

State *Of the* State Survey

*Michigan Families and the
Work-Family Interface*

*by Janet L. Bokemeier
Jeanne M. Lorentzen
Lori A. Wibert*

Briefing Paper No. 95-13

Michigan Families and the Work-Family Interface

prepared by

Janet L. Bokemeier, Ph.D.
Jeanne M. Lorentzen, M.A.
Lori A. Wibert, M.A.

Department of Sociology
Michigan State University

Principal Investigators

Janet Bokemeier
Department of Sociology
and Institute for Public Policy and Social Research

Merry Morash
School of Criminal Justice
Michigan State University

MSU State of the State Survey
Briefing Paper No. 95-13
©IPPSR, MSU
May 1996

Please contact the following for further information:

About this report: Janet Bokemeier, Professor of Sociology, Michigan State University (Phone: 517-355-6640; Internet: janet.bokemeier@ssc.msu.edu). **About SOSS:** Brian Silver, Professor of Political Science and Director of SOSS (Phone: 517-355-2237; Internet: bsilver@pilot.msu.edu). **About the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research:** Philip R. Smith, Director, IPPSR (Phone: 517/353-9019; Internet: philip.smith@ssc.msu.edu). General contact for media and press: AnnMarie Schneider, Public Relations, IPPSR (Phone: 517/355-6672 x 143; Internet: wolf@pilot.msu.edu).

The analyses and interpretations in SOSS Briefing Papers are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of IPPSR or of Michigan State University.

THE SURVEY

- Between May 10 and June 20, 1995, Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research conducted a telephone survey of 1,202 adult residents of the state of Michigan. This was the third quarterly MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS). The main themes of this round of research were the state of Michigan families, the role and status of women, and the status of children.
- The sample design provides representative information for respondents from major regions of the state: Detroit City, Southeast Michigan (excluding Detroit), Southwest Michigan, East Central Michigan, West Central Michigan, Northern Lower Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula. (See *attached information sheet for a list of the counties included in each region.*) The data reported here are weighted to make the results representative of the adult population of Michigan.

KEY FINDINGS

To What Extent Does Work Interfere with Home Life in Michigan?

An index ranging from zero to ten indicates the degree to which work interferes with sleep, exercise, health care, work in the home, spending time with family/children, and child supervision. (Q. 1—*question wording is given below.* We created Interference Index 1 from these questions.)

- **A third of Michigan residents find that work does not interfere with their personal lives.** Nearly half of the respondents find their job to be only slightly problematic outside the workplace. Eight percent find work extremely intrusive in their lives.
- **The stresses of work have a remarkable impact on separated and divorced residents' personal lives.** On a scale of 0 to 10 measuring the degree to which work interferes in their home life, the average Michigan resident has a score of 3.3. This score jumps to 5.1 for separated residents and 4.1 for those who are divorced, while never-married people have the lowest index scores, only 2.0. (See Figure 1.)
- **High school graduates have the lowest score (only 2.3) while college graduates report that work interferes with their personal lives much more (4.3).** (See Figure 2.) People at the lowest income levels in Michigan report the least amount of interference with their families by job demands. The greatest work demands are reported by people making between \$50,000 and \$90,000 a year. Michigan residents with incomes over \$90,000 have a score of family interference almost as low as people making below \$25,000. (See Figure 3.)

Surprisingly, there are no significant differences between men and women or African Americans and whites in the extent to which work interferes with home life.

To What Extent Does Family Caregiving Interfere with Michigan Jobs?

An index ranging from zero to ten indicates the degree to which family caregiving interferes with work. Interference Index 2 includes items such as missing work, losing raises/promotions, causing distractions, frequent interruptions, and dissatisfaction with work quality. (Q. 2)

· **More than half of Michigan residents (53.1%) claim family caregiving does not affect their work at all.** Thirty-six percent of the population feel their responsibilities at home impact their jobs somewhat.

· **Women (index score 1.9) are significantly more likely than men (index score 1.4) to find that their family caregiving responsibilities interfere with their jobs.** (See Figure 4.)

Again, separated respondents (index score 4.2) find their caregiving responsibilities interfere the most with their employment. In contrast, divorced respondents feel that their caregiving responsibilities only slightly affect their jobs, which is evident in their low average score of 1.7. (See Figure 5.)

· **The level of education makes a difference in the extent to which Michigan residents feel their caregiving responsibilities interfere with their jobs.** People with the most education (bachelor's degree or higher) are the least likely to find their caregiving situation interferes with their jobs (index score 1.3). In contrast, as Figure 6 shows, Michigan respondents with some college experience the most interference at work from caregiving responsibilities (index score 2.1). Income level follows a similar pattern, with the highest and lowest income categories sensing the least amount of interference at work and the middle incomes feeling the most.

· **Political party affiliation affects the degree to which family caregiving responsibilities interfere with work.** As Figure 7 shows, Democrats (index score 2.0) are more likely than Republicans (index score 1.2) to feel that their home life interferes with their jobs.

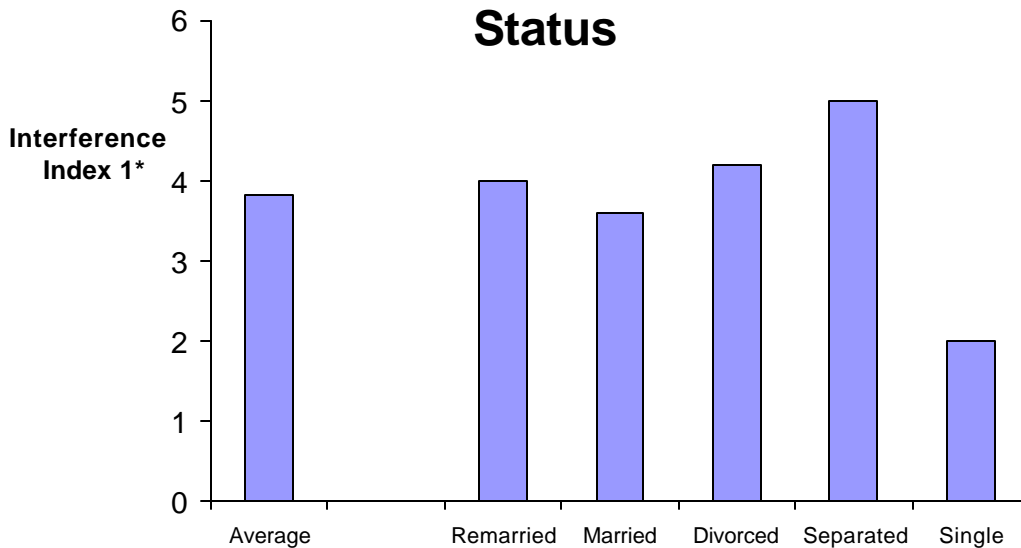
· **Overall, Michigan citizens are more likely to acknowledge that demands of their job interfere with family life than that family demands interfere with their jobs.**

DISCUSSION

The amount of work interference people sense in their personal lives depends on demands placed on them and on their type of employment. People with the highest incomes and the highest educational attainment have fewer problems with work interfering at home. This is probably because higher education and income assist in autonomy. People with more money and education are more likely to be able to control the events of their lives outside of work. With sufficient income, services can be purchased to facilitate the work-family interface. With the aid of housekeepers, nannies, and gardeners, the more affluent have fewer conflicts between their responsibilities at work and home. Those in the lowest income and educational levels probably do not have as much autonomy as the upper strata; however, the nature of their work may be qualitatively different. People without college degrees are much more likely to be hourly wage earners, meaning that when work is finished, they can go home and separate their work activities more easily from their personal activities. In contrast, people at the middle educational and income levels are more upwardly mobile and have different types of occupations, for example, management. They might be expected to work longer days and weekends to continue their upward mobility.

Women are often penalized in the work setting for being parents. Occasionally, women are denied positions because it is expected that their family obligations will interfere with work responsibilities. Furthermore, women are often expected to be the primary caregivers, regardless of employment status. Logically, marital status will at least partially determine the extent of caregiving responsibilities. A single parent will have more demands at home than a parent with a partner. Separation of married couples is the single most stressful family event. New living arrangements and child custody situations can exacerbate an already stressful living situation and it is evident that separated Michigan residents feel by far the most interference at work from caregiving responsibilities.

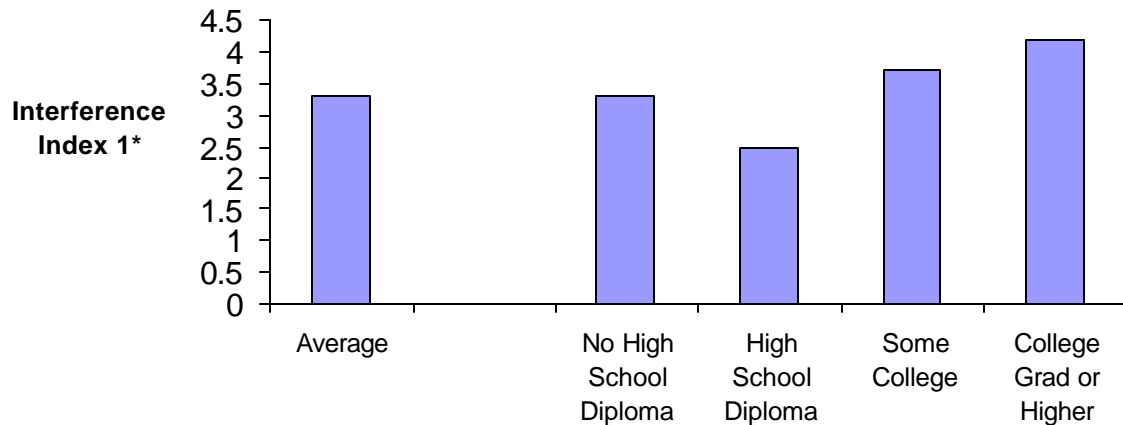
Figure 1. Extent to Which Work Interferes with Family by Marital Status



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
 N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 1 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

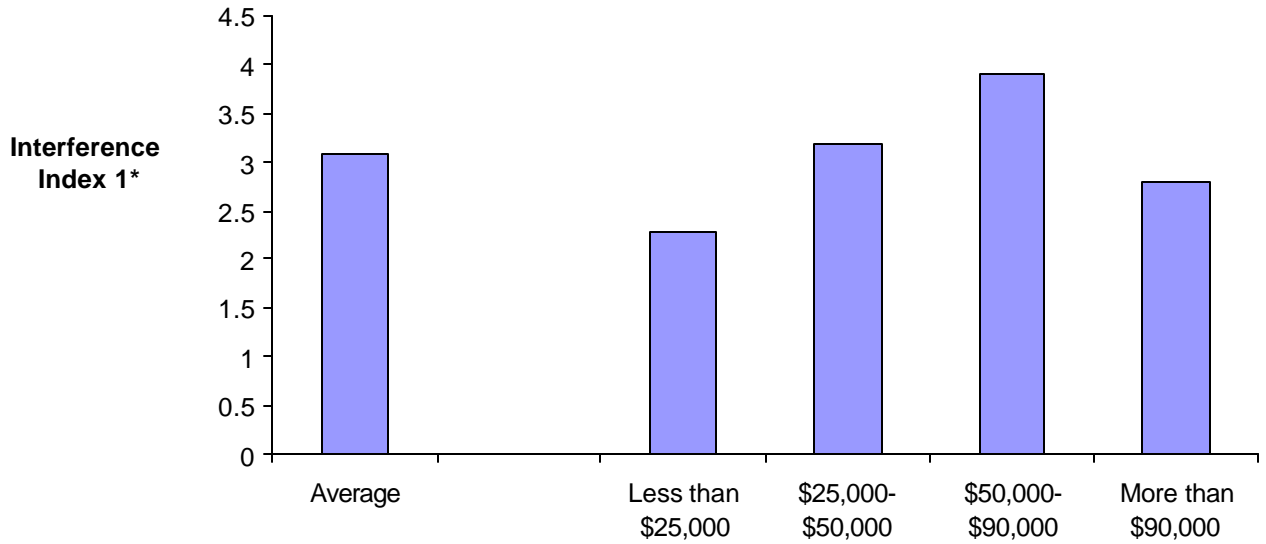
Figure 2. Extent to Which Work Interferes with Family by Education



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
 N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 1 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

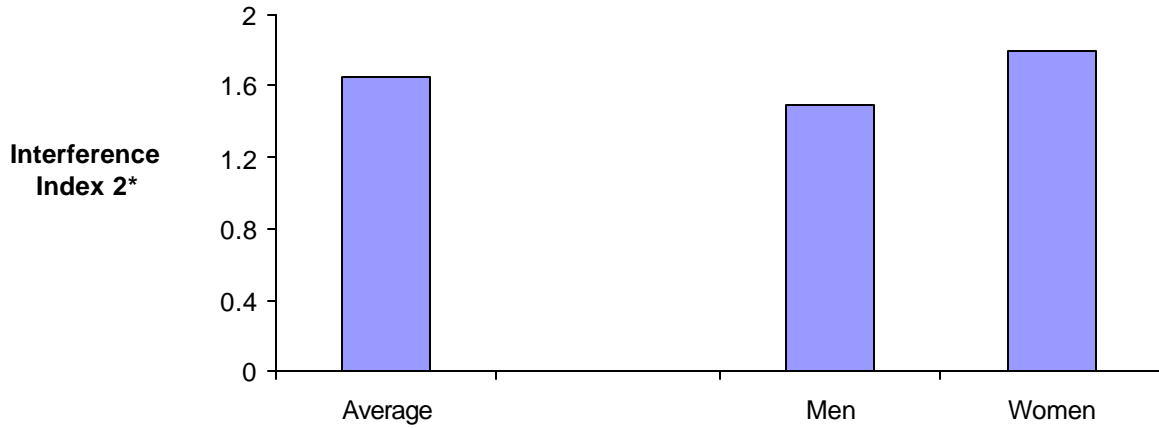
Figure 3. Extent to Which Work Interferes with Family by Income



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 1 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

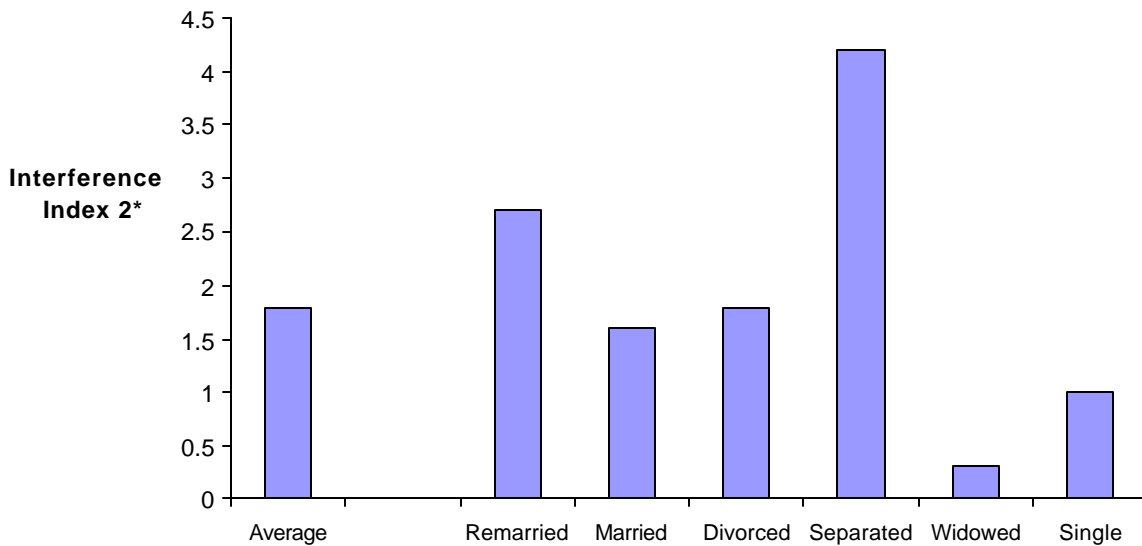
Figure 4. Extent to Which Caregiving Responsibilities Interfere with Work by Gender



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
 N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Indexes 1 and 2 range from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

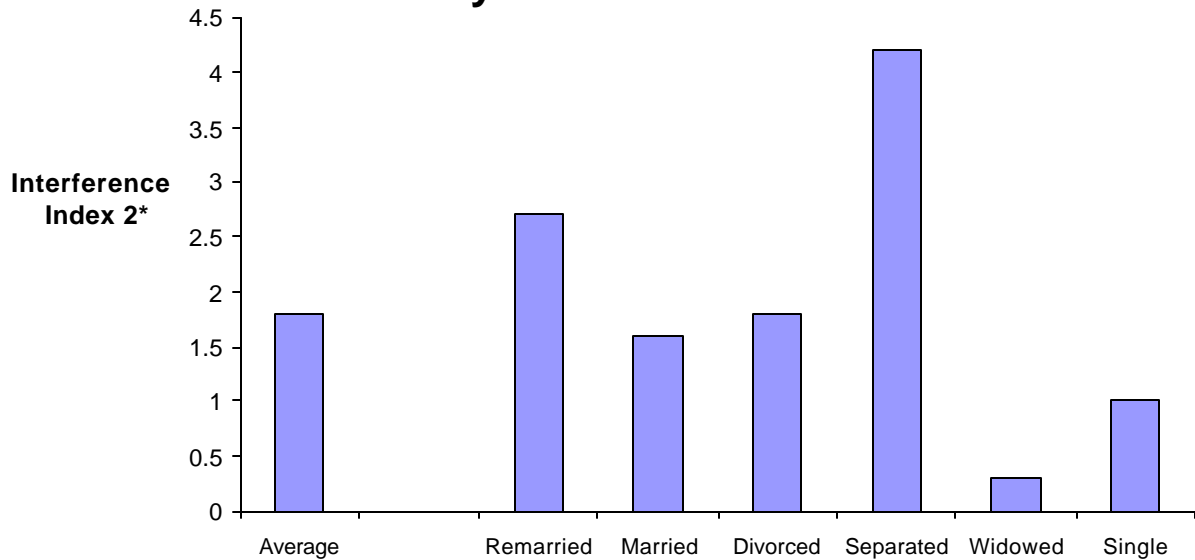
Figure 5. Extent to Which Caregiving Responsibilities Interfere with Work by Marital Status



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
 N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 2 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

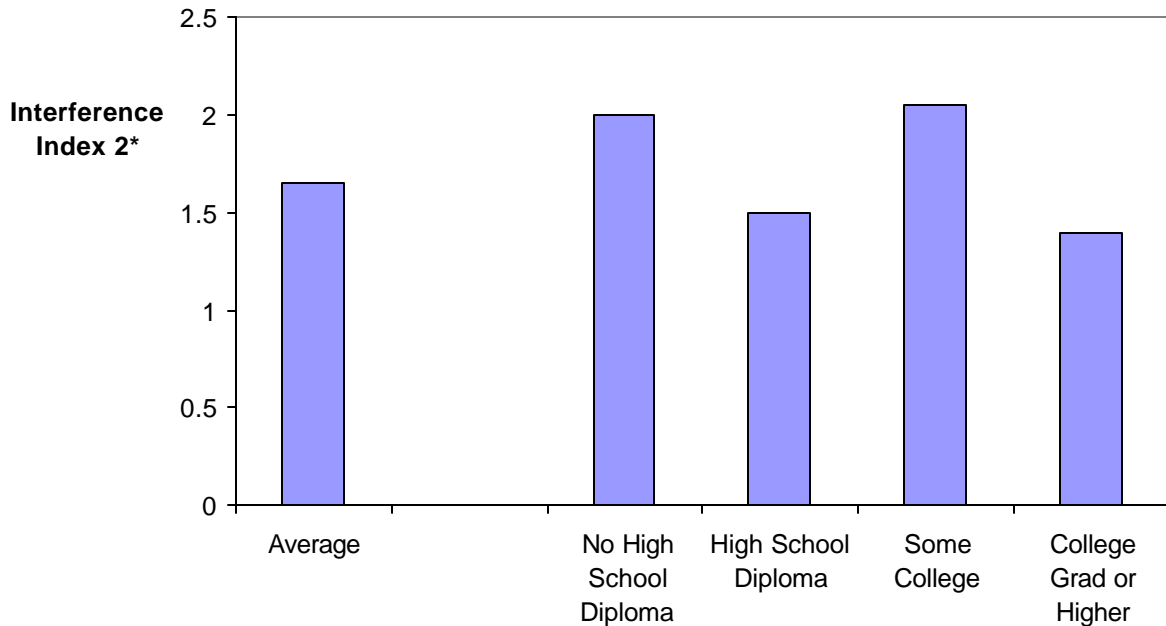
Figure 5. Extent to Which Caregiving Responsibilities Interfere with Work by Marital Status



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
 N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 2 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

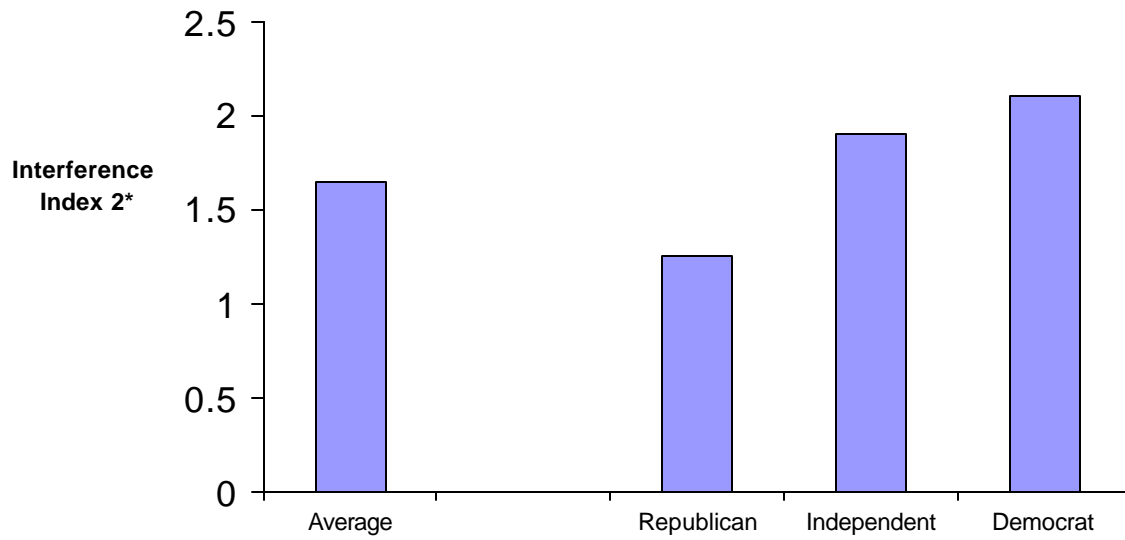
Figure 6. Extent to Which Caregiving responsibilities interfere with Work by Education



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
 N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 2 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

Figure 7. Extent to Which Caregiving Responsibilities Interfere with Work by Political Party



M.S.U. State of the State survey (SOSS) May-June, 1995
N=1202 Sampling Error=2.8% Michigan State University IPPSR

*Index 2 ranges from 0 "Zero Interference" to 10 "Most Interference."

SURVEY QUESTIONS

NOTE: The full wording of questions for the items discussed in this briefing paper is given below. Answer categories are shown if other than yes or no. The order in this list conforms with the order of the bulleted items above, not the order for the questions in the survey instrument. Overall, the interviews lasted an average of 23 minutes. The questions about the family-work interface consumed about four minutes of that time.

- Q. 1. In the past six months, have your work responsibilities caused you to:
- a. spend less time with your family than you would like?
 - b. have less time with your children?
 - c. let needed home repairs or housework go undone?
 - d. let a young child be home alone, unsupervised?
 - e. postpone or not get adequate sleep or rest?
 - f. postpone exercise you need for good health?
 - g. postpone or not get preventive medical care?
- Q. 2. In the past six months, have your family caregiving responsibilities caused you to:
- a. miss a half day or more of work?
 - b. be turned down for a promotion or a pay raise?
 - c. be frequently distracted with worry about children, a parent, or other relatives while at work?
 - d. be frequently interrupted at work with phone calls from or about children or other family members you are caring for?
 - e. be dissatisfied with the quality of your work?

REGIONAL CATEGORIES

NOTE: These regions are the ones used by the Michigan State University Extension Service, except that we treat Detroit City as a separate region.

Detroit: City of Detroit

Southeast: Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Wayne (excluding Detroit)

Southwest: Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren

West Central: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa

East Central: Arenac, Bay, Clare, Clinton, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola

Northern L.P.: Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Otsego, Oscoda, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Wexford

U.P.: Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft

Background Information

Michigan State University State of the State Survey [MSU SOSS]

What Is MSU SOSS?

The MSU State of the State Survey is a quarterly statewide survey of a random sample of the residents of Michigan. Although dozens of surveys are conducted in Michigan every year, none is designed to provide a regular systematic monitoring of the public mood in major regions of the state. Through SOSS, MSU aims to fill this information gap. SOSS has five main purposes: (1) to provide timely information about citizen opinions on critical issues; (2) to provide data for scientific and policy research by MSU faculty; (3) to provide information for programs and offices at MSU; (4) to develop survey research methodology; and (5) to provide opportunities for student training and research.

Each quarterly round or “wave” of SOSS has a different main theme: (a) January—quality of life, governmental reform, higher education; (b) April—family, women, and children; (c) July—ethnic and racial groups, Michigan communities; (d) October (even numbered years)—politics, the election, and political issues; (odd-numbered years)—health and the environment;

Who Is Conducting SOSS?

The State of the State Survey is administered by the Survey Research Division (SRD) of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR), using its computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology.

The design and overall planning of SOSS is the responsibility of a 17-person Steering Committee chaired by Dr. Brian D. Silver, Professor of Political Science. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from sponsoring units, which are primarily colleges and other administrative offices within MSU.

Subject to final approval by the Steering Committee, the questionnaire for each wave of SOSS is developed by a Working Group, most of whom also serve as analysts for that wave. The Working Group for the May 1995 wave includes Principal Investigators, a Research Team and an Advisory Council. Members are:

Principal Investigators

Dr. Janet Bokemeier, Professor, Dept. of Sociology and Director of Evaluation, IPPSR: (517) 355-6640
Dr. Merry Morash, Professor and Director, School of Criminal Justice: (517) 355-2192

Research Team

Dr. Clifford Broman, Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology: (517) 355-6640
Dr. Diane Levande, Professor, School of Social Work: (517) 432-3724
Dr. Margaret Nielsen, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work: (517) 432-3727
Dr. Christina Polsenberg, Assistant Professor, School of Criminal Justice: (517) 432-1998
Dr. Cris Sullivan, Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology: (517) 353-8867
Dr. Victor Whiteman, Professor, School of Social Work: (517) 432-3732
Dr. Mark Wilson, Associate Professor, James Madison College: (517) 353-2967

Advisory Council

David Berns, Michigan Department of Social Services, Children’s Services
Leah Harris, Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
Cheryl Howell, MSU Outreach Communications
Robert Ivory, United Way of Michigan
Cynthia Wilbanks, Michigan Children