

HOME OWNERSHIP AND WELL-BEING

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Abstract

Through three cross-sectional surveys conducted in 1981, 1983, and 1989 we investigate a model of the articulation between home ownership and cognitive well-being. Data were collected from participants in an experimental home ownership program designed for working class families. Our model anticipates that home ownership will increase feelings of overall well-being by increasing satisfaction with the residential environment and increasing interaction with other residents in the community. While we find empirical support for the model, the last year of the study, 1989, suggests a reversal in the evaluation of the neighborhood.

Introduction

In this paper, we are interested in developing a theoretical model that specifies the articulation of home ownership with cognitive well-being. We find that owning a home does indeed lead to increased perceptions of well-being by increasing satisfaction with the residential environment and affiliation with neighborhood residents. Data were collected through a series of interviews with participants in a home ownership program in Norfolk, Virginia in 1981, 1983 and 1989.

Much has been written about home ownership: its benefits (Teaford, 1972; Dean, 1951) and its desirability (Bach, 1962; Freidan and Newman, 1970; Downs, 1970), but little is known about the effects that owning a home has on attitudes and behaviors of owners and their families. In 1979 we began a study of the effects of a special home ownership program on the quality of life of participants. During the grant period we conducted three one-hour interviews with participants in the program as well as three matched control groups. These interviews produced a wealth of data on respondents' relations with neighbors, economic status, participation in voluntary associations, relations with their families, etc., as well as their perceptions of their overall well-being. In 1989, ten years after the first wave of interviews, it seemed an opportune time to conduct a brief follow-up of the original participants to provide a measure of the long term effects of home ownership and to evaluate a model specifying the linkage between home ownership and well-being.

We located the original experimental group and the control group of matched private sector renters and conducted a brief telephone survey. The results provide a comparison with the earlier results of our study as well as a comparison between the home owner and rental groups at the present time.

Description of Program

The Home Ownership Opportunities Program was a local response to provisions of the Federal government's 1968 Housing Act. The act envisioned the construction of public housing units that could be sold to qualified tenants under a "sweat equity" arrangement in which families were given financial credit for doing routine maintenance on their units. In 1974, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) developed this home ownership program in two housing projects, Wellington Oaks and Belle Diamond. Wellington Oaks was integrated with a racial composition of 55 percent white, 42 percent black and 3 percent other

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racial groups. It was similar in racial and economic composition to its surrounding neighborhood. Belle Diamond is located in a predominantly black working class neighborhood. The residents were mostly nonwhite. In both locations, the units were town house style homes.

After four or five years of tenant status, families could accumulate enough "sweat equity" to cover the down payments and closing costs for their unit. If they did not wish to buy their homes, they had to move out of the project. Families who were unlikely to acquire sufficient money to purchase a house under other circumstances could become home owners under this program. The housing authority benefited by eventually turning over the maintenance and management of the housing project to individual home owners. Once a family bought a house, it lost the services of the housing authority, but acquired full title to the home. Other than a few restrictions on profits generated by resale during the first five years of the mortgage, owners were free to act as any home owner anywhere. They could remain in the developments or could sell their homes under any conditions they chose.

The Ownership Model

As conceived here, home ownership produces a sense of permanency and a psychological as well as an economic investment in the residential neighborhood. It is hypothesized that owners, in comparison to renters, will develop a sense of residential stability which increases the owner's stake in the neighborhood. This, in turn, will produce a greater concern for the welfare of the residential environment. The purchase of a home, particularly for lower and moderate income families, represents a commitment of major importance. A large proportion of the family's economic resources are encumbered over a long period of time. The important feature of the owner's economic commitment, one which differentiates the owner from the renter, is that it is made at once and that it is made to a specific home and neighborhood. In addition to the economic investment, there are psychological and emotional investments which are concomitant with the decision to purchase a home. These spring from a need to maintain consonance with the economic investment.

In addition to the economic investment, owners commit themselves and their families to a neighborhood's social and physical milieu. All residents should possess some cognizance of salient features of the community in which they live. The general hospitality of neighbors, the quality of schools, the risk of criminal victimization, the attractiveness of the community, and convenience to the work place, shopping, hospitals and churches are community traits which impinge somewhat directly upon the daily lives of most persons (Bradburn et al., 1970; Rainwater, 1966). Of course, assessment of the relative importance of these factors is not shared equally by all persons (Robinson, et al., 1975). But these features may be more important to owners because they are accouterments of the capital investment.

An owner's greater commitment to the house and neighborhood is also more difficult to withdraw than that of renters. Owners face barriers to residential mobility which renters do not. The stronger psychological and emotional investments cannot be easily transferred. Also, moving from an owned house involves efforts such as locating and interacting with buyers or real estate brokers and attorneys. Finally, working class and lower class home owners may experience difficulty in finding equivalent or improved housing they can afford, especially if they have occupied their houses for a number of years. Thus, both in a real and subjective sense, owners have a more permanent stake in their homes and neighborhoods than do renters. This may, in part, account for much lower rates of residential mobility among owners (Roistacher, 1974).

We hypothesized that the extent of financial investment in house and neighborhood will result in differences in behavioral outcomes between owners and renters. One of the expected outcomes is that owners will act to achieve greater involvement in informal neighborhood interaction networks than will renters (Ahlbrandt, 1984). There are two reasons for this. First, involvement with neighbors can be viewed as a method of control over some of the contextual aspects of the neighborhood. Through the establishment of social relationships within the residential environment, attempts can be made to produce change or enhance stability in the neighborhood environment. Given an owner's greater stake, he or she may be more

likely to expend efforts to preserve positive features of his or her neighborhoods (Downs, 1981). Second, since owners are more likely to perceive a much longer tenure in the neighborhood, they may attach greater importance to involvement in the neighborhood social system than the more transient renters. If dwellers perceive their stay as short or of uncertain length, establishing close relationships may not be considered as important (Michelson, 1977; Bradburn, et al., 1970). Other community residents probably will share this orientation as well. That is, they may be less open to friendships with persons whom they view as temporary inhabitants of their neighborhoods.

Also, we hypothesized that the greater the involvement by owners in neighborhood social networks, the greater will be the sense of pleasure and satisfaction with the overall neighborhood environment (Ahlandt, 1984). Integration into social networks tends to be intrinsically rewarding, and the perception of these rewards may increase the extent to which a neighborhood is viewed with favorable regard. Further, familiarity with the social environment may enhance feelings of comfort and safety in the neighborhood. The major effects of home ownership on neighborhood satisfaction are, we believe, mediated by residential stability which flows from permanence.

While we do not believe that a sense of overall well-being is only produced by physical living arrangements, we think that they comprise an important part. Having a sense of stability and a greater satisfaction with one's home and neighborhood may have some spill over into other aspects of life (Shoenberg, 1980).

In order to clearly specify the mechanics through which home ownership translates into a sense of well-being, a hypothetical model was constructed and evaluated. The model was drawn inferentially from earlier studies and from a theoretical sense of the linkage between home ownership, neighborhood satisfaction, and well-being. The model predicts that ownership is positively but indirectly linked to a positive conception of well-being through satisfaction with home and neighborhood. As explained earlier, we believe that owners expect to have longer tenure in their neighborhoods than renters, and that this anticipation of stability will produce greater satisfaction with home and the surrounding neighborhood. We think that part of the link between stability and satisfaction with the neighborhood is due to increased interaction with neighbors, although this variable is not included in the current analysis.

Research Methods

This study considers only the experimental group of home owners and a matched control group of private sector home renters. These private sector renters were similar to the participants in the home ownership program in all demographic characteristics measured, as shown in Table 1. Over the three years of the original study, 59 owners and 41 private sector renters were included in the study.

Table 1. Comparison of demographic characteristics of owners and renters.

Demographic Variables	Owners	Renters
Number in Study 1st Year - 3rd Year	59	41
Number in Follow-up Study	33	15
Mean Household Size	2.8	2.6
Mean Age of Household Head	47.3	47.3
Mean Education of Household Head (yrs.)	10.9	10.5
Percent Black Headed Households	81.0	82.0
Mean Family Income	14,990.0	11,879.0

During the summer of 1989, we conducted a short telephone interview with members of the experimental group of owners and members of the private sector renters. Respondents were asked about residential mobility. Items were taken from the original study to measure perceptions of well-being and attitudes about their homes and neighborhoods using multi-dimensional scales. We also asked them about some features of life which serve as more objective indicators of well-being such as divorce, unemployment, victimization from

property crimes or crimes against persons. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate their total family incomes for 1988.

The attempt to locate members of the original study followed three approaches. First, we tried to find listings in the local telephone directory. Second, we used "location cards" which respondents completed during the early years of the study and which listed "someone who would always know your whereabouts." Third, if the first two strategies were unsuccessful, city directories and cross listed directories were used to attempt to determine current addresses. Those that we located but were unable to contact by telephone, were sent questionnaires by mail.

The analysis here is composed of two parts. First, we investigated a theoretical model, specifying the manner in which home ownership affects cognitive well-being. We used data from the first and third years of the study as well as data from the follow-up telephone survey. Then we examined differences between participants in the home ownership program and the original control group of private sector renters on the basis of objective measures of well-being from the follow-up study.

Variables

Both in the original survey and in the follow-up the dependent variable, cognitive well-being (WELL-BEING), was measured by four Likert-type items. Subjects were asked to indicate how they felt about their (1) "whole life," (2) "health," (3) "marriage," and (4) "life five years from now." Ratings were expressed on a seven point response scale in the first study and a five point scale in the follow-up study: "delighted," "pleased," "mostly satisfied," "mixed," "mostly dissatisfied," "unhappy," or "terrible." (In the follow-up survey, the responses, "mostly satisfied" and "mostly dissatisfied," were omitted in order to maintain clarity and brevity necessary for a telephone survey.) These items were combined into single indicators of cognitive well-being for each phase using principal components factor analysis. (The communalities for the first year were respectively Whole Life, 0.560; Health, 0.529; Marriage, 0.226; Life in 5 years, 0.438. For the third year the communalities were Whole Life, 0.700; Health, 0.596; Marriage, 0.547; Life in 5 years, 0.382. The communalities for the follow-up study were Whole Life, 0.759; Health, 0.542; Marriage, 0.221; Life in 5 years, 0.601.

Our measure of satisfaction with home and neighborhood (NBHOOD) was taken from two items using the same response categories as the items making up the dependent variable. In this case, respondents rated "this neighborhood as a place to live" and "your house or apartment." These items were combined using principal components factor analysis to form a single indicator of satisfaction with the residential environment for each year and for the follow-up study. (The communalities were both 0.750 for the first year, and for the third year, both were 0.740. The communalities for the follow-up were both 0.635.

Anticipated stability in the neighborhood (STABILITY) was indicated by a question in the original surveys, "How long do you think you will live in this house or apartment?" This question was not included in the follow-up study in order to maintain the brevity necessary for a successful telephone survey.

The index for satisfaction with neighbors was comprised of three items from three different kinds of scales (NEIGHBORS). A "Faces" scale presented respondents with a series of seven faces, ranging from smiling faces, expressing various levels of approval, to frowning faces, showing disapproval (Andrews and Withey, 1976, pp. 211-212). The items used on the "satisfaction with neighbors" index were (1) "The people in your neighborhood" (Faces), (2) "The people who live in your neighborhood" (delighted to terrible scale), and (3) "How often do you get together with your neighbors to play cards, go to the movies, have picnics, watch television, or things like that?" (The communalities for the neighbor satisfaction for the first year, Faces, 0.541; Delighted - Terrible, 0.198; Social activities, 0.322. The communalities for the second year were: Faces, 0.749; Delighted - Terrible, 0.775; Social activities, 0.225.) All of the items included in the indices were normalized before being included in the principal components analysis.

Measures of more objective features of well-being were included in the follow-up questionnaire. These questions included indications of divorce, unemployment, burglary, and assault. Members of the home ownership program were compared with renters on each of these measures.

Table 2. Path coefficients for home ownership well-being model: all paths included.

Dependent Variables	R ²	Independent Variables	b	SE	β	t	p
First Year:							
Well-being	0.29	Income	0.18	0.083	0.23	2.14	.035
		Neighbors	0.35	0.089	0.46	3.92	.000
		Age	0.00	0.008	0.03	0.27	.790
		Ownership	-0.18	0.188	-0.12	-0.97	.335
		Stability	-0.07	0.109	-0.07	-0.58	.564
Nbhood	0.31	Nbhood	0.09	0.077	0.12	1.12	.268
		Income	0.18	0.106	0.17	1.65	.103
		Neighbors	0.20	0.098	0.20	2.04	.045
		Age	0.01	0.010	0.08	0.77	.447
		Ownership	-0.19	0.243	-0.09	-0.79	.432
Neighbors	0.07	Stability	0.53	0.127	0.47	4.15	.000
		Income	-0.13	0.123	-0.13	-1.05	.297
		Age	0.11	0.012	0.11	0.90	.369
		Ownership	-0.19	0.284	-0.09	-0.66	.511
		Stability	0.21	0.147	0.19	1.45	.152
Stability	0.25	Income	-0.05	0.096	-0.05	-0.49	.623
		Age	0.02	0.009	0.18	1.75	.085
		Ownership	0.81	0.200	0.44	4.06	.001
Third Year:							
Well-being	0.13	Income	0.05	0.100	-0.06	-0.51	.612
		Neighbors	-0.10	0.143	-0.12	-0.71	.479
		Age	-0.00	0.010	-0.03	-0.25	.803
		Ownership	0.08	0.276	0.15	0.55	.583
		Stability	-0.20	0.154	-0.22	-1.33	.187
Nbhood	0.61	Nbhood	0.40	0.152	0.47	2.65	.010
		Income	-0.02	0.076	-0.02	-0.25	.801
		Neighbors	0.66	0.077	0.67	8.55	.000
		Age	0.00	0.008	0.02	0.24	.811
		Ownership	-0.27	0.208	-0.13	-1.29	.200
Neighbors	0.07	Stability	0.35	0.110	0.32	3.19	.002
		Income	-0.10	0.112	-0.10	-0.87	.387
		Age	-0.01	0.011	-0.10	0.89	.374
		Ownership	-0.76	0.295	-0.36	-2.57	.012
		Stability	0.50	0.152	0.45	3.27	.002
Stability	0.25	Income	-0.07	0.084	-0.08	-0.83	.408
		Age	0.01	0.008	0.14	1.53	.131
		Ownership	1.16	0.178	0.61	6.51	.000
Follow-up:							
Well-being	0.27	Income	0.18	0.073	0.36	2.47	.018
		Nbhood	0.37	0.141	0.36	2.63	.012
		Age	0.03	0.017	0.23	1.61	.115
		Ownership	0.54	0.297	0.25	1.80	.079
Nbhood	0.09	Income	-0.02	0.079	-0.03	-0.21	.838
		Age	0.01	0.018	0.07	0.41	.687
		Ownership	-0.60	0.309	-0.29	-1.95	.058

Results

A path analysis was conducted for the first year, the third year and the follow-up study. Table 2 provides information on all of the hypothesized links of all the variables. These results provided the basis for the development of our model. The model was produced by trimming individual variables until only those with statistically significant paths remained ($p < 0.11$). This procedure is somewhat risky in light of the rather small size of our sample.

Table 3. Significant path coefficients for home ownership, well-being parsimonious model (only significant paths).

Dependent Variables	R ²	Independent Variables	b	SE	β	t	p	TIE
First Year:								
Well-being	0.25	Income	0.13	0.076	0.16	1.72	.090	.02
		Nbhood	0.35	0.089	0.45	3.92	.000	.00
		Neighbors	-	-	-	-	-	.09
		Stability	-	-	-	-	-	.24
		Ownership	-	-	-	-	-	.12
Nbhood	0.28	Age	-	-	-	-	-	-.5
		Income	-	-	-	-	-	.03
		Neighbors	0.19	0.096	0.19	1.97	.053	.00
		Stability	0.52	0.110	0.47	4.75	.000	.06
		Ownership	-	-	-	-	-	.19
Neighbors	0.07	Age	-	-	-	-	-	.14
		Income	-	-	-	-	-	-.03
		Stability	0.37	0.155	0.32	2.36	.021	.00
		Ownership	-0.63	0.325	-0.26	-1.93	.057	.14
Stability	0.25	Age	-	-	-	-	-	.03
		Income	-	-	-	-	-	.08
		Ownership	0.78	0.185	0.42	4.18	.000	.00
Age		Income	0.02	0.009	0.19	1.86	.067	.09
		Neighbors	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Stability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Third Year:								
Well-being	0.09	Income	-	-	-	-	-	-.01
		Nbhood	0.26	0.093	0.31	2.83	.006	.00
		Neighbors	-	-	-	-	-	.22
		Stability	-	-	-	-	-	.17
		Ownership	-	-	-	-	-	-.03
Nbhood	0.61	Age	-	-	-	-	-	-.01
		Income	-	-	-	-	-	.03
		Neighbors	0.70	0.072	0.70	9.66	.000	.00
		Stability	0.26	0.079	0.24	3.25	.002	.31
		Ownership	-	-	-	-	-	.17
Neighbors	0.14	Age	-	-	-	-	-	.04
		Income	-	-	-	-	-	-.03
		Stability	0.49	0.148	0.44	3.28	.002	.00
		Ownership	-0.85	0.281	-0.41	-3.03	.003	.27
Age		Income	-	-	-	-	-	-.03

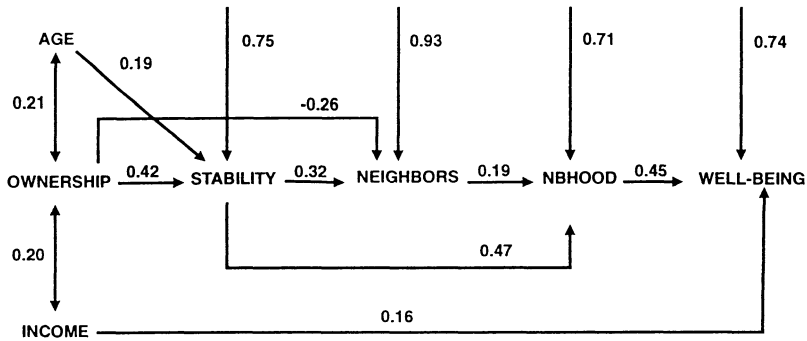
However, our objective was to develop a model of the effects of home ownership on perceptions of well-being. We attempted to extend our analysis beyond a simple description of the paths of all variables which plausibly might be related to well-being to arrive at a parsimonious path model. Unfortunately, our relatively small sample made a type II error more likely. In order to lessen this risk, we set the alpha level at $p < 0.11$. Table 3 shows the coefficients of the variables included in the final selection of the path model. This is the parsimonious model. In addition to the coefficients and t tests, Table 3 contains the value of the total indirect effects for each possible independent variable on the dependent variable. Following are the path diagrams, including the standardized regression coefficients for each year of the study.

Model: First Year (1979)

Figure 1 provides the results of the analysis of the hypothesized model during the first year of the study. Only relationships which are statistically significant at $p < .10$ for a t test of the null hypothesis of no relationship are included in the path diagram. Variables which did not exhibit statistically significant relationships were removed from the equations. The model accounts for 26 percent of the variance in cognitive well-being during the first year and is

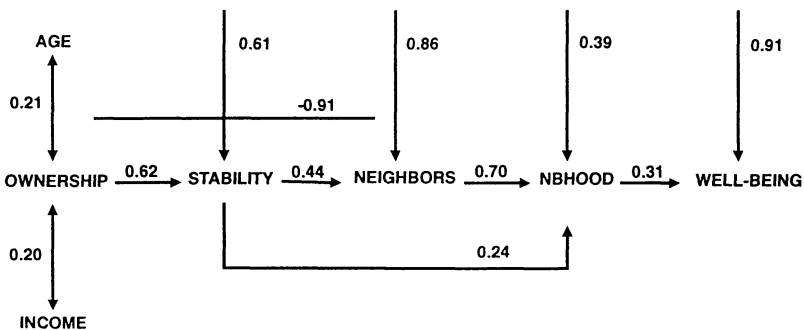
statistically significant at $p < .0001$. When all variables were included in the equation, only two variables, the index for satisfaction with home and neighborhood ($\beta = 0.45$) and family income ($\beta = 0.16$), exhibited a significant, direct path to well-being. Both the index for well-being and the index for satisfaction were adjusted for scale effects, since both were measured using the "delighted to terrible" response alternatives.

Figure 1
Path Diagram
Ownership - Well-being Model From First Year Study



Satisfaction with the neighborhood and the home was affected by stability ($\beta = 0.47$) and interaction with neighbors ($\beta = 0.19$) together explaining 29 percent of the variance. Interaction with neighbors was affected positively by anticipated stability but negatively by home ownership ($\beta = -0.26$). Both ownership and age significantly affected anticipated stability, accounting for 25 percent of the variation in anticipated stability. The net effect (indirect plus direct effects) of ownership on well-being was 0.115.

Figure 2
Path Diagram
Ownership - Well-Being Model From Third Year Study



Model: Third Year (1981)

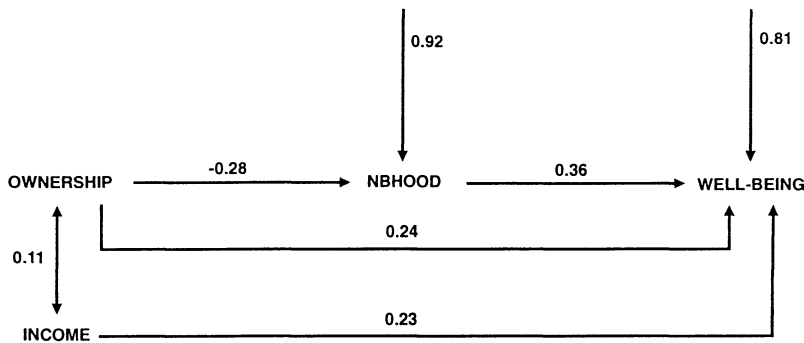
Data in the third year (Figure 2) of the study provided support for the model derived from the first year. Generally, the relationships were somewhat weaker; only nine percent of the variance in cognitive well-being was explained by the model ($F = 8.17, p < .01$). Satisfaction with home and neighborhood was the only variable directly affecting well-being during the third year.

The third year parallels the first in that anticipated stability ($\beta = 0.24$) and satisfaction with neighbors ($\beta = 0.70$) directly and positively influenced participants' satisfaction with their homes and neighborhoods. The anticipation of longer tenure in the neighborhood was positively linked to satisfaction with neighbors ($\beta = 0.44$) and, as it was the case in the first year, home ownership had a direct, negative influence on satisfaction with neighbors. But ownership had a strong positive influence on the length of time participants planned to live in the neighborhood ($\beta = 0.62$). Surprisingly, however, the net effect of ownership on satisfaction with neighbors, in both the first and third years, was negative. The net effect of ownership on well-being had diminished to .0163 by the third year. The relationship was very weak but still positive.

Model: Follow-up (1989)

The interpretation of the results of the follow-up study must be tempered by the relatively low number of original home renters interviewed. While 33 of the original 53 participants in the ownership program were located and interviewed, only 16 of the original 47 private sector renters were interviewed. It is likely that the follow-up sample of renters was biased

Figure 3
Path Diagram
Ownership - Well-being Model From Follow-Up Study



toward stability and perhaps higher levels of neighborhood satisfaction than the original sample. The less stable and perhaps less happy were less likely to be located and therefore excluded from the sample.

The follow-up questionnaire was short because it was conducted on the telephone. We excluded questions about the anticipation of stability and satisfaction with neighbors, but a limited model could be estimated using the remaining variables. The path model is shown in Figure 3.

The model accounts for 19 percent of the variance in respondents' estimates of well-being. Home ownership, family income, and satisfaction with the residential environment all exerted direct positive effects on well-being. This was the first time ownership had exhibited a direct effect on well-being. The follow up study omitted ratings of "satisfaction with neighbors" and "anticipated stability" from the model because they were not included in the telephone questionnaire. The effect of home ownership on satisfaction with the residential

Table 4. Objective indicators of well-being between owners and renters.

Variables	Chi-Square	Sig	Sommer's D
Unemployment	0.405	Ns	0.059
Burglary	0.936	Ns	-0.097
Assault	0.495	Ns	0.030
Divorce	1.681	Ns	-0.095

environment (home and neighborhood) was negative and contradicted the results of the first years of the study. This was the first time we had observed this effect. Owners were less satisfied with their residential environment than renters. For the first time, ownership had a direct effect on well-being. Considering this positive direct effect and the indirect negative effect through the satisfaction variable, home ownership had a net positive impact on well-being ($\beta = 0.17$).

Table 4 shows the results of the comparisons of the objective indicators of well-being which were included in the follow-up questionnaire. The incidence of burglary, unemployment, assault, or divorce is not associated with participation in the home ownership program. There were no significant differences between owners and renters on any of these measures.

Discussion

Throughout the years we have studied the Norfolk Home Ownership Program we have found a net positive effect of ownership on cognitive well-being. In the early years of the program, ownership operated to increase stability leading to an increase in the satisfaction with the residence and the residential neighborhood. Owners planned on living in their residence for longer periods than renters. The anticipation of greater tenure led to more positive relations with neighbors. Good relations with neighbors was directly and positively linked to higher levels of satisfaction with the residence and neighborhood. The level of satisfaction with the neighborhood and residence had the strongest influence on conceptions of well-being. Therefore, in its basic form the model was supported during the first three years of the ownership program.

However, we also found a direct negative path between ownership and the satisfaction with neighbors. When home ownership produced a sense of long tenure in the neighborhood, ownership, in turn, increased satisfaction with neighbors. When residential stability was controlled, home ownership led to negative relations with neighbors. This finding was unanticipated but does not contradict the model. There is nothing intrinsic to owning a home, outside its longevity influence, which would increase or decrease the relations with neighbors. Outside of the anticipation of future tenure, relations with neighbors would depend on the contextual features of the social networks established in the neighborhood. If there are similar interests, a minimum of annoying behavior patterns, a climate of mutual respect and so forth, relations with neighbors will be positive regardless of ownership status. If not, the opposite is likely. It is the feature of anticipated tenure which serves to allow residents to overlook negative characteristics of neighbors and emphasize positive ones.

Results from the follow-up study conducted ten years after the first survey suggest that the model linking home ownership to cognitive well-being operates differently than it did ten years ago. Now ownership is negatively related to satisfaction with the residential environment but remains linked to positive well-being. During the first and third years of the project, the net effect of ownership on satisfaction with the residential environment was positive (1st year: 0.17; 3rd year: 0.05). But during the 1989 follow up, the path from home ownership to residential satisfaction was negative ($\beta = -.21$). Although home owners perceived more negative estimates of the quality of the residential environment, the net effect of ownership on well-being was still positive (0.23).

Perhaps two factors contribute to this change. First and most obvious is the nature of our sample during the follow-up survey. We were only successful in locating and interviewing a small proportion of the original group of private sector renters (34 percent). It is most probable that these are the most stable and perhaps the most satisfied members of the original renter group. Those who were unhappy and more mobile may have moved out of the area leaving behind relationships that were established ten years ago. Thus it is possible that the renter group included in the follow-up study had more of a bias toward positive feelings of well-being than those whom we could not locate.

The second factor may be the decline of the neighborhoods where the home ownership programs were established. We received some comments from some of the home owners that neighborhoods had deteriorated, that there was more crime, and that the environment

was more threatening than it was ten years ago. We do not at present have objective measures of this change. But if true, it might explain the negative link between ownership and satisfaction demonstrated in the follow-up study.

We anticipated that home ownership would serve to provide some insulation from negative life features. Briefly, we postulated that home ownership would provide stability, thus promoting more stable employment and family relations. We anticipated that home owners experiencing more positive neighboring would feel increased neighborhood control, and, in turn, would reduce the risks of victimization from crime in comparison to renters. The results of questions about these activities, shown in Table 3, indicated that there were no significant differences in this study between owners and renters on these dimensions.

Conclusions

Our proposed model of the effects of home ownership on the quality of life or what is referred to here as "well-being" seemed to be clearly supported during the first three years of a home ownership program. Home ownership served to increase estimates of well-being by enhancing positive features of the social and physical environment. The results of our follow-up study conducted 10 years after the first survey supports the hypothesized paths between the components of the model. However, for the first time we found home ownership negatively linked to satisfaction with home and neighborhood; yet owners maintained higher levels of well-being than renters. Results from this study infer that owning a home produces very important positive benefits for the owners.

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