

HOUSING ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS: 1960 AND 1988

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to determine the housing aspirations and expectations of current senior college students and to examine those housing aspirations and expectations in relation to those of women-college students in the 1960s (as reported by Montgomery, 1963). The questionnaire to measure housing aspirations and expectations was designed using the one developed by Montgomery as a model. Data for the study were collected from college seniors at two universities in the spring term of 1988. Seventy-five percent of the 1000 questionnaires mailed were returned. Differences between males and females were examined using the T-test, and comparisons of the percentage of students selecting each response were made for items utilized in both this study and the one reported by Montgomery using 1960 data.

Data collected from the 1988 respondents revealed that 98 percent planned to purchase a single family dwelling sometime in their lifetime. These college seniors desired many "upscale" housing features, but were usually realistic in their expectations as to features that would be present in their first purchased house. Results of the T-test analysis indicated a greater number of differences between males and females with regard to features desired as compared with features expected.

Of the data collected that were comparable to the 1960 study, students in 1988 were found to have many different expectations and desires. College seniors in 1988 were more likely to want a contemporary home with fewer bedrooms than those in 1960. Features such as dishwashers and food waste disposers were expected by the 1988 sample at least as often as they were desired by students in the 1960s.

Introduction

The housing train has left the station and whether or not someone was on it and when he or she boarded will influence not only his or her ability to achieve his or her housing aspirations but also the overall level of economic well-being he or she is able to attain (Hughes and Sternlieb, 1990). For example, first wave baby boomers who purchased houses in the 1970s were able to lock in lower mortgage payments and now have more money available for discretionary spending. Their ability to trade up to larger housing units with more amenities may be hampered, however, by the fact that for the first time since before World War II the size of the generation that will be looking for starter homes is smaller than the generation preceding it. The coming generation of home purchasers, the baby bust generation, is likely to find itself benefiting from a buyer's market in housing at the same time that it profits from reduced competition for entry level job positions.

The influence of generation size on the economic success of a generation was first examined by the economist Richard Easterlin. In his book, *Birth and Fortune*, Easterlin (1980) hypothesized that although the effects of generation size are most significant in young adulthood, they remain throughout the life cycle. In general, smaller generations fare better with better access to jobs, higher wages, faster opportunities for advancement, and better access to first houses.

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Using Easterlin's premises as a framework, this paper reports the results of studies which examined the housing aspirations and expectations of two generations. The first study reports on women college students who were part of the half generation which came of age in the late 1950s while the second study focused on women and men who were college students in 1988.

In 1963, Montgomery reported the results of a study titled "Housing Images of Women College Students" in which the housing aspirations and expectations of women students at four universities were determined. In this study, a total of 1,947 women undergraduates were surveyed during the spring of 1960 at the University of Tennessee, the University of Minnesota, the University of Oregon, and Oregon State College (now Oregon State University). Approximately two-thirds of the sample were home economics majors and one third were liberal arts majors. The study examined the desires and expectations of the students relative to the kinds and locations of living arrangements, age of first house, architectural style, housing features, mechanical equipment, methods of acquiring housing, anticipated cost, and factors which students thought had influenced their ideas about housing.

Some of the findings reported by Montgomery included the following: a preference for new styles of housing such as modern, split-level, or ranch styles; more certainty of the housing values held than of the ability to attain those values; a generally negative image of the city and of prefabrication in housing; and a perception that the parental setting had not been an important source of information relative to the formation of the students' ideas about housing. It is interesting to note that Montgomery felt the women students to be very realistic in some of their expectations whereas in others he felt they were most unrealistic. Among the realistic expectations were the following: starting households as renters; locating in metropolitan areas; having few, if any, extra rooms; possessing a modest amount of mechanical equipment; paying for housing; and emphasizing homeownership.

The expectations which Montgomery felt to be unrealistic included the preference for contemporary architecture, the timing of the first housing purchase (which students expected to be four years after marriage), the preference for a dining room and fireplace, and the expectation that their first house would be custom designed by either an architect or themselves.

It is somewhat surprising that in the time since the Montgomery study when culture in the United States was dominated by a youth orientation and increases in housing costs were outpacing increases in income, little of the vast quantity of research focusing on youth dealt with housing issues. A study reported by Holm (1983) revealed the importance of homeownership for college students as individuals and for society as a whole. A replication of this study reported by Crull (1988) provided additional support for the importance of homeownership to college students.

The current study was undertaken in an effort to update the Montgomery study and to gain greater insight into the housing aspirations and expectations of the college students of today who are likely to be first-time home buyers in 2000. Therefore, the purposes of the study reported in this paper were to determine the housing aspirations and expectations of senior college students who are the potential first-time buyers of 2000, and to examine those housing aspirations and expectations in relation to those of women college students in the 1960s. The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To determine the housing aspirations and expectations of today's college students who are likely to be first-time homebuyers in 2000;
2. To examine the differences between the housing aspirations and expectations of male and female college seniors;
3. To examine the differences between the housing aspirations and expectations of college students today and of women college students in the 1960s (as reported by Montgomery, 1963).

The research was implemented through a survey of seniors at Radford University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (commonly known as Virginia Tech). The sample was drawn from those students classified as seniors during the fall term of 1987. In order to obtain a sample of sufficient size, all seniors majoring in interior design, housing,

architecture, or building construction were included in the sample. The remainder of the sample was randomly selected from seniors majoring in other fields. The total sample consisted of 1000 seniors proportionally divided between the two universities on the basis of the number of students classified as seniors. The survey was conducted during the spring term of 1988.

Table 1. Demographics of the sample.

Variable	N	%
Sex		
Female	354	54.0
Male	302	46.0
Marital Statue		
Single	620	94.2
Married	25	3.8
Other	13	2.0
Age		
Under 21	7	1.1
21	214	32.4
22	251	38.0
23	104	15.8
24	45	6.8
25	11	1.7
26-30	20	3.2
31-41	8	1.5
Major		
Housing/Interior Design	55	8.3
Architecture/Bldg Construction/Landscape	65	9.8
Business	142	21.5
Engineering	106	16.1
Other	292	44.2
Parents' Occupation		
Temporary/Factory Worker	16	2.6
Clerk/Tradesman/Foreman	77	12.2
Teacher/Small Business/Supervisor	193	30.6
Executive/Professional	345	54.7
Political Orientation		
Liberal	132	20.6
Middle-of-the-Road	320	49.9
Conservative	189	29.5

The questionnaire to measure housing aspirations and expectations was designed using the one developed by Montgomery (1963) as a model. Appropriate additions, deletions, and revisions were made in order to make the instrument more current. The questionnaire was pretested for clarity by groups of students at both universities. The necessary permission for human subjects research was obtained at each of the participating universities.

The questionnaires were distributed through campus and U.S. mail. Follow-up procedures, as described in the Dillman (1978) total design method for mail surveys, were implemented to ensure an adequate rate of response. Approximately one week after the questionnaires were mailed, a post card thanking the student for participating in the survey, and reminding those who had not returned the questionnaire to do so, was mailed to each person in the sample. Two weeks later, a duplicate copy of the questionnaire along with a cover letter was sent to all members of the sample who had not responded at that time. Utilization of this procedure resulted in a response rate of 74.6 percent. Respondents who lived with parents or owned their own homes were not included in the analysis. The collected data were coded and entered on the computer for analysis. Differences between males and fe-

males were examined using the T-test procedure. Comparisons of the percentage of students selecting each response were made for items utilized in both this study and the one reported by Montgomery.

Descriptions of the Sample

Students were single (94 percent), between the ages of 21 and 23 (86 percent) and almost evenly divided by sex (54 percent female and 46 percent male)(see Table 1). Majors ranged from engineering (16 percent), business (22 percent), and housing, interior design and architecture (18 percent) to 44 percent of the students in other majors. Respondents were predominantly from Virginia (74 percent), with Maryland (7 percent) and New Jersey (4 percent) a distant second and third. Parents' occupations tended toward the professional with 31 percent being teachers, supervisors or small business owners and 55 percent being business executives or in professional positions such as engineers, doctors, and lawyers. Students' political orientation was middle of the road (50 percent) with 21 percent considering themselves liberal and 30 percent conservative.

Residential Characteristics and Future Plans

The American dream of owning one's own house is alive and well if respondents in this survey represent college age youth of today. Although 93.4 percent of the respondents spent most of their lives in houses owned by their parents, 98 percent plan to purchase a single family house sometime in their lifetime (See Table 2). Most wanted their house to be located in a suburb (50 percent) or small city (23 percent), with about 20 percent desiring to live in a rural area or small town.

Almost 95 percent of the sample had grown up in a single family dwelling, and 58 percent expected their first house to be a single family dwelling. While 22.7 percent expected their first purchased dwelling to be a townhouse and 19.5 percent expected to purchase an apartment, not one respondent expected a mobile home as the first purchased residence.

Most respondents reported they wanted a contemporary home (40.6 percent) as compared with 19.6 percent whose parents actually lived in a contemporary home. The greatest percentage of respondents had lived with their parents in split-, bi- or tri-level houses (30.3 percent) or in a colonial style house (27.2 percent); however, only 7.5 percent and 15.4 percent desired those styles for their first purchased dwelling.

A majority of the respondents (52 percent) wanted a two story house, while only 15 percent desired a single story dwelling. The three bedroom house (55 percent), with two or two and one half baths (76 percent), was the size desired most frequently.

When asked about their preference for a new dwelling, the respondents selected a relatively new dwelling most frequently (33.3 percent), followed by an older house in move-in condition (17.9 percent), a custom built house designed by the respondent (17.3 percent), and a newly constructed dwelling (13.6 percent) (See Table 3).

Respondents expected this first residence to cost \$75,000-\$99,999 (31.9 percent), \$50,000-\$74,999 (30.7 percent) and \$100,000-\$149,000 (24.9 percent). Few expected their first dwelling to cost more than \$150,000 (6.7 percent) or less than \$50,000 (5.8 percent).

Respondents were less realistic about when they expected to purchase their first residence. Sixty-four percent expected to purchase their residence within five years after graduation, making the respondents about 27 or 28 years of age or younger. In reality, between 1980 and 1988, homeownership rates for 25 to 29-year-olds fell from 43.3 percent to 36.2 percent (Apgar, DiPasquale, McArdle, and Olson, 1989). In addition, an overwhelming majority (81.2 percent) of the respondents expected to save for their downpayment, with only 8.7 percent expecting to borrow or receive the downpayment as a gift from parents. This also underscores the unrealistic expectations of purchasing a home in less than five years since downpayments would probably range from \$15,000 to \$25,000 for most of the expected purchase prices.

Desires and Expectations

While the 1980s were often called the “me” decade and Yuppie became synonymous with expensive consumer purchases, the respondents’ expectations were probably very realistic even though their desires reflected features found in expensive move-up homes. Ninety percent of the respondents desired an eat-in kitchen and deck; over 80 percent desired a utility room (89.6 percent), dining room (86.4 percent), entry hall (85.4 percent), garage (84.5 percent), family room (84.1 percent), and den (82.5 percent) (See Table 4). Of those items, 78.5 percent actually expected an eat-in kitchen, 72.7 percent a utility room, 68.0 percent a dining room, 66.3 percent a family room, and 62.2 percent an entry hall.

Table 2. Characteristics of past residences(s) and future plans.

Variable	N	%	Past N	Future %
Form of Tenure				
Rented	37	5.6		
Owned by parents	613	93.4		
Provided free	6	0.9		
			653	98.0
Plans to Purchase				
Community Size				
Large city	69	10.6	41	6.3
Suburb	261	40.2	324	50.0
Small city	136	20.9	149	23.0
Small town	97	14.9	52	8.0
Rural	87	13.4	82	12.7
Type				
Single	622	94.8	378	57.7
Mobile home	1	0.2	---	---
Townhouse	17	2.6	149	22.7
Apartment	16	2.4	128	19.5
Style				
Contemporary	122	19.6	266	40.6
Colonial	169	27.2	101	15.4
Townhouse	7	1.1		
Traditional ranch			40	6.1
Split-, bi-, or tri-level	188	30.3	49	7.5
Other	101	16.3	63	9.6
Don't know	34	5.5	136	20.8
Structure				
Single-story			99	15.2
Two-story			340	52.2
Split-, bi-, or tri-level			212	32.6
Number of Bedrooms				
One			12	1.8
Two			207	31.4
Three			363	55.1
Four or more			77	11.7
Number of Bathrooms				
One			12	1.8
One and 1/2			93	14.0
Two			280	42.3
Two and 1/2			221	33.4
Three or more			56	8.5

In terms of decorative finishing and leisure amenities, the fireplace was the most desired (94.4 percent) and expected (74.3 percent). Respondents also wanted ceiling fans (85.4 percent), skylights (83.9 percent), hardwood floors (82 percent) and a hot tub (80.5 percent). They expected these amenities in much lower numbers: ceiling fans (47.8 percent), skylights (27.1 percent), hardwood floors (51.5 percent) and hot tubs (12.0 percent).

Table 3. Financial aspects of first purchase.

Variable	N	%
Age of Unit		
Older, to be rehabilitated	65	9.9
Older, in move in-condition	117	17.9
Relatively new	218	33.3
Newly constructed	89	13.6
Designed by respondent, custom built	113	17.3
Designed by architect, custom built	53	8.1
Cost		
Less than \$50,000	38	5.8
\$50,000-74,999	201	30.7
\$75,000-99,999	209	31.9
\$100,000-149,999	163	24.9
Greater than \$150,000	44	6.7
Source of Funds for Down Payment		
Personal Savings	524	81.2
Borrow from parents	41	6.4
Gift from parents	15	2.3
Borrow from relatives	9	1.4
Gift from relatives	4	0.6
Other	52	8.1
Expected Purchase Date		
Less than two years after graduation	85	12.9
Two to five years after graduation	338	51.1
More than five years after graduation	238	36.0

Historically, those who market homes have emphasized that the kitchen and bath were the most important selling features in a house. In the 1980s, the master bedroom/bath was added to that list. Respondents were asked their desires and expectations in these three areas. In the kitchen, respondents desired a dishwasher (94.8 percent), microwave (93.4 percent) and food waste disposer (85.7 percent) and expected to have all of these features at least 70 percent of the time.

In the master bathroom they wanted large mirrors (93.1 percent), a bathroom linen closet (87.8 percent), ceramic tile flooring (80.7 percent), and a whirlpool (75.6 percent). Their expectations to have these features were much lower: large mirrors (65.4 percent), ceramic tile flooring (62.5 percent), bathroom linen closet (53.5 percent), and a whirlpool (7.9 percent).

As for the master bedroom, the respondents desired a walk-in closet (97.7 percent) and a bedroom balcony or patio (78.4 percent). Although 71.9 percent expected a walk-in closet, only 15.9 percent expected a bedroom balcony or patio.

When given a choice between certain features, respondents selected wood over laminate cabinets (82 percent-18 percent), laminate over ceramic tile countertops (72 percent-28 percent), and a vanity cabinet over a pedestal sink in the master bath (84 percent-16 percent).

Table 4. Features of first purchase.

Features	Desired		Expected	
	N	%	N	%
Spaces				
Eat-in kitchen	594	90.3	512	78.5
Dining Room	566	86.4	437	68.0
Entry hall	555	85.4	399	62.2
Den	536	82.5	330	51.2
Family room	546	84.1	426	66.3
Utility room	587	89.6	468	72.7
Shop	233	36.0	78	12.3
Garage	555	84.5	349	54.4
Sunroom	384	59.2	69	10.9
Computer area	235	36.5	90	14.2
Interior balcony	431	65.9	119	18.9
Deck	586	90.0	381	59.3
Screened porch	321	49.8	118	18.6
Decorative Finishes/Leisures/Amenities				
Ceiling fans	563	85.4	312	47.8
Fireplace	622	94.4	488	74.3
Security system	410	62.6	107	16.5
Built-in vacuum	198	30.4	37	5.7
Wet bar	424	64.5	109	16.7
Swimming pool	380	57.9	42	6.5
Hot tub	530	80.5	78	12.0
French doors	383	59.6	100	15.7
Sliding glass doors	495	76.2	473	73.2
Hardwood floors	536	82.0	333	51.5
Track lighting	446	69.6	173	27.2
Decorative moulding	437	67.6	222	34.6
Wood paneling	552	83.9	176	27.1
Skylights	552	83.9	176	27.1
Sunken rooms	415	63.9	100	15.6
Cathedral ceilings	406	62.4	124	19.3
Mirrored walls	150	23.1	39	6.1
Window seats	448	69.1	136	21.3
Interior Amenities/Equipment				
Kitchen	594	90.3	512	78.5
Kitchen work island	513	78.2	173	26.9
Microwave	613	93.4	91	14.8
Dishwasher	624	94.8	551	84.4
Trash compactor	259	39.8	64	9.9
Food disposal	563	85.7	459	70.2
Master bath				
Bath greenhouse/bay	382	58.7	71	11.1
Bathroom skylight	457	69.8	92	14.2
Colored plumbing fixtures	272	42.2	120	18.8
Ceramic tile flooring	522	80.7	400	62.5
Bathroom linen closet	577	87.8	345	53.5
Large mirrors	611	93.1	425	65.4
Separate shower	296	45.2	92	14.2
Two sinks	374	57.5	130	20.2
Whirlpool	496	75.6	51	7.9
Master Bedroom				
Bedroom balcony/patio	513	78.4	103	15.9
Walk-in closet	644	97.7	470	71.9
Bedroom fireplace	418	64.0	65	10.0
Bedroom sitting area	417	63.8	137	21.0

Comparisons Between Male and Female Students

T-test comparisons of means were conducted to determine if significant differences existed in the features desired and expected between female and male respondents. Desired and expected housing features that differed significantly at the .05 level are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Significant differences between males and females for desired and expected housing features.

Variable	Group ¹		t	Probability ²
	Mean	SD		
Desired separate dining room	1.11	3.15	-1.99	0.0474
Desired office/den	1.21	0.41	2.16	0.0315
Desired shop	1.77	0.42	7.50	0.0001
Desired sunroom	1.49	0.50	-3.90	0.0001
Desired interior balcony	1.40	0.49	-2.86	0.0044
Desired deck	1.08	0.27	-2.09	0.0367
Desired eat-in kitchen	1.07	0.26	-2.28	0.0229
Desired bay window	1.52	0.50	-4.99	0.0001
Desired skylight in bath	1.24	0.43	-3.55	0.0004
Desired colored plumbing	1.66	0.48	-4.00	0.0001
Desired linen closet in bath	1.09	0.28	-2.93	0.0036
Desired two sinks	1.52	0.50	-4.81	0.0001
Desired whirlpool	1.20	0.40	-2.68	0.0076
Desired balcony/patio in master bdrm	1.43	0.36	-4.18	0.0001
Desired fireplace in master bdrm	1.43	0.50	-3.49	0.0005
Desired fireplace	1.02	0.13	-4.41	0.0001
Desired swimming pool	1.53	0.50	-2.12	0.0347
Desired French doors	1.53	0.50	-6.01	0.0001
Desired wood paneling	1.41	0.49	2.99	0.0029
Desired skylight	1.12	0.39	-2.81	0.0052
Desired vaulted/cathedral ceiling	1.44	0.50	-3.27	0.0011
Desired window seats	1.20	0.40	-6.72	0.0001
Expected entry hall	1.42	0.49	-2.15	0.0320
Expected office/den	1.43	0.50	2.82	0.0050
Expected shop	1.93	0.26	3.98	0.0001
Expected eat-in kitchen	1.17	0.38	-2.76	0.0060
Expected two sinks	1.74	0.44	-4.41	0.0001
Expected French doors	1.82	0.39	-2.04	0.0417
Expected vaulted/cathedral ceiling	1.77	0.42	-2.87	0.0042
Expected window seats	1.74	0.44	-3.25	0.0012

¹ Desired and expected items were coded as 1, undesired or unexpected items were coded as 2; thus, the lower the mean score the greater the desirability or expectation.

² Only items significant at the .05 level are reported

A number of significant differences were found between male and female respondents in terms of the housing features desired. Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to desire an office/den, a shop, and wood paneling. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to desire such amenities as a separate dining room, a sunroom, an interior balcony, a deck, an eat-in kitchen, a bay window, skylights in the bathroom, colored plumbing fixtures, a linen closet in the bathroom, two sinks in the master bathroom, a whirlpool tub, a balcony or patio off the master bedroom, a fireplace in the master bedroom, a sitting area in the master bedroom, a fireplace, a swimming pool, French doors, skylights, vaulted/cathedral ceilings, and window seats.

Although there were significant differences between females and males on a number of desired features, it is interesting to note that the expectations of the two groups were in much closer alignment. Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to expect an office/den, a shop, and a standard range in the kitchen. Females were more likely than male respondents to expect an entry, an eat-in kitchen, two sinks in the master bathroom, French doors, vaulted/cathedral ceilings, and window seats.

Housing Preferences: 1960 and 1988

A comparison of respondents in 1960 and 1988 shows that there has been a great deal of change in college students' housing aspirations, as well as in their expectations. In the 1960 study, preferences for a split-level and contemporary house styles were about equal (27 percent) (See Table 6). The students in 1988 overwhelmingly desired a contemporary (40.6 percent), with only 7.5 percent desiring a split level.

Table 6. Overview of housing preference for first residence: 1960 and 1988 percentages.

Variable	1960 ¹ Female (N=1947)	1988 Female (N=354)	1988 Total (N=656)
Style of first single family residence			
Contemporary	27	43.3	40.6
Colonial	21	17.4	15.4
Traditional ranch	21	5.1	6.1
Split level	27	6.3	7.5
Other	9	11.1	9.6
Number of bedrooms			
Three	47	56.0	55.1
Four	45	12.5	11.7
Number of bathrooms			
Two or more	89	87.0	84.0
Ways of securing home			
Design themselves	32	15.4	17.3
Have it designed by an architect	42	8.0	8.1
Buy an older house and remodel it	12	8.6	9.9
Buy a new house in a development	4	51.2	46.9
Location			
Urban	24	6.9	6.3
Suburban	52	73.4	73.0
Rural	22	19.7	20.7
Distance from parental home			
Less than 25 miles	24	8.3	7.8
25-99	10	22.3	22.6
100-199	29	17.2	17.9
200-499	24	34.4	31.4
500 or more	11	17.8	20.3

¹ Percentages reported by Montgomery were rounded to the nearest whole number

Students in the 1960s wanted more bedrooms, with 45 percent desiring four bedrooms as compared with 11.7 percent in 1988. This trend probably reflects the decrease in fertility rates during that time span (Hughes and Sternlieb, 1987).

Only eight percent of today's students expected to have their home designed by an architect as compared with 42 percent in the 1960s. The 1988 sample overwhelmingly expected to purchase a new home in a development (47 percent) as compared with four percent in the 1960s. Increasingly, students expected to live in the suburbs -- from 52 percent in 1960 to 73 percent in 1988. Students in 1988 were more likely to expect to live farther from their parental home. For example, almost 52 percent of the students in 1988 expected to live 200 or more miles away from home, as compared with 35 percent in 1960. This may be a reflection of the more transient life-styles of the 1970s and 1980s.

As one might expect, housing preferences and expectations for many items changed over the 28-year period. Features such as microwaves and whirlpools did not even exist on the consumer market in 1960. For those items that can be compared, one can note that 66 percent of today's college students expected a family room as compared with 26 percent in 1960. Only 23 percent of the 1960 respondents expected an office or den as compared with 57 percent in 1988.

In the comparison of housing features, 92 percent of the 1960 college students desired a fireplace as compared with 94 percent in 1988 (See Table 7). The major difference occurred in the area of expectations, with 58 percent expecting them in 1960 as compared with 74 percent in 1988.

Table 7. Housing preferences and expectations: 1960 and 1988

Home Features	1960 Female (N=1947)		1988 Female (N+354)		1988 Total (N+656)	
	Desired	Expected	Desired	Expected	Desired	Expected
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Entry Hall	72	49	87.9	65.8	85.4	62.2
Family room	66	26	84.1	68.9	84.1	66.3
Office/den	60	23	79.5	45.9	82.5	51.2
Utility room	75	50	90.5	74.4	89.6	72.7
Shop	26	8	23.2	7.4	36.0	12.3
Fireplace	92	58	98.3	76.1	94.4	74.3
Garbage disposal	70	32	85.4	71.0	85.7	70.0
Dishwasher	56	21	94.3	83.0	94.8	84.0

¹ Percentages reported by Montgomery were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Perhaps the greatest area of change was in the preference for dishwashers and food waste disposers. As many, or more, students in 1988 expected dishwashers (84 percent) and food waste disposers (70 percent) as desired them in 1960 (56 percent and 70 percent respectively). Only 21 percent of the 1960 respondents expected a dishwasher, and only 32 percent expected a food waste disposer.

In only one major area of comparison did the college students of 1960 and 1988 agree. In terms of what influenced their housing expectations, both groups agreed that other homes they had seen had influenced their ideas about housing most.

Implications

The goal of homeownership is just as much a part of the "American Dream" for college seniors in 1988 as it was for women college students in 1960. Data collected from the 1988 respondents revealed that 98 percent planned to purchase a single family dwelling at some time in their lifetime. The typical house desired for first-time purchase was a two-story contemporary with three bedrooms and two and one-half baths. These college seniors desired many "upscale" housing features, but appeared to be realistic in their expectations as to the

features that would be present in their first purchased house. Although there were significant differences between females and males on a number of desired features, the expectations of the two groups were found to be in close agreement.

As one might expect, students in 1988 were found to have higher desires and expectations than those in 1960. Many of the features desired by today's college students did not exist in 1960. The only area of comparison in which college students of 1960 and 1988 agreed was in terms of what had influenced their housing expectations. Both agreed that other homes they had seen (not their own home or that of relatives) had influenced their ideas about housing most.

How well did the women college students of 1960 do in attaining their aspirations and expectations for housing? A review of the historical data indicates that they have done quite well. Using the analogy from Hughes and Sternlieb (1990), they boarded the housing train early and were able to profit when they wanted to trade up because behind them was the large generation of baby boomers wanting to purchase first houses. The overall prosperity of this group has also been great as Easterlin (1980) would have predicted based on the relatively small size of this generation. The small size of the generation made entry into the job market easier, and combined with the expanding economy of the 1950s and 1960s, contributed to the development of an affluent generation. It is interesting to note that although this generation has met with great economic success in the past, Easterlin predicts that the 1990s may be quite perilous for them as they are forced into early retirement to make room for the large number of baby boomers behind them on the career ladder.

How successful will the college seniors of 1988 be in attaining their housing aspirations and expectations? Again, we can apply the concepts of the housing train developed by Hughes and Sternlieb (1990) and the impact of generation size from the work of Easterlin (1980) to enable us to speculate on the answer to this question. Because this generation, the baby bust generation, is so small, its members can expect significant economic advantages. At the time baby busters want to purchase houses, many baby boomers will be wanting to trade up and many older couples may be selling houses as they retire. Consequently, there will be more houses on the market than buyers, helping to slow, stop, or even reverse increases in housing costs and making it easier for members of the baby bust generation to attain their first houses. Not only will entry into the job market be easier, but wages will be higher and advancement will probably come sooner and more easily than it did for baby boomers. All of these factors will combine to make it easier for this generation to satisfy its economic aspirations.

Easterlin (1980) carries the analysis of the impact of generation size on economic success one step further to suggest that there may be an inverse relationship between generation size and birth rate. He hypothesizes that we may be on a 40-year cycle in which the harsh economic realities of large generations produce lower birth rates and the better economic conditions of smaller generations result in higher birth rates. Easterlin goes so far as to propose that women in the baby bust generation may follow the path of their grandmothers and stay home and have large families. Predicting the future is always uncertain, and even Easterlin admits that the increase in birth rate may be more gradual and less pronounced than might be anticipated as a result of changes in sex roles, the labor market, and questions relative to confidence in the future.

Both the concepts of the housing train and the effects of generation size are useful in examining the ability of the two generations studied in attaining the housing aspirations and expectations they expressed. The combination of generational, economic, and housing factors indicates that the seniors of 1988 are likely to be as successful as the women students of 1960 in attaining their housing aspirations.

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