

PERCEPTUAL INDICATORS OF FAMILY WELL-BEING \*

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**ABSTRACT.** A resource exchange theory for the development of perceptual indicators of quality of family life is presented with empirical evidence to test the theory. The theory specifies six classes of resources: love, status, services, information, goods and money, as necessary to maintain some level of life quality. The first three are the most dependent on the particular people involved in the exchange relationship and the interpersonal exchanges of these resources offer opportunities for highest levels of satisfaction. It was hypothesized (1) that feelings about the particularistic resources received from family would significantly contribute to family life satisfaction for men and women; (2) that the order of resource classes on the particularism dimension would correspond to the order of their effectiveness in contributing to family life satisfaction. Results of the study support the theoretical model and hypotheses and suggest that further research with respondents of differing life circumstances is needed. The need for indicators of quality of family life in quality of life research is emphasized.

Despite the importance of the family to people's general sense of well-being (Campbell, 1981), the research on quality of life has concentrated on individual well-being while the study of family well-being and the development of family indicators have been given minimal attention.

We contend that indicators of the well-being of families are needed for assessment of the quality of life on both the individual and societal levels. Over one hundred years ago, Frederic LePlay proposed a theory of social change based on his analyses of the modes of existence of French families (Zimmerman and Frampton, 1935). LePlay believed that a study of the family in relation to the general social structure was important in understanding the well-being of the family which, in turn, would contribute to understanding the welfare of society. He considered the standard of living to involve both material and non-material things — 'daily bread' and the 'moral law'. A high standard of living involved not only high economic and physical resources and conditions, but also the social-psychological conditions of society. Both of these were dependent on a good working social structure of which the family was a critical element. The family was critical because its consumption and production of resources were an index of the prosperity of society, and the social practices of the family reflected and influenced those

of society. LePlay concluded that the family was the ultimate social unit which reflected all the important characteristics of society.

Attention has returned to the centrality of the family in maintaining social-economic order and a moral order based on realism, self-governance, deferred gratification and critical judgment (Levine, 1981; Novak, 1981). The most fundamental values and behaviors necessary for human cooperation and economic and social welfare are learned and maintained in the family.

The family provides the setting in which essential resources are created, transformed, allocated and exchanged to meet physical, safety and higher level needs of individuals. Level of life quality is dependent on the degree to which needs are met. It is important, therefore, to assess family well-being and to develop indicators of family functioning and of the processes which contribute to quality of family life in order to evaluate both individual and societal well-being.

The purposes of this paper are to: (1) emphasize the need for perceptual indicators of family well-being in the assessment of quality of life; (2) present a theoretical conceptualization which integrates human needs, economic and psychological resources and interpersonal satisfactions as a basis for the development of perceptual indicators of family well-being and (3) present research findings in support of the theoretical framework proposed.

#### I. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Conceptualization of family indicators should begin with an analytical scheme for delineating the human needs which family is expected to fulfill for its members. Several models for mapping needs, similar to the hierarchy proposed by Maslow (1954), have been formulated (Allardt, 1973, 1976; Mallman, 1977; McCall, 1975). However, the family environments best adapted for meeting individual needs have not been fully attended to in these schemata. Because the family is the social unit in which all human needs are integrated and where to some degree they must all be met, selection or construction of a theoretical framework which focuses on this unit is critical.

The present study uses the resource exchange theory of Foa and Foa (1974, 1980). This theory has several strengths: (1) It links needs, resources and satisfactions and assumes that humans have both economic and social-psychological needs which cannot be satisfied in isolation. Family is the environment where the widest range of exchanges of resources to meet needs

takes place. (2) It provides a means for studying interaction of the individual and the near environment in an ecological view of human social-psychological and economic well-being. (3) It provides a classification of events and conditions which makes life pleasant and worthy, which offers parsimony and which is specific enough to pinpoint essential differences among people (Foa and Foa, 1973). (4) It clarifies reasons for diminished interpersonal satisfactions when material goods and money are substituted for needed, highly valued particularistic resources of love and status.

The Foas' theory specifies six classes of resources, all of which are required to maintain level of life quality. When any one resource falls below a minimum level, quality of life is impaired. The six essential resource classes are: love, status, services, information, goods and money. Shared time is a necessary environmental condition for the exchange of these resources.

The theory assumes that humans are social creatures who enjoy companionship and need the support of a group for survival. They have needs for resources of love, status, services, information, goods and money which cannot be satisfied in isolation. Since humans depend upon others for these resources, they seek situations to exchange them through interpersonal behavior. The probability of an interpersonal exchange taking place depends upon: (1) the properties of resources to be exchanged, (2) appropriateness of the environment and (3) the motivational state of potential exchangers.

Figure 1 depicts the six resource classes on the particularism-universality and concrete-symbolic dimensions of the structural model. The position of the resource on the particularism-universality dimension indicates the extent to which the value of the resource is influenced by the particular persons involved in the exchange and by their relationship. Love is the most particularistic resource, since its value is most influenced by the particular persons and their relationship. Money is the most universalistic resource, since its value is least influenced by the person from whom it is received. The position of the resource on the concrete-symbolic dimension suggests the form or type of expression. Behaviors such as giving an object (goods) or performing a service to the body or belongings of another (services) are concrete. Language forms of expression (information) are symbolic. "Love and money are exchanged in both concrete and symbolic forms and thus occupy an intermediate position on the coordinate" (Foa and Foa, 1974).

The rules of exchange vary gradually with position in the structure. Giving to other and giving to self are related positively for the resource of love. When

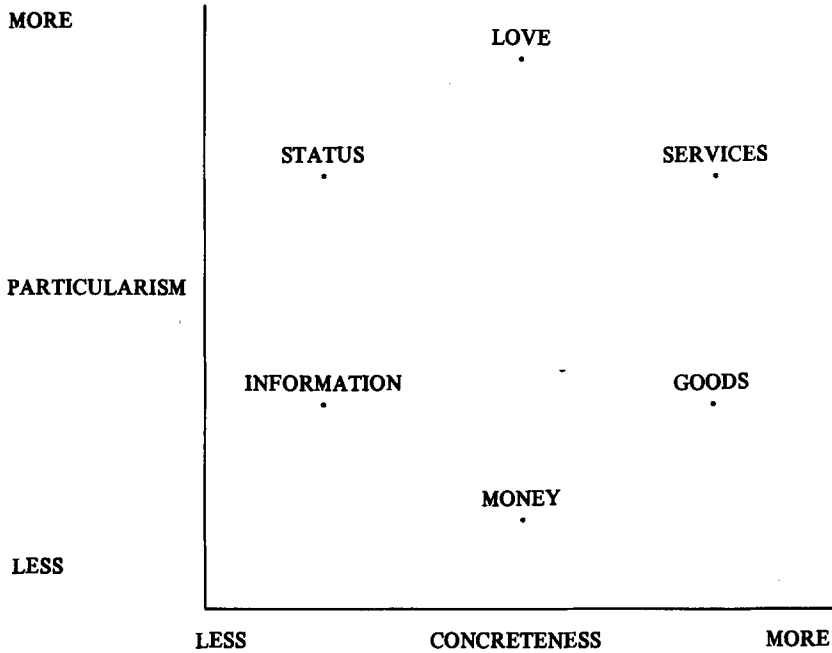


Fig. 1. The cognitive structure of resource classes (copyright 1971 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science).

giving love to another, one simultaneously receives love and has lost nothing. However, when giving money to another, one's own supply is depleted. Since the participant in an exchange gives what he has in abundance and receives what is scarce, the marginal utility of the receiver is higher than the marginal utility of the giver (Foa and Foa, 1974).

*Love* is defined as an expression of positive regard, warmth or comfort that is most easily expressed in paralinguistic communication such as touch, eye contact, posture, proximity and facial expressions. *Status* is defined as an evaluative judgment that conveys high or low prestige or esteem and, in contrast to love, is conveyed in verbal, symbolic behaviors in messages of respect and confidence in competence. *Service* involves concrete activities performed on the body, belongings or environment of a person usually constituting labor of one person for another to increase comfort or save energy. *Information* is given as advice, opinions, instructions or enlightenment, but is exclusive of

behaviors which could be classified as love or status, and has the most symbolic form of expression. Exchanges of *goods* and *money* also contribute to the quality of the relationship and may be simultaneously exchanged with psychological resources. Giving a gift which is a tangible good, or money which is more symbolic, may represent love and/or respect.

The ordinal position of a resource on the particularism dimension affects the satisfactions possible for exchanges. Similar resources are preferred in exchange, with love as the most preferred resource of proaction and reaction. Exchanges of love with a highly valued particular person in repeated encounters over a period of time offer the opportunity for highest possible levels of satisfaction.

Status is the second preferred resource of exchange and is simultaneously given to self and other. It is possible to give respect without love, but difficult to give love without simultaneously giving respect (status). Services and information follow status in order of preference. The rules of exchange stipulate that giving services, goods and money are costs to the giver; one person's loss is another's gain. In consequence, an exchange of money can be a zero-sum game, but an exchange of love cannot (Foa and Foa, 1980).

Resources close in order can partially compensate for one another. A person who is unable to exchange love or who infrequently exchanges love may be reasonably happy if status or personal services are obtained, but satisfaction is diminished if goods or money are received instead of the needed love. A resource remote from the needed one is not an efficient or satisfactory substitute. The substituted resource is demanded in greater amounts, but the larger quantity produces less satisfaction than the needed resource. Money and goods cannot really substitute for or satisfy needs for love.

The probability of a resource exchange occurring is also dependent upon the appropriateness of the environment. Shared time is the environmental condition necessary for transfer of the most particularistic resources. The exchange of love requires not only shared time, but repeated encounters, few persons and privacy of space. The family is an environment for exchange of all resources and is especially crucial for love and status exchanges.

The Foas (1974) propose that particularistic resources are scarce in industrialized societies which develop institutional patterns and environments suitable to the production and exchange of economic resources, but are detrimental to the psychological ones. Unsatisfied needs for the particularistic resources increase the demands for material goods; but while the material

resources are readily available, they do not, even in increasing amounts, provide high levels of satisfaction. The quality of life is thus diminished (Foa and Foa, 1973).

Completion of exchange also depends upon the motivational states of the persons involved. The theory proposes that for each resource class there is an optimal range. When the amount of a given resource is within the range the person feels comfortable and is not motivated to initiate change; when the amount is below the lower bound of the range, one will be motivated to increase the amount of the resource. The width of the optimal range varies with the structural position of the resource and is narrowest for love and widest for money. Size of optimal range also varies among individuals, depending upon early childhood experiences with satisfaction of needs for the resources. (For a complete presentation of the resource theory and supporting research, see Foa and Foa, 1974, or Foa and Foa, 1980.)

The Foa and Foa theory appears to provide a useful analytic scheme for the development of indicators of the quality of family life. Both economic and non-economic needs and resources are recognized as crucial to well-being. The assumption that minimum levels of all resources are needed is also an essential element in the development of quality of life indicators. Levels imply that some minimum standards might be established, objectively or subjectively. For instance, standards for money and goods required for subsistence or maintenance might be objectively determined, while personal subjective standards for love or status could be ascertained.

## II. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Despite the importance of family life to perceived overall quality of life, there have been few attempts to develop perceptual indicators of family well-being. Several of the major quality of life studies have investigated the family domain, but were comprehensive in purpose and did not attempt to investigate the family domain in depth (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Bharadwaj and Wilkening, 1977; Campbell *et al.*, 1976).

The major quality of life studies consistently find that the quality of family life is extremely important to perceived overall quality of life (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Bharadwaj and Wilkening, 1977, 1980; Bubolz *et al.*, 1980; Campbell *et al.*, 1976; Campbell, 1981; Haavio-Mannila, 1971; Mancini, 1978; Metzen, 1980; Sontag *et al.*, 1979). Higher life satisfaction has

been found among married persons than among single, widowed or divorced persons (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Campbell *et al.*, 1976; Campbell, 1981).

Family well-being has been surveyed from both economic (Duncan and Morgan, 1978; Giampaglia and Young, 1980; Moen, 1980; Weiss, 1953) and social-psychological viewpoints (Stinnett *et al.*, 1980). It is recognized in quality of life research that the health of the family system is dependent upon the adequacy of family resources, but an integrated theoretical framework which combines economic and psychological resources and well-being has seldom been used. Despite the lack of theoretical integration, it is generally recognized, however, that basic needs for food, clothing, shelter and physical health must be met before it is possible to consider meeting higher level needs.

Campbell (1981) reports that surveys around the world have repeatedly found that individuals who are materially well-off have stronger feelings of well-being than those at the bottom of the ladder. However, income and material goods are not sufficient to guarantee well-being or health of the family system. In summarizing studies conducted in 1971 and 1976 by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, Campbell (1981) concluded:

When people are asked how they feel about "the time they spend and the things they do with their family," most of them say they are very well satisfied. But some are much less satisfied, and this number increased somewhat between 1971 and 1978. We learn virtually nothing about why one person is satisfied with family life and another is not from a knowledge of his or her *sex, race, income, education, religion, or place of residence*. These aspects of a person's life situation, which have important implications in other domains, have no influence on a person's satisfaction with family life. What does matter is the family situation the person lives in (p. 103).

Research on family strengths has begun to identify some indicators of family well-being. A study using a combination of testing, survey and observational methods of data collection was completed by Lewis *et al.* (1976). The study originated with the hope that qualities of families which produce capable, adaptive and healthy individuals could be understood. Several ways of defining health (or well-being) were identified: (1) health as absence of overt pathology (reasonable rather than optimal functioning), (2) health as optimal functioning as determined by a theoretical system, (3) health as average functioning which is a statistical concept that views the midrange of the majority as healthy, (4) health defined as process which takes into account changes in

the system over time and (5) health defined as any combination of the above definitions (p. 13).

Results of the Lewis *et al.* (1976) study indicated seven characteristics that distinguished optimal from adequate families: (1) affiliative vs. oppositional attitude about human encounter, (2) respect for one's own and the subjective world-view of other, (3) openness in communication vs. distancing mechanisms, (4) firm parental coalition without evidence of competing parent-child coalitions, (5) belief in complex motivations, (6) spontaneity vs. rigid stereotyped interactions and (7) encouragement of unique vs. bland human characteristics.

Additional results from the Lewis *et al.* (1976) study indicated that in those families designated as optimal, far greater degrees of marital and family satisfaction were expressed by wives. Husbands were more directly supportive of wives and showed less interpersonal distance. Optimal families had increased capacity to communicate thoughts and feelings, shared adult leisure pursuits, had more community involvement and showed a prevailing mood of warmth, affection and caring. The mother in less than optimal families was the first to become dissatisfied, distressed or symptomatic. Lewis (1980) emphasized the importance of assessing family competence in understanding the role of the family in providing a quality environment for its individuals.

Olson *et al.* (1979) developed a model of family systems that attempted to locate families in a circumplex matrix created by the two central dimensions of family cohesion (an emotional, intellectual and physical oneness) and family adaptability (the ability to shift power structure, role relationships and relationship rules in response to stress). The model is based on the hypothesis that either too much or too little of family cohesion and family adaptability is detrimental to family functioning. Russell (1979) tested the hypothesis with 31 families who participated in a structured family interaction game and also completed questionnaires. Analysis of the data yielded considerable support for the circumplex model. High family functioning was associated with moderate family cohesion and adaptability. High family support (expression of acceptance, appreciation, recognition, praise and encouragement) and creativity (the ability to produce a large number and variety of alternative solutions in a problem-solving situation) were also associated with high family functioning.

Stinnett (1981) also studied qualities of strong families. The sample was acquired with the assistance of Home Economics Extension Agents in Okla-



homa who identified families with a high degree of marital happiness and parent-child satisfaction. The identified families also needed to rate themselves highly on the criteria before they were eligible to participate in the study. Data were collected by questionnaire and personal interview. Results of the study clearly identified six qualities that played an important role in the strength and happiness of these families: (1) appreciation, (2) spending time together, (3) good communication patterns, (4) commitment, (5) a high degree of religious orientation and (6) ability to deal with crises in a positive manner.

Studies of family well-being (Campbell *et al.*, 1976; Fisher and Sprenkle, 1978; Kantor and Lehr, 1975; Lewis *et al.*, 1976; Stinnett, 1981; Westley and Epstein, 1969) are in agreement with research on marital quality that the marital relationship is of central importance in determining the health of the family system. The marriages in healthy family systems are characterized by: (1) strong affectional bonds and emotional support, (2) shared responsibilities and leisure time, (3) high levels of interest and satisfaction with the sexual relationship, (4) open communication and (5) competence in problem solving.

The previous research indicates that love and affection, recognition and respect, comfort and assistance, sharing and companionship and shared meaning are the human needs satisfied in the family through the exchanges of love, respect, services and information as the Foa and Foa theory suggests.

### III. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

This study was based on the premise that if there is satisfactory frequency of shared time among family members then there is a greater probability of particularistic resource exchanges occurring and consequently more possibilities for higher levels of satisfaction with family life.

The research objectives of the study were to: (1) develop perceptual indicators of quality of family life in order to test the Foas' theory and (2) test the Foa and Foa (1974) resource exchange theory for explaining satisfaction with family life (perceived quality of family life), an important component of perceived overall quality of life.

The study explored the relationships between the structural positions of the resources on the particularism-universality dimension and their ability to explain differences in quality of family life. The present study has the respon-

dent as receiver of resources while the family members are actors and givers of resources. Family is considered the environment for the exchange of resources for the individual who is the unit of study.

Following the propositions of the Foa and Foa theory, it was hypothesized that: (1) Feelings about the particularistic resources received from family would significantly contribute to family life satisfaction for both men and women. (2) The order of resource classes on the particularism dimension would correspond to the order of their effectiveness in contributing to family life satisfaction. The order would be: love, services-status and information. The more particularistic a variable within any resource class, the more important it will be for explaining satisfaction.

#### IV. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Data used in the study were collected in Oakland County, Michigan during Winter 1977-78 as part of a Quality of Life Research Project. Family was the survey unit and was defined as a husband and wife living together in the same household having at least one child between the ages of five and eighteen years. Information was obtained from self-administered questionnaires completed independently by husbands and wives.

##### *Sampling Procedures*

A nationally known marketing research firm was employed to draw a sample of 300 families and distribute and collect questionnaires and consent forms. The sampling department of the firm drew two-stage systematic samples from rural, suburban and urban areas, with clusters and probability proportionate to size (larger census tracts had a greater probability of selection). Stage one of the sampling procedure involved selection of census tracts and blocks identified as sampling points. Stage two of the procedures was the random selection of a household at each sampling point to be the first designated interview. Three call-backs were made to designated households. A specific walk pattern was used by interviewers to designate the additional three households in the sampling point cluster.

A total of 250 families completed questionnaires. Unsuccessful attempts were made to place four sets of questionnaires; twenty-one questionnaire sets were placed with families who later refused to respond; and the firm made no attempt to place twenty-five questionnaire sets.

*Description of the Study Sample*

Of the 250 families who completed questionnaires, 26 families were dropped from the sample because of inadvertent failure to meet the selection criteria or suspected or known collaboration in the completion of husband and wife questionnaires. The final study sample consisted of 448 persons or 224 husband-wife couples.

The respondents were 82 percent White (17% Black, 1% other) with a mean age of 37.5 years for women and 40.2 years for men. The majority of men (95%) and 42 percent of the women were employed outside the household. The average educational level was 13.5 years for men and 12.8 years for women. The mean family income for 1977 was \$26 982 with a mean per capita income of \$6055. Only 7 percent of the marriages were of less than five years' duration and 14 percent of the couples in the sample had been married for more than twenty-five years; the mean was 15.9 years of marriage.

*Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable was a subjective indicator of perceived quality of family life. The study defined quality of family life as a person's overall perceived satisfaction/happiness or dissatisfaction/unhappiness with family life over a period of time. It was a person's internal response to perceived rewards received from the family members and the family environment over a period of time.

Respondents were asked for their evaluations of family life measured on the seven-point 'Delighted-Terrible Scale' (Andrews and Withey, 1976) which included both affective and cognitive dimensions. The question asked: "How do you feel about your own family life — your husband or wife, your marriage, your children, if any?" The responses included: "terrible," "unhappy," "mostly dissatisfied," "mixed," "about equally satisfied and dissatisfied," "mostly satisfied," "pleased" and "delighted." Responses were coded from one ("terrible") to seven ("delighted"). The question was asked early in the questionnaire and again following the questions involving specific dimensions of family life with a time interval of about thirty minutes. The measure of 'perceived quality of family life' was the simple average of responses to the same question asked at the two points in time. The measure was a global indicator of family well-being; it was highly correlated with overall quality

of life ( $r = 0.68$  women;  $r = 0.60$  men). Descriptive statistics of the dependent variable indicated a mean score of 5.6 for wives ( $SD = 1.0$ ) and 5.7 for husbands ( $SD = 1.3$ ).

### *Independent Variables*

The independent variables were of two types: (1) evaluations of resources received measured on the 'Delighted-Terrible Scale' and (2) perceived frequency of resources received measured on an eight-point scale ranging from "never" to "about 2–3 times a day." The resources received were love, status, services, information, goods and money. Evaluation of and frequency of shared time were also included as independent variables since time sharing is a necessary condition for particularistic resource exchanges. In addition, respondents were asked to evaluate their satisfaction with particularistic relationships. A complete list of independent evaluation variables is given in Table I.

Respondents were also asked for their perceptions of the frequency with which they received resources from their mate. Responses were coded on an eight-point scale: "never," "about once a year," "about six times each year," "about once each month," "about once each week," "about once each day" and "about 2–3 times each day." The variables were then transformed by converting each number to a decimal using 365 days as the denominator to create a ratio scale. Responses to the items were then added to create a variable representing each resource class. For example, the status resource class included three items: How often does your spouse "make you feel like an important person," "tell or show you that he/she admires and respects you" and "let you know that he/she has confidence in your abilities." Cronbach's alpha was calculated for these created variables which ranged from 0.68 for the women's information frequency to 0.73 for services frequency, 0.91 for status frequency and 0.83 for love frequency variables. A list of created frequency variables is given in Table II. These frequency variables were used for correlation with the dependent variable, but were not used in the regression analyses reported.

### *Research Strategy*

The close relationship of particularistic resources in the Foa and Foa (1974)

TABLE I  
Pearson correlation coefficients for independent variables with perceived quality of family life

	WIVES <i>r</i>	HUSBANDS <i>r</i>
How would you feel about your family life if you considered only:		
<i>Love Resource Class Indicators</i>		
The love and affection you experience?	0.73	0.61
The closeness and sense of belonging you feel?	0.72	0.56
<i>Status Resource Class Indicator</i>		
The amount of respect you receive?	0.66	0.55
<i>Services Resource Class Indicators</i>		
Your sexual relationship?	0.58	0.62
How comfortable it feels to be at home?	0.66	0.65
The way household work is divided/accomplished?	0.45	0.50
Mutual helpfulness of family members?	0.42	0.45
<i>Information Resource Indicators</i>		
How openly and honestly you can express feelings?	0.58	0.59
The kind of communication you have?	0.60	0.62
The way decisions are made?	0.56	0.44
<i>Shared Time Indicators</i>		
The time you spend with your husband or wife?	0.57	0.62
The things you do together?	0.57	0.63
The amount of time the family spends together?	0.58	0.49
The time you spend with your children?	0.44	0.35
<i>Goods Resource Class Indicator</i>		
The material goods it enables you to enjoy?	0.30	0.34
<i>Money Resource Class Indicators</i>		
The way money is used?	0.35	0.41
The amount of money available for your personal use?	0.31	0.40
<i>Particularistic Relationships</i>		
Your husband/wife?	0.64	0.67
Your children?	0.54	0.46
The friends it enables you to enjoy?	0.43	0.50
Your marriage?	0.71	0.70

All correlations significantly greater than zero,  $p < 0.05$ .

TABLE II

Pearson correlation coefficients for frequency of resources received from mate, created variables, with perceived quality of family life

Created variable	WOMEN	MEN
	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>
Mate love frequency	0.465 <sup>a</sup>	0.398 <sup>a</sup>
Mate status frequency	0.429 <sup>a</sup>	0.376 <sup>a</sup>
Mate services frequency	0.263 <sup>a</sup>	0.256 <sup>a</sup>
Mate information frequency	0.192 <sup>a</sup>	0.119 <sup>a</sup>
Mate time frequency, companionship	0.289 <sup>a</sup>	0.327 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $p < 0.01$ .

theory required caution in the selection of independent variables for regression analyses in order to minimize multicollinearity. Selection of independent variables was accomplished in several steps: (1) Hierarchical complete-linkage cluster analyses were used as a validity check on questionnaire items thought to represent resource classes of love, status, services and information. (2) Variables were tested separately for linearity with the dependent variable, since the linear model of regression includes this assumption. (3) The correlation matrix of independent variables was examined in order to choose the linear variable from each resource class which had lowest correlations with other independent variables. The procedures were important since an ideal regression should have high correlations of independent and dependent variables with low correlations among independent variables.

The agglomerative method of hierarchical complete-linkage clustering was used in order to determine whether the underlying structure of the data would validate expectations of the resource classes of love, status, services and information. The clustering procedure (Allard, 1978) groups variables which are similar and thus is a data reduction and explanation procedure appropriate when the objective is model fitting or the generation of hypotheses (Everitt, 1970, p. 3).

Cluster analysis was selected as the appropriate technique based on the discussion of Thorndike (1978):

A clustering procedure results in non-overlapping groups of items. The correlations among the items within the groups will be high, and the correlations with other items will be low. Factor analysis would be inappropriate for this phase of research, because it would assign a portion of the variance of each item to each of several factors (p. 230).

Hierarchical clustering begins with a similarity matrix of product moment correlation coefficients and proceeds by a series of successive fusions which results in a merger of all variables. The procedure for agglomerative clustering is outlined in Anderberg (1973, p. 133). Three hierarchical agglomerative methods of clustering variables are commonly used. These methods vary in the way the similarity matrix is updated at each step of the analysis. The objective of complete-linkage, in contrast to the other two methods, is to form tight, homogeneous clusters. On an absolute scale the complete-linkage method will give clusters with longer lifetimes than clusters achieved with other techniques.

Three clustering techniques on the evaluation variables (Table I) were used in the present study which produced similar results and gave evidence of the validity of the measures. Complete-linkage clustering separated love and status resource classes more effectively than the other methods. The order of fusion for separate clusters further supported the structured relationship among resource classes specified in the theory.<sup>1</sup>

Since the evaluation variables did cluster appropriately in resource classes (Rettig, 1980), it was then possible to select one linear variable from each particularistic resource class for the regression analyses. The forward selection search procedure of multiple regression was used since the hypothesis involved ordered relationships and the procedure permitted examination at each step for existence of problems due to multicollinearity.

## V. RESULTS

The multiple regression analyses provided support for Hypothesis 1 (Table III). The set of independent evaluation variables significantly contributed to the explanation of variance in family life satisfaction for men (adjusted  $R^2$  0.52) and women (adjusted  $R^2$  0.58).

Hypothesis 2 stated that the order of resource classes on the particularism dimension would correspond to the order of their effectiveness in contributing to family life satisfaction. Both correlation coefficients and the regression analysis supported the hypothesis. Examination of the correlation coefficients of the evaluation variables with perceived quality of family life (Table I) reveals that indicators of the most particularistic resources have higher correlations than those for goods and money. The size of the correlations followed the expected order on the particularism dimension, particularly for

TABLE III  
Regression measures for perceived quality of family life

Step	Variable entered	E to enter	Significance	R square	R <sup>2</sup> change	Regression coefficient	Standard error beta	Standardized coefficient	T
<i>Wives</i>									
1.	Love and affection	230.26	0	0.51	0.51	0.253	0.05	0.360	4.74 <sup>a</sup>
2.	Time family spends together	16.78	0.000	0.55	0.03	0.098	0.04	0.137	2.38 <sup>b</sup>
3.	Respect received	12.03	0.001	0.57	0.02	0.149	0.05	0.206	3.07 <sup>a</sup>
4.	Sexual relationship	4.74	0.031	0.58	0.01	0.072	0.03	0.114	1.91
5.	Open expression	2.47	0.117	0.59	0.00	0.072	0.05	0.097	1.58
<i>Multiple R</i> 0.766									
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> 0.586									
<i>Adjusted R</i> <sup>2</sup> 0.577									
<i>F</i> (5, 214) 60.682 <sup>a</sup>									
<i>Husbands</i>									
1.	Love and affection	130.19	0	0.37	0.37	0.205	0.05	0.257	3.59 <sup>a</sup>
2.	Time family spends together	38.19	0	0.47	0.09	0.160	0.04	0.216	3.95 <sup>a</sup>
3.	Sexual relationship	17.72	0.000	0.51	0.04	0.131	0.04	0.216	3.13 <sup>a</sup>
4.	Open expression	8.83	0.003	0.53	0.02	0.138	0.05	0.173	2.59 <sup>a</sup>
4.	Respect received	0.81	0.369	0.53	0.00	0.045	0.05	0.061	0.90
<i>Multiple R</i> 0.727									
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> 0.529									
<i>Adjusted R</i> <sup>2</sup> 0.518									
<i>F</i> (5, 214) 48.054 <sup>a</sup>									

<sup>a</sup>  $p < 0.01$

<sup>b</sup>  $p < 0.05$



women. The correlations for the frequency variables (Table II) for both men and women fell in the expected sequence, with the love and status resource classes having higher correlations with perceived quality of family life than those for services and information.

The regression analysis provided additional support for Hypothesis 2. Resource classes were ordered according to structural position proposed, particularly for the women's analyses. Satisfaction with the love resource ranked first for both men and women in the proportion of variance explained. The standardized regression coefficient (respect received) status ranked second for women, followed by the time, services and information indicators. There were some differences between men and women with love contributing to a larger share of the variance for women than for men. 'Respect received' (status) was more important to women's quality of life while 'sexual relationship' (services) was more important to men.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Our findings support the basic premise of the Foas' theory that social-psychological as well as economic resources are of critical importance to the quality of family life. Support was also found for the proposition that resources are ordered in their relationship to quality of life, with the most particularistic resources having the highest correlations. For both sexes, how well satisfied one is with feelings of warmth, caring, affection and respect received from one's spouse contributes a great deal to how one feels about one's family life. Positive feelings about the time family members spend together and satisfaction with sexual relationships with one's spouse also make important contributions to positive evaluation of family life.

These findings provide an explanation and understanding of why the family situation in which one lives, rather than demographic variables, is the dominant factor contributing to quality of family life. The family can provide the environment for the exchange of the resources which depend on particular persons having the time and opportunity to interact, communicate and give to each other and themselves love and respect. If the family provides this setting and the people in it can and do exchange the needed resources, the quality of family life will be high. On the other hand, if the family does not meet these needs, the quality of family life is impaired. And since evaluation of family life is highly related to evaluation of one's total life situation, lack

of fulfillment in the family results in a general lowering of life quality.

The Foas (1973) propose that: (1) particularistic resources are scarce in modern society which has developed institutional patterns suitable to the production and exchange of economic resources, but detrimental to the psychological ones; (2) unsatisfied spiritual needs increase the demand for material goods; (3) economic resources, although more readily available, are distant from the particularistic resources, therefore they do not, even in increasing amounts, conduce to satisfaction and (4) provision of psychological, non-economic resources may reduce the demand for economic ones, at the same time increasing satisfaction. Shortages of non-economic resources can thus result in economic and ecological costs, as well as in plain human suffering.

These propositions are demonstrated in an analysis of the current high rate of divorce in many Western countries (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1977). Divorce can be interpreted as an indicator of the inability of individuals to achieve within the marital or family relationship satisfaction of intensely held needs for the non-economic resources of love and esteem or sexual satisfaction. In cultures where personal happiness, achievement and self-fulfillment are highly prized, serious strains are placed on relationships in which each member is pursuing individually oriented goals. In such relationships spouses may be unable or unwilling to attend to the emotional and psychological needs of their partners or other family members. When one does not give love and esteem to another, one gives less to oneself and receives less from the other, becoming doubly deprived. The acrimonious disputes which often accompany divorce proceedings further illustrate the Foa propositions. When love is gone from a relationship, seeking possession of material goods that were also once part of the relationship may be seen as an attempt to replace the loss of the object and source of love and esteem. One can gain some measure of satisfaction by feeling that, at least, one got the house or car, or whatever of material value one wins in the case. Divorce also frequently results in fewer economic resources for families as each partner must establish a separate residence and one or both partners may be required to contribute to the maintenance of two families. Social welfare payments become necessary to support many of these single parent families. Economic costs to the society as well as the individual are thereby increased.

It must be pointed out that the respondents in the study reported here were all in intact nuclear families and had relatively high incomes, high educa-

tional levels and high material levels of living. Results of research may be different for persons at low income or poverty levels where physiological and safety needs have higher priority and potency, and where undue amounts of energy must be expended on sustaining material existence. Social-emotional needs may have low priority, and when they do emerge, few resources may be available to satisfy them. Results may also be different in the single-parent family, a form rapidly increasing in number (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1980). In this setting there is no spouse present with whom to exchange particularistic resources. Economic resources, especially in those families headed by women, are also often in short supply. It will be important in the future to test the theory with subjects in various family structures and differing life circumstances. Additionally, since our findings indicated that there may be some differences between men and women in the extent to which the resources contribute to quality of family life, gender variations should be examined in future research.

The survey methodology used in this study presents some limitations. Observational methods of data collection would provide indicators of actual exchanges between spouses and would yield information about communication patterns and tension, power, and tempo dimensions which may be involved in resource exchanges. The theory does not incorporate religious orientations or spiritual values nor those of commitment and responsibility which have been found important for successful family relationships.

Despite these limitations, we still contend that the research helps us to know more about what is important to the quality of family life and that the Foas' theory offers a parsimonious framework for the delineation of indicators of quality of family life. We have argued in this paper that such indicators are needed for assessment on both the individual and societal levels. As LePlay postulated a century ago, indicators which tell us how well the family is meeting the material and non-material needs of its members are a barometer of how well the society is functioning. These indicators can help to determine and evaluate public policy and national goals, a primary purpose of the assessment of the quality of life. We urge evolution towards forms of social organization and prioritizing of values on the personal and societal levels which will offer a more balanced supply of economic and non-economic resources necessary for a better quality of life. Since the family continues to be the social structure in which most persons seek to meet their social-psychological needs and in which they share and allocate economic resources,

we propose that greater attention be given to assisting families through education and other social support systems to carry out these essential functions in order to maximize quality of life for the individual and in the society.

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and  
Michigan State University, East Lansing*

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Results of the cluster analysis are available on request.

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