THE USE OF NEIGHBORHOODS BY MOTHERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

by

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ABSTRACT

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City planners have devoted little attention to the domestic side of urban life. In particular, they have almost ignored the question how to design neighborhoods to accommodate mothers and young children. This paper tries to develop some criteria for such design.

Obviously, different kinds of families will prefer different types of neighborhoods. The paper therefore discusses what kinds of families there are. One important distinction is that some people are more "familistic", others more "individualistic". Three components of familism are described. First, familistic people have stronger ties to relatives outside their own nuclear families. Second, familistic mothers usually want less independence from their children than individualistic mothers want. And third, familistic parents raise their children to adjust to the family group, not to go as individuals into the world outside. In all three respects, past studies have shown that working-class people are usually more familistic than middle-class people.

The next question is what kinds of neighborhoods are best suited for familists and individualists. Sociologists have often written that suburban neighborhoods are highly familistic. However, this paper reviews some of the sociological literature, and rejects the notion of suburban familism. Hypotheses are developed, arguing that suburbs are actually less advantageous for familism, for three reasons. First, at low densities it is more difficult for relatives to live nearby. Second, suburbs offer less for mothers and children to do together, and spacious yards make maternal supervision superfluous. Third, young children who spend much time playing unsupervised in suburban yards are more likely to meet friends outside the family, and therefore their personalities have more opportunity to develop apart from their mothers.

These hypotheses are tested with data from a small survey of mothers of preschool children in three neighborhoods of metropolitan Boston. The survey does show that middle-class mothers are more individualistic, that suburbs favor individualism, and that middle-class mothers are therefore more satisfied with the suburbs than with the city. The survey does not support the hypothesis that working-class

mothers are happier in the city than middle-class mothers, but apparently the reason is that the samples were not drawn from comparable urban neighborhoods.

Though suburbs may be the best kind of existing neighborhood to accommodate the individualistic relationships between middle-class mothers and children, they are not the best neighborhood imaginable for this purpose. The findings imply that middle-class mothers of young children might prefer a medium-density development with a communal back yard for about fifty dwellings, perhaps owned as a condominium. Working-class mothers might prefer slightly higher densities, and private rather than communal outdoor space.

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INTRODUCTION

Neighborhoods, if they are planned at all, are seldom planned for the benefit of children. Since children lack both economic and political power, neither real estate developers nor city planners need pay any attention to them. No one expects children to understand or express their own best interests, anyway. Even the experts who write about children's development know little or nothing about the optimum physical environment for children. (Hoffman and Hoffman)

In practice, it is parents who decide where children will live. But since parents and children live together, the parents' choice of neighborhood, if they have a choice, depends heavily on their own wants and needs. The children are not consulted, though their needs, as interpreted by the parents, presumably influence the decision. It seems likely, however, that parents' interpretation of children's needs will be biased toward agreement with the parents' own desires. Mothers are probably reluctant to consider their children's interests as independent from their own, and they might have difficulty answering the question whether they or their children derive more benefit from their neighborhood. For instance, the mothers of the children who play on the sidewalks of lower Manhattan could not really say that their children were better off than children in the spacious suburbs. Nor could Jane Jacobs herself, who described this neighborhood (Jacobs, p. 78), be sure that her children need the teeming

city as much as she does. Conversely, suburban mothers could not be certain that their children develop better in barren back yards than amid urban excitement and diversity.

This paper reports an attempt to discover some of the advantages and disadvantages of different kinds of neighborhoods for raising children. It is a tentative and small attempt to develop criteria for designing neighborhoods to benefit children. The most direct ways to develop such criteria would have been either to conduct long-term experiments with real children in controlled environments, or to study children now living in actual neighborhoods. However, the first method would have taken too much time, and the second method would have required more direct access to children than was available. Therefore, the technique chosen was to survey mothers in different neighborhoods. And because mothers probably do not really know how the neighborhood affects their children, the survey had to focus on the mothers rather than on the children. The main question became, not the effects of neighborhoods upon children's development, but the effects of neighborhoods upon the relationship between mothers and children.

Obviously, neighborhoods do not determine the relationship between mothers and children. But certain kinds of neighborhood may impede or facilitate certain kinds of relationship. And although there is an infinite number of ways to classify mother-child relationships, it should be

possible to find a classification that is both relevant to the physical environment and important to mothers and children. This paper considers one such fundamental dimension, which may be called familism versus individualism. The next section of the paper will define this concept, and will discuss three ways in which the working class is more familistic than the middle class. The paper will then look critically at some of the literature on suburbia, and will argue that suburbs should not be considered familistic. Next, the results of the survey will be presented, to show that suburbs favor individualistic mother-child relationships, which are common in the middle class, while urban neighborhoods favor the familism of the working class. Finally, there will be a brief description of the kind of neighborhood which could be built to eliminate the disadvantages of existing suburbs for the individualistic middle class, and also a description of the kind of neighborhood which would be more suitable than present urban neighborhoods for the familistic working class.

FAMILISM: CLASS DIFFERENCES

Familism is a characteristic of people who direct their time, energy, and attention toward the interests of their families, rather than toward their own interests or the interests of people outside their families. At the same time, the interests of familistic people are served by members

of their families, rather than by people outside. A familistic person is more likely than an individualistic person to make sacrifices for his family, but this does not mean he is less selfish, because he also expects more from his family in return.

Rogers and Sebald have found that familism has two separate components. They distinguish between family integration, i.e. the degree to which a person is oriented toward maximizing the welfare of others in his nuclear family, and kinship orientation, i.e. the degree to which he fulfills the expectations of his extended family. They measure family integration by the frequency of joint decision-making and joint participation in leisure activities by husbands and wives. Kinship orientation, on the other hand, is measured by the amount of interaction, joint participation, and exchange of goods and services with relatives other than spouse or children. Studies with several samples have shown no significant statistical correlation between these two forms of familism. This is really not surprising, since the claims of the nuclear family are quite independent of obligations to the extended family, and sometimes they clearly conflict. (Dore, pp. 97-99, 125-130)

This section of the paper, therefore, will discuss three components of familism. The first is kinship orientation, as Rogers and Sebald defined it. The second and third are maternal independence and children's autonomy. These two

variables are related to nuclear family integration, especially to mother-child relationships. The three variables will now be defined, and class differences discussed.

Kinship Orientation: The Extended Family

The normal family in Western industrial societies has relatively weak kinship orientation. Typically, industrialization coincides with the emergence of the conjugal family system. The basic characteristic of this system is the exclusion of blood relatives and in-laws from people's everyday affairs. (Goode, pp. 8-9) This exclusion means, for example, that people move away from their parents after marriage, that parents do not determine the choice of spouse, that the relatives of one spouse are not necessarily more important than the relatives of the other, and that the emotional relationships among husband, wife, and children are comparatively intense.

A fact of considerable importance to the planning of neighborhoods in Western industrial countries is that social classes differ in the extent to which they adopt the conjugal family system. Total separation from extended families is rare in any social class, but several studies have shown that the degree of separation is greater in the middle class than in the working class, and that the working class has stronger kinship orientation than the middle class. Dotson showed in 1950 the importance of relatives in the

social life of the working class. And later studies in both the United States and England have shown that married people in the working class are more likely both to live near (Litwak; Sussman; Willmott and Young 1960, pp. 173-177) and to interact with (Cavan; Willmott and Young 1960, pp. 173-177; Rainwater and others, pp. 103-114) their parents and siblings than are married people in the middle class. Herbert Gans even considers this the distinguishing difference between the two classes:

> "Perhaps the most important - or at least the most visible - difference between the classes is one of family structure. The working-class subculture is distinguished by the dominant role of the family circle. Its way of life is based on social relationships amidst relatives..." (p. 244)

> "The middle-class subculture is built around the nuclear family and its desire to make its way in the larger society. Although the family circle may exist, it plays only a secondary role... Contact with close relatives is maintained, but even they participate in a subordinate role. Individuals derive most of their social and emotional gratifications from the nuclear family itself. ... The professional upper-middle-class culture is also organized around the nuclear family..." (p. 247)

Though this difference in kinship orientation is an empirically demonstrated fact, a fact has little reliability or practical utility unless it can be explained. Therefore an explanation will now be offered, in terms of need, ethnicity, and mobility.

Perhaps the main reason why the working class maintains stronger ties with extended relatives is greater need. Interaction among working-class kin consists not only of friendly visiting, but also of mutual aid and solace. (Young and Willmott 1957, pp. 190-194) Relatives help each other cope with the physical and psychological stresses caused by limited

resources and occasional unemployment, which are much smaller problems for the middle class.

The class difference in kinship orientation may also be due in part to ethnic differences. The description by Gans of working-class kinship orientation depends heavily on his observation of the Italian community in Boston's West End, and Cavan's conclusions similarly rest upon a study of Italians in New Haven. In these cases, strong kinship orientation may result not from class position but from the familistic traditions of peasants in southern Italy. All studies of southern Italy and Sicily show that social life centers almost exclusively around the family circle of relatives, and that this has traditionally been so. (Campisi; Gans, pp. 200-201) Similarly, Bardis has found that students from the rural Greek Peloponnesus scored significantly higher on his familism scale than did several groups of Protestant students in the United States. (Bardis 1959)

This difference in kinship orientation between southern Europeans and Anglo-Saxon Protestants may be traditional. Accounts of European travelers to the United States between 1800 and 1850 indicate that people even then were relatively free to marry whom they desired, and to leave their parents when adult. One Frenchman marveled:

"As soon as they have their growth, the Yankees whose spirit now predominates in the Union quit their parents, never to return, as naturally and with as little emotion as young birds..." (Furstenberg)

This lack of strong kinship orientation seems to have been

imported from northern Europe. The immigrants who crossed the Atlantic before 1850 to become "Old Americans" came mostly from areas in northern Europe where "single-family homesteads were the rule." (Mogey) The present differences in kinship orientation between some working-class ethnic and some middle-class ethnic groups can therefore be traced back into European history, and are independent of class.

However, ethnicity is not the whole story. For instance, middle-class Italians probably have weaker kinship orientation than working-class Italians, although no hard evidence supports this assertion. But the association between class and kinship orientation has been clearly shown in London, where ethnicity is surely irrelevant. More explanation therefore is needed.

One explanation can be derived from the theory that the nuclear family is better adapted than the extended family to an industrial economy. Development of a conjugal family system may facilitate industrialization because it frees people from the ascribed roles and inherited occupations of the extended family, allowing workers to be drawn by higher wages to occupations most in need of labor, and to be hired and promoted according to what they can do rather than who they are. (Goode, pp. 10-15) Sometimes both industrialization and the development of the conjugal family system are connected with the same political or religious ideology, for instance the Protestant ethic in English history. (Pitts; Goode, p. 19) But whether ideologically motivated or not, the people who

leave their extended families are the ones who fit in best with the industrial system. Therefore it is perhaps not surprising that the middle class in industrial societies, i.e. those who fit in best with the economic system, have a weaker kinship orientation.

It is possible, however, that kinship orientation, which now is stronger in the working class, used to be stronger in the middle class. Goode has argued that, in societies just undergoing industrialization, the "peasants and primitives" are under strong pressure to renounce their extended families, but the middle class can actually use the extended family to exploit the new economic opportunities. (p. 13) If this is true, it indicates that those English and American peasants and proletarians who did take advantage of industrialization, and who managed to move up into the new, industrial middle class, were those who did renounce their extended families. Since most members of the contemporary middle class are descendants of these upwardly mobile peasants and proletarians, rather than descendants of the familistic, preindustrial middle class, this explains why the contemporary middle class has weaker kinship orientation than the contemporary working class, whose peasant ancestors were not mobile. In short, social mobility weakened extended families. (Willmott and Young 1960, p. 83) Though a study by Litwak has suggested that mobility in postindustrial societies no longer has this effect, Litwak

did find that the working class still lives closer to relatives than does the middle class.

In sum, the working class has stronger kinship orientation than the middle class, because it has greater need for aid from relatives, because it contains more ethnic groups with familistic traditions, and because it has been less socially mobile. This implies that working-class mothers will want to raise their children in neighborhoods where their relatives live nearby.

Maternal Independence

The difference in familism between the middle and working classes is apparent not only in relationships with relatives but also within the nuclear family itself. Specifically, middle-class mothers, or at least upper-middle-class mothers, more often have some degree of independence from their children than do their working-class counterparts. The freer hand which working-class husbands allow their wives in matters concerning the children and the home increases the women's responsibility, and ties them more strongly to maternal and domestic duties. (Besner; Rainwater and others, pp. 76-87) In contrast, middle-class husbands often help their wives with household chores, participate in making decisions about the children, and encourage the women to do things outside the home. (Blood; Nye)

Working-class wives are more strongly tied to maternal

duties not only because their husbands want them to be, but also because this is what they themselves want. The exclusively maternal motivation of working-class wives was demonstrated in a study by Rainwater and others. They found that

"The working class wife and mother lives her life closely tied to the day-to-day experiences within the family, and her children and her husband occupy her energies and emotions, her inner life and her routine behaviors much more extensively than is true for the middle class woman..." (p. 102)

Because the working-class mother lives almost exclusively within the family, her very identity as a person depends on her children. She finds it difficult to have an identity apart from that of a mother. (p. 91) When asked, "What would you say is the best thing that ever happened to you?", a large proportion of working-class women say "having children". (p. 88) Likewise, when asked what they would most like to be if a magician could change them into something other than a human being, many working-class women indicate a wish to continue playing a maternal role. One wanted to be "The bed my children lay on so I could still be close to them." Another said, "A fairy, so I could watch over the kids and other people." In contrast, middle-class women more often want individual freedom and happiness. They said things like, "A bird because it can fly wherever it wants and see the world", "A cloud because it is so light and frothy and free", or "A flower that blooms for years". (pp. 49-50) Middle-class women of course take motherhood very seriously,

but they may also want to be career women, companions to their husbands, and gracious ladies. In contrast, motherhood is frequently the only role that working-class women could want or imagine.

An example of middle-class mothers' more frequent desire and ability to play other roles is the fact that they more often work when they do not have to. A sample survey of working wives in the United States showed that those with professional or managerial occupations, and those whose husbands had high incomes, more often said they worked because of their need to accomplish something outside the home or because they wanted to meet people or occupy their time, rather than because they had to make money. (Sobol) Moreover, a study of more than two hundred married English women in the professions showed that financial motivation was even less important for those who had children. (Myrdal and Klein, p. 86) Apparently, middle-class mothers who work do so not because their families need money, but rather because they want an economic as well as a maternal role. Their motives are therefore individualistic, not familistic. This probably explains why a study in France showed that women whose husbands work in the "liberal professions", as compared to women whose husbands are "employees" or "industrial workers", less often let the presence of children deter them from working. (Myrdal and Klein, p. 47)

To treat maternal participation in the labor force, in

itself, as a negative index of familism, would be misleading. The fact is that the mothers most likely to work are those whose husbands are absent; and among mothers with husbands present those whose husbands make less money are more likely to work. (U.S. Women's Bureau, pp. 29, 37) It is not surprising, therefore, that women in general give "money" as their main reason for working. (Hoffman) Indeed, the studies mentioned above showed that only middle-class mothers work mainly for non-monetary reasons. Working-class mothers, though they work more frequently than middle-class mothers, go to work because their families need money. Typically, working-class girls hope not to work after marriage. (Myrdal and Klein, p. 9) They feel their place is in the home, with the children, and they go to work only to satisfy the children's needs.

The fact that middle-class women more often desire independence seems tied to the fact that they have more education. In both the United States (U.S. Women's Bureau, p. 193) and France (Myrdal and Klein, p. 48), the rate of participation in the labor force is higher among women with more education. This remains true among mothers of young children. (U.S. Women's Bureau, p. 47) Interestingly, a study in Seattle showed that more education is associated with a higher rate of labor force participation among mothers whose husbands have working-class occupations. (Myers) Education raises women's level of aspiration, broadens

their awareness, and equips them to use their intelligence in economically productive ways. In short, it affects women just as it affects men.

Since middle-class mothers are seldom obliged to work by their families' financial needs, they may face a difficult role-conflict if they want to work. (Ginzberg) Especially if their children are not yet in school, they must choose between staying home to care for them and going out to pursue their own interests. This is a unique dilemma of middle-class mothers in industrial societies. In preindustrial economies women work at home. (Myrdal and Klein, pp. 1-6) Therefore, women can play a productive role, sometimes even converting their produce into cash for their own needs, but this does not conflict with their maternal role. (LeVine and LeVine) Industrialization, however, renders the domestic production of household goods obsolete, and removes all productive work from the home. This creates a dilemma for middle-class women. Since their children will not suffer if they do not go out to work, and since the children in fact probably benefit from their presence at home, these women often must try to reconcile a conflict between their children and their careers.

In summary, middle-class women, because of their own education and their husbands' encouragement, more often have independent roles apart from their children. In contrast, working-class women more often aspire only to motherhood.

Paradoxically, middle-class women have more inclination and training to pursue careers, but they also have less justification for leaving the children, since their families do not need the money. Middle-class mothers therefore need neighborhoods which minimize the conflict between their maternal roles and their independent roles. Working-class women only need neighborhoods which enhance their roles as mothers.

Autonomy as a Goal of Child-Raising

Just as middle-class mothers more often want independence for themselves, they more often value autonomy for their children. Middle-class mothers are more likely to say that young children should be curious, happy, considerate, well-rounded, and self-controlled. On the other hand, more working-class mothers say children should be obedient, upright, neat, and clean. (Kantor and others; Kohn 1959; Rainwater and others, p. 94) Urie Bronfenbrenner's critical review of child-raising studies done between 1928 and 1957 revealed that a middle-class mother "has higher expectations for the child. The middle-class youngster is expected to learn to take care of himself earlier, to accept more responsibilities about the home, and - above all - to progress further in school." Toward this end, middle-class parents use more psychological than physical punishment; this is "more likely to bring about the development of internalized values and controls." Bronfenbrenner found, in sum, that

"Over the entire 25-year period studied, parent-child relationships in the middle class are consistently reported as more acceptant and equalitarian, while those in the working class are oriented toward maintaining order and obedience."

It should be noted that mothers who want their children to be autonomous do not necessarily love them any more or any less than do mothers who exercise direct control over their children's behavior. (Schaefer)

The differences in goals and methods for raising young children reflect differences in the conditions of life for the two classes. Middle-class parents may not have to worry about such things as their children's neatness and cleanliness because their larger and more stable incomes allow them to take for granted the respectability for which the working class must strive. (Beshers, pp. 137-138) On the other hand, middle-class parents must stress self-control and curiosity because they intend that their children enter middle-class occupations, which require more individual initiative and self-direction than the occupations of manual workers, which are subject to more standardized and direct supervision. (Kohn 1963) In fact, among mothers whose husbands have working-class occupations, those who themselves work at white-collar jobs do have more middle-class attitudes toward raising children than those who work at more menial jobs. (Kohn 1959) In addition to income and occupation, differences in education also influence child-raising. Since middle-class women are more educated, they

more often can "deal with the subjective and the ideational." They can therefore use psychological discipline to manipulate their children's motives and feelings, rather than merely using physical discipline to control their overt behavior. (Kohn 1963) Such manipulation inculcates principles of behavior, and creates more autonomous children. Finally, the greater concern of working-class mothers for "maintaining order and obedience" may reflect the more crowded living conditions of this class.

In short, working-class mothers want their children to obey them. Middle-class mothers, though of course they also want their children to do the right things, more often want them to be self-regulating, or autonomous. They would therefore prefer neighborhoods with plenty of wholesome activities for the children to do on their own. Working-class mothers, on the other hand, would be less enthusiastic about their children participating in activities which they themselves did not control.

Summary and Prospects

Mother-child relationships in the middle class are different than in the working class. First of all, middle-class mothers have fewer relatives nearby, and therefore they less often have someone to help them with the children. Secondly, many middle-class mothers face a conflict between their maternal responsibilities and their desire to have a

career or some other independent role apart from their children. Working-class women seldom confront this dilemma, because they usually want only to be mothers, and if they do go out to work, they not only may have relatives nearby to care for the children, but they also know that their children would suffer if they did not earn money. The third difference is that working-class mothers want their children to obey them, and to depend on them for almost everything, including judgments of right and wrong. In contrast, middle-class mothers are less anxious to dominate their children's everyday lives, just as they do not want their own lives to be completely determined by the children.

What is the likelihood that these class differences will persist in the future? The difference in kinship orientation will probably persist, but it may diminish. It is likely to persist because occupational and geographic mobility is less frequent among the working class, so kinship ties are subjected to less strain. However, as the conditions of life are made more secure for the working class by means such as the guaranteed annual wage recently won by the United Automobile Workers, the need for strong ties with extended relatives will decrease. Moreover, as families in the middle class learn to cope with and even encourage mobility, it will become less damaging to extended family ties. Therefore working-class people will probably continue to live nearer their relatives, but actual visiting and mutual aid

may diminish and become no more common than in the middle class. If so, then working-class mothers may no longer have the advantage of more frequently receiving relatives' help with the children.

The difference in maternal independence will probably persist for many years. Indeed, in the next decade or two it is likely that working-class mothers will devote even more of their time directly to their children, as rising incomes reduce the need for them to work. In the very long run, perhaps, improved communications will permit women to work at home, thus eliminating the middle-class conflict between career and children. Also in the very long run increasing education may stimulate most women to follow careers. The proportion of women older than twenty who were enrolled in school increased from 5.4% in 1950 to 15.4% in 1964. But at the same time, only 6.5% of all women in 1964 had completed college. (U.S. Women's Bureau, pp. 172, 175) Obviously, it will take several decades before higher education will reach a majority of women. Even then, middle-class women will have more college degrees than working-class women, and more of their own interests to satisfy in addition to their children's demands.

Finally, this educational difference will help perpetuate the class difference in goals and methods for raising children. Better educated middle-class mothers will continue to pay more attention to their children's motives and

feelings, in order that the children may become autonomous by internalizing the right principles of behavior. Moreover, the difference between middle-class and working-class occupations also seems likely to persist; even if working-class jobs become less manual and more technical, while middle-class occupations become less entrepreneurial and more bureaucratic, there will always be some people on one side of the machines and some people on the other. Consequently, middle-class children still will be trained to take initiative and participate in setting their own standards, while working-class children will learn to depend on rules their mothers impose.

THE MYTH OF SUBURBAN FAMILISM

There are several kinds of suburbs. This discussion will deal only with low-density, residential suburbs. (Schnore) These are municipalities or parts of municipalities or unincorporated areas, from which most heads of families must depart each day to go to work, and in which most dwellings are detached houses with at least ten thousand square feet of land. This type of suburb is usually inhabited by middle-class people. (Duncan and Duncan; Duncan and Reiss; Dobriner, p. 48) Therefore they should be less familistic than working-class neighborhoods in industrial suburbs or central cities. That is, inhabitants of low-density, residential suburbs should have weaker ties with extended relatives, and

should place higher value on independence for mothers and autonomy for children. The testing of these hypotheses will be reported in the next section of this paper. The remainder of this section will try to refute previous arguments that suburbs are actually more familistic than cities.

Some of these previous arguments have been based on findings by several sociologists who asked people why they moved to the suburbs. All have found that people give "better for children" at least as often as any other reason. (Dobriner, p. 64) This would seem to show that suburbs attract familists. Even the fact that some other studies have found many suburbanites dissatisfied with the lack of space or facilities for children's recreation would not contradict this conclusion. (Benson and others; Martin) Parents might move to the suburbs because they thought the new environment would be better for the children, even if some of them became disillusioned later.

However, the study which at first seems the most convincing in showing suburbanites to be more familistic, actually reveals upon a second reading that the apparently familistic reasons why people move to the suburbs are not purely child-centered at all. This is the 1956 study by Wendell Bell, where he set out to prove that

> "the move to the suburbs expresses an attempt to find a location in which to conduct family life which is more suitable than that offered by central cities, i.e., that persons moving to the suburbs are principally those who have chosen familism as an important element of their life styles as over against career or consumership."

Bell asked two hundred residents in two rapidly growing suburbs of Chicago why they had moved to the suburbs. Of all the reasons given (some gave several), 81% referred to the advantages of suburbs for children, 77% were ways in which life would be generally more enjoyable, 21% had to do with the husband's job, 14% were about being near relatives, and 3% were miscellaneous. As in the other studies, "better for children" was the most commonly stated reason.

People who claimed suburbs were better for children were then asked why. Of all the answers to this question, Bell found 20% referring to the extra space outside the house, 14% to extra space inside the house, 13% to "the outdoors", 12% to less traffic, 10% to better schools, 9% to the presence of "nice" children, 6% to the cleanliness of the neighborhood, and the rest to other things less frequently mentioned. In general, physical reasons were cited nearly three times as often as social reasons. Bell seems convinced that these supposed advantages really do make the suburbs better for children.

"More space outside the house with less traffic and cleaner areas were cited as allowing the children to play out of doors 'like children should', with much less worry and supervision on the part of the parents. Also, the fresh air, sunshine, and other features of 'the outdoors' were mentioned as providing a 'more healthy' life for the children. Living in a single-family detached house - instead of next to, above, or below other persons as in an apartment - was cited as giving the children more freedom to run and play in the house without the constant repressive demands of the parents. Also, the additional space inside the house, according to the respondents, allows the children to have a place of their own within the house, and permits them to 'be children' without constantly 'being on top' of their parents. Naps are less interfered with in the quiet of the suburbs."

Bell's report would seem to indicate that suburbs do have advantages for children. But a second reading reveals that these are also advantages for the parents. The suburbs are "better for children" mainly because they make it easier for parents to take care of them. City children can get outdoors just as much as suburban children, so the neighborhoods are equally salubrious for the children; the main difference is that city neighborhoods less often permit children to be sent outside without supervision. That is, children in the suburbs require less maternal attention. Thus, of all the reasons Bell's respondents gave for saying suburbs were better for children, more than a third had to do with safe, clean, outdoor space, and the main advantage of this space is that it allows for "much less worry and supervision on the part of the parents." Likewise, extra space inside the house is a blessing because it keeps the children from "constantly 'being on top' of their parents." And the beauty of "the outdoors" is something the parents enjoy at least as much as the children, as Mowrer has argued:

> "... the most common reason given by interviewees for moving to the suburban homes is that here is a better place in which to rear children. But when he is asked to explain why suburbia is a better place in which to rear children, the reasons he gives apply equally as well to himself as to his child. Fresh air and sunshine, cultural opportunities, absence of disturbing noises, more spacious homes, more friendly contacts, places for pets, etc., are attributes which recognize no age differentials. Likewise less crowded conditions with more space for play are less restrictive of adult as well as of child behavior."

In short, the main reason why suburban parents prefer the

suburbs for raising children is apparently that suburban spaciousness, aside from being intrinsically more pleasant, allows mothers and children to be more independent of each other. Thus suburbs facilitate individualistic mother-child relationships. But this is not purely an advantage for the children. The only purely child-centered advantages mentioned by Bell's respondents were better schools and "nice" children. While neither of these features requires any sacrifice or effort from the parents on behalf of the children, neither represents a saving in parental effort, either. But these purely child-centered advantages amounted to less than one fifth of all the benefits mentioned.

Previous arguments that suburbs are more familistic have been based not only on people's stated reasons for moving to suburbs, which have just been discredited, but also upon certain Census data, which will now be shown to be irrelevant. Three intercorrelated Census variables have been considered an index of familism. These variables are the crude fertility ratio, the proportion of detached houses, and the rate of female participation in the labor force. (Greer, pp. 77-85; Dobriner, pp. 19-20; Beshers, pp. 90-102) Fertility is the number of children younger than five in a given area, divided by the number of women between twenty and forty-four; this ratio tends to be higher in suburbs. So does the proportion of single-family houses. The proportion of women who work tends to be lower. However, as will now be shown,

the construct of these three variables really implies nothing about the quality of mother-child relationships.

First, to say that suburbs are more familistic because they contain more detached dwellings is not very instructive, since suburbs are defined as places with more detached dwellings. Does familism follow from the definition of suburbs? Only in the symbolic sense that a detached dwelling, by separating a family from work and from other families, somehow exalts or enhances it. And there is no evidence that this symbolic emphasis exists anywhere but in the minds of sociologists. Besides, regardless of any symbolic meaning for the nuclear family, low density obviously hinders interaction within the extended family, by making it more difficult for relatives to live near each other. Therefore, detached houses are not intrinsically familistic. Indeed, as suggested above, the main virtue of houses with yards apparently is that they facilitate individualistic, rather than familistic, relationships between mothers and children.

High fertility is an equally poor index of familism. First of all, high suburban fertility ratios show not that families are much larger in the suburbs, but only that childless women seldom live there. Unmarried women have no need for big, detached houses, so they almost always live in central cities. (Duncan and Reiss) But single persons should not be counted in comparisons of urban and suburban familism, since in discussing relationships within families

it is relevant to consider only the population within families. Thus, when single people are excluded and only the family population is considered, the average suburban family turns out to have 1.4 children younger than eighteen, and the average family in central cities has 1.2. These figures are the same for 1950 and 1966. (Duncan and Reiss; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1967) Even this small difference would partly disappear if young, childless couples were not included in the family population. Such couples may seldom want, and can rarely afford, a house in the suburbs; therefore they are concentrated in cities. In short, the difference in fertility ratio between suburbs and central cities reflects only the lack of small dwellings in the suburbs, which prevents many single women and childless couples from living there. If comparison were restricted to married women of the same age, instead of all women of child-bearing age, then the difference between urban and suburban fertility might disappear altogether. Finally, even if some difference did remain, it would be difficult to interpret. Parents who have only one or two children may value them even more than parents who have many. Indeed, they may intentionally have fewer children so that they can devote more time and resources to each child. (Ogburn and Nimkoff, pp. 209-211) Therefore, crude fertility ratios not only reveal little about the size of urban and suburban families, they also fail to show anything at all about the quality of mother-child relationships.

The third putative index of familism is female participation in the labor force; this index is no better than the other two. First of all, it is higher in areas with more single and childless women, since these are more likely to work than women with children. (U.S. Women's Bureau, p. 24) Since single and childless women, as argued above, tend not to live in suburbs, the scarcity of working women in the suburbs once again largely reflects the lack of small dwellings. It also reflects the fact that suburban families have higher incomes, so fewer mothers need to work. But, as pointed out earlier, mothers who work to help feed their families cannot be considered less familistic than middle-class mothers who stay home. Therefore, the lower rate of labor force participation by suburban mothers does not show that suburban mothers are more familistic. Indeed, the previous discussion of maternal independence argued that middle-class women are actually less willing to renounce careers and other independent roles when they become mothers. Thus the lower rate of labor force participation merely shows that suburbs do not attract single women, childless couples, or families of modest means.

In summary, previous arguments that people in the suburbs are more familistic seem incorrect. Higher fertility ratios and lower rates of female participation in the labor force show only that suburban housing is not suited for single women, childless couples, or families of modest means.

This obviously implies nothing about suburban mothers being more familistic. To the contrary, low residential density should actually inhibit kinship orientation, by making it more difficult for relatives to live nearby. Moreover, though suburbanites say their neighborhoods are better for children, the main advantage of suburbs is outdoor space, and this is most advantageous to mothers who want an individualistic relationship with their children. The next section will now present some support for these new hypotheses.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS

This section will report and interpret some survey results which show that the middle class is in some ways less familistic than the working class; that suburbs favor individualistic mother-child relationships; that middle-class mothers are therefore happier in the suburbs than in the city; and, finally, that working-class mothers should therefore be happier in the city than middle-class mothers.

About twenty mothers were surveyed in each of three neighborhoods. Because the samples are so small, this survey can really be considered only a pilot study. The three neighborhoods are in Lexington, Brookline, and Somerville, three municipalities in the area of Boston. They are, respectively, a middle-class suburb, a middle-class urban town, and a working-class city. I attempted

to choose areas such that the Brookline neighborhood would be similar in socioeconomic status to the Lexington neighborhood but comparable in housing density to the Somerville neighborhood. Having chosen the three neighborhoods, I began looking for children. I wanted only preschool children, ages three and four. The reason was that for children younger than three the neighborhood is irrelevant, and for children older than four the quality of the local schools, which is independent of neighborhood design, has overriding importance. Therefore, in each neighborhood I simply walked from door to door, up and down the streets, asking all who answered if they had preschool children, or if they knew any neighbors who did. If I found no one in, I did not call back unless a neighbor had told me of a preschool child at that address, in which case I would call back until I found someone in. Having found a house with a three or four year-old child, I left a questionnaire with the mother. After a week or two I came back to pick up the form and answer questions about it. If the mother had not yet filled it out, I kept coming back or telephoning until she either handed it to me, mailed it, or told me she did not intend to complete it.

This procedure produced a somewhat biased sample. In Lexington everyone cooperated, so there was no bias. In Brookline two mothers of preschool children refused to take questionnaires, and two took questionnaires but did

not return them. This amounted to a nonresponse rate among known mothers of preschool children of twenty percent, but the four noncompliant mothers did not differ in any obvious way from the sixteen who complied. However, in Somerville people were generally less cooperative, and I never found out with certainty, as I had in Brookline and Lexington, exactly how many three and four year-olds were in the neighborhood and where they lived. More people were out, and I did not call back. Many houses lacked doorbells or public front doors. Moreover, about five people with preschool children would not or could not take questionnaires, and another five took but did not return them, so the nonresponse rate among known mothers of preschool children was almost forty percent. These nonrespondents, and probably those who were not in or who lacked doorbells, seemed to include more working mothers, broken or unstable families, and recent immigrants with poor English, than did the groupd who cooperated. This means that the sample from this working-class neighborhood includes fewer families from the lower-class than from the middle-class fringe.

There were also some problems with the questionnaire (see appendix), because it was not pretested. The most serious problem was seasonal variation. Several questions asked about a typical day, and the answers would obviously depend on the season of the year. I did not anticipate this problem in composing the questionnaire, but I discov-

ered it from the very first respondent. Subsequently, I explained the problem to all respondents, and asked them either to give separate answers for different seasons or to give average answers for the whole year. Everyone seemed to understand. However, because of confusion about seasonal variation, some answers could not be converted into averages for the whole year. An even larger group of answers, because of the sheer difficulty of the questions about a typical day, were not internally consistent. Therefore, in tabulating the answers to these questions, about forty percent of the questionnaires from Lexington had to be excluded, as did more than thirty percent of those from Brookline and about ten percent from Somerville. Apparently, mothers in Somerville have a more reliable sense of how their children spend their time.

The three neighborhoods differ sharply in appearance and atmosphere. In Lexington the houses are strung along a few curving streets which loop off from a rural road a couple of miles from the center of town. Woods border some of the back yards, and occasionally crowd around into the large front yards as well. The houses are substantial and sophisticated. Built between 1956 and 1966, most are worth more than $40,000. Scandinavian styles outnumber colonial, and the rolling terrain creates pleasant variations in siting. Automobiles are rare, as are pedestrians, at least in late winter. All is quiet and safe.

The Brookline neighborhood is less than half a mile from a main street with a trolley line. The neighborhood has no sharp edges, but it has a definite center. The center is a public playground, an acre of grass on top of a hill, from which streets curve down in four directions. Big, stately houses of wood, stucco, and Georgian brick stand on the brow of the hill. The lower slopes are dense with wooden three-deckers and three-storey brick apartment buildings. Many of these have tiny yards in back. Cars are surprisingly frequent on the winding streets, and there are a few elderly pedestrians. The neighborhood is clean, quiet, and solid.

In Somerville, the sample neighborhood lies within a triangle of three arterial streets. The topography is not flat, but there is no well-defined hill, and the streets are rectilinear. The houses here are old, as in Brookline, but they are less substantial, and occasional buildings are empty and decayed. Most dwellings are in multifamily wooden structures, but there are also some small brick apartments. Nearly all the buildings have small yards. There is a park, as in Brookline, but this one is larger, has a dirt surface, and seems more suited for older children to play ball than for toddlers and their mothers. In the neighborhood are grocery stores, variety stores, and a couple of bars, two public elementary schools, a Catholic school, and an American Legion post. At night the older

children gather on the street corners, but during the day both cars and pedestrians are rare. The neighborhood is shabby and bleak.

Tables 1 and 2 present measures of some of these physical characteristics, and also reveal the social characteristics which underlie the differences in neighborhood appearance and atmosphere. Lexington and Brookline are clearly shown to be middle-class areas; their residents are wealthier, better educated, and more often employed in middle-class occupations than the people in Somerville. The Brookline population is quite different from the Lexington population, however. It contains many elderly people, and a high proportion of Russian Jews. In its high ethnicity, the Brookline neighborhood is more similar to Somerville, which has many Irish and Italian Catholics.

Brookline families have fewer children than Lexington and Somerville families. Lexington has the highest concentration of three and four year-olds per dwelling. But the lower density of the Lexington neighborhood allows more outdoor space for each three or four year-old than in the other neighborhoods. Brookline's preschoolers have the next most open space, because there are so few of them. In Somerville, where each building contains many small dwellings and each dwelling has a large number of children, the three and four year-olds have the least space, both indoors and out.

TABLE 1

Selected Characteristics in 1960 of the Census Tracts Containing the Sample Neighborhoods

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Occupations of employed males:			
Prof., tech., managers	48%	46%	7%
Clerical, sales	18%	28%	14%
Craftsmen, foremen	17%	11%	18%
Operatives	7%	6%	32%
Service workers, laborers	6%	3%	18%
Occupations of employed females:			
Prof., tech., managers	29%	30%	6%
Clerical, sales	44%	47%	43%
Craftsmen, foremen, operatives	9%	4%	27%
Service workers, laborers	16%	15%	11%
Median family income	$9197	$8355	$5611
Median family income per capita	$2380	$3010	$1610
Median school years completed (of population 25 or older)	12.8	12.5	9.7
Total foreign stock	35%	65%	49%
Irish	3%	3%	11%
Russian	2%	31%	0%
Italian	5%	1%	15%
Canadian	10%	7%	13%
Median age of males	29.6	45.2	28.6
Median age of females	30.7	49.7	30.6
Number of children younger than 18 living with both parents, per married couple	1.7	0.7	1.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1960: Census Tracts, Tables P-1, P-2, P-3, H-1, and H-2

TABLE 2

Selected Characteristics of the Blocks
Comprising the Sample Neighborhoods

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Percent of dwellings occupied by owners	100*	25**	29**
Percent of dwellings in sound condition	100*	98**	75**
Median contract rent for rented dwellings	-	$103**	$49**
Population per dwelling	3.8***	3.1**	3.1**
Median contract rent per person	-	$33**	$16**
Median number of rooms per dwelling	8*	5.7**	5.0**
Median number of rooms per person	2.1***	1.9**	1.6**
Dwellings per gross acre	1****	12****	23****
Dwellings per net acre	1****	15****	30****
Percent of gross acreage covered by buildings	14*	28****	27****
Percent of gross acreage used for streets	14*	20****	23****
Percent of gross acreage left as open space	72*	52****	50****
Number of children aged 3 and 4 per dwelling	0.3*	0.05*	0.1*
Number of children aged 3 and 4 per gross acre	0.3*	0.6*	2.3*
Number of square feet of open space per child aged 3 and 4	100,000*	38,000*	9,000*

Sources:
*estimated from direct observation
**from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1960: City Blocks
***from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1960: Census Tracts
****from Sanborn Map Company

Middle-Class Individualism and Working-Class Familism

Mothers and children in the middle-class neighborhoods of Lexington and Brookline give evidence of being less familistic than those in working-class Somerville. Part of this evidence is in Table 3. Here the most striking fact is that children in Somerville spend a substantially larger part of their time with their mothers. In other words, mothers in Brookline and Lexington spend less time with their children. In spite of the small samples, analysis of variance shows this difference is statistically significant, at a level of probability less than 0.01. Moreover, Table 4 reveals that, despite spending less time with their children, Brookline and Lexington mothers desire more time for themselves at least as often as mothers in Somerville. In other words, the middle-class mothers both want and have more time for their own activities. Therefore Tables 3 and 4 indicate that middle-class mothers and children are less dependent on each other; they have a more individualistic relationship than do mothers and children in the working class.

The amount of time that mothers and children spend together is admittedly a somewhat superficial index of familism. It is possible that a middle-class mother becomes more emotionally involved with her children during the time when they are together, and that she therefore needs more time away from them. It is also possible that since middle-class children internalize more of their parents'

TABLE 3

Mean Percentage of Children's Time Spent in Various Places, Company, and Activities on a "Typical Day"

	Lexington (n = 14)	Brookline (n = 11)	Somerville (n = 14)
Inside own house, with mother	43	45	59
At park, playground, or swimming pool, with mother	3	11	2
In own yard, with mother	7	3	5
Shopping or doing errands, with mother	5	6	6
Visiting friends or relatives, with mother	2	1	5
Other time out of house, with mother	2	1	2
Subtotal: time out of house, with mother	19	22	20
Subtotal: time with mother	62	67	79
Inside own house, without mother	5	7	1
In own yard, without mother	9	6	11
In neighboring yards, without mother	6	1	2
On street or sidewalk, without mother	1	0	2
At park, playground, or swimming pool, without mother	0	6	3
At nursery school	13	10	1
Visiting other children, without mother	4	2	1
Visiting adult friends or relatives, without mother	0	0	0
Other time out of house, without mother	0	1	0
Subtotal: time out of house, without mother	33	26	20
Subtotal: time without mother	38	33	21
Total	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 4

Answers to Question, "Do You Ever Wish You Had More Time for Activities of Your Own?"

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
"Never"	2	0	1
"Very rarely"	7	3	4
"Sometimes"	12	9	8
"Often"	2	4	0

rules, they are actually less autonomous than working-class children, even though they spend less time with their mothers. If these possibilities were true, then the smaller amount of time that middle-class mothers and children spend together would not necessarily imply either greater maternal independence or more autonomy for the children. However, the truth of these possibilities is not self-evident, and would be difficult to test. Therefore the implication of Tables 3 and 4 remains that, at least superficially, middle-class mothers have more independence from their children, and the children have greater autonomy.

Table 3 shows that an important reason why middle-class children spend less time with their mothers is that they go to nursery school. In Brookline and Lexington, every mother except one sends her children to nursery school or plans to send them next year. In Somerville, though, only two children attend. Five Somerville mothers were not interested in nursery school at all. As one mother of six children wrote, "I did not have children to have someone else bring them up." The other nine mothers in Somerville indicated that they

would like to send their children, but nursery school cost too much. However, the fact that a nearby settlement house runs a nursery school and charges almost nothing (two children in the sample go there), raises some doubt about the strength of these nine women's expressed desire to send their children to nursery school. At any rate, a larger proportion of the working-class than of the middle-class mothers show no interest in nursery school. Apparently, they consider the mother-child relationship sufficient for both themselves and their children, and they want no outside agency to intervene.

Another indication that the lives of three and four year-old working-class children are more family-centered than the lives of middle-class children is the lower ratio of playmates to siblings. Mothers were asked how many playmates their children have, and also how many siblings younger than eighteen. In Somerville the mean number of siblings is 2.8, in Brookline it is 1.6, and in Lexington also 1.6. The mean numbers of playmates, respectively, are 4.8, 4.5, and 5.6. It is clear that Somerville children have relatively more siblings and Lexington children have more playmates. Though the questionnaire allowed siblings to be counted as playmates (see appendix), this does not destroy the findings. For even if Somerville mothers counted no siblings as playmates, while Brookline and Lexington mothers counted all siblings as playmates, which is extremely

unlikely, the ratio of siblings to non-sibling playmates would still be highest in Somerville. The ratios would be 0.57 in Somerville, 0.55 in Brookline, and 0.40 in Lexington. Thus working-class children have fewer playmates as compared to siblings despite the fact that their neighborhood has the highest concentration of three and four year-olds, as Table 2 showed. Moreover, the middle-class children have more playmates even when nursery schoolmates are not counted. Clearly, family members play a larger part in the world of working-class children.

The greater importance of family members for children in the working class is also apparent in Table 5. When working-class mothers need baby-sitters, they are more likely to call on members of the nuclear or extended family. In contrast, middle-class mothers usually hire someone. This means once again that middle-class children have far more extensive contacts with people outside the family. The greater reliance upon relatives also indicates the stronger kinship orientation of working-class adults, which was discussed earlier.

Despite the fact that working-class mothers more often call on relatives to baby-sit, they very rarely if ever have relatives in to help with the children while they themselves are at home. Like mothers in the middle-class neighborhoods, Somerville mothers report that, when they are with the children, they have someone else to help them only a negligible

TABLE 5

Number of Mothers Using Various Kinds of Baby-Sitters

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Adult in household	7	7	7
Older child in household	8	4	3
Relative in neighborhood	1	3	6
Relative outside neighborhood	5	3	6
Friend in neighborhood (unpaid)	5	7	6
Friend outside nghbhd. (unpaid)	1	0	1
Other in neighborhood (paid)	11	6	4
Other outside neighborhood (paid)	16	5	1

fraction of the time. This is somewhat surprising, in view of the stronger kinship orientation of working-class women.

However, working-class familism does express itself again in the values of the Somerville mothers. Item 29 of the questionnaire (see appendix) asked mothers to rank four alternatives in terms of what they considered most important for their preschool children. The alternatives represented physical, individual, social, and emotional development (these are obviously not mutually exclusive). Tables 6 and 7 show that middle-class mothers, especially in Lexington, more often value emotional and individual development. In contrast, Somerville mothers value physical and social development. The reason why middle-class mothers value individual development is their desire, discussed earlier, that their children become autonomous. And because teaching children to be autonomous means inculcating certain feelings of right and wrong, middle-class mothers must show respect and concern for their children's emotions. On the other

TABLE 6

Number of Mothers Who Value Physical Versus Emotional Development

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Physical	10	11	10
Emotional	12	5	5

TABLE 7

Number of Mothers Who Value Social Versus Individual Development

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Social	7	8	10
Individual	12	8	5

hand, working-class mothers, who are usually more dependent than middle-class mothers upon the maternal role, do not try to make their children autonomous. Instead, they cater to the children's physical wants and try to teach obedience to familial authority. In short, middle-class mothers have more individualistic goals for their children, while those of working-class mothers are more familistic.

It is not clear why the values expressed by Brookline mothers tend to resemble those of mothers in Somerville. Perhaps the high density of housing in Brookline does not allow the tolerant concern that middle-class mothers usually show for their children's emotions. Since less space makes it more difficult to isolate misbehaving children, their behavior must be controlled. The Brookline mothers may also be influenced by traditional Jewish familism (Bardis 1961),

TABLE 8

Answers to Question, "Does Your Child Ever Get in the Way around the House?"

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
"Never"	3	2	0
"Very rarely"	6	2	1
"Sometimes"	12	10	11
"Often"	2	2	2

TABLE 9

Answers to Question, "Does Your Child Ever Get in the Way around the House?", by Whether Or Not Children Share Bedrooms

	Lexington		Brookline		Somerville	
	share	not share	share	not share	share	not share
"Never"	0	3	1	1	0	0
"Very rarely"	0	6	1	1	0	1
"Sometimes"	5	7	3	7	7	4
"Often"	0	2	2	0	1	1

though this sample is less Jewish than the rest of Brookline.

On balance, the evidence does indicate that the working class is more familistic. Somerville mothers do not mind spending more time with their children. And Somerville children not only spend more time with their mothers, they are also more likely to have relatives for playmates and baby-sitters. Moreover, Somerville mothers train their children not to be autonomous, but to live in a working-class family.

Of course, even Somerville mothers are annoyed by their children sometimes, as Table 8 shows. But Table 9 reveals that lack of space, as indicated by the necessity for

sharing bedrooms, is a major cause of maternal annoyance. Lack of space in Somerville was shown in Table 2, and Table 11 will show that Somerville mothers consider this the neighborhood's biggest drawback. But the reason they dislike the lack of space is not that they mind having to supervise their children all the time; rather, it is that overcrowding makes it difficult for mothers and children to spend their time comfortably together. Therefore, the fact that Somerville mothers complain of overcrowding does not contradict the main conclusion, which is that working-class women think a mother and a young child should play a larger part in each other's daily lives than do middle-class women.

Suburbs Favor Individualism More Than Familism

The fact that suburbs appeal less strongly to familists than to individualists is implicit in Tables 10, 11, and 12, which show what mothers like and dislike about their neighborhoods. Abundant and safe outdoor space, where children can play unsupervised, is the advantage most often mentioned by mothers in Lexington. Conversely, the lack of such space, and the consequent need for constant supervision, is the disadvantage most often mentioned by mothers in Brookline. These individualistic middle-class mothers want a neighborhood where they do not always have to watch their children. Familistic Somerville mothers also complain about lack of outdoor space, but, as was argued above, this is not because

TABLE 10

Advantages of Neighborhoods: Number of Mentions of Each Advantage as a Percentage Of All Mentions of All Advantages

	Lexington (n = 88)	Brookline (n = 74)	Somerville (n = 45)
Accessibility to Boston, church, school, recreation, medical care, nursery school, library	3	28	35
Good schools	8	7	4
Public parks and playgrounds	1	21	18
Safe yards and outdoor space, lack of need for constant supervision of children	32	11	18
Presence of other children, nice children, or children of same age	17	13	13
Attractive neighborhood, advantages of country	13	0	0
Nice neighbors, social atmosphere	10	9	4
Communally owned swimming pool	9	0	0
Other	7	11	8
Total	100%	100%	100%

they want more independence from their children; rather, it is a reaction to overcrowding, which is much more severe in Somerville than in Brookline or Lexington.

Table 13 confirms even more strongly that suburbs appeal to individualists. When listing the advantages of their neighborhoods, mothers sometimes repeated themselves by saying the same thing in different ways. For instance, mothers in Lexington sometimes stated the advantage of outdoor space by writing that they liked the big yards, and that it was safe outside, and also that there was no need for constant supervision of children outdoors. Therefore it was possible

TABLE 11

Disadvantages of Neighborhoods: Number of Mentions of Each Disadvantage as a Percentage Of All Mentions of All Disadvantages

	Lexington (n = 32)	Brookline (n = 28)	Somerville (n = 27)
Lack of outdoor space where children can play safely, alone, freely, or without supervision	0	46	41
Indoor crowding, lack of privacy	0	14	0
Hills	0	11	0
Lack of playmates	9	7	7
Urban ugliness	0	11	0
Poor schools	0	0	15
Necessity for scheduling and managing children's playmates and activities	16	0	0
Undesirable people, children, language, or behavior	3	0	15
Lack of a playground	6	0	4
Dogs	0	0	7
Socioeconomic and age homogeneity	13	0	0
Lack of things to do nearby, dependence on car, necessity for chauffeuring	31	0	4
Other	22	11	7
Total	100%	100%	100%

to separate the Lexington mothers into categories according to the number of ways in which they expressed their enthusiasm for outdoor space. Table 13 shows that mothers who most often mentioned the advantage of outdoor space spent the least time with their children, yet they felt just as often as other mothers that they needed more time for themselves. Clearly, the mothers who are most enthusiastic about outdoor space, which is the main advantage of the suburbs, are those who want to be more independent of their children. Table 13

TABLE 12

Attributes of "Best Neighborhood": Number Of Mentions of Each Attribute as a Percentage Of All Mentions of All Attributes

	Lexington (n = 20)	Brookline (n = 25)	Somerville (n = 15)
Like suburb, with yard or safe outdoor space	0	40	33
Playground or park nearby	15	8	6
Other children available	0	16	0
Good schools	0	4	20
Like present neighborhood, without qualification	50	4	0
Clean	0	0	20
Other	35	28	20
Total	100%	100%	100%

also shows that these mothers more often emphasize their children's emotional rather than physical development; this indicates a desire that their children become autonomous. In short, the most individualistic mothers are the most enthusiastic about outdoor space.

Analysis of the Brookline questionnaires failed to reveal that the mothers most often expressing a desire for outdoor space were those who spent less time with their children, or who emphasized emotional more than physical development for their children. The reason for this seems to be that several mothers on top of the hill in the Brookline neighborhood already have adequate yards, and these mothers do spend less time with their children. Moreover, in Somerville those mothers who want suburbs and more outdoor space do, like middle-class mothers, spend less time with their children

TABLE 13

Importance of Outdoor Space for, and Selected Other Characteristics of, Lexington Mothers

	Number of ways mothers stated the advantage of outdoor space			
	None	One	Two	Three
Number of mothers	7	6	8	2
Mean percent of time children spend with mothers on a typical day (n =)	71 (4)	59 (5)	56 (4)	54 (1)
Number of mothers answering question, "Do you ever wish you had more time for activities of your own?":				
"never"	0	2	0	0
"very rarely"	3	1	2	1
"sometimes"	2	3	6	1
"often"	2	0	0	0
Number who value physical more than emotional development	5	3	2	0
Number who value emotional more than physical development	1	3	6	2
Number who value social more than individual development	2	0	5	0
Number who value individual more than social development	3	4	3	2

than the other mothers in Somerville. The implications of Table 13, therefore, are not contradicted by data from the other two neighborhoods. Suburbs do appeal most strongly to mothers who want individualistic relationships with their children.

Another reason why suburbs appeal to mothers who want more independence from their children is that other mothers can easily take over supervision. This is a consequence of what Dobriner called the visibility factor. (Dobriner, p. 9)

TABLE 14

Number of Children Spending Various Amounts
Of Time with Other Children

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Number spending more than 50% of time with no other children	2	5	1
Number spending more than 50% of time with only one other child	5	6	5
Number spending 50% or less of time with no other children, 50% or less of time with only one other child, and 50% or less of time with two or more other children	8	3	4
Number spending more than 50% of time with two or more other children	8	1	1

The openness of the suburbs allows people to see into other people's yards, and also allows children to roam from yard to yard. A mother therefore knows that she is not the only one watching her child outside. In Lexington, half of the mothers said the neighbors keep an eye on their children outside, while only a third of the mothers in Brookline and in Somerville said their neighbors did.

One more sign that suburbs favor individualism is Table 14. Individualism, as defined in this paper, means only that people's lives are not centered on the family, not that people participate in no groups at all. It was previously argued that a higher ratio of playmates to siblings is one of the traits that demonstrate the individualism of the middle class. Middle-class mothers want their children to have many playmates outside the family because among playmates the children become more independent of their

mothers. Thus the individualistic Lexington children spend more time with playmates than do children in the other neighborhoods, as Table 14 shows; chi-square analysis shows the difference is statistically significant, at a level of probability less than 0.02. This points up another reason why middle-class mothers like suburbs: namely, that their own and neighboring yards are ideal places for children to meet and play with friends, under minimum supervision. Suburban children can learn to play in a group of peers, and the mothers can attend to their own interests. In Brookline, where outdoor space is scarce, the fact that children spend less time with playmates is regarded as a disadvantage by mothers, who would prefer a neighborhood where other children were more available, as Table 12 showed. Brookline mothers, like their Lexington counterparts, want outdoor space because it facilitates their children's autonomy.

Finally, just as the suburbs favor individualism, the city favors familism. In Brookline and Somerville, Table 5 showed that half of the relatives called on to baby-sit live in the same neighborhood, but in Lexington only one out of six does. This difference is not due to differential mobility, since the distributions of the three samples by length of residence in the neighborhood are identical. Rather, it is due to higher density, which facilitates interaction with extended relatives simply because there are more dwellings nearby where relatives can live. It would

be very difficult for a woman in Lexington to find her mother a house within walking distance of her own.

In summary, suburbs facilitate individualistic relationships between mothers and children because children there require less supervision outdoors, because part of this supervision can be supplied by neighboring mothers, and because unsupervised children can more easily meet friends and begin to live their own life apart from the family. Conversely, familistic people may prefer the city because at higher densities it is easier to maintain ties with extended relatives.

Middle-Class Mothers Are More Satisfied with the Suburbs Than with the City

Because middle-class mothers are more often individualists, and because the suburbs favor individualism, it should follow that middle-class mothers are happier in the suburbs than in the city. This, indeed, is what the survey found. The most direct evidence was in Table 12, which showed that many more mothers in Lexington than in Brookline said a neighborhood like their present one would be the best in which to raise their children.

That middle-class mothers are more satisfied with the suburbs is also shown, though more indirectly, in Table 15. All mothers were asked to list the advantages and disadvantages of their neighborhoods, both for their children and for themselves as the people responsible for the children.

TABLE 15

Number of Advantages Minus Number of Disadvantages Of Neighborhood

	Lexington	Brookline	Somerville
Number of mothers for whom the number of advantages for child minus the number of disadvantages for child is:			
less than 0	0	1	3
0	2	1	3
1	8	6	5
2	6	3	4
3	4	2	0
more than 3	3	3	0
Number of mothers for whom the number of advantages for self minus the number of disadvantages for self is:			
less than 0	2	1	1
0	9	3	6
1	6	6	6
2	3	2	1
3	2	3	0
more than 3	1	1	1

Since the main benefit of suburban neighborhoods is to free mothers from the task of constant supervision, Lexington mothers were expected to list more advantages for themselves, in relation to disadvantages, than Brookline mothers. However, Table 15 shows just the opposite. The number of stated advantages for the mothers themselves usually exceeded the number of disadvantages by a greater margin in Brookline than in Lexington.

The reason for this is that mothers considered constant supervision a disadvantage for their children more often than for themselves. Tables 10 and 11 showed that safe

outdoor space and the consequent lack of need for constant supervision was the advantage Lexington mothers most often found in their neighborhood, and the shortage of such space was the most common complaint of mothers in Brookline. But most Lexington mothers listed this as an advantage for their children, not for themselves, and most Brookline mothers said the lack of it was a disadvantage for the children, not for themselves. This goes a long way toward explaining why, in Table 15, mothers found more net advantages for their children in Lexington than in Brookline. It also explains why mothers often found fewer net advantages for themselves in Lexington than in Brookline, where, as Table 10 showed, they liked the proximity to many facilities and things to do.

It is not obvious why Lexington mothers considered the lack of need for outdoor supervision an advantage for their children more often than for themselves. Nor is it clear why Brookline mothers thought their children suffered from the lack of a yard in which to play unsupervised, when these same mothers did consider the local parks an advantage for the children. There seem to be two possible reasons why middle-class mothers believe children should have a place to play without maternal supervision. First, the belief may derive from their desire that the children become autonomous. They may feel that, in order for children to develop as individuals, they must have a place to play without maternal

supervision. Therefore a safe yard would be an advantage for the children.

A second possible explanation is that mothers would feel guilty if they admitted they do not want to supervise their children all the time. (Gray) If this were true, they might project their own desire for independence onto the children, as a belief that the children need to become autonomous. This would mean that the real reason mothers liked suburbs was that the lack of need for supervision gives them more free time, but that they prefer to consider this lack of need for supervision as an advantage for the children.

Whether middle-class women consider the lack of need for constant supervision an advantage for themselves or for their children, either reason would reflect their desire for an individualistic relationship with the children. However, other features of the suburbs actually make this kind of relationship more difficult, and therefore Lexington mothers complain about these features. For instance, in a low-density residential neighborhood, friends, recreational facilities, and things to do are likely not to be within walking distance for a preschool child. Mothers therefore must chauffeur their children. As Table 11 showed, this is considered a disadvantage for mothers and children who want to be independent of each other.

In sum, the survey does show that middle-class mothers,

because they are more individualistic, generally seem more satisfied with the suburbs. The main advantage they find in suburbs is that children there can play outdoors unsupervised, and this facilitates an individualistic relationship between mothers and children. However, some features of suburbs, such as the need for mothers to chauffeur their children, actually hinder individualistic relationships. Moreover, some features of the city, such as the accessibility of many things to do, appeal to middle-class women because they alleviate role-conflict by allowing mothers to pursue their own interests without leaving the children.

Are Working-Class Mothers More Satisfied with the City Than Middle-Class Mothers?

Since the working class is more familistic and cities favor familism, working-class mothers should be happier in the city than middle-class mothers. The survey did not corroborate this, however. As Table 15 shows, most Somerville mothers found fewer net advantages in their neighborhood, for both themselves and their children, than did Brookline mothers. Table 10 indicated that mothers found the same types of advantages in Somerville as in Brookline. But Table 11 showed some different complaints. Several mothers in Somerville objected to poor public schools, and several also complained about undesirable neighbors, drunks, bad-mouthed or unsupervised children, and dogs. These problems do not exist in the Brookline neighborhood, and therefore

they reduce the validity of any comparison between satisfaction in Somerville and satisfaction in Brookline. Perhaps it is valid, however, to note that, despite the much more severe lack of space in Somerville shown by Table 2, Table 11 reveals that the mothers there complain about lack of space no more often than do the mothers in Brookline. In short, considering the greater lack of space and the presence of more dangers and bad influences, it is not surprising that the familistic mothers in Somerville are dissatisfied with their neighborhood. The data, therefore, neither confirms nor contradicts the theory that working-class mothers would be happier than middle-class mothers if they lived in identical or comparable urban neighborhoods.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

This study was small and somewhat unsystematic, so some of the arguments are supported weakly if at all. However, the major conclusions seem sturdy enough. These are: First, the middle class in some ways is less familistic than the working class. Middle-class mothers have weaker ties to their own extended relatives. They more often want a degree of independence from their children, sometimes in order to follow a career. Similarly, they want their young children to be more autonomous, and to learn to get along with people outside the family. The second major conclusion is that suburbs facilitate individualistic mother-child

relationships, mainly because the abundance of safe, outdoor space permits young children to play outside without supervision. That is apparently the main reason why middle-class mothers prefer the suburbs.

These conclusions of course do not completely explain why middle-class families prefer to live in suburbs. The middle class probably wants, in part, to segregate itself from the lower classes of society. In particular, it probably wants schools where its children will have the right kind of classmates and teachers when they grow older. Moreover, although this paper has examined the motivations of mothers, these may not be decisive in determining where to live. Fathers have reasons all their own. Some of these are probably financial, such as the desire to own a house. But other paternal motivation may be familistic. Further research should study what paternal familism is, and whether it varies between classes. Possibly, as maternal familism in some sense decreases in higher social classes, paternal familism may increase. An interesting question for further research would therefore be how the choice of neighborhood depends on the interaction between maternal and paternal familism or individualism, and whether the familism factor has greater or lesser importance than social and financial factors.

But even the present conclusions by themselves have implications. In drawing these implications out, I assume

that social stratification and residential segregation by class will continue to exist, deplorable though they are. The issue therefore is not integration, but rather designing neighborhoods to meet the specific needs of different inhabitants.

The most obvious implication of the present findings is that the government or some other organization should subsidize a massive system of top-quality day-care centers, for the children of working-class mothers who have to work and middle-class mothers who want to work. (Cochran and Robinson) For a variety of reasons, these services cannot exist without subsidies.

As for actual neighborhood design, it is apparent that the middle class wants plenty of safe, outdoor space. But low suburban densities have at least two disadvantages. First, there is often nothing in the neighborhood for mothers to do. Second, children must often be chauffeured to friends' houses or other places where they may want to go.

These disadvantages of the suburbs could be eliminated, and the advantages retained, if middle-class housing were built at higher densities - for instance, twenty to twenty-five dwellings per net acre. Instead of private yards, the houses could share a common back yard. The houses might be detached, but probably would have to be duplex, row houses, or garden apartments. Attached housing might actually be preferable, because then the houses would act as a wall to

prevent little children from wandering into the street. A development of this type might look like something halfway between a small superblock and a large atrium house, with perhaps fifty dwellings built around the periphery of a two-acre block. Small children could play safely in the communal back yard; there would probably be ten or fifteen preschool children in the block. Mothers could therefore send their young children outside without supervising them. Thus they could go out for an hour or so without worrying about their children, especially if there were a paid supervisor in the courtyard or some kind of cooperative arrangement among the mothers so that someone was always on duty. Not only would the mothers then be free to go out, but the higher density would make it feasible to develop commercial and recreational facilities in the area, so there would be somewhere nearby for the mothers to go. This would clearly be an improvement over the present suburban situation.

In order to preserve the advantages of a one-family house - including the tax benefits, which are important for the middle class - the whole development might be owned as a condominium. This would facilitate the hiring of a courtyard supervisor, and also the operation of other communal services if wanted. (Myrdal and Klein, p. 170) Of course, to be completely competitive with the suburbs each dwelling should have its own garden, however small, and a little lawn where people could dig crabgrass. Altogether, this kind of

development would have all the advantages of presently existing suburbs. And it would eliminate the disadvantages of mothers having nothing to do and children needing to be chauffeured everywhere. Moreover, not only would these medium-density developments be preferable to existing low-density suburbs for raising young children, but also they would probably be no worse for older children. Large playgrounds could be built for the children about eight to fifteen years old. Then their noisy play would not have to take place in back yards where it disturbs people, as in present suburbs. Also, these children, like their younger siblings, would require less chauffeuring in a medium-density development. As for the adolescents, they, like their mothers, might be able to find things to do nearby, rather than being bored as in existing suburbs. Finally, the idea of this kind of development, which can be built at fairly high densities, might be useful to planners in central cities who are wondering how to bring back the middle class.

For working-class families, planners of urban renewal projects in working-class areas should not build imitation suburbs, because a neighborhood where young children could play outside unsupervised would only leave working-class mothers with nothing to do. Instead, working-class families would probably prefer a neighborhood of fairly high density - perhaps thirty to forty dwellings per net acre - so that land costs would be low, and so that relatives could live

nearby. Such high density would be possible because the working class would not require a large common back yard. These mothers would rather have a place where they themselves can be with the children, than a place where the children can go to meet friends outside the family. They are more concerned with controlling their children than with encouraging them to go off on their own. Therefore the outdoor space in a working-class neighborhood should be more private, perhaps fenced in, so that children could be more easily contained and so that each family would have its own outdoor place to gather as a group. To accommodate large families, the dwellings should be as large as economically possible. Finally, the stores and other facilities in the neighborhood should have little, fenced-in spaces nearby, where mothers could park their children for a few minutes. This would enable mothers to take their children with them when they go out. Neighborhoods like these would be favorable for the familistic relationships found between working-class mothers and children.

APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out the advantages and disadvantages of different neighborhoods for raising children. The questions refer only to preschool children, three or four years old. The questionnaire should be filled out by the child's mother.

Some of the questions ask how much time is spent doing certain things on "a typical day". This is meant to include all the child's waking hours, during both daylight and evening. If something takes different amounts of time on different days, please try to give the average amount of time. You may give answers in fractions of hours if you wish. It is less important to state the exact number of hours spent doing something than to make sure your answers are consistent, so that you show which things take more time and which things take less.

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1. How many people live in this household? How many boys younger than 18? What ages are they? How many girls younger than 18? What ages are they?

2. On a typical day, how many of your preschool child's waking hours does he or she spend inside this house?

3. During how many of the hours when your child is inside the house are you inside with him or her?

4. During how many of the hours when you and the child are in the house together is there someone else here to help you take care of him or her?

5. During how many of the hours when your child is in the house are you not here with him or her?

6. On a typical day, how many hours does your child spend out of this house?

7. During how many of the hours when your child is out of the house are you out with him or her?

How many of these hours do you spend:

going to the park or playground
being in the yard or around outside the house
shopping
doing other errands
visiting at friends' or relatives' houses
other (please specify)

8. During how many of the hours when you and the child are out <u>together</u> is there someone <u>else</u> with you to help take care of him or her?

9. During how many of the hours when your child is out of the house are you <u>not</u> with him or her?
How many of these hours does he or she spend:

playing in the yard without supervision
playing in the yard with supervision
playing in neighboring yards without supervision
playing in neighboring yards with supervision
playing on the sidewalk or street near the house without supervision
playing on the sidewalk or street near the house with supervision
playing in a park, playground, or vacant lot without supervision
playing in a park, playground, or vacant lot with supervision
at a day-care center
at a nursery school
visiting other children's homes
visiting the homes of adult friends or relatives
other (please specify)

10. When your child is outside playing without supervision, do the neighbors ever keep an eye on him or her?

11. Which of the following types of people usually baby-sit or help you look after your child? (Check those which apply.) About how much, if anything, do you pay them per hour?

Type of Person	Amount Paid, If Any
other adult in this household	
older child in this household	
relative who lives in this neighborhood	
relative from outside neighborhood	
friend from outside neighborhood	
friend who lives in this neighborhood	
other person who lives in this neighborhood	
other person from outside neighborhood	
other (please specify)	

12. If your child goes to nursery school, how many weeks per year does he or she attend? How many days per week? How many hours per day? How much does it cost per year?

13. If your child does not go to nursery school, would you like him or her to attend? If so, how many weeks per year? How many days per week? How many hours per day? How much would you be willing to pay per year?

14. If your child does not go to nursery school, and you are not interested in sending him or her, what are the reasons why you are not interested? (Number the following in order of importance: 1 = most important, 2 = next most important, etc.)

The child may catch cold or sickness from other children.
Nursery school costs too much.
The child gets everything he or she needs at home.
You enjoy having the child stay home.
The child enjoys staying home.
other reasons (please specify)

15. On a typical day, how many hours does your child spend with no other children?

16. On a typical day, how many hours does your child spend with one other child? (Include brothers and sisters but not nursery schoolmates.)

17. How many hours does he or she spend with two or more other children? (Include brothers and sisters but not nursery schoolmates.)

18. How many playmates does your child have in all? (Include brothers and sisters but not nursery schoolmates.)

19. Do you have a television? If so, how many hours does your child spend watching it on a typical day?

20. Does your child have a tricycle or bicycle? If so, how many hours does he or she spend riding it on a typical day?

21. On a typical day, how many hours does your child spend reading or having someone read to him or her?

22. With whom, if anyone, does your child share his or her bedroom?

(For the next four questions, check the appropriate column.)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often
23. Does your child ever get in the way around the house?				
24. Do you ever feel you could use more help in looking after your child?				
25. Do you ever wish you had more time for activities of your own?				
26. Do the neighbors ever complain about your child making noise?				

27. How long have you lived in this neighborhood?

28. What advantages and disadvantages does this neighborhood have for your <u>child</u> and for <u>you</u> as the person responsible for him or her?

Advantages for your child:

Disadvantages for your child:

Advantages for you as the person responsible:

Disadvantages for you as the person responsible:

29. What do you consider important for children of this age? (Number the following in order of importance: 1 = most important, etc.)

To eat enough, sleep enough, and get enough fresh air and exercise so that they grow big and healthy.

To start developing their own individual skills and abilities.

To begin learning how to get along with other people.

To be kept happy and secure so that they develop cheerful personalities.

other (please specify)

30. What would be the best kind of neighborhood in which to raise your child?

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