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BLACK AND WHITE PERCEPTIONS  
OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN BOSTON

by  
Floyd J. Fowler, Jr.

Center for Survey Research  
a Facility of the  
University of Massachusetts/Boston  
and the  
Joint Center for Urban Studies of M.I.T.  
and Harvard University

Prepared under contract for the Boston Committee, Inc.

March, 1982



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## PREFACE

When we first began talking with The Boston Committee staff members, I felt some trepidation about the task of collecting data and writing about the racial situation in Boston. For me, the feeling can be traced to some research we did over ten years ago. We asked a sample of residents which groups in Boston they thought received the most services from city government, and who received the least. The majority of blacks said the Irish or white Protestants received the most services, and that blacks received the least. Meanwhile, the white respondents were sure that blacks received the most services, while they received the least.

In this context, there is little chance that this report can be judged as appropriately evenhanded. So long as describing a problem for one group can be viewed as providing a basis for playing down or ignoring someone else's priorities or problems, an author's chances of popularity in writing on these topics are not good. However, I would like to make three points which, I hope, anticipate some questions about this work.

First, this is not a report about racism. We did not ask questions designed to classify people as racists. We did not ask questions designed to measure perceptions of racism. I did not find a set of survey measures that I thought would credibly measure racism. If I had, I still probably would have omitted them, because it is hard to see how such measures would have aided the cause of problem solving in Boston.

The report is about racial groups. It compares the perceptions and feelings of blacks and whites in Boston. However, we purposely concentrated on the people and their own lives, experiences and problems. We purposely avoided asking how they felt about other people or what they thought other

people's needs, feelings and problems might be. Although we know stereotyping and misperceptions exist and add fuel to intergroup tensions, we could not see how documenting them could help develop constructive dialogue and programs. Rather, a premise of this effort was that a constructive program will focus on making the quality of life better for all residents in Boston.

Second, in talking about the data, some surely will find fault with the balance struck between emphasizing similarities and differences between blacks and whites. Frankly, if anything, I have tried to err in the direction of pointing out the commonality of responses. The approach of presenting comparative tables points out differences; and I did not want readers to overlook similarities. I am confident that others will emphasize the differences. Moreover, I believe that the perception that blacks and whites have different problems so that they must fight for priority is divisive and retards progress. It seems to me that those problem areas where there are shared concerns and interests are the best places to get people to work together and make some progress.

Third, I hope readers will focus more on the data than on the particular points I make about them. Necessarily, another writer would organize the data differently and emphasize different points. My main goal was to get a good factual set of data in the public arena so that discussions and problem definition will be more informed. I believe that has been accomplished with this monograph. It is now up to others to use this information in a constructive way.

Floyd J. Fowler, Jr.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Center for Survey Research was founded in 1971 as a research facility, housed and administered by the University of Massachusetts-Boston, established under an agreement between the University and the Joint Center for Urban Studies of M.I.T. and Harvard University. Surveys provide a way to collect objective information that cannot be obtained in any other way. In particular, the Center is a facility committed to the development of reliable population data that may assist in understanding and addressing salient issues and problems facing the Boston area, particularly the City of Boston. This project is an excellent example of the kind of research for which the Center was established. A central purpose of the Center was to provide the expertise and staff capability to collect survey data of the highest feasible quality.

This project was carried out under a contract with The Boston Committee. The incorporators of The Boston Committee were Richard D. Hill, Chairman of the Board, the First National Bank of Boston; His Eminence Humberto Cardinal Madeiros, Archbishop of Boston; William Davis Taylor, Chairman of the Board, The Boston Globe; and the Honorable Kevin H. White, Mayor of the City of Boston. As the initial Trustees of The Boston Committee, these founders appointed Frank N. Jones as President of The Boston Committee and increased the number of Trustees to 13 members representing city-wide and neighborhood perspectives.

The process of planning the study, identifying the topics to be included and developing the questionnaire was carried out jointly by staff members of the Center and The Boston Committee, with input from the broader community where appropriate. The actual sample design, the final form of the questionnaire, the interviewing staff, reduction of data for computer analysis

and the preparation of this report, however, were the responsibility of the Center for Survey Research.

The Center wishes to thank the many people who contributed to this effort. Foremost among these are the over 900 people who gave their time and shared their views with us. Responsibility for any errors and for the organization and interpretation of the data presented here, however, rests with the Center and the author.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is difficult, probably impossible, to compare objectively the seriousness of racial problems and tensions in Boston with those in other cities. However, there can be little doubt that there is a widespread perception that relationships between blacks and whites in Boston constitute a serious problem. Specifically, one image is that Boston is a community in which blacks are not welcome and in which they are treated with unusual hostility and abuse. Another image is that whites in Boston are unfairly maligned as racists and bigots.

In 1980, following several race-related incidents, The Boston Committee was formed. The purpose of the Committee is to direct an integrated effort to address the problems that contribute to racial tension and conflict in Boston. A needed first step was a clear, factually-based definition of the real problems in Boston.

The data to produce a good problem analysis were not available. 1980 Census data were available on only a very limited basis. A special-purpose survey, the Boston Neighborhood Survey, sponsored by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and carried out by the Center for Survey Research, produced a set of statistics on objective conditions in the city: housing, employment, income, and family situation. However, that survey was not intended to provide data about the way Boston residents actually experienced life in Boston. There were no recent data documenting the way Boston residents felt about or evaluated their neighborhoods and housing, their satisfaction with their jobs or their confidence in their schools, police and other fundamental services. Such data seemed essential to defining problems and setting priorities.

In the spring of 1981, The Boston Committee contracted with the Center for Survey Research to carry out a survey of Boston residents designed to provide an objective, factual reading on a number of ways that a person's racial background might be related to the quality of life in Boston. A probability sample of slightly over 900 Boston adults living in housing units with telephones was interviewed in May of 1981. The sample was designed to produce at least a minimally adequate sample in most of Boston's traditional neighborhoods. Households were sampled using a random-digit-dialed procedure. One adult from those 18 or older living in a selected household was objectively designated to be the respondent. No substitutions were made for any reason. Once a household was included in the sample, every effort was made to enlist the cooperation of the designated respondent, including at least 10 calls to find difficult-to-reach respondents. The details of the procedures, as well as the survey questionnaire, can be found in the Appendix to this report.

This report is the first effort to publicly report the data from that survey. In reading the results presented in the following pages, several general points about this research and this report should be kept in mind.

First, this study purposely focussed on the way people in Boston evaluated their own situations. The main approach was to ascertain the extent to which problems and concerns were or were not related to racial background. Such an approach takes advantage of the main strength of surveys: obtaining comparable answers to questions about people's own lives and experiences.

In constructing the questions which we would pose to people, we deliberately avoided asking people to respond in stereotypic ways to answer questions which they could not answer from their own knowledge; for example,

to report in general how blacks or whites were treated or felt. Our approach was to try to understand better the way it was to live in Boston for people in terms that applied to all groups, regardless of background. We called the project a study of "Quality of Life in Boston"; and indeed that is what it attempts to be. We asked questions of respondents about how things were for them in the vital areas of life: neighborhood, housing, jobs, schools, safety and opportunity for fulfillment.

In our analysis, our basic approach was to ascertain whether or not a person's racial background was significantly related to the problems with which he or she was faced and the concerns he or she reported. In some cases, we found that the situation for blacks and whites as groups was very similar. In some other areas, we found that blacks and whites differed on the average. However, further analysis revealed that those differences were not so much related to race per se but could be better understood as resulting from differing situations, needs, interests or problems. In still other instances, we identified areas in which the problems or concerns were, in fact, more prevalent in one group than in another.

It is worth noting that this approach tends to emphasize the differences rather than similarities. When 46 percent of whites and only 31 percent of blacks characterized their feelings about their housing as "very satisfied", one must conclude that the average level of satisfaction among whites is higher. Yet, the overlap, that is, the extent to which blacks and whites put themselves in the same category, is actually much higher than the extent to which people put themselves in different categories.

When we are presenting data such as these, we will attempt to put such issues into perspective. However, it is useful for readers to appreciate that looking at answers by race tends to focus on differences.



It also is useful to point out that any analysis will have biases. The numbers are not biased. However, any analyst will address some questions and not others. The selection of analysis questions defines those aspects of the data that are discussed in a report. There is some judgement involved in evaluation of the importance of findings and how much attention to devote to them. There is judgement in saying a difference is "big" or "little" which affects the tone and conclusions. It is not possible to avoid these biases entirely. We have made every effort to be balanced and fair. However, the most important step we take is to get the numbers into the public arena, where people with different perspectives can scrutinize them and draw their own conclusions.

A word is in order about the Hispanic and Asian populations of Boston. Each of these groups is an important and growing part of Boston. There are probably more than 30,000 people of Hispanic background in Boston; and the Asian population may be about half that size. Both groups have grown in the past decade. Many of the concerns which led to this research, concerns about access to quality jobs, appropriate schools and adequate housing apply as well to Hispanics and Asians as they do to blacks; indeed, as noted above, they apply to all Boston residents.

Unfortunately, given the sample size for this particular survey and given the fact that Hispanics and Asians still constitute relatively small fractions of the total Boston population, we do not have adequate samples of either of these groups to reliably single them out in analysis. We recognize how unsatisfactory it will seem to those particularly interested in the Hispanic and Asian communities to have them essentially omitted from our analysis. In any research project, priorities must be set and analytic goals defined. In this case, our focus was on the relationship between the blacks

and whites living in Boston. Adequate treatment of Hispanics and Asians will have to wait for another effort.

The report is organized along topical lines. A chapter, sometimes brief, is devoted to each of the areas relevant to life quality addressed in the survey. Comparisons are presented between the responses of blacks and whites for most of the questions in the survey. Hundreds of additional breakdowns have also been examined and a selection of those that seemed to add most to the understanding of black-white comparisons is presented.

To a limited extent, we have included data from other sources. Two surveys of Boston residents carried out by the Center near the beginning of the 1970's provide some historical perspective because questions from those studies were replicated in this survey. A few tables also are drawn from a 1980 Center survey of population and housing characteristics. The main body of the report, however, focusses on the data from The Boston Committee survey<sup>1</sup>.

A word is in order about the reliability of the data. Any number based on a sample can be somewhat in error. The smaller the sample, the more it can vary by chance from having the characteristics of the whole population. A great deal of this report focusses on comparing answers of two or more groups. Readers need some guide as to whether or not a difference presented in a table is large enough to take seriously. In many tables, we have indicated the "statistical significance" of comparisons presented. Where tables are very complex, presenting numerous comparisons, we have not presented all the significance calculations in the table; but readers can use

<sup>1</sup> The Boston Area Survey, 1969 and the The Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970, were personal interview surveys of probability samples of about 500 Boston residents. The Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980, entailed personal interviews with a sample of about 1,200 households.

Table A3 in the Appendix as a guide to statistical significance. What that means is that a difference between the pattern of answers given by two groups is too large to have occurred by chance very often (more than 5 times in 100). If we did another survey, we almost certainly again would find that the two groups differed. Differences that are not "significant" should be treated as only suggestive at best.

Error due to sampling is only one potential source of error in a survey. Readers are urged to read the Appendix for a full discussion of the reliability of the data.

Finally, we are very hopeful that this will not be viewed as "the report" or "the product" of this survey. Our intent is to present the basic data from the survey in a form in which they can be used. This report is supposed to be the first step in a process.

The current plan is that these data will form one basis for a series of forums sponsored by The Boston Committee. At these forums, data from other sources and different points of view will be brought together to develop a factually based definition of problems. These problem definitions, in turn, will provide targets for community task forces whose job it will be to develop feasible plans for action that could make a difference in the quality of intergroup relations and the quality of life in the city.

This report contains no proposals. Its total focus is problem definition. Proposals involve values, political realities and fiscal concerns that go well beyond what this project can contribute. However, it is hoped that these data can make an effective contribution to stimulating and informing the process that is to follow.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF PROFILE OF THE BLACK AND WHITE POPULATION IN BOSTON

The majority of this report is devoted to describing the perceptions and feelings of the survey respondents. However, there are some differences in the characteristics of the black and white populations living in Boston which seem likely to affect their needs and, hence, perhaps their answers. A few basic facts about the black and white populations in Boston may provide useful perspective for the data that follow.

Nationally, blacks constitute about 12 percent of the population. However, the concentration of blacks in New England is much lower. In Metropolitan Boston as a whole, only about five percent of the population is black.

The majority of blacks living in Greater Boston live in the city. The best current estimates are that about 22 percent of the population in the City of Boston is black. This represents some increase from 1970, when about 17 percent of the population was black. That change reflects both some increase in the size of the black population in Boston and some decline in the size of the population as a whole.

Perhaps it is worth noting that there has been some change in the basis for growth in the black population. In the 1950's and 1960's, most of the growth in the black population in the Boston area could be traced to black people moving into the Boston area from elsewhere in the United States. Since the 1970's, such movement has been greatly slowed. Migration into the Boston area in the past decade by blacks has been predominantly from the West Indies, not from elsewhere in the United States. This serves to highlight the fact that the black population should not be considered an undifferentiated group, but rather contains people with a variety of backgrounds and needs.

In that context, it is also appropriate to take an overall look at the ethnic background of adults who live in Boston. In Table 2.1, those classified as Irish or Italians were either born in those countries or said that most of their family originally came from those countries. There are a number of interesting points to be made about Table 2.1. However, two are most relevant.

One important point to be made from Table 2.1 is that those who are labeled "white" are a heterogeneous group from an ethnic point of view. Major groups include Irish, white Catholics with mixed national background, Italians and the white Protestants. Throughout the report when comparisons are made between the responses of black and white respondents, readers need to keep in mind that the data for whites, like the data for blacks, represent a weighted average of answers and perceptions from people with a range of backgrounds and interests.

Second, although there has been some change in the ethnic composition of Boston, the dominant picture is of stability, not change. Those of Hispanic background and Asians are slightly greater fractions of the 1980 population than they were of the 1970 population. However, overall, the ethnic mix of those living in Boston has not changed a great deal during the 1970's. It is particularly important to note that black adults are estimated to have remained at about 17 percent of all adults even though the total population is over 20 percent black. This apparent discrepancy results from the fact that families with children are a larger component of the black population than the white population of Boston; close to 30 percent of the minor children in Boston are black.

Table 2.2 presents a summary of the life cycle stage of adults. It can be seen that a large fraction, more than one third, of both groups are young,

TABLE 2.1

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF ADULTS (21 OR OVER), 1969-70\* AND 1980\*\*

<u>Ethnic Background</u>	<u>Year</u>	
	<u>1969-70</u> <u>(N=977)</u>	<u>1980</u> <u>(N=2192)</u>
Black	17%	17%***
Irish Catholic	22%	22%
Italian Catholic	11%	10%
Other White Catholic	23%	22%
White Protestant	13%	11%
Jewish	8%	7%
Hispanic	2%	5%
Asian	2%	3%
Other White	<u>3%</u>	<u>4%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

\* Source: these percentages are weighted averages of the ethnicity figures obtained from the Boston Area Study, 1969 and the Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970.

\*\* Source: Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980.

\*\*\*The percentage of black adults in the population is 17%. However, when taking into account all people in Boston (including children) the percentage goes up to 22%; also the Hispanic and Asian percentages rise slightly.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of individual category differences.

TABLE 2.2  
LIFE CYCLE OF ADULTS BY RACE\*

	Race	
	Black (N=351)	White (N=1825)
Under 40, not married, no minor children	34%	35%
Under 40, married, no minor children	2%	7%
Under 40, have minor children	28%	11%
40-64, not married, no minor children	7%	8%
40-64, married, no minor children	7%	5%
40-64, have minor children	14%	17%
65 or over	<u>8%</u>	<u>17%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

\* Source: Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980. These figures show the percentage of all adults who have minor children, which is not the same as the percentage of households with minor children in them.

Use Table A3 for guide to significance of individual percentage differences.

unmarried singles. However, many more of the blacks are parents with minor children, while significantly more of the white population is elderly.

One consequence of that difference is, on average, black households are larger than white households. Nearly 70 percent of all white households consist of only one or two persons; that is true of only about half of all of the black households. Black households average about one half a person per household larger than do white households.

Over 40 percent of the adults in the white population have at least some college experience, and over one quarter have graduated from college. In contrast, only one quarter of the adults in the black population have attended college; 10 percent are college graduates. At the other end of the continuum, only 20 percent of the white population has not finished high school, while that is true for about 35 percent of the black population (Table 2.4). These differences take on added meaning because the white population is older; and, in general, the level of education is higher among young adults.

The data on family income in Table 2.5 certainly reflect in part this educational difference. In addition, the number of employed persons in a household obviously affects household income. The table shows clearly that, on average, white households have higher incomes than black households. The difference is about \$3,000 for one person households rising to about \$5,000 for households with two or more persons.

These same kinds of differences affect interpretation of the neighborhood area data that will be presented.<sup>1</sup> For example, adults with college experience are in the majority in the Central Boston and Allston-

<sup>1</sup> Because the definitions of areas do not correspond perfectly with those used in this report, detailed tables are not presented. However, the patterns reported below were derived from a 1980 Boston Neighborhood Survey conducted by the Center.



TABLE 2.3  
 PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD BY RACE\*

<u>Persons per household:</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u> (N=177)	<u>White</u> (N=926)
1	28%	36%
2	23%	33%
3	21%	11%
4+	<u>28%</u>	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
 <u>Average household size:</u>	 2.9	 2.4

\* Source: Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980.

The black/white difference in household size is statistically significant.

TABLE 2.4  
EDUCATION BY RACE\*

<u>Education:</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black (N=206)</u>	<u>White (N=1111)</u>
Less than high school graduation	35%	20%
High school graduation	39%	34%
1 - 3 years college	16%	20%
College graduation	7%	15%
Graduate education	<u>3%</u>	<u>11%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

\* Source: Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980. In comparison, in the 1981 Quality of Life in Boston Study, there was a higher rate of non-response among the less educated. Therefore the resulting sample has a higher percentage of better educated respondents.

The black/white education difference is statistically significant.

TABLE 2.5  
FAMILY INCOME BY RACE AND FAMILY UNIT SIZE, 1979

<u>Income:</u>	<u>Race and Family Unit Size</u>			
	<u>Black</u> (N=177)		<u>White</u> (N=926)	
	<u>1 person</u>	<u>2+ persons</u>	<u>1 person</u>	<u>2+ persons</u>
Less than \$7,000	51%	30%	36%	18%
\$7,000-9,999	8%	17%	20%	11%
\$10,000-14,999	24%	21%	19%	20%
\$15,000-24,999	11%	23%	18%	25%
\$25,000 or more	7%	9%	7%	26%
Median income	\$6,950	\$10,750	\$9,000	\$15,700

Black/white differences in income levels are statistically significant.

Brighton areas. However, less than a third of the adult residents of East Boston, South Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester-Mattapan, Roslindale or Hyde Park have attended college. When income is relevant to answers, higher than average income levels are found in West Roxbury-Roslindale and in Central Boston, while income levels in South Boston, Roxbury and East Boston tend to be lower than average. Neighborhood areas also differ in the rate at which they include families with children, young singles or elderly people.

The sources and reasons for these differences lie well beyond the scope of this report. However, age, family situation, education and income all are related to needs, interests and resources, which in turn will affect how one evaluates the quality of life. For this reason, recalling these differences will be useful as we proceed to analyze responses in the balance of this report.

CHAPTER 3  
NEIGHBORHOODS

Introduction

Boston is a city of neighborhoods. The city which we now know as Boston was actually formed by joining a number of towns which were once independent political entities and which still retain their names. As one survey respondent said when asked how long she had lived in the City of Boston, "I don't live in the City of Boston. I live in East Boston." Her sense of identity is not unique.

In this chapter, we present data from the resident survey about the way that people in Boston see their neighborhood areas. It is important to understand that any set of definitions of neighborhood areas will be imperfect. Some neighborhood areas such as East Boston are quite well defined; observers disagree on the borders of places such as the South End, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain and Hyde Park. For these analyses, we have placed people in the neighborhood area in which they said they lived. These will not correspond exactly with other definitions of neighborhood areas.<sup>1</sup>

We also had to do some combining of traditional neighborhood areas. The main reason was sample size. A minimum number of interviews is needed for confidence that the sampled views approximate those of an entire area population. Responses from West Roxbury and Roslindale were combined for greater reliability. The Central Boston designation includes people from the Waterfront area, the North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay and the Fenway. These

<sup>1</sup> We compared people's answers to a question about the name of the neighborhood areas where they lived with areas defined using ZIP codes and telephone exchanges. There was a high degree of correspondence among the three methods. The worst problem was Mattapan.

combinations were necessary because the samples in any one of the areas was not large enough for statistical confidence.

In addition, Dorchester and Mattapan respondents were combined. The main reason was that our analyses demonstrated a considerable amount of inconsistency regarding the definition of Mattapan's boundaries.

It is important to keep in mind that these neighborhood areas are heterogeneous. Some are big places. For example, the area known as Roxbury has a population of over 60,000. Dorchester and Mattapan combined are over 100,000 in population. All of the neighborhood areas contain many smaller "neighborhoods" which probably are what people think of as their neighborhoods. Like all statistical summaries, the averages presented will mask diversity. However, such summaries are necessary, and the averages do help us understand the way that perceptions are distributed about the population.

#### The Populations of Neighborhoods

The focus of this report is on blacks and whites in Boston. Any observer of Boston knows that in this city, as in most other cities, blacks and whites are not mixed evenly around neighborhoods.

The majority of the black population lives in two neighborhood areas, Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan (Table 3.1). Over 80 percent of the black population resides in those two neighborhood areas, though there are blacks in almost all of Boston's neighborhoods.

Table 3.2 presents the data in a slightly different way. There, we can see that the majority of the residents in the Roxbury area are black. The area labelled Dorchester-Mattapan, which is among the largest of the neighborhood areas, has a population that is close to evenly split between blacks and whites. Of those who said they lived in Hyde Park and the South

TABLE 3.1  
NEIGHBORHOOD BY RACE

<u>Neighborhood Area</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black (N=156)</u>	<u>White (N=683)</u>
East Boston	1%	7%
Charlestown	-	2%
South Boston	-	8%
Central	4%	18%
South End	3%	4%
Allston-Brighton	2%	18%
Jamaica Plain	1%	8%
Roxbury	32%	1%
Dorchester-Mattapan	49%	15%
Roslindale-West Roxbury	3%	11%
Hyde Park	<u>5%</u>	<u>8%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

- Less than 1 percent.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of individual category differences.

TABLE 3.2

RACE BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Race	East Boston (N=45) *	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49) *	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43) *	Allston-Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester-Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale-W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Black	2%	3%	-	5%	17%	2%	3%	79%	44%	5%	16%
White	98%	91%	100%	86%	63%	92%	79%	12%	49%	89%	82%
Other	-	6%	-	9%	20%	6%	18%	9%	7%	6%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

- Less than one percent.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.



End, between 10 and 20 percent were black, but other ways of defining the borders of Hyde Park produce lower estimates of the black population. Altogether, a key point to keep in mind as we look at the ratings by neighborhood area residents is that blacks constitute only a small fraction of respondents in areas other than Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan.

#### Ratings of Neighborhood Areas

We compiled a list of what we considered to be the most important characteristics of a neighborhood area and asked survey respondents to rate their neighborhood area in each of these respects. The rating scale used was "very satisfied", "generally satisfied", "somewhat dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied". Table 3.3 presents summaries of the way that black and white respondents rated the various aspects of the neighborhoods in which they reside.

It can be clearly seen that on eight of the nine questions, blacks on average were less satisfied than whites, though one of those eight differences was not statistically significant. The greatest discrepancies appeared with respect to the physical facilities in neighborhoods. Thus, with respect to the satisfaction with parks and recreation facilities, the way property is maintained, the quality of nearby stores, access to shopping areas, and satisfaction with nearby restaurants and places to go out, the differences between black and white ratings were distinctively large.

Given these figures alone, one could easily conclude that neighborhoods in which blacks reside are systematically less desirable than those in which whites reside. Obviously, to some extent, that is an accurate statement. However, the data in Table 3.4 present a slightly more complicated picture.

Looking at Table 3.4, we can see that with respect to the way sidewalks and streets are maintained, satisfaction with public transportation and

TABLE 3.3  
SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS BY RACE

Percent who say they are "very satisfied" or  
"generally satisfied" with:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Parks and recreation facilities	39%	57%
Way property is kept up	51%	75%
Kind and quality of nearby stores	47%	71%
Access to good shopping areas	62%	81%
Way neighborhood residents get along	69%	83%
Public transportation	56%	67%
Noise level in neighborhood	67%	57%
Way streets and sidewalks are maintained	38%	45%
Nearby restaurants, places to go out	28%	59%

All black/white differences are statistically significant except the way streets and sidewalks are maintained.

ratings of the way neighborhood residents get along, the ratings from residents in Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan were not distinctively negative. Moreover, while the ratings of recreational facilities in Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan were at the bottom, they were joined by Charlestown residents in their dissatisfaction. Thus, in those respects, while black ratings may average lower than whites, the neighborhood level data do not show a very distinctive racial pattern.

On the other hand, when it comes to the physical characteristics of the neighborhood, and the facilities in the neighborhoods, it is quite clear from Table 3.4 that residents of Roxbury were distinctively less satisfied than any other neighborhood community. Particularly noticeable is the discrepancy in rated satisfaction of Roxbury residents with the way that property is being maintained, the availability of nearby stores and shopping areas, and the availability of restaurants.

Of course, the areas within Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan are heterogeneous, as are the areas in the rest of Boston. One hypothesis is that the lower ratings of facilities and property maintenance may be more associated with income than with race. Although much more analysis could be done, our preliminary look in this direction produces mixed results. Table 3.5 focusses on property maintenance, race and income. It shows that blacks rated their situation lower than whites when income is controlled. However, the discrepancy is less for those above \$15,000, much greater for those with incomes under \$15,000 per year.

People were also asked for more global evaluations of their neighborhood areas in addition to the specific ratings discussed above. The answers to four questions are presented in Table 3.6: has the neighborhood been getting better or worse or stayed about the same in recent years; do you think it will

TABLE 3.4

## SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say they are "very satisfied" or "generally satisfied" with:

	East Boston (N=45) *	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49) *	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43) *	Allston-Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester-Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale-W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Parks and recreation facilities	53%	41%	56%	63%	47%	60%	60%	40%	40%	54%	59%
Way property is kept up	67%	69%	65%	70%	62%	67%	75%	53%	61%	92%	89%
Kind and quality of nearby stores	56%	66%	77%	79%	51%	80%	47%	44%	59%	71%	77%
Access to good shopping areas	70%	76%	83%	90%	70%	87%	68%	54%	70%	92%	73%
Way neighborhood residents get along	81%	82%	92%	87%	73%	81%	86%	75%	75%	80%	69%
Public transportation	75%	66%	66%	74%	67%	64%	49%	70%	58%	71%	60%
Noise level in neighborhood	30%	62%	44%	53%	52%	58%	64%	67%	60%	71%	77%
Way streets & sidewalks are maintained	25%	28%	29%	39%	26%	38%	45%	39%	35%	76%	76%
Nearby restaurants, places to go out	69%	57%	62%	78%	53%	54%	45%	25%	40%	61%	34%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

TABLE 3.5

## SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD PROPERTY MAINTENANCE BY INCOME AND RACE

Percent who say they are "very satisfied" or "generally satisfied" with the way property is kept up in their neighborhood:

<u>Income</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Under \$15,000	38% (N=74)	70% (N=290)
\$15,000 or more	63% (N=61)	77% (N=313)

Black/white differences shown are statistically significant. Differences between income groups within racial category are statistically significant.

get better, worse or stay about the same in the coming five years; do you feel part of the neighborhood or is it just a place to live; and how satisfied are you with the neighborhood as a place to live?

Based on the data we have seen previously, one would expect a wide discrepancy in the ratings of blacks and whites. However, that prediction is not fully borne out by the data in Table 3.6. Although blacks were slightly more likely than whites to think their neighborhood had deteriorated in the last five years, that difference is too small for statistical reliability. Moreover, the trend, to the extent to which it exists, goes in the other direction when respondents were asked about their expectations for the coming five years; that is, blacks, if anything, were slightly more optimistic. Blacks were slightly less likely to say they feel "part" of their neighborhood; but that difference may be explained by the slightly lower average tenure of black residents in their neighborhoods.

In terms of overall satisfaction, black respondents rated their satisfaction slightly lower than did whites. That difference is large enough to be statistically reliable; however, the difference in overall satisfaction is not as great as one might have predicted from preceding data on specific neighborhood characteristics.

A similar conclusion is supported by data in Table 3.7. Roxbury residents were about in the middle in their perception of neighborhood improvement over recent years. Although they were not as impressed with recent developments as residents in the South End and Charlestown, they reported a more positive pattern than residents of Allston-Brighton or East Boston. Moreover, for the coming five years, they were significantly more optimistic about positive changes than residents of at least four Boston neighborhood areas, all of which are predominantly white.

TABLE 3.6  
NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
<u>Percent who say neighborhood has:</u>		
Become a better place to live	20%	28%
Become a worse place to live	41%	36%
Stayed the same	<u>39%</u>	<u>36%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
Percent who feel "part of" their neighborhood	44%	54%
Percent who say the neighborhood will be a better place to live in five years	46%	42%
Percent who say they are "very satisfied" or "generally satisfied" with neighborhood as a place to live	72%	80%

---

All black/white differences are statistically significant except the percent who say the neighborhood will be a better place to live in five years.

TABLE 3.7  
NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say:	East Boston (N=45) *	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49) *	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43) *	Allston-Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester-Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale-W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
The neighborhood has become a better place to live	17%	48%	27%	34%	69%	11%	39%	27%	19%	18%	26%
They feel "part of" their neighborhood	57%	57%	71%	51%	53%	45%	55%	48%	47%	59%	52%
The neighborhood will be a better place to live in five years	31%	64%	56%	49%	73%	27%	48%	51%	45%	30%	28%
They are "very satisfied" or "generally satisfied" with neighborhood as place to live	68%	83%	90%	84%	73%	75%	76%	68%	73%	85%	79%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.



Table 3.7 also goes on to show that neighborhood identification, as measured by whether people feel part of a neighborhood, was surprisingly constant across most areas, with the exception of South Boston, where neighborhood identification stood out above all other areas.

In terms of overall satisfaction, South Boston led the way again, while East Boston and Roxbury were tied for the lowest average level of satisfaction. However, again, in looking at the numbers, the size of the differences between most areas were not great and were too small for statistical significance.

A different kind of perspective comes from Table 3.8. There, we compare the answers to a question about recent neighborhood change asked in a 1969 survey with the same data for 1981. It can be seen that the answers were no worse, but little better, for blacks. They were significantly more positive for whites.

### Conclusion

The data in this chapter have been reasonably consistent in the following way. For most measures of satisfaction with respect to neighborhoods, comparison of black and white respondents suggests that blacks felt more negatively about their neighborhood environment than did whites. Very specifically, the facilities -- shopping, restaurants and stores -- and the maintenance of property stood out as the main distinctive problems for blacks and for residents of Roxbury and, to a lesser extent, Dorchester-Mattapan. Other differences between whites and blacks were much more modest and did not suggest patterns of discrepancies that can be well understood by looking at racial differences.

The main implication of the data presented in this chapter is that the disparity in perceptions of the facilities and physical condition of property

TABLE 3.8

RATING OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE IN PAST YEARS BY RACE, 1969\* AND 1981

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u> <u>(N=92)</u>	<u>White</u> <u>(N=447)</u>
<u>1969</u>		
<u>Percent who say their neighborhood has:</u>		
Become a better place to live	16%	9%
Become a worse place to live	44%	38%
Stayed the same	<u>40%</u>	<u>53%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
<u>1981</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>(N=156)</u>	<u>White</u> <u>(N=683)</u>
<u>Percent who say their neighborhood has:</u>		
Become a better place to live	20%	28%
Become a worse place to live	41%	36%
Stayed the same	<u>39%</u>	<u>36%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

---

\* Source: Boston Area Study, 1969.

The difference between black and white attitudes in 1981 is statistically significant; also the difference between white attitudes from 1969 to 1981 is statistically significant.

in areas where blacks live, and the way that blacks feel about those things, is a distinctive and salient difference between the way in which blacks and whites on average experience life in Boston. However, it should also be clear that these concerns are not unique to black residents. They are shared by many white residents. Moreover, overall feelings about neighborhood environment were not strongly race related and, if anything, may have improved over the past ten years.

## CHAPTER 4

### HOUSING

#### Introduction

The quality of housing available to people would seem likely to play a particularly salient role in the quality of their lives. In thinking about housing, a bit of background information about the housing stock in Boston may be useful.

A feature of Boston as a city is that less than 20 percent of all housing units in Boston are single houses. Over 80 percent of all households live in multi-family structures. About half of these are in two- or three-family units; the rest are in larger structures.

A result of this housing stock is that approximately two thirds of households in Boston are renters; only about a third of the people who live in Boston own their own homes. This latter figure includes condominium owners who, while they have increased in the past decade, currently still constitute a small fraction -- probably only two or three percent -- of housing units in Boston.

A final important characteristic of Boston housing is that it is old. Recent construction has almost exclusively been large, relatively expensive apartment buildings near the central Boston area. Old housing stock has its charm. However, in addition, it requires upkeep and maintenance in order to provide satisfactory housing.

It is stating the obvious to say that people's needs with respect to housing differ. In this section, we do not attempt to objectively evaluate the housing in which people live. Rather, as has been our focus throughout the report, we are presenting data about the way Boston residents feel about and perceive the housing in which they live.

## Quality of Housing

One dimension of housing is simply its size. Respondents were asked whether their housing was bigger than they needed, smaller than they needed, or about right. About one in five respondents said that their housing was smaller than they would like. We noted in Chapter 2 that black households, on an average, are larger than white households. However, there was no significant difference between blacks and whites in the likelihood of saying their housing was too small (Table 4.1).

People who said their housing was too small were also asked whether they considered the size of their home to be a serious problem or not. Only about one in ten said it was. Again, there was not a statistically significant difference between blacks and whites.

Looking at the answers by neighborhood area, we see that people who felt they had size problems with their housing were most likely to live in Jamaica Plain, South Boston, Hyde Park and Charlestown. In addition, almost 40 percent of those living in Central Boston, which includes Back Bay and Beacon Hill, said their housing was smaller than they wanted. If anything, housing in Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan tended to be less likely than average to be cited as having a problem with respect to size for residents. Overall, problems with housing size does not seem to be an aspect of housing which is particularly race related (Table 4.2).

Another dimension of housing quality is its condition. We already have seen that the condition of housing in neighborhoods was more often cited as a problem by blacks than by whites. As a result, it is not surprising that black respondents more than white respondents said they had problems with the upkeep and maintenance of their homes. One in five black respondents said they had maintenance problems that were, in their view, "serious", while only ten percent of the whites so rated their problems.

TABLE 4.1  
 SATISFACTION WITH SIZE OF HOUSING BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Percent who say their home is smaller than they would like	20%	23%
Percent who say the size of their home is a "serious" problem	12%	8%

The black/white differences in housing size satisfaction are not statistically significant.

TABLE 4.2

## SATISFACTION WITH SIZE OF HOUSING BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say their home is smaller than they would like	East Boston (N=45) *	Charles- town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49) *	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43) *	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester- Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
	6%	22%	20%	39%	24%	25%	19%	17%	15%	22%	29%
Percent who say the size of their home is a "serious" problem	2%	14%	16%	7%	11%	11%	15%	6%	6%	6%	15%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

TABLE 4.3

## PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS WITH MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Percent who say there are problems with the maintenance of their homes	27%	18%
Percent who say the maintenance problems are "serious"	20%	11%

The black/white differences in household maintenance problems are statistically significant.



When the data are presented by neighborhood area, it can be seen that more Roxbury residents claimed serious maintenance problems with their housing than residents anywhere else in Boston; but residents in South Boston were not far behind. Interestingly residents of East Boston joined those of West Roxbury-Roslindale and Hyde Park as having the lowest rate of housing maintenance problems. It is also worth noting that the residents of Dorchester-Mattapan rated their housing as average or a little better than average for the city.

A further table adds another kind of perspective. In a 1970 study, an identical question about maintenance was asked of all renters in the City of Boston. Table 4.5 compares the answers for renters in 1970 and 1981. It can be seen that in 1970 there was a significant difference between the perceptions of blacks and whites with respect to the maintenance of the housing. Then, as now, blacks were significantly more likely to say they had serious maintenance problems. However, the table also shows that the rate at which respondents reported such perceptions among both groups improved significantly in the past decade. While in 1970 nearly half the black renters claimed serious maintenance problems with their housing, the corresponding figure is only 27 percent in 1981. For whites, the change was from 34 percent to 15 percent.

Thus, the condition of housing is a race-related problem. It is a dimension of the quality of life in which, on average, blacks were somewhat more likely to report difficulty than whites. On the other hand, it is also an aspect of the quality of life in Boston that has improved significantly in the last decade for blacks and for whites.

Another dimension of housing is its cost. Median rent in Boston for blacks was about \$30 per month lower than what white families paid. We noted

TABLE 4.4  
PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS WITH MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston-Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester-Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale-W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Percent who say there are problems with the maintenance of their homes	2%	20%	18%	27%	19%	22%	21%	28%	21%	11%	10%
Percent who say the maintenance problems are "serious"	-	16%	21%	16%	14%	15%	17%	25%	12%	5%	6%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

TABLE 4.5

PERCENT RENTERS WHO HAVE SERIOUS MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS BY RACE, 1970\* AND 1981

Percent renters who say there is a serious problem with  
the way housing is maintained:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
1970	47% (N=76)	34% (N=277)
1981	27% (N=107)	15% (N=471)

\* Source: Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970

The black/white differences within each year are statistically significant. Also the differences between years within each racial category are statistically significant.

above the condition of that housing was worse, but the size was also larger.<sup>1</sup> Part of the reason for the difference in cost is that blacks occupy public and subsidized housing at a higher rate than whites. Again, we did not attempt to assess objectively what is a fair rate. Rather, we asked people for their own perceptions of the appropriateness of the cost they were paying for housing: whether the amount they were paying was "too high" or "about right".

In this respect, we can see in Table 4.6 that there was no difference between the responses of black and white respondents. Among both groups, approximately one out of three respondents felt that their costs were "too high" for housing, while the rest described their costs as "about right".

Looking at the data by neighborhood, we can see the "too high" response was most common in the Central Boston area (Table 4.7). The distribution of answers in other neighborhoods, although there was some variation, was relatively even. It certainly reveals no tendency for the people living in Roxbury or Dorchester-Mattapan to report distinctive concerns about housing costs.

Data from 1970 provide additional perspective on the answers. The identical question regarding housing costs was asked of respondents in a 1970 survey. The data in Table 4.8 show the comparative result. In 1970, blacks were more likely than whites to think they were paying "too much" for housing. This difference has disappeared in the past decade. Moreover, it has disappeared because their perception that they are paying too much for housing is less common in the black community than it was a decade ago, while it has stayed approximately constant among white residents in Boston. There is some basis for saying there has been some progress in housing costs for black residents in Boston during the past decade.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980.

TABLE 4.6

## SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING COSTS BY RACE

Percent who say their housing costs are:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Too high	34%	33%
About right	<u>66%</u>	<u>67%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white difference in housing cost satisfaction is not statistically significant.

TABLE 4.7

## SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING COSTS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say their housing costs are:

	East Boston (N=45) *	Charles- town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49) *	Central (N=157)	South Bnd (N=43) *	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester- Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Too high	26%	21%	25%	54%	38%	36%	35%	31%	25%	39%	28%
About right	<u>74%</u>	<u>79%</u>	<u>75%</u>	<u>46%</u>	<u>62%</u>	<u>64%</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>69%</u>	<u>75%</u>	<u>61%</u>	<u>72%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

TABLE 4.8

PERCENT WHO SAY THEY PAY TOO MUCH FOR HOUSING BY RACE, 1970\* AND 1981

Percent who say housing costs are "too high":

---

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
1970	41% (N=100)	35% (N=385)
1981	34% (N=156)	33% (N=683)

---

\* Source: Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970.

The black/white differences are not statistically significant, neither are the differences between years within each racial group.

Finally, we asked respondents to put their various perceptions all together and rate their overall satisfaction with their housing situation. Consistent with the ratings with respect to maintenance, and also probably reflecting some of the difference in neighborhood ratings, blacks rated their housing situation lower on average than white respondents (Table 4.9). This was a clear, statistically significant pattern.

In looking at the distribution of answers by neighborhood, there was somewhat less of a sense of the race relatedness of housing dissatisfaction (Table 4.10). The most satisfied responses came from residents of East Boston, which is predominantly white. South Boston, Roslindale-West Roxbury and Hyde Park, along with the South End, form a second echelon with respect to satisfaction; and again all of those areas are predominantly white. However, one should not overlook the fact that Allston-Brighton and Jamaica Plain residents show up at the bottom of the continuum with respect to the housing satisfaction; and neither of those neighborhoods is predominantly black.

One possible explanation for the black-white difference is that owners are more satisfied than renters. However, the difference in the rate of home ownership (25 percent for blacks vs. 30 percent for whites<sup>2</sup>) is not great enough to explain the difference.

Perhaps the data can be better understood by looking at Table 4.11, which breaks down housing satisfaction by income. That table basically shows satisfaction levels to be comparable for whites with incomes under \$15,000 and for blacks regardless of income. The group which stands out with respect to housing satisfaction is whites with income over \$15,000.

<sup>2</sup> Source, Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980.



TABLE 4.9  
HOUSING SATISFACTION BY RACE

Considering their housing situations, percent who say they are:

	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black (N=156)</u>	<u>White (N=683)</u>
Very satisfied	31%	46%
Generally satisfied	45%	37%
Somewhat or very dissatisfied	<u>24%</u>	<u>17%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white housing satisfaction difference shown is statistically significant.

TABLE 4.10  
HOUSING SATISFACTION BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Considering their housing situations, percent who say they are:

	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles- town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester- Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Very satisfied	64%	41%	49%	31%	49%	42%	34%	35%	39%	51%	49%
Generally satisfied	30%	38%	39%	47%	36%	32%	39%	47%	41%	41%	30%
Somewhat or very dissatisfied	6%	21%	12%	22%	15%	26%	27%	18%	20%	8%	21%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significances of differences between areas.

TABLE 4.11  
HOUSING SATISFACTION BY INCOME AND RACE

Percent who say they are "very" or "generally satisfied" with their housing:

<u>Income</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Under \$15,000	79% (N=74)	74% (N=290)
\$15,000 or more	78% (N=61)	89% (N=313)

The black/white difference in the \$15,000 or more income category is statistically significant. Within the racial categories, the income difference in the white group is statistically significant.

There are two ways to generalize about that table. First, one could say that for whites, but not blacks, having low income leads to reduced housing satisfaction. Alternatively, one could say that higher income blacks are not as successful in increasing their housing satisfaction in accordance with their income as is the case for whites.

#### Access to Housing

It is important to be clear that asking people themselves about access to housing provides information about their perceptions but does not provide a true measure of the extent to which fair housing procedures are followed. People may overestimate discrimination, seeing themselves discriminated against when in fact they are not. On the other hand, they also may underestimate discrimination, being unaware of occasions when their opportunities for housing were limited unfairly. Nonetheless people's own perceptions of their experiences are part of understanding the way things are for blacks and whites in Boston.

The key question in the survey with respect to access to housing asked respondents if they had been unable to rent or buy housing because of their age, race, sex or family circumstances. The data are summarized in Table 4.12.

The table shows that about one in six respondents said they felt they had been discriminated against in Boston; about one in ten said this had happened in the last five years. There were no significant differences by race in these answers.

Those figures, of course, apply to many people who were not looking for housing in the past five years. Furthermore, most instances of discrimination refer to renting, not home buying. Hence, we further focussed the calculation on those who rent and looked for housing in the past five years. When we did

TABLE 4.12  
PERCEPTIONS OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION BY RACE

	Race	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Percent who ever perceived they had been denied housing for discriminatory reasons	17% (N=156)	16% (N=683)
Percent who perceived they had been denied housing for discriminatory reasons during the past five years	9% (N=156)	12% (N=683)
Percent renters in housing market during the past five years who perceived they had been denied rental housing for discriminatory reasons	25% (N=51)	20% (N=282)

---

The black/white housing discrimination differences shown are not statistically significant.

that, the table shows that about one in four black renters in Boston who have been in the housing market during the last five years said that they were discriminated against. The table also shows that about one in five of the white households in the same circumstances said that they have been discriminated against in the last five years. That difference is not statistically significant.

We did further breakdowns by characteristics of people and how they perceived this experience. In one table, we looked at whether families with children had experienced more discrimination than others. There seemed to be no such effect. We also looked at the way income affected the perception of a discriminatory experience. Here the data were quite clear, and parallel to the data on housing satisfaction. In essence, blacks regardless of income and whites with incomes under \$15,000 report experiences of discrimination at approximately the same rates. Only whites with incomes over \$15,000 were significantly different, with their rate of perceived discrimination being only about one in ten.

There also was an interesting relationship with education. For whites, the less education, the more likely respondents were to have felt that they were victims of discrimination in housing. In contrast, for blacks, the more educated blacks reported the higher rate of discrimination.

There are two possible explanations for this latter pattern. First, better educated blacks may be more sensitive to instances of possible discrimination. Second, better educated blacks may attempt to obtain housing that is protected by discriminatory practices more than blacks who are less educated.

These data may be somewhat controversial. However, in no way should they be interpreted as reducing the importance of concerns about

TABLE 4.13

## RENTAL HOUSING DISCRIMINATION BY INCOME AND RACE

Percent renters in housing market during last five years who felt they had been denied housing for discriminatory reasons:

<u>Income</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Under \$15,000	31% (N=74)	29% (N=290)
\$15,000 or more	28% (N=61)	11% (N=313)

The black/white difference in the \$15,000 or more income category is statistically significant. Within the racial categories, the income difference in the white group is statistically significant.

discrimination in housing. In essence, the data show that blacks are somewhat more likely than whites to perceive themselves to be victims of discrimination. However, they also show that blacks do not have a monopoly on that problem. Rather, the experience is almost as common among whites. Numerically, because the white population is larger, there are more whites than blacks in Boston who perceived themselves to have been the victims of housing discrimination. For whites with incomes under \$15,000, the rate of the perception of discrimination in housing was the same as it was for blacks.

Of course, the perceived reasons were different. Blacks cited race as the problem, while whites cited having children, being unmarried, being on welfare, and being students as problems. However, the fact that about one in four blacks, as well as nearly one in four whites with incomes under \$15,000 living in Boston, thought they were discriminated against (adjusting for those who had not been in the housing market or were homeowners) is noteworthy. It appears that attention to the way in which people in Boston have access to housing is not something that should be seen as primarily aimed at helping the black community, though it will certainly help there. Rather, it is something that would benefit a very large number of people throughout Boston.

### Conclusion

The picture with respect to housing and race is not a simple one. The clearest way that blacks were "worse off" was with respect to housing maintenance and condition. However, this generalization needs to be tempered by the observation that the overall condition of housing in Boston improved significantly in the last ten years, for blacks as much as for whites.

With respect to the appropriateness of cost and size, blacks did not perceive their housing any differently from whites. The average satisfaction



of blacks with their housing was lower than for whites. However, that difference was almost solely attributable to the fact that whites with incomes over \$15,000 were distinctively satisfied with their housing in Boston. Whites with incomes below that figure rated their housing about the same as do the black residents.

Altogether, attention to insuring that housing meets minimal maintenance standards and developing ways to help owners fix up and maintain existing housing stock will benefit whites and blacks alike, with particular benefits to blacks and to whites with incomes below \$15,000.

Blacks were slightly more likely to say they had been discriminated against in the rental market in the past five years. Although the overall difference was small, it is important to note that a significant source of discrimination against whites (perhaps a fourth) was associated with being a student, which is a transient state. However, there were also a significant number of whites who perceived discrimination because they had children, were unmarried or were on welfare. Although it is impossible from these data to identify the actual extent and nature of discrimination in the housing market, the data show that being deprived of housing for unfair reasons is a prevalent perception in both the black and white communities.

## CHAPTER 5

### CRIME, FEAR OF CRIME AND POLICE SERVICES

Probably no issues about the quality of life in the city have received more media attention than crime and fear of crime. Research has shown that crime and fear of crime do not necessarily go together. In all cities there are people whose odds of being victimized are quite low who nevertheless are more fearful than average. People can be fearful independently of their risk of being victims. However, both crime in itself and fear of crime can take their toll on the quality of life.

#### Burglary Rates

In this chapter we present some objective data about the rates at which people in Boston are victimized by burglary, breaking and entering in order to steal. Burglary was chosen because its prevalence is relatively high, in Boston and elsewhere, and, therefore, we are able to get a reliable reading on the rates at which people are victimized. Other crimes, such as robbery, where people take something directly from the victim by force or threat of force, may be even more fear producing; but they occur at a lower rate, which makes analysis more difficult.

Table 5.1 shows that nearly one black household in five was reported to have been broken into in the year preceding the survey. The corresponding rate for white households was one in ten.

Table 5.2 shows the same data by neighborhood area. There we can see some variation among the predominantly white areas. The reported rates were extremely low in Hyde Park, South Boston and the South End, while they were higher in Central Boston and Allston-Brighton. However, the data are very clear that the highest rates were in Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan.

TABLE 5.1

## PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS THAT EXPERIENCED BURGLARY BY RACE

Percent households which during the past year:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Had experienced a burglary	21%	9%
Had not experienced a burglary	<u>79</u>	<u>91</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white burglary difference is statistically significant.

TABLE 5.2  
PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS THAT EXPERIENCED BURGLARY BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent households which in the past year:

	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester - Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Had experienced a burglary	9%	9%	4%	13%	2%	12%	10%	17%	17%	9%	-
Had not experienced a burglary	<u>91%</u>	<u>91%</u>	<u>96%</u>	<u>87%</u>	<u>98%</u>	<u>88%</u>	<u>90%</u>	<u>83%</u>	<u>83%</u>	<u>91%</u>	<u>100%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

- Less than 1 percent.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

From these data, it is difficult not to conclude, as has been shown often in other places, that black households are more the victims of burglary than white households.

### Fears and Concerns

We now turn to the subjective side of crime, the way people feel. We asked people five standard questions about their feelings and perceptions: how safe they felt walking alone in their neighborhoods by day and by night, how big a problem they considered robbery and burglary to be in their neighborhood, and how likely they considered it to be that they would be the victim of an assault (Table 5.3).

With respect to people's ratings of how safe they felt walking alone in their neighborhoods, the responses of black respondents were significantly lower than those of white respondents; that is, blacks said they felt less safe on their streets both during the day and at night than did their white counterparts.

Rather consistent data emerged from the respective ratings of problems. Despite the fact that blacks were twice as likely as whites to be victims of burglary, blacks and whites were about equal in their ratings of burglary as a problem. However, black respondents rated robbery, taking something from someone by force, to be a much more serious problem than did white respondents. We do not have data from this particular survey with which to validate the perceptions of robbery. However, the size of the difference makes it very clear that there is a difference in concern about robbery.

Given the relative concerns about robbery, it perhaps is surprising to look at the data regarding the perceived chances of being assaulted, attacked or beaten up. That particular event was considered likely -- that is, people said they thought there was a "good" or "fair" chance it would happen to them

TABLE 5.3  
SAFETY RATINGS BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
<u>Percent who feel "very safe" or "fairly safe" in neighborhood:</u>		
During day	73%	89%
During night	32%	47%
<u>Percent who rate the following as a "big" problem in neighborhood:</u>		
Burglary	33%	30%
Robbery/pursesnatch	34%	15%
<u>Percent who feel that there is a "good chance" or "some chance" of being assaulted in Boston:</u>		
	43%	56%

All black/white differences are statistically significant except percent who rate burglary as a big problem.

during the year -- more often if respondents were white than if they were black.

There are characteristics that are more important than race in explaining how people answered some of these questions. For example, ratings of how safe people felt on the streets were highly associated with age and sex. Women reported feeling much less safe alone on the streets by day and by night than men. That difference was considerably more important than the average racial difference. White women also stood out in worrying about assault more than black women or men of either race (Table 5.4).

In looking at age effects in Table 5.5, older people consistently felt less safe on the streets, regardless of race. Ratings of crime problems and the perceived likelihood of assault were much higher among blacks over 30 than among blacks under 30. However, those answers were unrelated to age among whites. It also is interesting that young blacks rated burglary less a problem than young whites; but older blacks rated burglary more of a problem than whites over 30. In almost all respects, blacks over 30 stood out as being most concerned about crime and most affected by fear of crime.

Table 5.6 shows the same answers by neighborhood area. With respect to feeling safe on the streets and concerned about robbery, South Boston stands out as the place where residents felt best. Charlestown, East Boston, Central Boston, Hyde Park and Roslindale-West Roxbury were places where people felt safer than average on the streets. At the other extreme, Roxbury, Dorchester-Mattapan and the South End were places where there was greater than average concern about street safety.

Burglary showed a different pattern. The South End residents most often rated burglary as a "big" problem, followed by Jamaica Plain and Central Boston residents. South Boston residents again were at the positive extreme,

TABLE 5.4  
SAFETY RATINGS BY SEX AND RACE

	Race	
	Black	White
<u>Percent who feel "very safe" or "fairly safe" in neighborhood:</u>		
<u>During the day</u>		
Males	83% (N=67)	95% (N=251)
Females	64% (N=89)	85% (N=431)
<u>During the night</u>		
Males	48% (N=67)	61% (N=251)
Females	17% (N=89)	37% (N=431)
<u>Percent who rate as a "big problem" in the neighborhood:</u>		
<u>Burglary</u>		
Males	33% (N=67)	31% (N=251)
Females	33% (N=89)	30% (N=431)
<u>Robbery</u>		
Males	37% (N=67)	13% (N=251)
Females	31% (N=89)	16% (N=431)
<u>Percent who feel there is a "good chance" or "some chance" of being assaulted in Boston:</u>		
Males	46% (N=67)	50% (N=251)
Females	40% (N=89)	61% (N=431)

All black/white differences are statistically significant except the rating of burglary as a big problem in both the male and female groups and the rating of the chance of being assaulted in the male group. Within the racial groups, the male/female differences which are statistically significant are: the day and night safety ratings in both the black and white groups, and the rating of the chance of being assaulted in the white group.



TABLE 5.5  
SAFETY RATINGS BY AGE AND RACE

Percent who feel "very safe" or "fairly safe" in neighborhood:	Race	
	Black	White
<u>During the day</u>		
Under 30 years	93% (N=47)*	92% (N=239)
30-50 years	54% (N=74)	92% (N=242)
Over 50 years	74% (N=32)*	81% (N=188)
<u>During the night</u>		
Under 30 years	46% (N=47)*	52% (N=239)
30-50 years	26% (N=74)	51% (N=242)
Over 50 years	16% (N=32)*	35% (N=188)
<u>Percent who rate as a "big problem" in the neighborhood:</u>		
<u>Burglary</u>		
Under 30 years	15% (N=47)*	30% (N=239)
30-50 years	45% (N=74)	30% (N=242)
Over 50 years	43% (N=32)*	30% (N=188)
<u>Robbery</u>		
Under 30 years	19% (N=47)*	12% (N=239)
30-50 years	41% (N=74)	14% (N=242)
Over 50 years	47% (N=32)*	19% (N=188)
<u>Percent who feel there is a "good chance" or "some chance" of being assaulted in Boston:</u>		
Under 30	38% (N=47)*	56% (N=239)
30-50 years	44% (N=74)	60% (N=242)
Over 50 years	50% (N=32)*	53% (N=188)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

TABLE 5.5 continued

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant except: percent who feel safe in neighborhood during the day in both the under 30 and over 50 age groups, percent who feel safe in neighborhood during the night in the under 30 age group, percent who rate burglary as a big problem in the over 50 age group, percent who rate robbery as a big problem in the under 30 age group, and the percent who feel there is a chance of being assaulted in Boston in the over 50 age group. Use Table A3 as a guide to significance of differences between age groups.

TABLE 5.6

## SAFETY RATINGS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say:	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston-Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester-Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale-W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
They feel "very safe" or "fairly safe" in neighborhood during the day	92%	95%	97%	89%	76%	89%	90%	73%	78%	88%	84%
They feel "very safe" or "fairly safe" in neighborhood during the night	46%	62%	80%	58%	35%	40%	38%	36%	29%	41%	50%
Burglary as a "big problem" in the neighborhood	33%	20%	13%	38%	46%	30%	38%	23%	33%	27%	22%
Robbery is a "big problem" in the neighborhood	7%	7%	6%	17%	31%	11%	19%	40%	28%	8%	15%
There is a "good chance" or "some chance" of being assaulted in Boston	53%	53%	57%	52%	67%	54%	62%	37%	50%	52%	51%

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

being least likely to rate burglary a "big problem". However, Roxbury joined Hyde Park and Charlestown in the next most positive group. Interestingly, Roxbury stood out among all areas as the place residents said they were least likely to be assaulted or beaten up.

One point is very clear from these and previous data: people's concerns about crime were not very well correlated with their actual risk. Two obvious examples are Roxbury and the South End. South End residents were not particularly high in their risk of burglary, but their concerns were very high. In contrast, Roxbury residents were very much at risk, but their concerns about burglary were comparatively low. Roxbury residents were more concerned about street crime. Other research has shown fairly well that neighborhood conditions, more than crime rates, affect people's concerns and fears regarding crime. That is important to consider when interpreting these data.

Another kind of important perspective comes from Table 5.7. There is a tendency to think of crime and fear as ever increasing problems. We do not have good crime trend data; but we did ask a comparable question about feeling safe on the streets in 1970. As Table 5.7 shows, although in 1970, as in 1981, blacks felt less safe than whites on neighborhood streets at night, the difference may have narrowed during the past decade. Moreover, this occurred through a combination of stability of ratings by white respondents and some improvement in black responses. Fear on streets has not increased in Boston in the past decade for either blacks or whites.

Perhaps the racial overtones of crime and fear can most clearly be seen in the answers to the question about whether or not there was anywhere in Boston that respondents were afraid to go. The answers clearly show the relationship between racial perceptions and fear. The answers of blacks

TABLE 5.7

## SAFETY RATINGS BY RACE, 1970\* AND 1981

Percent who say they feel "very safe" or "fairly safe"  
in neighborhood at night:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
1970	25% (N=100)	48% (N=385)
1981	32% (N=156)	47% (N=683)

\* Source: Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970.

The black/white safety differences are statistically significant for both 1970 and 1981. The 1970/1981 differences within racial groups are not statistically significant.

concentrated on South Boston and, to a lesser extent, Charlestown. The answers from whites concentrated on Roxbury and, to a lesser extent, Dorchester. There were some other answers. There were some blacks who said they were afraid to go some places in Roxbury. Almost 10 percent of the whites said they were frightened to go downtown, an uncommon answer for blacks. However, the overwhelming pattern was a racial pattern. Although an extensive sociological study may not have been needed in order to document this fact, Table 5.8 speaks eloquently to the intertwining of racial tensions and fears.

On the other hand, it has been postulated that the racial tensions in Boston make public events and crowds distinctively uncomfortable for blacks. To address this question, we specifically asked: "Some people have told us they do not feel comfortable at public events or in crowded public places in Boston -- for example, at sports events, concerts, in Quincy Market or in downtown stores. Obviously, many other people feel very comfortable in such places. How is it for you? How do you feel at public events and in crowds in Boston -- would you say very comfortable, generally comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable or very uncomfortable?"

The data in Table 5.9 offer little support for the idea that blacks feel distinctively uncomfortable in public places and public events in Boston. The small differences in response pattern are not statistically reliable.

Thus, the data on crime and fear do not produce a simple summary. Blacks were more often victims of burglary than whites. Concern about burglary was not related to race, though blacks over 30 were distinctively likely to rate it a problem. More clearly, blacks were much more concerned about the safety of the streets and robbery than whites. However, whites -- particularly white women -- were most concerned about being assaulted or attacked.

TABLE 5.8

## AREAS OF CITY FEARED DURING DAYTIME BY RACE

Percent who mentioned following neighborhoods as places they were afraid to walk during the day:\*

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Charlestown	28%	2%
South Boston	64%	4%
Central/Downtown	1%	9%
South End	5%	12%
Roxbury	13%	55%
Dorchester	6%	30%
Hyde Park	13%	1%

\* Three responses could be recorded for each respondent, and, therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

Use Table A3 as a guide to significance of differences in individual categories.

TABLE 5.9

## RATED FEELING OF COMFORT AT PUBLIC EVENTS OR IN CROWDS IN BOSTON BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
<u>Percent who say they feel, at public events or in crowds in Boston:</u>		
Very comfortable	23%	27%
Generally comfortable	47%	49%
Somewhat uncomfortable	21%	18%
Very uncomfortable	<u>9%</u>	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white difference in feeling comfortable is not statistically significant.



Places that people said were scary to them fell along racial lines. However, downtown areas and public gatherings were not cited as being distinctively fear producing or uncomfortable by either group.

### Police Services

For a considerable period of time, blacks have been more critical of police services than whites. In the middle and late sixties, such issues garnered significant public attention. Many police forces were predominantly white. They were accused of showing less sensitivity to interpersonal relationships in the black community and being less responsive to the problems and needs of the black community.

Fairly clear documentation of this pattern came from a 1970 study of ten cities, of which Boston was one. In that survey study, in every city but one, blacks rated police services significantly lower than whites on the several dimensions of police service covered by that survey.<sup>1</sup>

In this study, we replicated the ratings that were used in that 1970 survey. In that way, we can compare the situation today in 1981 with that in 1970, thereby gaining perspective on the data.

Table 5.10 compares black and white responses on three questions: the perceived rapidity with which police respond to calls for help, the way the police generally treat neighborhood residents, and the overall quality of police service. It is important to realize that this survey was done in May, 1981, when the topic of cutbacks in police service was much in the news. Those events may well have created a perception of reduced police service and capability. However, there is little basis for thinking that it would have affected the relative ordering of black and white residents.

<sup>1</sup> Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., Citizen Attitudes Toward Local Government Services and Taxes, Cambridge: Ballinger Press, 1974.

TABLE 5.10

## PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Percent who say police "come right away" when called for help	30%	48%
Percent who say police treat neighborhood residents "very well" or "well enough"	62%	88%
Percent who say overall police service in neighborhood is "very good" or "good"	29%	52%

---

All black/white police perceptions differences are statistically significant.

Table 5.10 is very clear in showing significant differences in black and white respondents in their ratings of police services. In all three questions, black respondents were significantly more critical than their white counterparts.

Table 5.11 breaks these responses down further by age and by sex. There is some basis for saying that females were more positive about police services than males, particularly among black respondents. There is also some support in the table for the idea that older people were somewhat more positive about police services than young adults. However, the racial differences hold up quite consistently for all measures.

Table 5.12 presents data comparing responses in 1970 with those in 1981. While the direction of black-white differences for all three measures was the same in 1981 as in 1970, the difference between black and white ratings of police had narrowed. In two of the three cases, a contributing factor to narrowing the difference was the comparative improvement in the ratings black residents gave to police. In the past decade, there was an increase in black police officers in Boston. This change, and other steps reflecting increased attention to police-community relations in the black community may be showing up in these figures; though the changes are too small for statistical confidence. The clearer pattern is that white ratings deteriorated significantly on two of the three measures.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the perception of police service clearly is a race-related issue. Although whites, more than blacks, cited crime as the leading city problem, the distribution of fear and concern, if anything, was more pronounced in the black community. The burglary rate was twice as high for blacks as for whites. Particularly street crime was a concern that was greater among blacks than whites.

## PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Race	
	Black	White
<u>Percent who say police "come right away" when called for help:</u>		
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	24% (N=67)	42% (N=251)
Females	35% (N=89)	51% (N=431)
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	39% (N=47)*	45% (N=239)
30-50	26% (N=74)	45% (N=242)
Over 50	16% (N=32)*	54% (N=188)
<u>Percent who say police treat neighborhood residents "very well" or "well enough":</u>		
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	46% (N=67)	86% (N=251)
Females	76% (N=89)	89% (N=431)
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	61% (N=47)*	86% (N=239)
30-50	54% (N=74)	86% (N=242)
Over 50	81% (N=32)*	93% (N=188)
<u>Percent who rate overall police service in neighborhood as "very good" or "good":</u>		
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	22% (N=67)	49% (N=251)
Females	36% (N=89)	54% (N=431)
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	37% (N=47)*	46% (N=239)
30-50	16% (N=74)	51% (N=242)
Over 50	47% (N=32)*	63% (N=188)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between individual categories.

TABLE 5.12  
PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE BY RACE, 1970\* AND 1981

<u>Percent who say police "come right away" when called for help:</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Year</u>		
1970	25% (N=100)	60% (N=385)
1981	30% (N=156)	48% (N=683)
<u>Percent who say police treat neighborhood residents "very well" or "well enough":</u>		
<u>Year</u>		
1970	56% (N=100)	86% (N=385)
1981	62% (N=156)	88% (N=683)
<u>Percent who say overall police service in neighborhood is "very good" or "good":</u>		
<u>Year</u>		
1970	30% (N=100)	65% (N=385)
1981	29% (N=156)	52% (N=683)

\* Source: Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970.

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant. In the white racial category the differences in percent who say police came right away and percent who say overall police service is good are statistically significant between years.

There is a legitimate question about how much police can do to affect crime rates or people's fears and concerns. Research findings lead us to be modest in expectations of such effects. Moreover, it is important to realize that these ratings of police services may not be based on fact. In contrast to most questions in this survey, we know most respondents do not have a good factual basis for rating police response time or how police "treat people". The images reported are real, but may not be tied directly to the quality of police service.

Nonetheless, for most people, police are the ones who are supposed to help if there is a problem related to crime. In this context, police service is distinctively important to blacks in Boston. However, there is a major difference between blacks and whites in the perception of police services delivered. Although there has been some improvement in this discrepancy over the past decade, the reality is still very much that police services perceived as less reliable and less effective by black residents than by white residents of Boston. For whatever reasons this discrepancy exists, its significance in looking at race-related issues cannot be ignored.

## CHAPTER 6

### BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Introduction

Perhaps no single issue in Boston has received as much media attention as a racial topic as the public schools. A full consideration of the school issue would include data not presented here: for example, enrollment figures, data on school achievement, and cost figures. What we can add, however, is information about people's perceptions and feelings about the public schools in Boston.

As background, it is important to realize that the Boston Public Schools play a more important role for black households in Boston than for whites. There are two reasons for this. First, a much higher percentage of the black households in Boston have minor children than is the case for whites. Second, blacks rely more heavily on the public school system than do white families.

At this time, about half the black households in Boston contain children under 18 years of age. In contrast, only about 20 percent of the white households in Boston have minor children. Some observers would quickly attribute this difference to "white flight". In this report we are not going to address the extent to which white families with children left the city during the 1970's because of disaffection with the public schools. That particular research goes beyond the data available in this report. However, much, if not all, of this differential can be accounted for by two independent but very real factors which have nothing to do with the Boston Public Schools.

First, in the past decade there has been a significant change in the marriage and child birth patterns of white young people. They have been

marrying later; they have been having children later and fewer of them. As a result of this trend alone, the fraction of white households in Greater Boston with minor children has declined from about 50 percent to about 40 percent. This change to later marriage and later childbearing has been much less apparent among blacks, producing an overall discrepancy in the rate of households with children.

Second, it has for decades been the case that white families that had children and could afford it were more likely to live in the suburbs than in the City of Boston itself. Single family houses with yards are rare in Boston, yet are the housing of choice for many young families. In contrast, single adults have long found the rental housing in the city itself, along with the lifestyle, to be attractive. Thus, historically there has been a lower proportion of white households with children in the city than in the metropolitan area as a whole; the majority of white families with children have lived in the suburbs.

In contrast, through some combination of choice, the economics of suburban housing and historically restricted options the vast majority of blacks in Metropolitan Boston live in the City of Boston. As a result, there is no similar suburb/city discrepancy in the rate at which black households include children.

#### Use of Public Schools

There is a long history in Boston of using parochial schools as well as public schools for the education of children. This began well before busing began in the mid-1970's. Table 6.1 shows that in 1970, only slightly over half the families with school-aged children in Boston sent their children only to public schools. Despite common perceptions, the figures for 1981 were not very different. If there was any notable change at all over the period, it



TABLE 6.1

## PUBLIC SCHOOL USE, 1970\* AND 1981

Percent families with school children who use:

	Year	
	1970 (N=159)	1981 (N=208)
Public schools only	55%	51%
Public and other schools	8%	15%
Other schools only	<u>37%</u>	<u>34%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

\* Source: Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970. These percentages include families with children from 3 to 5 who reported where they would send their children when they reached school age.

The school use difference between years is not statistically significant.

was a slight increase of families who sent children both to public and non-public schools.

When these same comparisons are broken down by race, we can see that the averages mask some changes that have occurred. Actually, for both blacks and whites, there has been some increase in the use of alternatives to public schools. The apparent stability in Table 6.1 is in part due to the increase in the proportion of all school children who are black. In addition, perhaps the most critical point to note from Table 6.2 is that blacks rely much more heavily on the public schools than do whites. About three quarters of the black families with school-aged children were relying solely on the public schools. This was true for only one quarter of the white families with school-aged children, though an additional quarter reported using both public and non-public schools.

#### Ratings of Schools

We now turn to the way that blacks and whites rated the public schools. Three questions were asked: a rating of the public school opportunities in general for neighborhood children, a rating of how well the high schools prepare children for college, then a rating of how well the high schools prepare students to get a job after high school. Table 6.3 shows some difference in the way that whites and blacks rated the public schools. At the lowest end of the scales, whites were significantly more likely to rate the overall public educational opportunities as "poor", while blacks may have been more likely to rate the preparation for students planning to get a job after high school graduation as "poor". Those two differences, going in opposite directions, may balance one another out. Overall, it is hard to conclude from Table 6.3 that there was much overall difference in the way whites and blacks in Boston rated the public school system.

TABLE 6.2  
PUBLIC SCHOOL USE BY RACE, 1969\* AND 1981

<u>Percent households with children in public schools:</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Year</u>		
1969	35% (N=93)	20% (N=450)
1981	35% (N=156)	11% (N=683)
<u>Percent families with school children who use public schools:</u>		
<u>Year</u>		
1969	85% (N=39)**	69% (N=133)
1981	74% (N=72)	55% (N=136)

\* Source: Boston Area Study, 1969.

\*\*Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant. Within racial categories, the differences between years are significant for the white group in both the percent households with children in public schools and the percent families with school children who use public schools.

TABLE 6.3  
RATING OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
<u>Percent who say Boston public schools are:</u>		
Very Good	10%	6%
Good	18%	20%
Fair	44%	32%
Poor	<u>28%</u>	<u>42%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
<u>Percent who say Boston high school education for students planning to go to college is:</u>		
Very good	6%	6%
Good	18%	14%
Fair	35%	36%
Poor	<u>41%</u>	<u>44%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
<u>Percent who say Boston high school education for students planning to get a job after graduation is:</u>		
Very good	8%	4%
Good	18%	21%
Fair	33%	41%
Poor	<u>41%</u>	<u>34%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white school rating differences are not statistically significant except the difference in "poor" rating in the top table.

TABLE 6.4  
 RATINGS OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY WHETHER OR NOT  
 THERE ARE SCHOOL CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD

	<u>Whether or not have school children</u>	
	<u>Yes</u> (N=208)	<u>No</u> (N=693)
Percent who say Boston public schools are "very good" or "good"	27%	27%
Percent who say Boston high schools are "very good" or "good" for students planning to go to college	20%	22%
Percent who say Boston high schools are "very good" or "good" for students planning to get a job after graduation	23%	25%

---

The differences between groups with school children and without are not statistically significant.

Interestingly, as Table 6.4 shows, there also was little difference among Boston residents in the ratings of the schools by whether they had children or did not have children. Perceptions were very similar. Moreover, ratings were fairly consistent across Boston neighborhoods, with two notable exceptions. East Boston residents stood out from all the rest as rating the public school opportunities in their area as distinctively good. It also was an area that was least affected by court-ordered busing. Charlestown residents were distinctively negative in their ratings. The balance of the data in Table 6.5 are fairly even.

A variable that does make a difference in how people rated the public schools was their own level of education. Table 6.6 shows very clearly that people who had graduated from high school were significantly more critical of the quality of education in Boston public schools than those who had not graduated from high school. This relationship held equally for both blacks and for whites. There was no significant difference in black and white ratings within education groups.

The question of how perceptions of the Boston schools have changed is important. Part of the way things are judged is in the context of how current circumstances compare with the past. However, sometimes perceived differences or comparisons are not accurate.

A case in point stems from the data in Tables 6.7 through 6.9. Survey respondents were asked whether they considered the Boston schools to be better, worse or about the same today as they were ten years ago. As Table 6.7 shows, the majority of both black and white respondents rated the Boston public schools as "worse" today. Although one in five blacks compared with one in twenty whites considered them better today, indicating that a sense of progress was more common in the black community than in the white community, that was a minority view among both groups.

## RATING OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say Boston public schools are:

	East Boston (N=45) *	Charles- town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49) *	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43) *	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester- Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
Very good	14%	7%	1%	3%	5%	5%	7%	9%	10%	8%	7%
Good	37%	10%	14%	17%	12%	22%	24%	16%	19%	18%	18%
Fair	22%	21%	39%	40%	50%	29%	33%	44%	35%	29%	34%
Poor	27%	62%	46%	40%	33%	44%	36%	31%	36%	45%	41%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

TABLE 6.6

## RATING OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY EDUCATION AND RACE

Percent who say Boston public schools are "very good" or "good" :

<u>Education</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Less than high school graduation	39% (N=35)*	45% (N=83)
High school graduation	29% (N=66)	25% (N=199)
College experience	18% (N=54)	23% (N=394)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The black/white differences shown are not statistically significant.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between education categories.



TABLE 6.7

## COMPARISON OF QUALITY OF SCHOOLS WITH TEN YEARS AGO BY RACE

Percent who say, compared to ten years ago, Boston public schools are:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Better	20%	5%
Worse	52%	60%
About the same	10%	14%
Don't know	<u>18%</u>	<u>21%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white difference in comparing school quality is statistically significant.

TABLE 6.8

## COMPARISON OF QUALITY OF SCHOOLS WITH TEN YEARS AGO BY EDUCATION AND RACE

	Race	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Percent who say Boston public schools are worse now than ten years ago:</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	48% (N=35)*	48% (N=83)
High school graduation	58% (N=66)	69% (N=199)
College experience	47% (N=54)	58% (N=394)
<u>Percent who say Boston public schools are better now than ten years ago:</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	13% (N=35)*	7% (N=83)
High school graduation	18% (N=66)	3% (N=199)
College experience	29% (N=54)	6% (N=394)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The black/white differences in the percent who rated Boston public schools better now than ten years ago are statistically significant in the high school graduation and college experience groups. Use Table A3 as a guide to significance of differences between education categories.

TABLE 6.9

## RATING OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY RACE, 1969\* AND 1981

Percent who say Boston public schools are "very good" or "good":

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
1969	29% (N=83)	60% (N=345)
1981	28% (N=156)	26% (N=683)

\* Source: Boston Area Study, 1969.

The 1969 black/white school rating difference is statistically significant. Also, within the white racial category the difference between years is statistically significant.

Those views were not completely evenly distributed by education. Table 6.8 shows that the better educated blacks were more likely to report a sense of progress about the Boston public schools than any other group. However, among all groups, the perception of deterioration was more common than that of progress.

In this context, it is then interesting to look at Table 6.9. In that table we can compare the answers to the 1981 survey with answers to nearly identical questions in 1969. Three points emerge clearly from the table.

First, ten years ago blacks felt much more poorly served by the public school system than did whites in Boston. The quality of public school education, and its appropriateness to people's needs, was a divisive issue in 1969. In contrast, in 1981, ratings of the school system were no longer divided by race.

Second, the table clearly shows that the way that consensus occurred was through a large reduction in confidence in the white population in the public school opportunities in Boston.

Finally, the data indicate "no change" from the point of view of black residents in their rating of the quality of public education in Boston in the past decade.

Altogether, the data for both groups indicate a low level of confidence in the quality of public education currently available, compared with the way that the white population felt ten years ago.

### The Impact of Busing

Certainly the most controversial school-related event in Boston in recent years was the advent of court-ordered busing in 1974. It did not seem constructive or useful to ask people directly how they felt about the busing experiment in Boston. However, we did ask about what good and bad effects

they observed from the busing program designed to more nearly racially balance Boston public schools.

Forty percent of the black respondents and over half of the white respondents could cite no positive effects of busing. However, respondents from both groups, in generally comparable numbers, did cite broadened student horizons, heightened awareness of racial problems, improved racial relations, and increased tolerance as positive outcomes of busing. The main important difference in responses observed was that blacks, more than whites, expressed the view that educational opportunities had improved in the Boston schools. While that was the view of only one in ten white respondents, it was expressed by almost one in three of the black respondents.

On the negative side, the vast majority of respondents from both the black and white communities could cite some negative effects of the busing experiment -- over 80 percent of the blacks and over 90 percent of the whites. Again, one of the important points to note about the data in Table 6.11 is the similarity of many of the answers. For example, one in three respondents among both blacks and whites cited the view that it was detrimental to children to leave their own neighborhoods. Although concerns about increased fear, tension and violence in the schools, money "wasted" on busing or increased racial tensions in the city may have been cited more often by white respondents, those concerns were expressed at a rate not significantly lower by black respondents.

In fact, there were only two points that were made significantly more often by whites than blacks. First, whites more often cited a change in the racial composition of the school system as a negative effect of busings. Second, and most important, almost 40 percent of the white respondents said the quality of education in the schools had deteriorated as a result of the

TABLE 6.10  
 POSITIVE EFFECTS OF BUSING BY RACE

Percent who mentioned the following as positive effects of busing:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Increased tolerance; students and teachers learned to get along in schools	11%	7%
Improved educational opportunities	30%	12%
Broadened children's horizons	9%	6%
Balanced schools racially	2%	3%
Heightened awareness of racial problems; improved race relations	12%	12%
No positive effects mentioned	37%	56%

\* Three responses could be recorded for each respondent, and, therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between individual categories.

TABLE 6.11  
NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF BUSING BY RACE

Percent who mentioned the following as negative effects of busing:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Increased fear, tension, violence in schools; decreased discipline	15%	24%
Reduced quality of education and/or opportunities	17%	38%
Detrimental to have children leave neighborhoods	31%	34%
Too much money spent, wasted	7%	12%
Composition of schools changed as result of children leaving public schools	6%	17%
Exacerbated racial tensions outside of schools	16%	23%
No negative effects mentioned	18%	4%

\* Three responses could be recorded for each respondent, and, therefore percentages do not add up to 100%.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between individual categories.

busing program; that was the view of only one in five of the black respondents.

### Conclusion

The data in this chapter present a kind of perspective on people's feelings about the schools that perhaps has not been available before. First, although the majority of school-aged children in Boston are white, with only 28 percent or so being black, a higher proportion of black families have school children; and a significantly higher proportion of black families with school children use the public schools.

This is not a new phenomenon. Boston's white families have a long history of using non-public schools to supplement the public schools for educational purposes. Altogether, though, from a political perspective it is important to note that only ten percent of all white Boston households have children in the public schools. Ninety percent either have no children or are using private or parochial schools exclusively. That constitutes a very small constituency directly concerned with the public schools in Boston. Combining black and white families with children in public schools, less than a quarter of all the households in the city have children in public schools. In an arena in which a variety of groups are competing for scarce tax dollars, public school families are not the force they used to be.

Blacks with children mainly live in the City of Boston. The suburban options available to whites are not available to blacks in the same way. The parochial school option is not as generally available or appropriate. For these reasons, the quality of public schools is more salient to the black community than to the white community.

The data involving attitudes can be summarized in two different ways. If one wants to focus on differences in black and white perceptions, there is



a basis for doing so. Black respondents were more likely to say schools have improved in the past ten years. They did see more positive and fewer negative effects of the busing program than whites. In particular, they were much more likely to say that the quality of educational opportunities had improved as a result of the program. Perhaps most important, although blacks and whites rated the schools in a similar way in 1981, this constitutes a major decline or change for whites, whereas the ratings were basically unchanged for blacks. Hence, the context of the ratings for whites was different in a way that may be significant.

Yet, from another perspective, the similarity of perceptions and ratings stands out. Not only were the ratings of Boston public schools similar. For the most part, the perceptions of the good and bad effects of the busing program over the past decade were expressed at similar rates among both groups. Moreover, the perception of a decline in the quality of public schools is largely shared. Blacks and whites probably do not agree on all aspects of what an improved school situation would be. However, many of their perceptions of problems are similar. Most important, they definitely agree that change/improvement is needed. Overall, the similarity of ratings of the schools strongly suggests that there is a sound basis on which blacks and whites could work together to change the schools and make them better for everyone.

## CHAPTER 7

### WORK

#### Introduction

The opportunity to hold a job that will provide adequate income and provide satisfaction is an important component of the quality of life. It goes without saying that for a long period of time it has been shown that blacks have been overrepresented in the lower paying, less desirable jobs.

This survey did not provide an occasion for doing an in-depth analysis of the quality of jobs that blacks and whites hold in Boston. The data in this chapter are about the subjective side of work. Further analysis, integrating these data with data from other sources, is needed to present a full picture of the job situation for blacks and whites in Boston.

#### Types of Jobs

Table 7.1 shows the distribution of the jobs that employed people hold who live in Boston. The categories used are large ones which encompass many very different kinds of jobs. In particular, the category labeled service workers is complex. It includes policemen and firemen, waitresses and beauticians. Thus, the meaning of any category is not easy to interpret. Nonetheless, Table 7.1 fairly clearly shows that whites were more heavily represented in the higher level occupations, and blacks were more likely than whites to be working in semi-skilled and service occupations.

#### Perceptions of Jobs

The data from this survey were designed to obtain some measures, not of the objective value of jobs, but of how people who were employed felt about their jobs. Three rather standard questions were asked of each respondent who was employed: do you have important skills which you are not using on your

TABLE 7.1  
OCCUPATIONS OF BOSTON RESIDENTS IN THE LABOR FORCE BY RACE\*

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Professional, managerial, technical	15%	35%
Sales	2%	3%
Clerical	27%	27%
Craftspeople, skilled workers	11%	8%
Operatives, semi-skilled workers**	17%	8%
Laborers, unskilled workers	3%	3%
Service Workers***	<u>25%</u>	<u>16%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
Proportion of labor force	17%	74%

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\* Source - Boston Neighborhood Survey, 1980.

\*\* Operatives include transportation operators.

\*\*\*Service workers include those working in private households, armed services, fire and police services, waiters and waitresses and beauticians among others.

job; do you think you should have a better job, given your experience and training; and overall, how satisfied are you with your job?

In general, we can say that on each of these three measures, blacks reported lower job satisfaction than whites. However, the answers to these questions can be understood better by looking at the more detailed data presented in Tables 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5.

In Table 7.3, the data are further broken down by the age of the respondent. It can be seen that young people were much more likely to think they had skills that were not being used than older respondents. There also was a clear association between age and thinking one should have a better job. For whites, but not blacks, young people were also less satisfied with their jobs. In general, the discrepancy between blacks and whites was most apparent for those 30 to 50.

In Table 7.4, the data were broken down by education. Here we can see that the majority of all people who were high school graduates thought they should have a better job. Interestingly, job satisfaction was also lower for those with more education, though that trend was much more pronounced for blacks than for whites. In this case, controlling for education seems to augment the differences between black and white job perceptions. The black-white differences were most striking for those who had attended college. Moreover, if anything, the average educational differences between blacks and whites masked the true extent of black-white differences in job satisfaction.

Looking at the effect of gender in Table 7.5, black males stood out as the group most likely to feel they had skills not used on their jobs; white females followed behind them in this respect. Black males also stood out as being lowest on the other two measures, being particularly more likely than their white counterparts to think they should have a better job.

TABLE 7.2  
MEASURES RELATED TO JOB SATISFACTION BY RACE

<u>Percent working full time who say:</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black (N=104)</u>	<u>White (N=435)</u>
They have skills not used on the job	38%	32%
They should have a better job	67%	53%
They are "fairly dissatisfied" or "not satisfied" with their job situation	31%	21%

---

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant except the percent who say they have skills not used on the job.

TABLE 7.3

## MEASURES RELATED TO JOB SATISFACTION BY AGE AND RACE

	Race	
	Black	White
<u>Percent working full time who say they have skills not used on the job:</u>		
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	48% (N=34)*	45% (N=185)
30-50	38% (N=53)	24% (N=180)
Over 50	**	19% (N=62)
<u>Percent working full time who say they should have a better job:</u>		
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	68% (N=34)*	57% (N=185)
30-50	70% (N=53)	52% (N=180)
Over 50	**	44% (N=62)
<u>Percent working full time who are "fairly dissatisfied" or "not satisfied" with their job situation:</u>		
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	18% (N=34)*	28% (N=185)
30-50	41% (N=53)	17% (N=180)
Over 50	**	13% (N=62)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

\*\*Too few cases to be reliable.

The following black/white differences are statistically significant: percent who say they should have a better job and percent dissatisfied with job situation, both in the 30-50 age group only. Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between age groups.

TABLE 7.4

## MEASURES RELATED TO JOB SATISFACTION BY EDUCATION AND RACE

	Race	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Percent working full time who say they have skills not used on the job:</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	*	36% (N=29)**
High school graduation	32% (N=41)**	17% (N=102)
College experience	62% (N=47)**	37% (N=301)
<u>Percent working full time who say they should have a better job:</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	*	28% (N=29)**
High school graduation	68% (N=41)**	47% (N=102)
College experience	83% (N=47)**	58% (N=301)
<u>Percent working full time who are "fairly dissatisfied" or "not satisfied with their job situation:</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	*	15% (N=29)**
High school graduation	34% (N=41)**	14% (N=102)
College experience	39% (N=47)**	24% (N=301)

\* Too few cases to be reliable.

\*\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant except percent who say they have skills not used on the job in the high school graduation group. Differences in the less than high school graduation group cannot be tested. Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between education groups.

TABLE 7.5

## MEASURES RELATED TO JOB SATISFACTION BY SEX AND RACE

	Race	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Percent working full time who say they have skills not used on the job:</u>		
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	46% (N=51)	29% (N=194)
Females	30% (N=53)	36% (N=240)
<u>Percent working full time who say they should have a better job:</u>		
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	67% (N=51)	50% (N=194)
Females	67% (N=53)	57% (N=240)
<u>Percent working full time who are "fairly dissatisfied" or "not satisfied" with their job situation:</u>		
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	31% (N=51)	17% (N=194)
Females	30% (N=53)	25% (N=240)

All black/white differences are statistically significant in the male groups but not the female groups. Within racial categories the only statistically significant male/female differences is the percent working who are dissatisfied with their job situation in the white category.



These further breakdowns basically strengthen the conclusion that employed blacks felt more negatively about their jobs than whites. Two discrepancies stand out above the rest. First, blacks who graduated from high school or who had attended college were much less satisfied with their jobs than whites with comparable education. Second, black males reported less satisfaction than white males. In addition, blacks in the prime of their work life, 30 to 50, were distinctively less satisfied than whites in the same age group. These three patterns add up to a serious discrepancy in a major aspect of quality of life for blacks.

### Job Tenure

While job satisfaction obviously is an important part of a person's life, not having a job at all is a more important problem. The measurement of unemployment has been the subject of some debate. The way unemployment is measured can have a significant effect on the conclusions one reaches. The most commonly used measurement of unemployment, based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics approach, is to ask people who are not currently employed if they have been looking for work in the past two or four weeks. This approach undercounts people who have given up looking for work; and what constitutes "looking for work" is ambiguous. The figures in Tables 7.6 came from two different questions.

The top of the table resulted from asking people to classify themselves in one of the table categories. The bottom figure in the table resulted when all those people not currently employed were asked: "Are you not working mainly because you want it that way or mainly because you cannot find a job you want?". Those who said they were not working mainly because they could not find a job they want were defined as the "unemployed" in the bottom of Table 7.6.

TABLE 7.6  
EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY RACE

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
<u>Percent who are:</u>		
Working full time	56%	52%
Working part time	12%	14%
Unemployed	8%	3%
Laid off	3%	2%
Retired	7%	12%
Homemakers	3%	11%
Students	7%	5%
Disabled	<u>4%</u>	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%
<u>Percent who say they are not working but would like to be:*</u>	8%	6%

\* This was calculated by dividing the number of respondents who said they were not working because they could not find jobs by that number plus those employed:

$$\frac{N \text{ could not find job, but want one}}{N \text{ working plus } N \text{ could not find job but want one}}$$

Use Table A3 as a guide to statistical significance.

The top of the table shows blacks more likely to classify themselves unemployed and disabled, while whites were more likely to say they were retired or homemaking. Labor force participation (being employed) was comparable.

The bottom figure is probably a more consistent way to define being unemployed. It shows that the rate of people not working who want to be working was rather comparable in the white and black communities. The difference in the rates was not statistically significant.

Table 7.7 goes on to show that being out of work for those who wanted a job was far from evenly distributed in both communities. It will come as no surprise that those who had not finished high school constituted the main group that could not find work. Approximately one out of five such people in both the black and white communities fell into this category. For those who had graduated from high school, the rates of not being able to find work were close to five percent or less for blacks and whites. The impact of educational level on unemployment is clearly more important than race. There were no statistically significant racial differences when education was controlled.

Two other groups may also be distinctively likely to be out of work among those who want to work: black females and blacks 18 to 30. The differences are slightly too small for statistical confidence in the age pattern, and the sample size does not permit breaking each of these groups down further. However, it seems almost certain from the data that there is considerable overlap between the the unemployed in those two groups and those who have not finished high school.

TABLE 7.7

## PERCENT UNEMPLOYED BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND RACE

<u>Percent who say they are not working but would like to be:</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	20% (N=35)*	17% (N=83)
High school graduation	3% (N=66)	4% (N=199)
College experience	7% (N=54)	4% (N=394)
<u>Sex</u>		
Males	4% (N=67)	5% (N=251)
Females	12% (N=89)	6% (N=431)
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	13% (N=47)*	7% (N=239)
30-50	7% (N=74)	6% (N=242)
Over 50	- (N=32)	3% (N=188)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

- Less than one percent.

The black/white differences shown are not statistically significant. The unemployment difference between blackmales and black females is statistically significant. Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between other categories.

## Perceived Discrimination

The preceding data have dealt with people's satisfaction with the work they have and their ability to find work. A reasonable question is whether the incidence of job dissatisfaction or being out of work results from any kind of unfair treatment.

Obviously, a study such as this cannot detect instances of actual discrimination. However, the perception of being discriminated against is a reality that appropriately may be taken into account when thinking about the problems people have in living in Boston.

Respondents were asked if they felt they had been discriminated against with respect to getting a job, with respect to promotion, or with respect to the way they were treated on their job. The figures in Table 7.8 were calculated by dividing the number of people who said they were discriminated against in the past five years by the total number of people who were employed or who had looked for a job in the past five years.

One of the possibly surprising features of Table 7.8 is the fact that the rates of reported experience of discrimination with respect to jobs was obviously not significantly different between blacks and whites. The perception of being discriminated against with respect to work was as common in the white population as it was in the black population.

Table 7.9 goes on to show the answers on the basis of which the respondents thought they were discriminated against. Those bases are worth noting. It can be seen that black respondents virtually always thought they were discriminated against because of their race. In contrast, sex was the most common reason given by white respondents for their being discriminated against. Age was the second most common reason. A quarter of the white respondents who thought they suffered in the job market attributed the

TABLE 7.8

## JOB DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCE BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND RACE

Percent working or in job market who experienced job discrimination  
during last five years:

<u>Education</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Less than high school graduation	*	7% (N=39)**
High school graduation	24% (N=53)	15% (N=127)
College experience	33% (N=52)	24% (N=344)
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	30% (N=60)	16% (N=216)
Female	16% (N=69)	24% (N=297)
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	23% (N=45)**	23% (N=225)
30-50	25% (N=64)	17% (N=205)
Over 50	*	20% (N=76)
<u>Overall</u>		
	23% (N=129)	20% (N=513)

\* Too few cases to be reliable.

\*\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The black/white difference in perception of job discrimination is statistically significant in the male category only. Also, the difference in perception of job discrimination between white males and white females is statistically significant. Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between other categories.

TABLE 7.9

## PERCEIVED REASONS FOR JOB DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCE BY RACE

Percent of those reporting discrimination who mentioned the following as cause for perceived job discrimination:\*

	Race	
	Black (N=31)**	White (N=108)
Race	83%	28%
Sex	3%	47%
Age	3%	32%
Education/Experience	8%	4%
Other	5%	13%

\* Two responses could be recorded for each respondent, and, therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%. Only respondents who said they had experienced job discrimination during the past five years are included.

\*\*Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between individual categories.

experience to their race. Combining the data from both Tables 7.8 and 7.9, one could say that about 20 percent of the blacks, but only six percent of whites in the job market felt their opportunities were unfairly affected because of their race in the last five years. However, that does not change the fact that discrimination for all reasons was perceived at nearly equal rates.

Not surprisingly, those perceptions were not evenly distributed. The way they were distributed, however, may not be readily predictable. First, for both blacks and whites, more educated respondents were more likely to perceive that they had been discriminated against than those who were less educated. Those who had not finished high school virtually never saw themselves as discriminated against, either black or white. This may be either the product of the kind of jobs they seek, their lack of sophistication about identifying discrimination when it occurs, or their perception that in fact they are not particularly well qualified, thereby making job rejection appropriate in their eyes. It is important to note further that, at a particular education level, blacks did perceive more discrimination than whites. Again, the average educational differences tended to mask the overall racial differences.

Second, black males stood out as the group most often thinking they had been discriminated against; white females were the group that was second most likely to perceive job discrimination. Black females were tied with white males at a rate significantly lower than the other two groups. Age was not a very good predictor of perceptions of job-related discrimination.

### Conclusion

If these data did not give some indication that blacks felt more disadvantaged in the area of jobs than whites, the data would probably not be



credible. Both the differences in the kinds of jobs that blacks and whites occupy and the long history of documented problems in this area would lead one to expect that such differences would persist and would be apparent in the perceptions of black residents. In fact, all the ratings with respect to satisfaction with work, with respect to difficulty in finding work and with respect to discrimination were in the direction of saying blacks were worse off.

Nevertheless, having said this, the data were also very clear that the problems we are discussing -- job satisfaction, unemployment and discrimination -- are not the sole province, or even primarily the province, of blacks.

The data in this chapter most related to race were those on job satisfaction. For those who had finished high school or gone to college, blacks were much more likely than whites to think they should have a better job and to be dissatisfied with their current job. There also were significant race-related differences in job satisfaction for males and those 30 to 50. However, it should not be forgotten that over half of the whites interviewed also thought they should have a better job. In a different survey study in Boston, over one in four families throughout Greater Boston said they had a problem in their family related to finding the right job or career. Matching people to the right job is a very serious societal problem. Although the data suggest that blacks have this problem distinctively, it cuts across all segments of the Boston community.

The problem of being out of work can be discussed more clearly in non-racial terms. If a person did not have a high school diploma in Boston, it

was very hard for him or her to find a job. About one-fifth of such people who wanted to work had that problem, whether they were black or white. Race was not related to reported unemployment when education was controlled.

It is worth noting that this survey did not cover teenage unemployment. In order to be a respondent, a person had to be 18 or older. Teenage unemployment is certainly going to be more of a problem in the black community than in the white community. In part, as we have seen in previous chapters, the rate of having teenagers in black households is considerably higher than for white households. In addition, those under 18 looking for full-time jobs generally are not high school graduates. However, the key point is that the main problem for getting jobs for people in Boston is the problem of getting employment for people without high school diplomas.

Finally, the data with respect to perceived job discrimination make two points. First, quite a few people perceive themselves as being discriminated against. If one excluded those who had not finished high school, close to 20 percent of all adults who were employed or active in the job market in the last five years felt they had been discriminated against with respect to getting a job or being promoted. Whether they were right or wrong, that would seem to be a substantial number of people to have that perception.

Second, although perceptions of job discrimination related to race were much more common among blacks than whites, perceptions of being unfairly treated because of demographic characteristics were almost even between blacks and whites. While black males stood out as the group most likely to have that perception, white females were not far behind.

These data do not suggest that concerns about racial discrimination in jobs should be played down. However, they do suggest job discrimination is

broader than that. The perception of being judged for a job on the basis of demographic characteristics unrelated to qualifications rather than on merit is a problem that cuts across the broad spectrum of the Boston community. Equal opportunity need not necessarily divide blacks and whites in Boston.

## CHAPTER 8

### PERCEPTIONS OF BOSTON'S INSTITUTIONS

Since The Boston Committee was founded by representatives of four major institutions in the city -- city government, the business community, the Catholic Church, and the media -- it seemed appropriate to obtain some measure of the way those institutions are perceived. Aside from simple curiosity, a component of a positive feeling about living in a city is likely to be the extent to which major institutions are seen as effective in adding to or contributing to a person's quality of life. Moreover, studies of the perceptions of blacks have routinely found them to have less confidence in society's institutions than their white counterparts.

In looking at ratings of institutions and leaders, it is important to understand two points. First, any single rating of a complex enterprise, such as the business community, or even the variety of actions and activities for which the Mayor may be responsible, necessarily is an oversimplification, forcing people to summarize what may be complex and ambivalent feelings into a single response. Second, it simply is a fact that many people do not have a high level of information about many important activities. Thus, particularly for something like the rating of the business community, ratings may be based on impressions and feelings that have a relatively slim information and factual base.

These introductory comments do not imply that the ratings reported in this chapter are meaningless. On the contrary, there is abundant research evidence that people's ratings of institutions, particularly their governmental leaders, are tightly tied to their general feelings of control and confidence in their communities. However, it is difficult or impossible to link ratings such as these to specific behaviors, programs or events.

One final point is worth noting. Originally, we asked several questions about people's perceptions about each of these institutions. For reasons related to the vagueness of opinions in some of these areas, and the central role of overall feelings about these institutions in detailed ratings, the answers to different questions that had an evaluative component tended to be very similar. In the end, we settled on a single question: "Over the past three years, how much do you feel (INSTITUTION) has done to make Boston a better place to live for you -- a lot, some, only a little or not at all." Table 8.1 presents the basic distributions of the answers to these questions by race.

Two points stand out immediately from this table. First, on five of the seven ratings, black respondents were less positive in their ratings than were white respondents. Whites and blacks were identical in their ratings of the Catholic Church and religious leaders in Boston -- a particularly interesting fact, since the majority of blacks are Protestant. Second, for both blacks and whites, the two elected institutions -- the Mayor and the City Council -- were rated significantly lower than others.

In interpreting the latter point, it is important to recall that these data were collected in the spring of 1981 when the Mayor and City Council were much in the news with respect to their efforts to raise money for city services, particularly fire fighters and police officers. There was considerable criticism of both in the media regarding the way the city's problems were being handled. The timing of the survey may have produced a more negative rating of the Mayor and the City Council than would have been attained at another point in time. However, it is likely that the basic ordering of the ratings would have been the same in any case.

TABLE 8.1

## PERCEPTIONS OF BOSTON INSTITUTIONS BY RACE

Percent who say the following institutions have done "a lot" or "some"  
to make Boston a better place to live:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Boston newspapers	50%	60%
Boston television stations	55%	65%
The Mayor	31%	39%
The Boston City Council	35%	46%
The Boston business community	55%	68%
Religious leaders in Boston	60%	60%
Catholic Church in Boston	58%	58%

All black/white differences are statistically significant except for ratings of religious leaders and the Catholic church.

Table 8.2 presents the same ratings, this time by neighborhood area. The data in this table suggest that neighborhood may be a better way to understand the ratings than race. For example, East Boston, South Boston, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan residents all gave the Mayor approximately equal ratings. Since the racial compositions of those neighborhoods differ markedly, it seems evident that the racial composition of the neighborhoods does not explain the ratings.

In looking at the ratings of City Council, the lowest marks came from Jamaica Plain and the South End, while the highest marks for the City Council came from East Boston and South Boston. Again, it is hard to see a racial pattern in those responses. Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan ratings came near the city average.

With respect to newspapers, Roxbury residents were on the low end of the continuum; but the lowest ratings came from Hyde Park.

The dynamics may have been similar, though the content differed, with respect to the ratings of Boston's television stations. The ratings from Roxbury again were close to the bottom; but the people of South Boston were even more critical of Boston's television stations. In contrast, East Boston residents were distinctively positive about the contributions of Boston television stations. The residents of Dorchester-Mattapan were not too far behind them.

The ratings of the contributions of religious leaders and the Catholic Church also do not tend to break down along racial lines, though it seems that the concentration of Catholics in a neighborhood played some role in the way the contributions of the Catholic Church were rated.

The one rating in Table 8.2 that did seem related to race was that of the contribution of the business community. The residents of the three areas

TABLE 8.2

## RATINGS OF SELECTED BOSTON INSTITUTIONS BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Percent who say the following have done "a lot" or "some" to make Boston a better place to live:

	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles-town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston-Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester - Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale - W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
The Mayor	33%	39%	34%	40%	47%	43%	29%	32%	30%	47%	39%
The City Council	62%	41%	66%	36%	29%	43%	26%	39%	41%	54%	42%
Boston newspapers	62%	55%	58%	60%	53%	70%	66%	47%	54%	55%	43%
Boston television stations	72%	64%	41%	65%	66%	74%	56%	48%	66%	62%	66%
The Boston business community	65%	70%	65%	62%	48%	71%	61%	56%	56%	77%	71%
Religious leaders in Boston	58%	54%	64%	48%	53%	52%	58%	67%	64%	71%	60%
Catholic Church in Boston	62%	46%	76%	37%	37%	48%	59%	48%	70%	68%	63%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.



with the most significant minority populations -- South End, Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan -- were least likely to perceive that the business community had contributed to their quality of life.

We also looked at these ratings by education and age; and there were some important associations. First, less educated Boston residents, particularly whites, were more positively disposed toward the City Council than those who were more educated. The same tendency could be found with respect to the ratings of the contributions of the religious leaders in general and the Catholic church to the quality of life in Boston. Also, it probably should be noted that college-educated blacks were distinctively positive about the contributions of the business community in Boston, though the sample of such respondents was small.

With respect to age, younger respondents were somewhat more positive about the newspapers than were older respondents. On the other hand, older respondents, particularly whites, tended to rate the contribution of the Catholic Church and religious leaders in general more highly than those who were younger.

Additional questions were asked regarding media characterization of neighborhoods, which further illuminate some of the preceding data. People were asked whether the image of the neighborhood presented in the media was more favorable, less favorable, or about right in the context of the way the neighborhood actually was (Table 8.5). The people of South Boston felt most strongly that their neighborhood was presented in an unfavorable light by the media. Their views were followed only slightly by the ratings of the people in Roxbury and Charlestown. Feeling that the media did not do justice to the neighborhoods was not race related.

TABLE 8.3

## RATINGS OF SELECTED BOSTON INSTITUTIONS BY EDUCATION AND RACE

Percent who say the following institutions have done "a lot" or "some" to make Boston a better place to live:

<u>City Council</u>	Race	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	50% (N=35)*	69% (N=83)
High school graduation	35% (N=66)	49% (N=199)
College experience	25% (N=54)	41% (N=394)
<u>The Catholic Church</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	62% (N=35)*	80% (N=83)
High school graduation	57% (N=66)	70% (N=199)
College experience	59% (N=54)	47% (N=394)
<u>Religious Leaders</u>		
<u>Education</u>		
Less than high school graduation	68% (N=35)*	72% (N=83)
High school graduation	59% (N=66)	71% (N=199)
College experience	59% (N=54)	53% (N=394)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The following black/white differences are statistically significant: the ratings of City Council for the high school graduation and college experience groups and the rating of the Catholic Church for the high school graduation group. Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences of education groups.

TABLE 8.4

## RATINGS OF SELECTED BOSTON INSTITUTIONS BY AGE AND RACE

Percent who say the following institutions have done "a lot" or "some" to make Boston a better place to live:

	Race	
	Black	White
<u>Boston Newspapers</u>		
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	51% (N=47)*	67% (N=239)
30 - 50	51% (N=74)	57% (N=242)
Over 50	49% (N=32)*	53% (N=188)
<u>The Catholic Church</u>		
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	59% (N=47)*	53% (N=239)
30 - 50	48% (N=74)	51% (N=242)
Under 50	80% (N=32)*	78% (N=188)
<u>Religious Leaders</u>		
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	64% (N=47)*	52% (N=239)
30 - 50	53% (N=74)	61% (N=242)
Over 50	73% (N=32)	73% (N=188)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The black/white difference in the perception for the Boston newspapers is statistically significant in the under 30 age group only. Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences in age categories.

TABLE 8.5

## PERCEPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIA COVERAGE BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

	Percent who say the image of their neighborhood presented in the media is:										
	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles- town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester- Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
More favorable than it actually is	12%	11%	2%	14%	15%	4%	10%	9%	6%	21%	7%
Less favorable than it actually is	35%	57%	74%	19%	38%	28%	44%	60%	47%	19%	30%
About right	<u>53%</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>67%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>68%</u>	<u>46%</u>	<u>31%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>63%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent who say media attention to neighborhood problems is:											
Too much	9%	40%	14%	10%	4%	5%	3%	15%	12%	5%	11%
Too little	43%	33%	47%	35%	48%	44%	50%	62%	59%	45%	43%
About right	<u>48%</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>55%</u>	<u>48%</u>	<u>51%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>29%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>46%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

A difference between South Boston and Roxbury showed up when respondents were asked if the media paid too much attention to the neighborhood or not enough. Respondents in the black community felt that their neighborhood areas were neglected in the media, that there was not enough attention paid to the problems and issues in those neighborhoods. Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan stood out from all other neighborhoods in this respect. South Boston residents, in contrast, did not want more media attention. Thus, while the perception that the neighborhood has been portrayed unfairly in the media is by no means more a black or a white problem in Boston, there is some basis for thinking that the problem of neglect of neighborhood problems is a race-related perception.

Another set of questions asked whether people thought they received their money's worth in city services in their neighborhoods. Table 8.6 shows that black respondents were much less likely to feel that their neighborhood was getting its fair value in services than were white respondents. However, once again, breaking the responses down by neighborhood makes the pattern seem less a racial issue than Table 8.6 would suggest. While the responses in Roxbury were critical, the people who live in Jamaica Plain were equally critical. South Boston residents were very positive about city services; but so were people in the South End and downtown area (Table 8.7).

Finally, looking at Table 8.8 provides a kind of perspective that is important for Bostonians to have. As is the case with some other questions asked in the survey, we were able to replicate a question asked in 1970. Table 8.8 shows that a decade ago, like today, blacks were less likely than whites to think they received their money's worth in city services. The table also shows that the ratings of city service improved. For both blacks and whites there has been a significant improvement in the sense that the city is delivering adequate services for a tax dollar.

TABLE 8.6  
SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES BY RACE

Considering their neighborhood services, percent who say:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
They get their money's worth	30%	44%
They do not get their money's worth	70%	56%
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white perceptions of services difference is statistically significant.

TABLE 8. 7

## SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES BY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Considering their neighborhood services, percent who say:

	East Boston (N=45)*	Charles- town (N=66)	South Boston (N=49)*	Central (N=157)	South End (N=43)*	Allston- Brighton (N=105)	Jamaica Plain (N=58)	Roxbury (N=65)	Dorchester- Mattapan (N=169)	Roslindale- W. Roxbury (N=75)	Hyde Park (N=73)
They get their money's worth	30%	32%	41%	56%	23%	39%	39%	35%	32%	52%	58%
They do not get their money's worth	<u>70%</u>	<u>68%</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>44%</u>	<u>77%</u>	<u>61%</u>	<u>61%</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>68%</u>	<u>48%</u>	<u>42%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\*Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between areas.

TABLE 8.8

## SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES BY RACE, 1970\* AND 1981

Percent who say they get their money's worth in neighborhood services:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
1970	12% (N=100)	23% (N=385)
1981	30% (N=156)	44% (N=683)

\* Source: Citizen Attitude Survey, 1970.

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant, so are differences between years within racial group.



In conclusion, as has often been the case in studies of black and white perceptions, on average, blacks were somewhat less likely than whites to see the institutions in Boston as having made a contribution to improving life for them. However, further analysis suggests that the division does not cut very clearly along racial lines. We have not carried out a complete analysis of the factors associated with perceptions of these institutions. More such analyses can be done at a later date. However, the analysis we have done suggests that race should not be a guiding principle in thinking about or trying to understand the way Boston residents see their institutions. It is true that blacks and those in neighborhood areas with significant black populations did tend to be more critical of the business community. However, with that exception, the way people felt about the institutions considered can be better understood by looking at non-racial factors.

## CHAPTER 9

### PERCEPTIONS OF THE BOSTON SCENE

When we designed the survey questionnaire, we emphasized questions to which people would know the answers from their own direct experience. Although it is true that the ratings of schools and the estimates of police response time do not strictly meet that test, most of the data presented in this report reflect people's own living situations and their own feelings, topics about which most respondents are quite knowledgeable. However, we also felt it was essential to get some reading on the way people perceived those broader, more general aspects of the Boston social and cultural environment likely to affect their lives. Thus, we asked some questions which necessarily went beyond people's own direct experiences. Ratings of medical facilities, job opportunities, race relations and even the quality of restaurants available necessarily are based on some combination of direct experience and impressions from friends, acquaintances and media sources. These impressions are real. It is reasonable to think that perceptions of the opportunities and options available in the environment affects the way a person feels about a place. However, it also is important to realize those perceptions may not be accurate.

The salience of that introduction is that in some ways the data in Table 9.1 present a picture of black-white differences that is sharper than one would have expected from the data preceding this chapter. Respondents were asked to rate the Boston area on eight dimensions deemed salient to the quality of life. With the exception of "race relations", the questions were about opportunities and facilities available to the respondent and his or her family.

TABLE 9.1  
 RATING OF SELECTED BOSTON FEATURES BY RACE

Percent who rate the following as "very good" or "good":

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Medical facilities	81%	95%
Job opportunities	37%	60%
Cost and quality of housing	14%	25%
Race relations	12%	17%
Outdoor recreation	30%	54%
Cultural activities	62%	90%
Restaurants, lounges, clubs	62%	84%
Educational opportunities	47%	85%

All black/white differences shown are statistically significant except the rating of race relations.

It can be seen that on every dimension except the rating of race relations, blacks were significantly less likely than whites to rate the situation in Boston as "good" or "very good". Possibly that statement alone was predictable from preceding data. For most of the measures presented in this report, blacks were somewhat more critical of their situation than were whites. However, while one should be cautious about using data such as these to reach absolute conclusions, the size of the discrepancies in Table 9.1 does contrast with other data.

With respect to job opportunities, housing, outdoor recreation and educational opportunity, whites were nearly twice as likely as blacks to rate their situation as "good" or better. Over half of the white respondents rated the situation as "good" or better on six of the eight dimensions considered; only housing and race relations fell below that point. On half of the items, over 80 percent of white respondents rated the situation as "good". In contrast, the majority of blacks gave a "good" or better rating to only three of the dimensions. Indeed, the only glimmer of consensus in the table is that blacks and whites clearly agreed that race relations were not good in Boston. However, even there, when the full distribution of responses is examined, blacks were significantly more likely to characterize the situation as "poor" than were whites.

We looked at the possibility that other variables were accounting for, or at least exacerbating, the differences observed in Table 9.1. For example, we thought that housing opportunities would be affected by income: which is true. However, Table 9.2 shows that the racial difference in ratings was not mainly due to income. If anything, whites with low incomes rated the housing situation as better than blacks with high incomes.

TABLE 9.2

## RATING OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN BOSTON BY INCOME AND RACE

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 Percent who rate housing opportunities as "very good" or "good":
 

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<u>Income</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Under \$15,000	11% (N=74)	22% (N=290)
\$15,000 or more	19% (N=61)	28% (N=313)

---

The black/white difference in the under \$15,000 income category is statistically significant.

The importance of race is perhaps even clearer with respect to perceived job opportunities. We thought that people who were not employed might see the job situation as more limited than those employed; which is true. However, Table 9.3 shows that whites not employed rated job opportunities as significantly higher than blacks who were working.

With respect to education, blacks and whites who had not finished high school rated job opportunities at about an equal level. However, among those with a high school education or more education, whites were twice as likely as blacks to rate the job opportunities as "good" (Table 9.4).

We thought having school-aged children might affect a person's need for, and therefore perceptions of, educational opportunities. There was some tendency for this to be true, at least for whites. However, again, the difference between black and white responses was much more important than any difference associated with having children in Table 9.5.

Finally, we thought that level of education might affect the perception of race relations. That is true. The more education a person had, the worse he or she rated the racial situation in Boston. In this case, the differences in perceptions between blacks and whites were somewhat less than for other dimensions. Nonetheless, the direction of difference between blacks and whites was maintained at all levels of education (Table 9.6).

It is difficult to look at the data in Table 9.1 and not conclude that blacks in Boston feel disadvantaged in comparison to whites. There can be almost no question that they see the features of the city which are relevant to their living as less "good" for them than is the case for white residents of Boston.

These data do look somewhat different from data seen elsewhere in this report. We have seen that there is some difference in the level of job

TABLE 9.3

## RATING OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN BOSTON BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND BY RACE

Percent who rate job opportunities in Boston as "very good" or "good":

<u>Employment Status</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Working full or part time	41% (N=106)	63% (N=451)
Not working	27% (N=50)	55% (N=232)

The black/white differences shown are statistically significant. Also, within the white racial category the difference between those working and not working is statistically significant.

TABLE 9.4

## RATING OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN BOSTON BY EDUCATION AND RACE

Percent who rate job opportunities in Boston as "very good" or "good":

<u>Education</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Less than high school graduation	41% (N=35)*	44% (N=83)
High school graduation	33% (N=66)	62% (N=199)
College experience	39% (N=54)	62% (N=394)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The black/white differences are statistically significant in the high school graduation and college experience groups.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between education groups.



TABLE 9.5

RATING OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN BOSTON BY  
WHETHER OR NOT HAVE MINOR CHILDREN AND BY RACE

Percent who rate educational opportunities for themselves and for their families as "very good" or good":

<u>Minor children in household</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Yes	47% (N=73)	73% (N=151)
No	46% (N=80)	89% (N=514)

The black/white difference shown is statistically significant.

TABLE 9.6

## RATING OF QUALITY OF RACE RELATIONS IN BOSTON BY EDUCATION AND RACE

Percent who rate race relations in Boston as "very good" or "good":

<u>Education</u>	<u>Race</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Less than high school graduation	21% (N=35)*	27% (N=83)
High school graduation	16% (N=66)	19% (N=199)
College experience	1% (N=54)	14% (N=394)

\* Percentages based on fewer than 50 cases should be interpreted with special caution.

The black/white difference in the college experience group is statistically significant.

Use Table A3 as guide to significance of differences between education groups.

satisfaction between blacks and whites. However, the differences observed in people's ratings of their own job situations would not seem to lead to the kind of difference in perception of job opportunities shown in Table 9.1.

We have seen that blacks were more likely than whites to report significant housing maintenance problems, though in other respects the ratings of blacks and whites of their housing situations were not very different. Although the ratings of the housing situation in Boston were among the less discrepant measures in Table 9.1, the difference still seemed larger than the reality would lead one to expect.

Although educational opportunity clearly encompasses more than the public schools, particularly for those who do not have children, the similarity of black and white perceptions of the educational opportunities for children was a clear pattern in Chapter 6. From there, one would not expect the striking difference in response observed in Table 9.1.

Perhaps the point can be most graphically made by looking at the data in Table 9.7. Respondents were asked whether the neighborhood area in which they lived was racially mixed or not. If they said it was mixed, we asked how different racial groups "got along" in the neighborhood. Identical proportions of blacks and whites, roughly 85 percent, who lived in racially mixed neighborhoods said that people of different backgrounds in their neighborhoods got along "very well" or "well enough". The answers in that table, where blacks and whites reported on their own concrete living situations in very similar and generally very positive terms, contrasts markedly with their overall ratings of race relations, which were very negative.

The data throughout this report have indicated that on average blacks reported conditions as somewhat negative in comparison with whites, though

TABLE 9.7

HOW RACIAL GROUPS GET ALONG IN RACIALLY MIXED NEIGHBORHOODS  
BY RACE

	Race	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>
Percent who live in racially mixed neighborhoods	62% (N=156)	43% (N=683)
Percent in racially mixed neighborhoods who feel different racial groups get along "very well" or "well enough"	85% (N=91)	84% (N=288)

---

The black/white difference in the percent living in racially mixed neighborhoods is statistically significant.

race was not always the best way to explain or understand those average differences. The data in this chapter, however, suggest that blacks feel less satisfied than whites with their opportunities and their perceptions of the facilities and social climate in Boston. It is a reasonable hypothesis that such a difference in the perception of opportunities constitutes a major source of difference in the overall quality of life for blacks and whites in Boston.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

In preceding chapters, we have discussed the data from the survey on a topic-by-topic basis. In this final chapter, we attempt to take a broader view and look at some of the more general conclusions that can be reached from these data.

Whether the similarities or differences between blacks and whites stand out depends on which data one chooses to emphasize. Some of the findings show ways in which black and white residents in Boston have similar problems and concerns. Some examples:

- 1) Although the rate at which black families use public schools is higher than the rate at which white families in Boston use public schools, the feelings and perceptions of black and white respondents regarding the quality of public schools in Boston are not dissimilar. Whereas a decade ago blacks were more critical of the public schools than white Boston residents, a major decline in ratings by white residents has erased this difference. Although the perception that there has been some improvement in the Boston public schools in the last ten years is slightly more common in the black community than in the white community, the overall perception in both groups is that the public school system has deteriorated in the last decade. Blacks were more likely than whites to cite an improvement in educational opportunities as an effect of busing. Whites were more likely to cite a changed racial composition in the system and possibly increased safety problems in schools. However, the perceptions of black and white respondents regarding the effect of busing tended to be much more similar than different.

Overall, the main difference in orientation to the public schools between blacks and whites in Boston was the historically-based greater

reliance of white families on Catholic parochial schools. In addition, white respondents rated schools negatively in the context of previous positive ratings, while black negative ratings have a long history. Even so, a majority of white families with children use the Boston public schools for at least a portion of the education of their children. Altogether, blacks and whites should have a common interest in making things better.

2) The problems of the cost of housing and the size of housing available to people in Boston were unrelated to race. Black and white respondents were about equally concerned with these problems. Moreover, there has been some improvement over the past decade for both blacks and whites in their sense of paying a fair price for their housing.

3) Unemployment, the state of not being employed when one wants to be, is only slightly more common among black adults than it is among white adults. Primarily, being unemployed in Boston is related to education. For both blacks and whites who have not finished high school, approximately one in five adults who wants to be working, is not. However, for those who have finished high school, the apparent rate of unemployment is around five percent and is unrelated to racial background.

4) The perception of having been discriminated against, either with respect to housing or with respect to employment, is only slightly related to racial background. Obviously, blacks were more likely than whites to feel discriminated against because of race; but whites felt themselves to be victims for other reasons. The incidence of such perceptions was almost as common in the white community as in the black community. This generalization should not minimize concern about discrimination against blacks. However, it points out that unfair practices with respect to employment and housing do not solely, or even primarily, affect blacks.

In each of the above respects, while there may be a perception that the issues are race related, in fact there was little significant race-related difference. Rather these were issues and concerns which occur with about equal frequency in both the black and white communities.

On the other hand, if one wanted to emphasize differences, there were numerous examples in the report of issues that clearly were related to race.

1) Blacks more than whites consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the shopping, quality of stores, restaurants and recreational facilities available in their neighborhood areas. A breakdown by neighborhood showed that there were neighborhood areas which were predominantly white where these concerns were expressed as well. Nonetheless, the physical condition of and facilities in neighborhoods probably were of more concern to blacks than whites in Boston.

2) Clearly, the physical condition of housing in which people live was more a problem for blacks than whites, though it also is worth noting that the perceived physical rated condition of rental housing in Boston has improved significantly in the past decade for both blacks and whites.

3) Crime was more often cited by white respondents than black respondents as the most important problem in Boston. The idea that whites are distinctively victims of crime, even the victims of predominantly black offenders, is not uncommon. In fact, when questions were asked directly about crime and fear of crime, however, the black community in Boston reported more problems than the white population.

The burglary rate reported by blacks was nearly twice that reported by white households. Blacks over 30 cited burglary as a more serious problem than whites. Blacks also reported feeling less safe on their neighborhood streets than white respondents. There were neighborhood areas that were



predominantly white where the levels of reported fear and concern about crime approximated the levels reported by Roxbury and Dorchester-Mattapan respondents. Whites were more concerned about assault than blacks. Moreover, the data did not support the hypothesis that blacks felt distinctively uncomfortable or unwelcome in public places in Boston. However, overall the data suggest that crime and fear of crime probably affect black residents more than white residents of Boston.

4) It has been the case for a long time, in Boston and elsewhere, that black residents rated the quality of their police service less favorably than white residents. Although the discrepancy was less in 1981 than a decade ago, that pattern persists today in Boston.

5) Although the rate of actually having a job did not differ much by race for those who had graduated from high school, there was a clear pattern for blacks to be less satisfied with their jobs than their white counterparts. Feelings of underemployment, feeling one could hold a better job or that one had unused skills, were prevalent in both the black and white communities. Females and young workers were particularly likely to have those feelings. However, after one controls for these various factors, it still appears that being black is associated with a sense of reduced job satisfaction in Boston workers. Moreover, those differences were most apparent among males, among those who were middle aged and among those who had gone to college.

Even where there are these clear average differences, there still is generally a basis for coalition and cooperation:

1) Although Roxbury stood out as the place where the development of shopping and other facilities was most at issue, people in East Boston, the South End, and Jamaica Plain were nearly as dissatisfied with nearby stores.

While the "way property is kept up" is most a problem to Roxbury residents, over a third of the residents of South Boston, the South End and Dorchester-Mattapan were also dissatisfied with that aspect of their neighborhood. A similar analysis could be made of other neighborhood issues. Neighborhood development or improvement need not be treated as a racially divisive issue.

2) Although housing maintenance problems were cited most often by Roxbury residents, the rates of such problems were not significantly different in Charlestown, South Boston, Central Boston or Allston-Brighton.

3) Crime and police service, if anything, has been more often a priority issue for whites, even though blacks are probably more affected by crime, fear of crime and the quality of police services.

4) Job dissatisfaction is a problem throughout the community at all levels.

In all of the these areas, though on average the rates of problems are related to race, the concerns and problems are found at nearly equal rates in neighborhoods or among groups that are not black.

There is, however, one aspect of the data that clearly is related to race. The strongest race-related differences were in people's sense of the quality of facilities and opportunities available to them in Boston. Black respondents rated the opportunities and options in Boston available to them much lower than did their white counterparts.

There are at least two observations that may help to explain the strength of those differences. First, although there are many important exceptions across all tables, it is difficult to escape the observation that, more often than not, in direct black-white comparisons, blacks came up less satisfied. This cumulative picture may play a critical role in communicating to black residents that the opportunities and facilities available to them are not as good as those available to whites.

In addition, there was a pattern that occurred in our analysis regarding the value of education and income for blacks that may be troublesome. For whites, having a higher income led to being more satisfied with one's housing. However, in the black community, those with incomes over \$15,000 were no more satisfied with their housing than those who had lower incomes.

There was a tendency for increased education to lead to decreased job satisfaction for both blacks and whites. However, if anything, increased education exacerbated the black-white differences in job satisfaction, with well-educated blacks being the most dissatisfied with their work situations.

Blacks with college experience were distinctively likely to report having experienced job discrimination in the past five years. Blacks with incomes over \$15,000 were as likely to have perceived themselves to have been victims of housing discrimination as those blacks with lower incomes and, indeed, as those whites with incomes under \$15,000. Obtaining increased educational credentials and earning more money, the "traditional American ways" to solve problems and improve the quality of life, did not seem to be effective as ways of improving quality of life for blacks in Boston. Such a perception may play a role in black ratings of the opportunities and facilities available to them here.

In conclusion, we have laid out the data in this report describing the subjective side of the quality of life in Boston from a black and a white perspective.

There is not a one-to-one correspondence between the way that people rate their situations and the objective conditions in which they live. A concrete example discussed earlier is that people's fear of crime is only slightly related to their actual risk of victimization. In other areas, the sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction need to be probed further before

one knows why there is dissatisfaction; and before one can prescribe positive steps. These data need to be supplemented, wherever possible, with data about objective conditions. The melding of objective and subjective data is necessary for full problem definition.

From these data alone, however, three important generalizations can be made:

1) There are many salient quality of life problems that are unrelated to race.

2) Even when black residents experience a problem or concern at a higher rate than white residents all problems studied -- with respect to neighborhoods, housing, crime, work or schools -- are shared by both groups. Blacks do not have a monopoly on any problem area. Efforts to ameliorate problems in any area will benefit a broad range of Boston residents.

3) Finally, race relations are considered a problem in Boston. Blacks and whites agree they are not good, though ratings of interracial relations in neighborhoods are much more positive than ratings of the general situation. However, it is important to understand that the quality of race relations is more a problem for blacks than whites.

This observation was very clear in the community discussion groups that were run prior to the survey. The white discussion groups almost totally avoided the topic of race, except when discussing the schools. In contrast, every topic regarding living in Boston quickly turned to race-related matters in the black discussion groups.

The most concrete sign of this from the survey was in the answers to a question about the single most important problem in Boston. As Table 10.1 shows, about 15 percent of the white respondents answered in a way that had something to do with race relations. In contrast, about 30 percent of the black respondents chose race relations as the most important Boston problem.

TABLE 10.1

## MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN BOSTON BY RACE

Percent who mentioned the following as the most important problem in Boston:

	Race	
	Black (N=156)	White (N=683)
Too much crime and fear - not enough protection	21%	27%
Need better municipal services, transit, housing, (excluding schools)	17	17
Need better fiscal administration, tax structure, leadership	11	25
School-related problems	10	11
Health-welfare-employment problems	8	4
Race relations should be improved (includes better human relations in general)	30	15
Other	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%

The black/white difference in mentioning better fiscal administration and in mentioning race relations are statistically significant.

That very fact lies at the heart of the problem and the challenge. Blacks are a minority. Efforts to deal with racial tensions or problems that contribute to racial tensions have to rise to the top of the priority list of white as well as black Bostonians if anything is going to happen. In addition, the belief among blacks that their concerns and interests can be given equal, if not priority, status on the city's agenda is probably needed. Blacks were significantly less likely to see Boston's institutions as working to improve their quality of life.

The study cited in the preface to this report graphically documented the common perception in Boston that there was a sense of interracial competition for resources and priority. The basis exists for interracial cooperation in the commonality of needs and concerns. However, for cooperation to occur, there also must be a sense of trust. Perhaps it is the development of that sense of trust that is the greatest, and most important, challenge facing The Boston Committee.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

The following pages describe the procedures used to carry out the survey together with a discussion of reliability.

### Questionnaire Design

It was decided that the principle emphasis of this survey should be the measurement of subjective perceptions. Consistent with this orientation, the project became known as the "Quality of Life in Boston" study. Aspects of life thought to be related to racial background or racial tensions were of particular interest.

The first step was to develop a list of issues or potential problem areas with respect to life in a city. This list was initially developed jointly by the staff of The Boston Committee and the Center for Survey Research. It was refined as a result of review by numerous people in the community. In addition, focussed discussion groups with Boston residents recruited at random were held to provide further insight into the kinds of problems people were concerned about.

Out of this process, the following areas emerged as among the most critical:

- a. The physical condition of, and facilities in or near, neighborhoods
- b. Housing
- c. Public schools
- d. Crime and fear of crime
- e. Police services
- f. Employment and quality of work
- g. Perceived responsiveness of institutions
- h. Perceived availability in Boston of amenities and opportunities that contribute to quality of life.

A standardized survey instrument was developed to tap people's perceptions and feelings in each of these areas. By standardized, we mean a questionnaire which could be administered exactly as worded to all respondents, without amendment or elaboration by interviewers. It is by having such an instrument that we are able to interpret differences in responses as reflecting different life situations.

An initial questionnaire was pretested on a small sample of Boston residents by experienced interviewers. Changes in wording and question order were made on the basis of this experience to generate the final survey instrument. The full questionnaire is reproduced at the end of this appendix.

### Sampling

The basic design of the sample was to collect interviews with approximately 900 adults 18 or older. A sample of that size provides an excellent basis for citywide analysis and would provide a sample of 50 or larger in most of the traditional Boston neighborhoods.\*

The goal of a good sampling procedure is to give every household in the City the same (or at least a known) chance of being selected in the sample. Because the survey was to be conducted by telephone, the 5 percent of the households in Boston without phones did not have a chance to be in a sample. However, with that exception, the procedures did give each household in the

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\* In order to increase the samples in two small neighborhoods, Hyde Park and Charlestown, households were selected at twice and four times the rate of the rest of the city respectively. Without such a procedure, the sample sizes in those areas would have been too small for reliable analysis. When combining samples from those areas with those in the rest of the city, appropriate weighting factors are required to return them to their proper proportion of the entire city. Roslindale, West Roxbury, North End and Mattapan are four neighborhood areas for which the samples are not large enough for reliable figures. Data for these areas need to be combined with others when looking at a geographic variation in response.



City of Boston a known chance of selection.

If one were to attempt to draw a sample of households from a telephone book, three groups would be omitted: those without phones, those who have chosen to have unlisted numbers and those who have moved into the city since the most recent directory was compiled. A procedure called Random Digit Dialing includes those with unlisted phones and those who are not in the directory at the same rate as all other households in a telephone sample, though of course it cannot include people who have no phones.

A two-stage design was carried out. First, all exchanges (the three digits at the beginning of every telephone number) which serve any numbers at all in Boston were listed. Then, within each exchange, four digit numbers, randomly selected, were chosen to complete the telephone number. By choosing the same number of random numbers within each exchange, every household with a working residential number is given the same chance of selection. As noted, Hyde Park and Charlestown numbers were selected at a higher rate.

#### Field Procedures

Interviewing was carried out by a team of carefully trained survey interviewers working out of a telephone facility at the Center for Survey Research, located in the downtown campus of the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

The actual interviewing proceeded in three phases. First, interviewers had to identify residential addresses in the sample. When using a Random Digit Dialed sample, there is no advance information about where any particular selected number leads. The interviewer simply dials a number which could be any one of five types:

1. A non-working number

2. The number of business, commercial or other places, not a private residence
3. A public pay phone
4. A residential number outside the city of Boston. Some exchanges serve households both in Boston and in adjacent towns. Only households located within the Boston city limits were eligible to be interviewed.
5. A residential number in the city of Boston.

Interviewers called numbers at random to ascertain into which of the above categories they fell. If someone answered the phone, the interviewers' first task was to find out whether the number did lead to a household within the Boston city limits. If it did not, the number was simply dropped from the sample.

If no one answered the phone, interviewers called back a minimum of ten times at different times of the day and on different days to try and obtain an answer. If there was no answer, there were three possibilities: the number was residential, but there was no one at home at the times we called; the number was a pay phone; the number was a nonresidential number of some other type that for one of several reasons it was never answered.

When a number was never answered after repeated calls, we made an effort to contact the phone company and ascertain whether or not the number was a working residential number in Boston. In the majority of cases we were able to find out; but in some cases the status was never determined.

It is important to note that once the number was selected no substitutions were made. Every effort was made to reach each selected number.

When an interviewer found a working residential number leading to a household within Boston, his or her next task was to identify the particular adult within the household that was to be interviewed. There was no discretion in this selection, either on the part of respondents or interviewers. Rather,

a table stamped on each coversheet provided for a random selection of adults based on the number of adults found to be in a household.

The interviewer first ascertained how many persons 18 years of age or older resided in the household. From that listing, the table designated a specific adult to be the respondent based on age (the oldest adult, second oldest adult, etc.). Once that designation was made, it was the interviewers' task to find a time to reach that particular person and carry out the extended interview. Once again, no substitutions were ever made. At least ten calls were made to reach hard-to-find respondents.

It should be noted that since only one adult per household was interviewed, the probability of any adult being the actual respondent varied with household size. Individuals in single adult households had three times the chance of being the respondent as did the adults in three-adult households. During analysis, it is important to weight answers by the number of adults in a household in order to compensate for this fact.

Once the interviewer reached the designated respondent, the purposes of the study were explained fully. Interviewers also assured respondents that their cooperation was voluntary, that interview responses would be confidential and that respondents could skip any question they did not want to answer.

Once all respondent questions about the study had been answered, the interviewer proceeded to administer the standardized survey instrument. Interviewer procedures included asking questions exactly as worded, probing non-directively in the event that a complete, adequate answer did not result from the initial question and recording answers given by respondents verbatim when respondents were answering in their own words. Adherence to these and other generally accepted survey principles were monitored on a continuing basis throughout the survey data collection process.

## Field Results

The accompanying table shows the disposition of the 5,530 sample addresses. Of these, all but about 160 were successfully screened; that is, about 97 percent (see Table A1).

Of those that were screened, slightly over 70 percent were not working residential numbers in the City of Boston. Most numbers dialed in any random dialing procedure are out of service. Business numbers and numbers out of Boston were the other large categories.

We made the assumption that those unresolved numbers were ineligible at the same rate as those which were screened, yielding an estimate that our sample consisted of 1,499 residential numbers in Boston. From these, 908 interviews were completed. The table estimates that we completed interviews in 61 percent of the eligible households in our sample. Twenty-seven percent of the sample refused to be interviewed; and another 12 percent were not interviewed for other reasons.

It is worth noting that only 6 percent of the sample was not interviewed because we could not reach the respondent, a fact that reflects the effort made to contact eligible respondents. Another 3 percent were estimated to be among those in households where we never reached anyone at all. Thus availability played a relatively small role in non-response.

## Reliability of the Sample

Any sample survey has four different potential sources of error: 1) the sampling strategy does not give everyone in the population a chance of selection; 2) the sample selected varies by chance in certain characteristics from the population as a whole; 3) the people for whom an interview is not completed are different from those who are interviewed; and 4) error occurs within the question and answer process. Let us discuss what we know about these sources

TABLE A1  
FIELD RESULTS

Number selected	5530	
Number screened	5367	
Percent screened	97%	
<u>Screening Results</u>		
Not a working number	2489	
Business, commercial	1201	
Outside of Boston	209	
Group quarters	8	
Known pay phone	8	
Residential number in Boston	<u>1452</u>	
Total screened	5367	
Estimated residential numbers in Boston	(1452 + 47*) =	1499
Interviews	908	
Non-interviews	591	
Percent eligible interviewed	61%	
<u>Reasons for non-interviews</u>		<u>Percent of Total Sample</u>
Refusals	391	26
Not at home after repeated calls	89	6
Illness	46	3
Other (includes language for which no available interviewer could translate)	18	1
Estimated from unscreened	<u>47</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	591	39%

\* Estimated from unscreened sample.

of error one at a time. As with any kind of information, it is important for users to be aware of the kind of error that may exist in the data. This awareness should not produce skepticism of the findings but should insure that the data are not misused or relied on in ways that are not appropriate.

We knew in advance that those households not having telephones would not have a chance to be in the sample. As noted, only five percent of the housing units in Boston do not have a telephone. Those who are single individuals, more transient and who have low incomes are among those most likely not to have telephone service.

Sampling error is the term statisticians use for the kind of error which occurs because information is collected only about a sample of the population rather than every member of the population. If one flips a coin, even if it is a fair coin, it is possible that the number of heads and tails obtained will not be exactly even. This is especially true if only a small number of flips occur. The more times the coin is flipped, the more likely it is that the percentage of heads will be nearly 50 percent.

In essence, each sample selection provides new information about the characteristics of the people who live in Boston, like another flip of the coin. The more selections that are made, the larger the sample, the more likely it is that the sample will have the same characteristics as the population from which it is drawn.

Table A2 is a generalized table that gives some idea of how much error one can expect as a result of sampling. It can be seen that when figures are based on the entire sample on 900 cases, there is a very small margin of error. With 95 percent confidence, percentage figures will be within one to three percentage points of the sample estimates. However, when one wants figures for sub-groups, for example, by neighborhood, for the elderly, for homeowners

or families with children, the samples are, of course, less than 900 and there is more potential margin of error around estimates. The sample was designed to provide adequate samples for most of the sub-groups of analytic importance. However, there are a few neighborhood areas, as well as some other analytically interesting groupings -- e.g., Spanish or Asian -- for which samples are not large enough for reliable estimates. When the survey provides fewer than 30 cases for a particular group, there is so much potential error in the figures that probably numbers should not be presented at all; they are not presented in this report.

There is a further consideration. It is important to know whether a difference between two values obtained in the sample is "statistically significant." That is, would the difference still exist if other samples of the population were interviewed or if the whole population were surveyed? Calculation of statistical significance depends both on the size of the groups being compared and on the percentages obtained. Table A3 shows the sampling errors of differences. It can be used as follows:

Suppose 28 percent of the 156 black households in the sample contain one person; while that is true of 36 percent of the 683 white households. The table says that when comparing groups sized 150 and 500, with proportions near 70 percent, a difference of about 9 percentage points is needed for statistical confidence. The difference is only 8 percentage points (36 minus 28). This means that a difference of this magnitude would arise through chance fluctuations or because this particular sample was selected slightly more than 5 times in 100. Although it may be a real difference, based on these samples alone we cannot have statistical confidence that the difference in the rate of single person households is reliable.

TABLE A2

## CONFIDENCE RANGES FOR VARIABILITY DUE TO SAMPLING\*

Chances are 95 in 100 that population figure lies in range defined by + number indicated, given percentage of sample with characteristic and number of sample cases on which percentage is based.

<u>Sample Size</u>	<u>Percentage of sample with characteristic</u>				
	<u>5/95</u>	<u>10/90</u>	<u>20/80</u>	<u>30/70</u>	<u>50/50</u>
35	.07	.10	.14	.15	.17
50	.06	.08	.11	.13	.14
75	.05	.07	.09	.11	.12
100	.04	.06	.08	.09	.10
200	.03	.04	.06	.06	.07
300	.03	.03	.05	.05	.06
500	.02	.03	.04	.04	.04
900	.01	.02	.03	.03	.03

\* This table describes variability due to sampling, rather than collecting data on every population member. Errors due to non-response or reporting errors are not reflected in this table.



TABLE A3

PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCES NEEDED FOR 95 PERCENT CONFIDENCE LEVEL  
WHEN COMPARING PERCENTAGE FIGURES FOR TWO GROUPS

For Percentages Around 50 Percent

<u>Number of Interviews</u>	<u>Number of Interviews</u>						
	<u>30</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>900</u>
30	26	24	20	20	20	19	19
50		22	19	18	18	15	14
100			16	14	14	11	11
150				13	12	9	9
200					11	8	8
500						6	6

For Percentages Around 30 or 70 Percent

<u>Number of Interviews</u>	<u>Number of Interviews</u>						
	<u>30</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>900</u>
30	24	21	19	18	18	17	17
50		20	18	17	16	14	13
100			14	13	12	10	10
150				12	11	9	8
200					10	8	7
500						6	5

For Percentages Around 10 or 90 Percent

<u>Number of Interviews</u>	<u>Number of Interviews</u>						
	<u>30</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>900</u>
30	15	14	12	12	12	11	11
50		13	12	11	10	9	9
100			9	9	8	7	6
150				7	7	6	5
200					7	5	5
500						4	3

A final note of caution regarding sampling error: Because sampling errors can be calculated, it is tempting to treat them as if they were the only source of error in data. However, when sample sizes are relatively large, it is quite common for other sources of error -- such as nonresponse or reporting error -- to be much more important sources of error than normal sampling variability. These figures should not be treated as the only or even the main source of error in survey estimates.

Nonresponse is a problem for survey estimates because nonrespondents are likely to be different from those who do respond. In particular, in this survey, 27 percent of those persons who were asked to cooperate in the survey refused to do so. It is not unlikely at all that the people who were not interested in answering questions about the quality of life in Boston were somewhat different from the population as a whole.

Necessarily, we do not know very much about the people who were not interviewed. One possible way of assessing nonresponse bias is to look at the characteristics of the sample. For comparison purposes, we used descriptive data from another recent survey carried out by the Center for which the response rate was nearly 80 percent. Note that there are two differences observed. First, the other study was a personal interview survey. Therefore, it includes people who had no telephone. In addition, the response rate was higher in that survey and perhaps non-response was less related to people's feelings about public policy issues.

In many respects, the two samples are very similar (Table A4). Home ownership, race, and income are virtually identical in the two samples. The distribution across neighborhoods is also very close, especially since the area

definitions for the two surveys could not be made identical. However, it is clear that those who had not completed high school were less willing to participate in this survey than others. Two correlated biases, being Catholic and being over 60, also showed up in the final sample distributions. To the extent that the views of these people are different from those who agreed to be interviewed, their views will be underrepresented in the statistics generated from this study.

Finally, it is impossible to assess the amount of response error; that is, the error that comes out of the question and answer process. However, in interpreting the data from a survey like this, it is important to keep in mind that attitude or opinion questions produce only relative answers, not absolute answers. The percentage of people who say they are "very satisfied" or who rate schools "very good" is only meaningful in the context of the way that other people answered the same question. Thus, the data can be used appropriately to say that people in one neighborhood rate their schools better than those in another; or that people with one level of education rate the schools differently than those with some other level of education. However, it generally is not appropriate to say that in some absolute sense the rating given to, say, the schools is either "good" or "not good". Appropriate interpretation of such data is an important part of the analysis.

TABLE A4

## COMPARISON OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS FROM TWO SURVEYS

RACE	Study	
	Quality of Life in Boston	1980 CSR Survey**
Black	17%	18%
White	76	72
Hispanic	3	5
Other	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>RELIGION</u>		
Catholic	56%	64%
Protestant	34	25
Jewish	6	7
Other	2	2
No specific	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>EDUCATION</u>		
Not a high school graduate	15%	26%
High school graduate	32	34
1-3 years college	20	19
College graduate	23	13
Advanced degree	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>HOME TENURE</u>		
Own	29%	30%
Rent	<u>71</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME</u>		
Under \$10,000	35%	37%
\$10,000-19,999	33	34
\$20,000-29,999	21	16
\$30,000 or over	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>SEX</u>		
Male	42%	47%*
Female	<u>58</u>	<u>53*</u>

TABLE A 4 continued

	Study	
	Quality of Life in Boston	1980 CSR Survey**
<u>AGE OF ADULTS</u>		
Under 30	42%	38%
30-59	43	43
60 and over	<u>15</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>NEIGHBORHOOD</u>		
East Boston	5%	7%
Charlestown	2	2
South Boston	6	7
Central	19	16
South End	5	4
Allston-Brighton	13	13
Jamaica Plain	7	7
Roxbury	8	9
Dorchester-Mattapan	20	19
Roslindale-West Roxbury	9	11
Hyde Park	6	5
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

\* Based on all residents of sampled households, not just adults.

\*\*Household personal interview survey of approximately 1200 households in Boston.

## The Questionnaire

The questions that were actually used in the questionnaire are reproduced below, although the questionnaire format and some instructions have been omitted or changed to conserve space and to enhance clarity for the reader.

### Mobility

- A1. How many years have you been living in the Greater Boston area that is - either in the city itself or its suburbs?
- A2. What is the name of the part of Boston you live in now?
- A3. How many years have you been living in (PART OF BOSTON)?
- A5. (IF LESS THAN 5 YEARS) In what city or town was the apartment or house you lived in five years ago? (IF BOSTON, What part of Boston?)

### Neighborhood

- B1. I'd like to ask you more about (PART OF BOSTON). First, in recent years do you think (PART OF BOSTON) has been improving as a place to live, has it gotten worse or has it stayed about the same?
- B2. For you, what are the two best things about (PART OF BOSTON) as a place to live?
- B3. In your opinion, what are the two biggest problems or things you would like changed about (PART OF BOSTON)?
- B4. As you can tell, there are two main kinds of questions we ask. One type, like those you just answered, call for you to answer in your own words. For those, I am writing down your words exactly. For others, we ask you to choose one answer from a list of answers.

For example, in the next questions, I am going to ask about different aspects of your part of Boston. I will want you to choose one of four answers to describe your feelings - very satisfied, generally satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied? Of course, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want to know how you feel.

- B5. How do you feel about the \_\_\_\_\_ are you very satisfied, generally satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?
- a) parks, playgrounds and other recreational facilities in your neighborhood
  - b) way people keep up their property in your neighborhood
  - c) kind and quality of stores near you in your neighborhood
  - d) your access to good shopping areas from your neighborhood
  - e) way people get along with each other in your neighborhood
  - f) public transportation available to you in your neighborhood
  - g) noise level in your neighborhood
  - h) way streets and sidewalks are cleaned and maintained in your neighborhood
  - i) nearby restaurants or places where you can go out for fun in your neighborhood
- B6. Compared to other neighborhoods in Boston and considering what is paid in local taxes, do you feel you generally get your money's worth in neighborhood services, or not?
- B7. I would like you to think for a minute about the stories in the newspapers or on television that concern your neighborhood. Do you think the image of your neighborhood presented in the media is more favorable than it actually is, is it less favorable or is it about right?
- B8. And how about the media attention to neighborhood problems and concerns. Do newspapers and television pay too much attention to problems in your neighborhood, not enough attention, or is media attention to your neighborhood problems and concerns just about right?
- B9. Would you say you really feel part of your neighborhood area, or do you think of it more as just a place to live?
- B10. In the next five years, do you think (PART OF BOSTON) will be a better place to live than it is now, a worse place, or do you expect no change?
- B11. What people or groups do you think will be mainly responsible for what happens in your neighborhood in the next five years?
- B12. Overall, how satisfied are you with your neighborhood as a place to live - would you say very satisfied, generally satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied

## Crime and Safety

- C1. How safe do you feel walking alone on the streets in your neighborhood during the day - very safe, fairly safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?
- C2. How about at night - how safe do or would you feel walking alone on the streets in your neighborhood at night - very safe, fairly safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?
- C3. As you probably know, burglary is the crime of breaking into someone's home to steal something. How much of a problem is burglary in the neighborhood where you live - would you say a big problem, some problem, or almost no problem at all?
- C4. How about snatching purses or robbing people on the street - how much of a problem is that in the neighborhood where you live - a big problem, some problem or almost no problem at all?
- C5. In the past year, since May a year ago, has anyone broken into your home to steal something?
- C6. (IF YES) How many different times did that heppen?
- C7. Are there any neighborhood areas or parts of Boston where you would not go during the daytime because you would be concerned about being attacked or beaten up?
- C8. (IF YES) What areas are those? (Any others?)
- C9. Thinking about where you go and how you generally spend your time in Boston - going to movies, going to work or shopping - how much of a chance do you feel you have of being physically attacked or assaulted- would you say a good chance, some chance, slight chance or no chance at all?

## Police

- D1. From what you know or have heard, when someone in your neighborhood calls the police for help, do the police usually come right away, or do they take quite a while to come?
- D2. And how would you say the police generally treat people in your neighborhood - would you say very well, well enough, not too well or not well at all?
- D3. Overall, how would you rate the police service in your neighborhood area - would you say very good, good, fair or poor?



## Schools

- E1. Now I would like to ask about public schools in Boston. Overall, how would you rate the educational opportunities available to children from your neighborhood area in public schools here in Boston - would you say they are very good, good, fair, or poor?
- E2. Think about the public high schools in Boston. How would you rate the high school education available for young people who want to go to college - would you say it is very good, good, fair or poor?
- E3. How about the public high school education for young people who want to get a job right after they finish high school - would you say the education available for them is very good, good, fair or poor?
- E4. If they try, how much effect are parents able to have on what goes on in their children's schools - would you say a lot, some or very little?
- E5. As you probably know, in 1974 there was a court order which required some children to be assigned to schools outside their neighborhood to produce better racial balance in the public schools. What negative effects, if any, do you think this decision had on the public schools in Boston? (Anything else?)
- E6. What positive effects, if any, do you think this decision had on the public schools in Boston? (Anything else?)
- E7. How do you think the Boston public schools available to children in your neighborhood compare with those available 10 years ago - would you say they are better now, about the same, or worse now than they were 10 years ago?
- E8. (IF WORSE OR BETTER) What is the main way in which you would say they are (worse/better)?

## Housing

- F1. Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about your apartment or house. First, do you own your home, are you renting, or is there some other arrangement? (What?)
- F2. How many rooms do you have in your home, not counting halls or bathrooms?
- F3. Would you say your home is bigger than you really need, is it about right or is it smaller than you need?
- F4. (If smaller) Is that a serious problem for you, or not?

- F5. In some neighborhoods people tell us about problems with the way houses are kept -- things like dangerous floors, poor heating, bad wiring, toilets that don't work, rats and other things. Do you have any problems like that now where you live?
- F6. (IF YES) What kind of problems do you have?
- F7. Do you think (this is a serious problem/these are serious problems), or not?
- F8. Does the cost of your housing seem about right to you for what you are getting, or do you think you pay too much for housing?
- F9. Overall, how satisfied are you with your housing situation - would you say very satisfied, generally satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?
- F10. There has been concern about discrimination in housing over the years - such as people being denied places to rent or buy because of their racial or national background, not being married, having too many children, or being on welfare. Have you ever thought that you were denied housing you could afford in the city of Boston because someone was discriminating against you?
- F11. (IF YES) Has this happened in the last five years?
- F12. (IF NO) Have you been in the housing market actually looking for a house or apartment in Boston in the last five years?
- F13. (IF FELT DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN LAST FIVE YEARS) Tell me what happened (the time that bothered you most)?
- F14. And, what was it about you that they were discriminating against?

#### Employment

- G1. We are also interested in jobs and work. Are you currently employed, working at a job for pay, either full-time or part-time?
- G2. (IF YES) Are you working part-time or full time?
- G3. (IF NOT WORKING) Are you unemployed, laid off, retired, taking care of your house or a student?
- G4. (IF NOT WORKING) Are you (not working/working part-time) mainly because you want it that way or mainly because you cannot find a (full-time) job you want?
- G5. (G5-G11 ASKED IF WORKING) Are you self-employed or do you work for someone else?
- G6. What kind of organization, business or industry do you work for?

- G7. And, what kind of work do you do on your job?
- G8. Do you have some skills from your experience and training that you would like to be using in your work but can't on your present job?
- G9. In addition to any special job training that is needed, what is the lowest level of formal education you feel is needed for a person to hold your present job?
- G10. Given your skills, training and experience, do you have as good a job as you should have or do you think you are qualified for a better job than you now have?
- G11. All in all, how satisfied are you with your present job -- would you say very satisfied, generally satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?
- G12. Some people feel that they lose job opportunities or chances for promotion because of their race, sex, or age. In the last five years, was there a time when you thought you were not hired for a job, or did not get a promotion, mainly because someone discriminated against your race, sex, or age?
- G13. (IF NOT) Have you looked for a job at all during the past five years?
- G14. (IF FELT DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN LAST FIVE YEARS) Tell me what happened (the last time)? (Anything else?)
- G15. What was it about you that you thought kept you from getting the (job/promotion)? (Anything else?)

### Institutions

- H1. We are interested in who you think has contributed to making Boston a better place for you to live. Over the past three years, how much do you feel \_\_\_\_\_ (has/have) done to make Boston a better place to live for you -- would you say a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

The Boston newspapers  
 The Boston television stations  
 The Mayor  
 The Boston City Council  
 The Boston Business Community  
 Religious leaders in Boston  
 The Catholic Church in Boston

- H2. Now, I would like you to rate different features of living in Boston. For example -- how would you rate \_\_\_\_\_ - would you say very good, good, fair or poor?
- a. The medical care facilities available to you in the Boston area
  - b. The job opportunities in the Boston area for people with your skills and interests
  - c. The cost and quality of housing available to you in the city of Boston
  - d. The quality of race relations in the Boston area
  - e. The outdoor recreation such as parks, beaches and other facilities available to you in the Boston area
  - f. The availability in the Boston area of the kind of plays, concerts and museums you like to go to
  - g. The availability in the Boston area of the kind of restaurants, lounges, and clubs you like to go to
  - h. The availability in the Boston area of educational opportunities for you and your family
- H3. Some people have told us they do not feel comfortable at public events or in crowded public places in Boston -- for example, at sports events, concerts, in Quincy Market, or in downtown stores. Obviously, many other people feel very comfortable in such places. How is it for you? How do you feel at public events and in crowds in Boston - would you say very comfortable, generally comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable?
- H4. (IF UNCOMFORTABLE) Can you tell me what it is about such situations that bothers or concerns you most?
- H5. Thinking now about the way blacks, Hispanics, whites and Asians get along - in what ways, if any, has the relationship among different racial and ethnic groups in Boston been a positive part of Boston life for you? (Anything else?)
- H6. In what ways, if any, has the relationship among different racial and ethnic groups in Boston been a problem for you? (Anything else?)
- H7. Thinking of your own neighborhood area, do the people who live in your neighborhood mostly have the same racial background or would you say your neighborhood is racially mixed?
- H8. (IF MIXED) How would you rate the way different racial groups in your neighborhood get along - would you say very well, well enough, not too well, or not well at all?

## Background

- I1. Now, I'd like to ask you a few background questions. First, I need to know how old were you on your last birthday?
- I2. RESPONDENT'S SEX
- I3. OMITTED
- I4. (IF MORE THAN ONE ADULT) Would you tell me about the other adult(s) 18 or older living there with you. I don't need names, but for each adult in the household can you tell me his or her age, sex and relationship to you?
- I5. (OMITTED)
- I6. And are there any children 17 or younger who live with you?
- I7. (IF CHILDREN) How many children 17 or younger live with you?
  - a. Do any of the children go to school?
  - b. (F YES) Do any of the children go to a Boston public school?
  - c. Do any of the children go to a Catholic parochial school?
  - d. Do any of the children go to any other kind of school?
- I8. Which of these best describes your background -- Black, White, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian or something else?
- I9. From what country or part of the world did most of your family come from originally (before moving to the United States)?
- I10. In what religion were you raised -- Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim or something else?
- I11. What was the highest grade of school you completed -- (IF HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE: Did you graduate?)
- I12. Adding up your income from all sources for you (and your family living with you), before deductions for taxes roughly what was (your/your family's) total income in 1980 -- less than \$10,000, \$10,000 to \$19,000, \$20,000 to \$29,000, or \$30,000 or more?
- I13. I have one question to help us determine your chances of being selected in our random sample. Other than the line we're talking on now, is there any other telephone number I could have called to reach you now in your home?
- I14. What is your zip code?
- I15. And finally, one last thing. If you were to pick one problem in Boston that is most important to work on, what would it be?

Thank you very much.