

THREE SUBCULTURES: GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION

IN THE STRUCTURE OF GERMAN OPINION

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Abstract

Responses of 259 adult West Germans living in three communities—a community, a village, and a university—to questions on satisfaction, approval of the political parties, personal efficacy, and the perception of political norms were analyzed to determine how opinions differ across the communities. Questions were asked by interviewers and answered by respondents using an "opinionometer", a device allowing them to use 100-point scales and comparatively readjust their answers to each question in a set. ?

Respondents were found to be more dissatisfied with politics than with anything else. They were most satisfied with how they were treated by those closest to them. Villagers were most satisfied, when satisfaction was measured absolutely. Those in different communities were also relatively satisfied with different things.

There was a tendency for respondents to be more satisfied with things that they considered more important. When weighted by importance, aggregated satisfaction therefore rises, but it is still lower than the general satisfaction that the respondents ascribed to themselves. The three communities attached relative importance to different things, with the university being the least materialistic. The tendency for satisfaction to be highest on the things perceived as most important was also weakest in the university, leaving academics the most likely to be frustrated by dissatisfaction.

In each community, respondents saw themselves as more satisfied at present than they had been earlier or than they would be in the future, although the university foresaw the smallest future drop in satisfaction. Substantial uncertainty, however, was expressed about the ability to predict one's own future satisfaction.

There is evidence in the responses that respondents in each community tended to project their own satisfaction levels onto the whole country: satisfaction differences were largely wiped out when respondents were asked to compare their satisfaction with that of the citizenry in general. But when they compared what they got with what they deserved, the city dwellers saw themselves as most overindulged. There was a tendency for perceived indulgence to rise from past to future. But in the university this was accompanied by a drop in the already low perceived indulgence of the groups with which the respondents identified. This left the academics expecting to become increasingly indulged personally but increasingly deprived collectively—a combination conducive to extreme protest.

Respondents exhibited a strong tendency to ascribe responsibility to the state for being active in whatever realms of life they considered important at all. The highest responsibility for the state was demanded by the villagers, and the lowest by those in the university. When those who thought the state

should be responsible for a particular activity were asked how well they thought the government had been handling it, the ratings tended to be somewhat below 50 on a 0-to-100 scale, reflecting moderate dissatisfaction. The ratings were highest in the village and the lowest in the university. But general ratings on the performance of the government, not referring to any particular activities, were extremely low and not significantly different among the communities. The general ratings of the government were too low to be explained by any weighting of the specific ones, suggesting certain response patterns as explanations for the differences between general and specific questions. Cultural norms may lead respondents to rate their general satisfaction higher, and their general approval of the government lower, than their corresponding specific ones. The tendency to hide ignorance with positivity may reinforce the relative inflation of specific ratings of the government.

The opposition CDU/CSU was rated higher than the SPD/FDP coalition in power in all three communities, but especially in the village. The right-wing NPD bettered the government in the village, and the Communists almost did so in the university. The ratings of the parties given by the identifiers with the different parties were largely in the directions predicted by the parties' positions on the conventional left-right political spectrum, with party and community interacting in the prediction

of ratings. Still, in each community even SPD identifiers rated the CDU/CSU higher than the coalition. Disaffection with the federal government was also shown by the fact that on three different variables members of the Bundestag were rated lower than judges, the police, civil servants, and administrative officials by the respondents in all three communities. On all ratings, however, the villagers expressed the highest and the university members the lowest confidence in each type of official.

When asked about how much influence they had over various arenas of life, respondents in all three communities gave the lowest ratings to the political arenas, without exception and by large differences. City dwellers rated themselves as lowest in influence, regardless of how measured. While village and city respondents saw their influence levels as fairly stable over time, academics perceived a sharp rise in their own influence from the past to the present, and only they foresaw any rise at all from the present to the future.

The perception of norms was measured by asking what percentages of the West German population would probably approve of particular forms of political activity, ranging from collecting signatures to plotting the violent overthrow of the government. In general, the three communities ranked the activities similarly. But the university respondents were the most agreed among themselves about the percentage

approval to be expected, and they also made the greatest distinction between accepted and rejected activities. They thus appeared to project on the whole population their elite norms of legitimacy, while the responses from village and city revealed considerable confusion or disagreement in the perception of these norms.

Three Subcultures: Geographical Variation in the Structure of German Opinion

Introduction

National opinion surveys typically use samples that are so widely distributed across the regions and communities of a country that it is possible to discover how different kinds of persons think, but not how their opinions are clustered in different communities. A comparative community survey, by contrast, allows the communities to be compared, as well as their residents.

In this report, three communities in the Federal Republic of Germany are described in terms of the opinions their members have on several kinds of questions. Although based on survey data, the report is more ethnographic than nomothetic in orientation. Rather than beginning with specific hypotheses to be tested, we shall begin with a single assumption: the communities studied are so different in social type that substantial opinion differences will undoubtedly emerge. The purpose of this report is to discover some of those differences. The findings can be used to test or to generate hypotheses, or simply to increase one's familiarity with the kinds of opinion structures found in West German communities today.

The three communities surveyed can be (and in this report will be) labeled for abbreviation as "city", "village", and "university". The first is Schönau, a working-class section of the industrial city of Mannheim,

which in turn is part of the industrial twin-city of Mannheim-Ludwigshafen, located at the confluence of the Rhein and Neckar rivers in southern Germany, south of Frankfurt. The village is Dorn-Dürkheim, in the predominantly agricultural state of Rheinland-Pfalz, but not far from Mannheim. It was chosen for study because of its proximity to the other two communities and because of its recent history of higher than usual electoral support for the right-wing Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD). The university is the University of Heidelberg, which is also within easy commuting distance from Mannheim, and which has had considerable internal conflict in recent years related to university policies and to the ideological cleavages prevalent within the West German intelligentsia.

In the city and the village, 90 persons each were interviewed. They were selected randomly from the adults of the respective communities. The university presented a more difficult sampling problem, since it is a community without definite geographical boundaries. There quota sampling was employed in order to obtain interviews with three social types of persons: students, professors, and people between them in the teaching hierarchy (Mittelbau). Within each of these types, interviews were sought with persons identified by others as "left", "right", and "politically independent". The interviewing took place at the beginning of the academic year and by the end of the scheduled interviewing period only 79 out of the planned 90 university interviews could be completed. No claim can be made for the representativeness of the

university sample. So that the reader can decide how far to infer from its characteristics the characteristics of the parent population, Table 1 presents the sample breakdown by social type and reputed political orientation.

The interview questionnaire contained 91 items, but several of these contained more than one question, so that a total of 308 responses were recorded per interview. This report will focus on responses of a particular type: those given by means of a device called an "opinionometer". Wherever a fine gradation of opinion was desired and several related questions were to be asked, this device was employed. One purpose of the survey was, in fact, to test the opinionometer as a tool of attitude measurement.*

The opinionometer was a rectangular pair of boards hinged together so that a sheet of paper could be placed between them. The lower board served as a base, was made of wood, and was covered by a layer of foam rubber. The upper board was made of plexiglas, so that the sheet of paper could be seen through it. In the upper board were 20 channels, each containing a pointer that could be freely moved. Corresponding to each channel in the upper board was a printed scale on the sheet of paper, running either from 0 to 100 or from -50 to +50. A respondent could thus indicate his or her response to a question by moving a particular pointer to any desired location on the scale beneath it. Since there were 20 pointers, responses to up to 20 questions could be indicated on a single sheet. No mark was made on a sheet until the entire set of responses

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITY SAMPLE

		Social Type			Total
		Professor	<u>Mittelbau</u>	Student	
Politi- cal Orien- tation	Left	11	7	19	37
	Indepen- dent	4	0	8	12
	Right	8	6	16	30
	Total	23	13	43	79

had been made; then the pointers were all depressed, puncturing the sheet and leaving a hole on each scale. Respondents could therefore revise their individual positions with reference to the positions of other pointers in the set, before the positions of all pointers in the set were registered. This procedure might be called "synoptic" as opposed to "sequential" response elicitation. After a given sheet had been used, it was removed and a new sheet inserted for another set of responses. Each scale was numbered for identification, but wherever possible it also had an abbreviated verbal label to indicate which question was to be answered by making a rating on that scale. Typically, the questions in any set were identical in form, and differed only in one element. Examples might be "How would you like to work as a(n) X?", "How important do you think the office of X is?", and "What percentage of the students in this school do you think are X's?" Any one of these could constitute a set of questions, differing by the word or phrase substituted for "X" (plumber, carpenter, astronaut, etc.).

The report is divided into four sections, dealing with four areas of opinion. First we shall examine respondents' ratings of their own satisfaction; second, their approval and disapproval of the government in power and the alternative governments that might be in power; third, their ratings of their own political efficacy; and fourth, their perceptions of the extent of the acceptance of various political norms among the West German population.

Satisfaction

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with each item in a list of 18 tangible and intangible things. For each item, the corresponding pointer was used to rate the respondent's satisfaction on a 0-to-100 scale, with 0 representing complete dissatisfaction and 100 the greatest possible satisfaction. The operative parts of the question (Question 1) were:

Ich möchte Sie fragen, wie zufrieden oder unzufrieden Sie persönlich gegenwärtig mit den Dingen hier auf dieser Liste sind. . . . 100 bedeutet in diesem Fall jeweils die "größtmögliche Zufriedenheit"; 0 bedeutet "völlig unzufrieden" zu sein. Die Werte dazwischen dienen zur Abstufung.

(Since the questions were read aloud by interviewers, paragraph divisions in the questionnaire are ignored when the text of a question is given in this report.)

Table 2 presents the 18 items, in the order they appeared on the opinionometer response sheet. It will be noted that three of these items are political, in the narrow sense of the word: items 4, 14, and 17. The other 15 items might be divided into two broad categories: welfare items and treatment items. The latter (items 1, 7, 10, 12, and 15) deal with how the respondent is treated or respected by certain kinds of people. The ten welfare items can in turn be divided, perhaps with some room for argument, into primarily material, financial, or physical items (2, 3, 5, 8, 11, and 18) and primarily spiritual, cultural, or intellectual

TABLE 2

SATISFACTION ITEMS

<u>Text</u>	<u>Abbreviated Translation</u>
Wie zufrieden oder wie unzufrieden sind Sie gegenwärtig mit den folgenden Dingen?	
1. Wie Sie (*Ihr Mann) von Vorgesetzten bzw. Lehrern am Arbeitsplatz bzw. Studienplatz behandelt werden?	Treatment by boss/teachers.
2. Mit Ihren Wohnverhältnissen?	Housing conditions.
3. Mit dem Fortkommen Ihrer Kinder?	Kids' success.
4. Mit Ihren Möglichkeiten, bei öffentlichen Angelegenheiten mitzuwirken?	Ability to participate in public affairs.
5. Mit Ihrer finanziellen Sicherheit im Alter?	Old-age economic security.
6. Mit dem Ausmaß der Ihnen zur Verfügung stehenden freien Zeit?	Amount of free time.
7. Wie sehr Ihre Meinungen in Familie und Bekanntenkreis geachtet werden?	How family & friends respect your views.
8. Mit der ärztlichen und Krankenhaus-Versorgung, die Sie in Anspruch nehmen können?	Available medical & hospital care.
9. Mit Ihrer eigenen Ausbildung?	Education.
10. Mit der Art und Weise, wie Sie von Behörden behandelt werden?	Treatment by officialdom.
11. Mit Ihrem Einkommen (*dem Ihres Mannes)?	Income.
12. Wie Sie von anderen Leuten in Ihrer näheren Umgebung behandelt werden?	Treatment by neighbors.
13. Mit der Art Ihrer beruflichen Tätigkeit (*die Ihres Mannes)?	Type of work.
14. Mit der Vertretung Ihrer Interessen und Anliegen durch die Politiker?	How politicians represent you.
15. Mit der Art und Weise, wie Sie von anderen in Ihrer Familie behandelt werden?	Treatment by family.
16. Mit den Möglichkeiten Ihres beruflichen Fortkommens (*die Ihres Mannes)?	Possibility for occupational advancement.

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

17. Mit Ihren Möglichkeiten, die
Gemeindepolitik zu beeinflussen?

Influence in local politics.

18. Mit der Sicherheit Ihres Arbeitsplatzes
(*des Arbeitsplatzes Ihres Mannes)?

Job security.

*bei Hausfrauen bzw. nicht Berufstätigen!

items (6, 9, 13, and 16).

The most striking result in the responses to this question is that the three political items are the three items with which the respondents, on the average, were the least satisfied out of all 18 items. As Table 3 shows, the level of satisfaction varied greatly from one item to another: the highest level was 79.1, the lowest 29.6. Thus the fact that the three political items got the lowest ratings of all indicates a comparatively great dissatisfaction with politics, not just a minor difference. Since the endpoints of 100 and 0 were defined as the extremes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, respectively, it seems reasonable to view any rating under 50 as an expression of some level of dissatisfaction. In this light, we can add that the respondents were not simply less satisfied with politics than with everything else; they were distinctly dissatisfied with politics. This is true whether the item was phrased in terms of the respondent's ability to be politically active or in terms of how represented the respondent was by active politicians.

Related to this political dissatisfaction is a difference among the responses to the treatment items. The greater the social distance between the respondent and a type of person, the less satisfied was the respondent with the way (s)he was treated by that type of person, on the average. If we add items 8 and 14 to the list of treatment items, on the grounds that they reflect satisfaction with treatment by doctors and by politicians, respectively, the pattern remains. What we see (again in Table 3) is that people were most satisfied with how they were treated

TABLE 3

SATISFACTION WITH 18 ITEMS

<u>Item</u>	<u>Average Satisfaction</u>
15. Treatment by family	79.1
12. Treatment by neighbors	70.6
7. How family & friends respect your views	69.2
3. Kids' success	67.6
2. Housing conditions	67.1
13. Type of work	66.5
8. Available medical & hospital care	66.2
18. Job security	63.7
5. Old-age economic security	60.3
1. Treatment by boss/teachers	58.9
11. Income	55.5
9. Education	52.1
10. Treatment by officialdom	51.8
6. Amount of free time	51.6
16. Possibility for occupational advancement	43.9
4. Ability to participate in public affairs	43.3
14. How politicians represent you	37.9
17. Influence in local politics	29.6

by those closest to them, and most dissatisfied with how they were treated by those farthest from them. The respondents were decreasingly satisfied with treatment by the following agents:

family	79.1
neighbors	70.6
family & friends	69.2
doctors	66.2
boss/teachers	58.9
officialdom	51.8
politicians	37.9

Even if the rank ordering of each adjacent pair in the above list might be unclear, the general tendency for social distance from the respondent to increase down the list is obvious. The range between the highest and the lowest satisfaction with treatment is great, and the widest gap of all is that separating politicians, at the bottom, from the next group (officialdom). Satisfaction with treatment is above the midpoint (50) for all groups except politicians, for whom it is (as noted earlier) considerably below. The fact that officialdom is next to the lowest group suggests the respondents were alienated from the government in two directions: dissatisfied, as we saw before, with the roles they are allowed to play in determining government policy, and also with how they are affected by government policy as it is carried out.

With minor variations, these basic patterns hold not only for the respondents as a whole, but also for the three communities of respondents,

considered one by one. In each of the three communities, the three political items were at the bottom of the satisfaction ranking. They were not ranked in the same order by all three communities, however, and in two of the communities another (non-political) item was ranked lower than the highest-ranked political item. This was 16 (possibility for occupational advancement) in the village, and 10 (treatment by officialdom) in the university. Still, in each of the communities the following generalization holds: the three political items were all among the four items giving the least average satisfaction. The rank orderings of all items in the three communities can be seen in Table 4.

From the same table it is also apparent that the respondents in each community got satisfaction from their treatment by different agents in about the same rank orders. The ordering shown above, from family down to politicians, holds in all three communities, with only two exceptions: in the city item 8 (doctors) moves two ranks higher, to occupy a position between family and neighbors; and in the village items 1 (boss/teachers) and 10 (officialdom) exchange places, still remaining adjacent. Thus the general relationship between social distance and treatment satisfaction remains strong when the three communities are examined separately.

Beyond confirming these two patterns, the data in Table 4 also reveal some differences among the three communities. One difference is that on any given item the respondents in one community tended to express more satisfaction than those in another. On 12 of the 18 items,

TABLE 4

SATISFACTION WITH 18 ITEMS IN THREE COMMUNITIES

<u>Item Number</u>	Absolute level (and rank order) of average satisfaction in:		
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>University</u>
15	69.6(1)	84.9(1)	83.6(1)
12	60.0(4)	78.3(3)	74.0(2)
7	58.7(7)	76.2(5)	73.2(3)
3	58.7(6)	75.4(6)	72.5(4)
2	61.1(3)	79.3(2)	60.3(9)
13	51.8(10)	76.5(4)	71.7(5)
8	61.2(2)	75.2(8)	61.5(8)
18	51.4(11)	75.2(7)	65.7(6)
5	58.8(5)	59.0(12)	63.9(7)
1	54.5(8)	65.4(10)	58.4(12)
11	51.4(12)	61.0(11)	54.0(13)
9	45.7(13)	51.3(13)	60.2(10)
10	43.3(14)	67.0(9)	44.7(16)
6	53.9(9)	48.8(14)	52.2(14)
16	37.2(15)	36.8(17)	59.8(11)
4	36.1(16)	42.9(16)	51.1(15)
14	32.4(17)	46.7(15)	34.4(18)
17	19.8(18)	30.4(18)	39.0(17)

respondents in the village expressed the highest satisfaction. On 15 of the 18 items, respondents in the city expressed the lowest satisfaction. And on 12 of the items, those in the university rated their satisfaction somewhere between the levels given by the city respondents and by the village ones. Based on this information, it appears that the villagers were more satisfied than the university members, and the latter were more satisfied than the city dwellers.

There were also differences among the communities in the relative satisfaction that different items gave their members. If we use the intra-community rank orders rather than the absolute levels of satisfaction, in order to adjust for the tendency of the villagers to be most satisfied and the city people to be least satisfied, we find that each community has one or two items that it is specially satisfied or dissatisfied with, in comparison with the other two communities. Specifically,

the city is relatively most

satisfied with amount of free time and available medical &
hospital care

dissatisfied with type of work

the village is relatively most

satisfied with treatment by officialdom

dissatisfied with old-age economic security

the university is relatively most

satisfied with possibility for occupational advancement

dissatisfied with housing conditions

The communities also differed in the degree of consensus shown by

their members in rating their levels of satisfaction. On all except one item, the respondents in the city showed the greatest standard deviation, i. e. the least consensus, in their ratings. This was true not merely on items for which the city average was closest to the midpoint and city ratings therefore freest to vary; it was also true where the city average was closest to 0 or 100 and hence least free to vary. Hence it seems reasonable to conclude that in their responses to this question the city people were in fact the least agreed among themselves. Perhaps their lack of consensus can be attributed to their membership in the largest community, for their social and political community is more the city of Mannheim as a whole than the Schönau section that was sampled.

What can we tell from the above information about the over-all satisfaction of the respondents? It cannot be assumed that the level of satisfaction with each of the 18 items makes an equal contribution to total satisfaction. Rather, in accordance with Fishbein's approach, it seems reasonable to attach more weight to satisfaction with items that are more important to the respondents.* Respondents were asked to indicate which items were most important to them, by naming the three items whose satisfaction levels they would choose to maintain if they were threatened with a general worsening of their situation. The question read in part:

Stellen wir uns eine für Sie schlimme Situation vor. Alles droht bei Ihnen schlechter zu werden. Sie haben aber die Möglichkeit, Ihre jetzige Zufriedenheit bei drei von diesen 18 Dingen zu bewahren. Bei welchen drei Dingen würden

Sie die Verschlechterung am liebsten aufhalten wollen?

Each respondent could name up to three items, so the total number of item-namings approached triple the number of respondents: 738.

As Table 5 shows, the six items classified above as material, financial, or physical welfare items occupy the top six places in the list of items, when it is ordered according to the number of times each item was chosen as one of the most important. These six items were named 480 times out of the 738, or 65%. A reference to Table 3 will show that these six most important items were clustered in the middle to middle-high range of satisfaction. The average of their levels of satisfaction is 63.4. Thus we can say that the respondents were in general fairly satisfied with those things that were most important to them. Conversely, how important were the things that they were most dissatisfied with? If we look at the six items receiving the lowest satisfaction ratings (including the three political items), we find that they have middle to low importance. Together, they were named only 102 times as being among the most important, or 14% of the total. By contrast, the six items receiving the highest satisfaction ratings were named as important more than twice as often: 284 times, or 38%. Hence, although the average of the satisfaction levels of the 18 items was 57.5, we should expect general satisfaction to be considerably higher, since there is a positive association between satisfaction with an item and the importance of that item.

Luckily we are in a position to test this expectation, since in addition

TABLE 5

IMPORTANCE OF 18 ITEMS

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number of Mentions as among Three Most Important</u>	
5. Old-age economic security	102	14%
11. Income	89	12
3. Kids' success	88	12
2. Housing conditions	71	10
8. Available medical & hospital care	71	10
18. Job security	59	8
15. Treatment by family	54	7
13. Type of work	41	6
4. Ability to participate in public affairs	28	4
6. Amount of free time	24	3
9. Education	24	3
16. Possibility for occupational advancement	22	3
14. How politicians represent you	19	3
7. How family & friends respect your views	15	2
12. Treatment by neighbors	15	2
1. Treatment by boss/teachers	7	1
17. Influence in local politics	5	1
10. Treatment by officialdom	4	1
Total	738	

to the 18 items respondents were also asked to assess their general level of satisfaction, in reference to everything that has any importance to their lives. The wording was:

Und nun denken Sie an alles, was Ihnen überhaupt im Leben wichtig ist: Für wie zufrieden oder unzufrieden halten Sie sich so im allgemeinen? Bitte geben Sie mir Ihre allgemeine Zufriedenheit mit Zeiger 19 an.

The result of this test is to go even farther than confirming our expectation, for the average general satisfaction level in response to this question was 70.0--even higher than the highest level of satisfaction with any of the six most important items (67.6). Thus the average general satisfaction is indeed higher than the average of the average specific satisfactions, and in the direction predicted by the importance-weighting approach. But the difference between the two averages is too great to be explained entirely by importance weighting. Perhaps, then, there are other items of even greater importance that our questionnaire did not mention: in response to a request for omitted items of greater importance, health was in fact mentioned 38 times. Another possibility is that people have a tendency to rate themselves happier in general than with specific things.

The three communities were by no means agreed on the relative importance of the 18 items. Substantial differences in rank orders are revealed by Table 6. One of the main differences is that city respondents accorded more importance to housing conditions than did either village or university respondents. Beyond this, all major differences are between

TABLE 6

IMPORTANCE OF 18 ITEMS IN THREE COMMUNITIES

Item, Number of Mentions, and Percentage of Mentions in:

<u>City</u>			<u>Village</u>			<u>University</u>		
11.	40	16%	5.	51	20%	13.	25	11%
5.	38	15	11.	38	15	3.	22	9
2.	34	14	3.	35	14	4.	22	9
3.	31	13	8.	29	11	9.	20	9
8.	27	11	15.	22	9	18.	18	8
18.	23	9	2.	21	8	2.	16	7
15.	19	8	18.	18	7	8.	15	6
6.	8	3	13.	8	3	6.	14	6
13.	8	3	14.	7	3	16.	14	6
1.	5	2	16.	7	3	5.	13	6
7.	4	2	4.	6	2	15.	13	6
9.	3	1	7.	4	2	11.	11	5
12.	3	1	10.	3	1	14.	10	4
14.	2	1	12.	3	1	12.	9	4
16.	1	0	6.	2	1	7.	7	3
17.	1	0	1.	1	0	17.	3	1
4.	0	0	9.	1	0	1.	1	0
10.	0	0	17.	1	0	10.	1	0
T	247		T	257		T	234	

the university, on the one hand, and the other two communities, on the other. By considerable margins, university respondents attached the greatest importance to education, type of work, and the ability to participate in public affairs, and attached the least importance to income and old-age economic security, compared with city and village respondents. The importance rankings of the six material, financial, or physical welfare items also differ in the university. In the city they occupy the top six places, and in the village they occupy six of the top seven places. But in the university, these items occupy ranks spread through the upper and middle ranges, down to rank 12. The university respondents either were, or wanted to appear to be, less materialistic than those in the city and the village.

Besides ranking the items differently, university respondents also spread their importance attributions more evenly across the 18 items than did those in the other two communities. While the top six items account for over three-fourths of the mentions in the city and in the village, they account for just over one-half of the mentions in the university. On the question of which items are most important, there appears to be less consensus in the university than elsewhere.

Let us now look at the interaction between satisfaction and importance, comparing the three communities. Since respondents were not asked to assess the proportional contributions of all 18 items to their own total satisfaction, it is impossible strictly to weight their satisfaction levels by their item importance assessments. As an approximation,

however, we can use the percentage of all mentions received by a given item as one of the three most important items. When we apply this weighting factor in the three communities, we find that importance weighting increases the average level of satisfaction in each community. The increase, however, is smallest in the university. The university difference is so small, as shown in Table 7, that one can conclude there is little association between satisfaction with an item and the importance of that item in the university sample. This means that university people are the most likely to be frustrated by feeling unhappy about something that is of great concern to them.

Still, the weighted average satisfaction level is lowest of all in the city, because of its residents' tendency to be less satisfied on most items than those in the other two communities. But the difference in satisfaction level between the city and the university is cut in half when importance weighting is employed. By contrast, the satisfaction advantage of the village over the university is more than doubled by importance weighting. In the end, the weighted satisfaction levels would lead us to predict that the village would give itself the highest and the city would give itself the lowest rating on general satisfaction, with the university falling about midway between them. Table 7 shows that this prediction is only partly confirmed. The general satisfaction level was highest in the village, as predicted, but the city's level was a little above, rather than below, that of the university. In each community, however, the pattern mentioned above for the whole sample was repeated: the

TABLE 7

THREE KINDS OF SATISFACTION IN THREE COMMUNITIES

<u>Kind of Satisfaction</u>	<u>Community</u>		
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>University</u>
Unweighted average of 18 item-satisfaction averages	50.3	62.8	60.0
Importance-weighted average of 18 item- satisfaction averages	57.2	68.0	62.4
Average general satisfaction	69.1	74.7	65.8

importance weighting helps account for some, but not all, of the tendency for the level of general satisfaction to be above the average level of specific satisfactions. The bulk of the unexplained discrepancy is in the city, and a substantial amount also in the village; the discrepancy is only small in the university.

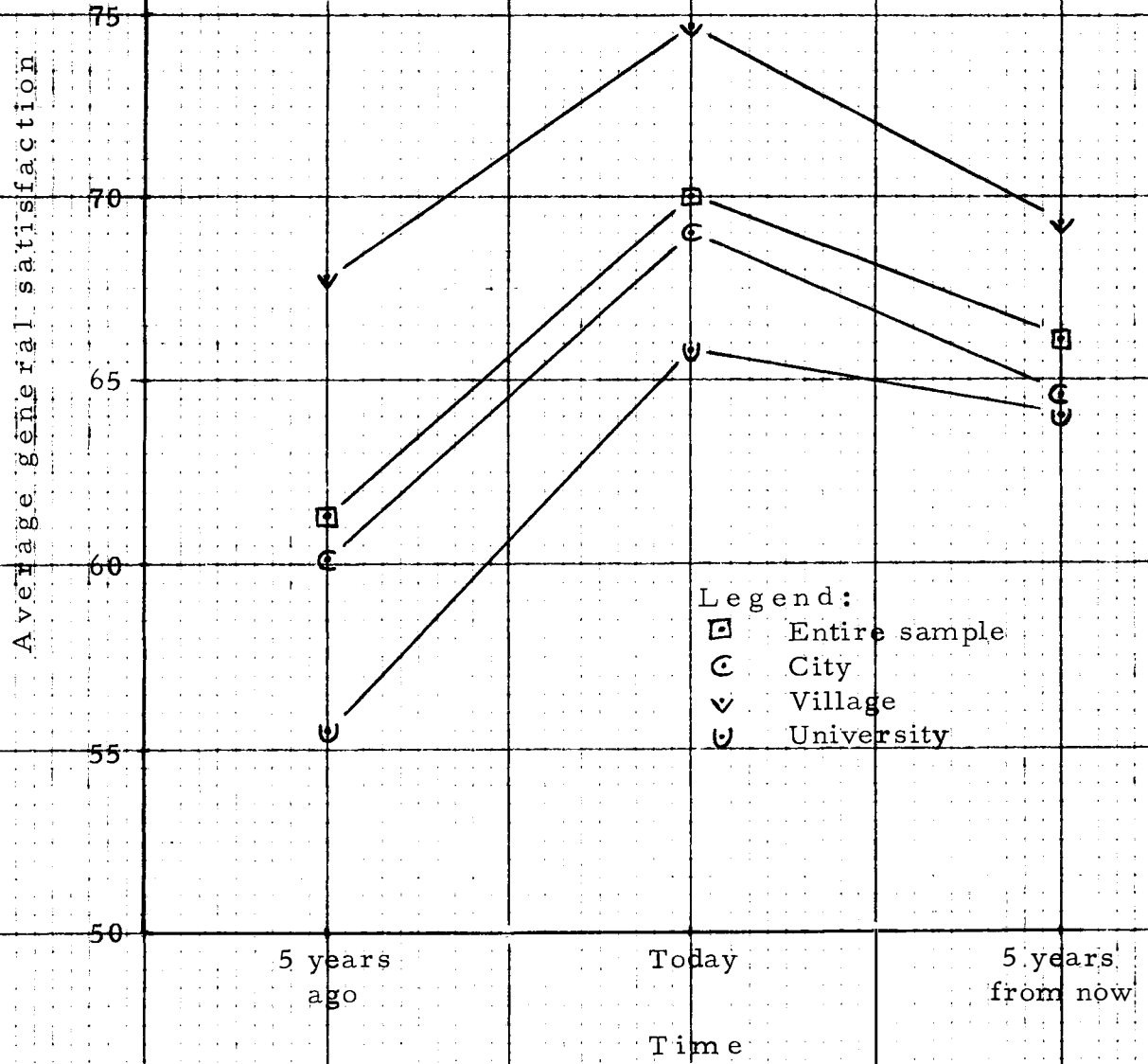
Respondents were asked to rate their general level of satisfaction not only at present, but also as of five years ago and as predicted for five years into the future. Interestingly, on the average they did not see themselves getting happier, nor unhappier, nor staying the same; rather, they saw themselves on a peak of satisfaction. Things had gotten better, and now they were expected to get worse, though not as fast. This is true not only for the whole sample, but also for each of the three communities. The results are shown in Figure 1.

Although the figure shows all communities with the same rise-and-fall pattern, there are substantial differences in magnitude. In the first place, the differences among the communities steadily decreases over time. The greatest difference is in the past and the least in the future. This trend appears to show a perception of convergence among satisfaction levels in city, village, and university. In this sense, the university was much more optimistic than the village: the former expected the level of satisfaction to fall only slightly from its present level, but in the village it was expected to fall almost back to where it had stood five years earlier. Age differences may, of course, have much to do with this.

To confirm these observations, we can compare the responses to

FIGURE 1

TRENDS IN GENERAL SATISFACTION



three questions about the anticipated level of satisfaction with the three items considered most important by the respondent. This question included the following wording:

Hier sehen wir noch einmal, wie zufrieden Sie gegenwärtig mit . . . sind. Was denken Sie, wie zufrieden werden Sie mit diesen Dingen voraussichtlich in 5 Jahren sein?

Since this question is about the most important items, we would expect the average of the three responses to it to be close to the response given to the question about general satisfaction five years from now.

This is the case: the general response is 66.1, and the average response to the three-most-important-items question is 64.8. The latter figure is not far from the former in any of the three communities either:

2.4 points lower in the city, 2.6 points higher in the village, and 4.0 points lower in the university. It would be expected that the gap is

greatest in the university, since it is there (as we have seen above)

that the three most important items are least consensually rated as the

most important. It seems reasonable that in a community whose members are divided as to what is most important there will be a tendency for

each individual member to reflect that division, by attributing substantial importance to a larger number of items. The result would be less

correspondence between expected satisfaction with the three most important items and expected general satisfaction.

The expectations of the respondents about their future satisfaction were not based on a high degree of subjective certainty. Table 8 shows

TABLE 8

CERTAINTY ABOUT ONE'S FUTURE

		<u>Community</u>			
		<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>University</u>	<u>Total</u>
Certainty of Responses about Own Future	Very certain	20%	5%	12%	12%
	Some- what certain	26%	37%	25%	30%
	Some- what uncertain	38%	29%	43%	37%
	Very uncertain	16%	28%	20%	22%
	N	74	78	75	227

that in the sample as a whole, and each of the communities except the city, more respondents said they were very uncertain than said they were very certain about their predictions of future satisfaction. The question on which the table is based read:

Sie haben Angaben über Ihre zukünftige Lage gemacht. Wie sicher waren Sie dabei: Sehr sicher, etwas sicher, etwas unsicher oder sehr unsicher?

Uncertainty about the future is also reflected in the fact that 19% fewer people answered the question about general future satisfaction than answered the question about general present satisfaction, which was answered by over 97% of the sample.

Almost all respondents were willing to rate their general and their specific levels of satisfaction, at least for the present, using the scale described above, whose endpoints represented extremes that respondents were asked to imagine for themselves. Two other ways of measuring satisfaction with the opinionometer were also tried, since willingness to answer does not necessarily imply that the answers received will be comparable and theoretically useful. In the other two measurement modes, respondents were asked to make comparisons between their satisfaction and something else. Let us briefly turn to the results of these questions to see what was learned.

One technique was to ask the respondent to locate himself or herself at a satisfaction percentile within a particular set of persons to which (s)he belonged. Each respondent had chosen a group that (s)he felt

most strongly a member of, out of a list of 33 groups, to which the respondent was also permitted to add. One question asked each respondent to rate his or her own satisfaction in comparison with all the members of this group:

Sie sagten eben, Sie fühlen sich dem/der/den . . . zugehörig. Nun sagen Sie mir doch bitte, ob Sie als . . . Ihrer Ansicht nach zufriedener oder unzufriedener sind als die anderen 100 würde diesmal bedeuten, daß Sie sich für den "zufriedensten" . . . halten; 50 würde bedeuten, daß Sie sich für "genauso zufrieden" bzw. "genauso unzufrieden" wie alle anderen . . . im Durchschnitt halten; 0 würde bedeuten, daß Sie sich für den "unzufriedensten" . . . halten.

(Wherever three dots appear, the name of the respondent's group was substituted.) Another question asked the respondent to make the same kind of comparison with the entire citizenry of the Federal Republic of Germany:

Und nun vergleichen Sie sich bitte mit allen anderen Leuten hier in der Bundesrepublik, nicht nur mit den Falls Sie glauben, daß Sie weniger zufrieden sind als andere Leute in der Bundesrepublik, dann geben Sie sich einen niedrigen Wert. Falls Sie der Ansicht sind, daß Sie--verglichen mit anderen in der Bundesrepublik--zufriedener sind, dann geben Sie sich einen hohen Skalenwert. Falls Sie glauben, daß Sie ebenso zufrieden sind, wie alle anderen im Durchschnitt, dann stellen Sie den Zeiger auf 50.

If all people were able to assess their own and each other's satisfaction comparatively and consensually, then we should expect the

answers to the last question to be related to the answers to the general satisfaction question, since whoever has more absolute satisfaction must also be at a higher percentile of those in the country. On the other hand, no such association would have to exist between general satisfaction and group-related satisfaction, since different respondents belonged to different groups. Table 9 compares the two kinds of comparative satisfactions with absolute satisfaction. The most striking difference is that absolute satisfaction is considerably higher than comparative satisfaction. Respondents considered themselves satisfied, but not much more satisfied than they thought most of their fellow citizens were. In other words, respondents considered their fellow citizens fairly satisfied also.

The expected correspondence between differences in absolute satisfaction and differences in satisfaction compared with the whole country does not appear in Table 9, however, across the three communities. Not only is the rank order of the communities different on the two variables (although only partly different), but also the inter-community difference, which is statistically significant at the .05 level for absolute satisfaction, is not significant at that level for satisfaction compared with all citizens. What this suggests is that people in each community tend to project the characteristics of their own community, and of themselves, onto the entire country. In doing so, they would cluster around 50 instead of being evenly distributed from the 0th to the 100th percentile on the country question. In our

TABLE 9

ABSOLUTE AND COMPARATIVE SATISFACTIONS

<u>Type of Satisfaction</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>University</u>	
Average absolute	69.1	74.7	65.8	70.0 ^a
Average percentile of own reference group	56.8	60.9	59.5	59.0 ^b
Average percentile of all West Germans	51.5	58.1	55.4	55.0 ^b

Statistical significance of inter-community differences (F test):

a = $p < .05$

b = not significant

sample, the standard deviation of the responses to this question was 22.4, while it would have been 28.9 if the respondents had perceived themselves as a cross-section of the West German population from the point of view of satisfaction. Of course, without a national random sample we have no way of knowing to what extent this sample did approximate a cross-section.

In addition to asking the respondents to compare their satisfaction with that of other persons, we also asked them to compare what they were getting with what they deserved. Here we used the -50 to +50 scale, on which 0 stood for getting exactly what one deserved. One question asked the respondents to rate themselves on their three most important items with this scale:

Jeder hat von sich eine Meinung, was ihm eigentlich im Leben zustehen sollte. Bitte denken Sie noch einmal an die drei Dinge, die Sie vorhin ausgewählt haben, und zwar
Bitte drücken Sie mit dem Meinungsometer aus, wie gut es Ihnen gegenwärtig geht in Bezug auf diese drei Dinge.
0 bedeutet, daß es Ihnen "genauso geht" wie Sie es eigentlich verdienen; -50 bedeutet, daß es Ihnen "sehr viel schlechter" geht, als Sie es eigentlich verdienen; +50 bedeutet, daß es Ihnen "sehr viel besser" geht, als Sie es eigentlich verdienen.

This was followed by a question asking them to generalize the comparison to everything that had any importance to their life:

Nun denken Sie einmal an alles, was Ihnen überhaupt im Leben wichtig ist. Ganz allgemein gesehen: Wie geht es Ihnen im Vergleich zu dem, wie Sie es eigentlich verdienen würden?

The average of each respondent's average response to the three items on the first question, and the average response to the second question, were both positive (4.1 and 7.1, respectively). This means that the respondents tended to see themselves as getting more than they actually deserved, although not much more. In each community, the satisfaction elicited by the general question was greater than the average satisfaction on the three items--a pattern that we have already observed (see Table 7). In contrast to the kinds of satisfaction we have analyzed before, here it was the city that, on both measures, revealed the greatest satisfaction. The differences among the communities were not, however, statistically significant at the .05 level on either of these measures.

A contrast with previous findings is that, when satisfaction was measured by comparison with what the respondents saw themselves as deserving, there was a slight but steady upward trend in perceived satisfaction. The level five years earlier was perceived as 3.4, the present level as 7.1, and the level forecast for five years later as 8.0. A similar trend, with a rise from past to present and a less steep rise from present to future, is observed in each of the three communities. For the most part, the present-to-future rise is confirmed by the responses to the analogous questions dealing with the three most important items; the one exception is that there is a slight drop in satisfaction from present to future in the university. (No question on satisfaction in comparison with deserts was asked for the past.) Of

all the questions of this type, only one produced statistically significant differences among the three communities: respondents in the city, predicting their future satisfaction with the three most important things in comparison with what they deserved, rated themselves at an average of 10.1; villagers at 5.0; and university members at 1.4 (significant at the .05 level).

Respondents were finally asked to rate what the group they identified with was getting, in comparison with what the group deserved, and to make that comparison as of five years into the past and into the future, as well as for the present. For the sample as a whole, there is almost no difference among the three time periods; the group is perceived as doing just barely better than it deserves to do, and yet not as well as the respondent himself or herself. The three communities, however, show small but interesting differences. In the city and the village, the respondent and the respondent's group are seen as getting almost exactly the same amount more than what is deserved, with the group faring just slightly (but certainly not statistically significantly) better than the respondent. But in the university, the respondent sees his or her group as doing not only worse than the respondent, but also worse than the group deserves. And, although we saw in Figure 1 that the university people showed the greatest rise in satisfaction from past to future, it is the opposite when respondents are assessing how their reference groups are moving: here the university respondents' groups are seen as declining over time (slightly), while the

villagers, who showed the smallest past-to-future rise in their own satisfaction, responded most optimistically about their reference groups.

As contrasted with the other two communities, what we see in the university is a noticeable member-group gap in perceived satisfaction. Members see themselves as indulged, but their group as deprived. This can be an important combination of perceptions. Survey data from Quebec, for example, reveal that there is a high incidence of political separatism among those who perceive Quebec and the French Canadians as deprived but perceive themselves personally as indulged; people who perceive both the collectivity and themselves personally as deprived, on the other hand, have a very low incidence of separatism.* In the West German context, while separatism is not a discussed option, radical reforms and revolutions are much discussed, particularly in university communities.

Documentation for the discussion of responses to the questions on satisfaction in comparison with deserts is provided in Table 10.

TABLE 10

SATISFACTION IN COMPARISON WITH DESERTS

<u>Type of Satisfaction</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>University</u>	
Self: general 5 years ago	6.1	1.2	2.8	3.4 ^a
Self: general today	9.6	4.5	7.3	7.1 ^a
Self: general in 5 years	11.5	4.7	8.0	8.0 ^a
Self: average of 3 most important items today	6.8	3.6	1.7	4.1 ^a
Self: average of 3 most important items in 5 years	10.1	5.0	1.4	5.7 ^b
Group: 5 years ago	3.8	4.0	-3.0	1.8 ^a
Group: today	8.1	3.9	-4.1	2.9 ^c
Group: in 5 years	8.4	3.0	-5.2	2.4 ^d

Statistical significance of inter-community differences (F test):

a = not significant

b = $p < .05$

c = $p < .01$

d = $p < .001$

Approval of the Government and its Alternatives

In the previous section we learned that, of 18 things mentioned to the respondents in our sample, they were least satisfied with the three political ones. This fact makes it worth looking into the respondents' political satisfactions and dissatisfactions in more detail, so as to seek the origin of the political disaffection we have discovered. We began with an attempt to find out what activities the respondents thought it was appropriate for the government to engage in. Our intention was to ask them how well the government was dealing with these activities, and how successfully the government was staying out of those areas of life in which the respondents thought it had no business meddling. The responses, however, confirmed even more clearly than we had expected that West Germans of different subcultures, regardless of how much they disagree about what the government should aim for, do not disagree much about what the government should be involved in. Of the 16 possible activities mentioned none was thought to be out of bounds for government action by more than 20% of the respondents. In one community 46% of the respondents thought one activity was not the business of government, but aside from that no more than 26% of the respondents in any community thought any activity was out of bounds. The results are shown in Table 11.

The respondents saw the government as responsible not only for these 16 activities, but also for the three items which they had previously picked out as the most important among their personal sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This was determined by a question asking respondents to

TABLE 11

IMPORTANT, UNIMPORTANT, AND IMPROPER ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE

(For each activity, the first row shows the percentage saying it is an important activity of the state, the second row the percentage saying it is not a proper activity of the state. The percentage saying it is an unimportant activity of the state is the remainder. Indefinite answers are excluded.)

<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Abbreviated translation</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Community</u>		<u>Total</u>
			<u>Village</u>	<u>Uni- ver- sity</u>	
1. Vorsorge für alte, schwache und bedürftige Leute.	Aid to needy.	99 0	99 1	100 0	99 0
2. Sicherung der freien Marktwirtschaft.	Maintaining free economy.	94 1	89 1	59 15	81 6
3. Dafür sorgen, daß alle Abiturienten die Universität besuchen können.	Opening university admissions.	86 5	73 9	56 17	72 10
4. Für eine starke und handlungsfähige politische Führung sorgen.	Strong political leadership.	94 1	95 1	77 13	89 5
5. Sicherung eines angenehmen Lebens für alle Bürger.	Providing good life to all.	90 5	88 5	58 24	80 11
6. Schutz und Sicherheit für den Einzelnen.	Security for individuals.	99 0	95 1	95 1	96 1
7. Die Unterschiede zwischen Arm und Reich ausgleichen.	Equalization of rich & poor.	87 11	66 25	76 13	76 16
8. Gerechtigkeit für alle gewährleisten.	Justice for all.	95 2	96 1	97 0	96 1
9. Sicherstellung der nationalen Verteidigung.	National defense.	93 2	94 1	68 9	85 4
10. Aufrechterhaltung von Sitte und Moral.	Maintaining traditions & morality.	96 1	88 5	29 46	74 15

(continued)

TABLE 11 (continued)

11. Durchsetzung demokratischer Grundsätze in Wirtschaft, Verbänden und Universitäten.	Democratizing economy & society.	92 5	80 5	75 19	83 9
12. Bekämpfung der Umweltverschmutzung und Verbesserung des Landschaftschutzes.	Environmental protection.	96 1	96 4	97 0	97 2
13. Streitigkeiten zwischen gesellschaftlichen Gruppen schlichten.	Reducing social conflict.	81 10	55 26	52 25	63 20
14. Für Ruhe und Ordnung im Lande sorgen.	Domestic peace & order.	100 0	91 4	66 4	86 2
15. Gleiche Möglichkeiten für alle Bürger schaffen, an politischen Entscheidungen mitzuwirken.	Equalizing political access.	87 3	80 4	91 4	86 3
16. Für wirtschaftliche Stabilität sorgen.	Economic stability	98 0	99 0	88 1	95 0
Minimum N		79	78	70	234

use 100 on the opinionometer to mean that the state had total responsibility, and 0 to mean it had no responsibility, for the item in question:

Nun möchte ich gerne wissen, inwieweit Ihrer Ansicht nach der Staat für diese Lebensbereiche verantwortlich und zuständig ist. . . . Diesmal bedeutet 0 "überhaupt nicht verantwortlich und zuständig" und 100 bedeutet "voll verantwortlich und zuständig". Sagen Sie mir bitte, wie verantwortlich und zuständig der Staat für diese drei Dinge sein sollte.

The average of each respondent's three (or fewer) answers to this question was computed, and the resulting scores were averaged across all respondents, giving a score of 65. The community scores fell inside a narrow range, from 62 (village) to 67 (university), and did not differ from each other with statistical significance.

A final responsibility question asked respondents to widen the spectrum of potential state activity beyond the three items of greatest concern to them personally, to everything of importance to people like them:

Denken Sie nun mal an alles, was für Leute wie Sie im Leben wichtig ist. Wie verantwortlich und zuständig sollte der Staat für all das sein . . . ?

Here, as might be expected, the level of expected responsibility was lower (62). In addition, a highly significant ($p < .001$) difference emerged among the communities: the village assigned the highest and the university the lowest responsibility for all this to the state. Still, the average rating of responsibility was above 50 in each of the communities, even

with this expansive formulation of the question.

Given that most respondents in all communities felt that the government was responsible for most of the things we mentioned and for the things most important to them and people like them, how well did they think the government was exercising its responsibilities? Remembering their relative and absolute dissatisfaction with political items, we should not be surprised to find them thinking poorly of the government's performance.

All respondents were asked to judge the government's handling of those activities which the respondents had classified as important activities of the state. Their ratings could range from "extremely effective" (100) to "totally ineffective" (0). The question read in part:

Denken Sie jetzt bitte nur noch an die wichtigen Aufgaben.
Wie wirkungsvoll sind diese von der Regierung behandelt worden? . . . 100 auf dem Meinungsometer bedeutet "äußerst wirkungsvoll"; 0 bedeutet "ganz wirkungslos".

As Table 12 shows, the highest rating given to the government on any activity by the respondents as a whole was 56.9, and the lowest 36.0. Three-fourths of the activities produced ratings of under 50. The difference between the highest and the lowest level of perceived government efficacy was less than half the difference between the highest and the lowest level of personal satisfaction, reflecting a greater tendency for respondents to distinguish among sources of personal satisfaction than to distinguish among sources of political satisfaction.

TABLE 12

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE IN IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Univer-</u> <u>sity</u>	
9. National defense.	49.1	66.2	55.6	56.9
2. Maintaining free economy.	47.7	56.4	56.0	52.7
14. Domestic peace & order.	47.4	54.7	53.7	51.4
4. Strong political leadership.	46.7	56.9	46.6	50.1
1. Aid to needy.	46.8	56.1	46.8	50.0
6. Security for individuals.	45.9	54.0	48.1	49.3
5. Providing good life to all.	46.9	52.1	38.3	46.9
15. Equalizing political access.	42.6	56.8	40.2	45.8
10. Maintaining traditions & morality.	42.2	47.4	46.3	44.8
16. Economic stability.	43.5	47.4	40.5	43.9
8. Justice for all.	42.9	49.0	38.7	43.6
11. Democratizing economy & society.	42.5	51.6	28.1	40.6
3. Opening university admissions.	37.8	50.7	29.6	40.1
13. Reducing social conflict.	36.9	45.2	39.3	39.6
12. Environmental protection.	36.6	45.0	27.8	36.6
7. Equalization of rich & poor.	37.1	43.1	28.2	36.0

Significance of inter-community differences (F test):

$p \geq .05$: 2, 6, 10, 13, 14, 16

$p < .05$: 1, 4, 5, 8

$p < .01$: 7, 15

$p < .001$: 3, 9, 11, 12

In general, the government was seen as doing a better job of maintaining the power of the state than developing the opportunities of citizens. For the most part, all three communities agreed on what the government was doing better and what it was doing worse. The chief difference in rank ordering had to do with alternative approaches to group or class conflict in society. City and village respondents thought the government was democratizing the economy and society better than it was reducing social conflict, but the university respondents thought just the opposite.

Of the three communities, the village was most often the happiest with governmental performance: its rating was the highest on all of the 16 activities. The university was the least content, giving the lowest rating on 10 of the activities. The university respondents differentiated their perceptions of efficacy the most, with a range of 28.2 from the most to the least efficacious activity. The least differentiation was among the city respondents, with a range of only 12.5.

The predominance of ratings somewhat under 50 for the efficacy of the government is reaffirmed in two other places in the interview. One is where respondents were asked to compare the responsibility the state ought to take for the respondent's three most important items, or for all things of importance to people like the respondent, with the amount of responsibility the state actually takes for these things. In both cases, the rating took a sharp drop from the "ought" to the "is". In the second location, respondents were given a list of nine policies that the West German government had been pursuing recently, and were asked to name

up to three of them to which they had been paying attention. They were then asked to rate the government's handling of the policies in which they had expressed an interest, on a scale from "excellent" to "atrocious":

Denken Sie nun einmal daran, wie die Bundesregierung diese Frage(n) behandelt. Wie würden Sie die Behandlung dieser Frage(n) durch die Regierung beurteilen? 100 bedeutet "ausgezeichnet"; 0 bedeutet "empörend".

When each respondent's three (or fewer) ratings in response to this question are averaged, the result is similar to the ratings given to the government on its taking of responsibility for the important areas of life, as shown in Table 13. In the two cases where statistically significant differences exist among the communities, it was the villagers who gave the government its highest ratings. In no case was there a large inter-community difference, however.

One more question asked for a summary assessment of the government, and this was the most summary of all. Rather than asking about effectiveness, responsibility, important areas of life, or interesting policies, this question asked for a blanket rating of the government on its "accomplishments":

Wie würden Sie ganz allgemein die Leistungen der jetzigen Regierung beurteilen?

The response to this question is in startling contrast to all the related questions, as Table 13 indicates. Ratings of the government on this most general question plunge to about half, or less, of the ratings on the general, but not quite so general, questions. This is not a freak

TABLE 13

GENERAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT

<u>Type of Assessment</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Univer- sity</u>	
Responsibility for three things most important to respondent:				
Ideally	66.0	62.4	66.9	65.0 ^a
In reality	45.6	42.3	42.2	43.4 ^a
Responsibility for everything of importance to people like respondent:				
Ideally	63.3	68.3	52.8	61.8 ^b
In reality	42.1	46.2	38.0	42.2 ^c
Handling of three policies to which respondent has paid attention	46.4	53.3	42.8	47.4 ^c
General accomplishments	21.2	13.2	19.3	17.8 ^a

Statistical significance of inter-community differences (F test):

a = not significant

b = $p < .001$

c = $p < .05$

result in one community: it is consistent across all three communities. And it is an even stronger drop if the two responsibility items are given the reasonable interpretation that the "ideal" value should be the upper limit, and the "real" value should be recomputed as a proportion of that limit. In this case, the responsibility ratings would be mostly in the 60's, making the general ratings seem even smaller by comparison.

The responses to the most general question about governmental performance were also low in comparison with the ratings of the government on its handling of 16 policy areas, shown in Table 12 above. In fact, the lowest rating given by any community on any of the 16 activities was still higher than the highest rating given by any community to the government in response to the general question. And the community that most often gave the government the highest rating on a specific activity (the village) was the community giving the lowest general rating. (The latter difference is not statistically significant, but the gap between specific and general ratings is significantly higher for the village than for the other communities.)

Why this precipitous drop in approval of the government, when the question attains the peak of generality? A recollection of the results of the satisfaction questions may suggest an explanation. With satisfaction we found that general levels were higher than could be explained by specific levels; now, with ratings of the government, we find the opposite. One explanation lies in the norms, hence expectations, of West German culture (and the norms in question are probably shared

by most Western countries with competitive political systems). One norm is to deny one's personal unhappiness: one can say one is unhappy with X, Y, or Z, but not that one is "an unhappy person". Another norm is to be suspicious of government in general, and especially of the party in power, and to let one's suspicion grow with the time that that party remains in power. Here again, one can more easily say that the government is handling problem X well than one can say that the government is doing a good job. Another norm, which reinforces this pattern, is to hide ignorance with approval, when asked for an opinion about the specific behavior of a person or collectivity. Consequently, only the knowledgeable are likely to be very critical on a specific policy (cf. the university respondents' rating of the government on open admissions to universities, in Table 12), while anyone can be critical at a sufficiently high level of generality (the general accomplishments question is the only opinionometer question everyone answered). Finally there is a norm of kindness to human beings, especially those with whom one is familiar, but no corresponding norm of kindness to institutions. Had the general question referred to Willy Brandt instead of the federal government, this norm would, it is hypothesized, have kept the ratings fairly high.

If these hypotheses are correct, the specific ratings of the government have been inflated by the be-positive-when-ignorant norm, and the general ratings have been depressed by the no-government-stays-good-very-long norm. The "truth" would presumably lie somewhere in between. Further tests of this explanation via split-ballot variations in questionnaire content would be appropriate.

If, indeed, the depressed general ratings of the government were in part based on the belief that it had naturally deteriorated during its period in power, rather than (or in addition to) a belief that government is always incompetent or corrupt, then the respondents should have been more charitable towards the prospect of other parties in power. A series of questions allows us to test this expectation. Appearing immediately after the general question about the government's accomplishments, each of these asked the respondent to estimate what the government's accomplishments would be like if a particular party were in power, e.g.:

Und was glauben Sie, wie würden die Leistungen der
Regierung aussehen, wenn die CDU/CSU die Regierung
bilden würde?

The results are shown in Table 14 and tend to confirm the above expectation.

For the respondents as a whole, and in each one of the three communities, the prospective Christian democratic coalition received a higher average rating than the actual social-liberal coalition. For the most part, the CDU/CSU was the only party or coalition able to beat the SPD/FDP; the two extreme parties fared even worse than the present coalition. But in the village, even the NPD got a higher rating than the existing government.

Although the CDU/CSU got the highest rating in each of the three communities, its lead over the other parties differed substantially. The

TABLE 14

ASSESSMENTS OF ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENTS

Party or Coalition Forming the <u>Government</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	Univer- <u>sity</u>	
SPD/FDP	21.2	13.2	19.3	17.8 ^a
CDU/CSU	43.9	55.1	40.9	46.8 ^b
NPD	8.9	16.2	4.2	9.9 ^b
DKP/KPD	9.2	4.9	16.6	10.0 ^b

Statistical significance of inter-community differences (F test):

a = not significant

b = $p < .001$

village gave it over four times higher a rating than the SPD/FDP, while the city and the university gave the CDU/CSU only twice the ratings they gave the present government. In the university the communists came close to matching the incumbents' rating, but in the city and the village the communists did less than half as well. The city gave both extreme parties about equally low ratings, but the village and the university had strong preferences between them: the nationalists got more support in the village, and the communists in the university, in each case getting more than triple the other party's rating.

Although there was a strong tendency to rate the most likely alternative government higher than the current one, respondents were not very optimistic in their expectations. Only one rating was over 50: that of the CDU/CSU in the village. From what we have seen about political skepticism, and from what we already knew about the differences in party support among these three communities, the patterns in Table 14 seem reasonable and seem to reflect self-conscious use of the opinionometer. This gives us more confidence in the assumption that the extremely low ratings given to the current government, whatever their explanations, were not simply the result of a misunderstanding of the question or a "random" fluctuation in response behavior.

Additional differences among the communities are discovered when we look separately at the assessments of alternative governments given by those who identified with different parties. 184 of the respondents, or 71%, were willing to answer the questions about party identification and

party voting and did so consistently, i. e. did not say they had voted (cast their second vote) for a different party from the one they said they felt closest to. As one would expect, party affiliation was useful in predicting the ratings respondents gave to the alternative governments. With one exception, the ratings conform to a unidimensional model of inter-party distances, running from DKP/KPD on the left through SPD, FDP, CDU/CSU, to NPD on the right. The exception appears in the ratings of an NPD government: although the highest rating comes from the NPD identifiers and the lowest from the (lone) communist, as expected, the ratings given by the three more popular parties' supporters are reversed, with the highest coming from the SPD and the lowest from the CDU/CSU. The latter difference, however, is minuscule (less than 3 points). The figures are shown in Table 15.

The expressed attitudes of those identifying with a given party are also dependent on the community they live in, however. This dependence seems to be greatest when the supporters of one party are called on to evaluate another party. In this case, they tend to modify their expected harsh evaluation if they live in a community where the evaluated party is relatively strong. Of our three communities, the SPD/FDP was strongest in the city, with 65% of those indicating a party preference, as opposed to 60% in the university and 50% in the village. The CDU/CSU was strongest in the village, with 45%, as opposed to 38% in the university and 35% in the city. A supporter of the CDU/CSU but living in the stronghold of the coalition parties was likely to give a higher rating to the coalition than

TABLE 15

ASSESSMENTS OF ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENTS
BY SUPPORTERS OF DIFFERENT PARTIES

<u>Party or Coalition Forming the Government</u>	<u>Party</u>				
	<u>SPD</u>	<u>FDP</u>	<u>CDU/CSU</u>	<u>NPD</u>	<u>DKP/KPD</u>
SPD/FDP	20.1	13.8	8.1	0.3	0.0 ^a
CDU/CSU	38.7	51.8	66.4	66.3	1.0 ^b
NPD	11.1	9.2	8.7	89.7	0.0 ^b
DKP/KPD	13.8	7.2	2.8	0.3	100.0 ^b
Minimum N	85	13	67	3	1

Statistical significance of inter-party differences (F test):

a = not significant

b = $p < .001$

a fellow party supporter living elsewhere; and a supporter of one of the coalition parties living in the community where the CDU/CSU was strongest was likely to give that party a considerably higher rating than a fellow social-liberal elsewhere. This pattern is shown in Table 16. This should not, however, draw our attention away from the fact, shown in Table 15, that even SPD supporters rated the CDU/CSU higher than their own party's government. Furthermore, they did this in each of the three communities.

Disaffection with the government in Bonn was shown by responses to another set of opinionometer questions as well, dealing with the characteristics of five kinds of public servants:

Ich möchte Sie bitten, die Polizisten, die Richter, die Verwaltungsbeamten, die Bundestagsabgeordneten und die Leute im öffentlichen Dienst allgemein nach drei Eigenschaften einzustufen, nämlich wie vertrauenswürdig sie Ihnen erscheinen, wie gerecht sie Ihnen erscheinen und ob Sie glauben, daß diese Leute gute oder schlechte Arbeit leisten. . . . Dabei bedeutet 100 jeweils "äußerst vertrauenswürdig"; 0 bedeutet jeweils "überhaupt nicht vertrauenswürdig". . . . Dabei bedeutet 100 jeweils "äußerst gerecht"; 0 bedeutet jeweils "überhaupt nicht gerecht". . . . 100 bedeutet "bestmögliche Arbeit" und 0 bedeutet "schlechteste Arbeit".

As Figure 2 shows, confidence in non-political officials was fairly high, averaging between 60 and 65, while confidence in members of the Bundestag was the lowest, not far above the midpoint of the scale.

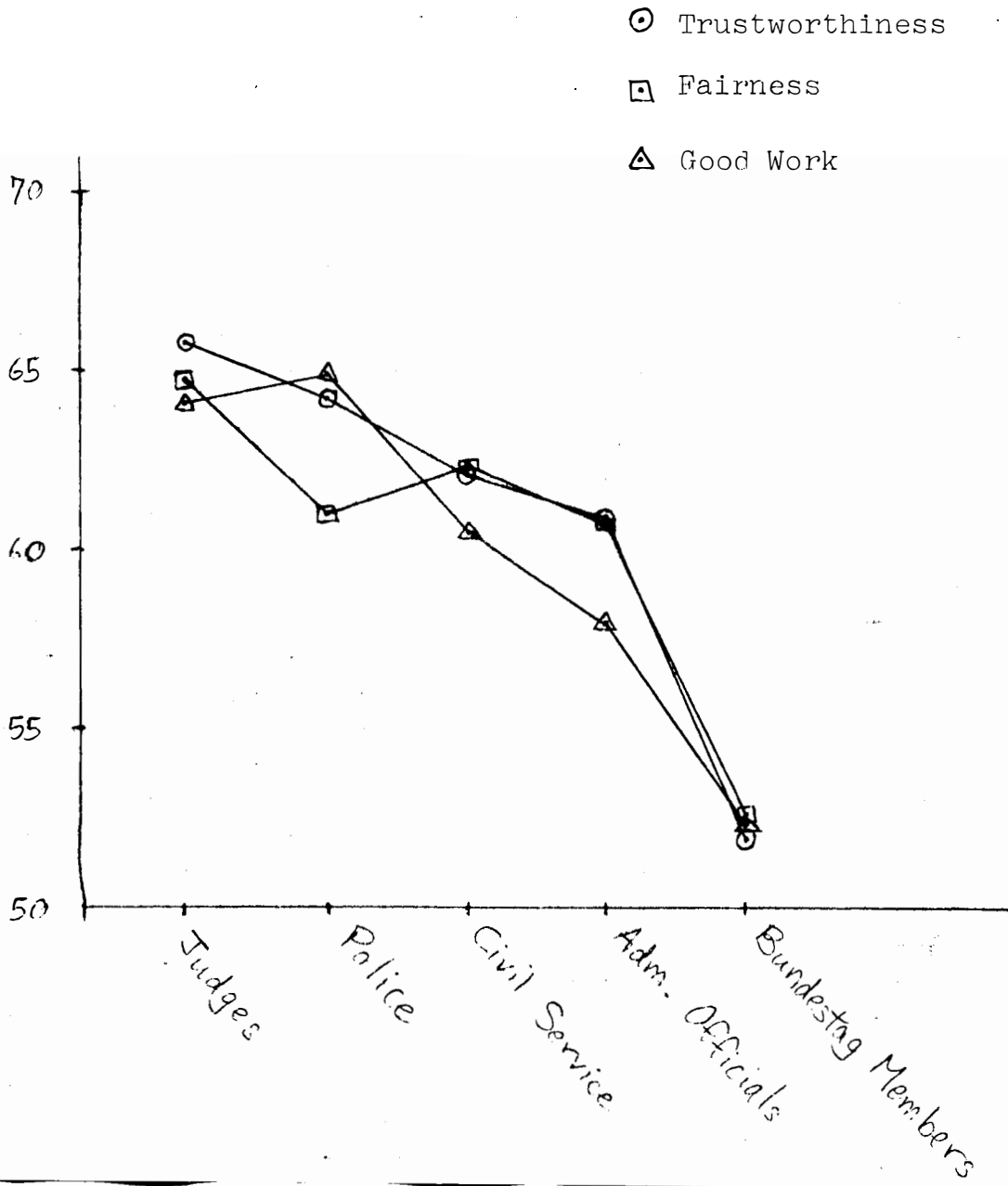
TABLE 16

PARTY, COMMUNITY, AND ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENTS

<u>Party or Coalition Forming the Government</u>		<u>Party</u>	
		<u>SPD or FDP</u>	<u>CDU/CSU</u>
SPD/FDP	City	21.1	16.8
	Village	15.7	2.1
	University	20.5	6.5
CDU/CSU	City	33.9	68.7
	Village	51.9	62.7
	University	37.1	69.5
NPD	City	9.8	8.9
	Village	15.5	11.3
	University	7.4	3.9
DKP/KPD	City	13.3	5.1
	Village	7.4	2.1
	University	18.4	1.4

FIGURE 2

PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS



In all three communities the members of the Bundestag received the lowest ratings on all three characteristics. The communities did differ, however, in confidence. On every one of the 15 ratings, the villagers expressed the highest and the university members the lowest average confidence. The communities' ratings came close together for the judges, on two of whose characteristics the inter-community differences did not reach statistical significance, but the other 13 ratings were all significant at the .05 level, and nine of them at the .001 level. For four of the five kinds of public servants, the communities differed in their ratings most on the "good work" characteristic.

Political Efficacy

Respondents rated their own influence over various aspects of life with the opinionometer. The scale ranged from 0, meaning no influence at all, to 100, meaning the greatest possible amount of influence:

Einige Leute glauben, daß sie auf bestimmte Dinge persönlich großen Einfluß haben, andere Leute sind dagegen der Ansicht, daß sie selbst nur sehr wenig ausrichten können. Hier ist eine Liste mit verschiedenen Bereichen, die für viele Leute wichtig sind. Wir möchten zunächst herausfinden, wieviel Einfluß Sie Ihrer Ansicht nach persönlich in diesen Bereichen haben. . . . 0 bedeutet "überhaupt keinen Einfluß"; 100 bedeutet "größtmöglichen Einfluß".

Ten areas were mentioned, of which three were clearly political. When

the answers are compared, the political items once again fall into a distinct cluster: it is they that respondents saw as being least accessible to their personal influence. The non-political items receive ratings from just below the midpoint up to the 60's; the political items, by contrast, all fall into the bottom quartile of the range. The gap between the three political items and all the others is by far the greatest gap among the items, if measured by the average levels of personal efficacy expressed by the respondents. The political items rank as numbers 8, 9, and 10 in each of the three communities. The data are given in Table 17.

Can this result be explained by the fact that each person necessarily has less influence over the affairs of a large collectivity than over the affairs of his or her family or personal life? Reasonable as this seems, the explanation does not square with the differences among the political items themselves. If respondents were objectivizing their influence, they would, on the average, be expected to claim most influence over local politics, next most over state politics, and least over federal politics, corresponding to the number of others with whom they must each share the available influence opportunities. But this is not the order observed. The smallest amount of influence claimed is in state rather than federal politics. More importantly, however, the three political influence levels are remarkably close to each other. In the three communities, the three levels of politics are ranked in three different orders. Rather than treating these ratings as an attempt to

TABLE 17

PERCEIVED PERSONAL EFFICACY

<u>Type of Influence</u>	<u>Abbreviated Translation</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
		<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Univer- sity</u>	
Ihre eigene Zufriedenheit.	Own happiness.	57.8	74.8	66.1	66.3
Die Möglichkeit, sich Klubs, Vereinen oder Organisationen anzuschließen.	Ability to join groups.	44.3	54.1	84.0	59.9
Art der Arbeit, die Sie verrichten.	Type of work.	45.8	64.0	66.5	58.3
Die Möglichkeiten, da Ihre Kinder es im Leben zu etwas bringen.	Kids' chances for success.	51.1	57.6	57.5	55.1
Die Entscheidungen, die an Ihrem Arbeitsplatz/ Studienplatz/in Ihrem Haushalt gefällt werden.	Decisions made at work/school/home.	42.4	67.0	51.8	53.6
Ihre allgemeine wirtschaftliche Situation.	Economic situation.	46.0	53.8	54.3	51.2
Ihre eigene schulische oder berufliche Ausbildung.	Education	39.0	44.7	62.2	48.2
Die Entscheidungen in Ihrer Gemeinde.	Community decisions.	18.4	25.6	27.4	23.7
Art und Weise, wie die Bundesrepublik regiert wird.	How the country is run.	23.8	17.2	21.9	21.0
Das, was die Landesregierung in . . . (Bundesland) tut.	What the state government does.	19.6	16.2	22.5	19.3

calculate one's influence objectively, it is more reasonable to interpret the responses as expressive of the difference between the amount of influence one expects to be able to exercise and the amount that one finds oneself able to exercise. If this is the proper interpretation, or if this aspect of influence is an important component of the responses over all, then we should find a fairly strong relationship between the perception of influence and satisfaction with influence. One pair of questions allows us to test this expectation. As Figure 3 shows, there is a fairly strong association between satisfaction with one's ability to influence local politics and one's perceived amount of influence over community decisions. The product-moment correlation between the two is .49. If Table 17 is compared with Tables 3 and 4, one finds that the average ratings of the two questions are similar, and that the three communities differ from each other (with statistical significance) on both questions in the same order.

The three communities display some other notable differences in their responses to this set of questions about personal efficacy. Respondents in the university were by far the most confident of their ability to join clubs and other organizations. Villagers, on the other hand, felt they had the greatest influence over decisions made at the place of work, school, and home. University members appeared to claim the greatest influence over all, having the highest score on 6 of the 10 items. City people, by contrast, got the lowest score on 8 of the 10. Interestingly, city respondents still gave themselves the highest score on one item,

influence over how the country is run. This fact might well be explained by the vicarious influence that comes from identification with the party in power. Still, the absolute level of claimed influence over federal politics is very low in the city, as elsewhere.

The responses to the influence series give some circumstantial evidence that the university respondents made the greatest distinction between the absolute amount of influence wielded and their level of satisfaction with that amount. The correlation between the two questions plotted together in Figure 3 is .52 in the city, .55 in the village, and only .31 in the university. Those stretched across the lower third of the plot, who claimed little influence over local politics but were not necessarily unhappy about this fact, came for the most part from the university. The inference that university respondents tended to see the influence series in more objective terms than the members of the other communities is supported also by the fact that only in the university was the claimed order of influence levels identical to the three levels of government: most influence over local politics, next most over state politics, and least over federal politics.

Besides being asked about their influence over particular areas of life, respondents also had a chance to assess their influence in general terms. The wording of the question tended to focus attention, here, on respondents' personal lives rather than on public affairs:

Nun denken Sie bitte an all die Bereiche, die Ihnen
überhaupt im Leben wichtig sind. Wieviel persönlichen

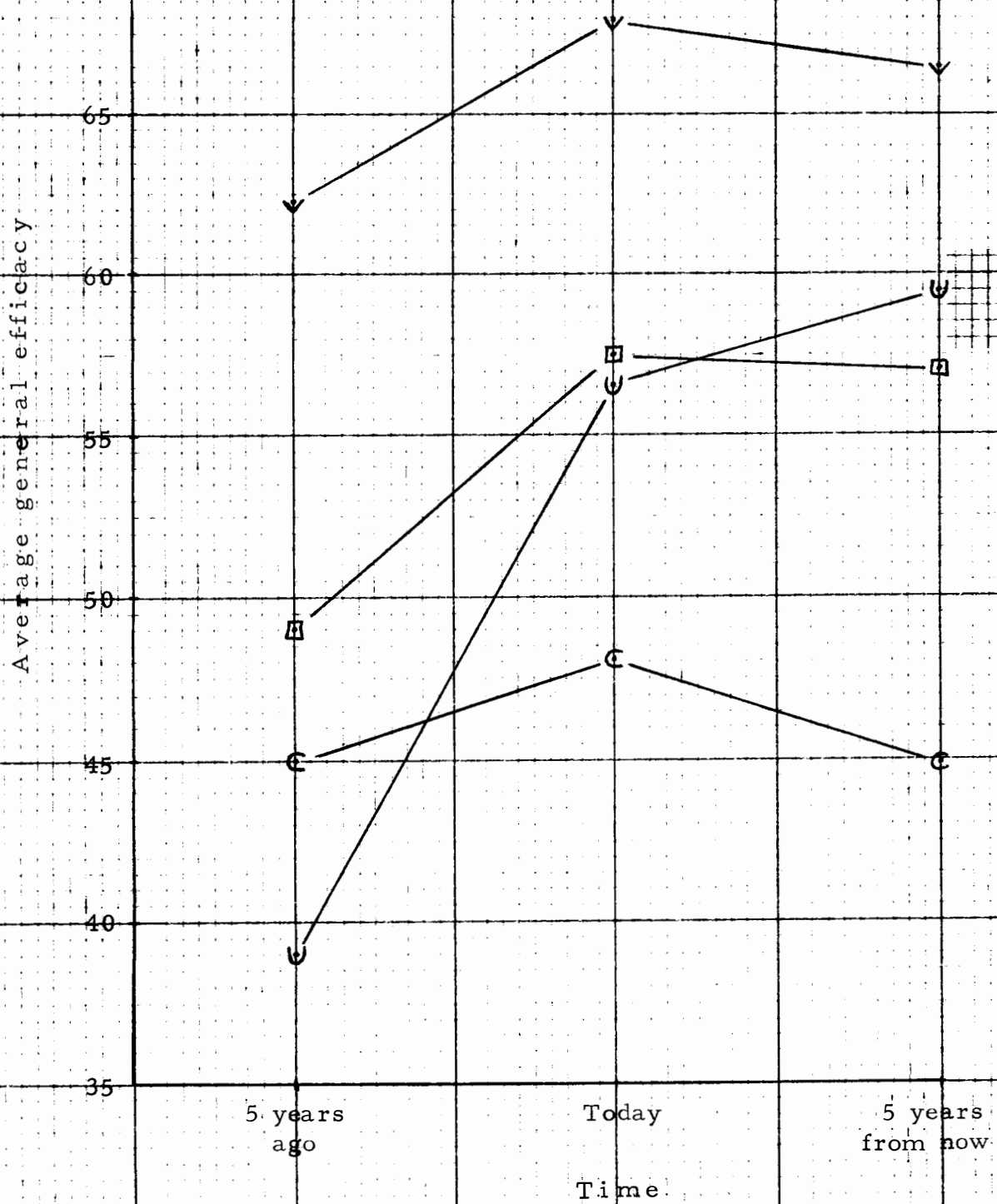
Einfluß haben Sie ganz allgemein in Ihrem Leben--nicht
in einem speziellen Bereich, sondern überhaupt?

Contrary to what we have discovered in the cases of satisfaction and governmental assessment, the influence case presents no shocking discrepancy between specific and general ratings. Allowing for the fact that the general question probably was interpreted to refer primarily to the more personal and non-political objects of influence, and hence the objects over which the respondents felt they had the most influence, we can say that the general ratings look much like an averaging of the specific ones. It is interesting, however, that the villagers, who were in the middle in specific influence, gave themselves the highest rating on general influence. Part of this reversal may be explained by the fact that, when the three political items are removed from the specific list, the villagers rank only barely below the university members in claimed influence. Thus the reversal seems largely to be due to the wording of the general question.

Figure 4, which presents the data just described, also shows the trends that the respondents perceived in their personal efficacy over time. It is clear from the figure that the bulk of the upward trend perceived by the sample in the previous five years is concentrated among the members of the university. A comparison with Figure 1 reveals a similarity in pattern, but with a greater inter-community difference in the case of influence than in the case of satisfaction. In common in both cases is the perception that all or most of the improvement has already

FIGURE 4

TRENDS IN GENERAL PERSONAL EFFICACY



taken place. Each community sees its influence, like its satisfaction, as about to level off or even decline. It is only natural that a university student would see his or her efficacy as having been far lower five years earlier than it is now, but it is not so obvious why (s)he should perceive himself or herself as nearing a plateau already.

Perception of Political Norms

An important part of this survey dealt with norms of political participation. Of interest were such questions as what kinds of political activity respondents had engaged in, what kinds they approved of, what kinds they expected they would be willing to engage in, what kinds they perceived their fellow citizens approved of, and what kinds they thought were effective. Several aspects of this topic have been treated in other reports based on the data from this survey, and these will not be repeated here.* In this section the responses to one set of questions, administered with the opinionometer, will be analyzed for the limited purpose of learning more about the differences among the three communities.

Twelve kinds of political activities were shown to the respondents to elicit a variety of reactions. In one question, they were asked to estimate what percentage of the citizens of their country would approve of each activity, using the 0-to-100 scale as a scale of percentages:

Bitte benutzen Sie den Meinungs-meter, um für jede
Verhaltensweise auszudrücken, wieviel Prozent der

Bundesbürger der jeweiligen Verhaltensweise Ihrer Ansicht nach zustimmen. 0 bedeutet, daß "kein Bundesbürger zustimmt"; 100 bedeutet, daß "jeder Bundesbürger zustimmt"; 50 bedeutet, daß "die Hälfte der Bundesbürger zustimmt".

The responses varied substantially from one activity to another, with an average ranging from 46.9% estimated approval of petition circulating down to 12.5% estimated approval of the violent overthrow of the government. Although the upper end of this range might seem depressed and the lower end inflated, in general there was a fairly close correspondence between the percentage approval estimated by the average respondent and the percentage of the respondents themselves voicing their own approval for the activities in question.*

Even though the city, the village, and the university were bound to differ in their own repertoire of approved activities, it is not so clear whether they should be expected to differ in their perceptions of the extent to which each activity is accepted by the citizenry at large. Those with normative disagreements could still agree on the cognitive aspect of political norms, if they had sufficient information about public opinion in their country. And, in fact, on four of the twelve items the three communities' different assessments of the level of popular approval did not diverge enough to attain statistical significance. Each community gave the highest estimate of popular approval on exactly four of the items.

A pattern of difference begins to emerge, however, when we look at which items each community gave the highest and the lowest estimates on.

The university gave the highest estimates on the top four activities and the lowest estimates on the bottom eight activities. In other words, people in the university perceived more popular approval for the most approved activities, and less popular approval for the least approved activities, than did respondents in the other two communities. The university subsample differentiated the activities more sharply than the city or the village dwellers. While the range of approval estimates went from about 15 to about 40 per cent in the city and the village, it went from 8 to 60 per cent in the university. Further, the university respondents divided the 12 activities into three levels: a 60%-approval level, including petition circulating and friendly persuasion; an upper-30's level, including legal demonstrations and electoral campaigning; and a 20%-and-below level, including everything else. No such clear-cut division can be discerned in the responses from city and village, however, in Table 18.

The university appears more consensual in its ratings, as well. It shows the lowest standard deviation on seven of the 12 items. On all but two items, the city shows the highest standard deviation, thus revealing the same kind of dissensus that we saw in the ratings of satisfaction.

At first glance, the university seems to be revealing its greater knowledge about public feelings of legitimacy. After all, what basis could the villagers have had for estimating that more people approve of violent overthrow of the government than of writing slogans on walls? On the other side, the responses from the city and the village may reflect more about popular notions of what is acceptable--and popular confusions about

TABLE 18

PERCEIVED CITIZEN APPROVAL OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Abbreviated Translation</u>	<u>Community</u>			<u>Total</u>
		<u>City</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Univer- sity</u>	
Beteiligung an einer Unterschriftensammlung.	Circulating petitions.	39.0	42.4	60.0	46.9
Versuchen, Freunde für die eigenen politischen Ansichten zu gewinnen.	Persuading friends.	32.4	36.4	59.9	42.8
Teilnahme an einer genehmigten politischen Demonstration.	Legal demonstration.	31.5	34.6	38.4	34.8
Zeit opfern, um für eine politische Partei oder einen Kandidaten im Wahlkampf zu arbeiten.	Electoral campaigning.	25.5	34.8	35.4	31.9
Wehrdienst verweigern.	Being a C.O.	25.4	23.8	18.9	22.8
Beteiligung an einem wilden Streik.	Wildcat strike.	24.1	22.7	20.2	22.4
Sich weigern, Mieten, Raten oder Steuern zu bezahlen.	Rent or tax strike.	20.6	23.5	13.7	19.2
Besetzung von Fabriken, Ämtern und anderen Gebäuden.	Sit-ins.	18.3	21.2	12.8	17.5
Beteiligung an Schlägereien (Kampf mit Polizisten, Kampf mit anderen Demonstranten).	Fighting in the street.	17.0	17.3	13.2	15.9
Parolen an Mauern schreiben.	Writing slogans on walls.	21.6	14.3	11.3	15.7
Beschädigung fremden Eigentums (Fenster einschlagen, Straßentafeln abmontieren).	Trashing.	17.9	16.1	9.5	14.5
Beteiligung an einer Gruppe, die die Regierung mit Gewalt stürzen will.	Conspiracy to overthrow the government.	14.7	14.8	8.0	12.5

what is acceptable--than the estimates from the university. The latter figures suggest that a subpopulation that is well informed of elite norms of participation has a tendency to project those norms on the populace and perceive them as widely internalized, before this has in fact happened. If so, the subcultures may not only differ in what they want and how they are prepared to get it, but also be unaware as to how much they do differ.

Notes

Page 3. The survey was conducted as a pilot study in a research project planned by Edward N. Muller III, and the author, together with Rudolf Wildenmann and others, under a grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

Page 15. See Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement, ed. Martin Fishbein (New York: Wiley, 1967).

Page 63. E.g., Edward N. Muller III, "Behavioral Correlates of Political Support", American Political Science Review, 71 (no. 2, June, 1977); Jonathan Pool, "The Discriminability and Dimensionality of Political Support: Some Results from a German Pilot Study", paper presented to the Research Group on Political Alienation and Support, Chicago, August 29, 1974.

Page 64. Pool, p. 12.

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