was eventually extended out over a thirty-year period (Baller 1936; Charles 1953; Miller 1965; and Baller, Charles, and Miller 1966). A somewhat later longitudinal study into the social adaptation of the mildly retarded in the community, similar to that of Baller, Charles, and Miller's in its breadth of interests, was that undertaken by Kennedy (1948, 1966).

While these two major studies, like most of the research done in recent decades on the social adaptation of mentally retarded persons, exhibit something of an undue preoccupation with quantitative demographic material, they are nevertheless distinctive and noteworthy on two counts. First, these two studies gave some needed

recognition and emphasis to the fact that the social lives of the mentally retarded are complex, multidimensional phenomenon, and that neither vocational success nor any other single measure of social success or failure is adequate in understanding their overall social adaptation to the community. Secondly, by being the first--and presently the only--major studies to utilize control groups of normal IQ adults in their research, these studies have been able to underscore many of the significant difficulties which exist in trying to relate the social adaptation of mentally retarded persons directly to their perceived intellectual deficiencies. As Kennedy noted regarding these latter difficulties, it was the intent of her study

to advance beyond mere descriptive aspects of the behavior of retardates and to compare their adjustment to a matched control group, thereby avoiding the pitfall of ascribing behavioral characterization (e.g., arrests for breach of peace) to mental retardation when its true source is found in extraneous factors (notably belonging to a low socio-economic group) (1966:2).

While neither the studies by Kennedy nor by Baller, Charles and Miller were able to fully overcome the difficulties posed in relating intelligence to social adaptation in their subjects, Cobb has described them as being the "two serious attempts" which have been made to "determine the precise characteristics of the social adjustment achieved by persons identified during the school years as mildly retarded and living freely in the community in comparison with other citizens of presumed normal intelligence" (1972:27). Even without restricting it to studies which involve comparisons with "normals," however, it can be argued that Cobb's description of these two studies is almost equally valid (though a number of

recent studies, such as that by Henshel [1972] may be described in similarly favorable terms).

Beyond their distinctive theoretical and methodological orientation, perhaps the most significant aspect of these two studies has been that they have helped prompt some awareness of the fact that short-term, survey-type studies are for the most part incapable of adequately delineating the relative importance different features have in the social lives of the mentally retarded, and as a result can foster serious misinterpretations regarding the extent and nature of the mentally retarded's over-all community adaptation. This weakness in much of the research done on the mentally retarded has been alluded to by MacMillan who, in reviewing most of the social research which has been done on mildly retarded adults in the community, noted their susceptibility to widely divergent interpretations:

Interpretations of the above results are conflicting. Some interpret these results to indicate that former EMRs melt into society and adjust economically and socially as well as nonretarded persons from the same social class. And it would appear that former EMRs do adjust at some level. In the majority of cases they do avoid designation as mentally retarded as adults, they do find work unless economic conditions are poor, they do marry and raise families, and they do provide housing and food for their families.

However, the same results can be interpreted to reflect a poor adjustment, particularly if one looks at degrees of adjustment. Former EMRs appear at the lowest points on scales of social and occupational adjustment. That is, if we go beyond the simplistic consideration of whether or not the person is employed and look at the nature of the job and income received, we see that the degree of adjustment is relatively poor . . . . Furthermore, the degree to which marriages are satisfying reveals a very different picture than we would obtain from simply asking whether or not the

individual is married. Qualitatively, the life of the former EMRs as a group is not comparable to that of the general public or even to that of their immediate neighbors (1977:326).

While statements such as MacMillan's can be taken simply as indicating the need for further detailed information to resolve the differing interpretations given to the present data regarding the social success of mildly retarded persons, at another level these differing interpretations can be understood as a portent of things to come; namely, that as researchers begin to fathom the complexities involved in the mentally retarded's social adaptation to their community environment there will be increasingly less of a consensus among researchers as to how the mentally retarded's level of social adaptation is to be measured, and increasingly more interpretations which can be given to the same social data. Predicted on the correctness of this latter viewpoint, it can be noted that in the following description and analysis of the subjects' social lives the intent has not been to offer any definitive analysis so much as it has been to introduce interpretations of the data which appear to best expand the context within which the social lives of the subjects, and the mentally retarded more generally, can be understood.

#### Description and Analysis of Subjects' Social Lives

In the fifty-odd years of research into the social lives of mentally retarded persons living in the community studies have tended to focus their attention on one or more of the following areas of social life: marriage and family, anti-social behavior, citizenship,

and social group participation. In keeping with such a "tradition," and because they provide convenient and rather inclusive categories for organizing data, these same four topic-areas will be utilized in describing and analyzing the social lives of the subjects involved in this study.

### Family and Marriage

#### Marital Rates

In reviewing a variety of studies' reports on the marital status of mildly retarded adults living in the community, Conley (1973) concluded that while such people were more apt to be single or divorced than were their normal counterparts, nevertheless, by middle age almost three-fourths of the mildly retarded males and three-fifths of the mildly retarded females studied were married and living with their spouses. Although Conley's summary of these studies is essentially correct, when looked at individually these studies provide a less uniform, and perhaps somewhat different, picture of the mildly retarded population's marital situation than might otherwise be drawn.

For example, Baller (1936) reported in his initial study that while retarded females were as likely to be married during their twenties as were their normal counterparts (58.9 percent vs. 59.0 percent, respectively), retarded males were less likely to be married at this age than were their normal counterparts (33.3 percent vs. 52.4 percent, respectively). With slightly younger subjects, however, Kennedy (1948) found that both retarded males and females were as

likely to be married as were their normal counterparts (males, 44.7 percent vs. 40.0 percent; and females, 54.6 percent vs. 49.0 percent, respectively).

Conley, in noting the different marriage rates reported in these studies by Baller and Kennedy, suggested that the difference "may reflect the influence of a slightly higher level of intellectual functioning by the subjects of the Kennedy study" (1973:234). Support for this suggestion that marital rates may be influenced by the mildly retarded's level of intellectual functioning is found in a number of studies (e.g., Henshel 1973), but perhaps most notably in the follow-up study done by Baller, et al. (1966). In this latter study it was found that the subjects classified 30 years earlier as "mentally deficient" (mean IQ 60) were significantly less likely to be married at middle-age than were their normal "control" counterparts (48 percent vs. 90 percent, respectively), whereas those originally judged to be merely "dull" (mean IQ 80) were only slightly less likely to be married than were their normal counterparts (84 percent vs. 90 percent).

In the present study similar evidence for a relationship between intellectual functioning (i.e., IQ scores) and marital success in individuals of below average intelligence was found in comparing the IQs and marital statuses of the 31 subjects. In this comparison a positive correlation was found between current marital success (i.e., whether the subject was married at the time of the study) and present IQ scores ( $r = .62$ ), while a lesser correlation existed between the subjects' IQs and their having ever been married



( $r = .47$ ). When these marital figures are broken down even further, it is found that the IQs of the subjects currently married are significantly higher than are those of either the subjects who have been divorced or have remained single ( $p < .01$  for both comparisons), whereas there is no significant difference in the IQ scores of divorced and single subjects (see Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1.--IQ Scores of Married, Divorced, and Single Subjects.

		Males	Females	Combined
Married	Mean	83.3	83.3	83.3
	S.D.	4.67	9.64	5.96
Divorced	Mean	74.0	79.7	75.9
	S.D.	4.05	6.66	5.42
Single	Mean	70.7	74.0	71.1
	S.D.	10.86	--	9.99

Although the small subject population in this study precludes any definitive conclusions, in conjunction with the findings from other studies the data can be taken as suggesting: (a) that among individuals formerly identified as mildly retarded those with the higher IQs are more likely to marry than are their lower IQ counterparts; and, more significantly, (b) among those individuals who marry those with higher IQs are more likely to remain married than are their lower IQ counterparts. With respect to this latter suggestion, the findings in this study are similar to those reported by

Baller, Charles, and Miller (1966) in that they both indicate that the high rate of divorce noted among former special education students is primarily the product of a disproportionately high rate of divorce among the lower IQ subjects studied (see Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2.--Marital Rates for Subjects and Census Counterparts.\*

		Males	Females	Combined
Married	Subjects	48%	50%	48%
	Census Population	80%	86%	83%
Divorced	Subjects	26%	38%	29%
	Census Population	3%	6%	4%
Single	Subjects	26%	12%	23%
	Census Population	17%	8%	13%

\*25-29 year olds in Keeler SMSA (1970 Census of Population, Volume. 1, part 24, "Michigan," Table 152).

Although intellectual functioning was the only variable found to be significantly correlated with marital success in this study, it is important to recognize that other variables which are less easily translated into numbers may have similar importance in determining a mildly retarded individual's chances of being married. That this is so is readily apparent in Henshel's detailed investigation into the differences between her married and single mildly retarded subjects, in which she concluded:

. . . subjects apparently had to meet certain prerequisites if they were to marry: a minimal IQ level, a normal appearance, and a modicum of good looks. Health was also a factor distinguishing one marital category from another, although probably not a sine qua non for either. A superior school performance and a positive self-perception, on the other hand, were not at all characteristic of those who had eventually married (1973:144; emphasis added).

## Spouses

In looking at who the mildly retarded marry, studies which have researched this issue generally report that while many mildly retarded persons marry individuals who are similarly retarded, the majority marry individuals of normal intelligence. For example, Henshel reported that of the 30 mildly retarded subjects in her study who had married, 8 had married other retarded individuals (27 percent) and 22 had married normal individuals (73 percent). However, as Henshel noted, most of these normal spouses appeared to function at about the same intellectual level as their mildly retarded mates.

Contrasting somewhat with Henshel's study, Baller reported that while most of the mildly retarded adults in his study who married had done so with people of similar intellectual abilities, 42 percent of the females and 17 percent of the males "married individuals of unmistakably better intelligence than their own" (1936:227). Similarly, Kennedy noted a tendency among her mildly retarded subjects to marry individuals "with educations superior to their own," though she tempered this finding with the observation that "their own general education level is so low that most of them would find it hard to find mates with inferior schooling" (1948:37).

Given findings such as these, the subjects in this study appear to have had unusual success in marrying "upwards." That is, the subjective impression left from observing and talking with the 15 married subjects and their spouses is that 10 of the subjects married individuals who were intellectually and, for the most part, socially more competent than themselves. Of the remaining five married subjects, four appear to have married individuals of roughly similar intellectual and social competencies, with only one subject marrying an individual of noticeably lesser abilities.

Although not enough information was gathered on the subjects' spouses to directly confirm such an impression, some basic biographical information obtained on these people is supportive. First, of the 15 subjects currently married, 11 are married to high school graduates, with the overall educational level among the spouses being 11.5 years of schooling (only one of whom had been in special education classes, and this because of severe vision--reading--problems). Interestingly enough, among the divorced subjects (who had a lower mean IQ than did their married counterparts), former spouses had slightly more education than did current spouses (11.8 years of schooling), though it was not clear whether any of these individuals had been in special education programs (in which case there would be little value in comparing the educational level of current and past spouses since any comparisons between former "regular" and special education students as to the number of years they attended school are essentially meaningless).

Somewhat more tangential to the issue of the spouses' relative level of competence is the matter of employment. However, regarding this matter it is worth noting that while none of the married female subjects are employed (nor really need to be, given their husbands' earnings), six of the male subjects' wives (55 percent) are working full-time, and in three of these cases it was made clear by the wives that they did so primarily because they considered their husbands to be inadequate as family providers. Similarly, among the divorced male subjects, four of the six (66 percent) reported that their wives had worked full-time during their marriages, with three of them mentioning that finances were a major factor in their divorces (although these subjects did not recall their respective incomes during marriage, it appears that in all three cases the wives probably earned nearly as much, if not more, than did the subjects).

Although in no way conclusive, such rudimentary comparisons between the subjects and their spouses can be taken as suggesting that among mildly retarded individuals with higher IQs (roughly 70 to 80 and up), whatever intellectual impairments they possess do not have any major adverse effects on their chances of marrying persons of similar or somewhat superior intelligence. However, especially in the case of males, individuals with lower IQs (down to 50) are significantly less likely to marry or maintain a marriage than are their less retarded counterparts, though in terms of intelligence alone it is unclear from this study's findings whether

such low marital rates are more indicative of these people's lack of basic intellectual skills necessary for successful marriages or that the differences in intellectual competencies which exist between them and most of their potential or past spouses make marriage an untenable proposition.

This latter possibility, that among mildly retarded individuals their failure to marry or remain married may be significantly influenced by a relative lack of intellectual competence, finds a partial support in Henshel's (1973) report that the sex of the mildly retarded individual affects the importance given his/her incompetencies in a marriage:

. . . when a woman had an obviously less competent husband, though the marriage went well for all practical purposes, the woman felt cheated, and, at times, despised her spouse. Society dictates that males should be better educated and show more initiative than their female counterparts; the wives adhered to those mores and expected such ideals to materialize within their own lives. These expectations had unfortunate consequences, for, as a result, men who otherwise functioned very competently in several areas were hardly favored with wifely esteem and could not help but feel inferior. In addition, the more competent women often had responsibilities with which they would not have been burdened had they married normals. Some of the husbands shared the household and marital encumbrances equally, but, in other cases, the wives were actually saddled with more work than they could handle, both in and outside the home. . . .

However, when the wife was the retardate, no such reaction occurred. Typically, the husband shrugged off her limitations, either because he did not attach any importance to them or because her inadequacies gave him more freedom to make his own decisions (1973:175-176).

Parenthetically, Henshel moderates this relativistic perspective by stating that mentally retarded individuals with lower IQs almost invariably lack the "necessary capabilities" for marriage

(her statements appear to suggest an IQ of between 60 and 70 as a minimal prerequisite for marriage).

Although the issue of the mentally retarded's level of intellectual competence vis-a-vis that of their spouses has been brought into focus by researchers such as Henshel, it is important to recognize that this issue is not simply an artifact of these researcher's efforts. In fact, at least among the subjects in the present study, this issue appears to be one that most of the subjects and their spouses are conscious of, and which gets injected into many of their conversations without any outside prompting.

As might be expected from Henshel's statement, the particular manner in which the subjects and their spouses dealt with the issue of their comparative intellectual capabilities varied widely, noticeably in terms of whether the less intellectually competent individual was the husband or the wife. Among the four married females in this study (all married to men judged to be their intellectual superiors) this issue was dealt with in essentially the same manner, with the wives making comments to the effect that their husbands were better educated than themselves, were more knowledgeable about things, smarter, etc. Their husbands, in turn, commented more indirectly on their wives' apparent lesser intellectual abilities, usually stating something to the effect that while their wives may be weak in certain school subjects (e.g., arithmetic, reading, etc.), they have done admirable jobs of keeping up the house, taking care of the children, etc. In essence, the female subjects and their spouses gave some explicit recognition to their

differing intellectual capabilities, though the manner in which they did so suggests that these differences are not an important source of discord in their marriages.

Among the married males in this study, the issue of their intellectual competencies vis-a-vis their spouses was dealt with in a variety of manners. For a few of them, noticeably two who are no longer classifiable as mildly retarded, and who married women of similar intellectual competencies, this issue never arose spontaneously in conversation, nor did it appear to be an issue of any great relevance in their marriages. For two other male subjects who are married to women of similar intellectual competencies, there were acknowledgments by both husbands and wives as to their "learning difficulties," but whatever frustrations these difficulties caused them were expressed without any recriminating remarks toward their spouses.

For the majority of married males, however, especially those married to women judged to be more intellectually competent than themselves, comments by their spouses regarding their intellectual capabilities were not totally innocuous. For the most part these comments took the form of teasing on the part of the spouse (e.g., while one subject was trying to build a doghouse, his wife nearby recalled how he had sawed all the two-by-fours for their patio the wrong length because he added all the figures wrong), though in four marriages the wives' comments regarding their husbands' intellectual shortcomings--i.e., their "stupid" behavior--were on more than one occasion openly hostile. Although in most instances the subjects



responded rather passively to their wives' comments, such comments did appear to be a source (or at least a distinct symptom) of tension in their conversations.

While the obvious, and no doubt overwhelming, importance other personal and social factors have in a marriage should not be minimized, the remarks made by both the subjects and their spouses throughout the study regarding their intellectual competencies suggest that they are not unaware of their relative competencies, and that, especially in the cases where the wife appears to be the smarter partner, this may become a significant source of tension and conflict in their marriage.

#### Parenthood

In looking at the reproductive as well as the marital rates of mildly retarded adults a number of early studies (e.g., Fairbank 1933; Baller 1936) reported that in contrast to their lower marital rates mildly retarded individuals had more offspring than did their normal counterparts (comparisons were based on married individuals). Such reports led a number of writers to conclude that the mildly retarded had an overall reproductive rate similar to that of normals, the effect being that their lower marital and higher reproductive rates roughly offset each other (Conley 1973). In contrast to these studies, Kennedy (1960) found that among middle-aged mildly retarded and normal subjects (who had, it was assumed, essentially completed their reproductive cycle) there were almost identical offspring rates among married individuals, a finding taken to suggest that

overall mildly retarded persons actually have fewer offspring than do their normal counterparts.

In the present study the reproductive rates found among the 31 subjects were for the most part lower than would be expected from any of the above cited studies. The two exceptions to this were found among the female subjects, who had slightly higher reproductive rates than did Keeler females of their age as a whole when compared either in terms of offspring per woman (2.0 vs. 1.8, respectively) or offspring per woman ever married (2.3 vs. 2.0, respectively). These higher reproductive rates, however, are apparently more than counterbalanced by the low reproductive rates found among the male subjects (.87 children per male subject, 1.2 per male subject ever married). While census material does not provide separate reproductive figures for males, by extrapolating from the female reproductive rates for this age group (25 to 29 years old, which encompasses the age range of most male subjects' wives as well) it can be tentatively estimated that the 31 male and female subjects in this study have a significantly lower reproductive rate than do their normal counterparts (1.16 vs. an estimated 1.78 children, respectively).

Not surprisingly, given the correlation found between IQ and marriage, it was also found in this study that the 16 subjects who have had children have higher mean IQ scores than do the 15 subjects who have had no offspring (81.8 vs. 74.7, respectively,  $p < .02$ ). Although this relationship between IQ and parenthood appears to be an indirect one, a clearly "insightful" finding gained from looking

at this relationship is that having children is more closely correlated with the subjects' performance scores ( $r = .35$ ) than with their verbal scores ( $r = .19$ ).

Taken together, the findings from the present study and those of previous studies suggest that two broad generalizations can be made regarding the family and marital circumstances of the mildly retarded. First, mildly retarded adults living in the community are significantly less likely to be married, remain married, or have children than are their normal counterparts. This relatively low level of marital success, though, is not uniform but corresponds to some extent with the IQs of the mildly retarded, with those having higher IQs being more apt to marry and remain married than those having lower IQs (e.g., in the present study 66 percent of the subjects with IQs of 80 or above were currently married, whereas only 19 percent of those with lower IQs were so married).

Second, when viewed in a larger social context, marriage in America can be perceived as an important process whereby individuals establish new family units within which to live out their adult lives and as an important means of expanding family and social ties. In these respects, the high percentage of mildly retarded adults who do not marry or remain married suggests that this population experiences an unusually high rate of social isolation in adulthood, an isolation which, it may be assumed, becomes even more marked as they reach middle-age (e.g., through divorce, loss of parents, etc.).

### Subjects' Views on Marriage and Family

Taken by themselves, the subjects' views on marriage and family do not appear to differentiate them from other segments of American society. Among married subjects spouses and children were unanimously mentioned as being one of the most important things in their lives. Although single and divorced subjects were understandably less apt to mention marriage in this fashion, two single subjects did consider getting married to be of central importance to them, while five other subjects mentioned either their children (3) or their parents (2) as having this importance in their lives. This failure by many of the single or divorced subjects in this study to mention their consanguineal families in this light, however, appears to understate, as it were, the actual importance they have in these subjects' lives, especially given the fact that most of them continue to live with, and be financially and socially dependent on their parents and siblings.

When questioned in greater detail about the issue of marriage and family, the subjects' responses continued to be fairly consistent with those of American society at large. Regarding what they thought to be the most important factors for a successful marriage, subjects most often mentioned the following: trust between spouses, love, sharing, and the ability to talk things over with the spouse (neither the sex nor the marital status of the subjects had any perceivable effect on their responses; see Table 5.3). Essentially, when combined, the subjects' responses suggest that rather than being based on anything as potentially volatile as romantic love or sex, they

TABLE 5.3.--Factors\* Seen by Subjects as Most Influential in a Successful Marriage and in Causing Divorce.

	Number of Times Mentioned
<u>Factors Most Important to a Successful Marriage:</u>	
Trust and honesty between spouses	7
Love	5
Sharing	5
Ability to talk things over with spouse	5
Fidelity	3
Children	2
Adequate financial resources	2
Compromise	2
Understanding	2
Let spouse do "own thing"	2
<u>Factors Most Important in Causing Divorces</u>	
Running around on spouse	10
Money	8
Individual not ready to "settle down"	5
Fighting	5
Can't communicate with each other	2

\* Factors categorized on the basis of key phrase or concept mentioned by response to these two questions, only factors mentioned by two or more subjects listed.

view a successful marriage as requiring those qualities which best foster a secure, stable, and fairly equitable affective relationship.

When questioned about the causes of divorce, in turn, subjects tended to emphasize a limited number of factors which they thought kept marriages from attaining or maintaining a stable and secure nature. Foremost among the reasons given for divorce were: "running around" on one's spouse, money difficulties, and the fact that one or both of the spouses were not ready to settle down (see Table 5.3). Again, neither the sex of the subject nor his/her marital status appeared to significantly influence the reasons offered for divorce, even though subjects typically viewed the man as being the spouse most apt to "run around" or be unready to settle down.

While not ignoring the possibility that the wife may be the major instigator of marital difficulties in many instances, the subjects' reasoning on the causes of divorce strongly suggests that they perceive marriage as requiring some real sacrifices--socially, financially, and sensually--that men are typically less able or willing to make than women. In this perspective, successful marriages are viewed as triumphs over man's proclivity to engage in behaviors which would destabilize and make untenable such relationships.

If successful marriages are made possible by subduing some natural urges for the more subtle and less volatile joys of matrimony, successful parenthood is similarly seen as requiring that parents overcome some natural tendencies, noticeably their inclination to ignore their children. At least this orientation to parenthood appears to underlie many of the subjects' responses to the issue

of how they were raised by their parents and how they would raise their own children. In discussing this issue subjects most commonly responded by saying that they felt it was very important that their children are given more assistance in getting a good education than they had received (e.g., help them with their schoolwork, get involved with children's school and teachers, etc.) or, more generally, that they give their children more time and attention than they had received (e.g., "do more things with them," spend more time with them when they're young, etc.). While six subjects felt that their parents had been adequately attentive to them and their needs as they grew up and would try to raise their children in a similar fashion, four others perceived parenthood primarily in terms of providing their children with more material goods--especially clothing--than they had had during their childhood (e.g., "buy her everything I didn't have," etc.).

In general terms, then, the subjects can be said to view both marriage and family as having their ideal basis in affectionate, yet practical and rational relationships. That is, the ideal marriage is one made secure by the spouses abandoning their irresponsible and immature pre-marital behaviors and establishing a companionship union which will provide needed solace from the emotional and financial rigors and insecurities of the outside world. Similarly, perceiving the family in various respects to be the antithesis of the outside world, with its emphasis on impersonal relationships and impulsive consumerism, the individual, in turn, sees his role as parent being complementary to his role as spouse. In this perspective, rather

than being an agent of socialization for the larger society directly, the ideal parent serves as a middle-man between his children and the larger society, attempting to insure that his children receive the educational and financial resources needed to adapt them for later life in an impersonal world, while yet providing them with the attention and emotional security which is presumed to be needed and unavailable outside the family.

In this respect, the individual is perceived as succeeding in his role as spouse and as parent when his parental and marital behavior is least, rather than most, directly reflective of the natural and socially induced inclinations promoted in the larger society. As Lasch has written, this view of marriage and family involves the concept of domestic life "as an emotional refuge in a cold and competitive society," one in which "a radical separation between work and leisure and between public life and private life" (1977:6-7) is taken for granted.

### Anti-Social Behavior

A central feature of the "eugenics alarm" in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the fear that mentally retarded persons were inherently prone to a life of crime and debauchery. While this fear began to dissipate during the 1920s, its legacy has been the continuing emphasis given to the issue of anti-social behavior in studies dealing with the community adjustment of mentally retarded individuals. Unfortunately, as numerous studies have indicated, the mentally retarded do, as



was earlier believed, appear to have a significantly greater tendency to violate civil and criminal laws than do their normal counterparts.

#### Studies on Anti-Social Behavior in Adults: Past and Present

Kennedy (1948), in her initial comparative study of "moron" and "normal" adults of similar socio-economic backgrounds, reported that while morons did not differ significantly from the normal counterparts in most areas of social life they were four times as likely to have been arrested for various law violations (21.1 vs. 5.4 percent). In this study she also noted that moron subjects were more apt to have been arrested more than once, and to have been arrested on more serious charges than were their normal counterparts. The studies by Baller et al. (1935, 1953, 1965, 1967) also found similar high rates of law violations among their subjects ("deficient," "dull," and "normal"). In 1935 Baller reported that 43 percent of the mentally deficient subjects had been prosecuted for relatively serious offenses, whereas only 10 percent of the normal subjects had been similarly prosecuted. By the time of their last study, however, Baller et al. (1967) found that the rate of law violations among all three groups had declined markedly, with the conviction rate for civil offenses ranging from none for normal subjects to 9 percent for dull subjects and 7 percent for deficient subjects. Since most of their subjects' convictions were for drunkenness, Baller et al. concluded their findings on an optimistic note:

It is quite apparent that the mentally deficient and "dull" subjects, as they were called earlier, although including some occasional troublemakers, had not posed much of a threat to the peace of their community. As noted in an earlier study, their offense reflected lower class status as much or more than low intelligence per se (1967:266).

Unlike previous studies which dealt with the criminal behavior of mildly retarded subjects, no efforts were made in the present study to obtain the arrest or court records of the subjects from governmental agencies. However, during the two years in which the subjects were interviewed five male subjects acknowledged having acquired criminal records during their late teens or early twenties. Of these five subjects, one was convicted of stealing a refrigerator (he stated that two friends actually stole it, but that he was caught with it in his possession and refused to "squeal" on them), one for stealing a car, one for assaulting a police officer (he was drunk at the time the officer pulled him over for a traffic violation), one for robbing the gas station where he worked (he claimed boss was cheating him on his wages, so broke into office to get back what was "due" him), and the last for arson (setting fire to the house of a rival for his girlfriend's affections). Consistent with the general tendencies noted in previous studies, these five subjects were among those with the lowest IQs in the study (none of their IQs exceeded the study's mean of 78.4; mean IQ for the five, 73.2, mean for other subjects, 79.4,  $p < .20$ ). Although a number of other subjects also mentioned having been arrested, these were for minor non-criminal infractions such as speeding, etc. which are not considered to have any real anti-social implications.

In addition to those cases in which the subjects were caught and convicted of some legal offense, at different points in the study four other subjects--all males--mentioned being involved in activities which were patently illegal. In two of these cases subjects continued to draw regular unemployment benefits for a number of months after they had found new full-time employment, while in the other two cases the subjects were either involved in the occasional sale of stolen CB radios or the regular poaching of deer (by which the subject provided most of the meat for the family he was living with).

Although lacking any "objective" basis for comparing the illegal behavior of the subjects in this study with that of their normal peers in the community, the evidence gathered is consistent with Conley's general conclusions regarding criminal behavior among the mentally retarded, and more specifically the mildly retarded: (a) that the mentally retarded commit illegal acts more often than do non-retarded persons, (b) the illegal acts committed by retarded offenders tend to be more serious than those committed by the non-retarded, (c) the retarded are "considerably more likely to violate the law when young," and (d) notwithstanding their higher crime rate, the great majority of the mentally retarded commit no "serious illegal acts" (1973:229; Conley quotes an estimate of almost 90 percent of the males and "virtually all of the females" as having committed no serious legal offenses).

Perceptions on the Anti-Social Behavior  
of Mentally Retarded Adults

Social Scientists.--In trying to understand the reasons for the higher rate of criminal behavior reported among mentally retarded than among normal individuals, two general positions appear to have emerged in the social science literature. The first of these has tended to focus on environmental factors (e.g., high rates of poverty, broken homes, poor schooling, etc.) as the prime explanation for the delinquent and criminal behavior of the mentally retarded, as well as for their normal counterparts. In this position, the fact that a disproportionate percentage of the mentally retarded came from lower-class and "disadvantaged" households, and experience significantly more employment and economic difficulties as adults than do their "normal" peers, is crucial in understanding their abnormally high rate of criminal behavior. The second position, however, has focused on a number of personality traits (e.g., lack of insight, greater susceptibility to social pressures, etc.) which are assumed to be much more prevalent among mentally retarded individuals than their normal counterparts, and which result in a greater proclivity to engage in various types of anti-social and illegal behavior.

While both of these positions appear to have some validity, one possibility raised in the present study which has not been sufficiently recognized is that in addition to any abnormal tendencies or pressures toward anti-social and criminal behavior the mentally retarded may experience, the higher crime rates reported for them may also reflect a greater susceptibility on their part to

being caught and convicted for illegal acts than is found among normals. In this sense, the mentally retarded's lack of insight, foresight, etc. and their poor financial circumstances may not only lead them to commit more crimes than their normal peers, but to being more easily apprehended and convicted for any crimes they commit than their peers.

Subjects.--In discussing the reasons people become criminals the subjects in this study, like their social science counterparts, are divided over what factors should be considered most influential. When this issue was initially raised in the course of administering the Kiddie Mach Test to subjects (see Appendix B for a full discussion of this test and its results) the subjects responded by agreeing 22 to 9 with the test statement that "a criminal is just like other people except that he is stupid enough to get caught." However, in questioning the subjects further on this issue they modified and amplified their responses a good deal, with the final result being that they were evenly divided over whether it was environmental or personal factors which are most important in explaining the criminal behavior of people (see Table 5.4).

Given the applicability of the subjects' comments on the causes of crime to their own situations, it is worth noting that in other interviews the nine subjects known to have engaged in illegal acts discussed their own actions in roughly the same terms that they had used in explaining what caused others to engage in criminal activities. Thus, the five individuals who had been convicted of

TABLE 5.4.--Factors Seen by Subjects as Most Important in Causing People to Become Criminals.

Factors	Number of Subjects Mentioning This Factor
<u>Environmental:</u>	
Unemployed	3
Lack of money	6
Upbringing	2
Associating with wrong type of people	3
<u>Personal:</u>	
Individual lacks affection, understanding -- commits crimes for "revenge"	3
Stupidity	2
Careless, lacks patience	2
Lazy	2
Does it "for kicks"	2
Evil	1
They don't "think"	2
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	4

crimes saw the major reasons people become criminals as being "a lack of patience, . . . a temper" (the "arsonist"), a lack of money (the "car thief" and the "boss robber"), hanging around with the "wrong kind of people" (the subject caught with the refrigerator), and "acting without thinking" (the police assailant). Among the four

individuals not caught, in turn, three saw most crimes--including their own--as being the result of people not having enough money (e.g., "being poor causes them to steal"), while the fourth couldn't explain why people became criminals, only that their lives were "different" (he did not look on his selling stolen CBs in terms of being a crime, but as a favor he was doing for his friends who had "obtained" them).

Whatever the relative frequency and explanations for the illegal behavior of the subjects, one notable perception shared by almost all of them is that they are essentially honest individuals in a less than totally honest world. Although most evident in informal discussions with the subjects, this perception is clearly detectable in their responses to various statements on the Kiddie Mach Test. When questioned regarding their own personal honesty, subjects were quite emphatic about the importance of being "honest, no matter what" (28 out of the 31 subjects agreed with such a statement), and were unanimous in stating that honesty was more important to them than any fame or fortune they could acquire by compromising on their honesty.

Yet even in emphasizing their own personal honesty, most of the subjects also recognized that honesty could be a serious obstacle to monetary and social success (e.g., subjects disagreed two to one with the statement that "successful people are mostly honest and good," while agreeing at the same rate that "sometimes you have to cheat a little to get what you want"). For some of the subjects this discrepancy between the importance they personally accord

honesty and the importance they feel it has in society more generally is apparently accepted without any difficulty--as a simple fact of life. However, for many of the subjects--especially males--this discrepancy is a real source of tension and frustration, with the feeling repeatedly being expressed that their efforts to be fair and honest with others too often results in their being taken advantage of (a feeling which was apparent in some of the subjects' efforts to explain--to justify--their own lapse into illegal activities).

Although the possible cognitive basis for this perception is dealt with more fully elsewhere (Appendix B), a number of other factors also appear to be involved. Among these are the fact that in one form or another most subjects recognize that their rather precarious economic and social position in the community makes them especially vulnerable to the dishonesty and exploitative tendencies of various individuals and institutions with whom they must to some extent deal. Perhaps the most striking and most common example of this vulnerability mentioned by subjects was their being cheated out of some of their earnings or benefits by dishonest employers. Beyond a certain level of vulnerability associated with their socioeconomic circumstances, however, the majority of subjects view themselves at an added personal disadvantage in that they consider themselves to be more easily fooled and cheated than most other people. This view is partially evident in the subjects' response to the Kiddie Mach statement that "most people cannot be easily fooled," to which roughly two-thirds of the subjects agreed. In addition, in



responding to a follow-up question in a similar percentage of the subjects stated that it would be easier for other people to fool them than for them to fool others, citing numerous further examples of their social and economic exploitation in the process.

In essence, the information obtained in this study suggests that if the subjects have a higher than "normal" criminal rate, it is nevertheless not one so high as to indicate any overwhelming propensity on their part toward anti-social and criminal behavior. In fact, the subjects' comments indicate that they see themselves as being more often the victim than the perpetrator of such behavior. Although this latter possibility, assuming it is correct, may be attributable in large part to their vulnerable socio-economic circumstances, the subjects' comments also suggest that more personal--and distinctly more pragmatic--considerations may be involved; namely, the subjects' perception that they would be more likely than most other people to be caught and prosecuted for any possible transgressions they may commit.

### Citizenship

#### Previous Studies

Although the term "citizenship" can refer to a wide range of duties, rights, and privileges which are incumbent upon the residents of a community or nation, when used in studies dealing with mentally retarded adults it has almost invariably referred simply to their voting behavior. Even when used in this restricted sense, however, these studies provide rather contrasting information on the

citizenship qualities of the mentally retarded. Kennedy, for example, found in her 1948 study that 43.9 percent of the mildly retarded subjects had voted in previous government elections, a figure which rose to 86.4 percent in the followup study carried out twelve years later (these figures compare with 58.8 percent and 98 percent voter participation rates found in the normal control group). Quite different findings, however, were obtained by Gozali (1971) in a study on the citizenship and voting behavior of mildly retarded adults. In this study Gozali indicates that none of the 68 individuals interviewed (age range, 21 to 28; IQ range 68 to 82) had ever voted in an election or even registered to vote. Striking something of a happy medium between these two studies, Kokaska (1972) reported that in four other studies an average of 51 percent of the mildly retarded adults who were eligible to vote actually did so.

Although these studies suggest that the mildly retarded do, to a surprising extent, "maintain their social responsibilities in a democratic society" (Gozali 1971:641), researchers who have taken more than a superficial look at the voting behavior of the mildly retarded provide a somewhat different and less optimistic perspective. For example, in his study Gozali administered a "citizenship" test to his sample of mildly retarded adults (typical questions being "What are the three main branches in the United States government?" "Why do we celebrate the Fourth of July?" etc.) and found that on the average these individuals could answer correctly only three or four of the 60 questions. Similarly, Baller, Charles, and Miller found that many of their subjects did not know either the party nor

the name of the governor of their state, and concluded that the voting among their subjects was "relatively uninformed" (1967:257).

#### Present Study

In the present study only 32 percent of the subjects claimed to have voted in the last presidential election, although 35 percent reported that they were registered to vote and 39 percent that they have voted in at least one government election. While these participation rates appear to be somewhat low when compared to the voting rates found among other groups of mentally retarded adults, they are only about one-half the rates found in the Keeler population as a whole (among Keeler adults it is estimated that 84 percent are registered to vote and that 62 percent voted in the last presidential election).

In terms of intra-group comparisons a small correlation was found between the subjects' IQs and their voting record ( $r = .39$ ), with higher IQ subjects being more apt to have voted in the last presidential election than their lower IQ counterparts (IQ means were 82.2 and 76.6, respectively,  $p < .10$ ). The subjects who voted were, in turn, found to be somewhat more knowledgeable about governmental affairs than were their non-voting counterparts as measured by whether they knew who the governor of the state was and the party to which he belonged, although they were almost as likely to not know the answer to either of these questions (50 percent of voting and 19 percent of non-voting subjects answered both questions correctly and 30 percent and 38 percent could answer neither correctly,

respectively). Besides the low correlation found with the subjects' IQ, only three other quantitatively measured personal variables were found to have any appreciable correspondence with the subjects' voting behavior; the number of grades the subjects completed in school ( $r = .39$ ), their being currently married ( $r = .33$ ), and their personal earned income ( $r = .31$ ).

#### Perceptions on Voting Behavior

Perhaps the only serious attempt to place the voting behavior of the mentally retarded in a larger context is that made by Kokaska. Directing his summary remarks on voting to educators of the mentally retarded, Kokaska writes:

It would be more profitable for educators to visualize voter participation as another indication of the social adaptation of former students. Voting falls within the realm of social competency and, as such, indicates the degree of involvement of the participant. It is a complex act requiring both a basic command and processing of information and a concept of the self as a capable participant in the necessary behaviors (1972:8).

As Kokaska points out, this latter suggestion is consistent with what is known about the effects stigma has upon the social interactions of the mentally retarded. That is, a common form of behavior among mentally retarded persons is to withdraw from social activities--in this case voting--in which their stigmatizing disability may become evident. While this withdrawal typically allows such individuals to "disappear" more easily into the larger community, it also deprives them of the opportunity to engage in many normal adult activities which are considered necessary for the development of a positive self-concept in American society.

While Kokaska's view on voting as an act sufficiently complex to cause both social and intellectual difficulties for the mentally retarded may have substantial merit, it can also be argued that he has significantly overestimated the actual importance intellectual factors per se have in influencing the voting behavior of mildly retarded persons (witness the striking difference in voting behavior found in the studies by Kennedy and Gozali). Instead, using Farber's (1968) concept of the mentally retarded as a "surplus population," it can be alternatively hypothesized that for the mildly retarded their voting patterns are less a direct reflection of their intellectual incompetencies or efforts to manage their social identities than they are of their general social status in American society. In this perspective, to the extent that the mentally retarded are part of a "surplus population" their low voting rate can be considered to be a realistic, if not socially valued, expression of their existing economic and social disfranchisement.

Based on the comments made by both voting and non-voting subjects in this study, it is this latter, more socially-oriented perspective which appears to have the greatest utility in understanding the voting behavior of individuals with low IQs. Among the non-voting subjects who offered some explanation for their failure to vote, for example, there was a general consensus that voting was a waste of time, that politicians running for office were all alike in that they wouldn't act on behalf of the "working man"--i.e., on the behalf of people like the subjects. Although this low opinion of voting and politicians was most commonly expressed in a rather

terse manner--e.g., "why bother [voting], they're all crooks," "they put who they want in there anyways," etc.--taken in the context of other statements made regarding politics and government they reflect a more general perception most subjects have of themselves as being essentially powerless in their interactions with major social institutions, public and private.

In part, these perceptions of powerlessness and inferiority may be taken as indicative of a tendency among the subjects to reify their social world, to see it as an inalterable product of natural or superhuman forces over which the individual has no control or influence. However, the fact that the only direct contact most of the subjects have had with "the government" has been as recipients of welfare or unemployment (68 percent have received welfare and 45 percent unemployment benefits since becoming adults) suggest the probability that their perceptions of powerlessness, etc. have a strong empirical basis in the kind of treatment given them by governmental welfare and unemployment agencies.

In contrast to non-voting subjects, the comments made by voting subjects suggest a somewhat lesser degree of estrangement from the public life of the community, though their opinion of politicians was similarly negative. Illustrative of this orientation is the comment made by one voting subject that "they're [politicians] all a bunch of crooks," to which he added the aside that "if you don't vote, you shouldn't gripe." If, to paraphrase another subject, the comments made by voting subjects indicate that they are more apt to "want their say in the world" than non-voting subjects, the fact

that voting behavior correlates only slightly with various objective measures of "social adaptation" (e.g., marriage, employment, etc.) suggests that voting may be as much a reflection of the subjects' desire for involvement and greater acceptance in the social life of the community as it is--as Kokaska suggests--an index of their actual involvement.

What gives the subjects' negative comments on government and politics special relevance in understanding how they perceive themselves vis-a-vis the community and society-at-large is the overwhelming importance they consider politicians to have in American society. When asked who they considered to be "the most important people in this country, the most powerful," subjects overwhelmingly selected the president and individuals in his administration (84 percent). In contrast to this response, only eleven subjects were subsequently able to name some people or groups outside of government who they thought were important and/or powerful in American society (the most common response was "rich people," mentioned three times, and the "Mafia," mentioned twice). In essence, the subjects' responses strongly suggest that the president and "the government" more generally have become symbolic representatives for a wide array of powerful social and economic institutions with which the subjects consider themselves as having only tenuous and rather unequal relationships.

### Social Group Participation

As with the case of citizenship, most studies of mentally retarded adults have tended to restrict their descriptions of social group participation (or social activities, etc.) to those types of behavior which are easily quantifiable. Generally, two different types of behavior have been included under this rubric, leisure (or recreational) activities and the more "purely" social group types of behavior. A similar procedure will be followed in this study's discussion of social activities.

#### Leisure Activities: Prior Studies

One of the most thorough descriptions of the mentally retarded's participation in leisure or recreational activities is that found in Bobroff's (1956b) study of 156 mildly retarded adults (estimated average IQ, 69; age range, 25 to 34). In looking at the different types of leisure activities engaged in by his subjects, Bobroff reported that 68 percent of them mentioned participating in some type of sports activity, with hunting and fishing being the most popular. Other leisure activities often mentioned were travel, excursions to local parks and lakes, and television or movies. In contrast to the popularity of these other types of recreation, however, Bobroff noted that 60 percent of the subjects had no hobbies (woodworking and cooking-sewing being the only ones mentioned with any frequency).

To various degrees Bobroff's findings have been echoed in other studies. Kennedy (1948), for example, noted in her followup



studies that the mildly retarded subjects exhibited the same preference for various kinds of leisure activities as did their normal counterparts (i.e., movies, sports, dancing, card games), but that the retarded subjects actually engaged in these activities much less frequently. Perhaps the best overall summary of the leisure time activities of mildly retarded adults, is that found in Miller's brief comments on this subject matter. Referring to the mentally deficient adults in his study, Miller writes:

Concerning participation in a hobby or regular recreational pursuit, only 45.71 percent could name at least one hobby or recreational pursuit engaged in over the past 11 years. The male and female distributions were roughly the same--47.62 percent of the males and 42.86 percent of the females. In the greatest majority of cases, the hobbies or recreations were of a solitary nature. For example, sewing, reading, and gardening were mentioned by females; and hunting, fishing, home carpentry, and yard work were mentioned by the males. Watching television was excluded from this category, but it should be noted that nearly every person interviewed admitted that television was a major source of recreation. The implications of the influence that television has had on the lives of these particular subjects are not determinable from the available information; so must continue to provoke one's imagination (1965:181).

#### Leisure Activities: Present Study

In the present study subjects were apparently neither so apt to involve themselves in recreational pursuits as were the subjects in Bobroff's study nor as disinclined to indulge in such endeavors as were those in Miller's study. More specifically, of the 31 subjects in the present study, 19 (61 percent; 50 percent of the females, 65 percent of males) reported that they participated in at least one type of recreational activity on a regular basis, while the

remaining 12 (39 percent) reported that they rarely, if ever, engaged in such activities. Among the subjects having some regular recreational pursuit, hunting and fishing, softball, bowling, and volleyball were the activities with the greatest popularity (see Table 5.5).

TABLE 5.5.--Recreational Activities of Subjects.

Activity	Males	Females
Fishing-Hunting	4	-
Softball	3	-
Bowling	3	-
Volleyball	-	2
Football	-	1
Basketball	1	-
Gardening	-	1
Car Racing	1	-
Exercise (Health Spa)	1	-
Motorcycle Trips	1	-
Army Reserve Exercises	1	-
Rarely, if ever, participate in any sports or recreational activities	8	4

While the recreational activities engaged in by the subjects in this study are of a distinctly more social, and less solitary nature than those noted in the studies by Miller and Bobroff, this apparent gregariousness is not readily evident in the kinds of leisure activities the subjects mentioned engaging in most frequently, i.e., on a day to day basis. When questioned as to the kinds of activities they spent the greatest amount of their leisure time

involved in, 22 subjects (71 percent) reported that watching television was their most common pastime, while another seven subjects (23 percent) considered it to be their second most common leisure time activity. Overall, of the nine subjects who considered television to be only a secondary pastime, all mentioned that they spent most of their leisure time engaged in other activities of a "solitary nature" (see Table 5.6).

TABLE 5.6.--Leisure Activities of Subjects (ranked according to amount of time spent on particular activity).

Activity	First		Second	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Television*	17	5	3	3
Home Repair	2	-	3	-
Woodworking	1	-	1	-
Raising Rabbits	1	-	-	-
Working on Car	1	-	-	-
Working on Motorcycle	1	-	-	-
Needlework	-	1	-	-
Reading	-	1	-	-
Baking	-	1	-	-
Games	-	-	-	2
Listening to Stereo	-	-	2	-
Crafts	-	-	1	-
Model Cars	-	-	4	-

\* By a wide margin the favorite television shows of female subjects are soap opera, and for male subjects police-mystery.

Given the preponderant amount of leisure time the subjects in this study devote to watching television, it would appear that this activity provides a key to understanding the significance leisure activities have for the subjects, and for mildly retarded adults more generally. However, having said that, it is possible, without provoking one's imagination excessively (to paraphrase Miller), to interpret the data on leisure activities from this and other studies as indicating that the advent of television has not had nearly the effect on the mentally retarded's activities per se as it has on the way they are perceived vis-a-vis their "normal" counterparts. That is, since the data from earlier social studies on mildly retarded persons indicate that they have traditionally pursued activities of a solitary nature, television may not, in fact, have significantly altered or affected their general pattern of leisure-time activities. Instead, what appears to have changed dramatically in the last 20 to 30 years is the tendency of "normals" to engage in solitary activities such as watching television for long periods of time (in 1976 Nielsen estimated that the "typical American family" watched some 44 hours of television a week; Tros1 and Grzech 1977).

Given this changing pattern of leisure activities among normals it may, in turn, be suggested that the tendency of the mentally retarded to engage so often in solitary activities--while perhaps a distinct enough pattern years ago to be noticed and cause questions to be raised about their social competency--no longer differentiates them from their increasingly sedentary and asocial

normal counterparts. Put in the vernacular, what is being suggested is that at the present time all television watchers, normal and mentally retarded, look equally gray in the dark.

Although the above suggestion does not deal with the full implications television has for the mildly retarded (e.g., as a possible means of fulfilling certain social and psychological desires vicariously), it does underscore an important point; namely, that while the solitary leisure-time activities of the mentally retarded appear to be a defining feature in their lives, they do not provide a ready basis for comparisons with normals. Instead, implicit in such a suggestion is just the reverse point, that it is the more overtly social activities, those in which people socially interact in the same activity rather than merely participate individually in similar activities, that provide a more reliable and obvious basis for comparing the social competency and adjustment of mentally retarded persons with that of their normal counterparts. In fact, by taking this suggestion a step further, it can be hypothesized that not only do such overtly social activities provide researchers with a superior basis for evaluating the relative social capabilities of the mentally retarded, but that it is in the course of such activities that normals are most prone to make informal evaluations about the personal attributes of others (e.g., their social competence, intelligence, etc.), including the mentally retarded. Although this particular hypothesis is dealt with more fully in Chapter VII, it is worth keeping in mind during the following review

of data regarding the (overt) social group activities of subjects in this and other prior studies.

### Social Activities

Given the importance social incompetency is supposed to have in defining mental retardation, it is truly remarkable how little is actually known about the social group activities of adults who have been defined as mentally retarded. As was true with respect to leisure activities, the short study by Bobroff (1956b) provides what is perhaps the most complete quantitative description currently available on the social group activities of a mentally retarded population. Although Bobroff describes in individual fashion a variety of different social group activities, these are easily grouped together under three headings: family activities, informal social activities, and organizational activities; a procedure likewise used in the following discussion of social group activities among subjects in this and previous studies.

Family Activities--Previous Studies.--With respect to family activities only one type of social interaction is reported on in Bobroff's study, that of family gatherings. The full extent of Bobroff's remarks on this activity consist of the following sentence: "Family gatherings constitute the predominant type of social activity, with 86 percent of 121 subjects visiting with their families" (1956b:130). Brevity on this topic, however, is not a virtue of Bobroff's alone. In fact, one of the only other studies on mentally retarded adults which even mentions family activities is

that done by Peterson and Smith, and their only statement on this matter was that "the families of the comparison group also participated more actively in group activities such as visiting friends or relatives, picnicking, attending movies, and the like, than did the families of the retarded group" (1960:406).

In essence, studies of mentally retarded adults living in the community provide some, though exceptionally fleeting, indications that parents continue to have some role in the social lives of their adult offspring. However, these studies leave unclear what the actual importance or nature of this parental role is in their lives.

Family Activities--Present Study.--In looking at what role parental families have assumed or retained in the social lives of this study's subjects, a number of circumstantial factors should be given initial notice. First, except for two subjects whose parents have died, all of the subjects interviewed in this study continue to live in close proximity (i.e., 10 to 15 miles) to at least one of their parents. Secondly, of the 15 subjects who are single or divorced, two-thirds (10) live with their parents (9) or other members of their immediate family (1). Hypothetically, these circumstantial factors might well be expected to result in the subjects' families having--or at least appearing to have--relatively greater importance in their social lives than would be the case for a sample population of normal adults. However, these circumstances appear to be consistent with the residence patterns noted among other groups of mildly retarded adults insofar as they are reported to be more apt

than normals to remain in the same community that they grew up in (Farber 1968; Baller et al. 1967) and remain unmarried and living with their parents (Peterson and Smith 1960).

Within the general context established by these somewhat "abnormal" circumstances, it can be stated that for the most part the subjects in this study have retained fairly close and amiable social ties with their parental families. The exceptions to this were six cases in which the relationships between the subjects and their families are characterized by animosity and/or open discord. In five of these cases the subjects lived apart from their parental families and maintained only minimal contact with them. In the sixth case the subject continued to live with his mother with whom he argued constantly; a situation which was apparently made tolerable to the two antagonists only through the mediating of the subject's older brother.

In contrast to these six subjects, 21 of the subjects have maintained what appears to be rather close and supportive ties with the various members of their parental family (included in this group are nine of the ten single subjects living with their families, nine of the 16 married subjects, and three of the five single subjects living alone; not enough information was obtained on the family relationships of the remaining four subjects, three married and one single, to warrant any evaluation). In addition to whatever personal importance these family ties have for them, for many of the subjects it is the family that plays the dominant role in their social lives. When the issue of social activities was brought up,



almost half of the married and unmarried subjects (7 of 15 in each group) stated that they were most apt to participate in such activities with family relatives rather than by themselves or with friends.

One factor which corresponds with the importance the subjects perceive their families to have in their social lives is the extent to which they participate with non-relatives in various social activities. Among the 21 subjects having friendly relations with their parents and family, all tend to "visit" and/or participate in other types of informal activities with them on a regular basis. However, given their druthers, 17 of these 21 subjects mentioned a preference for social activities involving friends and/or spouses over those involving their family. As a result, almost regardless of the actual amount of time the subjects spend with their families they typically emphasize the social importance their friends, etc. have for them, while ascribing a central role in their social lives to their families only when they had no other individuals with whom they regularly socialized.

A second factor relating to the social importance the subjects give their families is that of disposable income. As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, almost all the social activities the subjects participated in with their families (e.g., "visiting," cards, picnics, etc.) required little if any outlay of money, whereas those engaged in with friends often involved spending--relative to their incomes--sizable amounts of money. As such, those subjects with the least amount of money available to spend on non-essentials

were those most likely to restrict their social activities to those involving family and relatives. While subjects repeatedly mentioned that money was a major factor in deciding what social activities they engaged in (e.g., to visit their families or go out with friends), an unresolved issue in making any correlation between disposable income and social activities involves that of the causal relationship between the two; whether subjects are most likely to engage in social activities with friends rather than family because they fortuitously have the financial resources to do so, or whether these subjects have actually made prior efforts to minimize other expenses in order to have sufficient money available for socializing more often with any friends they may have.

If disposable income has some significant, if indeterminable, correspondence with both the type of social activities the subjects are most apt to engage in and, hence, with the social importance they ascribe to their families, it has also tended to obscure the possible importance other factors have in this matter. For example, based on the fact that lower IQ subjects are more likely to live with their parents than are higher IQ subjects ( $p < .01$ ), and appear to have fewer friends (see next section), it might reasonably be hypothesized that they perceive their families as having a larger role in their social lives than do high IQ subjects. However, low and high IQ subjects do not differ appreciably in the frequency with which they engage in various social activities with their families. In part, this pattern may be explicable in financial terms by (1) the fact that there is no direct correlation between the subjects'

IQs and incomes, and (2) that while subjects living with their parents have significantly lower incomes than do other subjects, their families also meet many--if not most--of their living expenses, resulting in them having comparable amounts of income to spend on non-family social activities. Conversely, while married subjects have significantly higher incomes than do non-married subjects, they are as likely to restrict their social activities as those involving relatives, at least in part because of the greater expenses they incur in supporting a home and family.

In essence, without minimizing the positive personal and social ties subjects maintain with their families it can be stated that just as the subjects' families in many cases have helped them maintain a certain economic standard of living, so too in many cases is it the subjects' families who have played the crucial role in preventing their offspring from becoming socially deprived--isolated. That is, in cases where the subjects lacked either the friends or financial wherewithal to engage in various social activities the family has typically acted to provide them with both the means and the accompaniment for participating in other types of social activities. One is tempted, not without some justification, to conclude that for a goodly number of subjects their families play a role in their social lives which is implicit in Robert Frost's statement that "home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

Informal Social Activities--Previous Studies.--The information available on the informal social activities of the mentally retarded is, if not extensive, at least more complete than that for family activities. In Bobroff's (1956b) study three types of informal social activities are included under this heading; close friendships, parties, and dances. According to Bobroff, 75 percent of his mildly retarded subjects reported having close friendships, while 57 and 51 percent mentioned participating in parties and dances, respectively. While other studies have not given much, if any, attention to the mentally retarded's participation in such activities as dancing, partying, etc. (e.g., Kennedy simply noted that 40 percent of her subjects went to dances), somewhat more attention has been given to the issue of close friendships. At present one of the most complete analyses of friendship patterns among mildly retarded adults living in the community is found in Henshel's study:

Another difference between the two groups (i.e., married and single subjects) was that, while singles more frequently claimed to have friends (94% versus 74%), married were in touch with their friends more frequently and shared more activities with them. With only a few exceptions, . . . singles usually did not go dancing, to movies, or to parties with friends, as did some of the married subjects. It seemed that, while so many singles claimed to have friends, in reality, very few actually did . . . .

A revealing facet of the often ephemeral friendship pattern of singles surfaced when the age of these "friends" was examined. While most married individuals had companions of their own age (plus or minus two years), the companions of singles were often either older or, as was usually the case, younger than themselves. This may partially explain why singles shared relatively few diversions with their "friends." Age is thus one of the factors which convinced us that many singles used the word inappropriately--perhaps

as an unconscious, face-saving device while talking to the interviewers, for is not social popularity very important?  
(1972:151-152)

Assuming the applicability of Henshel's findings to retarded adults more generally, it may be hypothesized that the comparatively low participation rate noted for them in various types of informal social activities (e.g., dances, parties, etc.) is to a significant extent reflective of a more fundamental difficulty they have in establishing friendship ties with their peers. In addition, Henshel's findings also raises the possibility that a similar association exists between the marital status of mentally retarded adults and the quality--if not the quantity--of their social interactions with peers generally (a hypothesis raised in the chapter on employment and income).

Informal Social Activities: Present Study.--There appears to be little, if anything, remarkable or distinctive about the types of informal social activities the subjects in this study mentioned liking to participate in most. Like so many of their normal counterparts in Keeler, the subjects' favorite informal social activities involved going with friends, relatives, etc. (1) to the movies, (2) drinking at bars, (3 & 4) dancing and bowling (see Table 5.7).

In terms of the frequency with which the subjects participate in their favorite social activities, this varies widely according to the activity (e.g., subjects who most enjoy going to the bars or bowling did so on the average of once a week, whereas those who preferred going to the movies or dancing did so an average

TABLE 5.7.--Subjects' Favorite Informal Social Activities.\*

Activity	Male		Female	
	Married	Single	Married	Single
Movies	3	2	-	3
Going to Bars	5	1	-	1
Dancing	1	1	1	1
Bowling	2	1	1	-
Visiting Relatives	3	-	-	-
Playing Cards	1	1	-	-
Visiting Friends	-	-	1	-
Sports Activities	-	1	-	-
Picnics	-	-	1	-
Camping	-	-	1	-
Church Activities	-	1	-	-

\*Some subjects' comments count twice; as when individuals claimed that their favorite activity was to go bowling and then dancing the same evening.

of only two or three times a year). However, regardless of their favorite activity, when taken as a group the subjects appear to participate in such informal social activities less often than do their normal counterparts. While not supported by any objective comparisons, this latter impression is given some added credence by the subjects themselves, who repeatedly remarked that they did not go out as often as other people they knew because of their financial situation.

In addition to this rather more obvious quantitative aspect of the subjects' informal social lives, Henshel's comments raise a key issue regarding the quality of their social lives; namely, the

type of friendships they develop with their peers. Although Henshel suggests that the "ephemeral friendship pattern" found among single retarded adults in her study resulted in their participating in social activities significantly less often than their married counterparts, this difference in social participation was not noted among the married and single subjects in the present study. However, Henshel's comments do underscore one finding in this study, and that is that while married and single subjects have similar participation rates in informal social activities, singles characteristically have fewer friends with whom they engage in such activities.

Although, as Henshel's remarks make clear, people's friendships are extremely difficult to describe and categorize with any certainty, a rough estimate made in this study regarding the number of friends the married and single subjects have indicates that married subjects are twice as likely as single subjects to have two or more friends with whom they regularly interact (11 out of 16 married subjects, 5 out of 15 single subjects), and between two and seven times less likely to have no close friends (7 single and 1 married subject have no friends with whom they interact with any frequency, while with two married subjects it was unclear whether they had any friends who could legitimately be defined in any way as being "close"). Interestingly enough, in the present study these differences in friendship patterns are even more pronounced when the lower IQ subjects are compared with their higher IQ counterparts. For example, among the ten subjects with the lowest IQs (7 males, 3

females; average IQ 69) only two of them had two or more close friends, whereas six of them had no friends with whom they interacted with any regularity. In contrast, among the ten subjects with the highest IQs in the study (5 males, 5 females; average IQ 86.7) nine of them were seen as having two or more close friends, while the tenth subject had one friend with whom he frequently participated in various social activities.

Without pushing these estimates too far, they nevertheless appear to indicate that the single and less intelligent subjects in this study are to an extraordinary degree without close friends, and except for their families without any regular social ties to the community at large. These estimates, in turn, may be taken--correctly, it is felt--as being reasonably indicative of the overall problems many mentally retarded individuals have in developing and sustaining any but the most superficial social ties with their peers and "normal" members of the community more generally.

Perceptions of Friends and Friendship.--The assumption that friends (or the lack thereof) constitute a major index of how well the mentally retarded are adjusting to community life is dependent, in several respects, upon the importance both they and the community at large ascribe to friendships. Some indication as to the importance friendships have for American adults generally can be found in the survey done by Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) on the quality of American life. In their study they found that American adults ranked friendships as being the fifth most important



important aspect of their lives (behind health, marriage, family life, and state of the nation), while in terms of regression coefficients satisfactory friendships were found to be the sixth most important aspect in people's lives for predicting their overall life satisfaction (behind family life, marriage, financial situation, housing, and job).

A further point regarding friendships noted by Campbell et al. was in addition to there being a correlation between people's satisfaction with their friendships and their overall life satisfaction, "it is the people with the largest number of friends who are the most satisfied with their friendships" (1976:358). As they put it:

In other words, if we take sets of respondents all of whom report exactly the same levels of satisfaction with their friendships, we can predict further significant differences in their reports of well-being by taking into account the number of friends reported. At any given level of friendship satisfaction, people reporting larger numbers of friends also report a greater sense of well-being than people with fewer friends (1976:378).

Given the importance that people attribute to friends in enhancing the quality of their lives, it can be argued that there has been relatively little attention given to this particular aspect of people's lives, especially in terms of how they acquire and sustain friendships over time. However true this may be, a number of general factors have been found to be significantly related to the development of friendships. Three such factors reported on by McDavid and Harari (1974) are those of propinquity, attitudinal similarity, and need satisfaction.

Regarding propinquity McDavid and Harari (1974) state that both physical proximity (e.g., living or working close to one another) and frequency of interactions are "vital" factors in the formation of friendships. Beyond these rather obvious prerequisites, however, attitudinal similarities between individuals--either actual or presumed on their part--have been shown to correspond most highly with the development of friendships. Put in somewhat different terms, it has been found that a wide range of variables (age, sex, socio-economic status, religious orientation, etc.) that are characteristically associated with similarities in people's attitudes and interests significantly increase the likelihood of their becoming friends.

The third factor thought to have an important bearing on friendship formation, that of need satisfaction, is less a derivative of empirical findings than of various hypotheses regarding the basis for interpersonal attraction. In essence, it reflects the plausible contention that in addition to similarities, friendships often develop which are based on the complementarity of the individuals' needs and attitudes (i.e., opposites attract; as might be the case between assertive and receptive individuals).

While these perspectives on the importance and probable determinates of friendship appear to have definite applicability to the subjects in this study, the somewhat limited information gathered on their perspective towards friendship suggests that they give slightly different weight to various factors in friendship than do their normal counterparts. In terms of the importance

subjects attribute to friendships in their lives it can be hypothesized that they give them a value similar to that ascribed to friendships by normal individuals, though only one "objective" measure of this value was obtained. This is found in the subjects' responses to the question on the Kiddie Mach test which asked whether "it hurts more to lose money than to lose a friend." In stating rather emphatically that friends were of greater value than money the subjects' responses were almost identical to that of "normals" (1.55 vs. 1.53, respectively, on a scale of 1 to 5; see Appendix B).

Somewhat more information was obtained on how the subjects have become acquainted with their friends and with what they perceive to be the basis for these relationships. Regarding their present friends subjects reported that they were most likely to have met them either while they were still in school (especially female subjects) or at their place of work (male subjects; see Table 5.8). While this finding conforms to the idea of propinquity, it also points out the social vulnerability of many mentally retarded persons with respect to friendships. For example, given that school and work are two major sources of friendship, the fact that mentally retarded persons, including those in this study, have typically been segregated into special education classes during their adolescence and as adults have experienced abnormally high rates of unemployment strongly suggests that their exposure to potential friends has been correspondingly limited.

TABLE 5.8.--Where Subjects Initially Met Their Present Friends.

Location	Subjects		Total
	Male	Female	
School	7	5	12
Work	9	-	9
Social Activities*	2	1	3
Bar	2	-	2
Neighborhood	2	-	2
Church	1	1	2
Miscellaneous	1	1	2

\* Informal social activities such as parties, dances, etc.

If it can be suggested that various external factors have resulted in the subjects having an abnormally low number of friends, it can also be suggested that they have developed a perspective on friendship which differs in certain respects from that held by normals. When asked what they like about people--what they consider the most important qualities in a friend--they most often mentioned liking people who enjoy the same activities or had the same "attitude" or "nature" as they did (see Table 5.9). While these responses conform to McDavid and Harari's thesis that attitudinal similarities (including similarity of interests) are the most significant individual variables promoting friendships, a further breakdown of the subjects' comments indicate that beyond this commonly shared perspective some distinctions can be made between the particular perspectives held by the high and low IQ subjects in this study, and at

TABLE 5.9.--Most Important Quality in a Friend.

Quality	Subjects (grouped by IQ)			Total
	Higher	Middle	Lower	
Enjoy same activities	4	5	4	13
Possess similar natures	2	-	-	2
Possess same attitudes	1	1	-	2
Helpfulness	2	3	2	7
Treated as equal	3	-	-	3
Understanding	-	1	-	1
Kind	-	1	-	1
Friendly	-	1	-	1
Willingness to share	-	1	-	1
Don't get you in trouble	-	-	1	1
Honest	-	-	3	3
Concerned with you	-	1	-	1
Attentive to you	-	-	1	1
Do you favors	-	-	1	1

a theoretical level between the subjects as a whole and their normal counterparts.

Although at times more implicit than explicit in their comments, a major distinction which appears to exist in the subjects' perspectives on friendship is that whereas the higher IQ subjects stress the importance of being treated as equals the lower IQ subjects appear to be more receptive to condescending behavior on the part of others. More specifically, it can be argued that higher IQ subjects place relatively greater emphasis on reciprocity and mutual

respect in establishing close personal relationships while the lower IQ subjects are more apt to focus on more immediate and material benefits they can obtain from such relationships.

A somewhat different, though complementary, interpretation that can be given the comments made by the lower IQ subjects is that they reflect a history of having been exploited and cheated by others. As a result, the requirements they place on "friendships" are rather minimal, consisting primarily of an expectation that "friends" will not take advantage of them and will, to some limited extent at least, provide them with various types of aid and assistance.

If these interpretations are correct it can, in turn, be suggested that while both subjects and normals place a high value on attitudinal similarities in their personal relationships, the apparent insecurities many of the subjects have regarding either their self-respect or overt exploitation have led them to place relatively greater stress on the supportive aspects of friendship. In essence, then, it can be suggested that in comparison to normals, the friendships the subjects develop with their peers are relatively more apt to be based on a complementarity of individual needs and desires than on their similarity (such a suggestion, of course, raises intriguing questions--not addressed here--as to the nature of the complementary needs and desires that normals find satisfied in their friendships with mentally retarded persons).

### Organizational Activities

Once it is recognized that the difficulties experienced by the mentally retarded in developing friendships may result in a rather tragic degree of social isolation for many of them on a day-to-day basis, it would seem that their level of participation in formally organized social activities might be considered to be of only secondary importance in understanding the nature of their social lives. However realistic this impression, followup studies of mentally retarded adults have in fact given much more attention to their participation in social organizations than to their friendship patterns. While such attention may be partially justified on the grounds that their participation in "formal" social activities provide a direct and objective measure of the mentally retarded's community adjustment, the fact that such participation is rather easily quantified should not be underestimated in understanding this attention.

### Previous Studies

Regardless of the particular reasons for focusing research attention on the mentally retarded's participation in organized social activities, the findings from such research are, with some variations, consistent with what is known about their behavior in other areas of social life. Peterson and Smith, for example, reported that in their study "almost four times as many subjects in the comparison (normal) group were members of group organizations such as PTA, card or dancing clubs, fraternal orders, and the like,

as was the case of the retarded group" (1960:406). Similar findings, in turn, led Baller, Charles, and Miller to the following conclusion regarding the mentally retarded's participation in social groups and clubs:

It is generally reported that participation in the social life of a community is negatively related to intelligence. Such proved to be the case with the three groups of the present study [mentally deficient, dull, and normal]. Zero membership in organizations went in a stairstep fashion from High to Low Groups: 23 percent, 48 percent, 60 percent; while participation reversed that order: Low Group, 4 percent; Middle Group, 17 percent; High Group, 33 percent. In short, the duller the individual the less likely he was to belong to or participate in a social organization (1967:266-267).

#### Present Study

Compared to both the mentally retarded and normal subjects in previous studies the individuals in this study can be readily characterized as "non-joiners." Of the 31 subjects, only three belonged to formally organized social groups; one to the JC's, one to a motorcycle club, and one--along with her husband--to the Moose Lodge (excluded from this count are two subjects who belong to informal "winter league" bowling teams, and one belonging to an ongoing women's cooking "class" held at the local church).

Lacking comparative data for lower-class adults in the community at large, it is difficult to estimate to what extent this low participation rate among the subjects sets them apart from their normal counterparts. However, the subjective impression gained during the two year study is that among their peers and neighbors there is little, if any, emphasis placed on belonging to formally organized social groups, and as such the subjects are not readily



(or significantly) distinguished from their normal counterparts in terms of their belonging--or not belonging--to such organizations.

### Summary and Conclusion

Given the general attitude in the early part of the twentieth century that the mentally retarded were inherently "a parasitic, predatory class, never capable of self-support or of managing their own affairs" (Fernald, quoted in Davies 1959:48), it is quite understandable why the findings from some of the early followup studies reviewed in this chapter were initially taken as evidence for a high rate of social "success" among mildly retarded adults. Such optimistic conclusions, however, were based on two rather simplistic notions: first, that social adjustment and success were adequately measured along a limited number of dimensions, such as marriage, court convictions, membership in a social organization, etc.; and second, that social "success" could be considered synonymous with the absence of any gross indications of social failure. In recent years such simplistic notions have begun to give way to a recognition that social adjustment is a multidimensional and multigradient phenomenon: multidimensional in that it is a composite of numerous factors, including even the subjective self-evaluations of the individuals involved (Edgerton and Bercovici 1976); and multigradient in that social adjustment rarely achieves the status of being an either-or proposition, that generally life consists of a process the English refer to as "muddling through"--an ongoing process of surviving both one's occasional successes and failures.

Looked at from this perspective, the information gathered on the social lives of the subjects in this study does not indicate that they have experienced many acute failures in their efforts to adjust to the norms of community life. Neither, however, does it suggest that they participate as frequently or as capably in the social life of the community as do their normal counterparts. Rather, what the information gathered suggests--but is not sufficient to confirm--is the probability that the subjects, and mildly retarded adults more generally, experience their greatest social difficulties in initiating and maintaining informal social relationships with their peers in the community. This appears to be most evident in their friendship patterns and, more indirectly, in their relatively low marriage rate.

Assuming the correctness of this suggestion, the emphasis that has been given to the mildly retarded's low level of participation in various formal social and community activities can be viewed as providing only a partial, and potentially misleading, perspective on the overall social adjustment of these individuals.

## CHAPTER VI

### WORLD VIEW AND RELIGION

#### Introduction

In previous chapters efforts have been made to describe as completely as possible various aspects of the subjects' lives and the particular views the subjects have developed regarding them. This chapter, though, focuses upon some of the more generalized orientations the subjects have toward their lives and the surrounding world, orientations which transcend routine affairs and matters of everyday life. In doing so primary attention is given to what can be termed the "world view" of the subjects and to their religious beliefs and practices.

To begin this chapter a number of theoretical works are reviewed which offer a particular perspective on how intellectual abilities may influence the development of people's world views and religious orientations. This brief review is then followed by a more detailed description and analysis of the world view and religious orientation held by the subjects in this study.

#### A Theoretical Perspective on World View and Religion, and its Implications for the Mentally Retarded

Given the present lack of any theoretically or empirically oriented literature on the religious beliefs and practices of

persons who are or have in the past been classified as mentally retarded, a situation that is only slightly better with respect to their world views, the theoretical works reviewed in this section are of necessity drawn from outside the field of mental retardation. Fortunately, because of their emphasis on the cognitive and structural dimensions of world views and religions these works provide a distinct perspective for understanding the role intellectual factors may have in the development of world views and religious orientations.

The first of these theoretical works is that of Luckmann. In his book The Invisible Religion, Luckmann writes that an individual or society's world view (of which religion is a specific part) can be understood as being fundamentally a structural entity:

The world view is an objective system of meaning by which an individual's past and future are integrated into a coherent biography and in which the emergent person locates himself in relation to fellow men, the social order and the transcendent sacred universe. The continuity of sense in individual life is dependent on the coherence of meaning in the world view (1967:69-70).

As Luckmann also emphasizes, the "typifications, interpretive schemes and models of conduct" which make up a world view are not isolated units of meaning but are organized into a "hierarchy of significance" (1967:56). In turn, while the particular hierarchical arrangement of meanings found in different world views provide them with their distinctive quality, all are characterized by the fact that as one goes from the lower to the higher levels of significance there is correspondingly less reference to the reality of everyday life and more to all-encompassing, ultimate realities which transcend such mundane existence.

As Luckmann goes on to point out, within this theoretical perspective religion can be viewed as an integral, yet distinct, part of an individual or society's world view:

Within the world view a domain of meaning can become articulated that deserves to be called religious. This domain consists of symbols which represent an essential "structural" trait of the world view as a whole--to wit, its inner hierarchy of significance (1967:56).

Inherent in this structuralist perspective of Luckmann is the possibility of analyzing world views (and their ethical and religious dimensions) in terms of cognitive structuring. More specifically, the structural aspects of world view (and religion) appear amiable to analysis in terms of the general scheme of cognitive development put forth by Piaget and other developmental psychologists.

Utilizing a basic premise of Piaget's work--that the reality of an individual at any one stage of cognitive development will differ markedly from that of individuals at other stages of development since "reality is determined by the type of structure with which it is apprehended" (Ginsburg and Oppen 1969:217)--two fairly broad hypotheses can be offered regarding the nature of the world views developed by mentally retarded individuals. In doing so these hypotheses are predicated on the fact that the intellectual impairments of mentally retarded individuals will, depending upon their severity, either significantly reduce or totally preclude their use of formal operations in the development of world views (Inhelder 1968).

The first of these hypotheses is that--other things being equal--the world view of mentally retarded persons will be relatively more concrete and personalized than that of normal persons:

Concreteness: Based on the literature regarding cognitive development it is possible to suggest that the world view of mentally retarded persons will typically involve a general perception of their social environment as being an objective, invariant reality rather than a dynamic, ever-changing product of man's activities. Illustrative of this concrete orientation toward their social world is the assumption that mentally retarded individuals, more than their normal counterparts, will perceive social adaptation and success as occurring through the acquisition and application of various bits of social knowledge which allow the individual to successfully conform to the objective social realities instead of through the active manipulation and change of one's social environment.

Personalization: Accompanying the propensity toward concrete thought will be a related tendency to perceive the social world in highly personal terms. In large measure this tendency will reflect difficulties in taking the role of others ("empathic" skills). As such, there will be a tendency among the mentally retarded to perceive the social behavior of others as occurring in response to the same concrete phenomena or thought processes they consider themselves responding to. This failure to clearly differentiate between what stimulates and motivates others and what stimulates and motivates oneself gives the world a distinctively personal quality, since

while others may not necessarily act in harmony with one's wishes, they are nevertheless thought to be sharing the same dimensional world.

In terms of moral-ethical considerations the concrete and personalized character of the mentally retarded's world view appear to be compatible with what Kohlberg has designated stages 2 and 3 in his scheme of moral development. According to Kohlberg's theory the socio-moral orders characteristically observed in these two stages are reflected in the ideas of "equal exchanges of favors or blows" between individuals (stage 2) and of "ideal reciprocity" involving stable and positive interpersonal relationships (stage 3). While stage 3 morality requires some mutual role-taking ability, concern for the position of others does not typically extend beyond personal dyadic relationships. As Kohlberg has commented, "stage 3 notions fit best the institutions of family and friendship which can be grounded on concrete, positive interpersonal relationships" (1971: 198).

What is worth noting in this first hypothesis is that that the mentally retarded person's level of cognitive functioning is seen as not only directly effecting the structural nature of his world view but also having a significant, if somewhat more indirect, effect on its content. However, in outlining this hypothesis it is also important to be cognizant of the findings that adults of normal intelligence apparently utilize formal operational procedures much less often in thinking about their world than was formerly presumed (Sinnott 1975). While this finding does not suggest that the world

view of mentally retarded persons will not differ substantially from that of normal persons it does raise the distinct possibility that the ability to engage in formal operations may be essential only in the development of certain structural and content features of a world view, and it is only in these particular areas that the world views of mentally retarded and "normal" individuals will exhibit substantial differences. Not surprisingly, this latter possibility gives rise to the second hypothesis regarding the world view and religious orientation of the mentally retarded.

This second hypothesis is rooted in Luckmann's contention that religion can be understood as a symbolic system that articulates those matters of "ultimate" concern and significance on which man's other symbolic and behavioral activities are premised. Such a contention, in turn, suggests that a necessary prerequisite for religion exists in the cognitive capabilities of humans--either individually or collectively--to engage in formal operational thought, or to quote Elkind, to utilize a "second symbol system, i.e., a set of symbols for symbols" (1970:76). Given these assumptions regarding the symbolic-cognitive nature of religion on a two-part hypothesis regarding the religious orientation of mentally retarded individuals can be proposed.

First, it can be hypothesized that the intellectual deficiencies of the mentally retarded will significantly limit their capacity for religious thought, either in terms of being able to adopt from others or to develop on their own a symbolic system which adequately articulates the existing hierarchy of significance within



their world view. However, while perhaps not finding any overt religious expression, any hierarchy of significance embedded in their world view will nevertheless "manifest itself consistently as a pattern of priorities in the individual's choices among alternative courses of action" (Luckmann 1967:70). In this respect, such individuals may be considered potentially religious, their lack of religiosity being attributable, at least in part, to a lack of appropriate symbols with which to express their particular system of ultimate meanings.

The second part of this hypothesis involves the assumption that the mentally retarded's relative failure to perceive the symbolic nature of religion will result in them perceiving religious concepts and practices to be phenomena which are relevant only to specific and well-defined aspects of their lives. As a result these concepts and practices will not assume their primary religious role as integrating elements within their world view. Similarly, matters which in the "official" religious orientation of the community are considered to be of ultimate significance will, in all probability, elicit only routinized and rather nominal recognition as to their sacred qualities. Under these circumstances it would be a serious mistake to automatically assume that any overt adherence by individuals of low intelligence to the basic tenets of society's official religion is reflective of the hierarchy of significance within their world view. In essence, this second hypothesis raises questions not only about the overall religious capabilities of mentally retarded persons but also about the religious authenticity

of their adherence to the "orthodox" religious beliefs and practices of their community.

### The Subjects' World View and Religious Orientation

While introducing this chapter with a particular theoretical perspective meant to illustrate how the intellectual deficiencies of the mentally retarded might influence their world view and religious orientation, in describing and analyzing the world view and religious orientation held by the subjects of this study attention will be given to both the intellectual and social aspects of these phenomena. While not meant to minimize the importance intellectual capabilities have in the formulation of world views and religions, this approach recognizes the obvious, that world views and religions are formulated during the course of social life and as such reflect not only the individual or group's intellectual and emotional proclivities but their social milieu as well.

#### World View

The concept of world view, as noted in Luckmann's initial quotation, is a rather all-encompassing one, involving as it does the way people see themselves "in relation to all else" (Redfield 1953:86). Even were it possible to obtain a complete account of a group or individual's world view, any attempt to describe it in detail would prove both futile and extremely tedious. In this study no such attempt is made. Rather, an effort is made to provide a basic understanding of the subjects' world view(s) by describing

some of what Luckmann would term their general "interpretive schemes." In doing so an extrinsic division is imposed on these mid-level schemes, with their description coming under two headings: (1) Major Ongoing Concerns, and (2) Causal Explanations. In keeping with Luckmann's concepts regarding world view and religion the most generalized and most integrative aspects of the subjects' world view(s) are, in turn, described in the ensuing section on religious beliefs and practices.

#### Major Ongoing Concerns

The general interpretive schemes within the subjects' world view(s) are initially discernible in terms of what objects and activities within their environment they personally consider to be of the greatest concern to them; what, in somewhat static terms, it is that they value the most, and use as criteria in evaluating the relative worth of other objects and activities. Rather than simply attempting to infer what these particular concerns are by observing the subjects' decision-making activities over time (in many respects the most reliable technique for determining a person or group's actual value orientation), however, the subjects were questioned directly on this subject-matter. Since no significant discrepancies were noted between the various statements the subjects made regarding the major concerns in their lives and the behavioral choices they made, only the former are dealt with at any length in this section.

Most Important Things in the Subjects' Lives.--The first opportunity to decipher what the major ongoing concerns of the

subjects are came during the first interview when they were asked directly what they considered to be the most important things in their lives. In response to this question 16 of the 31 subjects mentioned their families as being the most important thing in their lives, while seven others mentioned jobs--typically getting better jobs--in this context (see Table 6.1).

Since the social basis for these selections have been discussed at some length in previous chapters, it is only important at this point to note that however emphatic the subjects are about their families or jobs being the most important part of their lives, these things should not, in and of themselves, be prematurely taken as being matters of "ultimate concern" for the subjects. That is, while the family, for example, may provide the subjects with an important basis for evaluating and interpreting many of his/her behaviors and thoughts, as well as those of others, they are too well rooted in a personal, concrete reality to serve as the basis for any "supra-ordinated level of interpretation." Put somewhat differently, it can be claimed that ultimately one's family or employment cannot serve an integrative role in the subjects' world view(s) since they are primarily exclusive rather than inclusive concepts and/or entities.

However, having made this point it must be kept in mind that questions exist as to the ability of many mentally retarded persons to engage in symbolic thought, and by inference to develop an integrative, inclusive world view. Given such questions, the possibility exists that for some of the subjects in this study there is no more

TABLE 6.1.--The Most Important Things in the Lives of the 31 Subjects.

Item	Mentioned:					
	First		Second		Third	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Family (spouse/children)	10	6	4	-	-	-
Job	6	1	2	-	-	-
Life (just living)	3	-	1	-	-	-
Health	1	-	2	-	-	-
Working with animals	1	-	-	-	-	-
Car racing	1	-	-	-	-	-
Going into Army	1	-	-	-	-	-
Getting married	-	1	-	-	-	-
Being Normal	-	-	1	-	-	-
Home	-	-	-	2	-	2
Doing things (keeping busy)	-	-	1	-	-	-
Living independently	-	-	1	-	-	-
Have material goods	-	-	1	-	1	-
Motorcycle	-	-	-	1	-	-
Sports	-	-	-	-	1	-
Friends	-	-	-	-	-	1

inclusive scheme in their world view than that centering on the family or job, with matters falling outside this or any other interpretive schemes they may have developed being dismissed as irrelevant and/or "unintelligible."

Three Wishes.--Although it may be that various subjects lack the intellectual ability to develop a well integrated world view, a contrary possibility that must be entertained is that the importance the subjects ascribe to such quasi-tangible entities as their families

or jobs has effectively neutralized any incentives or needs they may have for developing--or verbalizing upon--more inclusive ideas or images of their world. Unlike the former, this latter possibility--and the implications it has for understanding the structural nature of the subjects' world view--can be at least partially resolved by testing the extent to which subjects continue to emphasize the importance of family and jobs. The most far-reaching effort to test this, and to determine if the subjects might place a higher value on other "things" in different circumstances, was made during the last regularly scheduled interview. During this interview the subjects were asked what they thought was the best thing that could happen to them personally; or more specifically, "if you had one wish for yourself, any wish, which would come true, what would you wish for?" Following this the subjects were then asked about a second and a third wish. As can be seen in Table 6.2, this attempt to get the subjects to disclose values and interests they may have that transcend or at least exist apart from their everyday concerns and values tended instead to reemphasize the overriding importance that the subjects give to family and jobs in their lives.

Given the conventional and rather mundane nature of the subjects' wishes, it is difficult to discern what, if any, particular significance can be ascribed to them. Assuming that under similar circumstances most American adults would also make wishes that had such tangible, immediate qualities to them, perhaps the most noteworthy characterization that can be made of the subjects' wishes is that they are essentially (1) normal wishes and/or (2) wishes to

TABLE 6.2.--What Subjects Wish for in Their Lives.

Item	First		Second and Third	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Occupational</u>				
"Good Job"	5	-	6	2
Own business	3	-	2	-
Exotic job	-	-	3	1
<u>Family</u>				
Marriage	1	2	2	1
Stay with parents	-	-	1	-
See children	-	-	1	1
Parents' health	-	-	2	-
Raise family well	-	1	-	1
<u>Money</u>	6	1	4	1
<u>House</u>	-	3	5	1
<u>Health</u>	1	-	2	1
<u>Excitement</u>				
Race cars	1	-	1	1
Play pro sports	-	-	2	-
Learn to fly	-	-	1	-
Vacation	-	-	4	1
Move elsewhere	-	-	1	-
<u>Possessions</u>				
Ranch	1	-	-	-
Furniture	-	-	-	2
Car	-	-	2	-
Motorcycle	-	-	-	1
<u>Smarter</u> ("new brain," have good education, etc.)	2	1	1	-
<u>Be Young</u>	1	-	2	1
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	1	-	-	2

be normal. That is to say, it can be conjectured that in those instances in which the subjects' wishes deviate from those expected of normals these deviations primarily reflect the subjects' desire for things that they think their normal counterparts already possess (e.g., the subjects' wish to be "smart," to have a "good" job, etc.).

Given the subjects' responses to these different questions, it is possible to conclude that family and jobs constitute the major ongoing concerns of the subjects in their lives. As will be elaborated on more fully in the section on religion, however, these concerns are not only significant in the context of the subjects' everyday lives, but also as manifestations of a more comprehensive--a more inclusive--ideological or religious scheme they have toward human behavior generally.

#### Causal Explanations

While identifying the major ongoing concerns of the subjects is important in understanding the particular configuration that their world view has assumed--i.e., where different phenomena are located in their hierarchy of significance--it is equally important to identify the major causal explanations within this world view--i.e., to understand the underlying assumptions the subjects have regarding why people and things behave the way they do. Reflecting the emphasis given in later interviews to exploring the ethical and religious aspects of the subjects' world view the causal explanations described below are for the most part assumptions the subjects have regarding the essential nature of people and the causes for



their adherence or non-adherence to established social and moral standards of behavior.

Forces of Good.--For many of the subjects in this study the question of what causes people to be good has a distinctive dimension, one which lies in the issue of individual perfectability. This became evident during the Kiddie Mach test, when 65 percent of the subjects (as opposed to only 24 percent of a normal control group) agreed with the statement that "it is possible to be good in every way" (a response pattern which had a negative correlation of .47 with the subjects' IQs). When questioned further subjects tended to explain that individuals achieved--or could achieve--this state of goodness as a result of (1) a basic personality trait they possessed (e.g., "they have a good attitude," they're "smart," etc.; mentioned by six subjects), (2) their family upbringing (e.g., "parents keep 'em in line," "way they're brought up," etc.; four subjects), or (3) individual effort (e.g., "have to work on it though," have to go to church "regularly," etc.; three subjects).

As might be expected, this common perception of people as being without any inherent limitations on their ethical perfectability--being born, as it were, without any indomitable proclivity to sin--anticipated the relative importance that the subjects as a whole place on environmental factors in explaining why people tend to be essentially "good and kind" (this latter position being taken by 26 of the 31 subjects; see Kiddie Mach question 2). More specifically, when questioned as to what causes people to be good,

subjects were most likely to mention being brought up in a good home by "good, honest, trusting, etc." parents and "being around good people" (see Table 6.3).

TABLE 6.3.--Major Causes of People Being Good.

Cause	Number of Times Mentioned*
Home (how parents raised them, etc.)	18
Positive Reinforcement	
Treated nice	4
Trusted	1
Given attention	3
Being around good people	6
Punishment	
Fear of punishment	2
Punished as a child when bad	3
Religious	
Knows God	1
Goes to church	1
Desire to be Good	2
Advice from others	2
Personality	
Their "nature"	2
Born that way	1
They're smart	2
Things going good for them	3
Miscellaneous	2

\* Most Subjects mentioned two causes.

Although possibly an artifact of the question's wording, and perhaps not that dissimilar to those which "normals" would offer, the answers the subjects gave as to why people are good are noteworthy in that they lack, with only a few exceptions, any hint of individual volition. While these answers are indicative of a generally mechanistic view of human behavior (a view not dissimilar to that held by most social scientists except for the lack of any compulsive curiosity about "hidden" influences and laws in human behavior), it can be suggested that they are more directly a reflection of the disproportionate emphasis the subjects give to external factors in determining their own and other people's behavior (a suggestion put forth more generally in the previous chapter when it was noted that mentally retarded persons are much more likely than are their normal counterparts to perceive the locus of control as being external to themselves).

Forces of Evil.--As can be seen in Table 6.4 the same factors the subjects viewed as being most apt to cause people to be good were those which, when their adjectives were altered, were also viewed as being most apt to cause people to become "bad" (e.g., being around the "wrong" as opposed to the "right" kind of friends). The only distinctive difference in the subjects' views on this matter was the even greater emphasis placed on the home environment as a cause of people going bad than as a cause of their being good.

Interestingly enough, when the question was changed from what causes people to be bad to one of why people such as themselves

TABLE 6.4.--Major Causes of People Being Bad.

Cause	Number of Times Mentioned*
Home ("bad home life, parents neglect them, don't love 'em, etc.)	28
Negative Reinforcement	
Hang around wrong people	5
Get away with being bad	2
Poverty	8
Too much money	1
Emotional Factors	
Boredom	3
Tension, too emotional	2
Lack patience	3
Poor in School	2
Inherent	
Their nature	2
Satan	2
Miscellaneous (adjectives, etc.)	4

\*Most Subjects mentioned two causes.

aren't "good in every way" (a question to which the subjects were noticeably more apt to relate to, and respond to, on a personal level), there was a distinct shift from environmental explanations to explanations dealing at some level with the concept of inherent constraints on human behavior and perfectability. Based on the 20 responses to this latter question (see Table 6.5), one explanation for this shift is that the question of what causes people to be bad

TABLE 6.5.--Major Causes of People's Imperfections.

Cause	Number of Times Mentioned
Inherent Imperfections	
Born sinners	2
Mind not smart enough	1
Everybody makes mistakes	3
Stupid	1
Nobody's perfect	2
Have to have a little fun	1
Home Environment	
Way people raised	1
Personal problems at home	2
Emotional Factors	
Bad temper	2
Jealousy	1
Poverty	2
Personal Volition	
Don't bother to listen	1
Don't try hard enough	1

places--or at least is perceived to place--such behavior within a continuum of normal behavior whereas the question of people's imperfections raises rather more directly the more abstract and more overtly religious issue of the parameters and potentials of human behavior generally. In this sense, the first question tends to focus attention on individual variability while the second focuses attention on the broader issue of human nature.

Another discernible feature of the subjects' responses to the question of people's imperfections was the apparent tendency among many of them (though perhaps not the majority) to exhibit what can be interpreted as an attitude of moral realism--i.e., an attitude in which actions are judged right or wrong according to their material consequences rather than to the performer's intentions (Piaget 1965). However, this claim should be qualified somewhat in that while some of the subjects' responses evidence a clear emphasis on objective actions rather than subjective intent in evaluating behavior (e.g., "everybody makes mistakes"), such moral realism was more commonly combined with other attitudes and views toward man's ethical nature. Illustrative of this synthesis of views is the position taken by one subject (female, IQ 86) that "people are not perfect . . . [that] the mind isn't smart enough to be perfect," In taking this position the woman neatly combined her strongly held religious belief that man is inherently imperfect--i.e., sinful--with the perception that the source of this imperfection resides in his inability rather than his unwillingness to adhere to established moral codes.

While such moral realism can be considered a "primitive" form of moral judgment which "normal" children typically outgrow as they become adolescents, it is also one which individuals of lower intellectual abilities retain for correspondingly longer periods in their lives (McLaughlin and Stephens 1974). In the case of the subjects in this study, however, it can be suggested that while their relatively low level of intellectual development may have had

some direct influence on their retaining an attitude of moral realism, it is more probable that this attitude is only indirectly a consequence of their intellectual impairments and more directly a reflection of their ongoing social status within the family and community. This latter possibility is one derived from Piaget, who emphasized the social as well as the intellectual component in moral development:

In short, moral realism seems to us from this point of view to be a natural and spontaneous product of child thought. For it is not nearly so natural as one would think for primitive thought to take intentions into account. The child is far more interested in the result than in the motivation of his own actions. It is cooperation which leads to the primacy of intentionality, by forcing the individual to be constantly occupied with the point of view of other people so as to compare it with his own (1965:189-190).

In the same sense, the lack of true cooperation between individuals (e.g., the interactions between adults and children, and between adults of unequal social status) is the basis for another of Piaget's premises regarding moral realism; that "moral realism would thus seem to be the fruit of constraint and of the primitive forms of unilateral respect" (1965:135).

In essence, Piaget's position that reciprocal and non-reciprocal social interactions each promote a different moral orientation--a different level of moral development--can be taken as supporting the contention that the subjects' moral realism (including what appears to be a tendency among many of them to reify the social and moral laws of the community) is a reflection of their rather marginal social position in the community. More

specifically, it can be contended that while most, if not all, of the subjects can be expected to take into account subjective responsibility when passing judgment on the rightness or wrongness of, for example, their own behavior or that of their children, their marginal position in the community--one which effectively precludes their participation in establishing ethical norms for the community while demanding their unilateral respect and obedience to such norms--reinforces a perspective of moral realism toward these rules and norms thought to emanate from the community and the universe at large. In this sense, then, the extent to which moral realism characterizes the ethical judgments of the subjects can be taken as an important measure of the degree to which cooperation and reciprocity characterize the interactions they have with others in the community.

Assuming, as has been done here, that moral realism characterizes the moral orientation of the subjects relatively more than it does normal persons, there is nevertheless a need for two reservations to be made regarding the wider applicability of this assumption. First, as Piaget (1965:119) has noted, "verbal thought lags behind active thought." As such, it may well be that the subjects are more able--and more apt--to take the intentions of others and the malleability of ethical norms into account in their concrete social interactions than they are in the verbal appraisal of such actions. However, this lag may be less significant in understanding the nature of the subjects' interactions with people in the community at large than of their interactions with immediate others since in



the former case the ritualized and rather temporal nature of these interactions does not give the subjects much opportunity to advance their concrete and practical judgments much beyond those of their verbal and theoretical judgments.

A second reservation concerns the relatively small amount of information obtained from the subjects on which the assumption regarding their moral realism was based. In part, this information shortage can be attributed to the failure of the interviewer to anticipate and pursue more fully some of the issues raised in the subjects' discussions of their world view. However, a more immediate cause of this shortage was the fact that when the subjects were asked to amplify on their initial responses to the scheduled questions regarding their world view there was a marked tendency for them to begin giving rather flippant responses or, more often, to simply begin making comments to the effect that they didn't know, hadn't thought about it, weren't sure, etc. (a tendency which was not nearly as prominent when subjects were questioned extensively on other issues such as employment, schooling, etc.). Given the primary cause of this information shortage, then, this second reservation may not constitute a reservation so much as a valid reflection of (1) the relative inability of the subjects to articulate the more generalized attitudes and orientations which underlie their world view, or (2) how rudimentary and disjointed the world view of the subjects typically becomes as one moves beyond "concretely" based interpretative schemes to those of an increasingly abstract and transcendental nature.

The first explanation for the subjects' failure to amplify on their world view, that they are relatively deficient in their ability to articulate whatever encompassing concepts and ideas they may have, is similar to that put forth by various psychologists in trying to explain the difficulties they have in describing the basic personality characteristics of mentally retarded persons:

The retarded child seems less likely verbally to give feeling tones that represent the deepest core of personality and more likely to give you the feeling tone of the moment, a feeling tone that might have been markedly influenced by the last experience he had prior to the testing situation (Gallagher 1959:297).

The second explanation, on the other hand, makes no presumption that the subjects (or mentally retarded or normal persons more generally) necessarily possess either a "deepest core of personality" or a unified and well developed world view that simply remains in most cases unarticulated. Instead, the failure of many of the subjects to make any overt reference to more inclusive ideas or concepts regarding the nature of man and his world may be taken somewhat more at face value, that they may in many cases simply not possess, either latently or manifestly, any coherent and unified view of the world. It is this second explanation which appears to have the most far reaching implications in attempting to understand the world view of the subjects, for it suggests that however well the subjects' mid-level interpretative schemes are documented--e.g., the value they place on family and jobs in their everyday life--these schemes cannot be used without a good measure of caution to infer either the existence or nature of any superordinated level of interpretation in their world view.

### Conclusions Regarding World View

Based on information acquired in both formally and informally structured interviews with the subjects it appears fairly clear that family and jobs are the key elements in what can be termed the "mid-level interpretative schemes" of their world view. More specifically, it can be postulated that family, and to a somewhat lesser extent jobs, are not only considered by the subjects to be the primary goals to be achieved during their lifetimes, but are also viewed as the critical institutions in the orderly reproduction of community life. Or, to juxtapose terms somewhat, it can be stated that within the world view of the subjects families and jobs are not only perceived as structural ends but also as functional prerequisites for satisfactory social life.

In making such assertions, however, it was also noted that the subjects' general failure to amplify on the various tenets of their world view, and their supposed deficiencies in the use of symbols, requires that any attempt to infer the nature and content of their religious orientation--i.e., the "superordinated level of interpretation" in their world view--by indirect means be undertaken only with a good deal of circumspection.

### Religious Orientation

As was implicit in the brief description of Luckmann's theory on world view and religion the perspective taken in this study is one in which religion is viewed, not as a separate and independent phenomena, but as the quintessential interpretation the subjects

give to themselves and their world. At the rather mundane level of empirical investigation such a perspective can be incorporated into a more purely functional approach to religion; that is, one in which primary consideration is given to understanding religion in terms of how it relates to, and is mutually supportive of, other aspects of the subjects' lives. In the present study the adoption of this investigative approach is reflected in the fact that the interviews done with the subjects on their religious beliefs and practices dealt only briefly with specific and well-defined aspects of religious life, tending more toward open-ended questions which allowed--and to some extent prompted--the subjects to place their answers in a broader interpretive context (e.g., "why do you think some people don't go to Church?" ". . . don't believe that there is a God?"). The result of utilizing this approach was both a high degree of idiosyncratic responses and the acquisition of information less appropriate for measuring the subjects' adherence to established religious beliefs and practices than for discerning the social and psychological basis for their personal religious orientations. Nevertheless, these results are consistent not only with a functional approach to the study of religion but in many respects to a "structural" approach as well, for as Yinger has put it, the distinctive feature of this latter approach is its emphasis on questions which ask "how is a person religious?" rather than "how religious is he?" (1969:90).

In attempting to delineate the distinguishing structural and functional characteristics of the subjects' religious orientations,

however, it is useful to first describe their religious beliefs and practices in more orthodox terms; to wit, how religious are they in terms of established religious institutions? As will be suggested, at least superficially, the answer to this question is "not very," the subjects with only a few exceptions expressing little real concern or interest in matters of organized religion.

#### Subjects' Adherence to Orthodox Religious Practices

In questioning the subjects about their involvement in organized religious activities 20 out of the 31 subjects claimed that as children they had "often" attended church, with 15 of them also claiming that at least one of their parents had also attended church frequently during the years they were growing up. When asked on separate occasions about their present level of church attendance, however, only five subjects claimed that they continued to attend church with any degree of regularity (there was an even more dramatic decline in church attendance noted among all 48 subjects interviewed).

Although no definitive answers were found for the decline in church attendance among these 15 subjects, the information obtained from all 31 subjects provides some general understanding as to the social basis of their church attendance (or lack thereof). The most immediately obvious of these was the pattern of church attendance in the subjects' families. For example, among the five subjects who continue to attend church regularly as adults it is possible to characterize four of them as being essentially passive participants,

with the major stimulus for their church attendance appearing to be the fact that they either live at home with their parents who are active church members or, as in one case, the subject lives with his wife's in-laws who are concerted churchgoers.

This pattern is just reversed among the 26 subjects who do not attend church regularly since attaining adulthood, as only one of them lives in a household where another member is an active churchgoer. Although these patterns would indicate that the subjects' families have a strong influence in determining their church attendance there was no reference to such an influence in the subjects' statements regarding why they do or do not presently attend church. Rather, to take the case of the non-churchgoers, their explanations dealt with a variety of other factors which can be loosely categorized as those of dislike, discomfort, and disinterest. As might be expected, those subjects whose explanations for not alternating church involved dislike--e.g., they thought that most churchgoers were hypocrites--were the most outspoken in their statements. However, they comprised only 20 percent of the non-churchgoers, with the rest of these subjects split rather evenly in offering explanations of discomfort (e.g., they would feel funny going to church, don't have the right kind of clothes, etc.), and disinterest (e.g., they preferred to sleep in on Sundays, found church boring, etc.).

Although the lack of family support and the explanations given for not attending church are no doubt similarly characteristic of most "normal" non-churchgoing persons in the United States (estimates for regular church attendance among Americans typically

run between 20 and 30 percent), the underlying tone of "discomfort" found in so many of the subjects' explanations suggests that other than "normal" factors are involved in determining their church participation. Basically, what this suggestion refers to is the idea that the subjects are typically viewed, and come to view themselves, as "marginal" people; or as Farber (1968) puts it, "surplus population." While such terms are usually applied in describing the position of mentally retarded persons in the American economic system more generally, it can be proposed that they are also apt in describing the social position of most of the subjects vis-a-vis established religious institutions within the community. That is, while it was only explicit in a few of the subjects' statements, it appears that for many of the subjects there is some feeling that they lack the proper social credentials for attending church. In this sense their lack of participation in the community's churches can be seen as a religious reaffirmation of their perceived marginal social position and worth.

#### Subjects' Adherence to Orthodox Religious Beliefs

In turning to the issue of the subjects' religious beliefs it can be seen that while compatible with their religious practices, they do represent somewhat more overt adherence to the basic ideals of the Christian religion. Although, as mentioned, no systematic attempt was made to measure the extent of the subjects' religious knowledge the information obtained in this regard is sufficient to make a number of generalizations. First, there was a marked tendency

among the subjects to approach religious beliefs in rather concrete terms. For example, little doubt was expressed by any of the subjects about the existence of God, and for a majority of them any doubt other people might have about God's existence was attributed in one way or another to a simple lack of information (e.g., they haven't read the Bible yet, haven't attended church, "are stupid," etc.). This rather "concrete" orientation, one in which a belief in God is considered a product of knowledge rather than faith, is similarly reflected in the subjects' statements regarding the nature of God and the way in which he/(she?) differs from humans. For most of the subjects God was defined simply in terms of physical attributes or activities (e.g., "he makes it rain," " . . . can perform miracles," "was power over life and death"). While five subjects, in turn, made some explicit reference to the "non-empirical" nature of God--e.g., his being a "spirit"--an almost equal number saw him in rather more human terms, that he was "very religious . . . and didn't swear," that he was a man who was "invisible," etc. (see Table 6.6).

For most of the subjects the certainty they expressed regarding the existence and physical presence of God was also evident in their statements about what happens to people after their death. Although three subjects ventured that there was no afterlife, and two stated that they didn't really know what if anything happens to people after their death, 25 subjects (81 percent) expressed the belief that a person's soul continues to exist--to live on--after physical death. While all 24 of these subjects went on to express a



TABLE 6.6.--Subjects' Perceptions Regarding the Nature of God.

Essential Characteristic	Number of Times Mentioned
God is a "Spirit"	5
God is a Person . . . Human ("but you don't see him," . . . "he's smarter," etc.)	3
God is "Perfect" (without sin)	3
God is Virtuous (is "good guy," . . . very religious, doesn't swear," . . . "he's good," etc.)	3
Has Supernatural Physical Powers (makes it snow, rain . . . created earth, gives daylight, etc.)	5
Has Power over Life/Death	3
Watches over you, determines whether you go to heaven or hell	1

belief in a heaven where people's souls may go after their death they differed as to what factors determined whether an individual's soul actually entered heaven. Roughly speaking, the subjects were almost evenly divided over whether entry into heaven was essentially a product of one's faith in God (e.g., those who "believe in God," "ask for God's forgiveness") or of good behavior (e.g., people who go to church regularly, "don't smoke, swear, or drink," etc.), while three other subjects thought that all people went to heaven after their death. When asked about the reasons people might go to hell,

however, the subjects were noticeably less apt to explain it in terms of faith--or the lack thereof--than as a punishment for people who had been "bad" during their lifetime (killers and robbers being mentioned most often in this context; see Table 6.7).

TABLE 6.7.--Subjects' Views on Why People go to Heaven or Hell.

Reason that People go to Heaven (go to Hell)	Number of Times Mentioned With Respect To	
	Heaven	Hell
Believe in God (don't believe) e.g., ask for God's forgiveness	11	7
Go (don't go) to Church	5	1
Good Behavior (Bad Behavior) e.g., "those who act nice," or, in turn, those who are killers, robbers, smokers, drinkers, etc.	5	12
Everybody goes to Heaven	3	3
Not Sure	3	-
God's Decision	-	2
"Religious to their Own Religion"	1	-

Although the majority of the subjects' views on heaven and hell can be loosely characterized as concrete, especially insofar as behavioral rather than belief criteria are used in defining who goes where, such a characterization gives little indication of the contextual and cognitive variability exhibited in these views. To

illustrate the difficulties involved in making such a characterization the following description of various subjects' statements on heaven and hell are offered:

(Male Subject, IQ 53)

When asked "who goes to heaven?" the subject responded that it was "good people . . . people who go to church." the subject, in turn, stated that it was "bad people" who went to hell. However, when questioned further as to what happens to people if they had been "bad" but had also attended church regularly the subject was unable to decide, finally answering that he didn't know.

In looking at the responses to the first two questions it appears that the subject has produced two real classes of people which he defined in terms of concrete behavior (people in the heaven class behave good, people in the hell class behave badly). However, his response on the followup question suggests that he has problems in understanding inclusion relations. That is, he exhibited a failure at this point to think of a single element (a person) as possessing two properties at once. Although problems with class inclusion are most often noted among children from 5 to 7 years of age there is little in the other interviews with this subject to indicate that this is not the mental level at which he often functions.

(Female Subject, IQ 69)

When asked "who goes to heaven?" this subject stated that it was people who were "real good," didn't take drugs or steal or kill. Similarly, people who go to hell were described as those who were "bad," that hell was punishment for "something like killing somebody." While this subject used only behavioral criteria in classifying people as to whether they would go to heaven or hell she did not exhibit the same problem as the previous subject in that she was able to understand that people could at times behave badly (not attend church, etc.) while still being essentially "good" people.

(Male Subject, IQ 81)

Asked "who goes to heaven?" this subject stated that it was "not necessarily people who go to church," that it was "just the normal, ordinary people," the ones who "confess their own sins" to God. People who go to hell, in turn, were perceived as being those who "don't care about where they go," those with a "bad attitude." Although he went on

to state (speculate?) that people with bad attitudes would not be admitted to heaven because "they'd be a bad influence on others," this subject never made any explicit mention of behavior as being a crucial factor in determining entry into either heaven or hell. Rather, it was "God's will"--"he's the judge"--that determined where one spent his/her afterlife.

If these three subjects' responses are looked at in vacuo a basic pattern can be detected, one in which as the subjects' IQs go up their responses become both increasingly abstract (i.e., exhibit increasing emphasis on faith rather than concrete behavior) and decreasingly egocentric (i.e., entry into heaven is less and less seen as being a result of their own volition and/or behavior and increasingly a product of God's will or love). The problem with this perceived pattern is that while it corresponds with basic cognitive changes noted during the development and elaboration of mental abilities in normal children and adolescents it is not consistent with the type of statements made by many of the other subjects on this religious issue. For example, just the opposite pattern is exhibited in the statements by other subjects:

(Female Subject, IQ 74)

Asked "who goes to heaven?" this subject stated that "(I) hope that all people would, but all don't," . . . that it is only those who "believe in Jesus." When questioned about the importance of behavior in entering heaven she discounted its importance, claiming that "no matter how much you sinned God would forgive you." As for who goes to hell, she responded that it was people who had "really sinned," those who "didn't ask for forgiveness." Further clarifying her position on this, she stated that those who go to hell are those "who God wouldn't want in his kingdom."

(Male Subject, IQ 83)

Asked "who goes to heaven?" this subject remarked that it was "good people," that these people would go to heaven

"if they're good in their church all the time, don't do anything bad," People go to hell, on the other hand, because "they're bad . . . do bad things . . . not going to church, fighting."

(Female Subject, IQ 90)

Unlike previous subject, this subject did not ignore the issue of faith (believing in God) but rather dismissed it as being of no real consequence in deciding who goes to heaven or hell. When asked about who goes to heaven she responded that it was people who go to church. In addition, people "have to be good" to go to heaven. The importance of goodness was reiterated in her claim that bad people--i.e., "robbers, murderers," etc.--went to hell, and "still go to hell" even if they believe in God and Jesus.

If, as illustrated, many of the subjects' comments on heaven and hell do not appear to correspond with their designated level of intellectual ability it can be suggested that the major reason for this is that, as Elkind (1964) has emphasized in his research, religious ideas and beliefs are not solely the product of one's own spontaneous mental constructions but are to a great extent acquired from others through imitation or instruction. In making this distinction between acquired and spontaneous religion Elkind contends that it is only the individual's spontaneous religious ideas and beliefs (i.e., ones that he generates himself) that "follow the sequence from the concrete to the abstract that we have come to expect in developmental studies of concept formation" (1964:40). In this sense, then, the subjects' comments on heaven and hell can be expected to often times exhibit little correspondence with their intellectual level since, unlike children, they have had a relatively long period of time in which to acquire particular religious ideas and beliefs from others which can be readily recited back when

questioned on religious matters. The last subjects' comments on heaven and hell nicely illustrate this point, for in emphasizing the importance of behavior over belief she was, as was discovered later, being consistent with the stance taken by her church on this issue (i.e., while faith is a necessary prerequisite for entering heaven it is the person's behavior that is the decisive factor; "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" James, II, 24).

If the subjects' intellectual abilities are not necessarily the key factor in causing them to take a rather concrete approach to certain well delineated religious issues one technique for determining what, if any, significance their intellectual abilities may have on their religious orientation more generally is, as Elkind's statement suggests, to ask them questions for which they have no established response; that is, questions to which they are forced to respond to in a spontaneous manner. This technique was in fact employed in interviewing the subjects on their religious beliefs and practices, using a number of questions developed by Elkind (1964) in studying the development of religious identity--i.e., the spontaneous meaning (individuals) attach to their religious denomination. The questions used in this study were, with the appropriate denominational term inserted: (1) You said you were a . . . , what exactly is a . . . ? (2) How can you tell a person is a . . . ? (3) How do you become a . . . ? (4) Why couldn't an animal become a . . . ? As Elkind (1961, 1962, 1963) has demonstrated in a series of studies the different responses children and

adolescents give to these questions (with the exception of question 2) can be classified into three stages, each corresponding with a basic stage in their cognitive development:

At the first stage the (individual) has only a global, undifferentiated conception of his denomination as a kind of proper name.

(Individuals) at the second stage had a concretely differentiated conception of their denomination. Their conception was concrete in the sense that they used observable features or actions to define their denomination, and their conception was differentiated because they discriminated among different behaviors in order to distinguish persons belonging to different denominations . . . .

Third stage (individuals) demonstrated an abstract, differentiated conception of their denomination. It was an abstract conception in the sense that these [individuals] no longer defined their denomination by mentioning names or observable activities but rather by mentioning non-observable mental attributes such as belief and understanding. (In short, at the third stage differentiation between denominations was not by means of the religious subject but rather by means of the religious object; Elkind, 1961) (Elkind 1964:45).

Although no correlations were found in this study between the subjects' IQs and their responses to these four questions, when divided into two groups by IQ the subjects with the higher IQs were found to have been significantly more apt to have defined their religious denomination in an "abstract" manner ( $p < .05$  for questions 1, 3, and 4 combined,  $p < .05$  for question 3, and  $p < .20$  for question 1; in addition, a correlation of  $r = .37$  was found between individual IQs and responses to questions 1, 3 and 4 combined). Illustrative of the differing orientations the subjects had toward their religious denomination are the following responses made to questions 1 and 4:

Question 1: "What exactly is a . . . ?"(Male Subject, IQ 70)

Catholics "don't believe in swearing, smoking, drinking." When asked, in turn, how they differed from other people this subject responded simply that they were "stricter." (Judged to be a "concrete" response.)

(Male Subject, IQ 75)

Catholics are "church going good people." As to how they differed from other people the subject stated that "maybe some (Catholics) act different" . . . they "have bibles, crosses," etc. (Judged to be a "concrete" response.)

(Male Subject, IQ 77)

Regarding Baptists this subject stated that "they're alright, they have their beliefs." Asked how they differed from other people he contrasted them with people who attend other kinds of churches, but concluded that "they're Christian, believe the same thing I do . . . they believe in God." Subject went on to state that the "true church is inside of you . . . some people just go to church to be forgiven (their) sins, but Monday night are drinking . . . use church as a front." (Judged to be an "abstract" response.)

(Male Subject, IQ 83)

(Catholic) "means a race, a certain religion." Asked how they differed from other people the subject responded: "I don't know . . . . Protestants can get married in any church. Catholics believe in one God, but Protestants believe in so many Gods, . . . that's why they (Protestants) can get married in different churches." (Judged to be a rather original, though quite logical, "abstract" response.)

Question 4: "Why couldn't an animal become a . . . ?"(Male Subject, IQ 76)

"No, (they) don't allow animals in church." (But, if allowed in church?) Yes, but would have to go through same thing . . . baptism." (Judged to be a "concrete" response.)

(Male Subject, IQ 81)

"Don't see how . . . can't judge right from wrong." "You can teach animals . . . (but) you can't teach 'em faith." (Response judged to be "abstract.")



(Male Subject, IQ 93)

"Practically impossible . . . if worked with 'em, maybe . . . teach 'em to kneel . . . got to believe, study." (In the end the subject was still pondering the possibility that a dog could "understand" if properly trained; response judged to be "abstract.")

If these "spontaneous" questions on religious identity revealed an intellectual influence which was not apparent in the subjects' responses to questions dealing with more orthodox religious issues, the fact nevertheless remains that the majority of subjects continued to exhibit a "concrete" orientation toward religious matters that exceeds any expectations that might be drawn from their IQs and MAs (Elkind's studies showed a much higher rate of "abstract" responses in adolescents of comparable MAs). It is this discrepancy between the subjects' IQs and their religious orientation that, among other things, helps substantiate the position that it is as erroneous now as it was in J. G. Frazer's time to assume that the particular religious beliefs that adults in either primitive or industrialized societies express provide an adequate or direct measure of their overall cognitive abilities. In the case of the subjects in this study it can be suggested that while their intellectual capabilities have some influence in determining their general religious orientation for many of them their tendency to exhibit "concrete" thinking on such matters may be more directly attributable to an ongoing disinterest or lack of social incentives in dealing more abstractly with religious matters.

Interestingly enough, this suggestion that the subjects' thinking on different matters (such as that of religion) may be

qualitatively affected by their indifference/attentiveness is one which in different form has been increasingly raised by various cognitive psychologists. Although emphasizing the possible significance of familiarity rather than interest or incentives, Sticht's comments are especially relevant to this type of suggestion:

Lovell points out that the factors of familiarity, credibility, and attitude to subject matter may influence the appearance or nonappearance of formal operational thought. In general, it appears that the more familiar or credible the subject matter and the more favorable the student's attitude toward the subject matter, the more likely it is that formal operational thought will be available to solve the problem at hand . . . . With this in mind, it appears to me that Lovell's review suggests the hypothesis that whenever a person capable of formal thought encounters an unfamiliar task, the probability of instances of formal thought operations decreases . . . .

If the probability of operations at lower stages of thought is directly related to the unfamiliarity of a task, then this hypothesis contains the notion of a regression of thought structure such that the greater the strangeness or unfamiliarity of the task or task situation, the lower the level of thought to which a person would regress to cope with the situation (1971:96).

The second generalization that can be made regarding the subjects' adherence to orthodox religious beliefs, one implicit in the suggestion that their responses indicate a certain disinterest in such matters, is the lack of immediacy which such beliefs have for the subjects. Neither God, nor religion more broadly, is perceived by the subjects as having much direct influence on their personal lives, with the subjects divided about equally between those claiming that religion is of "some" help to people in their lives and those who see religion as having no particular effect--beneficial or otherwise--on people's lives.

The lack of immediacy which religion appears to have for almost all of the subjects is perhaps best exemplified by the lack of any overt emotional affinity they have with their belief in God. Admittedly, almost half considered a belief in God necessary for going to heaven upon their death (a matter which, it would seem, would be of at least some personal concern to them), but otherwise there appeared to be no sense of awe--of profound respect or wonder--or even of curiosity with religious matters. It is as if, as Van Baal wrote in a different context, "the 'supernatural' has merged into the natural and lost its specific character" and that their religious notions have tended to "lose their religious character" because they "are no longer aware that they refer to a non-empirical reality" (1971:7).

One perspective for interpreting this lack of any strong emotional dimension in the subjects' orthodox religious beliefs is found in Durkheim's (1948) contention that at a certain level of meaning God is the sacred symbol of and for society. What this sociological perspective suggests when applied specifically to the subjects' situation is that their passive acceptance of the existence of God and their lack of emotional affinity with other related "orthodox" religious beliefs is reflective of their personal status within secular society generally. That is, the subjects exist within a larger social system--a fact readily apparent to them in even the most concrete of terms--yet are not full, active, and valued participants with strong emotional ties to this same social system--

a fact which is repeatedly expressed in many, if not most, of the subjects' conversations.

The major conclusion to be drawn from these two generalizations--that of concreteness and of a lack of immediacy--is that the subjects' "marginal" adherence to and understanding of the established religious beliefs and practices within the community are to a significant extent reflective of their marginal social standing within the community. Given the interrelationship between secular and sacred life outlined earlier such a conclusion also provides a basis for understanding why, while readily accepting at least the rudimentary tenets of Christianity, the subjects do not give such orthodox religious beliefs a significant cognitive or emotional role in their efforts to understand or deal with the everyday life they lead in the community. It is, so to speak, as though in orthodox terms they possessed the basic form but not the essential substance of religion in their personal lives.

The Invisible Religion: Matters of  
Ultimate Concern in the Lives  
of the Subjects

In the previous two sections two basic points regarding the subjects' world view and religious orientations have been put forth: (1) that family, and to a somewhat lesser extent work, are the key interpretive elements in the subjects' view of their everyday existence--of their "secular" world, as it were--and (2) that while the subjects give nominal recognition to established religious views of the nature of "ultimate" realities, this acceptance tends to be

perfunctory at both the level of practice and of belief. What needs to be given explicit emphasis at this point is the lack of congruency--of any mutual support--which exists between the subjects' world view and their orthodox religious beliefs and practices, a phenomena which Luckmann has suggested is common not only among marginal people such as the subjects in this study but increasingly so many members of modern, consumer oriented societies generally:

Matters of "ultimate" significance, as defined in the official model, are potentially convertible into routinized and discontinuous observances (or approximate observances or nonobservance) of specific religious requirements whose sacred quality may become merely nominal. Thus the specifically religious representations may cease to function as integrating elements of the subjective system of "ultimate" significance (1967:76).

In making this observation Luckmann also notes that incongruities between the official model of religion and individual religiosity (i.e., between the hierarchy of significance given "objective" status by society or its chosen representatives and the individual's subjective system of ultimate significance) may effectively deprive the individual of any socially recognized symbols with which to communicate adequately the ultimate nature of his distinctive hierarchy of significance. As such, to the extent that official religious symbols become inappropriate for the articulation of the individual's subjective system of ultimate significance the chances increase that this system will be perceived by others as being somehow not fully religious, as somehow not fully addressing those matters which are socially recognized as being of ultimate significance. In addition, a dearth of appropriate religious symbols

will also mean that individuals holding divergent systems of ultimate significance will be correspondingly less likely to be able to formulate matters of ultimate significance in explicit terms, not only for others but for themselves as well. As Luckmann writes regarding this latter possibility:

Just as the hierarchy of significance underlying a world view need not be articulated explicitly but may remain a purely "structural" trait of the world view, the subjective system of relevance need not be something that the individual can consciously apprehend as a system. He may merely apprehend specific interpretive schemes and specific motives. Nonetheless the subjective system of relevance is a constitutive element of personal identity by virtue of the fact that it manifests itself consistently as a pattern of priorities in the individual's choices among alternative courses of action.

. . . Earlier we defined the world view as a universal social form of religion. Correspondingly, we may now define personal identity as a universal form of individual religiosity (1967:70).

Given, then, the possibility that (1) individual religiosity may not be recognized by others as such, and (2) that the individual himself may not be consciously aware or able to adequately articulate his individual religiosity, the potential methodology problems in discovering and describing the religious orientation of persons such as the subjects in this study who are not overtly religious and are considered to be relatively deficient in the ability to assimilate and manipulate complex symbol systems should be obvious. It is at this point that Luckmann's approach to the study of religion is especially important, for it clearly demonstrates that a viable approach that can be taken in understanding a people's religious orientation is through an initial understanding of their world view, that religious beliefs do not conflict with one's

secular world view but rather are an articulation of what the individual has come to perceive as being most significant for his comprehension of, and involvement in, the world. In this respect religious experiences are inherently "meaningful" experiences, and are expressive of the individual's and/or society's insights (conscious or otherwise) into the underlying meaning and organization which unite the various aspects of life.

Placed in the context of such an approach to individual religiosity the importance the subjects ascribe to family and work in their everyday lives can be viewed as a fundamental social factor influencing the nature of their religious orientation generally. However, as noted earlier, family and work by themselves lack the "transcendental" quality that would allow them to be considered religious as well as secular values. While questions which asked the subjects rather directly about the more meaningful aspects of their lives tended to elicit mundane and predictable responses regarding the importance of family and work, indirect questions (e.g., "can you remember a time in the last couple of years when you were especially happy?" "what do you like most about people?" etc.) seemed to elicit more comprehensive and more insightful responses. Although superficially quite diverse, one central and integrative theme appears to have reoccurred repeatedly in these responses. In certain respects this theme is similar to that noted by Edgerton (1968) in his study of retarded adults--the need to pass as "normal"--but takes on a more inclusive and more positive form in the statements by the subjects in this study. This theme basically involves

the desire for social participation on a basis of equality. In its more negative form this theme was readily apparent in the subjects' statements that they most dislike people who "think they're better than you are" and try to "boss you around." However, it is in its positive form that it appears to most permeate the subjects' comments, characteristically taking the form of a desire for mutual sharing and affection among family and friends. The essential quality of this theme can be perhaps best summarized in the term reciprocity.

Although alluded to in a wide variety of comments, this theme of reciprocity was generally best illustrated in the individual responses the subjects made to the question of when in the past few years they had felt the happiest. Of the 20 subjects who gave some type of definitive answer to this question eight mentioned that they had been happiest engaging in some type of recreational or leisure activity with friends and associates, five mentioned some type of employment that they had been or were currently engaged in, four a family-type activity (including marriage), and three some type of solitary pursuit (all of which were outdoor recreational activities). While not immediately apparent in this categorization, the importance of reciprocity in the subjects' "happiest moments" was relatively evident in their individual statements with their repeated reference to "sharing" and "helping others" on these occasions. One example of this was provided by a male subject (IQ of 83) who said that he had been the happiest "going out and having good times with the boys . . . a few beers . . . shoot a little pool." This rather inconsequential response became more meaningful when the subject



went on to express the desire for some new friends who wouldn't "take advantage of me," who would "respect" him--e.g., would loan him money instead of just borrowing it, and who would pay their "fair share" when they went out.

Given the existence of an underlying emphasis on reciprocity in the individuals' statements, what the above categorization suggests is that while family and work continue to be dominant elements in the subjects' evaluation of themselves and their environment, many of the subjects nevertheless experience a heightened sense of happiness--of personal well-being--by engaging in social activities which attest to a certain comraderie between themselves and others. Without discounting the importance the subjects give to such immediate reciprocity between friends, however, their statements suggest that a desire for reciprocal social arrangements with society as a whole may be even more basic. Although often times alluded to without being made explicit, this desire for a generalized reciprocity is repeatedly reflected in the subjects' stated desire to possess the various trappings of social success (e.g., a good job, marriage, respect of others, etc.). One subject, though, made this association between various indices of social success and the desire for reciprocity explicit in his statements. When asked when he had felt the happiest, this subject (male, IQ of 78) stated that it was his "wedding night . . . and when son was born." Questioned further, he went on to state that in the last year he had felt the happiest on his son's first birthday; "everybody was there . . . never thought I would have a son, never thought I would be married."

Reflecting on this matter further, the subject went on to state that it was important that he do a good job raising his son, help him make something of himself when he grows up. As for the subject personally, his expressed goal in life was to "provide for the family . . . (and) to be treated equal . . . be a man, an individual." Summarizing his remarks the subject stated that he wanted to be "seen as competent," to be "able to show, not just be generous" (this latter comment referring back to an earlier statement in which the subject described himself as being "a hell of a nice guy . . . easy going," but not respected for this because others--especially his fellow employees--considered his willingness to "put up with people," etc., to be a sign of submissiveness and social inferiority rather than of his personal generosity).

Although similar statements by other subjects could be cited, if it is accepted that reciprocity is--if only implicitly--in fact a common theme among the subjects in this study the issue nevertheless remains as to why reciprocity should be considered here as being a phenomenon with such strong religious implications for the subjects. While unable to convey the subtleties of their reasoning, the essential theoretical basis for this consideration can be seen in the following pronouncements by Piaget and VanBaal. In the first of these Piaget summarizes his contention that it is reciprocity that constitutes the "rational" basis of morality:

It would seem, then, that the evolution (of moral judgment) marks a definite progress in the direction of reciprocity. Unilateral respect, the source of the absolute command, taken literally, yields the place to mutual respect, the source of moral understanding. . . .

alongside of the primitive respect felt by the inferior for the superior, or, as we have called it, "unilateral respect," we have claimed to distinguish a "mutual" respect toward which the individual tends when he enters into relations with his equals, or when his superiors tend to become his equals. The quasi physical element of fear which plays a part in unilateral respect then gradually begins to disappear in favour of the purely moral fear of falling in the esteem of the respected person. The need to be respected thus balances that of respecting, and the reciprocity resulting from this new relation is sufficient to abolish all element of constraint. At the same time, the commands vanish and turn into mutual agreement, and rules that have been freely consented to lose their character of external obligation. Nor is this all. For since the rule is now subjected to the laws of reciprocity, it is these same rules, rational in their essence, that will become the true norms of morality. Henceforward reason will be free to lay down its plan of action in so far as it remains rational, that is to say, in so far as its inner and outer coherence is safeguarded, i.e., in so far as the individual can adopt a perspective such that other perspectives will accord with it. Thus out of anomy and heteronomy, autonomy emerges victorious (1965:171, 382-383).

VanBall, in turn, takes this emphasis on reciprocity a step further by contending that it is reciprocity which is the quintessential element in religion. In doing so VanBall argues that the central issue addressed in religion is man's doubts about his membership in society and the universe at large.

Man's self-consciousness again and again reminds him of his otherness, his separateness from a world to which he belongs but which defies his efforts to get along with it. Observing his universe with detachment, the one thing he invariably discovered in times of misfortune or stress, is the meaninglessness of his existence, a lonely life curtailed in its relations with its fellow-men, barred from the blessings of Nature. Yet, this same lonely creature is too thoroughly part of his universe not to go on trying to find ways and means to convert this theoretical truth into an experience of real partnership. After all, he is a part and functioning as a part implies that his life has a meaning. He must find the means of communication (1971:226).

It is evident that man has found these means in religion.

Putting forth his definition of religion as being a system of symbols by which man communicates with his universe, VanBaal goes on to write:

The positive and concrete form of communication is the integration which is the result of interaction, of acting in concert with others by the exchange of words and ideas, of values and services. The subject must be a subject among other subjects, just as in reciprocity he is himself respected and accepted in his individuality by them. Communication is exchange in concern . . . . The exchange changes the participants into partners. They act together and their combined action involves the mutual recognition of their partnership, i.e., of being part of the greater whole, of the group. The certainty of being a part is found in communication, in concerted harmonious action, in every form of togetherness and reciprocity which affirms that the partaking individual belongs to it. The exchange of words and values is the most obvious means of establishing communication and of expressing and confirming partnership (1971:223).

Placed in the context of these statements by Piaget and VanBaal, the emphasis the subjects were noted to give to marriage and to their membership in family and work groups can be interpreted as reflective of a more general desire--and perhaps need--for an active involvement in and partnership with their social environment. In this sense, not only do individuals such as the subjects in this study concretely satisfy their desire for social involvement with others through marriage and employment, but by adhering to the social norms/expectations regarding such activities (e.g., adults should marry, be employed, have children, etc.), they also gain a sense of partnership with their social universe more generally. In an absolute sense, however, one's integration into any size social grouping is never complete, for full reciprocity--

partnership--is only an ideal state which people almost invariably find impossible to sustain over time if for no other reason than because of their continuing affective and cognitive egocentrism. (As Piaget has written regarding reciprocity and mutual respect: "Equality exists in theory only. It may therefore very well be the case that mutual respect is never to be found pure and unadulterated, but is only an ideal form of equilibrium toward which unilateral respect is guided as the inequalities of age and of social authority tend to disappear" [1965:385].)

Assuming that reciprocity--"full participation," à la VanBaal--with one's universe is perceived in some fashion to be an ultimately desirable state not only by the subjects in this study but by people generally, then it should likewise be recognized that the subjects' affinity for such a state does not set them apart from their "normal" counterparts, but is rather expressive of a common desire found among all people. In fact, it can be suggested that it is this desire for reciprocity that provides the crucial social basis for the development of religion; and which in Christianity is expressed in the belief of an ultimate "brotherhood of man" (e.g., "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Matthew 25:40; "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death," 1 John, 3:14).\*

---

\*In this context Luckmann's idea of religion as the articulation of the individual or group's hierarchy of significance can

However, what appears to be distinctive among the subjects in this study, and which may be true for most mildly retarded persons, is (1) the extent to which these religious desires and concerns have become separated from the established body of religious beliefs and practices within the community, and (2) the extent to which these desires and concerns remain unarticulated in any but their more rudimentary and secular forms.

Although such conclusions regarding the nature of the subjects' religious orientation--i.e., the nature of their "ultimate concerns"--do not provide any dramatic or unanticipated insights into the essential nature of their lives, on a more positive note they are fundamentally consistent with the conclusions made in previous chapters regarding the more purely "secular" aspects of their lives. As such, an understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the subjects' religious beliefs and practices does not necessitate the introduction of any new or esoteric theories regarding the nature of religion, but can be attained for the most part through a reiteration of theories relevant to understanding the distinctive characteristics of their social lives more generally. In this respect, the basic contention put forth in the previous chapter,

---

be interpreted as being ultimately an articulation of people's desire for--and partial achievement of--a state of equilibrium or reciprocity with their peers and their universe more generally; an equilibrium in which their own values and goals are perceived to be in basic accord with universal realities and "ultimate" truths. In this interpretive scheme, then, religion can be viewed as being essentially an articulation--in both functional and structural terms--of reciprocity as the "ultimate" state of the universe.

that the rather limited social success most mildly retarded persons experience may eventually be better understood in terms of their intellectual and cognitive deficiencies than in terms of any unique social experiences they may have encountered (e.g., being labeled mentally retarded), appears to be applicable in understanding their religious orientation as well. This, of course, is not to say that the relatively "marginal" social position the subjects have typically occupied during their lifetime has had no significant influence on the religious orientation they have acquired, nor that religion is purely the product of their cognitive efforts and abilities. Instead, what is being conveyed in these conclusions is the rather innocuous idea that it is simply inconceivable that the extent and manner to which the subjects have come to think and reason about the various other aspects of their lives should not be well represented in the way they think and reason about the more ultimate desires and concerns of their lives as well.

## CHAPTER VII

### GENERAL ANALYSIS OF DATA: TOWARD A THEORY OF INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE

#### Focus of This Analysis

In the preceding chapters the social behavior and perceptions exhibited by the subjects in different areas of their community life have been outlined and described in some detail. In doing so the subjects' behaviors and perceptions have also been compared with those exhibited by other populations (mentally retarded and/or normals) and analyzed in terms of the various social and psychological factors which have significantly affected their development.

While the initial analysis was concerned with a variety of non-intellectual factors, this chapter, in keeping with the central objective of this study, focuses primarily on one issue: the relationship between intelligence and social behavior in the subjects' lives. Specifically, the focus of this analysis is on a suggested theoretical perspective for understanding the nature of these relationships. That is, what is offered is not an explanation for particular social behaviors and perceptions, but a theoretical framework for understanding why--in terms of their relative intellectual impairments--the social behavior and perceptions of the lower IQ subjects tend to assume certain characteristics and have certain recurrent and predictable social consequences.



### Background to This Analysis

Although a variety of theories regarding the social behavior of mentally retarded persons have been advanced in recent years, relatively few have attempted to analyze such behaviors in terms of social competence or intellectual functioning. Rather, these theories have tended to focus on various social factors which presumably cause the mentally retarded to act in a specific manner regardless of their individual social and intellectual capabilities.

A number of reasons can be offered for this tendency to avoid dealing with issues of competence and intellectual capabilities in the analysis of the mentally retarded's social behavior. One of these is that there is some resistance among social scientists to emphasizing--or at times even acknowledging--physiological or psychological variables such as intelligence as important causal factors in social behavior. This resistance is reflected in Durkheim's well-known methodological rule that the "determining cause of a social fact should be sought among the social facts preceding it and not among the states of the individual consciousness" (1962: 110).

A second reason for this tendency is that previous social studies of mentally retarded persons have provided little empirical basis for assuming that a significant relationship actually exists between their social behavior and intellectual functioning. However, as suggested in previous chapters, this deficiency is more indicative of a failure among researchers to concern themselves with social activities in which such a relationship would be most evident--e.g.,

in the "informal" social interactions of the mentally retarded--than of an absence of such a relationship. As a result, the failure of many social researchers to conduct in-depth studies of their retarded subjects' social lives has had the effect of reinforcing the belief that the defining characteristic of the mentally retarded is not their intellectual deficiencies per se, but their having been recognized and labeled as mentally retarded by others (see, for example, Dexter 1962, and Mercer 1973).

### General Theoretical Orientation

Perhaps the best introduction to the theoretical orientation proposed in this chapter is found in Edgerton's comments regarding the nature of social interactions between mentally retarded and normal adults:

Their physical appearance is not distinctive and they appear to be able to move through most public places without revealing any tell-tale signs of their stigma. In this sense, then, their incompetence is not "evident." They remain "unknown-about" in most of their superficial, casual, and brief appearances in the normal world. However, they do not escape detection when their public exposure becomes face-to-face, when it is prolonged, or when problematic social situations must be confronted. In such instances the former patient is found out; his incompetence becomes quite evident.

Once this incompetence is recognized, it becomes "obtrusive" in Goffman's sense of interfering with the flow of interaction. It almost inevitably results in a reduction of all subsequent interaction to a less complex level than the normal person would have otherwise attempted. For example, the normal person who becomes aware of the incompetence of the former patient regularly switches his mode of speech to a condescending tone and a simplified content. The normal person "talks-down" and sometimes even attempts a form of "baby-talk" as might a Colonial Englishman in talking to "native" servants. There is also a tendency for the normal person to speak both more slowly and loudly than he ordinarily would. Interaction is reduced to a plane upon

which the normal person asks few questions, utilizes the simplest possible vocabulary, avoids complexities of humor, and assumes that the former patient has almost no knowledge of what is commonplace, much less what is intricate in the world. Furthermore, since the normal person generally wishes not to embarrass the retardate, he exercises conspicuous tact. The result is a slowing down of interaction to the point of virtual cessation (1968:80-81).

What should be most evident from these observations by Edgerton is that any analysis which attempts to provide an adequate basis for understanding the social behavior of mentally retarded persons must deal with both (1) those characteristics of the mentally retarded's social behavior that have the effect of impeding the "normal" flow of social interactions with others, and (2) the nature of the social response recurrently exhibited by "normals" in their interactions with the mentally retarded. In this same context it should also be evident that the social adjustment and social competence displayed by mentally retarded individuals in their lives is not simply a product of their own behavior per se, but the eventual outcome of mutual interactions with others in the community.

One theoretical orientation which offers a suitable framework for the analysis of social behavior both from the perspective of the mentally retarded and that of "normal" participants, and the one which is utilized--if only implicitly--throughout this review is that of symbolic interactionism. Essentially, as Blumer (1972) has noted, symbolic interactionism is a theoretical orientation based on three simple premises. The first is that humans act toward things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them. The second is that the meaning that these "things" have is not

intrinsic to the things themselves, but is acquired during social interactions. The third and in some ways most defining premise of symbolic interactionism is that while meanings are formed in the context of social interactions, these meanings are constantly subject to change and reinterpretation by the individuals involved; or, as Blumer has put it:

The actor selects, checks, suspends, regroups, and transforms the meanings in the light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction of his action. Accordingly, interpretation should not be regarded as a mere automatic application of established meanings but as a formative process in which meanings are used and revised as instruments for the guidance and formation of action (1972:69).

Placed in the context of this theory, then, the social interactions of mentally retarded individuals can be viewed as a dynamic process, the outcome of which is largely determined by the various meanings that these interactions are given by both the mentally retarded and normal participants. In this respect, symbolic interaction theory clearly indicates that the social behavior--including the social incompetencies--of mentally retarded individuals cannot be explained mechanically in terms of their intellectual deficiencies, but instead requires an understanding of how these deficiencies differentially affect the meaning that they and normal persons give to their social interactions. Reflecting this basic premise, the following review and analysis focuses upon a number of theoretical and empirical works which suggest that the meanings that mentally retarded individuals give to their social interactions are often incompatible with the meanings given these same interactions by individuals of normal intelligence.

### Intelligence and Social Competency

What little theoretical attention has been given to the issue of meaning and its behavioral consequences in the social interactions of mentally retarded persons is found almost entirely in the context of writings on social competency. The present review and analysis will likewise approach the issue of meaning and social behavior from the perspective of social competency. Specifically, the following issues will be examined as they relate to the social behavior and interactions of mentally retarded persons:

1. The nature of social competency and the skills involved in its development;
2. The importance of empathy and its role in social competency; and
3. The importance of two factors, social norms and intelligence, in the development of empathy and meaning in social interactions.

### Social Competence

According to Weinstein, social competence can be defined as "the ability to accomplish interpersonal tasks" (1961:755):

This is no more than saying that interpersonal competence boils down to the ability to manipulate other's responses. As such the concept is value free. We may wish to manipulate alter's responsive behavior for our own personal ends. Or our purpose in controlling the responses alter makes may be to enhance his own development as in the case of psychotherapy. Competence is relative to the actor's purposes.

Further, by defining interpersonal competence in terms of the actor's aims, we avoid the necessity of settling by fiat the issue of the generality of competence. It could be the case that competence is a role-specific or even a relationship-specific capacity . . . . How much is specific and how much general becomes an empirical question (1969:755).

Weinstein goes on to note that a necessary prerequisite for the completion of these interpersonal tasks is the establishment and maintenance of face-to-face interactions (or some facsimile of same). While seemingly an obvious point, it is significant in that such face-to-face interactions are not simply by-products of physical proximity but involve substantial agreement between the participants as to who everyone is and what is going on in the particular encounter (Kleck 1975). Referring to the importance such agreement has on social interactions, Goffman has written:

We have then a kind of interactional modus vivendi. Together the participants contribute to a single overall definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honored. Real agreement will also exist concerning the desirability of avoiding an open conflict of definitions of the situation. I will refer to this level of agreement as a "working consensus" (1959:9-10).

Taking this point further, Goffman argues that while a tacit agreement as to the general nature of the situation is necessary for social interaction to proceed, it is more specifically an agreement among the participants about their situational identities which is at the core of the "working consensus." As with the definition of social interactions as a whole, however, the situational identities that the participants assume are not foregone conclusions but variables which the participants attempt to manipulate so as to influence the nature of the "working consensus," and thus maximize their chances of accomplishing their various interpersonal tasks. It is this ability to manipulate one's own situational identity (i.e., one's "self-presentation"), and at the same time to understand the

social ramifications that other's situational identities have for the self, then, that Goffman considers to be of utmost importance for the development of interpersonal or social competence.

Consistent with the basic theoretical viewpoint of these different writers, two points can be made regarding the social competence of the subjects in this study. First, as repeatedly noted in previous chapters, a highly significant and valued "interpersonal task" in the subjects' social life concerns the establishment of close, reciprocal social relationships with others in the community (e.g., friendships, marriages, etc.). Given the importance the subjects attach to such relationships, their deficiencies in this area of social life can be taken as symptomatic of a certain, though at this point unmeasurable, degree of social incompetence.

Second, it can be proposed that the subjects' apparent social incompetence is to a great extent indicative of their failure to reach any substantial agreement with others as to the nature of their social interactions. In this sense, the meaning that the subjects and the meaning that others give to their social interactions can be viewed as incompatible with each other, thus making the successful completion of these interactions difficult, if not impossible.

### Empathy

Adopting the same basic perspective toward interpersonal competence as has Goffman, Weinstein has gone on to delineate in some detail what he considers to be the essential skills involved in such competence:

Skill at establishing and maintaining desired identities, both for one's self and for others, is pivotal in being interpersonally competent. This skill is dependent in turn upon three other variables. First, the individual must be able to take the role of the other accurately; he must be able to correctly predict the impact that various lines of action will have on alter's definition of the situation. This is what is meant by empathy if we strip the concept of its affective overtones. Second, the individual must possess a large and varied repertoire of lines of action. Third, the individual must possess the intra-personal resources to be capable of employing effective tactics in situations where they are appropriate (1969:757-758).

Although Winstein analyzes in some detail the importance each of these three variables have in determining social competence, only empathy is reviewed in this analysis (the issues of "tactics" and "lines of behavior" in social interactions are dealt with briefly in Appendix B). In addition, while empathy has been defined in a variety of ways, most often as either a cognitive response (i.e., understanding how another person thinks or feels) or as an affective response (i.e., feeling the same emotion as another person feels), in the context of this analysis it is dealt with entirely as a cognitive response.

In defining empathy in terms of its cognitive dimensions it can be seen that its meaning corresponds with that of role-taking (or taking the role of the other, à la Mead) as used in symbolic interaction theory. In fact, as Shaver (1975) points out, it is through symbolic interactions that people learn the meanings and values that others give to the various features in their lives. This fundamental social learning process, in turn, promotes the development of empathy, or role-taking, along two complementary dimensions.



First, through symbolic interactions with others the individual gains sufficient knowledge to be able to infer how these others think or feel about a wide variety of things. That is, the individual acquires in its simplest form the ability to empathize and take the role of others. As Weinstein (1969) notes, however, empathy extends beyond this mere awareness of other's affective or cognitive states. The real payoff, as he puts it, of role taking is that it allows the individual to anticipate the other's behavior, for only through anticipation is effective control of social interactions--and hence social competence--possible in the long run.

The second dimension of empathic development is an outgrowth of the first, and involves the phenomenon which Cooley first referred to as the "looking-glass self." That is, if one is capable of symbolically perceiving the world from another person's perspective one of the things perceived from this external position is the self. Hence, the result of this capability is that the individual can assume the role of the other so as to infer the kind of impression he is making and thus maintain or modify his interpersonal behavior accordingly.

In the specific context of empathy or role-taking, then, social competence reflects the degree to which the individual recognizes and coordinates the perspectives of self and other during social interactions (Affleck 1975a & b). This orientation to social competence is summarized in Feffer and Suchotliff's statement that:

. . . effective social interaction requires that each participant modify his intended behavior in light of his anticipation of the other's reaction to this behavior. In order to accurately anticipate this reaction, one must be able to view his intended behavior from the perspective of the other. Modifying one's behavior in light of this anticipation further requires that one view the intended action from his own perspective at the same time (1966:415).

In addition to its importance in social behavior and social competence generally, empathic ability is especially significant in a study of mentally retarded adults because it is one variable which has repeatedly been found to be positively related to both intellectual development (i.e., to MAs and IQs; Affleck 1975a, 1976; Shantz 1975) and cognitive development (Inhelder 1968). Reflective of these findings, intellectual and cognitive factors, as well as socio-cultural norms, are analyzed in the following sections in terms of how they effect the development of empathic abilities in mentally retarded persons.

#### Socio-Cultural Norms

In one of his earliest works Flavell noted that the "role-taker's" estimate of the other's cognitive or affective state is normally a synthesis of information from two sources:

. . . (a) his knowledge of people and their behavior in various situations (including, perhaps, some previous knowledge of this particular other and his habits); (b) perceptual input from the overt behavior of the other or from other cue sources in the immediate situation. Using Sarbin's terminology, we would say that the estimate is thus based on an integration of the subject's preexisting role expectations and his current role perception (1968:5).

Flavell's reference to role-expectations gives some explicit recognition to the fact that empathy has important social, as well

as psychological, foundations. That is, empathy may be considered to be a two stage process involving (a) estimates by the individual as to what social norms are applicable to the other person in the situation, and (b) the subsequent confirmation of some or all of these estimates through observation of the individual's behavior. Although modification of such estimates is almost inevitable in any ongoing social interaction, empathy from this perspective is essentially a deductive process which initially takes place at the social level with the individual correctly assuming that the other person will behave and feel a certain way because of the particular social situation he or she is in. In this context, the individual does not empathize with the other person directly so much as he empathizes with their situational or role identity.

Although this perspective recognizes that empathy may often take place more directly between individuals--as when one is able to understand how a close associate thinks and/or feels even when such mental orientations do not conform to established social norms--it does strongly suggest that empathy at any level requires a regularity, a predictability, in human interactions which occurs primarily in accordance with social norms. That is, in the great majority of social interactions social norms provide sufficient predictability to allow for empathy to occur, and provide an essential basis for the development of more complex, intimate, and idiosyncratic levels of empathy between individual participants.

Assuming, then, that norms are crucial to the development of empathic abilities among individuals, it may be concluded that factors which seriously restrict exposure to, or comprehension of, norms will have the effect of limiting empathic abilities, and hence social competence. This sequential relationship has been broadly outlined by Weinstein:

It may be assumed that exposing the child to a breadth and variety of social relationships facilitates the development of general role-taking accuracy. The larger the number of roles encountered by the child, the more he has opportunity to develop an effective vocabulary of positional stereotypes. Projective role-taking is also facilitated. One of the best ways to improve the capacity to take a given role is to have played it one's self. The greater the variety of social situations encountered by the child, the more will be his firsthand acquaintance with the exigencies of role behavior in such situations. . . . In a very real way, such opportunities are part of the child's life chances and heavily affected by his social class origins. Lower-class children are less likely to have the experiences which will facilitate role-taking accuracy, especially with those outside of their class. One can speculate about the implications this has for their developing the interpersonal skills necessary for upward mobility (1969:763).

Weinstein's remarks are especially relevant to the mentally retarded, for while a variety of somewhat complex and at times circuitous intellectual and motivational theories have been proposed to explain their lack of social competence and role-taking ability, relatively little attention has been given to the possibility that such incompetencies may on many occasions simply reflect an ignorance of the appropriate situational norms. Such ignorance should, in fact, be expected in many situations given the relatively high degree of social isolation and discrimination reportedly experienced by many mentally retarded persons. Illustrative of this

is the remark by one of Edgerton's subjects regarding his previous confinement to a state hospital for the mentally retarded:

Sometimes I worry I don't talk as good as other people. You know, like numbers and reading and all that. But how can I? I was in that hospital for eight long years and I didn't learn nothing about how to think or act on the outside (1967:170).

Curiously enough, Edgerton classified such statements as "excuses" used by the subjects in a "process of denial" regarding their mental retardation, even though his study also shows that these subjects have in fact experienced an extremely high level of social isolation and deprivation throughout their lives.

From a societal perspective, then, it may be concluded that norms are crucial for the development of individual social competencies, especially insofar as they (a) routinize at a fairly predictable and comprehensible level the behavioral and attitudinal demands placed upon the individual, and (b) allow, and even encourage, the individual to understand and adaptively respond to other's behavior and attitudes through empathic (role-taking) techniques by having such demands apply to the group as a whole. In this context it may be concluded that any serious inability on the part of mentally retarded individuals to comprehend relevant social norms--i.e., meanings--will result in both (a) their failure to conform to many of the behavioral and attitudinal expectations placed on them as participants in social relationships, and more importantly, (b) an inability to effectively understand and utilize other people's behavior as guidelines for the modification of their own behavior in ongoing social interactions.

Unfortunately, if these conclusions provide some understanding as to why an inadequate knowledge of social norms on the part of the mentally retarded may often result in their behaving in a socially incompetent manner, they do not offer much basis for estimating what meaning the mentally retarded do give to their interactions on such occasions. That is, there is relatively little in either the structural or functional nature of social norms to suggest what alternative meanings may be given to social interactions when the relevant norms are themselves not learned or comprehended. It is at this point, then, that intellectual and cognitive development needs to be looked at in terms of how it affects the meaning that mentally retarded individuals give to their social interactions.

#### Intellectual and Cognitive Development

In reviewing the possible influence intellectual and cognitive factors have on the mentally retarded's perception of social relationships--and hence on their social behavior--two issues are dealt with: the first involves the relationship between intelligence (IQs) and empathy in particular, and the second focuses on the apparent correlation between cognitive development and social perceptions (including empathy) more generally.

In studies with intellectual normal persons empathic abilities have repeatedly been found to be positively related to intellectual ability as measured by various psychometric methods (Shantz 1975; Weinstein 1969). Similarly, in a number of other studies the development of role-taking (i.e., empathic) abilities was found to be

associated with increasing mental rather than chronological age in both normal and mentally retarded children (Feffer and Gourevitch 1960; Feffer 1970). As Flavell points out, such findings are not really surprising, and in fact should be expected:

Just remember that the head that thinks about the social world is the selfsame head that thinks about the nonsocial world. It would therefore be astonishing if none of the developmental trends in nonsocial thinking . . . could be seen in the area of social thinking (1977:122).

In a number of related studies these same empathic abilities have also been shown to correlate with certain behavioral patterns. For example, Affleck (1977) has reported on studies showing that role-taking proficiency is related to cooperative behavior in children, and to skillful communication behavior in adults.

Although these studies point to a strong intellectual component in empathy and social competency more generally, relatively little interest has been given to such matters in the field of mental retardation. An exception to this, however, is found in the research undertaken by Affleck with mentally retarded children and young adults. In the first of his studies Affleck (1975a) found a highly significant correlation between role-taking ability and the success with which mildly retarded young adults were able to resolve various everyday social conflicts presented to them in structured role-plays. In a second study, Affleck (1975b) reported that among mentally retarded children role-taking performance was significantly correlated with the extent to which they were able to solve an interpersonal task requiring cooperative behavior in the form of reciprocal exchange. In the most recent of his investigations Affleck

(1976) found that among fifty mildly and moderately retarded children role-taking proficiency was related to the interpersonal tactics they used in attempting to change the behavioral responses of others. Specifically, Affleck found that children with high role-taking proficiencies were more apt to use positive sanctions (rewards, etc.) to induce others to change their behavior, whereas subjects low in role-taking ability "tended to be unwilling or unable to offer tactics or to choose tactics that were nothing more than a simple request" (1976:669).

In addition, in all three of his studies Affleck discovered significant positive correlations between the retarded subjects' role-taking proficiency and their mental age and IQ. Taken together, these studies indicate that among mentally retarded persons role-taking ability and various types of social behavior are related to intellectual development, though at this point the underlying nature of these relationships remain unclear.

If the manner in which intellectual development affects the mentally retarded's role-taking proficiency and social behavior is little understood, only slightly more is known on this subject with respect to normal persons. As Shantz concluded in her extensive review of research on social cognition:

Role-taking skills usually relate in the low to moderate range with conventional measures of intelligence, but that relationship often varies with the sex of the child, socioeconomic status, and the type of intelligence test. The attempt to find specific, nonsocial logical skills relating to role-taking ability has not proceeded far. The most frequent relation found has been with conservation performance, but even that is not consistent (1975:303).



Although empirical data on this topic is still relatively scarce, there has nevertheless been a number of well thought-out theoretical works presented in recent years regarding the general relationship intellectual growth has with developmental trends in social perception and role-taking. Two of these works, by Flavell (1977) and Feffer (1970), appear to be clearly applicable to an understanding of the social perception and role-taking processes in mentally retarded persons. Flavell's study shows certain parallels in the development of social and nonsocial cognition, while Feffer's work indicates how such developments affect the overall structure of social relationships.

A number of the parallels presented by Flavell (1977:122-123) between social and nonsocial cognitive development are especially relevant for understanding how people acquire increasingly sophisticated social perceptions and empathic abilities:

Surface to Depth. As has been repeatedly demonstrated by psychologists, the developmental trend in both social and nonsocial cognition is one from an early reliance on the immediate, perceived appearance of things to a more mature process of inferring the underlying reality of things from the available evidence.

Temporal Centration. During early developmental periods individuals characteristically focus their attention and conceptual energies on states rather than state-producing transformation, and on present states rather than past or future ones. According to Flavell, this developmental phenomenon is exemplified by the fact

that young children typically attend closely to the immediate social situation, whereas older children and adults are more likely to "spontaneously infer its likely past antecedents and futures consequences"--i.e., to integrate social phenomena over time and changing circumstances (1977:122).

Invariant Formation. Closely related to the first two developmental trends mentioned, invariant formation involves the increasing recognition by individuals that while some things change or undergo significant transformations other things remain constant (invariant) in the midst of such flux. Socially, this development is illustrated by the individual's growing awareness that people retain basic personality and social characteristics over time even though their moods and behaviors may change noticeably from day to day.

Metacognition. The last parallel between social and non-social cognitive development noted by Flavell concerns metacognition, or what Piaget has termed "formal-operational" or "hypothetico-deductive" thought. Socially, one characteristic of metacognition is the individual's growing awareness that symbols and human thinking more generally are not directly rooted in concrete realities but are the product of human thought, and as such are subject to alternations and transformations directly through individual and group mental processes.

What should be apparent from Flavell's work is that the various intellectual and cognitive developments taking place in

people's thinking as they mature are directly relevant to understanding how they develop stable concepts of social norms and roles, and eventually acquire some sense as to the symbolic nature of these concepts. This latter development is especially important for the development of interpersonal competence as it allows people to manipulate these concepts--to project them onto a variety of peoples and behaviors (as in empathy and role-taking)--without destroying their essential nature.

By extrapolation Flavell's research also points to some of the more specific difficulties that mentally retarded individuals can be expected to encounter in developing their empathic abilities. Included among these will be a tendency to concentrate solely on people's most immediate or prominent social behaviors and statuses when defining and attempting to empathize with others. Whatever the particular bases for empathic difficulties, however, they can be expected to result in the mentally retarded having significant problems in successfully understanding, manipulating, and adapting to other people's behavior, especially when interactions become lengthy or varied in nature.

As with Flavell's perspective on the cognitive foundations of social behavior and concepts, Feffer's (1970) conceptual framework for the analysis of social cognition and behavior is firmly rooted in Piaget's theories of cognitive development. However, in his work Feffer focuses specifically on the developmental issues of centration and part-whole relationships as they related to interpersonal interactions, and suggests three developmental stages.

In the first developmental stage the individual is given to concentrating his attention exclusively on some single feature or limited portion of the stimulus situation, while ignoring other relevant features. In terms of both social cognition and behavior, this tendency manifests itself most strikingly in the failure of individuals to clearly differentiate between the self and others in interactive situations. For this reason it has been suggested that the behavior exhibited at this stage of development is more aptly labeled "egocentric" than social.

In the second developmental stage centration is "partially corrected on a primitive level by an oscillating balance between opposing forces" (1970:200). In terms of social thought this second stage is perhaps best described as one in which the individual acquires the ability to perceive and comprehend with some accuracy the various parts of a social interaction, yet continues to exhibit a marked inability to focus on these parts simultaneously (i.e., in effect, to comprehend the underlying relationship between these parts). As a result, the relative inability of the individual at this stage to comprehend how different social behaviors (parts) can be combined so as to symbolically create or maintain desired social interactions (wholes) often leads to a situation where the individual correctly perceives that he has relatively little ability to successfully manipulate social interactions; hence, his fixation on following established behavioral norms. An important corollary to this contention may, in turn, be formulated: namely, that at this

stage the individual's ability to behave in a socially competent manner is dependent to a significant extent on the presence of external supports such as social norms, etc. That is, in highly structured social settings where accepted patterns of behavior have become formalized in social norms, the individual at this stage of development should exhibit relatively few difficulties in meeting minimal behavioral expectations. However, in informal social settings, where there is an absence of clearly defined behavioral expectations, the individual will lack the cognitive abilities needed to determine what behavioral responses will be deemed appropriate.

This corollary, it would seem, has a number of obvious and rather important implications for understanding why mentally retarded persons have been reported to experience their greatest social difficulties in social situations that are prolonged or problematic (Edgerton 1968), or more intimate and informal in nature (present study).

In the third and final stage of Feffer's developmental model decentralization is achieved, and a correction of the distortions and instabilities inherent in centration is brought about by cognitive operations which involve a simultaneous coordination of the various parts within the stimulus-situation. At this stage, then, there is simultaneous decentering whereby any quantitative change in the individual parts is immediately and thoroughly corrected by a system of cognitive balancing operations so as to conserve the quality of the whole. As Feffer goes on to point out, this decentration has

its most obvious social manifestation in the increased development of role-taking or empathic skills:

. . . the cognitive structuring of both impersonal and interpersonal events approaches an ideal equilibrium to the degree that systems of schemas permit a simultaneous reconciliation of polarities in the organization of experience. This conception accordingly suggests that the various role dimensions which in primitive self-organization are experienced as antagonistic polarities, are in mature self-organization simultaneously coordinated and reconciled, as for example, in the modulation of an aggressive impulse by the simultaneous realization of the victim's perspective. This simultaneous, mutual regulation of complementary viewpoints has been variously designated as taking the other's perspective . . . and on the most formal level, the recapitulation of the whole in the part (1970:208).

Taking his argument one step further, Feffer contends that the individual's acquisition of role-taking abilities is expressed on the group level by "the conservation of the social event itself" (1970:208). That is, in any ongoing social interaction the essential form of this interaction is maintained and conserved over a wide range of contingencies by virtue of each participant's ability to anticipate and adapt to variations in the role-reciprocal behavior of others.

Reflecting the importance that the participants' cognitive abilities and role-taking (empathic) abilities are perceived to have in conserving the basic nature of social interactions, Feffer concludes that "the different forms of the individual-group relation . . . are essentially a function of different developmental levels of individual organization in constructing the interpersonal event" (1970:209). When placed in the context of individual intellectual

and cognitive development, Feffer's work reaffirms what has been the central thesis of this section; namely, that the individual's level of intellectual development has a crucial role in determining the nature of his social behavior, not as to its content but as to its general form and structure.

While Feffer's description of third stage social thought is of an "ideal" stage of social cognition and interpersonal relationships, one rarely maintained over time in normal interactions, it nevertheless helps to define the nature of the mentally retarded's social deficiencies vis-a-vis "normal" individuals. That is, given the intellectual and cognitive deficiencies of mentally retarded persons in their non-social thinking it is not unreasonable to expect that they will exhibit corresponding deficiencies in at least two areas of social thought.

In the first of these it can be expected that mentally retarded persons will be relatively less apt than their normal counterparts to realize the active role they play in creating and maintaining social interactions (i.e., the relationship between parts and wholes), and corresponding less aware of the need to monitor the effects their behavior has on these interactions. In the context of Feffer's work this first deficiency is isomorphic with a deficiency in empathic skills, and is in a sense both its cause and consequence.

The second expected social deficiency of the mentally retarded, in turn, consists of a relative failure to understand the dynamic nature of social interactions and how they can be manipulated to one's benefit without necessarily destroying their ongoing or essential

nature (i.e., parts can be altered while "conserving" the whole). While differing somewhat in their manifestations, these social deficiencies are both suggestive of the idea that the social deficiencies of the mentally retarded are not reducible to inappropriate behavior per se, but exist primarily in the inadequate manner in which social relationships are perceived and interpreted. In essence, Feffer's work suggests that intellectual and cognitive development correspond with an increased ability to define and manipulate social interactions, a crucial ability in the attainment of social competence.

Studies by Zigler point to a related social implication of intellectual development: namely, a tendency of individuals to become increasingly less "outer-directed" in their social orientation as they mature intellectually. In delineating the occurrence of this tendency in different populations, Zigler and his cohorts have defined outer-directed as a style of problem solving which:

manifests itself in a greater sensitivity to external or environmental cues, particularly those provided by social agents, in the belief that these cues will be more reliable indicators than those provided by the child's own cognitive resources (Zigler and Harter 1969:1090).

As Zigler (1973) goes on to point out, this style of problem-solving is found predominantly among children, with the tendency being for them to increasingly abandon their outer-directedness in favor of reliance on their own cognitive problem-solving abilities as they mature intellectually and socially. While this reliance on external cues tends to be negatively correlated with intellectual development in normal individuals, Zigler's studies have repeatedly



shown that mentally retarded persons are much more outer-directed than are normal persons of the same mental age. From this he has concluded that for both normal and mentally retarded persons "the crucial variable would seem to be not just the level of cognitive ability but also the success or failure experienced by the individual when employing his cognitive resources" (Zigler and Harter 1969:1091).

While Zigler discusses "cognitive ability" and "success and failure" as if they were independent variables in determining outer-directedness, the actual difficulties of distinguishing between these two interdependent variables has been illustrated in a number of studies with mentally retarded and normal children:

Two additional studies, both demonstrating that duller pupils showed more frequent conformity to group decisions than did brighter subjects under ambiguous stimulus conditions where the group made the wrong decision, tend to support this general notion [i.e., that the "retardate" is more outer-directed]. Lucito's interpretation of these findings was that as a result of their previous experiences, the brighter children see themselves as successful in interpreting objective reality and as definers of social reality for others; however, the dull children have more frequently failed at interpreting objective reality and therefore have looked to others to define social reality for them (Zigler and Harter 1969:1090).

Elsewhere Zigler (1973) notes that whatever the difficulties in separating cognitive abilities from success and failure in normal populations it is typically even more difficult to separate these variables in mentally retarded populations. Explaining why mentally retarded children remain outer-directed under conditions that prompt normal children to become increasingly inner-directed, Zigler writes:

The crucial factor here appears to be the IQ of the child. If the child's intellect is adequate, he can choose to use or not to use the cues provided by an adult. If his past interactions with adults have been negative, it is reasonable that he will opt to avoid adults and the cues they provide. The child with a lower intellectual capacity does not enjoy such freedom of choice. Regardless of his personal attitudes toward adults, his own failure experiences when confronted with problems have taught him that it is better to use the cues provided by a possibly punishing adult than to rely on his own cognitive resources (1973:28).

Although a diverse collection of other studies provide additional support for the existence of a correspondence between intellectual development and reliance on external cues in social interactions (e.g., Phillips 1968; Kohlberg 1971), it is sufficient at this point to state that in addition to intellectual and cognitive functioning being a significant factor in the mentally retarded's ability to successfully manipulate social interactions it also appears to be a crucial factor in determining their willingness to undertake such manipulation on their own.

#### Summary Remarks

The central argument put forth in this chapter is that mentally retarded and normal individuals are not so distinguishable by how they define and behave in particular social situations as they are by how their definitions of social situations differ structurally (e.g., the mentally retarded individual's social definitions can be characterized as being relatively more parts-specific, static, externally-oriented, superficial, etc., than are those of "normal" individuals). The central conclusion of this

chapter, in turn, is that the most serious, and perhaps unresolvable, difficulty facing mentally retarded individuals in maintaining positive social interactions with individuals of normal intelligence comes from the discrepancies in how these interactions are defined--what, in essence, these interactions are thought to mean.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

#### Summary of Findings

This dissertation reports on an anthropological study carried out over a two-year period with a group of adults who had been classified as mentally retarded during their early adolescence.

In previous studies it has repeatedly been noted that many individuals classified during their childhood or youth as being mildly or educably retarded (IQs from 50 to 75) seem to simply disappear into the community upon leaving school. The most common assumption which is drawn from such disappearances is that outside of an academic environment such individuals are no longer recognized as being mentally retarded, and that the intellectual and educational deficiencies which they exhibited in school do not, even if they continue to exist, constitute a significant handicap for them in adult life.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate what happens to mildly or educably retarded students once they grow up and "disappear" into the community, and whether their intellectual and academic deficiencies continue to effect their social/community adaptation as adults. Thirty-one Caucasian adults who had been classified during their early adolescence as being mildly or educably

retarded (IQ range, 50 to 75) were the primary subjects of this study.<sup>1</sup> These subjects, who were between 26 and 28 years of age when first located for this study, were interviewed and observed over a two-year period. During this time the subjects were administered the WAIS and a wide variety of information was collected on their social behavior and perceptions.

An initial and to some extent unexpected finding of this study is that the subjects' IQ scores have increased significantly since early adolescence (from a school-age mean of 65.4 to a current mean of 78.4). Although a number of factors, including the validity and reliability of IQ tests, are examined as possible cause of this IQ increase, it is hypothesized that, at least in part, this increase reflects a relative increase in the subjects' overall level of intellectual functioning. (Some of the research implications of this IQ increase are commented on in the section dealing with suggestions for future research.

Utilizing the subjects' current IQ scores to analyze the social data gathered on them, a variety of conclusions and hypotheses are advanced regarding the nature of their social behavior and perceptions in the areas of schooling, employment, family and social life, and world view and religion. With respect to the subjects' educational and school experiences, their statements and recollections have led to the following conclusions being made: (1) that they view their academic difficulties and failings as children as having justified their special education placement; (2) that in spite of, or more likely because of, their special education placement the

subjects continue to be deficient in basic academic skills; and (3) that while the subjects did not especially like having been in special education classes, it is their academic deficiencies and not their history of special education classes or having been labeled mentally retarded which they consider to have the most effect on their current lives.

With respect to the subjects' employment/economic situation, the most striking finding was the extraordinarily high unemployment rate they were experiencing during the course of the study (only 39 percent of the males and 12 percent of the females were employed full-time). This unemployment rate was, in fact, so high that it is impossible to discern with any certainty the relative importance that various personal, intellectual, and social factors have had in determining the subjects' employment and earning successes/failures. However, a number of "tentative" conclusions are reached. First, in spite of the fact that the subjects have employment and income rates significantly below that of their "normal" counterparts their actual standard of living does not appear to be significantly below that of their working-class peers, primarily because of the support they receive from family, spouses, and friends. Secondly, there is, at least among the male subjects, no significant correlation between either IQ scores or job skills and their current employment status, although there appears to be a baseline effect present insofar as no subject with an IQ below 75 was employed full-time during this period. Thirdly, it is concluded that a key factor in determining the

employment and income success of the subjects involves who they work for, not what they do.

In terms of the subjects' family and social lives some rather significant correlations are found to exist between their IQ scores and their success in various types of social activities. Regarding the marital status of the subjects, a significant correlation is noted between IQ scores and marital success, with the higher IQ subjects being more apt to have married, and to have remained married. In analyzing this finding it is postulated that marriage places significant demands for intellectual, social, and economic competency upon individuals in a marriage, and that most of the low IQ subjects are perceived by potential (or past) spouses as lacking such competencies.

In other areas of social life it is noted that no significant correspondence exists between the subjects' IQs and their activities in the areas of criminal behavior, voting, or family interactions (where it is hypothesized that various social and economic factors are the primary determinates of their behavior). However, a significant correspondence is noted between the subjects' IQs and their behavior in the area of informal social activities and friendships. In analyzing their informal social activities and friendships it is concluded that the subjects with the lowest IQs are to an extraordinary degree without close friends and, except for their families, without any regular social ties to the community at large.

In summarizing the findings on the social lives of the subjects it is noted that Americans consider marriage, family life, and

friendships to be the crucial factors in achieving a satisfactory and satisfying life. Given the correlation found between the subjects' IQ scores and their relative success in maintaining marriages and friendships, the conclusion is made that the lower IQ subjects are at a significant disadvantage in achieving a satisfactory and satisfying social life in a normal community setting.

Additional support for an emphasis on social relationships in understanding and evaluating the subjects' social lives is found in their world view and religious beliefs and practices. Based on the subjects' own comments, it is argued that family and, to a lesser extent, jobs constitute the central elements in what can be termed the "mid-level interpretive schemes" of their world view. In turn, it is noted that family and jobs are not only considered by the subjects to be the primary source of individual satisfaction in this world but also the crucial institutions in the orderly reproduction of community life.

Regarding the value (i.e., religious) orientation of the subjects, the data collected suggest that the emphasis they place on family and work is reflective of a more generalized, and admittedly more nebulous, desire among them for an equitable and reciprocal relationship with their larger social universe. While the subjects are not for the most part overtly religious it is hypothesized that this desire for reciprocity constitutes a potentially religious theme in their lives, a matter of "ultimate concern" that has for both intellectual and social reasons remained unarticulated.



Based on the general conclusion reached in this study that the most consequential social difficulty experienced by the low IQ subjects is a relative inability to sustain meaningful social relationships with others, a number of hypotheses for understanding the cognitive/intellectual dimensions of this social difficulty are put forth. Utilizing symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework, the initial hypothesis advanced is that the relative inability of low IQ individuals--i.e., mentally retarded persons--to participate in various types of long-term social interactions can be perceived as being a consequence of the way they define their social interactions; specifically, that the definitions that low IQ individuals give to their social interactions are often incompatible with those held by "normal" participants. Based on this general hypothesis, it is then suggested that the recurrent difficulties mentally retarded persons have in developing "compatible" interpretations of their social relationships are to a large extent reflective of their deficiencies in empathic (role-taking) skills. A second suggestion, in turn, is advanced that such empathic deficiencies can be attributed in large part to an ignorance of relevant social norms (a result of various social factors) and to an inability to interpret and utilize the social information provided by others in a way that allows the essential meaning of social interactions to be "conserved" (reflective of the individual's low level of intellectual functioning).

Summarizing this study's findings even more concisely, it can be stated that with only a few exceptions the subjects have "disappeared" into the community. For many of them, this disappearance

is consistent with their higher level of intellectual functioning as adults, and with their relative success in meeting social and personal standards for community adjustment (e.g., full-time job, marriage, good friends, etc.). However, it is equally true that many of the subjects have continued to exhibit a relatively low level of intellectual functioning and have "disappeared" into the community only in the sense that they are no longer being formally identified and labeled by some agency as mentally retarded. As this study has attempted to demonstrate, for these latter subjects their social and personal adjustment to the community can be considered rather marginal, with their most severe adjustment difficulties existing in the area of social relationships.

Themes in the Subjects' Lives:  
Some General Conclusions

In recent decades growing acceptance has been given to the idea that the goal of anthropological research is not simply to describe and explain different people's socio-cultural behaviors but to understand how they perceive and define their social lives as well. This research perspective is embodied in Malinowski's admonition that "The final goal [of anthropological research] is, briefly, to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (quoted in Sturtevant, 1972:131).

It is hoped that the present study provides a much needed anthropological perspective on the social lives of persons who in their childhood were identified as being mentally retarded. In previous chapters, however, this study has refrained from going much

beyond the subjects' own explicit statements in describing the way they perceive and define various aspects of their socio-cultural lives. In the next few pages, though, a number of broad generalizations will be offered about the subjects and the vision(s) they have of their world. While consistent with the subjects' own statements, these generalizations are abstractions from the data and in part subjective impressions gained by this writer during repeated conversations with the 31 subjects.

One generalization concerns the subjects' social backgrounds. The impression, gained in early contacts with the subjects' parents, relatives, neighbors, etc., as well as from the subjects themselves, is that with only a few exceptions the subjects come from relatively normal working-class and lower-middle class families. That is, with few exceptions there was little in the subjects' family or social background to suggest that they had been reared in a deprived or socially deviant environment (e.g., a "culture of poverty"), or that the particular perceptions they have acquired on life reflect an upbringing in such an environment. In this respect, the subjects of this study have been anomalies not only to society as a whole, but in many--if not most--cases to their neighbors and families as well.

In turn, a number of general, but by no means inclusive, themes can be said to characterize the way the subjects perceive themselves in relation to their social universe at large. While these are composite themes which do not fully characterize any one subject's general vision of his/her world, they do in fact

characterize the low (50 to mid-70s) and middle (mid-70s to mid-80s) IQ subjects to a much greater extent than they do the higher IQ subjects (mid-80s and up) in this study.

The first, and in many ways the most immediately evident theme which can be said to characterize the subjects' view on life is that of acquiescence. This theme can perhaps be best illustrated by the case of R. J. (current IQ, 75). When initially located R. J. was at home talking to a door-to-door salesman from a photography firm about a special offer to have pictures taken of his family. R. J. was openly skeptical about the offer, saying among other things that he had previously been cheated out of \$300 by a photographer who had sold him a whole album of family pictures he didn't want. After about fifteen minutes, however, R. J. relented, signed the contract for this "special \$6.95 offer" ("do whatever you have to with those papers"), and paid the salesman two dollars as an advance.

One thing which needs to be recognized about this common type of behavior by the subjects is that it extends well beyond any matter of passivity or low sales resistance. Rather, it appears that the subjects' acquiescence represents a strong underlying tendency for them to consider other people's activities and opinions as somehow more important--more relevant--than their own in defining the nature and outcome of most of their social interactions. In the case of R. J., for example, the salesman did not have to change R. J.'s opinion about the offer (R. J. continued to voice serious misgivings even after signing), but instead exploited R. J.'s

relative willingness to let others determine what direction their social interactions are to take. As was so often the case with the subjects, the salesman was able to prompt this willingness in R. J. by not giving any real recognition--any legitimacy, as it were--to R. J.'s opinions about how their interaction was to proceed. In essence, this tendency among the subjects is not simply toward passivity, but toward subordinating their actions and opinions to those perceived to be somehow superior or dominant to themselves.

One question this tendency to acquiesce raises is that of origins. That is, have they adopted it because of their relative inability to deal competently with social matters on their own or because they are always treated as inferior, subordinate individuals? As noted in previous chapters this question is an extremely complex dialectical one which is not amenable to any simple answer (see, for example, chapter seven for a related discussion on the possible origins of outer-directedness in mentally retarded persons generally). In certain respects, however, this question of origins is one which is dealt with in another theme common to the subjects' vision of their world--that of victim.

As might be expected, the theme of victim varies widely among the subjects, being most pronounced among those with the lowest IQs, the jobless, and the most socially isolated. Perhaps because of the greater threat these circumstances pose to their self-esteem, it is these latter subjects who are also most apt to describe themselves as victims of external social forces far removed from themselves--e.g., that blacks get all the jobs nowadays because

employers are afraid of them, that unless you're rich everybody treats you like dirt, etc. (comments which suggest a high degree of outer-directedness in their social perspective).

For the majority of subjects, however, this theme is more circumscribed, and has taken on a more personal nature. For these subjects it is their own behavior and shortcomings which they perceive make them susceptible as victims. Yet in adopting this perspective it is usually made quite clear that it is other people who are ethically responsible for their victim status, that it is others--of both the personal and impersonal sort--that take unfair advantage of them. This perspective was illustrated in one subject's (male, IQ 76) contention that he wished he was smarter, that he had not "goofed off" in school, so that people wouldn't be able to take advantage of him and he'd be better able to take care of himself.

For most of the subjects this status of victim appears to pose a real dilemma for them regarding how to act toward others. Especially among the male subjects the feeling is often verbalized that they are justified in engaging in the same type of behavior they condemn in others to "even things out." Yet for all this male verbalism, there appears to have been a conscientious decision made by most subjects, male and female alike, to turn the other cheek and treat others fairly regardless of the consequences. The point can be raised, of course, that the subjects' vulnerability, their relative inability to comprehend and manipulate social interactions successfully on their own, dictate such a decision, and as such it is pragmatic rather than ethical considerations that literally force

the subjects to treat others in an affable and obliging fashion. Nevertheless, the dilemma is never really resolved, and regardless of the source of their virtuousness the subjects do try with a high degree of regularity to treat others equitably, even when they are conscious of the fact that such behavior does not minimize, and in fact may increase, their chances of being victimized by others.

Although overwhelmingly apolitical, in many cases the subjects' view of themselves as being exploited and duped by others take on certain political overtones. For the most part, these simply consist of claims that politicians are chronic liars and aren't really interested in poor and working-class people, only themselves and the rich. At the same time government is often seen as being too liberal and too lenient in its treatment of various minority groups. Almost without exception, however, these political and social views remain relatively undeveloped and unarticulated, perhaps because the subjects do not generally perceive themselves to be members of an exploited class but as marginal individuals subject to exploitation by almost everybody.

In contrast to what they perceive to be their actual relationship with others, the subjects place a great deal of emphasis on equality and reciprocity as the basis upon which ideal--and desired--social relationships are formed and maintained. Although this theme is discussed at some length in the chapter on world view and religion it needs mention here if only because it is a pivotal theme in the subjects' overall vision of their social world, as well as a primary criteria by which they evaluate their ongoing

relationships with others. Given the importance the subjects attach to this theme of equality and reciprocity an understandable tension exists in the subjects' social lives between what they find themselves tolerating within social relationships and what they consider to be the form these relationships should take. Although this tension is outwardly expressed in resentment toward those who "treat you like dirt," "think they're too good for you," "think they know it all," etc., it also appears to reflect certain doubts the subjects have about their intellectual and social competence. Yet if the subjects are sensitive to social slights, to behaviors which can be construed as calling their competence and worth into question, they do not appear, with the exception of some of the lower IQ subjects, to be preoccupied with such matters.

In part, this lack of preoccupation with social threats to their self-esteem appears to represent a certain accommodation the subjects have achieved, both with regard to their own shortcomings and those of others. In fact, a certain degree of equanimity appears to be a quality many of the subjects consciously strive to achieve in their personal lives, as well as in their relationships with others. Nevertheless, for most of the subjects their social placidity appears to be attained at some cost to their sociality as exemplified by their marked reluctance to socially interact with any but close friends and relatives.

This matter of the subjects' sociality, or their relative lack of same, raises another characteristic theme in the subjects "relation to life"--that of loneliness. As frequently noted



throughout this study many of the subjects, especially the lower IQ individuals, are to an extraordinary degree without close friends and, except for their families, without any regular social ties to the community. Beyond simply being alone, however, a more prominent and widespread feature in the subjects' lives is the degree of loneliness they appear to experience. In this context loneliness does not simply refer to the subjects' lack of physical and social contacts with others, but to their relative lack of social relationships which enhance or sustain feelings of self-worth, self-confidence, etc. While the lack of such primary relationships is understandably more evident among single subjects, almost half of the married male subjects appear to be sufficiently estranged from their spouses to suggest that they do not receive many of the positive psychological and social benefits usually associated with marriage (e.g., feelings of equality, mutual respect, sharing, etc.). In fact, a subjective estimate arrived at by this writer is that loneliness is a prominent and ongoing feature in the adult lives of 19 of the 31 subjects (80 percent of the single males, 75 percent of the single females, 45 percent of the married males, and 25 percent of the married females). Given this estimate, the recurrent emphasis the subjects give to equality and reciprocity (mutual respect, etc.) as the basis for desired social relationships, just serves to further accentuate the loneliness found in so many of the subjects' lives.

A final characteristic theme in the subjects' lives concerns the common evaluation they make of themselves as being somewhat "slow," but essentially normal, individuals. This evaluation is one

which takes place at two levels. At the first and more restrictive level the subjects recognize themselves as being slow, as having certain educational and/or intellectual shortcomings not characteristically found in others. While this slowness, as noted in Chapter III, is readily acknowledged (e.g., "I can't read the big words," "I still don't add or subtract too well"), it is not depicted as being an all-encompassing or central personal quality (e.g., "I have trouble learning . . . understanding [school] things, but with equipment I'm a fast learner"). In this respect, at the same time the subjects acknowledge specific personal shortcomings they are also putting forth--either explicitly or implicitly--a more general evaluation of themselves as fairly normal adults.

If the subjects do not consider their personal educational and intellectual shortcomings to be of central importance in describing themselves or in understanding their current life circumstances they are nevertheless vague and indecisive about what alternative factors are responsible for the many difficulties they experience in trying to lead a "normal" adult life. As a result, there is an aspect to this evaluative theme which remains relatively undeveloped, one which is typically addressed only when the subjects are questioned about the nature and cause of their social difficulties. This indecisiveness about the source of their social difficulties, other than that it is not indicative of any serious intellectual deficiency on their part, is illustrated in one subject's comments regarding his sporadic employment history:

In my father's time schools had time for individuals. Nowadays schools don't teach you nothing . . . (a few minutes later) My downfall was I never paid attention . . . (pause) but never got anywhere anyways, 'cause they do things the way they want anyways. . . . (a few sentences later) School may not necessarily be important. You need experience. That's what's wrong in the United States, [they] don't give people the chance [to gain job experience].

(In response to next question) If I had finished school I'd have a better chance of getting a good job, would probably be a little further ahead today.

If any tentative conclusions can be drawn from these impressions about the characteristic themes in the subjects' lives it is that whatever academic and intellectual deficiencies they continue to have are less immediately evident in adulthood and tend to express themselves primarily in social terms; that is, in the acquisition of certain characteristic social perspectives and attitudes as well as in a relative lack of certain desired social skills and relationships. In this respect, it can be suggested that the subjects' current and past intellectual and educational deficiencies need to be understood as social phenomena, not only in terms of how others react to these deficiencies but in terms of how they are expressed by the subjects themselves.

#### Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

In keeping with its fundamental character as an exploratory study, the present study has given less attention to resolving specific questions/issues about the social lives of people earlier identified as being mentally retarded than to determining and outlining what appear to be the essential questions/issues that need to be addressed if these people's lives are to be adequately understood.

One of the consequences of this approach is that the present study has engendered many more implications and suggestions for future research than it has answers and conclusions. Four of the most significant of these are discussed here.

The first major suggestion for future research concerns the finding from this and other studies that the IQ scores of mildly retarded individuals typically increase from early adolescence to adulthood. Although other explanations for this increase are examined in Appendix A (e.g., the mildly retarded have a longer developmental period than do other persons, etc.), one possibility that deserves further attention is that special education classes--and school more generally--are less successful in promoting these people's intellectual development than is their participation in the adult life of the community. One approach which would prove especially interesting in studying this possibility is found in Piaget's writings:

For how does psychological intelligence advance with age if not by means of increased [social] cooperation? Cooperation, of course, presupposes intelligence, but this circular relation is perfectly natural: Intelligence animates cooperation and yet needs this social instrument for its own formation (1969:17).

Operationalizing Piaget's statement, this suggested approach would investigate longitudinally the varying degrees to which different social environments promote or discourage social interaction and cooperation among individuals. In doing so, it may be discovered that a major "deficiency" in the education and enculturation of mildly retarded children is the relative lack of reciprocal social

interactions--i.e., cooperation--they have with their peers, a situation which is partially corrected when they leave school and begin to adapt to the demands of adult life in the community. In this respect, an important question which needs to be asked about the (special) education provided mildly retarded persons is not, for example, the appropriateness of the curriculum or their class placement, but whether it allows these students ample opportunity to utilize their acquired knowledge, and enhance their intellectual development, through repeated social interaction and cooperation with their peers.

This suggestion for a longitudinal study of IQ changes in the mentally retarded also includes the need for further research on two methodologically complex issues. The first of these involves the possibility that even within a relatively narrow IQ range (e.g., 50 to 75) the social experiences which enhance intellectual development in higher IQ individuals (e.g., 70 to 75) will differ noticeably from those enhancing such development in lower IQ individuals (e.g., 50 to 55, or even 60 to 65). The second issue involves the temporal and interactive significance of different social experiences; that is, whether the significance various social experiences have in enhancing the mentally retarded's intellectual functioning are related to the particular time and order in which they occur. Future research on these issues should help explain why--in spite of differences in their social histories--both the low and high IQ subjects in the present study have experienced similar numerical increases in their IQ scores since early adolescence.

The second suggestion for future research concerns the general hypothesis that the self-perceptions of the mentally retarded are a major determinant of their distinct social behaviors and attitudes. Specifically, a major question which needs to be more fully researched is the extent to which mentally retarded individuals develop a perception of themselves as being incompetent (through their school or social failures, being labeled mentally retarded, etc.), and whether this self-perception becomes a long-term self-fulfilling prophecy insofar as it causes them to become less motivated and less apt to perform at their "level of constitutional ability" (Gardner, 1968).

Given the findings from this and other studies that the IQ scores of mildly retarded persons often increase during early adulthood, one avenue for exploring the relationship between self-perception and social and intellectual performance in the mentally retarded is through a longitudinal study similar to that proposed above. In undertaking such a study the possibility would be explored that a change in the mentally retarded subjects' self-perceptions precedes or follows an increase in their IQ scores.

While problems in defining and measuring self-perceptions in mentally retarded persons are already widely recognized (Gardner, 1968) another major complicating factor--and an issue in its own right--in such a study is that little is known about how various social experiences common to the mentally retarded (e.g., being labeled, placed in special education classes, etc.) affect their self-perceptions. For example, while it has often been assumed

that placement in special education classes and/or labeling experiences cause a devaluation of self in the mentally retarded, and thus adversely affect their social and intellectual performance, recent studies raise the possibility that while labeling and special education classes offer little or no immediate intellectual or academic benefits to mentally retarded students such experiences actually enhance their self-perceptions (MacMillan 1977), and in doing so may thus promote later improvement in their intellectual and social performance. A similar possibility which this suggested study would need to explore is that the negative comments mentally retarded adults make about their special education and labeling experiences are not indicative of a negative self-image but reflect a process of self-aggrandizement that is not available to mentally retarded individuals who were never labeled and/or placed in special education classes (Edgerton and Sabagh 1962; Schurr, Towne, and Joiner 1972; MacMillan 1977).

In essence, among individuals identified as being mentally retarded the relationship between their self-perceptions and their social and intellectual performance is a complex dialectical one which needs to be studied over extended periods of time. Although its importance in understanding the social lives of the mentally retarded more generally is unclear, the issues this relationship raise are sufficiently important that until they are better understood the relative importance that other relationships have in the lives of the mentally retarded (e.g., intellectual functioning with social performance) will also remain uncertain.

The results of the present study also suggest that research into the social lives of the mentally retarded is seriously handicapped by the lack of any adequately developed means for assessing the cognitive operations which underlie their social behavior and thought. As a result, while theories and hypotheses can be advanced regarding how the mentally retarded's intellectual and cognitive deficiencies affect their social perceptions and behavior, support for such theories and hypotheses remain dependent on circumstantial evidence (e.g., correlations between their performance on IQ test questions and their behavior and reasoning in certain areas of social life).

In order to overcome these current methodological deficiencies a great deal of general research still needs to be undertaken by psychologists in the field of social cognition. That is, it is suggested that a major role in future efforts to delineate how the mentally retarded's intellectual and cognitive deficiencies affect their social thought and activities, and hence their social lives more generally, must be played by developmental and cognitive psychologists. Nevertheless, it is equally important that further social research of the type carried out in this study be undertaken so as to provide psychologists with a better understanding of the types of social activities and relationships the mentally retarded engage in. The importance that such social research can and should have in guiding future psychological research with mentally retarded persons is clearly outlined in the statement by Cole et al.,



regarding the usefulness of ethnographic research in all types of studies on culture and cognition:

We thus make ethnographic analysis prior to experimentation in order to identify the kinds of activities that people often engage in and hence ought to be skillful at dealing with.

In effect, we maintain that neither ethnography nor an experimental approach alone is by itself sufficient . . . .

The ethnographic standard sets a goal for experimental work [and] gives powerful suggestions about the form in which experiments should be run, and some of the major contextual variables that should guide the formulation of a series of experimental investigations (1971:217).

The fourth suggestion for future research involves the finding of this study that while most of the subjects are no longer formally identified as being mentally retarded, their intellectual abilities are often called into question by others (spouses, friends, etc.). While not explicitly dealt with at any length in this study, this finding raises one of the most interesting and yet most neglected issues in the field of mental retardation: namely, how do people come to be perceived by others as being slow, dull-witted, mentally retarded, etc. in the absence of any "formal" cues. Some of the more specific questions in need of further investigation include: (1) in what types of social interactions are questions most likely to be raised about people's intellectual abilities? (2) Within these social interactions what type of cues are most commonly used in evaluating people's intellectual abilities (specific behaviors, information on their personal and social backgrounds, appearance, etc.)? (3) Are the same cues used to define people as being "slow" as would be used in defining them as mentally retarded (i.e., are the same or different cues used when making

different judgments about people's intellectual abilities)?; and  
(4) To what extent do such "informal" social assessments of people's intelligence correspond with their IQ scores?

One way of addressing the first three of these questions would be to adopt the research methods of ethnoscience to a study of intelligence. This approach would entail discovering the linguistic categories people spontaneously use in defining intelligence and intelligent behavior, and would apply componential analysis to these categories to determine the criteria used to differentiate among them (Spradley 1972).

By utilizing this ethnoscientific approach with both mentally retarded and "normal" adults living in the community two interesting results can be predicted. First, with regard to normals, this ethnoscientific approach could prove to be extremely useful in understanding how sensitive they are to matters of intelligence in their social interactions with others, the particular cues they use to evaluate intellectual abilities, and possible role-expectations which are associated with different levels of intellectual ability. Second, with regard to the mentally retarded, this approach can provide unique insights into what aspects of social life they consider intellectual deficiencies to have the greatest impact, as well as whether they perceive there to be any role-expectations that accompany being identified as "slow," mentally retarded, etc. In addition, by comparing how normal and mentally retarded individuals define intelligence and intellectual behavior, it may be discovered that these definitions reflect one dimension along which their

interpretations of social interactions are incompatible (e.g., differing role-expectations), and hence a probable source of social difficulties for the mentally retarded.

In conjunction with this ethnoscience approach, research undertaken to determine the correspondence between public and psychometric assessments of intelligence will allow a number of additional theoretical and practical issues to be addressed. One of the most intriguing of these is the possibility that insofar as mentally retarded individuals "pass" as normals, they do so not because whatever intellectual deficiencies they have go unnoticed, but because the public does not define these deficiencies as being intellectual ones.

In summary, it should be evident that the approaches suggested in this section for future research on the mentally retarded are not significantly different from the approaches already commonly used in studying the social lives of other groups of people. In this respect, these different suggestions are all consistent with what the author considers to be the the ultimate goal of social research with the mentally retarded: to understand them as human beings.

## CHAPTER VIII: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>While the small number of subjects was necessary if an in-depth study was to be undertaken of their social lives, it has also lessened somewhat the applicability of the study's findings to former special education and mildly retarded persons generally.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTELLIGENCE TESTING, INTELLIGENCE,  
AND THE SUBJECTS' IQs

## APPENDIX A

### INTELLIGENCE TESTING, INTELLIGENCE, AND THE SUBJECTS' IQs

#### Intelligence Testing and Intelligence

The first intelligence test of the type presently used widely in the United States and other industrialized countries was developed by Binet and Simon at the beginning of the twentieth century for the express purpose of identifying children who were too mentally "defective" to profit from regular classroom instruction; children who were to be taken out of regular classes and placed in classes with specially designed curriculum. What set the work of Binet and Simon apart from earlier efforts to measure people's intelligence was the pragmatic orientation adopted in the development of their test. Instead of defining intelligence and then selecting items or tasks which were thought to measure this trait, the test developed by Binet and Simon reflected Binet's assertion that any a priori theoretical conceptions about the specific nature of intelligence were essentially futile. As Matarazzo has written of Binet:

Binet was not searching for an underlying "essence" or "thing" inside an individual which he called "intelligence." In common with Chein and others who later would return to his earlier conception, Binet conceived of "intelligence" as an attribute of behavior, not as an attribute of a person. Binet was clearly aware that "intelligence" was an open-ended disposition word for describing observable individual differences. As a matter of fact, and as a

careful reading of his 1905, 1908, and 1911 papers with Simon will make clear, he was fully aware that his test did not provide other than a sample of an individual's total repertoire of intelligent behaviors. The scale, then, crude and needing further development, provided an index, a mental age, which, in reference to the scale, provided different examiners with an operational definition, or means of objectively describing, the individual differences in behavior which now could be assessed and used in helping individuals more fully utilize their potential. However, "intelligence" as conceived and measured by Binet was a polymorphous disposition word or concept which certainly was not exhaustively assessed nor defined by the few behaviors sampled by his test. Classroom success, skill in rhetoric, sagacity of judgment on the playing field, success in one's occupation, and literally thousands upon thousands of every day behaviors also were and could be used, as exemplars of "intelligent behavior" (1972:64-65).

If the approach taken by Binet and Simon to the issue of intelligence avoided many of the theoretical entanglements that had reduced most previous efforts in this area to pedantic exercises, the practical success of their test created major problems almost immediately--especially in the United States. The most serious of these problems involved the quickness with which others in the field of psychology and education were willing to reify Binet's concept of intelligence, and to proclaim IQ tests to be valid and fully adequate measures of people's intelligence. Although some objections were raised during the first half of the twentieth century to the claims that IQ tests actually measured intelligence, IQ tests gained widespread acceptance during this period, especially as a definitive means of identifying those who were and were not mentally retarded.

By the 1950s and 1960s the lack of any sophisticated theoretical underpinnings for many of the uses to which IQ tests were being put had become a matter of real controversy, and a source of



embarrassment to many proponents of IQ testing who were apparently ignorant of--or had conveniently dismissed--the practical reasons for this supposed theoretical deficiency. As MacMillan dramatically, if somewhat misleadingly, described this state of affairs:

Educational psychologist Arthur Jensen admitted the scientifically embarrassing truth: intelligence is easier to measure than to define (1977:165).

As Wechsler saw it, however, it is fallacious to describe this as an "embarrassing" truth:

The view that we do not know what we are talking about when we speak of intelligence is unfortunate not only because it is not true by any comparative standards--actually we now know more about intelligence than we do about any other mental function--but because it has nurtured a confusing pessimism and a profitless kind of account taking which almost completely misses the issue at hand. The issue is not, as is commonly supposed, the lack of agreement by psychologists on a standard definition of intelligence. . . . The difficulty involved is similar to what the physicist encounters when asked to state what he means by time or energy, or the biologist what he means by life. The fact is that energy and life are not tangible entities but limiting constructs. . . . We know them by their effects or properties. The same is true of general intelligence. It is not a material fact but an abstract construct. What we can reasonably expect of any attempt at definition is only a sufficiently clear and broad connotation as to what it comprehends. Mind you, not what it is but what it involves and eventually what it distinguishes (1958:4)

Having noted the impossibility at this point of defining what intelligence "really" is, Wechsler offers a working definition of intelligence that is in many respects reminiscent of that proposed decades earlier by Binet. Wechsler writes:

Intelligence, as a hypothetical construct, is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment. It is aggregate or global because it is composed of elements or abilities (features) which,

although not entirely independent, are qualitatively differentiable. By measurement of these abilities through scores from a test (such as the WAIS), we have available to us objective data which are invaluable in the evaluation of intelligence. But functional intelligence is not identical with the mere sum of these abilities, however inclusive. There are three important reasons for this: (1) The ultimate products of intelligent behavior are a function not only of the number of abilities or their quality but also of the way in which they are combined, that is, their configuration. (2) Factors other than intellectual ability, for example, those of drive and incentive, are involved in intelligent behavior. (3) Finally, whereas different orders of intelligent behavior may require varying degrees of intellectual ability, an excess of any given ability may add relatively little to the effectiveness of the behavior as a whole (quoted in Matarazzo 1972:79).

Following this definition Wechsler goes on to further qualify his position on intelligence and intelligence testing:

Although intelligence is not a mere sum of intellectual abilities, the only way we can evaluate it quantitatively is by the measurement of the various aspects of these abilities. There is no contradiction here unless we insist upon the identity of general intelligence and intellectual ability . . . . We do not know what the ultimate nature of the "stuff" is which constitutes intelligence but, as in the case of electricity, we know it by the "things" it enables us to do . . . (1958:7).

If Wechsler must, in making a dichotomous distinction, be considered a proponent of IQ tests and their validity, his views on intelligence are nevertheless consistent--if not emphatically so--with the more socially and environmentally-oriented concepts of intelligence that have been introduced in recent years. In fact, there is nothing in Wechsler's views on intelligence that appears to be intrinsically at odds with the rather culturally specific--or emic--definition of intelligence cited in the introductory chapter.

Intelligence and intelligent behavior are culturally specific. The physical and socio-cultural conditions of an environment reinforce certain primary abilities as most significant for adjustment to the problems posed by it, and these in particular became the true diagnostics of intelligence within that environment (Cryns 1962:297).

The history of intelligence aside, what gives Wechsler's moderate views on intelligence and intelligence testing special relevancy to the present study is the fact that it is the test he developed (the WAIS) that has been used to obtain the current IQ scores for the subjects. In this same context it is also useful to recognize the position taken early-on by Wechsler regarding mental retardation, one which is similar to that taken decades later by the AAMD when it defined mental retardation as referring to "sub-average general intellectual functioning which . . . is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior" (Heber 1961:3). As Wechsler wrote in 1935 regarding the shortcomings of using IQ scores to define mental retardation without sufficient regard to its social dimension:

Mental deficiency is not . . . a definite entity. It does not define a group along scientific but along practical lines. Mental defectives are primarily individuals who because of lack of mental ability need special care, education or institutionalization . . . . Accumulated experience has shown that in spite of the great value of psychometric tests in detecting and measuring degrees of mental deficiency, it is not possible to define mental deficiency exclusively in terms of mental age or I.Q., for the reason that mental deficiency involves not merely a lack of intellectual ability but also an incapacity to apply that ability in concrete life situations (quoted in Matarazzo 1972:76).

In essence, what the writings of Wechsler, Binet, and others point to is the conclusion that while IQ tests do not measure

intelligence per se, they do measure to a remarkable degree the propensity of individuals to engage in intelligent behavior in a wide variety of circumstances (remarkable especially in terms of the short time needed to administer these tests). In terms of mental retardation and the mentally retarded, the fact that their behavior in one set of circumstances--i.e., their relatively "poor" showing in test situations--does not correspond perfectly with their behavior in other circumstances--e.g., employment, social interactions--is not, as Wechsler makes clear, necessarily indicative of any fundamental inadequacy in the IQ tests themselves, but is inevitable given the fact that their lives, like those of their normal counterparts, are complex phenomena which can be and typically are affected by a multiplicity of variables, of which their intelligence is only one. More specifically, the widespread attacks on the misuse of IQ tests have tended to obscure the fact that in many respects it is premature to argue over whether the association between intellectual functioning (i.e., IQ scores) and impaired adaptive behavior in the mentally retarded is a fallacious or authentic one since the nature of this association is only beginning to be explored in a thorough manner.

### The Subjects' IQ Scores

#### Procedure Used in Obtaining Subjects' School-Age IQ Scores

The IQ scores achieved by the subjects during their adolescence--i.e., their school-age or "old" IQ scores--were provided by the Keeler School System. Because of the number of years which had elapsed since the subjects had left school the information the school

system was able to provide on the subjects was generally meager. In those cases where the school records showed that the subjects had been given more than one IQ test (the majority of cases) it was the most recent of these which has been used in this study. Although it could not be ascertained in all cases who had given the test used in this study to the subjects, it appears that almost all of them were administered by the one school psychologist employed by the Keeler School System during most of the time in question.

#### Procedure Used in Obtaining Current IQ Scores

The subjects' current IQ scores were obtained through the use of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS). The individual (Mr. Tom Negri) who administered the WAIS to the subjects was at the time of the testing a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology with a number of years of professional experience in administering this test.

For a variety of reasons, in obtaining the subjects' agreement to take the WAIS, it was described to them simply as an achievement test, the results of which would be used to determine whether or not their skills in various kinds of academic and performance related tasks had improved in the years since they had left school. Although many of the subjects appeared rather hesitant to take any test of this kind, eventually only two out of the 33 subjects who had already taken part in all of the other scheduled interviews refused to take the test (due, no doubt, in part to the fact that the financial incentive for participating in this interview session

was raised from the usual five dollars to ten dollars). What was surprising and quite gratifying given the subjects' initial reservations about taking the test was the consummate skill with which Mr. Negri was able to relax the subjects and maintain their interest throughout the testing session. In fact, in later interviews the subjects were unanimous in stating that they had enjoyed talking with Mr. Negri and participating in the test. Although its overall effects may have been statistically insignificant, it appears safe to suggest that the rapport established between Mr. Negri and the subjects served to enhance the subjects' performance on the WAIS (see Matarazzo 1972).

#### The Subjects' Current and School-Age IQ Scores

The subjects' current and school-age IQ scores are listed in Table 1, along with the numerical differences in these scores. This is followed by Table 2, which delineates two ways, that of the AAMD and Wechsler, for classifying the subjects according to their IQ scores.

#### IQ Changes from Adolescence to Adulthood

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2 the subjects' IQs have increased an average of 13 points since their adolescence, an occurrence which means that a sizeable percentage of the subjects can no longer be classified as mentally retarded (the specific percentage depending upon the particular classification system used).

APPENDIX TABLE A-1.--The Subjects' Current and School-Age IQ Scores (Full Scale, Verbal, and Performance).

Subjects <sup>a</sup>	Current IQs			School IQs			Difference		
	FS	V	P	FS	V	P	FS	V	P
1. R.L. (WISC, '63) 16	53	60	51	50					
2. S.T. (WISC, '66) 18	64	62	72	63					
3. S.J. (WISC, '61) 15	68	70	71	70	66	79	- 2	4	- 8
4. L.B. (WISC, '60) 12	69	65	78	61	72	58	8	- 7	20
5. B.D. (WISC, '60) 13	70	72	72	52	57	55	18	15	17
6. B.W. (WISC, '60) 12	71	73	71	58			13		
7. P.M. (WISC, '61) 14	72	68	81	62	60	72	10	8	9
8. M.C. (SBLM, '63) 17	74	76	76	61			13		
9. R.D. ( ? , '63) 16	74	77	74	55			19		
10. R.J. (WISC, '59) 11	75	74	81	72	71	78	3	3	3
11. S.W. (WISC, '61) 15	76	75	81	68	63	79	8	12	2
12. W.R. (WISC, '63) 15	77	76	82	64	57	78	13	19	2
13. S.G. (SBL, '56) 9	77	74	84	66			11		
14. K.J. (WISC, '61) 13	78	80	77	62	72	58	16	8	19
15. W.J. (WISC, '60) 13	78	77	84	53			25		
16. W.W. (WISC, '62) 14	79	80	80	67	70	71	12	10	9
17. R.M. (WISC, '64) 16	80	75	90	66	58	80	14	17	10
18. R.C. (WISC, '64) 16	81	74	93	74	65	89	7	10	4
19. P.R. (RSV, '62) 16	81	77	88	67			14		
20. S.R. (WISC, '63) 15	83	77	91	69	67	76	14	10	15
21. B.J. (WISC, '63) 15	83	72	99	75	67	87	8	5	12
22. O.M. (WISC, '60) 13	83	82	86	63	66	67	20	16	19
23. P.W. (WISC, '61) 13	83	86	81	67	76	64	16	10	17
24. W.M. (SBLM, '62) 15	84	81	90	67			17		
25. O.B. (WISC, '62) 15	86	85	89	67	71	69	19	14	20
26. B.E. (WISC, '64) 16	86	76	102	62			24		
27. W.L. (WISC, '61) 14	87	85	90	73	72	79	14	13	11
28. M.C. (WISC, '61) 13	87	82	95	75	75	79	12	7	16
29. D.J. (SB , '57) 11	88	77	105	75			13		
30. M.J. (WISC, '59) 14	90	81	102	73	71	80	17	10	22
31. P.E. (WISC, '63) 15	93	89	99	70	76	69	23	13	30
Mean	78.4 <sup>b</sup>	76.1 <sup>b</sup>	84.1 <sup>b</sup>	65.4	67.6	73.4	13.0 <sup>c</sup>		
S.D.	8.4	6.6	11.5	6.8	6.1	9.4			

<sup>a</sup>Subjects' initials are followed in parentheses by initials of IQ test given them as students and the year this test was given. Following these parentheses is age of subjects when they took this test.

<sup>b</sup>Standard Deviation of subjects' current FS score is 8.13.

<sup>c</sup>There is a correlation of .655 between subjects' current and school-age IQ scores.

APPENDIX TABLE A-2.--Classification of Subject's Current IQ Scores.

Classification	IQ Range (S.D. - 15)	Number of Subjects in Each Grouping	Equivalent Percentile Ranks
A. Classification of WAIS IQ's according to AAMD's Definition of Mental Retardation <sup>a</sup>			
Average, Dull-Normal	85 and above	7	86
Borderline	70 to 84	20	14
Mild	55 to 69	3	1.9
Moderate	40 to 54	1	-
B. Classification of WAIS IQ's according to Wechsler			
Average	90 to 109	2	75.0
Dull-Normal	80 to 89	13	25.0
Borderline	70 to 79	12	8.9
Retarded	69 and below	4	2.2

<sup>a</sup>Heber 1961; in 1973 revision of AAMD definitions the borderline category was deleted, making the cutoff IQ for mental retardation 69 instead of 84 (Grossman 1973).



The most immediate explanation for this change is that it is a product of some type of testing error or inadequacy, that the subjects were never "really" as retarded as their early test scores indicated. However, given the lack of any substantial basis for such an explanation it would appear that other possibilities for the subjects' increased IQs need to be given greater consideration. Three possibilities are:

1. The increase in the subjects' IQ scores is a valid reflection of their increased intellectual capabilities, both in absolute and comparative terms. Such a possibility is one that is inherent in the hypothesis put forth by various researchers that while mildly retarded individuals exhibit a slower rate of intellectual development than do their more normal counterparts, their intellectual growth typically continues for a longer period of time--often into late adulthood (Fisher and Zeaman 1970). Consistent with this possibility are the findings of Charles (1953), who reported that his subjects' IQ scores increased an average of 22.9 points between childhood and middle-age (from 58.4 to 81.3), and Muench (1944), who reported an average increase in IQ scores of 15.4 points for his subjects between the ages of 13-14 and 31-32 (64.9 to 80.3; as Charles noted, however, part of the increase in his subjects' IQ scores is attributable to differences in the intelligence tests used in obtaining their childhood and adult scores).

Assuming for a moment that the subjects' increased IQ scores are reflective of some "real" increase in their intellectual

capabilities it can be suggested that there is a viable alternative to the explanation that they mature intellectually at a slower rate than do normals. This alternative explanation is that the subjects' higher IQs reflect the fact that they find adult life in the community to be more intellectually stimulating than was their childhood environment (especially school and special education classes?).

2. The increase in the subjects' average IQ scores from adolescence to adulthood reflects the "repeated observations of special education teachers that the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) seemed to produce exaggerated estimates of intellectual potential" in mentally retarded students (Hannon and Kicklighter 1970:179). In testing this possibility Hannon and Kicklighter found that in a sample of adolescents with IQs below 80 their IQ scores on the WAIS were an average of 6.9 points higher than were their scores on the WISC (75.7 vs. 68.8). Webb (1963) obtained comparable results with a group of educably retarded adolescents, with the subjects in his study scoring an average of 11 points higher on the WAIS (mean score, 79) than on the WISC (mean score, 68). Similarly, Fisher (1962), in arguing that the WAIS is "invalid" in assessing the intelligence of mentally retarded persons, offered data showing that in an institutionalized retarded population subjects scored an average of 9.3 points higher on the WAIS (mean score, 66.6) than on the WISC (mean score, 57.3).

The problem in interpreting these findings is rather obvious. If, as Wechsler states, IQ is a measure of a person's intelligence relative to that of his age peers, then there should be--at least in

theory--little basis for expecting that mildly retarded persons will consistently do better on one test of intelligence than another. This, of course, is based on the assumption that the different tests are tapping essentially the same intellectual abilities, have the same mean scores, and the same standard deviations. In the case of the WAIS and WISC it is possible to speculate that the subjects' higher WAIS scores indicate that it is tapping somewhat different abilities than did the WISC, and of which they have more, though there is presently no clear evidence to indicate that the WAIS and WISC do, in fact, differ substantially in this regard (Matarazzo 1972). On the other hand, there does appear to be somewhat more evidence to suggest that the standard deviation on the WAIS and WISC, while designed to be the same (i.e., 15 points), do, in fact, differ. For example, Matarazzo cites five studies which compared WAIS and WISC scores, and in all five studies the standard deviation on the WAIS was found to be smaller than that on the WISC (the difference between the standard deviations varying from .5 to 5.4 points). Assuming the reliability of these findings, they would suggest that the IQ scores mentally retarded adults obtain on the WAIS are somewhat inflated. Such a suggestion, in turn, would provide a partial basis for explaining the higher IQ scores the subjects have obtained on the WAIS.

3. The increase in the subjects' IQ scores is at least partially reflective of a general decline in the variability of their performance. This possibility is suggested by Baumeister's research which indicates that mentally retarded persons tend to demonstrate "greater intra-individual variability than normals" (1968:477). As

Baumeister points out, the usual tendency among researchers in attempting to explain the poor performance of mentally retarded persons on a wide range of tasks has been to postulate that they have some type of immutable deficiency--intellectual or otherwise--that precludes any higher level of performance. However, his research suggests that the relatively poor performance of the mentally retarded on a variety of tasks can be attributed--at least in part--to their greater intra-individual variability. As Baumeister writes regarding the consequences of such variability:

It should be obvious . . . that in situations in which the quality of performance is reflected in either a high or low score defined by some structural limit, marked inconsistency is not compatible with good performance. This is, one who is highly variable in his behavior can not achieve an overall good score. In such a case, there may be a positive correlation between intra-subject variability and composite or average performance (1968:478).

In the context of Baumeister's research it can be suggested that while the subjects' higher IQ scores as adults may represent a heightened level of performance it is not so much a product of any increase in their intellectual capabilities per se as it is an indication that they are increasingly able to sustain a high level of performance.

Parenthetically, while stressing the possible psychobiological determinants of intra-subject variability Baumeister does nothing to discount the possibility that environmental factors can significantly enhance or diminish the individual's overall level of variability over time. More specifically, Baumeister's research leaves open the possibility that while many people, such as the subjects, may

exhibit a high level of intra-subject variability when young, the increased social--and psychological--stability that often accompanies adulthood will provide them with increased opportunities to achieve a higher level of consistency in their performance. Such an achievement, in turn, could be expected to manifest itself in terms of higher scores on intelligence tests.

### Conclusion

As should be apparent from the discussion above, it is extremely difficult to make any definitive conclusions regarding what interpretation is to be given the subjects' IQ scores. However, a number of subjective conclusions can be offered regarding both the subjects' past and present IQ scores, and the differences between them.

First, based on the subjects' statements regarding their childhood and school experiences it appears that their "school-age" IQ scores were consistent with their overall level of academic and intellectual performance at that time. That is to say, in the context of the definition given intelligence by Binet, Wechsler, and others, there is little evidence to suggest that the subjects' school-age IQs somehow misrepresented their intellectual functioning or the severity of their learning difficulties as children:

Intelligence is an attribute of a person's performance, that is, an attribute of his past or current behavior, and it is not an unchanging or unchangeable attribute of the person. Changing conditions, personal or environmental, especially in children but also in adults, may increase or decrease the functional level of a person's relative level of demonstrable intellectual (organismic) resources (Matarazzo 1972: 21).

Secondly, it is extremely important to recognize that an IQ score is a position on an ordinal scale rather than an interval scale. That is to say, IQ scores provide a rank ordering of people's performance on an intelligence test but do not indicate the degree to which these people's performances have differed from one another (e.g., an IQ score of 50 or 75 does not indicate that an individual is half or three-quarters as intelligent as one with an IQ of 100).

The fact that IQ is measured on an ordinal scale appears to be especially important in evaluating the subjects' IQ scores and the changes which have taken place in these scores over time. For example, there appears to be some justification for suggesting that the significance that can be attached to particular numerical differences in the subjects' IQ scores decline markedly as these IQ scores increase. More to the point, what is being suggested here is that in terms of their general intellectual and social functioning the subjects with IQs in the 70s tend to differ substantially--and disproportionately--more from the subjects with IQs in the 60s than they did from subjects with IQs in the 80s.

In this same context it can be suggested that the higher the subject's childhood IQ score the less significant is any given numerical increase in his/her adult IQ score. For example, it can be proposed that the subject whose IQ score increased from 55 to 74 has in all probability exhibited a disproportionately greater improvement in his overall intellectual functioning than did the subject whose IQ score increased from 73 to 90. In this respect, it

appears that as the subjects' IQs increase arithmetically their significance as indicators of a particular level of intellectual and social functioning decline in a more geometric fashion.

The third and final conclusion is that, various reservations and limitations aside, the subjects' performance on the WAIS appears to correspond reasonably well with what can be deemed their general level of social/community adaptation. Although ultimately grounded in subjective impressions about the subjects and their behavior this conclusion was arrived at in a fairly systematic manner. First, after all the scheduled interviews were completed with the subjects, and just prior to their being administered the WAIS, this investigator ranked the 31 subjects according to their general level of social functioning. Specifically, the subjects' level of social functioning was evaluated and ranked by the investigator according to two criteria: (1) their current level of personal and social adaptation (e.g., did they have a full-time occupation, did they appear to be reasonably satisfied with their lives, did they get along with others in their family, neighborhood, etc.), and (2) based on what is known about the subjects, how successful does it appear that they would be in their personal and community adaptation if left to their own devices (in only a few cases was this second criteria a major influence in ranking the subjects, those being cases in which the constant intervention of the family was felt to be not simply useful but essential in maintaining the subjects' current level of social adaptation).

Secondly, once the subjects' WAIS scores were obtained they were correlated with their social adaptation rankings, as well as with all the other quantifiable social data obtained on the subjects. In doing this a high correlation was found to exist between the subjects' WAIS scores and their social adaptation ranking ( $r = .735$ ). This correlation appears to be especially high considering that only one other social variable had a similarly high correlation with either the subjects' WAIS scores or adaptation rankings, that being a positive correlation between the subjects' social rankings and their being currently married ( $r = .802$ ). In essence, the correlation between the subjects' IQ scores and their social adaptation rankings allows for a conclusion which is similar to that made by Matarrazo:

The kind of life one lives is itself a pretty good test of a person's intelligence. When a life history (assuming it to be accurate) is in disagreement with the "psychometric," it is well to pause before attempting a classification on the basis of tests alone. Generally it will be found that the former is a more reliable criterion of the individual's intelligence (1972:133).



## APPENDIX B

### THE KIDDIE MACH TEST: MACHIAVELLIANISM AMONG THE SUBJECTS

## APPENDIX B

### THE KIDDIE MACH TEST: MACHIAVELLIANISM AMONG THE SUBJECTS

#### The Nature of Machiavellianism

The term Machiavellianism is used in the field of psychology to refer to an orientation held by individuals toward interpersonal relationships; specifically a tendency to manipulate and exploit others for one's own benefit, to exhibit emotional detachment in interpersonal situations, and to take a utilitarian rather than moral view regarding social interactions. Studies using the Machiavellian scales developed by Christie have shown that persons who score high on these tests (hereafter referred to as "high machs") can be characterized as being less distractible to irrelevant social cues in testing situations than are low machs, who appear to get carried away unintentionally with social cues which are task-irrelevant (Christie and Geis 1970). In other testing situations, it has been reported that in mixed-motive bargaining, high scorers were more apt to end up with more of what everyone was bargaining for (Geis 1968), and that high machs are most persuasible when "factual" arguments are used as compared to low machs, who are more susceptible to persuasion by "social influence" (Epstein 1969).

In addition, while no differences have been found according to social status, or even degree of social mobility, it is

hypothesized that high machs are less likely to arise from traditional social environments because they tend to operate most effectively in unstructured situations. In essence, then, Machiavellianism need not imply any sinister orientation to social behavior, but rather can be considered a "pragmatic" orientation toward social relationships in which the individual efficiently organizes and exploits whatever resources are available so as to achieve his own goals.

In addition to the widespread use of Christie's Mach tests with adults, there have been a number of studies carried out which explore the existence of Machiavellianism in children (Nachamie 1969; Braginsky 1970). In these and other studies it has been shown that an individual's Machiavellian orientation to social relationships typically increases during later childhood and adolescence, a situation which has led to suggestions being made that cognitive development is an important factor influencing this increase in Machiavellianism. However, in studies using adults no correlation has ever been found between IQ scores and Mach scores, a fact which suggests that while a certain amount of cognitive development may typically be necessary for the development of a strong Machiavellian orientation to social behavior it is not, by itself, sufficient for such a development.

While the available literature thus provides little basis for inferring that a relationship between IQ and Machiavellianism exists in a "normal" population, studies undertaken with mentally retarded individuals have indicated that they differ from "normals" in certain

behavioral characteristics that are very similar to those attributed to low mach individuals. Specifically, studies dealing with the mentally retarded have shown that retarded subjects exhibit a greater sensitivity to cues provided by experimenters in test situations than do normal subjects, and have a correspondingly greater amount of distrust of their own personal solutions to problems (Green and Zigler 1962). These findings have led to the hypothesis that the mentally retarded can be characterized as employing an "outer-directed" style of problem solving; that is, they exhibit a greater dependence on external cues to guide their behavior than do their normal counterparts as a result of the "inordinate amount of failure" they experience when relying upon their own resources. The data from these studies also indicate that the mentally retarded typically have a greater susceptibility to irrelevant or incorrect social cues in determining their behavioral responses than do "normals."

Further, while it was noted that a shift from outer- to inner-directedness in problem solving tends to correspond with social and intellectual developments in normal individuals, the greater degree of outer-directedness in the mentally retarded was not found to be correlated with the level of intellectual ability attained, but was rather directly associated with their histories of failure (Turnure and Zigler 1964). Thus, while a low level of cognitive development may be a critical factor in predisposing the retarded to an "outer-directed" orientation, it is not by itself directly related to the adoption of such an orientation. In reporting their findings Zigler and Harter hypothesized that outer-directedness, which is

perceived as a strategy learned relatively early in an individual's life, would be retained by the mentally retarded throughout their lives, and "would generalize to a multiplicity of other external stimuli" (1969:1091).

### Hypotheses Explored in This Study

While the studies on Machiavellianism have focused primarily on its relationship to behavior in adults, and those on the "outer-directedness" of the retarded have come from observations using children and adolescents, both areas of research appear to have a common dimension insofar as both the "outer-directed" retardates and the low machs are viewed as relatively more dependent on others in providing cues for social behavior than are their normal or high mach counterparts. This reliance on others in determining the parameters within which social interactions take place can be viewed as having two facets, a greater susceptibility to the influences of others in determining behavior in face-to-face situations, and in a greater acceptance of conventional social norms (i.e., conformity to stereotypic images of majority or "natural" role behavior) as determining the limits for acceptable social interaction.

If a low Machiavellian orientation toward social behavior and outer-directedness are, in fact, highly correlated personality variables then certain hypotheses can be made regarding Machiavellianism in mentally retarded individuals. The specific hypotheses which were tested in this study through the use of the Kiddie Mach test were:

1. The subjects in this study will score significantly lower on the measure of Machiavellianism than will normal adults; and
2. Among the subjects there will be no significant correlation between IQ scores and Mach scores.

The first hypothesis was based on the initial assumption presented above regarding the high correlation between outer-directedness and a low Machiavellian orientation. That is, assuming that the subjects have typically experienced an "abnormal" amount of failure during their childhood and youth (e.g., placement in special education classes), it can be hypothesized that the subjects have become significantly more outer-directed and significantly less Machiavellian than their normal counterparts. The second hypothesis is based on Zigler's findings that outer-directedness is reflective of a history of failure rather than of intellectual deficiencies per se, and by Christie's studies which have found no correlation between intelligence and mach scores in adults.

### Method

#### Materials

The Kiddie Mach test, a simplified version of the Mach IV developed for use with children or low education adults, was used in this study to determine the degree of Machiavellian orientation held by the subjects (as noted elsewhere the subjects' responses to individual items on this test also proved useful in better understanding their perceptions on a variety of social issues). This test is made up of 20 Likert format items, 10 positively related to

a Machiavellian orientation and 10 negatively related (see copy of the test on the following page).

In developing the Mach IV test all items chosen correlated positively with the total test score (average correlation was .38), while the average item-item correlation was fairly small as an attempt was made to "introduce as much content variety as possible" into the test (Robinson and Sahver 1970:506). In summarizing the nature of the various Mach scales developed by Christis and others, Robinson and Shaver stated that "this measure attempts to tap a person's general strategy for dealing with people, especially the degree to which he feels other people are manipulatable in interpersonal situations" (1970:506).

### Subjects

Although the Kiddie Mach Test has apparently been used with a variety of populations, no test score results have been reported using adult subjects. To provide some comparative basis for evaluating the subjects' scores, therefore, two other groups were also administered the Kiddie Mach test during the course of this study:

Group B consisted of 110 assumedly "normal" adults who were enrolled in evening social science courses at a local community college. While many were full-time students, the majority of these adults were employed full-time during the day (primarily in semi-skilled or clerical jobs).

## KIDDIE MACH TEST

If you *agree very much* with the sentence, put a circle around: 5  
 If you *agree a little* with the sentence, put a circle around: 4  
 If you are *unsure*, don't know (maybe), put a circle around: 3  
 If you *disagree a little* with the sentence, put a circle around: 2  
 If you *disagree very much* with the sentence, put a circle around: 1

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Never tell anyone why you did something unless it will help you.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *2. Most people are good and kind.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The best way to get along with people is to tell them things that make them happy.                                | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *4. You should do something only when you are sure it is right.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. It is smartest to believe that all people will be mean if they have a chance                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *6. You should always be honest, no matter what.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Sometimes you have to hurt other people to get what you want.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Most people won't work hard unless you make them do it.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *9. It is better to be ordinary and honest than famous and dishonest.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *10. It's better to tell someone why you want him to help you than than to make up a good story to get him to do it. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *11. Successful people are mostly honest and good.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. A criminal is just like other people except that he is stupid enough to get caught.                              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *14. Most people are brave.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. It is smart to be nice to important people even if you don't really like them.                                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *16. It is possible to be good in every way.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *17. Most people cannot be easily fooled.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. Sometimes you have to cheat a little to get what you want.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| *19. It is never right to tell a lie.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. It hurts more to lose money than to lose a friend.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

---

\* Indicates those items negatively related to Machiavellianism. These 10 items had their scores reversed to compute final scores.



Group C consisted of 26 retarded adults who were participants in either a community activity center for retarded adults or were employed in a sheltered workshop program. Twenty-one of these individuals were classified as familial retarded and five as brain damaged retarded. None of these individuals had any serious physical impairments.

Other relevant data regarding the three groups is summarized in Table B-1.

APPENDIX TABLE B-1.--Group Characteristics.

		Subjects	Group B	Group C
<u>Sex:</u>	Male	23	59	13
	Female	8	51	13
<u>IQ:</u>	Mean	78.4	--	60.3
	S.D.	8.1	--	10.9
	Range	53-93	--	37-76
<u>Age:</u>	Mean	26.9	25.9	27.4
	S.D.	1.2	6.5	4.8
	Range	26-29	18-45	20-39

### Procedure

The Kiddie Mach test was given to each of the subjects and Group C participants individually. In presenting the test to these persons each of the test items was read to them twice and then asked whether he/she agreed or disagreed with it. After receiving an answer the subject was then questioned as to the extent to which he

agreed or disagreed ("Would you agree very much with this statement or would you agree somewhat with it?").

Following each answer the individual was asked why he had agreed or disagreed with the question. This procedure was stressed primarily on items where individuals often became confused with the negative wording (e.g., items 17 and 19), and was seen as providing some assurance that the individual understood the items and that the answers adequately reflected his or her viewpoint.

In the case of the "normal" group copies of the Kiddie Mach test were handed out to all the students of the classes with the instructions written on each copy. No verbal instructions or reading of questions was provided.

### Results

1. The initial hypothesis that the subjects in this study would be less Machiavellian than normals as measured on the Kiddie Mach test was not substantiated (though Group C's scores were significantly lower than were those of the "normal" participants,  $p < .01$ ). However, the subjects did differ significantly from the "normal" group in their responses to 13 of the 20 individual items on the test (see Table B-2). Of these individual items the subjects scored significantly lower on eight items and higher on five items than did the "normal" participants.

2. The second hypothesis, that there would be no significant correlation between IQ scores and Mach scores, was supported by the data (for the subjects,  $r = .10$ ; for Group C,  $r = -.11$ ). Illustrative

APPENDIX TABLE B-2.--Differences in Mach Scores Between the Groups.<sup>a</sup>

Item	Mean for Subjects	Mean for Group B	Mean for Group C	Differences Between Subjects and Group B
Total Test	51.36	53.29	48.46	-1.95
1	3.35	2.16	3.46	1.19***
2	1.90	2.38	1.50	- .48
3	3.68	2.98	4.65	.70*
4	1.55	3.20	1.31	-1.65***
5	3.26	1.90	2.54	1.36***
6	1.48	2.69	1.31	-1.21***
7	2.68	3.01	2.23	- .33
8	3.23	2.41	3.77	.82*
9	1.19	1.75	1.73	- .56***
10	1.19	1.67	1.88	- .48**
11	3.55	3.48	1.81	.07
12	3.16	2.94	2.54	.22
13	3.61	1.91	2.50	1.70***
14	2.74	3.45	2.12	- .71**
15	3.26	3.05	4.73	.21
16	2.42	3.70	1.65	-1.28***
17	2.45	3.27	2.54	- .82**
18	3.23	2.81	2.38	.42
19	1.87	2.99	1.19	-1.12***
20	1.55	1.53	2.62	.02

<sup>a</sup>Various computations were made in which the Mach scores from Group B were weighted according to age and sex so as to correspond more closely with the age/sex ratios among the subjects. Such computations did not alter full Mach scores sufficiently to warrant their listing.

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\*\*\* significant at the .001 level

(degrees of significance obtained using t test, 2-tailed, separate variance estimates).

of this lack of any correlation between the subjects' IQ scores and their Mach scores was the fact that while the IQs of seven of the subjects had risen since their youth to the point where they are now in the "normal" range (mean IQ score, 88.1), their Mach scores were not appreciably higher than those of the rest of the subjects (their mean Mach score, 52.2). Although the reason for this fact is open to speculation, it does conform with Christie and Geis' statement that "Mach scores of adults appear to be more closely related to pre-adult influences than to experiences after attaining maturity" (1970: 316).

3. Given that the subjects' total Mach scores were similar to those of normals, and that IQ did not significantly influence their Mach scores (either total scores or item scores), the issue of why they differed significantly from normals in their responses to 13 of the items becomes of central importance. An inspection of these items reveals that three basic factors appear to account for most of the differences in item responses between the subjects and the normal ("B") group. These are:

(a) A relatively strong concern among the subjects with conventional morality. While admitting difficulties in defining exactly what constitutes "conventional morality," Christie and Geis perceive it "in terms of the findings that most people think lying, cheating, and other forms of deceit are, although common, reprehensible" (1970:3) To the extent that conventional morality can be defined in terms of honesty, then, the subjects' responses to items 4, 6, 9, and 19 indicate that they are significantly more concerned

with adhering to conventional morality in their social interactions than are normals. In this respect, at least, the subjects' responses mark them as being less Machiavellian than are their normal counterparts.

(b) A benign view of human potential mixed with a much less optimistic view as to the actual trustworthiness of others in practice. According to Christie low machs typically view people as being basically good and kind, worthy of their trust. Consistent with this, low machs are also described as entering into interpersonal relationships with the assumption that they will take place on a basis of mutual reciprocity, that fair play will prevail. However, in the case of the subjects, while they can be defined as being slightly less Machiavellian than normals in how they perceive people in the abstract (e.g., believing in people's perfectability--items 16 and 2), they are distinctly more Machiavellian in their unwillingness to assume that other people will actually treat them in a fair and honorable fashion (e.g., items 1 and 5).

If the subjects appear to be somewhat "abnormal" in holding such discrepant views toward social interactions--between their own approach to social interactions (a) and that which they feel characterizes other people (b)--one plausible reason for this is the sense of vulnerability many of the subjects feel in interactions with others; the sense that even if they wanted to they could not manipulate others nearly as well as others are able to manipulate them (e.g., item 17). In this respect it may be misleading to use total Mach scores to conclude that the subjects and normals have

similar orientations toward social interactions, especially insofar as the subjects are scored as being Machiavellian for different reasons than are the "normals"; the subjects because of their greater willingness to give deferential treatment to those whom they perceive to be more important and powerful than themselves (e.g., item 3), and the normals because of their greater agreement with the idea that people are anything but perfect and that the most successful approach to social interactions is one that is relatively pragmatic rather than moral.

(c) An acquiescence response set among the subjects. Unlike the normal test participants the subjects exhibited a tendency to agree not only with the anti-Machiavellian statements on the test but also, albeit much more weakly, with most of the pro-Machiavellian statements as well.

While the actual effect this acquiescence response set had on their test scores is open to some conjecture, a similar response pattern was also found among Group C participants. In this latter case the fact that many of them had been given the Kiddie Mach test on two separate occasions (to study the test-retest reliability of the test's individual items) allowed a tentative conclusion to be drawn regarding the effects their acquiescence responses set had on their test scores; namely, that this response pattern was more apt to influence their answers to pro-Machiavellian statements rather than to anti-Machiavellian statements, with the result being that their total Mach scores were higher than they would have otherwise been. If it is assumed that the acquiescence response set noted in the

subjects' answers had similar consequences, then it can be hypothesized that the subjects' propensity to go along with others, to be agreeable--to be, as it were, good low machs--had the ironic effect of raising their total Mach score and making them appear to be more Machiavellian than they actually are.

### Discussion

In terms of total test scores the results of this study can be used to conclude: (1) that unlike lower IQ adults who continue to participate in programs for the mentally retarded (Group C) the subjects in this study are only slightly, and insignificantly, less Machiavellian in their orientation toward interpersonal relationships than are "normal" persons; and (2) that there is no correlation between the subjects' IQs and their Mach scores, a finding which also held true for the individuals in Group C. As a result of an analysis of the subjects' responses to the individual items on the Kiddie Mach test, however, there appears to be a number of reasons for questioning the accuracy of the first conclusion, though not of the second. In fact, this analysis suggests that contrary to total score results the subjects are actually less Machiavellian in their orientation to social relationships than are their "normal" counterparts, especially insofar as they appear to be "abnormally" pre-disposed to accepting "conventional morality" and the social status of others as important bases for their social interactions.

Assuming this latter, revised conclusion to be the correct one, that the subjects are in fact less Machiavellian in their

orientation toward social interactions (and by inference, more outer-directed), it raises the possibility that because of their early failures, social and otherwise, the subjects have adopted an orientation toward social relationships that to some indeterminate extent perpetuates their social difficulties. This possibility is one that is evident in Christie and Geis' characterization of "low machs":

The low brings the dominant response of being willing to go along with others into the bargaining situation, while the high, undistracted by this process, pursues the task goals of maximizing his gain. In general, it looks as if the lows are more heedless than helpless (1970:282).

While the use of the Kiddie Mach test to study some of the social attitudes held by the subjects toward interpersonal relationships has thrown little light on what, if any, effects their intellectual (dis)abilities may have had in the development of these attitudes, at the minimum it has provided some basis for suggesting that the particular attitudes the subjects hold toward interpersonal relationships have a greater influence in determining the outcome of these relationships than would be inferred from the present literature on persons with mental deficiencies. In fact, if such a suggestion is placed in the context of mentally retarded persons more generally, it may be suggested that the obtrusiveness of their intellectual deficiencies can (and apparently has on occasion) lead to the erroneous assumption that they are not, like their normal counterparts, capable of being simply heedless, but only helpless in their social interactions.



**APPENDIX C**

**CONSENT FORM**

## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in the study on Education and American Culture being conducted with former public school students in the Keeler area. (The study is an attempt to determine the effects people's school experiences and successes have on their social lives as adults.)

- a. I understand the study will last approximately one year, and it is desired that I be interviewed several times during this period on a variety of social subjects (e.g., your ideas on school, employment, social relations, etc.).
- b. I also understand, however, that I am free to stop my participation in this study at any time I desire without any recrimination; and
- c. that all the information I provide during this study will be held in the strictest confidence, and that no information about me will be obtained from or given to any individual or agency without my prior consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

## REFERENCES

## REFERENCES

- Affleck, G. G.  
1975a Role-Taking Ability and Interpersonal Conflict Resolution among Retarded Young Adults. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 80:233-236.
- 1975b Role-Taking Ability and the Interpersonal Competencies of Retarded Children. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 80:312-316.
- 1976 Role-Taking Ability and the Interpersonal Tactics of Retarded Children. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 80:667-670
- 1977 Interpersonal Competencies of the Mentally Retarded. In *Research to Practice in Mental Retardation, Volume II.* P. Mittler, ed. Pp. 85-92. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Appell, M., C. Williams, and K. Fishell  
1962 Significant Factors in Placing Mental Retardates from a Workshop Situation. *Personal and Guidance* 41:260-265.
- Baller, W. R.  
1936 A Study of the Present Social Status of a Group of Adults, Who, When They were in Elementary Schools, Were Classified as Mentally Deficient. *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 18:165-244.
- Baller, W. R., D. C. Charles, and E. L. Miller  
1967 Mid-Life Attainment of the Mentally Retarded: A Longitudinal Study. *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 75:235-329.
- Baumeister, A.  
1968 Behavioral Inadequacy and Variability of Performance. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 73:477-483.
- Begab, Michael  
1975 The Mentally Retarded and Society: Trends and Issues. In *The Mentally Retarded and Society.* Michael Begab and Stephen Richardson, eds. Pp. 3-32. Baltimore: University Park Press.

- Blum, Alan  
1964 Social Structure, Social Class, and Participation in Primary Relationships. In Blue-Collar World: Studies of the American Worker. A. Shostak and W. Gomberg, eds. Pp. 195-206. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Blumer, H.  
1972 Symbolic Interaction. In Culture and Cognition. James Spradley, ed. Pp. 65-83. San Francisco: Chandler.
- Blustein, Paul  
1976 Unemployment Amidst Prosperity: Why? Forbes 118(7):30-34.
- Bobroff, A.  
1956a Economic Adjustment of 121 Adults, Formerly Students in Classes for the Mental Retardates. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 60:525-535.  
  
1956b A Survey of Social and Civic Participation of Adults Formerly in Classes for the Mentally Retarded. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 61:127-133.
- Braginsky, D.  
1970 Machiavellianism and Manipulative Interpersonal Behavior in Children. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 6:77-99.
- Butler, A. and P. Browning  
1970 Methodological Issues in the Prediction of Rehabilitation Outcome with the Mentally Retarded. In Rehabilitation Research in Mental Retardation. H. Prehm, ed. Pp. 49-69. Rehabilitation Research and Training Monograph, No. 2. Eugene, Oregon.
- Campbell, A., P. Converse, and W. Rodgers  
1976 The Quality of American Life. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Catterall, C. D.  
1972 Special Education in Transition - Implications for School Psychology. Journal of School Psychology 10:91-98.
- Centers, R. and D. Bugental  
1970 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Job Motivations among Different Segments of the Working Population. In The Psychology of Vocational Development. R. Roth, D. Hershenson, and T. Hillard, eds. Pp. 350-356. Boston: Allyn and Bacon

- Charles, D. C.  
1953 Ability and Accomplishment of Persons Earlier Judged Mentally Deficient. *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 47: 3-71.
- Christie, R. and F. Geis  
1970 *Studies in Machiavellianism*. New York: Academic Press.
- Cobb, Henry  
1972 *The Forecast of Fulfillment: A Review of Research on Predictive Assessment of the Adult Retarded for Social and Vocational Adjustment*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cole, M., J. Gay, J. Glick, and D. Sharp  
1971 *The Cultural Context of Learning and Thinking*. New York: Basic Books.
- Conley, Ronald  
1973 *The Economics of Mental Retardation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Cryns, A. G. J.  
1962 African Intelligence: A Critical Survey of Cross-Cultural Intelligence Research in Africa South of Sahara. *Journal of Social Psychology* 57:283-301.
- Davies, S. P.  
1959 *The Mentally Retarded in Society*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Davis, Fred  
1961 Deviance Disavowal: The Management of Strained Interaction by the Visibly Handicapped. *Social Problems* 9:120-131.
- Davis, K. and W. Moore  
1945 Some Principles of Stratification. *American Sociological Review* 10:242-249.
- Deno, Evelyn  
1970 *The School-Work Approach to Rehabilitation*. In *Rehabilitation Research in Mental Retardation*. H. Prehm, ed. Pp. 3-17. *Rehabilitation Research and Training Monograph*, No. 2. Eugene, Oregon.

- DeVries, Rheta  
 1974 Relationship among Piagetian, IQ, and Achievement Assessments. *Child Development* 45:746-756.
- Dexter, Lewis  
 1962 On the Politics and Sociology of Stupidity in Our Society. *Social Problems* 9:221-228.
- Durkheim, E.  
 1962 The Rules of Sociological Method. S. Solovay and J. Mueller, trans. New York: Free Press.
- Edgerton, Robert  
 1967 The Cloak of Competence. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 1968 Anthropology and Mental Retardation. In *Behavioral Research in Mental Retardation*. H. Prehm, L. Hamerlynck, and J. Crosson, eds. Pp. 75-87. Rehabilitation Research and Training Monograph, No. 1. Eugene, Oregon.
- 1970 Mental Retardation in Non-Western Societies: Toward a Cross-Cultural Perspective on Incompetence. In *Social-Cultural Aspects of Mental Retardation*. H. Carl Haywood, ed. Pp. 523-559. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Edgerton, R. and G. Sabagh  
 1962 From Mortification to Aggrandizement: Changing Self-Concepts in the Careers of the Mentally Retarded. *Psychiatry* 25:263-272.
- Edgerton, R. and S. Bercovici  
 1976 The Coak of Competence: Years Later. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 80:485-497.
- Elkind, David  
 1961 The Child's Conception of his Religious Denomination I: The Jewish Child. *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 99: 209-225.
- 1962 The Child's Conception of his Religious Denomination II: The Catholic Child. *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 101: 185-193.
- 1963 The Child's Conception of his Religious Denomination III: The Protestant Child. *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 103: 291-304.

- Elkind, David  
 1964 Piaget's Semi-Clinical Interview and the Study of Spontaneous Religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 4:40-47.
- 1970 *Children and Adolescents: Interpretative Essays on Jean Piaget*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Epstein, G.  
 1969 Machiavelli and the Devil's Advocate. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2:38-41.
- Ewen, R. B.  
 1964 Some Determinants of Job Satisfaction: A Study of the Generality of Herzberg's Theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 48:161-163.
- Fairbank, Ruth  
 1933 The Subnormal Child - Seventeen Years After. *Mental Hygiene* 17:177-208.
- Farber, Bernard  
 1968 *Mental Retardation: Its Social Context and Social Consequences*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Feffer, M.  
 1970 A Developmental Analysis of Interpersonal Behavior. *Psychological Review* 77:197-214.
- Feffer, M. and V. Gourevitch  
 1960 Cognitive Aspects of Role-Taking in Children. *Journal of Personality* 28:383-396.
- Feffer, M. and L. Suchotliff  
 1966 Decentering Implications of Social Interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 4:415-422.
- Festinger, L.  
 1954 A Theory of Social Comparison Processes. *Human Relations* 7:117-140.
- Finkel, S. and V. Tarascio  
 1971 *Wage and Employment Theory*. New York: Ronald Press.
- Fischer, Constance  
 1973 Intelligence contra IQ. *Human Development* 16:8-20.



- Fisher, G. M.  
1962 Further Evidence of the Invalidity of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale for the Assessment of Intelligence of Mental Retardates. *Journal of Mental Deficiency Research* 6:41-43.
- Fisher, M. A. and D. Zeaman  
1970 Growth and Decline of Retardate Intelligence. *In International Review of Research in Mental Retardation*, Vol. 4. Norman Ellis, ed. Pp. 151-193. New York: Academic Press.
- Flavell, J.  
1968 The Development of Role-Taking and Communication Skills in Children. New York: John Wiley and Sons.  
  
1977 Cognitive Development. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Gallagher, J. J.  
1959 Measurement of Personality Development in Preadolescent Mentally Retarded Children. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 64:296-301.
- Gardner, William  
1968 Personality Characteristics of the Mentally Retarded: Review and Critique. *In Behavioral Research in Mental Retardation*. H. Prehm, L. Hamerlynck, and J. Crosson, eds. Pp. 53-68. Rehabilitation Research and Training Monograph, No. 1. Eugene, Oregon.
- Geertz, C.  
1966 Religion as a Cultural System. *In Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*. M. Banton, ed. Pp. 1-46. London: Tavistock.
- Geis, F.  
1968 Machiavellianism in a Semi-Real World. Proceedings, Seventy-sixth Annual Convention, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Ginsburg, H. and S. Oppen  
1969 Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Ginzberg, E.  
1965 The Mentally Handicapped in a Technological Society. *In The Biosocial Bases of Mental Retardation*. S. Osler and R. Cooke, eds. Pp. 1-16. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press.

- Goffman, Erving  
1963 Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identities. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Goodman, H., J. Gottlieb, and R. Harrison  
1972 Social Acceptance of EMR's Integrated into a Nongraded Elementary School. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 76:412-417.
- Goodnow, J. and G. Bethon  
1966 Piaget's Tasks: The Effects of Schooling and Intelligence. Child Development 37:573-582.
- Gottlieb, J.  
1975 Public, Peer, and Professional Attitudes toward Mentally Retarded Persons. In The Mentally Retarded and Society. Michael Begab and Stephen Richardson, eds. Pp. 99-126. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Gozali, J.  
1971 Citizenship and Voting Behavior of Mildly Retarded Adults. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 75:640-641.  
  
1972 Perception of the EMR Special Classes by Former Students. Mental Retardation 10:34-35.
- Green, C. and E. Zigler  
1962 Social Deprivation and the Performance of Feebleminded and Normal Children on a Satiation-type Task. Child Development 33:499-508.
- Grossman, Herbert  
1973 Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation: 1973 Revision. American Association on Mental Deficiency: Special Publication No. 2. Washington, D. C.
- Gunzburg, H. C.  
1965 Educational Problems in Mental Deficiency. In Mental Deficiency. A. Clarke and A. Clarke, eds. Pp. 328-355. New York: The Free Press.
- Guskin, S.  
1963 Social Psychologies of Mental Deficiencies. In Handbook of Mental Deficiency. N. Ellis, ed. Pp. 325-352. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Halpern, Andrew  
1973 General Unemployment and Vocational Opportunities for EMR Individuals. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 78: 123-127.

- Halpern, A. and W. Berard  
 1974 Counseling the Mentally Retarded: A Review for Practice. In *Mental Retardation: Rehabilitation and Counseling*. Phillip Browning, ed. Pp. 269-289. Springfield: Charles Thomas.
- Hannon, J. and R. Kicklighter  
 1970 WAIS versus WISC in Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 35:179-182.
- Hartlage, Lawrence  
 1965 Factors Affecting Employer Receptivity toward the Mentally Retarded. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 70: 108-113.
- Heber, R.  
 1961 A Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation (2nd ed.). *American Journal of Mental Deficiency (Monograph Supplement)*.
- 1970 Epidemiology of Mental Retardation. Springfield: Charles Thomas.
- Heber, R., R. Dever, and J. Conry  
 1968 The Influence of Environmental and Genetic Variables on Intellectual Development. In *Behavioral Research in Mental Retardation*. H. Prehm, L. Hamerlynck, and J. Crosson, eds. Pp. 1-22. *Rehabilitation Research and Training Monograph, No. 1*. Eugene, Oregon.
- Hensel, A.  
 1972 The Forgotten Ones: A Sociological Study of Anglo and Chicano Retardates. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hollinger, C. and R. Jones  
 1970 Community Attitudes toward Slow Learners and Mental Retardates: What's in a Name? *Mental Retardation* 8:19-23.
- Inhelder, Barbel  
 1968 The Diagnosis of Reasoning in the Mentally Retarded. New York: John Day.
- Jencks, C., et al.  
 1972 Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America. New York: Harper and Row.
- Johnson, G. O.  
 1963 Education for the Slow Learner. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

- Jones, R. L.  
1972 Labels and Stigma in Special Education. *Exceptional Children* 38:553-564.
- Kaufman, M. and P. Alberto  
1976 Research on Efficacy of Special Education for the Mentally Retarded. *In International Review of Research in Mental Retardation*, Vol. 8. N. Ellis, ed. Pp. 225-256. New York: Academic Press.
- Kennedy, R.  
1948 The Social Adjustment of Morons in a Connecticut Town. Hartford, Connecticut: Mansfield-Southburg Training School.  
  
1966 A Connecticut Community Revisited: A Study of the Social Adjustment of a Group of Mentally Deficient Adults in 1948 and 1960. Hartford, Connecticut: Connecticut State Department of Health, Office of Mental Retardation.
- Kleck, Robert  
1975 Issues in Social Effectiveness: The Case of the Mentally Retarded. *In The Mentally Retarded and Society*. Michael Begab and Stephen Richardson, eds. Pp. 181-196. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Kohlberg, L.  
1971 From Is to Ought. *In Cognitive Development and Epistemology*. Theodore Mischel, ed. Pp. 151-235. New York: Academic Press.
- Kokaska, Charles  
1972 Voter Participation of the EMR: A Review of the Literature. *Mental Retardation* 10:6-8.
- Kolstoe, Oliver  
1976 Teaching Educable Retarded Children. Second ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Lasch, Christopher  
1977 Haven in a Heartless World. New York: Basic Books.
- Lemert, Edwin  
1951 Social Pathology. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lopreato, J. and L. Hazelrigg  
1972 Class, Conflict, and Mobility. San Francisco: Chandler.
- Luckmann, Thomas  
1967 The Invisible Religion. New York: MacMillan.

- Mabry, B.  
1973 Economics of Manpower and the Labor Market. New York: Intext Educational Publishers.
- McDavid, J. and H. Harari  
1974 Psychology and Social Behavior. New York: Harper and Row.
- McLaughlin, J. and B. Stephens  
1974 Interrelationships among Reasoning, Moral Judgment, and Moral Conduct. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 79:156-161.
- MacMillan, Donald  
1977 Mental Retardation in School and Society. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- MacMillan, D., R. Jones, and G. Aloia  
1974 The Mentally Retarded Label: A Theoretical Analysis and Review of Research. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 79:241-261.
- Matarazzo, Joseph  
1972 Wechsler's Measurement and Appraisal of Adult Intelligence. Fifth ed. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins.
- Mercer, Jane  
1973 Labeling the Mentally Retarded. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mercer, J., E. Butler, and H. Dingman  
1964 The Relationship between Social Developmental Performance and Mental Ability. American Journal of Mental Deficiency 69:195-205.
- Michigan State Economic Record  
1975 Volume Seventeen. East Lansing, Michigan: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, College of Business and Public Service, Michigan State University.
- Miller, E.  
1965 Ability and Social Adjustment at Midlife of Persons earlier Judged Mentally Deficient. Genetic Psychology Monographs 72:139-198.
- Morris, R.  
1956 A Typology of Norms. American Sociological Review 21: 610-613.

- Morse, N. and R. Weiss  
1955 The Function and Meaning of Work and the Job. *American Sociological Review* 20:191-198.
- Muench, G.  
1944 A Followup of Mental Defectives after Eighteen Years. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 39:407-418.
- Nachamie, S.  
1969 Machiavellianism in Children: The Children's Mach Scale and the Bluffing Game. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Psychology, Columbia University.
- Peck, J. and W. B. Stephens  
1964 Success of Young Adult Male Retardates. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Peterson, L. and L. Smith  
1960 A Comparison of the Post-School Adjustment of Educable Mentally Retarded Adults with that of Adults of Normal Intelligence. *Exceptional Children* 26:404-408.
- Phillips, L.  
1968 Human Adaptation and Its Failures. New York: Academic Press.
- Piaget, Jean  
1965 The Moral Judgment of the Child. M. Gabain, trans. New York: The Free Press.
- Quay, L. C.  
1963 Academic Skills. In *Handbook of Mental Deficiency*. N. Ellis, ed. Pp. 664-690. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rainwater, L.  
1971 Making the Good Life: Working Class Family and Life-Styles. In *Blue-Collar Workers*. Sar Levitan, ed. Pp. 204-229. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Redfield, Robert  
1953 The Primitive World and Its Transformation. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Richardson, S. A.  
1975 Reaction to Mental Subnormality. In *The Mentally Retarded and Society*. Michael Begab and Stephen Richardson, eds. Pp. 77-98. Baltimore: University Park Press.

- Robinson, J. and P. Shaver  
1970 Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes (Appendix B to Measures of Political Attitudes). Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.
- Schur, E.  
1971 Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Consequences. New York: Harper and Row.
- Schurr, K., R. Towne, and L. Joiner  
1972 Trends in Self-Concept of Ability over 2 years of Special Class Placement. Journal of Special Education 6:161-166.
- Sellin, Donald  
1979 Mental Retardation: Nature, Needs, and Advocacy. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sennett, R. and J. Cobb  
1973 The Hidden Injuries of Class. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Shantz, C.  
1975 The Development of Social Cognition. In Review of Child Development Research, Vol. 5. E. M. Hetherington, ed. Pp. 257-324. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shaver, K.  
1975 An Introduction to Attribution Processes. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop.
- Shaw, M. and P. Costanzo  
1970 Theories of Social Psychology. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Shister, Joseph  
1956 Economics of the Labor Market. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Sinnott, J. D.  
1975 Everyday Thinking and Piagetian Operativity in Adults. Human Development 18:430-443.
- Spradley, James  
1972 Adaptive Strategies of Urban Nomads. In Culture and Cognition: Rules, Maps, and Plans. James Spradley, ed. Pp. 235-262. San Francisco: Chandler.
- Stefflre, B.  
1970 Vocational Development: Ten Propositions in Search of a Theory. In The Psychology of Vocational Development. R. Roth, D. Hershenson, and T. Hilliard, eds. Pp. 213-219. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Stephens, B. and J. McLaughlin  
 1974 Two-Year Gains in Reasoning by Retarded and Nonretarded Persons. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 79:116-126.
- Sticht, Thomas  
 1971 Comments on Kenneth Lovell's Paper - Does Learning Recapitulate Ontogeny? *In* Measurement and Piaget. D. Green, M. Ford, and G. Flamer, eds. Pp. 93-98. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Stoddard, Theodore  
 1922 Revolt against Civilization. New York: Scribner.
- Suls, J. and R. Miller, eds.  
 1977 Social Comparison Processes: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives. Washington, D. C.: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation.
- Super, D. E.  
 1953 A Theory of Vocational Development. *American Psychologist* 8:185-190.
- Trosi, C. and E. Grzech  
 1977 Could You Kick the TV Habit? *Detroit Free Press*: 147 (October 30): A-1.
- Turnure, J. and E. Zigler  
 1964 Outdirectedness in the Problem Solving of Normal and Retarded Children. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 69:427-436.
- United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census  
 1976 Current Population Reports: Series P-60, no. 103. "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the U.S.: 1975 and 1974 Revisions," (Advance Report). Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.
- VanBaal, J.  
 1971 Symbols for Communication. Assen, The Netherlands: Royal VanGorcum Ltd.
- Verway, David, ed.  
 1976 Michigan Statistical Abstract (11th edition). East Lansing, Michigan: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Michigan State University.



- Vroom, Victor  
1964 Work and Motivation. New York: Wiley and Sons.
- Wallace, A. F. C.  
1966 Religion: An Anthropological View. New York: Random House.
- Webb, A. P.  
1963 A Longitudinal Comparison of the WISC and WAIS with educable Mentally Retarded Negroes. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 19:101-102.
- Wechsler, David  
1958 Measurement and Appraisal of Adult Intelligence (Fourth ed.). Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins.
- Weinstein, Eugene  
1969 The Development of Interpersonal Competence. *In Handbook of Socialization Theory and Practice*. D. A. Goslin, ed. Pp. 753-775. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Weiss, L. W.  
1966 Concentration and Labor Earnings. *American Economic Review* 1:96-117.
- Wheeler, L., et al.  
1969 Factors Determining Choice of a Comparison Other. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 5:219-232.
- Wilensky, Harold  
1961 Orderly Careers and Social Participation. *American Sociological Review* 26:521-539.
- Williams, Robin  
1956 American Society: A Sociological Interpretation. New York: Knopf.
- Wolfensberger, Wolf  
1967 Vocational Preparation and Occupation. *In Mental Retardation*. A. Baumeister, ed. Pp. 232-273. Chicago: Aldine.
- Yinger, J. Milton  
1969 A Structural Examination of Religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8:88-99.
- Yudin, L. W.  
1966 Formal Thought in Adolescence as a Function of Intelligence. *Child Development* 37:697-708.

- Zerhart, P.  
1975     Comments. In Labor in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors. D. Hamermesh, ed. Pp. 260. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zigler, E.  
1973     Why Retarded Children do not Perform up to the Level of Their Ability. In Theories of Cognitive Development. R. Allen, A. Cortazzo, and R. Toister, eds. Pp. 13-35. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press.
- Zigler, E. and S. Harter  
1969     The Socialization of the Mentally Retarded. In Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research. David Goslin, ed. Pp. 1065-1102. Chicago: Rand McNally.