Legal Knowledge of Michigan Citizens*

The United States Supreme Court has often been severely criticized by the general public. Only recently, however, have political scientists suggested that much of this criticism may be based on misinformation or lack of information about the Court and its decisions.¹ This study explores public knowledge of laws and judicial institutions and, to some degree, the relationship of this knowledge to attitudes toward legal institutions.

In addition to shedding some light on criticisms of the Court, the extent of knowledge of the law is relevant to determining the need

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¹ See Dolbeare, The Public Views the Supreme Court, in LAW, POLITICS, AND THE FEDERAL COURTS 194 (H. Jacob ed. 1967); Murphy & Tannenhaus, Public Opinion and the United States Supreme Court, in FRONTIERS OF JUDICIAL RESEARCH 278 (J. Grossman & J. Tannenhaus ed. 1969); Barth, Perception and Acceptance of Supreme Court Decisions at the State and Local Level, 17 J. PUB. L. 398 (1969).
for certain due process requirements. For example, if it could be shown that 99.9 per cent of all consumers are aware of the presence and meaning of cognovit provisions in the contracts that they sign, it might not seem necessary to shift the burden of proving knowledgeable consent to such a provision from the low-income plaintiff, where it would normally lie, to the creditor defendant.2

Perhaps the most elementary reason for assessing the extent of legal knowledge is that awareness of the law is an indispensable tool for the ordinary citizen. An individual may be deprived of liberty and property merely because he lacks such knowledge. It has been suggested that some segments of our society, notably the poor, are particularly lacking in legal knowledge; as a result, these groups may be deprived of their rights to a greater extent than the over-all population.3

This empirical study of the legal knowledge of Michigan citizens arose in response to the paucity of research in the area,4 especially in Michigan, where no such study had previously been conducted, and the contradictory findings of those earlier studies that had been conducted.5 Its findings may have implications for future efforts to educate the public and may provide some clues as to whether and why certain segments of the population are deficient in legal knowledge.6

I. METHODS AND PURPOSE

In order to test general citizen knowledge in Michigan, a questionnaire was mailed during the early spring of 1973 to a random...


3. See D. Caplovitz, supra, at 192; Cortese, supra, at 192.

4. While a number of the studies cited in notes 1 and 3 supra deal with citizen knowledge of the law, they test public knowledge of the law only with regard to a specific legal area or to a particular subgroup of the population. Thus, Dolbeare and Murphy and Tanenhaus only tested awareness of recent Supreme Court decisions. Barth tested for knowledge of the obscenity laws. While both Cortese and Williams and Hall tested for general knowledge of the law, Cortese used a sample composed entirely of welfare recipients and law students, and Williams and Hall used a sample from Austin, Texas, a city that may not be representative of American society as a whole. The Williams and Hall study is, however, the most comprehensive to date.

5. For example, Dolbeare concluded that the degree of knowledge of Supreme Court decisions is not related to a person's attitude toward the Supreme Court, Dolbeare, supra note 1, at 210-12, while Barth suggested that a favorable attitude toward Supreme Court policy was positively related to level of knowledge, Barth, supra note 1, at 338.

6. While this study does not center on knowledge of Supreme Court decisions, inferences may be drawn regarding knowledge of the Supreme Court. A number of the questions, such as number 24 on wiretapping, deal with fairly recent Court decisions. Also, a number of the responses given to question 35 concerning satisfaction with "the American system of justice" specifically criticized the Supreme Court. See Appendix infra.
sample of residents in three areas of the state. In addition to substantive legal questions, the questionnaire included items designed to tap respondent attitudes toward the legal system. Background information on the respondent was also elicited, including information on his experience with legal matters and possible sources of his legal knowledge.

A. The Questionnaire

The first section of the questionnaire, which is reprinted in the Appendix, contains twenty-two true-false questions about the law. Questions were selected to cover areas of the law where lack of knowledge could be particularly harmful to an ordinary citizen. Most, but not all, of the questions were drawn from criminal and consumer law.

In writing the questions an effort was made to use colloquial expressions and simple words instead of legal phrases. The items deal with hypothetical fact situations, rather than legal abstractions, and are generally phrased in the third person to be as nonthreatening as possible. A pretest of a much larger group of questions given to a sample from Ann Arbor, Michigan, and The University of Michigan Law School aided in selecting the final twenty-two questions; the pretest indicated that there were certain questions about the law that almost everyone knew and others that were confusing, even to law students.

In addition to legal knowledge items, the first section included six questions asking what the law "should be" in certain fact situations. These were included to gauge attitudes toward certain specific laws. General attitudes, primarily relating to the criminal justice system, were tapped in questions 25-35. Open-ended questions 29 and 35 asked why innocent people are occasionally convicted and the reasons for respondent's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with "the way the American system of justice is working today."

To elicit background information the questionnaire asked for the respondent's sex, race, age, occupation, education, and income. Several questions probed contacts with the law. Questions 7-10 in the Background Information section asked whether the respondent had ever bought a car or merchandise on credit, borrowed money, or tried to return a defective product. Question 11 attempted to measure possible contacts with the criminal justice system. Finally, the last six questions attempted to uncover the sources of the respondent's knowl-

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7. These twenty-two questions compose the "over-all legal knowledge index." They are questions 1a, 1b, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 7-9, 12-15, 17, and 19-24.
8. Twelve questions on criminal law compose the "criminal law index." These are questions 1a, 1b, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 7-9, and 24.
9. Six questions on consumer law compose the "consumer law index." These questions are 17 and 19-23.
10. Questions 2a, 2b, 6a, 6b, 16, and 18.
edge by inquiring about reading habits, television habits (news and crime-related entertainment shows), and direct or indirect contacts with lawyers.

B. The Sample

Six hundred questionnaires were administered by mail. Monetary incentives were included in half.¹¹ Also, reminder letters with new questionnaires were sent a month after the original letters to those who had not yet responded.

Respondents were selected randomly from the 1972 city directories of three Michigan areas: Ann Arbor, Saginaw, and Ludington-Scottville. Ann Arbor, with a population of approximately 100,000, is the home of the University of Michigan and is a predominantly academic community.¹² The median number of school years completed by Ann Arbor residents is very high, 15.4 years; the median family income, 12,800 dollars in 1969, is also quite high. Saginaw is more industrial; well over half of its population is engaged in blue-collar or service occupations. The population of Saginaw is 92,000, the median number of school years completed is 11.6, and the median family income is 9,995 dollars. Ludington-Scottville is a predominantly rural farming area. The town of Ludington has a population of just over 9,000, and only about 1,200 people live in Scottville. In Mason County, where both towns are located, the median number of school years completed is 12.0, and the median family income in 1969 was 8,500 dollars.

Two hundred questionnaires were sent to the residents of each of these three areas. The over-all return rate was 64.2 per cent (Ann Arbor, 69 per cent; Saginaw, 56.5 per cent; and Ludington-Scottville, 67 per cent). While this response is quite good for a mail survey,¹³ it is, of course, possible that a range of attitudinal and demo-

¹¹ The money was included in connection with an experiment conducted by Professor Richard Lempert of the University of Michigan Law School. A dollar bill was included in 100 of the questionnaires, a check from the University of Michigan for one dollar was included in a second group of 100, and a third group of 100 were promised a check for one dollar upon the return of the completed questionnaire.


¹³ "One limitation of surveying a representative sample of U.S. households by mail is the difficulty of gaining response. Few published results report response rates that exceed 50 per cent; indeed, conclusions are frequently based on returns from less than 25 per cent of the designated respondents." Mayer & Pratt, A Note on Nonresponse in a Mail Survey, 30 Pub. Opinion Q. 637, 637 (1966). See also Champion & Sear, Questionnaire Response Rate: A Methodological Analysis, 47 Social Forces 335 (1969); Ford, Questionnaire Appearance and Response Rates in Mail Surveys, 8 J. Advertising Research 43 (1965).
graphic variables may be associated with those who failed to return the fairly lengthy questionnaire.

The demographic characteristics of those who did return the questionnaire were comparable to the over-all 1970 national census figures for the same areas, except for a few items. Only about five per cent of the returned questionnaires were filled out by blacks, whereas the over-all populations of the three areas included about ten per cent blacks. Also, the representation of people with seven years or less of education was, as would be expected, lower than that of people with more education. Thus, any conclusions to be drawn from the study along race lines may not be accurate, and the results may overestimate citizen knowledge because of the high educational level of the sample. Otherwise, the results appear to be representative of the populations of the three areas.

C. Hypotheses

The central hypothesis was that general knowledge of the law is quite low. A high level of legal knowledge is, of course, hard to define, but it was assumed that low citizen knowledge would be indicated if law students could correctly answer the large majority of the questions and the citizen scores were significantly lower than the law student scores. Therefore, the first part of the questionnaire was also given to a random sample of twenty-six third-year law students.

In view of the conflicting findings of earlier studies on the relationship of legal knowledge to attitudes toward legal institutions, no particular directionality in the results was expected on this point. It was hypothesized that people would be much more aware of criminal law than of consumer law because of recent increased concern about crime and the heavy emphasis on criminal law on television. It was also assumed that over-all legal knowledge would correlate positively with education and income. As to the layman's sources of legal knowledge, all of the following were assumed to perform some educative function: personal experiences with the law, newspapers, magazines, television news shows, crime-related television entertainment, and friends and relatives.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Citizen Knowledge in Comparison to Law Students

As predicted, the citizen sample scored considerably lower on the legal-knowledge test than did the control group of law stu-

14. See note 5 supra.

15. The over-all results from the citizen questionnaire are included in the Appendix infra. The questions are reproduced in the same form in which they were sent to the respondents.
The maximum score possible was 22; seventeen of the 26 law students scored 20 or higher, and no law student scored lower than 18. By comparison, only 9 of 385 ordinary citizens achieved a score of 20 or higher. The mean score of the Michigan residents was 15.2, as compared to 20.0 for law students, and 31 of 385 residents scored 11 or below—or less than half right on a true-false test.

Twelve questions comprised the criminal law subsection. Twenty-one of twenty-six law students answered eleven or twelve of these correctly; the mean was 11.1. In comparison, the citizen mean was 9.3.

In the consumer subsection, the law student mean was 5.3 out of a possible 6.0, while the citizen mean was a much lower 3.2. Half of the law students answered every consumer question correctly, while only 5 of 385 ordinary citizens could do the same.

These results indicate that, in legal knowledge of many fundamental rights, there is a gap between those trained in the law and those not so trained. Most of the law students remarked that the questions were “too easy,” while many citizens indicated that many of their answers were guesses. As was hypothesized, the gap is greater in the area of consumer affairs than in criminal law. One possible explanation is the rising citizen interest in crime (as evidenced by the success of law and order TV shows, books, and movies such as The Godfather, and the prominence of law and order as a recent campaign issue). This finding indicates that research into public knowledge of consumer rights is needed; given the success of the law students and the relatively high citizen scores on the criminal index, education directed specifically to consumer issues might raise citizen knowledge.

Certain responses indicate specific areas in which citizen knowledge is very low compared to that of law students. The two questions in the criminal area that produced the biggest differences involved police searches of homes and cars. Of the law student group, ninety-two per cent correctly answered that the law requires a homeowner to allow a policeman to search his home if the policeman is in hot pursuit of a robbery suspect. In contrast, only forty-seven per cent of the citizen group answered correctly. All of the law students, but only fifty-eight per cent of the citizens, correctly answered that a policeman cannot search a car he has stopped for a minor traffic violation. Note that the citizen group underestimated the power of the police to search a home but overestimated their power to search a car. This may stem from a feeling that the law regards “a man’s home as his castle,” protected from all intrusions, while a driver who breaks any law is “fair game” for the police. The former belief may be further demonstrated by the fact that thirty-eight per cent of the general population and fifty-one per cent of the Ann Arbor residents thought that a policeman should not be allowed to search a house without a warrant even if he were in hot pursuit of a suspect.
From four questions dealing with civil rights, perhaps the most interesting response was that, nearly twenty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, twenty per cent of the population does not know that the law does not allow separate but equal schools. In contrast, only one of twenty-six law students answered this question incorrectly. It should be noted that the phrasing of this question may have been ambiguous.

Neither have recent court decisions on sex discrimination reached certain segments of the population. Although ninety-six per cent of the law students correctly answered that an airline cannot lawfully refuse to hire a man as a stewardess because of his sex, only seventy per cent of the citizens gave the correct response.

While all of the consumer questions indicated considerable gaps between the knowledge of the citizen and law student groups, two questions stood out. On question 23, designed to test knowledge of the implied warranty of merchantability, eighty-eight per cent of the law students gave the correct response, while only seventeen per cent of the citizens answered correctly. This indicates that citizens might believe that only a written warranty gives one a legal right to return a defective product.

Only twenty-four per cent of the Michigan citizens correctly answered that a car dealer has the right to repossess a car purchased on credit if the purchaser defaults in his payments. In contrast, sixty-six per cent of the law students answered this question correctly. In fairness, it should be noted that two University of Michigan professors who teach commercial law examined the questionnaire and felt that this question might be misleading.

On one question law students scored lower than the general citizenry: "If the FBI believes that someone plans to bomb the White House, does the law allow the FBI to have that person's phone tapped without getting permission from a judge?" Sixty-three per cent of the citizens correctly answered that the law does not allow the FBI to do so, but only fifty-eight per cent of the law students gave the correct answer. Since the survey was conducted in the midst of the Watergate inquiry, perhaps it can be concluded that laymen learned more from that episode than did law students.

**B. Demographic Factors and Legal Knowledge**

Since Ann Arbor contains a greater number of people with high education levels and high incomes, it was expected that its citizens would score much higher than those of Ludington or Saginaw. Ann Arbor residents did score higher, but not appreciably so. The overall mean score for Ann Arbor was 15.5, in contrast to 15.0 for Ludington and 14.9 for Saginaw. Ann Arbor scored higher on the criminal

index (9.6 mean to 9.2 for Ludington and 9.1 for Saginaw), but, surprisingly, not on the consumer index (Ludington’s citizens compiled a 3.3 mean, compared to Ann Arbor’s 3.2 and Saginaw’s 3.1).

One possible explanation for these findings is that Ann Arbor’s relatively highly educated populace is familiar with criminal rights because of the publicity given to Supreme Court decisions in that area, but has less business experience than the populace of a small town like Ludington. For example, eighty-three per cent of the respondents from Ludington had purchased a car on credit or with money borrowed from a bank, while only fifty-two per cent of the Ann Arbor respondents had done so. In comparison, fifty per cent of the Ann Arbor respondents read Detroit or national newspapers, while only forty-one per cent in Ludington and thirty-nine per cent in Saginaw do.

Men scored somewhat higher in all indices than did women. The mean over-all scores were 15.7 for men and 14.7 for women. The mean criminal law index scores were 9.6 for men and 9.1 for women. In the consumer area, the male mean score was 3.5, compared to a female mean score of 3.1. These findings may indicate that males as a class have received more education and have different kinds of business experience than do females.

The variable of race provided some interesting and unexpected findings. However, as noted above, blacks were underrepresented in the survey, so these results may be suspect. While blacks and whites had similar scores on the criminal index (9.3 mean for whites, 9.0 mean for blacks), blacks had a considerably lower over-all mean (15.2 for whites, 13.4 for blacks), for they scored lower on consumer and civil rights questions.

Blacks had a 2.4 mean score on the consumer index, while whites had a 3.3 mean. Nearly every black who responded underestimated a consumer’s legal rights. A possible explanation for this result is that blacks have received less favorable treatment from stores and banks and have therefore assumed that the law does not favor the consumer.

Blacks also scored lower on every civil rights question, consistently underestimating the force of the civil rights laws. For example, twenty-five per cent of the blacks (compared to eleven per cent of the whites) thought separate but equal schools lawful, and eighteen per cent of the blacks (compared to six per cent of the whites) incorrectly believed that it is unlawful for a black to marry a white in Michigan. These findings may be due to the long history of discrimination, which many blacks apparently believe is still sanctioned by law to a greater extent than it in fact is.

The results on the relationship between age and legal knowledge were inconclusive in all but one respect. People over sixty-five years of age had by far the lowest mean score on the criminal and over-all
indices but the highest score on the consumer index. This may indicate that older people do not keep up with contemporary developments in criminal law but have had more experience in consumer law.

### TABLE 1
**EDUCATION AND LEGAL KNOWLEDGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 grades or less</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11 grades</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 grades</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 yrs. college</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yrs. college</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate work</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 indicates, there is a strong relationship between education and criminal and over-all knowledge of the law. The more highly educated citizen appears more likely to know his basic constitutional rights in the criminal area. However, there is no positive correlation between education and consumer knowledge. This finding would seem to indicate, as do our previous findings on city and age, that personal experience is more important than nonlegal education in the formation of a knowledgeable consumer.

### TABLE 2
**OCCUPATION AND LEGAL KNOWLEDGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers, officials, &amp; proprietors</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical workers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen &amp; foremen</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers &amp; farm workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The occupation variable was not conclusively related to legal knowledge. As Table 2 indicates, the over-all and criminal means of professionals were the highest, probably because they are comparatively the best educated. Managers and proprietors, who are likely
to be running a business, had by far the highest score in the consumer index. The very poor showing of farmers is surprising but also suspect; only four farmers responded to the questionnaire.

TABLE 3
INCOME AND LEGAL KNOWLEDGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Index Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Index Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $4,000</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4-8,000</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8-12,000</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$12-16,000</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$16-20,000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000+</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship of income to legal knowledge, as portrayed in Table 3, gives one clue as to a source of knowledge of consumer law. All income groups have roughly the same consumer index mean score, with the exception of those earning 20,000 dollars or more, who may be more likely to be involved in a business of some kind. It should be noted that the lowest income group covered in the survey contains many students and retirees and is thus not truly indicative of the poor.

Table 3 appears to indicate that a modification is necessary in the hypothesis, developed in Swarb v. Lennox,17 that consumers with incomes of less than 10,000 dollars are, as a class, less knowledgeable than consumers with higher incomes. The district court shifted the burden of proving default, execution of the obligation, knowledgeable consent to the cognovit provision, and the other elements necessary to execution of cognovit notes from debtors with incomes of less than 10,000 dollars to their creditors. The court felt that low-income consumers could not bargain about cognovit provisions, did not understand them, and were often unaware of their existence. The results of this study indicate that 20,000 dollars is a better cut-off between low- and high-knowledge consumers.

In terms of over-all knowledge and criminal knowledge there does appear to be a difference between those who earn over 12,000 dollars and those who earn less than 12,000 dollars; the difference in over-all knowledge is due almost entirely to the difference on the criminal index.

C. Attitudes and Legal Knowledge

In order to correlate attitudes with legal knowledge, several questions were asked concerning how the respondents felt about the

American system of justice. The citizens of both Ann Arbor and Saginaw were dissatisfied with the system, but for vastly different reasons. In response to the question “How satisfied are you with the way the American system of justice is working today?,” 65.2 per cent of Ann Arbor respondents and 65.5 per cent of Saginaw respondents reported that they were “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied.” Only 53.0 per cent of the Ludington respondents gave these responses.

The Saginaw respondents' perception of the justice system differs greatly from that of the Ann Arbor respondents. For example, 20.7 per cent of the respondents from Saginaw believe that in only one in a million convictions is the defendant really innocent, while in Ann Arbor only 10.9 per cent of the respondents gave this response. Of Saginaw respondents, 73.5 per cent said that sentences are “much too lenient”; only 47.3 per cent of Ann Arbor respondents gave this response. The responses from Ludington were almost always halfway between those from Saginaw and Ann Arbor.

One question revealed certain basic value differences between Ann Arbor and Saginaw respondents. In response to the question “What is the main reason for keeping a man in jail after he has been convicted of a crime?,” 44.2 per cent of Saginaw respondents answered, “to punish him for his crime,” while only 29 per cent of the Ann Arbor sample gave this response. In contrast, 13.9 per cent of those from Ann Arbor responded, “to deter others from committing a similar crime,” while only .5 per cent of the Saginaw sample replied in this way. The residents of the small towns of Ludington and Scottville were more likely than the other respondents to list rehabilitation as the main reason.

Table 4 summarizes the responses to the open-ended question ask-

| Reason for Dissatisfaction                                      | Ann Arbor | Saginaw | Ludington |
|                                                               |           |         |           |
| Sentences are too lenient                                    | 6.5       | 23.0    | 9.0       |
| The law protects the criminal rather than his victim         | 7.2       | 28.3    | 8.2       |
| Loopholes in the law allow criminals to escape punishment    | 6.5       | 14.2    | 10.4      |
| There are not enough convictions                             | 5.1       | 21.2    | 11.9      |
| Supreme Court decisions are bad                              | 2.2       | 6.2     | 9.7       |
| Justice is irrational; sentences are inconsistent            | 13.0      | 8.0     | 9.7       |
| Law favors the rich                                          | 23.9      | 6.2     | 7.5       |
| Courts are too crowded                                      | 20.3      | 8.8     | 9.7       |
| Prisons do not work                                          | 18.1      | 3.5     | 0.7       |
ing the respondents to list reasons for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the justice system. Nearly all who answered expressed dissatisfaction, and their answers fell into clearly definable patterns. Saginaw respondents were dissatisfied because criminals are not punished enough; “the law protects the criminal rather than his victim” was their most common complaint. Ann Arbor respondents, in contrast, took less of a hard-line approach and put the blame for their dissatisfaction on social factors (“law favors the rich”), the breakdown of the court system (“crowded courts,” “irrational justice”), and the prison system. The Ludington responses did not fall into so clear a pattern. The feeling that “Supreme Court decisions are bad,” relatively common in Ludington, appeared to be a reaction to the Court’s recent abortion decision.18

As stated earlier, the main goal in asking these attitude questions was to ascertain the relationship between attitudes and legal knowledge. Generally there was no significant correlation. For example, those who thought police performance “good” had about the same mean score on the criminal law index as those who thought police performance “poor.” Those who felt that sentences were too lenient scored approximately the same as those who felt that they were about right.

On certain questions that contained an answer obviously representing an extreme position (as indicated by the fact that it was rarely selected) differences did appear. For example, on the question “How often in America today do you think an innocent man is convicted of a crime he did not commit?”, those who said, “one in two convictions” and “one in five convictions” scored considerably lower on the criminal index than did other respondents. Those who said sentences were “much too lenient” had a criminal index mean of 8.9. But both those who said sentences were “too severe” and those who said “much too severe” had a higher mean of 10.3.

The more dissatisfied with the American system of justice a person was, the more likely he was to have a high over-all score. The over-all mean for those who said they were “very satisfied” was 13.3. It was 15.1 for the “undecided” group, 15.8 for those who said they were “unsatisfied,” and 16.0 for the “very unsatisfied” group.

Two questions were asked concerning the maximum sentences allowed by law for first offenders convicted of breaking and entering, and drunken driving. Those who underestimated sentences appeared to be more likely to think that sentences today are too lenient than were those who did not underestimate sentences. For breaking and entering, for example, the actual maximum prison term is fifteen years. Of those who said sentences are “much too lenient,” 28.0 per cent thought the maximum was six months or less. In contrast, 26.1

per cent of those who said "too lenient," 21.7 per cent of those who said "about right," 16.1 per cent of those who said "too severe," and 10.0 per cent of those who said "much too severe" thought that the maximum sentence was under six months.

**D. Sources of Legal Knowledge**

One of the goals of the survey was to discover the sources of the ordinary citizen's legal knowledge by examining the relationship between certain experiences and the level of knowledge. The results, while by no means conclusive, did indicate that certain factors do correlate highly with legal knowledge.

The hypothesis that those with certain consumer experiences would have a greater knowledge of commercial law than those who had no such experiences was neither confirmed nor disproved. The consumer mean was 3.27 for those respondents who had bought goods on credit and 3.21 for those who had not. For those who had bought a car on credit, the consumer mean was 3.28, while it was 3.20 for those who had not. Respondents who had returned a defective product had a consumer mean of 3.30, and those who had not had a mean of 3.01. However, those who had tried to return a defective product and had met with some opposition by the merchant had the highest consumer mean, 3.46. These findings are inconclusive because the differences, while in the expected direction, are not large.

The respondents were also asked if they, anyone in their family, or anyone they had known well had ever been involved in certain criminal situations, for example, having to put up bail. As Table 5 demonstrates, the results from these questions were more conclusive than the results from the inquiries into consumer experiences. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TABLE 5</strong></th>
<th><strong>CRIMINAL EXPERIENCE AND CRIMINAL LAW INDEX MEAN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Experience</td>
<td>Criminal Index Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No experience</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioned on the street</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketed for traffic offense</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial for traffic offense</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioned at police station</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to make bail</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial for nontraffic offense</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

results confirm the hypothesis that personal experience leads to a greater awareness of one's rights as a criminal defendant. The one obvious flaw is the relatively low score for those who have been convicted. There are several possible explanations for that result. First,
people may be unwilling to admit, even in an anonymous survey, to
criminal convictions. Second, a conviction may not in fact increase
one's criminal knowledge. Third, since it was not made clear that
"conviction," as used in this question, did not include convictions for
taxi offenses and since more people checked the convicted box than
indicated that they had been or knew someone who had been on trial,
it seems likely that the total for "convictions" includes convictions
for traffic violations. It would not be surprising if such a minor
encounter with the criminal justice system did not correlate positively
with legal knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Index Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Index Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No paper read</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local paper</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit paper</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National paper (N.Y. Times,</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local &amp; Detroit</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local &amp; national</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit &amp; national</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local, Detroit &amp; national</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 6, newspaper reading appears to correlate
positively with legal knowledge. Of course, it cannot be stated defi­
nitely that people who read newspapers gain their legal knowledge
from the papers; legally well educated people may gain their knowl­
dge elsewhere (for example, through formal schooling) and merely
like to read newspapers. Still, this table does indicate that those who
read newspapers, particularly national or Detroit papers, are likely to
have a greater amount of legal knowledge than those that do not.
Note that respondents who read local and Detroit papers have lower
scores than those who read only Detroit papers, and those who read
local and national papers have lower scores than those who read only
national papers. This may indicate either that local papers do not do
a good job in imparting legal knowledge or that people with high
legal knowledge do not care to read local papers.

The sample that reads both Detroit and national newspapers indi­

cates nothing of interest since it consists of only two persons. How­
ever, the extreme scores of those who read local, Detroit, and national
newspapers should be noted; eleven of these fifteen people were Ann
Arbor residents.

Newspaper reading does not appear to impart any consumer legal
knowledge. A possible explanation for this finding is that, while many of the criminal questions were concerned with Supreme Court decisions that had received heavy newspaper coverage, no question dealing with the legal rights of consumers has been heavily covered by the news media in recent years.

**TABLE 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newsweekly</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Index Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Index Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Time</em></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Newsweek</em></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U.S. News and World Report</em></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one of the above</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated by Table 7, the reading of popular news magazines correlates highly with legal knowledge. As with newspaper readership, this does not prove that reading a newsweekly imparts legal knowledge but may merely indicate that highly knowledgeable people read newsweeklies. One interesting sidelight of the magazine findings was that readers of *U.S. News and World Report*, which is business oriented, scored considerably lower on the criminal index than did readers of *Time* or *Newsweek*, but higher on the consumer index.

**TABLE 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television News</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Index Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Index Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National news only</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local news only</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and local news</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No TV news watched</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings indicated above (Table 8), on the relationship between watching television news and legal knowledge, are perplexing. Respondents who watch only local or only national news scored lower than those who watch both programs regularly and lower than those that watch none at all. Those who do not watch television news may
obtain legal knowledge from other sources, such as newspapers. It may also be possible that those who watch only national or local news are deprived of legal information conveyed by the unwatched program, as well as that obtained from outside sources.

Respondents were also asked which of certain crime-oriented entertainment shows they watched, but there was no obvious correlation between the watching of such shows (for example, "Columbo," "Hawaii Five-O," "The Rookies") and legal knowledge. Those who watched them scored neither better nor worse than those who did not, and respondents that watched many such shows scored approximately the same as those that watched few.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VISITS TO A LAWYER AND LEGAL KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Index Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Index Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No visits within the past three years</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit for business</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit for will</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit for estate</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit for criminal matter</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit for other reason</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was hypothesized that those that had visited a lawyer within the past three years would have higher scores. Table 9 gives some support for this theory. Respondents that had visited a lawyer for business scored high on the consumer index (possibly because they were businessmen themselves), and the nine respondents that had seen a lawyer about a criminal matter had very high scores on the criminal index.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEGAL KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Over-all Mean</th>
<th>Criminal Index Mean</th>
<th>Consumer Index Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV news</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own experience</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV shows</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final question was "From which of the following do you think you get most of your knowledge about the law?" As can be seen from Table 10, the results were inconclusive, with the exception of the high scores of the seven who thought their knowledge came from magazines.

The most important fact to be stressed is that, overall, the level of citizen knowledge of criminal law is fairly high and that of consumer law is fairly low. That indicates that more research should be conducted in the area of public knowledge of consumer rights. Few, if any, of the factors studied—general educational level, income, newspaper readership, consumer experience—had a strong correlation with knowledge of consumer rights.

However, in the area of criminal law, several factors do appear to be associated with high knowledge. Education, occupation, income, experience with criminal matters, newspaper readership, and newsweekly readership all appear to be related to knowledge of criminal law.

One final disturbing note is the great dissatisfaction with the American justice system revealed by the survey. The general feeling of most of those who responded was summed up by one Ludington man: "We're in one hell of a mess right now."

**APPENDIX**

I. **Legal Knowledge Questionnaire and Summary of Responses**

Please answer each question the way you think the law operates in Michigan today. Even if you are not sure, make a guess; if you have absolutely no idea as to the correct answer, check "no idea."

1. Suppose a police officer knocked on Mr. Smith's door and said he wanted to search the house. In each of the following cases, do you think the law would require Mr. Smith to allow the officer to search?
   a. The officer shows Mr. Smith a badge and tells Mr. Smith politely he is going to do a routine search. (Correct answer: Law does not require)
      Law requires 5%  Law does not require 93%
      Have no idea 2%
   b. The officer says he just saw a robbery suspect enter Mr. Smith's home and believes the suspect is still in there. (Law requires)
      Law requires 47%  Law does not require 51%
      Have no idea 2%

---

10. Percentages do not always total 100% because of rounding and multiple responses appropriate to certain questions.
2. Regardless of how you answered question [1], do you think the law should allow the police officer to search Mr. Smith's home if:
   a. The officer shows Mr. Smith a badge and tells Mr. Smith politely he is going to do a routine search.
      Law should allow 11%  Law should not allow 86%
      Have no idea 2%
   b. The officer says he just saw a robbery suspect enter Mr. Smith's home and believes the suspect is still in there.
      Law should allow 61%  Law should not allow 38%
      Have no idea 1%

3. Suppose a police officer stops a car and wants to search it. In each of the following cases, do you think the law allows the officer to search the car?
   a. The car meets the description of a car just involved in a robbery. (Law allows)
      Law allows 84%  Law does not allow 14%
      Have no idea 2%
   b. The car is pulled over because the driver has broken a minor traffic law, like a defective tail light. (Law does not allow)
      Law allows 40%  Law does not allow 58%
      Have no idea 2%

4. When do you think the law allows a police officer to stop a person on the street and frisk him—that is, search his clothing for weapons?
   a. Any time the police wish. (Law does not allow)
      Law allows 15%  Law does not allow 80%
      Have no idea 5%
   b. If the police think a crime is taking place. (Law allows)
      Law allows 83%  Law does not allow 10%
      Have no idea 7%

5. Mr. Johnson has been arrested and taken to the police station. If the police begin to question him, do you think the law allows Mr. Johnson to do any of the following?
   a. Refuse to say anything. (Law allows)
      Law allows 97%  Law does not allow 1.5%
      Have no idea 1.5%
   b. Be provided with a lawyer at the taxpayer's expense if he wants one but can't afford one. (Law allows).
      Law allows 95.5%  Law does not allow 3.5%
      Have no idea 1.5%

6. Regardless of how you answered Question [5], do you think the law should allow Mr. Johnson to do any of the following after being arrested and taken to the police station?
   a. Refuse to say anything.
      Law should allow 89%  Law should not allow 8.5%
      Have no idea 2.5%
b. Be provided with a lawyer at the taxpayers' expense if he wants one but can't afford one.
   Law should allow 90%  Law should not allow 8%
   Have no idea 2%

7. If a person remains silent when questioned by the police, may his silence be used against him in court? (No)
   Yes, it can be used against him 13%  No, it can't be used against him 82%
   Have no idea 4%

8. Suppose the police have entered a house because a noisy party is disturbing the neighbors. The police thoroughly search the house despite the owner's objections. In a drawer in the bedroom the police find a quantity of heroin. They arrest the owner of the house and charge him with possession of heroin. At the trial, do you think the heroin found in the house can be admitted as evidence against the owner? (No)
   Yes, it can be admitted as evidence 24%  No, it can't be admitted as evidence 71%
   Have no idea 5%

9. If a criminal defendant is found not guilty by reason of insanity, he may then go free. (False)
   True 14%  False 83%  Have no idea 3%

10. A burglar breaks into a residential home and is about to steal a television when he is caught by the police. The burglar is convicted of the crime of "breaking and entering." Assuming this is his first offense, what is the maximum prison sentence he may receive? (Please indicate below the maximum number of days, months, or years the burglar may receive as a sentence)

11. The maximum jail sentence for someone convicted for the first time of drunken driving in Michigan is: (Please indicate below the maximum number of days, months, or years the driver may receive as a sentence)

12. The Civil Rights Commission has the power to take civil rights violators to court. (False)
   True 63%  False 18%  Have no idea 18%

13. Under Michigan law, a school board can require blacks and whites to go to separate schools, as long as they are of equal quality. (False)
   True 12.5%  False 80.5%  Have no idea 7%

14. In Michigan it is against the law for a black person to marry a white person. (False)
   True 4%  False 93.5%  Have no idea 2%

15. The law allows an airline to refuse to hire a man who applies for a job as a stewardess for the reason that his sex disqualifies him for that position. (False)
   True 20%  False 70%  Have no idea 10%

16. Regardless of how you answered Question [15], do you think the law should allow an airline to refuse to hire a man who ap-
plies for a job as a stewardess for the reason that his sex disqualifies him for that position?
Law should allow 25%       Law should not allow 70%
Have no idea 5%

17. You buy a new car on credit from a local car dealer. You make the first six payments on the car, but then you miss the next payment. The car is now parked on the street in front of your house. Does the law allow the car dealer to come and take the car back without your knowledge? (Law allows)
Law allows 24%       Law does not allow 71%
Have no idea 5%

18. Regardless of how you answered Question [17], do you think the law should allow the car dealer to come and take the car back without your knowledge?
Law should allow 5.5%       Law should not allow 92.5%
Have no idea 2%

19. Michigan law limits the amount of interest loan companies can charge on their loans. (True)
True 80.5%       False 13%       Have no idea 6.5%

20. You buy some clothes in a department store. The next day, before you have worn the clothes, you decide you don’t like the style. When later the same day you bring the clothes back is the store required by law to refund your money? (Store not required by law)
Store is required by law 18%
Store is not required by law 77%
Have no idea 5%

21. A door-to-door salesman uses false promises to convince Mr. Long to sign a contract to buy some books. Does the law require Mr. Long to pay for the books? (Law does not require)
Law requires 30.5%       Law does not require 64.5%
Have no idea 5%

22. Someone steals your checkbook and signs your name on a check to a grocery store. Are you required by law to pay the store the amount of the check? (You are not required by law)
You are required by law 32.0%       You are not required by law 60.5%
Have no idea 7.5%

23. Mr. Edwards buys a new television set from a department store. There is no written guarantee on the television. Two weeks later, after normal use, the TV breaks down. The store admits the TV is defective, but refuses to repair it or refund Mr. Edwards’ money. Is the store required by law to repair the TV or refund the money? (Store is required)
Store is required by law 17%       Store is not required by law 76.5%
Have no idea 6.5%
24. If the FBI believes that someone plans to bomb the White House, does the law allow the FBI to have that person’s phone tapped without getting permission from a judge? (Law does not allow)
   Law allows 26%  Law does not allow 63%
   Have no idea 11%

25. How well do you think the police do in catching persons who have committed crimes?
   Very good 8%  Good 29.5%  Average 43%
   Poor 17.5%  Very poor 2%

26. How often in America today is a guilty man arrested but never convicted of a crime he committed?
   1 in 10 arrests 19%  3 in 10 arrests 39%
   5 in 10 arrests 26%  7 in 10 arrests 15%

27. In what fraction of arrests must charges be dropped because the evidence was obtained illegally?
   1 in 1,000 arrests 9%  1 in 100 arrests 29%
   1 in 10 arrests 38%  1 in 5 arrests 19%
   1 in 2 arrests 5%

28. How often in America today do you think an innocent man is convicted of a crime he did not commit? (Pick the figure closest to your guess)
   In one in a million convictions the defendant is really innocent 14%
   In one in 1,000 convictions the defendant is really innocent 42%
   In one in a hundred convictions the defendant is really innocent 29.5%
   In one in 10 convictions the defendant is really innocent 6.5%
   In one in 5 convictions the defendant is really innocent 5%
   In one in 2 convictions the defendant is really innocent 2.5%

29. Why are innocent men sometimes convicted?

30. Do you think sentences judges give in America today are . . .
   Much too lenient 24%  Too lenient 39%
   About right 27%  Too severe 6%
   Much too severe 4%

31. What is the main reason for keeping a man in jail after he has been convicted of a crime? (Please check one reason only).
   To prevent him from committing another crime for a period of time 10%
   To punish him for his crime 37%
   To deter others from committing similar crimes 7%
   To rehabilitate him so that he will not commit other crimes when he is released 42%
   Other 4%
32. How effective have civil rights laws been in bringing about equal opportunity for all Americans?
   Very effective 7%   Effective 58%   Not effective 27%
   Damaging 8%

33. The law which governs merchants and consumers
   Strongly favors merchants 8%   Favors merchants 33%
   Is neutral 37%   Favors consumers 18%
   Strongly favors consumers 3%

34. How satisfied are you with the way the American system of justice is working today?
   Very satisfied 1%   Satisfied 14%   Undecided 24%
   Unsatisfied 49%   Very unsatisfied 12%

35. What are the reasons for your satisfaction or dissatisfaction?

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this study we would like to see how answers compare for different groups of people. Also, we are interested in how people get their knowledge about the law. Therefore, would you please indicate:

1. Sex: Male 46%   Female 54%

2. Race: White 94%   Black 5%   Other 1%

3. Age:
   Under 18 1%  25-29 14.5%  45-54 17%
   18-21 11.5%  30-34 10.5%  55-64 12%
   22-24 7%  35-44 15.5%  65 or over 11%

4. What is the last grade of school or college that you have completed?
   7 grades or less 1%
   8 to 11 grades 17%
   12 grades (high school diploma) 32.5%
   1 to 3 years college or trade school 21%
   4 years college or bachelor's degree 15.5%
   Other 13% (described as graduate work)

5. Occupation: What kind of work do you now do, or if you are unemployed, what kind of work did you last do? (Please give a specific title or job description, not a general phrase like "factory work")

   The responses were classified as follows:
   Clerical workers 13%
   Craftsmen and foremen 8%
   Farmers or farm workers 1%
   Laborers 5%
   Managers, officials and proprietors 9%
   Operatives 5%
Professionals 21%
Sales workers 3%
Service workers 12%
Or check here if you are: Full-time housewife 13%
Full-time student 10%

6. During the past year, about what was your yearly income before taxes—anything you earned yourself, or if you are married, your family income? (Check ONE which fits best).
   Under $4,000 per year 19%   $12,000 to 15,999 16%
   $4,000 to 7,999   15%   $16,000 to 19,999 12%
   $8,000 to 11,999  20%   $20,000 or more  15%
   No answer  3%

7. Have you ever bought any merchandise on credit?
   Yes 78%   No 22%

8. Have you ever bought a car on credit or with money loaned to you by a bank or finance company?
   Yes 68%   No 32%

9. Have you ever tried to return a product to a store because it was defective?
   Yes 80%   No 20%

10. If you answered "yes" to the previous question, please tell us what happened when you tried to return the defective product.

11. In the past five years, has anyone close to you—any members of your family or people you know well—or have you yourself had any of the following experiences? (Check any that you know of)
   Ticketed for a traffic offense (other than parking tickets) 40%
   Stopped on the street by a policeman and questioned about a nontraffic offense 4%
   Arrested on a charge other than a traffic violation 3%
   Required to come to a police station for questioning 4%
   Been on trial for a traffic offense 7%
   Had to make bail 6%
   Been on trial for a nontraffic offense 3%
   Been convicted of an offense 9% (Please specify)
   None of the above 18%

12. Do you read any newspapers regularly? If so, which ones?

13. Do you read any of the following magazines on a regular basis?
   Time  Reader's Digest
   Newsweek  Look
   U.S. News & World Report  Ebony
   Other

14. Do you watch any of these television programs regularly?
   National news shows (like Walter Cronkite)
15. Have you seen a lawyer within the past three years?
   Yes 39%   No 61%
   What for?

16. Are any of your close relatives lawyers? (If so, please specify relationship)
   Yes 10%   No 90%

17. From which one of the following do you think you get most of your knowledge about the law? (Check only ONE)
   From newspapers 39%   From TV shows 14%
   From TV news programs 12%   From magazines 2%
   From your own experience 11%   From friends 7%
   Other (Please specify) 4% 20

20. In addition, 10% of the respondents indicated a combination of the listed methods.