

Charting a Course for Utah's Future: A Summary of the Wirthlin Worldwide Values Research for Envision Utah

Introduction

Before Envision Utah could work to help preserve Utah's high quality of life for future generations, it had to define what residents value about living in the area. One of the biggest challenges in regional planning is developing and then building consensus around a regional vision and plan. Competing personalities, agendas and politics quickly begin to erode direction and momentum. A regional plan that is built upon the personal values of the people living in the region removes much of the personality and politics and provides critical legitimacy to the direction and priorities of the vision. It's not about doing what this person or that group wants; its about doing what the people value most.

In 1997, Envision Utah hired Wirthlin Worldwide (now known as "Harris Interactive") to identify the shared, core values Utahns associate with quality of life and growth issues. Despite the widely differing opinions on issues that confront the state, residents share a set of core values that bring us together.

The following are examples of values: self-esteem, personal satisfaction, sense of accomplishment, security, care for others, personal freedom and control, concern for future generations, belonging, trust, sharing with others, pride, love, preserve the earth, etc.

Wirthlin sought to translate this "values landscape" into a successful action and communications strategy for Envision Utah in a way that addresses public concerns, generates consensus among differing groups, and instills support and confidence in public leaders and projects.

Utilizing a specialized research methodology called VISTA (Values in Strategy Assessment), Wirthlin conducted a series of in-depth interviews to find out what residents value about living in Utah. Special care was taken to ensure an equal demographic representation regarding ethnic background, age, religious affiliation, income level, and length of residency within the state. Careful survey work validated this research.

The research objectives were to guide the public, community leaders, and policy makers in making better informed and coordinated decisions to protect, promote and preserve the overall public good. Specifically, the research sought to answer:

- What makes Utah great?
- What issues/challenges threaten Utah?
- What are the expectations for Utah's future and how do Utahns view growth?
- What role can Utah companies, organizations, and state and local governments play in protecting, promoting, and preserving Utah's values amidst growth and change?
- What are public priorities regarding key issues and concerns and what is the public perception of how well the issues are being handled?
- What tradeoffs are people willing to make to help make things better or prevent them from getting worse?
- What is the vision of the ideal place to live in Utah?

Wirthlin staff conducted 83 two-hour interviews around Envision Utah’s 10-county area of focus. These one-on-one “laddering interviews” explore in depth the thought patterns and associations people hold about a particular subject. The interview results are then coded and “mapped” to show the connection between rational “attributes” and emotional “values.” This mapping shows the components and drivers of human decision-making.

Attributes, Consequences and Values

People operate on three basic levels in translating and prioritizing messages and choices about products, organizations, ideas, and even life:

- Attributes – tangible qualities of a quality life in Utah;
- Functional Consequences (rational) – the functional benefits of life in Utah, such as, “Utah is a good place to raise children.”
- Psycho-Social Consequences (emotional) – emotional experiences derived from the functional benefits; how does the person feel about a given attribute?
- Personal Values – stable, enduring personal goals.

Wirthlin Worldwide believes that successful communication operates at all levels, making the organization or issue position personally and positively relevant to its stakeholders or supporters. It accomplishes this by linking together: 1) unique and ownable attributes; 2) positive consequences of those attributes; and 3) relevant personal values and emotions.

The fundamental premise of the Wirthlin communications strategy is that one **persuades by reason and motivates by emotion**, tapping into the emotional component of personal values. A communication strategy, then, should provide the rational “reason why” but also create a link to personal values and emotions, which are ultimately what motivate people.

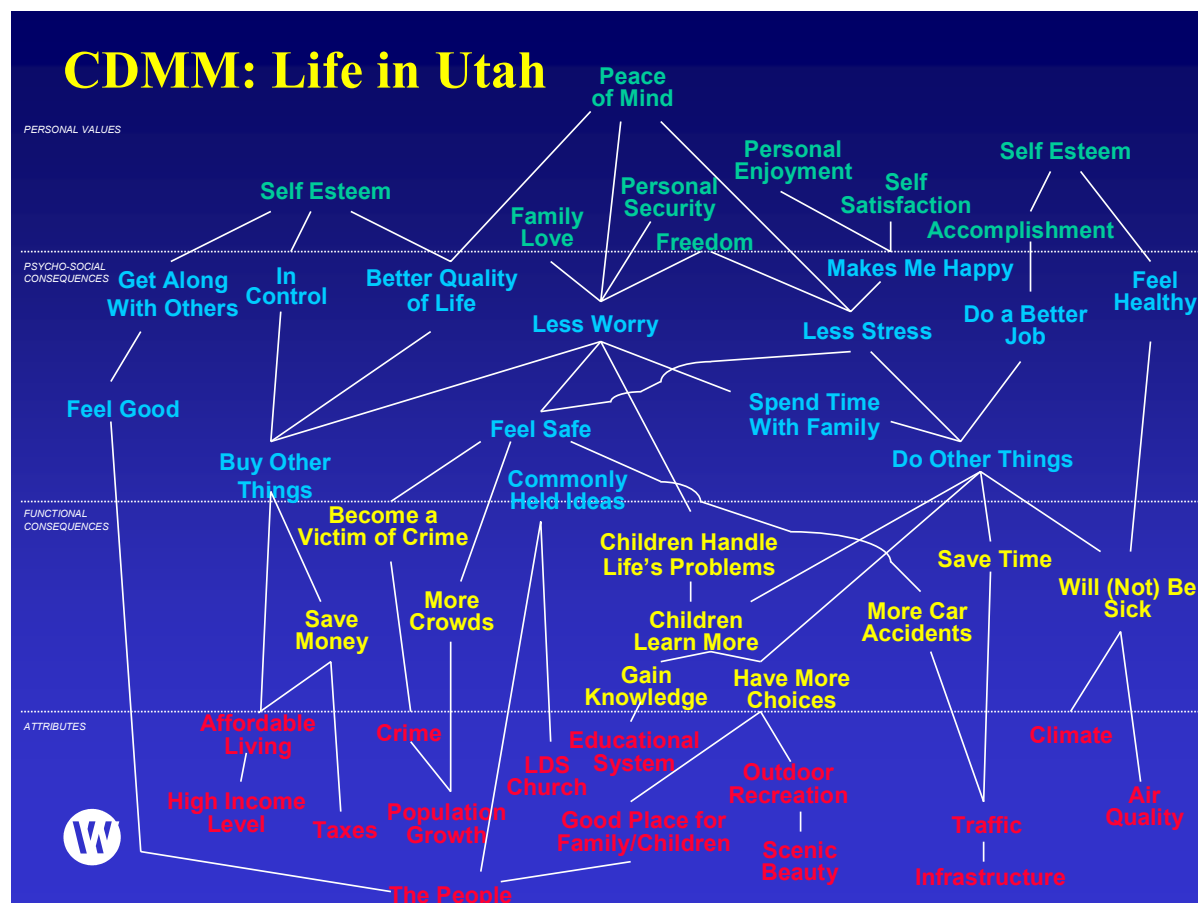
Our feeling about anything is influenced primarily by our personal values, and then, as we perceive, the psychological consequences and the functional consequences. This process is shown below in the “Decision-Making Structure.”

Stable, Enduring Personal Goals	Self
Emotional Experiences; Things that Are “About” People	Personal Values
Performance Features or Benefits of the Product; Things that Are “About” the Product	Psychological Consequences
Perceived Product Qualities; Things that Are “In” the Product	Functional Consequences
	Product Attributes
	Organization/Brand/Product

To better understand the Decision-Making Structure, we’ll use an example from the original “laddering interviews.” The original question begins at the bottom of the chart. As the person answers each question, the interviewer probes more deeply to eventually get to the person’s value behind her original answer. Laddering identifies each respondent’s pathways or evolutions of thought. Analysis of all ladders allowed Wirthlin to then map out the key decision-making structure.

Logic	Questions	Answers
Value	Why is it important for you to be more at ease?	“Security and Love as a Parent” (Family Love)
Personal Consequence	What is the benefit to you when you can raise your son in a safe environment?	“Less Worry – More at Ease” (Less Worry)
Functional Consequence	Why are the “friendlier people” important to you?	“Better Place to Raise Family” (Good Place for Family and Children)
Attribute	Why did you rate the quality of life in Utah so high?	“People Here Just Seem to be Friendlier” (The People)

This next chart shows the “laddering” process. The first responses people had are at the bottom (in the attributes section). Through probing questions, answers are provided that eventually work their way through functional consequences, personal consequences, and finally to the individual’s personal values.



As the chart shows, the key values of the residents of Utah are self-esteem, family love, peace of mind, personal security, freedom, personal enjoyment, self-satisfaction, and accomplishment. (Interviewers used content analysis to collapse responses into sets of similar phrases and meanings. In the laddering above, connections between elements were determined by the frequency that the lower level element led to the higher.)

There are both positive and negative ladders as shown in the example below:

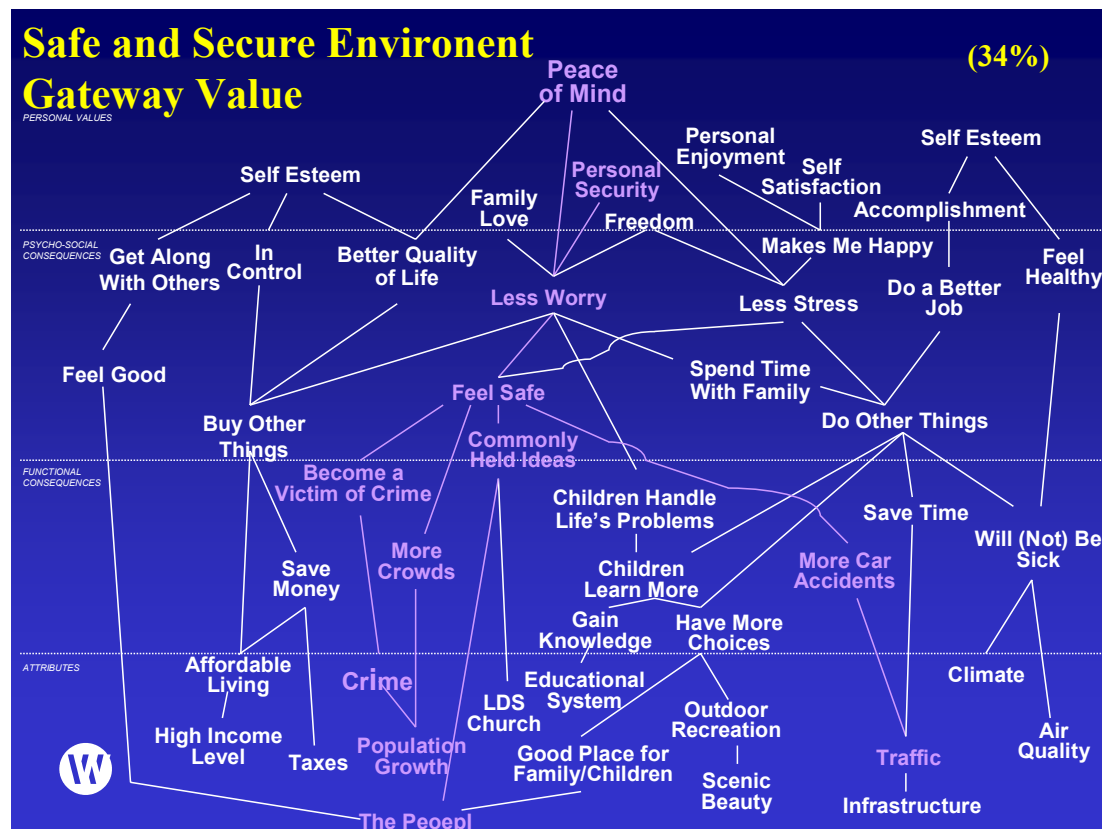
	Positive Ladder	Negative Ladder
Value	“Security and Love as a Parent”	“Sense of Accomplishment”
Personal Consequence	“Less Worry – More at Ease”	“Can’t Get More Things Done” or “Inefficient Use of Time”
Functional Consequence	“Better Place to Raise a Family”	“Bad Traffic – Lots of Cars”
Attribute	“Family Values People Have”	

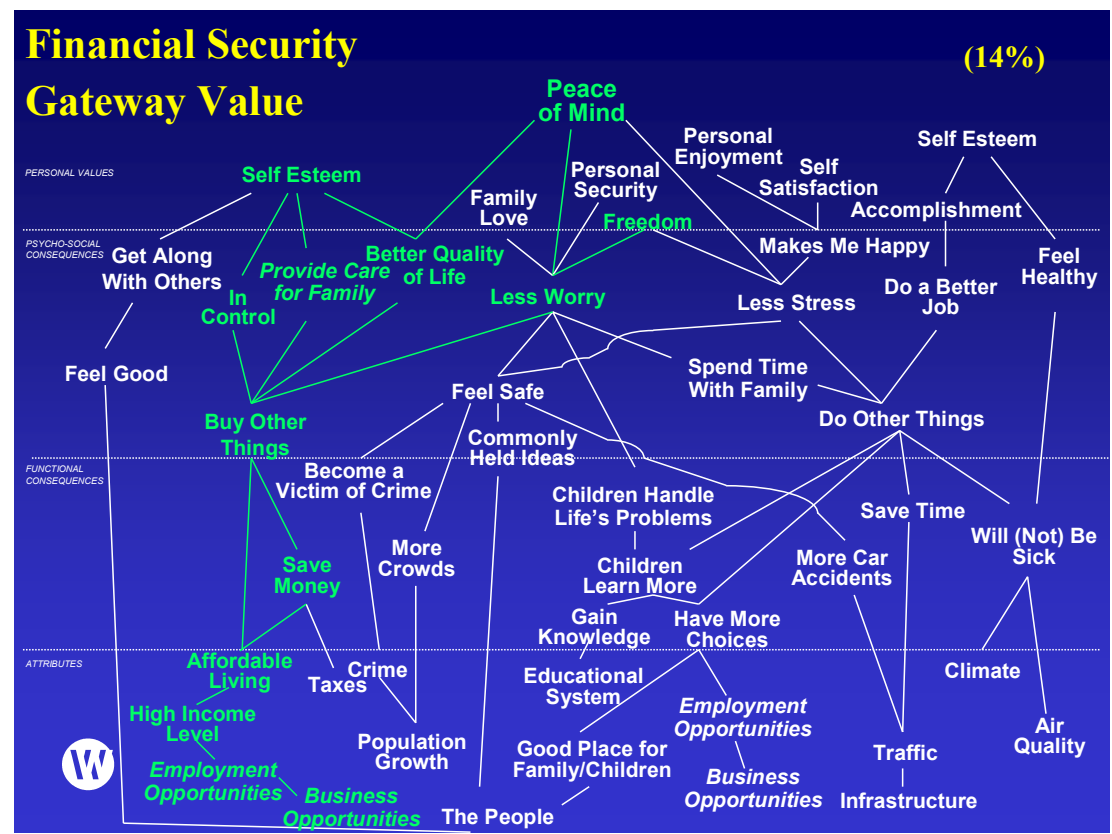
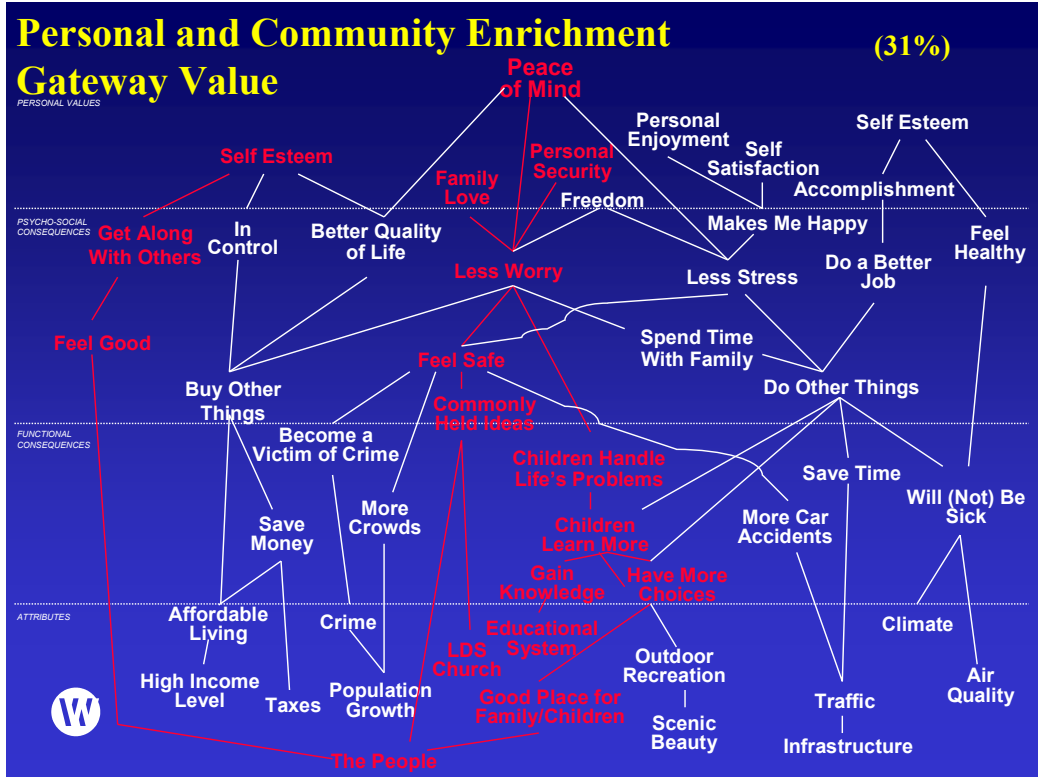
The value system along the Wasatch Front centers around a sense of peace or peace of mind, emanating from a feeling of safe haven based on living with people who prize and share a common sense of honesty, morality and ethics. **“Peace of Mind” dominates above all other value orientations.** This value is supported by a dedication to family and the desire to provide opportunities to help children handle life’s challenges.

The values research identified factors that brought together Utahns:

- Recognition that Utah is growing and will continue to grow;
- Recognition that ‘how much’ Utah should grow or ‘how’ growth should occur is a matter of debate; and
- A determination to shape and create our own future rather than have it be created for us.

The next four “laddering charts” looked at “Safe and Secure Environment,” “Personal and Community Enrichment,” “Personal Time and Opportunity,” and “Financial Security.”



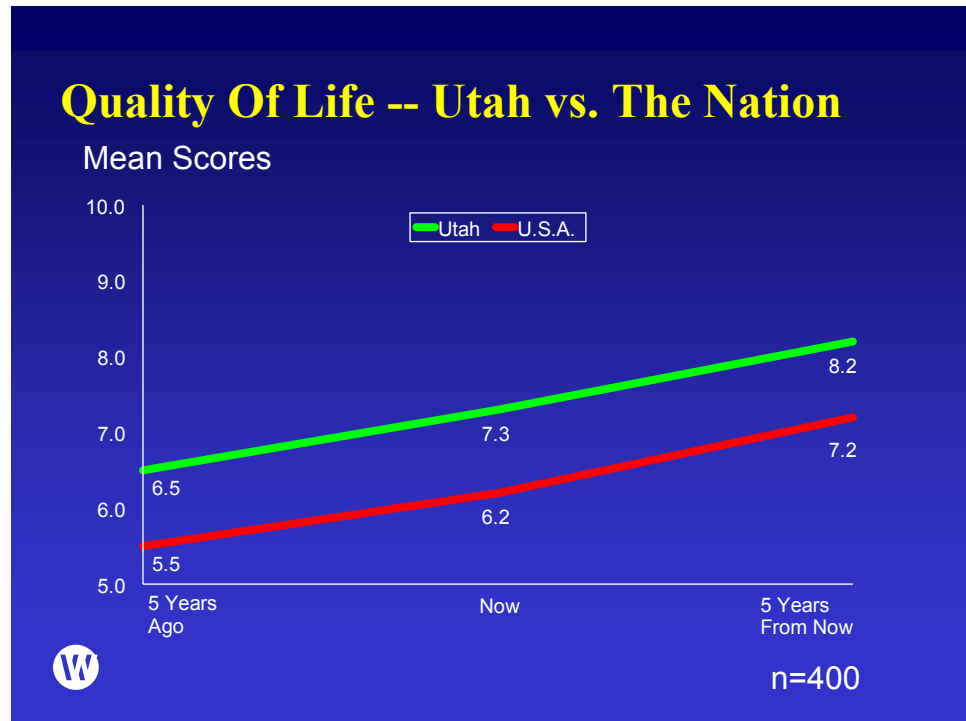


As these four laddering charts show, the ultimate values are all similar, regardless of whether one begins by asking about employment opportunities, personal enrichment, a secure environment, or the quality of life in Utah. Values are slow to change over time.

Summary of Survey Results

The following are some highlights of the survey results:

- Utahns on the Wasatch Front were personally quite satisfied with the current quality of life and very optimistic about the near-term possibilities.



- Wasatch Front residents recognize that growth brings with it a number of problems and challenges. Most believe, however, that future growth will make things better.
- New residents have a more positive view of growth than do longer-term residents.
- Nearly six in ten believe growth brings benefits and advantages to Utah and should be encouraged and fostered.
- When asked to identify the main cause of Utah's population growth, 82% mistakenly believed most of the growth comes from outsiders moving to Utah. Only 14% responded "new births in the state." (Approximately 74% of Utah's population growth is generated internally; that is, by the children and grandchildren of current residents.)

Applying the Values Research

Envision Utah applied information learned from the values research in advertising, marketing, presentations and strategies. It has influenced our communications with the public in many different formats.

Values research generates a large volume of information in the language that people use when they talk about an organization. This information is used to create a lexicon which can provide valuable insights as to how one must speak in order to communicate effectively to a larger audience.

The Wirthlin research also validated Envision Utah's underlying philosophy that the public should determine its own future. When asked, "Who can best deal with growth issues in Utah?" forty-two percent said "residents like you and me." Only 20 percent answered "state government," 18 percent said "local government," and 14 percent preferred "business as usual."

By catalyzing state and local government collaboration with community and business leaders, and then creating opportunities for local residents to play a major role in making decisions about Utah's future, Envision Utah fulfills its goal and responds to the public's desires. For example, we have held nearly 300 public workshops and open houses to gather input from residents; our quality growth demonstration projects always include representatives from the public and private sectors; and our educational forums are directed to both the private and public sectors.

A basic assumption of Envision Utah is that when people receive good information, they make good decisions. We actively seek input from the public. Our activities utilize grass-roots rather than top-down approaches.

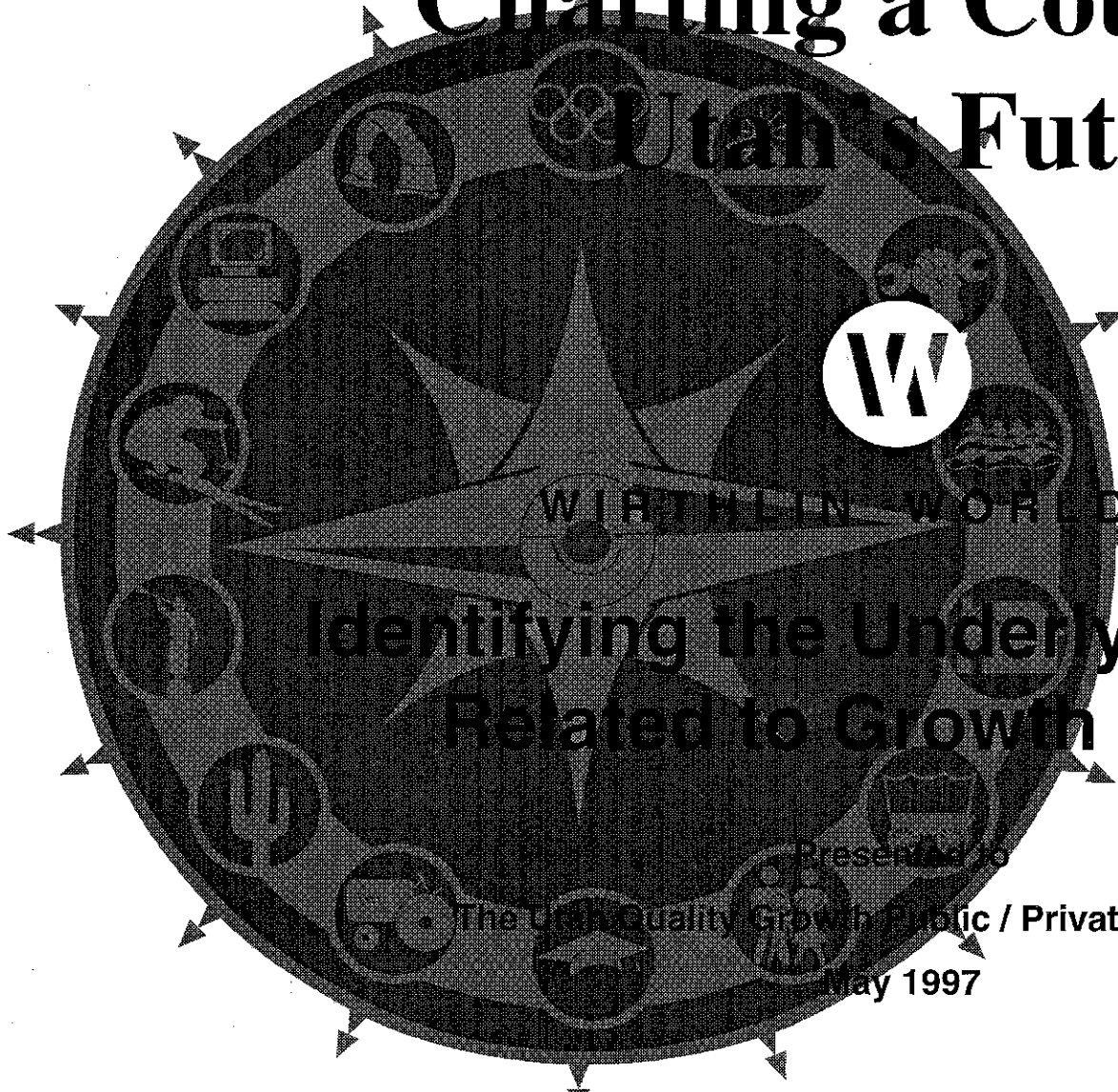
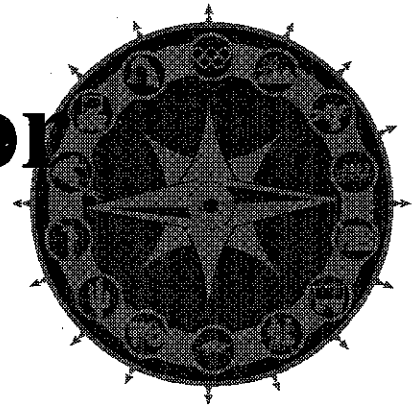
Before Envision Utah began to craft its four scenarios on how the region could grow, it held 175 public meetings to gather the preferences of residents. The scenarios grew from the public input. We then advertised these scenarios in a newspaper inset in four daily newspapers and asked readers to study the scenario information and decide which set of choices and consequences they would prefer for the future of the region. Nearly 18,000 residents completed the survey on the growth scenarios.

Summary

By focusing on the shared, core values of residents, our scenarios and vision were relevant and our messages have resonated and endured for many years. We have been more successful in our activities because we seek to educate by reason and persuade by emotion; both are needed.

Values are the central guideposts for human decision making. Values make clear which issues have the greatest impact. Values tie residents to their communities and beckon future residents to the state. Values guide our attitudes, opinions, and, ultimately, our behavior. Values research was key to bringing Utahns with divergent perspectives to common ground.

Charting a Course for Utah's Future



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WORTHIN WORLDWIDE

Identifying the Underlying Values Related to Growth in Utah

Presented to
The Utah Quality Growth Public / Private Partnership
May 1997

Research Objectives

There are two primary objectives that underlie this research:

- 1. Identify the shared, core values Utahns associate with quality of life and growth issues**
- 2. Translate this “values landscape” into successful action and communications strategy for the Partnership in a way that addresses public concerns, generates consensus among differing groups, and instills support and confidence in public leaders and projects.**

Research Topics

Questions which are answered in the research

- **What makes Utah great?**
- **What issues / challenges threaten Utah?**
- **How do Utahns view growth?**
- **What role can Utah companies, organizations, and state and local governments play in protecting, promoting, and preserving Utah's values amidst growth and change?**
- **What are the values that are central in determining which have greatest impact?**

Research Topics (cont.)

Questions which are answered in the research (cont.)

- **What are public priorities regarding key issues and concerns and how do they grade how well the issues are being handled?**
- **What tradeoffs are people willing to make to help make things better or prevent them from getting worse?**
- **What is the vision of the ideal place to live in Utah?**

Methodology

The study consists of two phases:

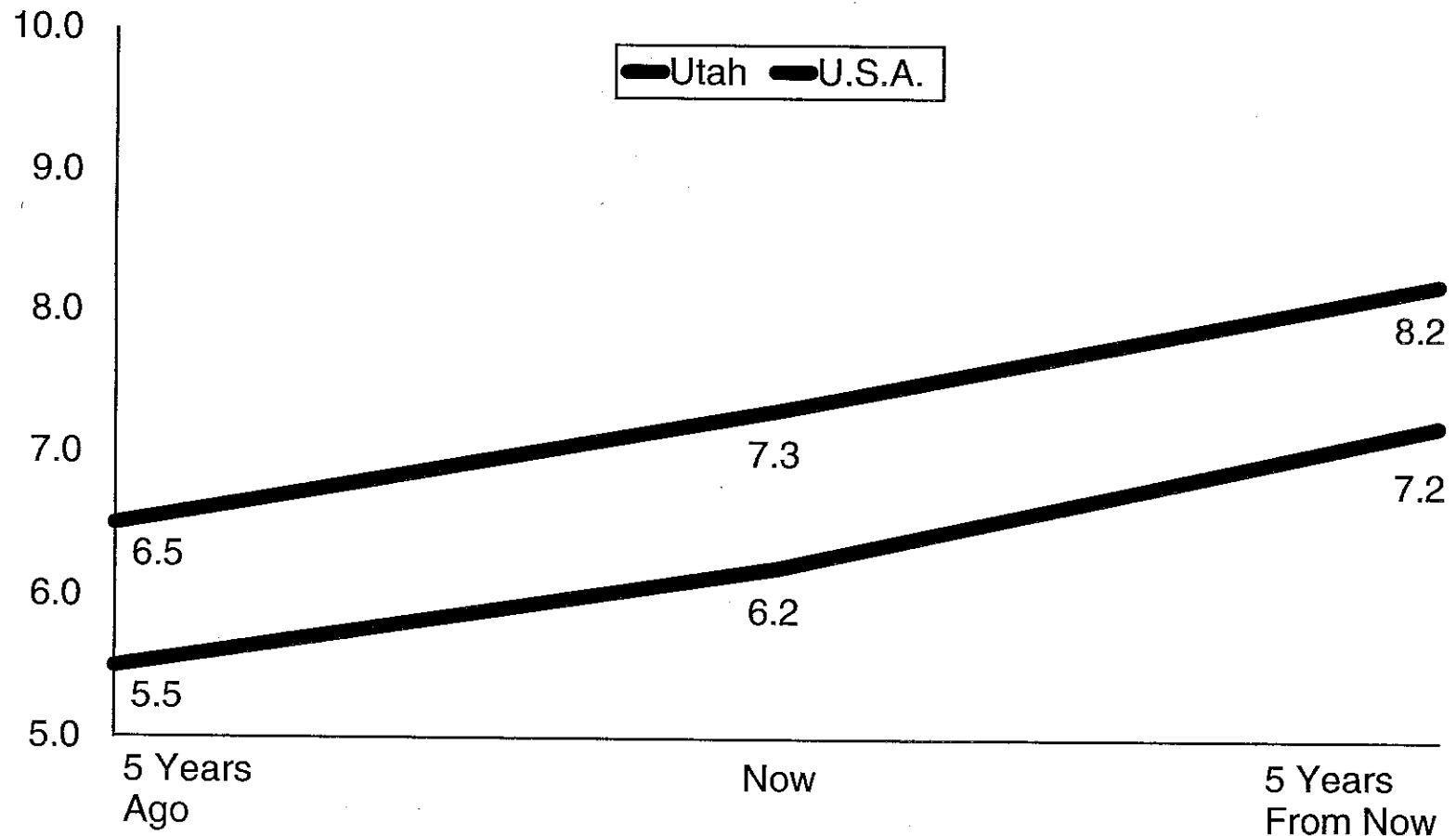
- **Quantitative Phase**
- **Qualitative Phase**

Quantitative Survey Summary

- **Utahns on the Wasatch Front are personally quite satisfied with their current quality of life and very optimistic about the near-term possibilities**

Quality Of Life -- Utah vs. The Nation

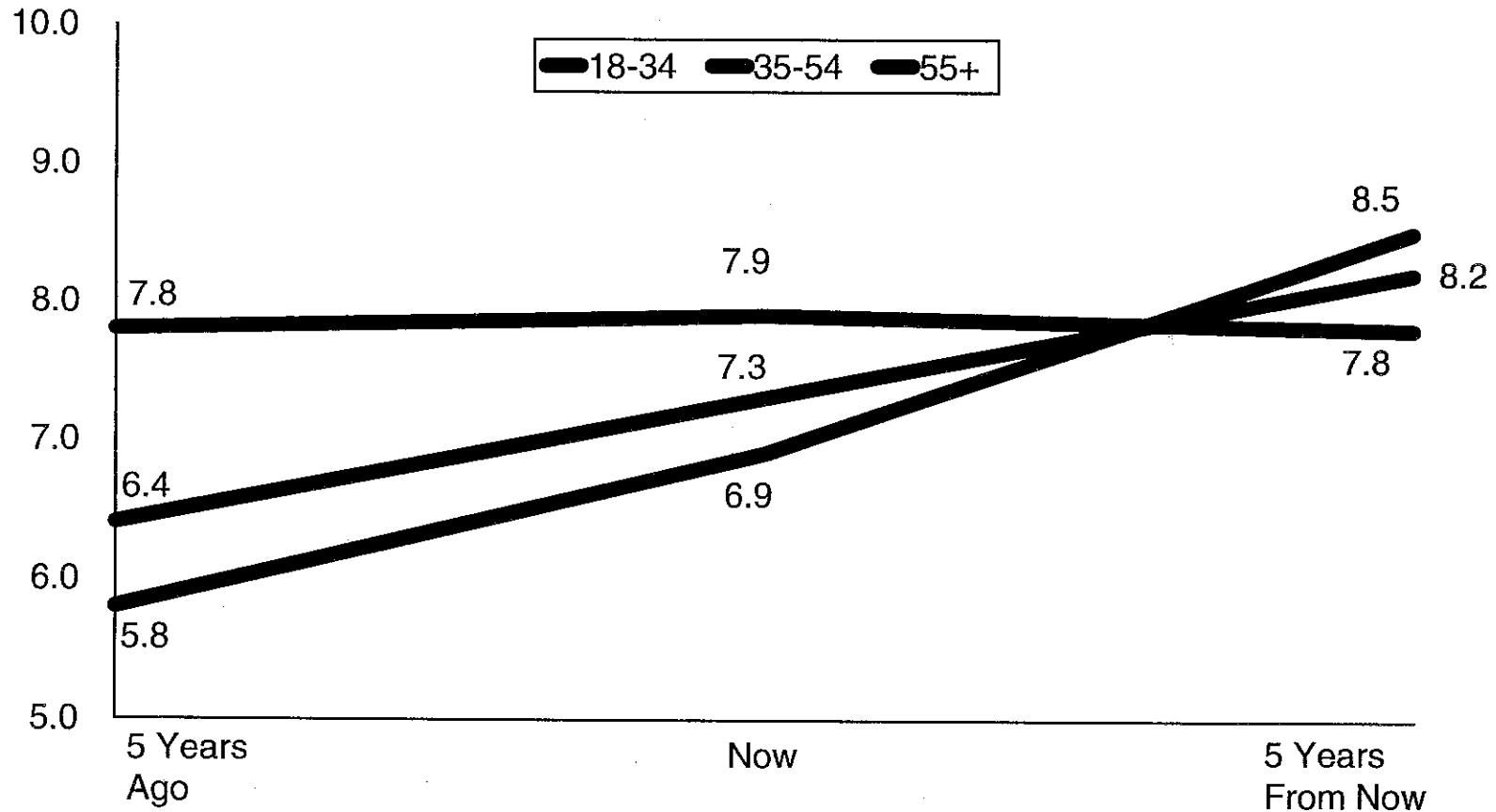
Mean Scores



n=400

Quality Of Life In Utah -- By Age Group

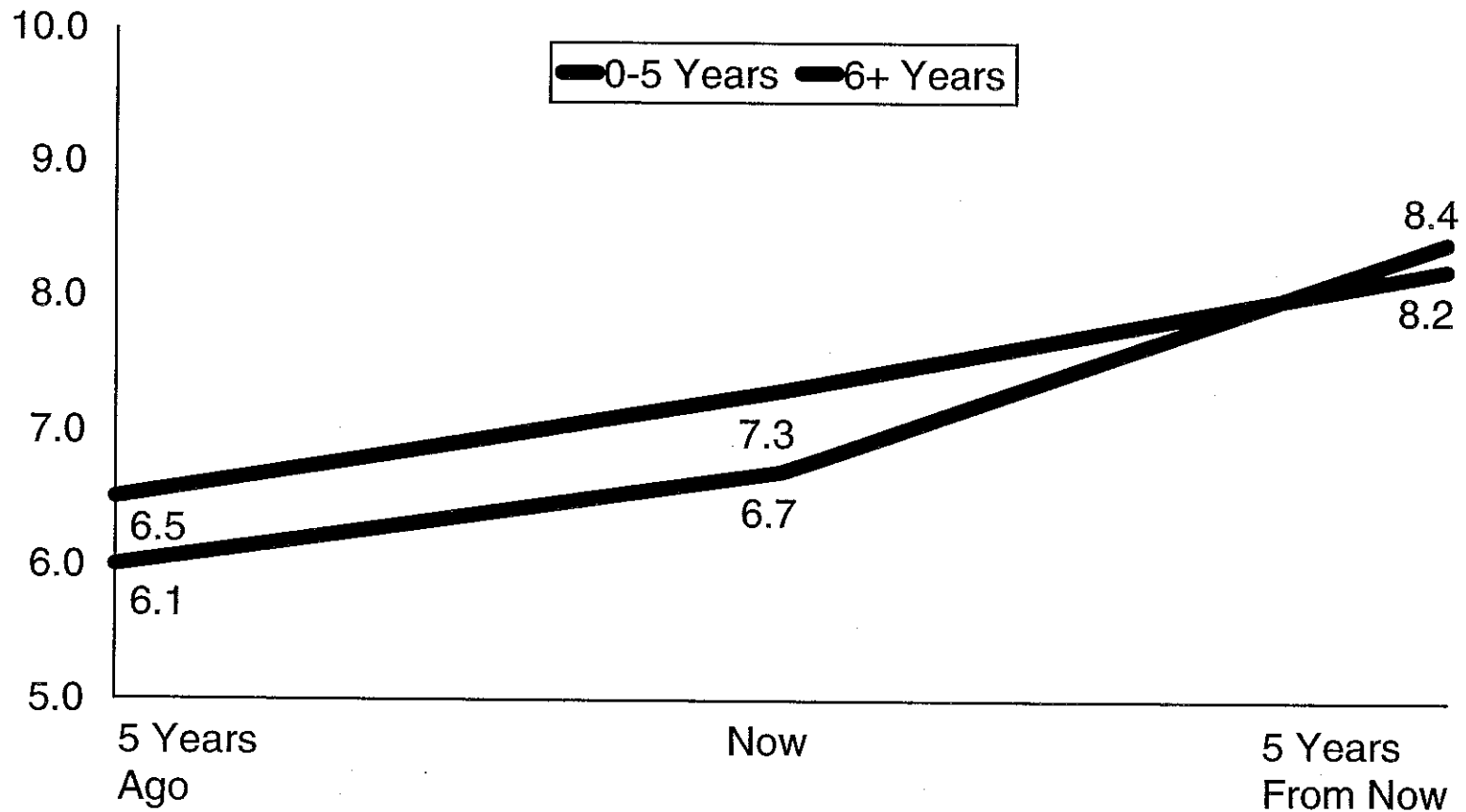
Mean Scores



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Quality Of Life In Utah -- By Length Of Time In Utah

Mean Scores

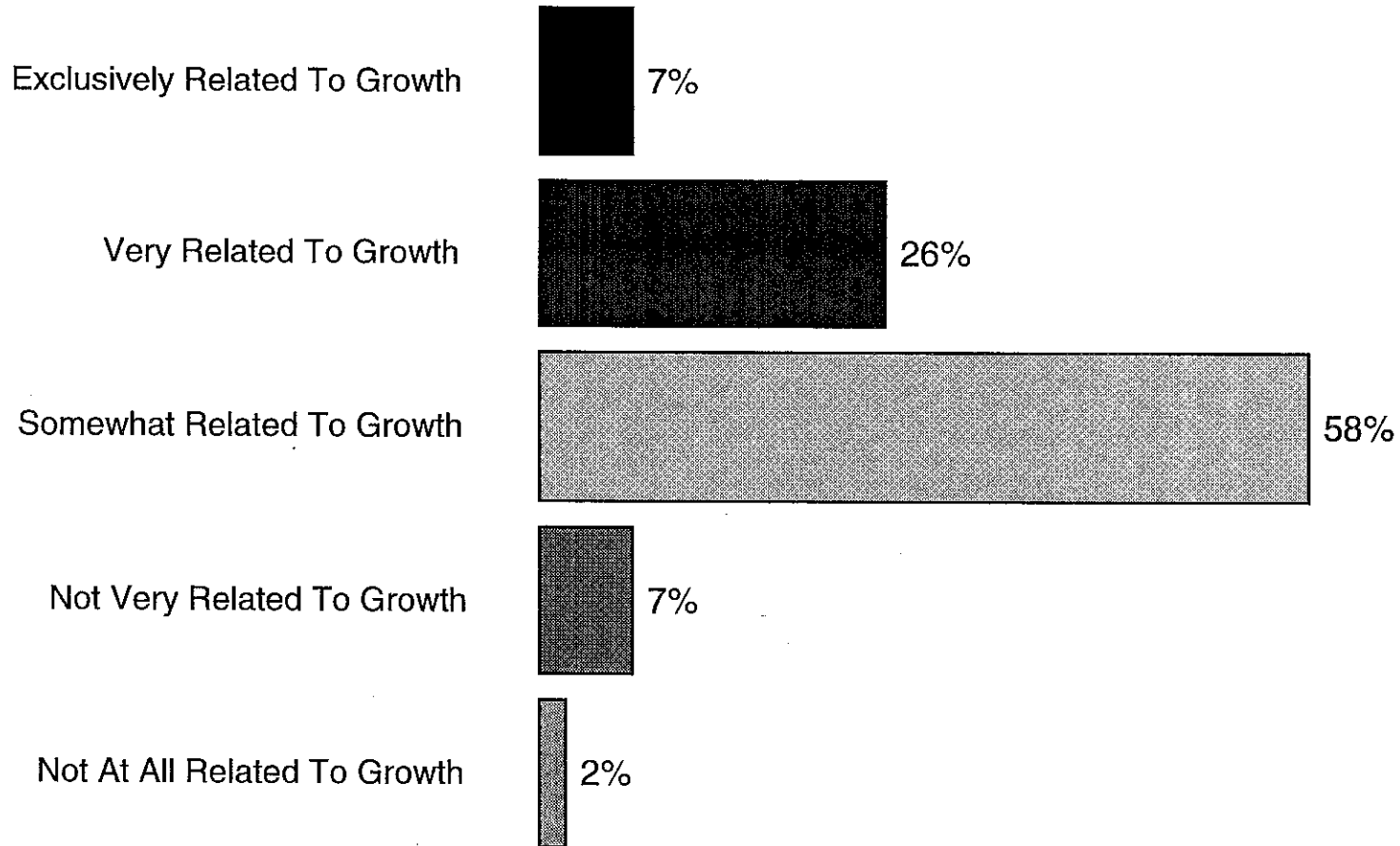


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Quantitative Survey Summary (cont.)

- **Wasatch Front residents recognize that growth brings with it a number of problems and challenges**

Utah's Problems And Challenges Today Are...

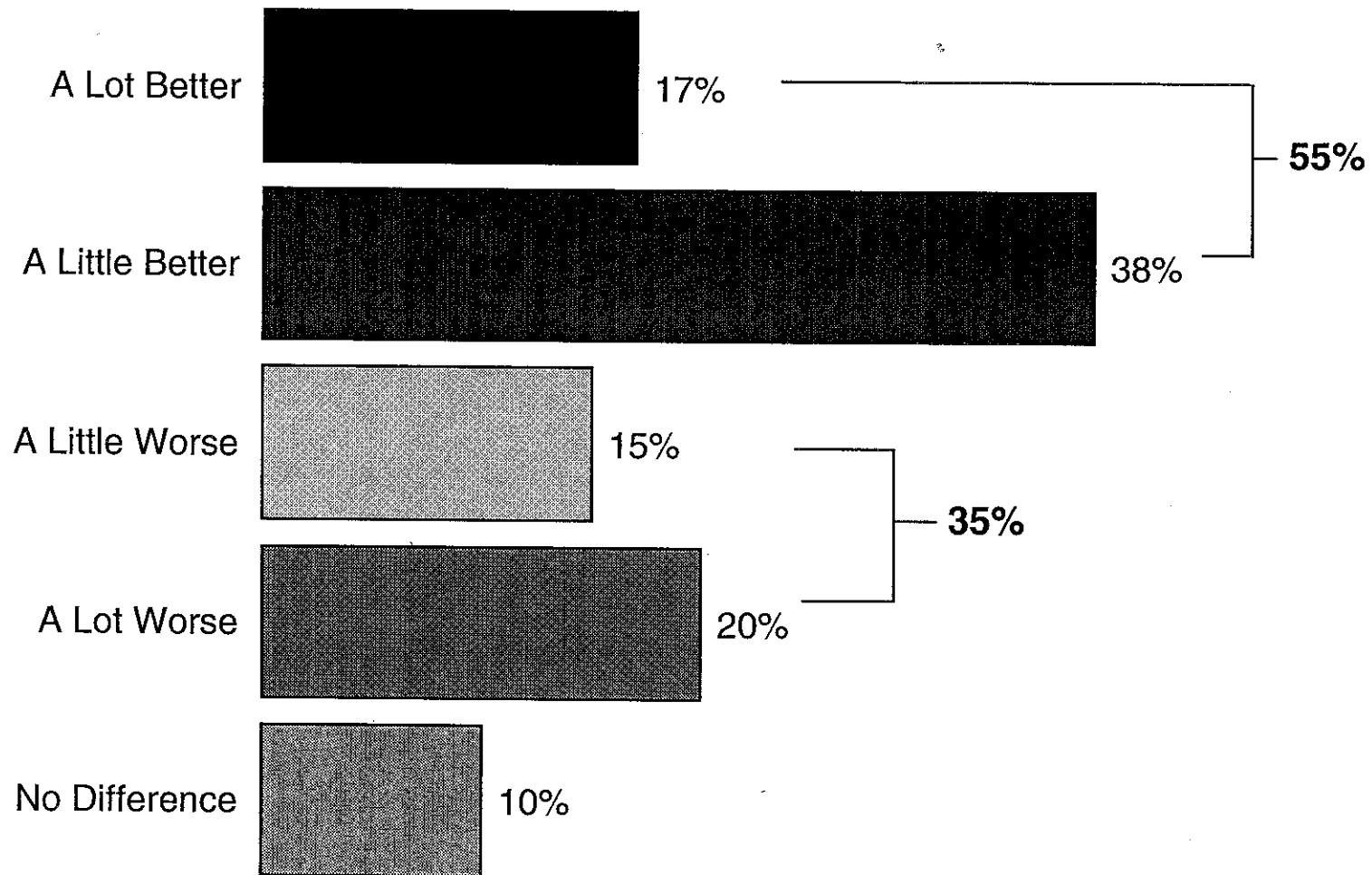


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Quantitative Survey Summary (cont.)

- **Most believe, however, that future growth will make things better**
 - ◆ **Newer residents have a more positive view of growth than do longer-term residents**
 - ◆ **Nearly six in ten believe growth brings benefits and advantages to Utah and should be strongly encouraged and fostered**
 - ◆ **About four in ten think growth jeopardizes the quality of life and should be strictly managed and limited**

Perceived Effect Of Growth In Utah

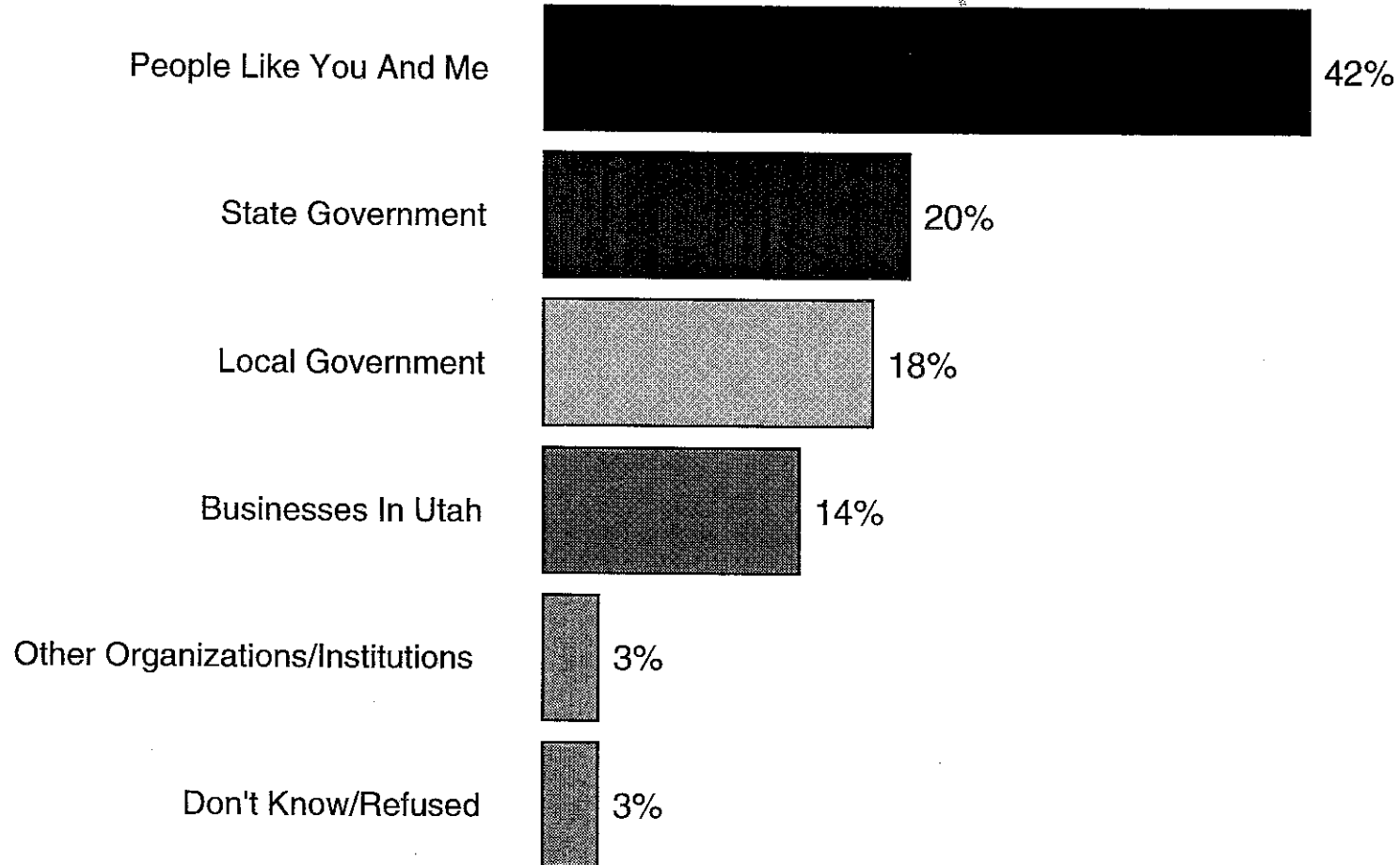


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Quantitative Survey Summary (cont.)

- **Wasatch Front residents indicate that they have an important role to play in dealing with growth issues -- not just a problem for government or business**

Who Can Best Deal With Growth Issues?



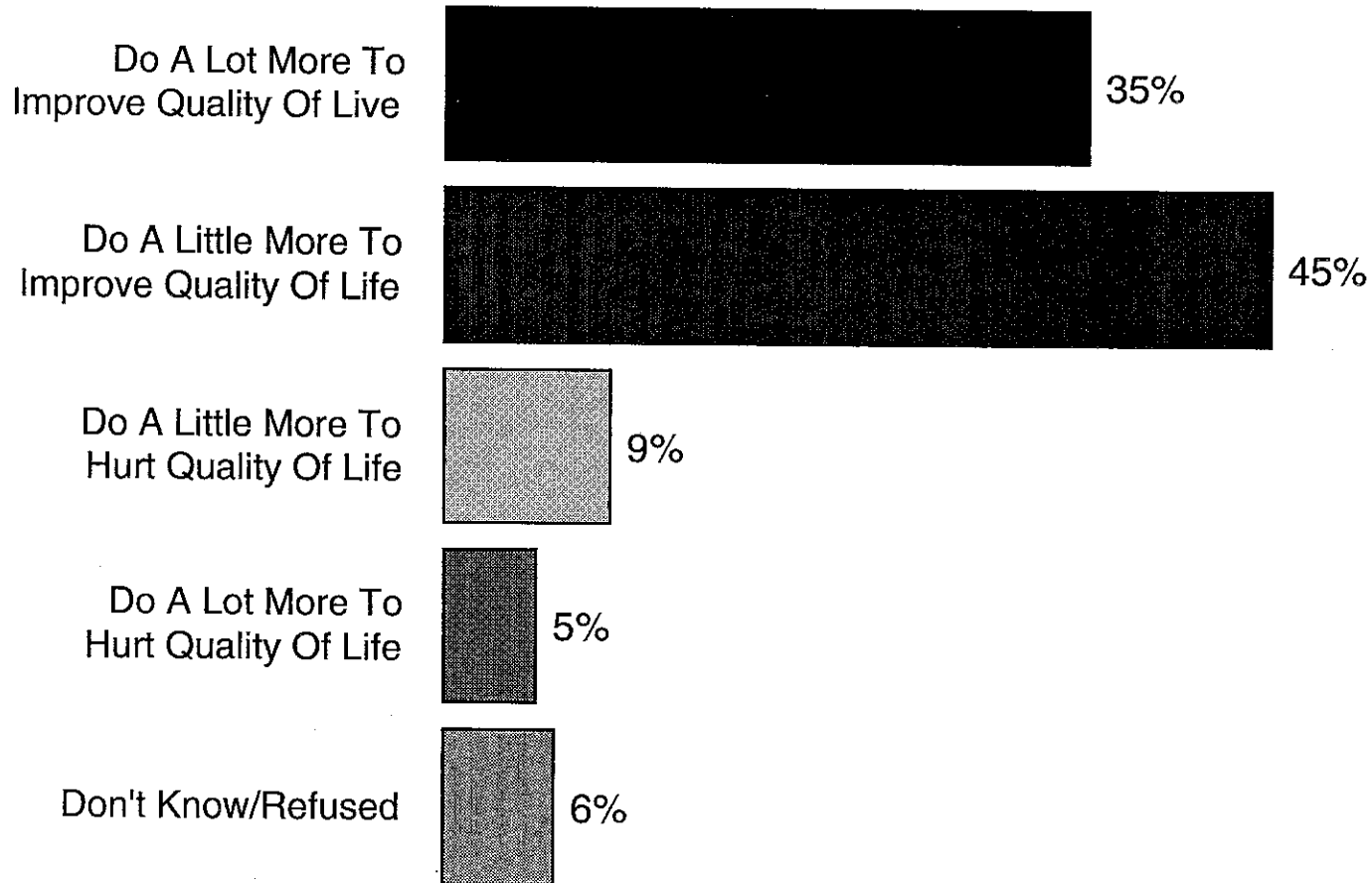
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Quantitative Survey Summary

(cont.)

- **A vast majority believe that new businesses/companies improve the quality of life in Utah**

Effect Of New Businesses/Companies On Quality Of Life In Utah



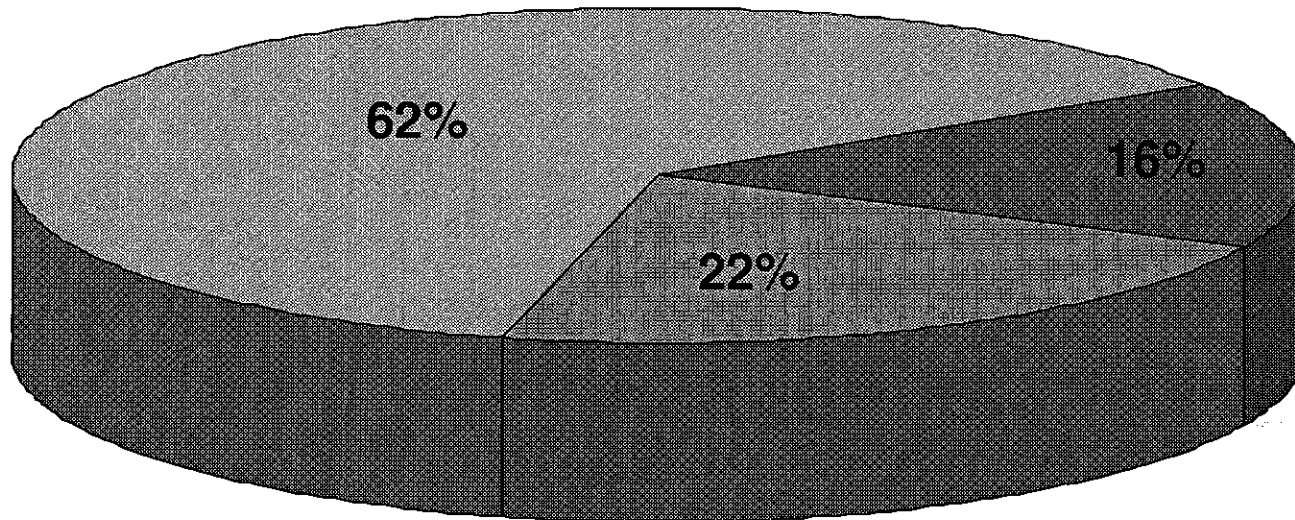
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Quantitative Survey Summary (cont.)

- **A number of misperceptions exist regarding growth in Utah**
 - ◆ **Over eight in ten think recent population growth is caused by new move-ins (though only some of the problems and challenges seen as result of transplants)**
 - ◆ **Six in ten believe air quality has gotten worse in the past decade**

Profile of Pro / Neutral / Slow Growth Groups

■ Pro ■ Neutral ■ Slow



What Makes Utah Great

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Utah's Greatness emanates from its "people"

- **Honest, ethical, and moral people**
- **Emphasis on the "people" is the same across ethnic, religious and other demographic variables**

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- **Outdoor recreation**
- **LDS Church**

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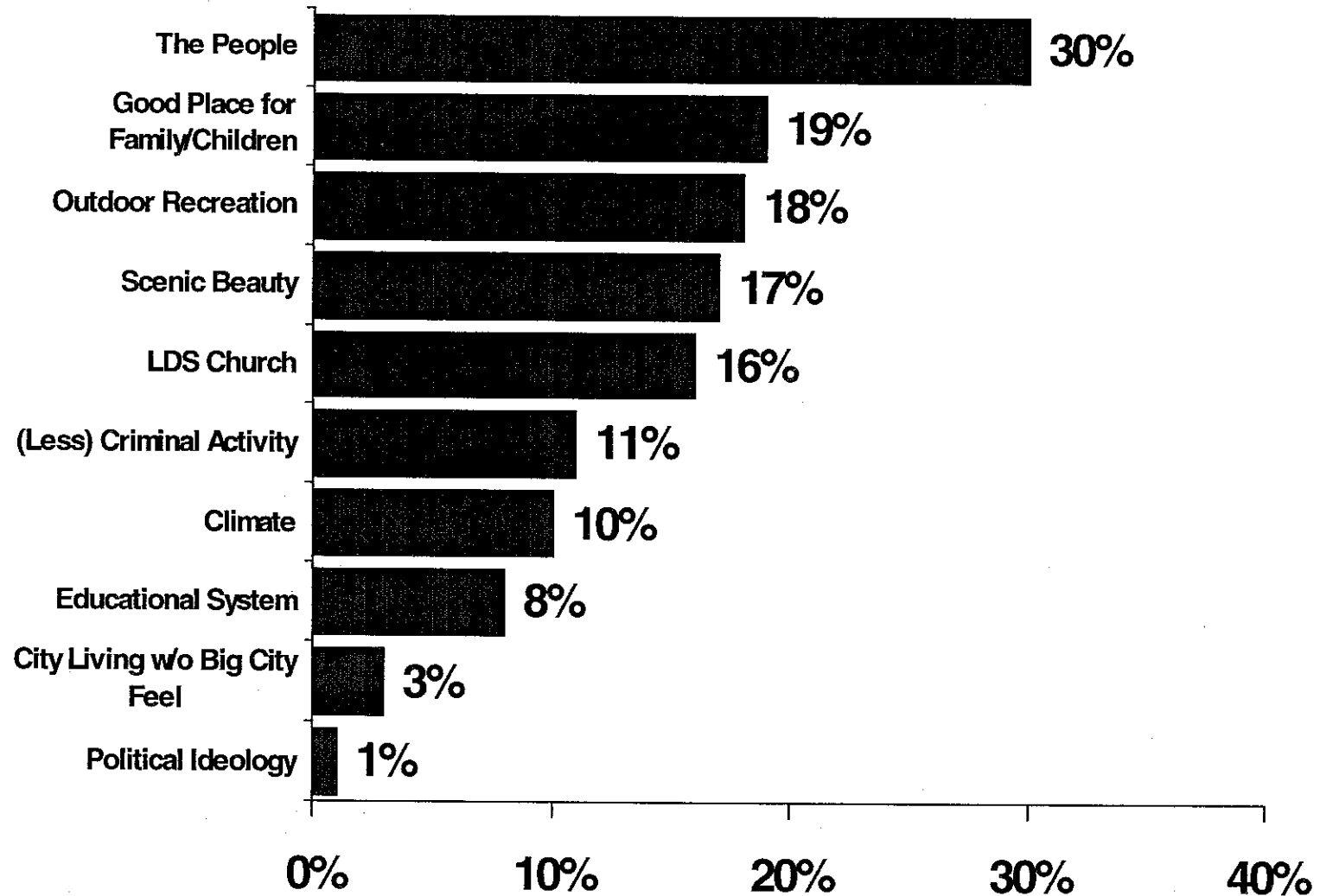
At a second tier, other factors contribute to Utah's greatness

- **"Good place for family"**
- **Outdoor recreation**
- **LDS Church**

At a third tier, low crime, good climate and the educational system also help to make Utah great

Great Things About Utah

Percent Who Mention First or Second Most Important



How Do Utahns Characterize Themselves

Question: "How would you describe the people of Utah? Is that positive or negative to you?"

% of respondents
(multiple mentions)

Characteristics	Overall	
	+	-
Moral, ethical, honest	47	--
Friendly	24	6
Thoughtful, caring	26	4
Willing to help	27	--
Family oriented	22	--
Hard working	18	--
Religious	10	2
Conservative	7	2

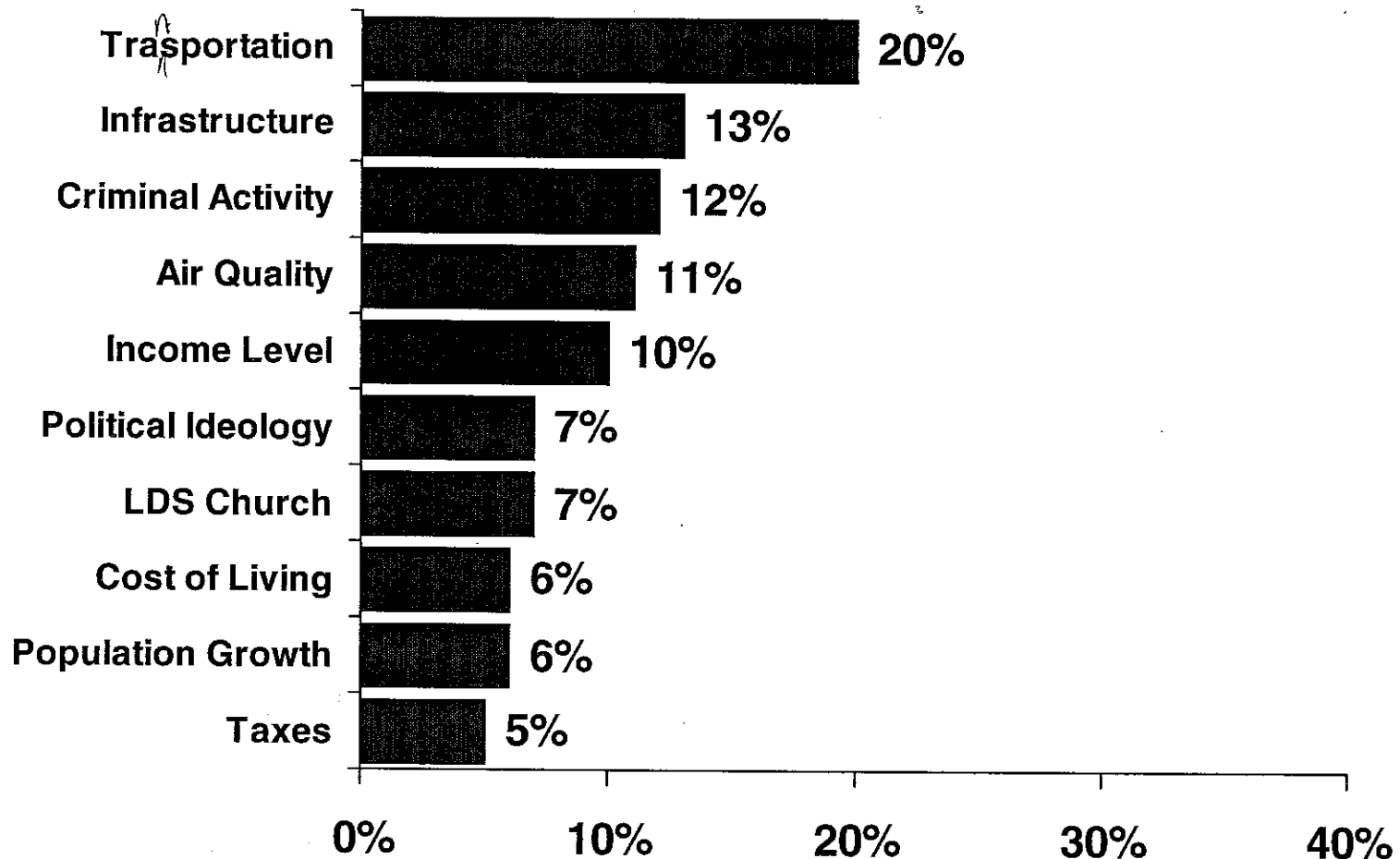
Issues / Challenges That Threaten Utah

What Makes Utah Great (worse)

- **Greatest perceived threats emanate from transportation, crime, and air quality**

Worst Things About Utah

Percent Who Mention First or Second Most Important



Current and Future Challenges Facing Utah

Question: "What do you feel are the biggest challenges currently facing Utah?" [Current]

% of respondents
(multiple mentions)

Challenges	Overall CURRENT
Population growth	41
Infrastructure	30
Criminal activity	27
Educational system	21
Olympic games	18
Cost of living	12
Air quality	12
Future planning	10
Commercial/Residential development	7
Employment Opportunities	7

How do Utahns View the Future and Growth

Quality of Life Perceptions of Future Generations

Question: "Think about the quality of life that will be here for your children and grandchildren. Do you see their quality of life in Utah increasing or decreasing in the future?"

% of respondents

Demographic Breaks:	Increase	Decrease
Overall	48	52
Growth Perception:		
Pro-Growth	62	38
Neutral Growth	56	44
Slow-Growth	21	79
Age:		
18 - 30 years	63	37
35 - 45 years	41	59
50 - 60 years	42	58
Gender:		
Male	53	43
Female	47	57
Years of Residence:		
1 - 4 years	64	36
5 or more years	40	60

How Future Growth Will Make Things Better

Question: "In what ways can future growth make things better?"

	% of respondents (multiple mentions)
Improvements	Overall
Employment opportunities	47
Business opportunities	25
Economy	24
Ethnic diversity	17
High income level	15
Educational system	12
Diversity of ideas	12
Cultural activities	8
Taxes	7
The people	1

How Future Growth Will Make Things Worse

Question: "In what ways can future growth make things worse?"

% of respondents
(multiple mentions)

Negative Changes	Overall
Criminal activity	49
Transportation	35
Population growth	28
Air quality	25
More crowds	17
Commercial/Residential development	13
Cost of living	10
Educational system	10
Environmental concerns	10
Natural resources	10
The people	4

Keeping Things From Getting Worse

Question: "What can be done or would you be willing to give up in order to keep things from getting worse?"

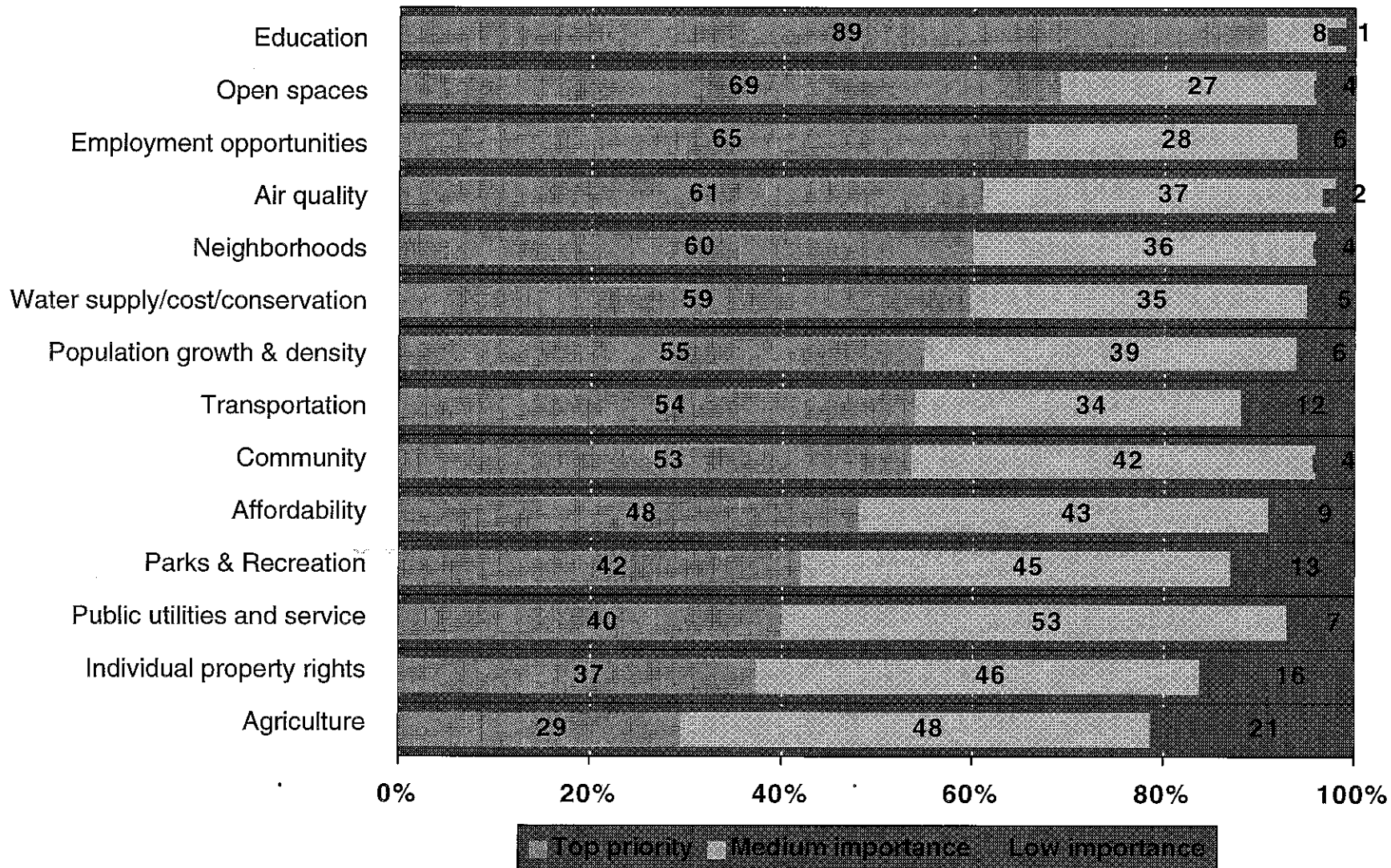
% of respondents
(multiple mentions)

Issue	Overall
Get involved/spend more time	36
Spend more money	36
Decrease automobile usage	28
Better planning for future	16
Enforce stricter laws/penalties	15
Increase public awareness	12
Slow down/limit growth	10

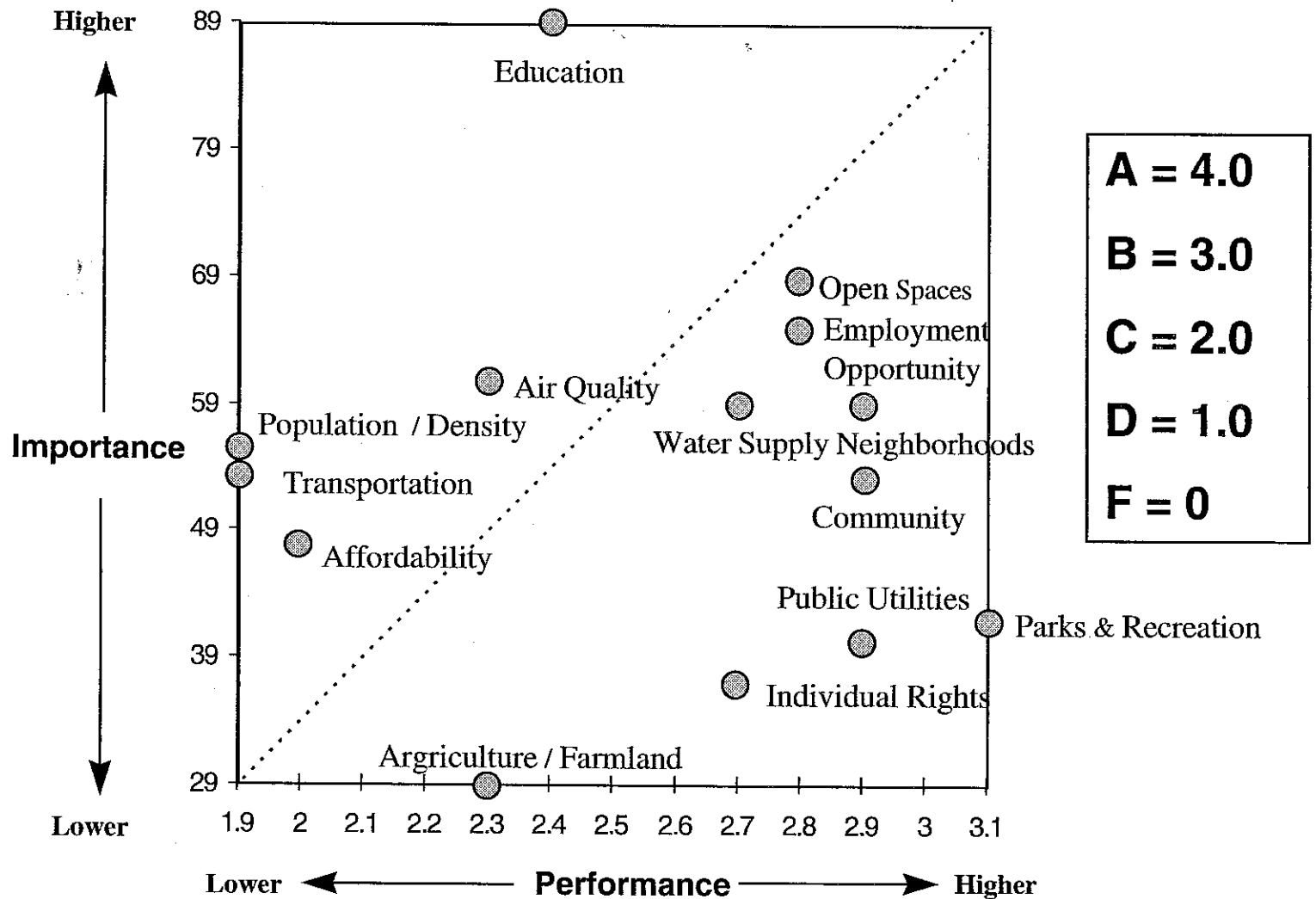
Importance of Aided Issues

Question: "Thinking about a better quality of life in Utah, I would like you to place these issues in three piles based on how important they are to you: top priority, medium importance, low importance."

% of respondents



Aided Issues: Performance by Salience

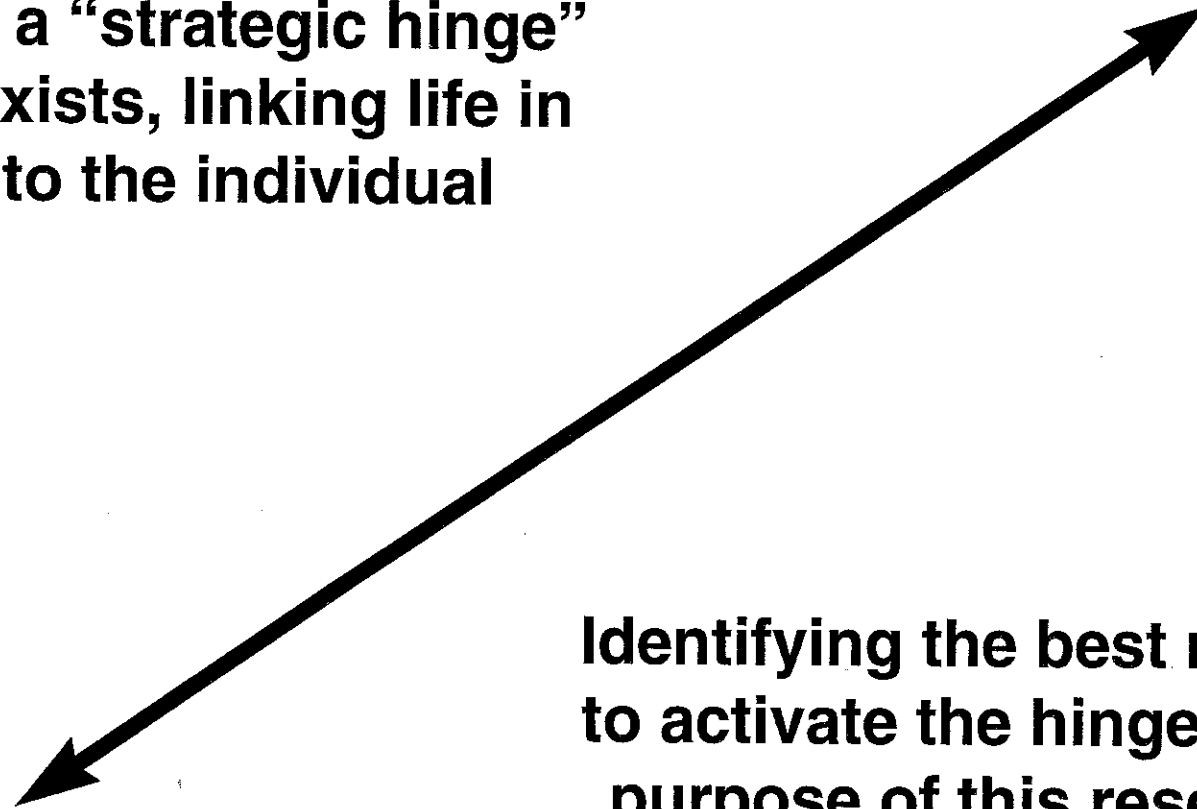


**Values that are Central in
Determining Which Issues Have the
Greatest Impact**

Strategic Hinge

**There is a “strategic hinge”
which exists, linking life in
Utah to the individual**

Individual



Life in Utah

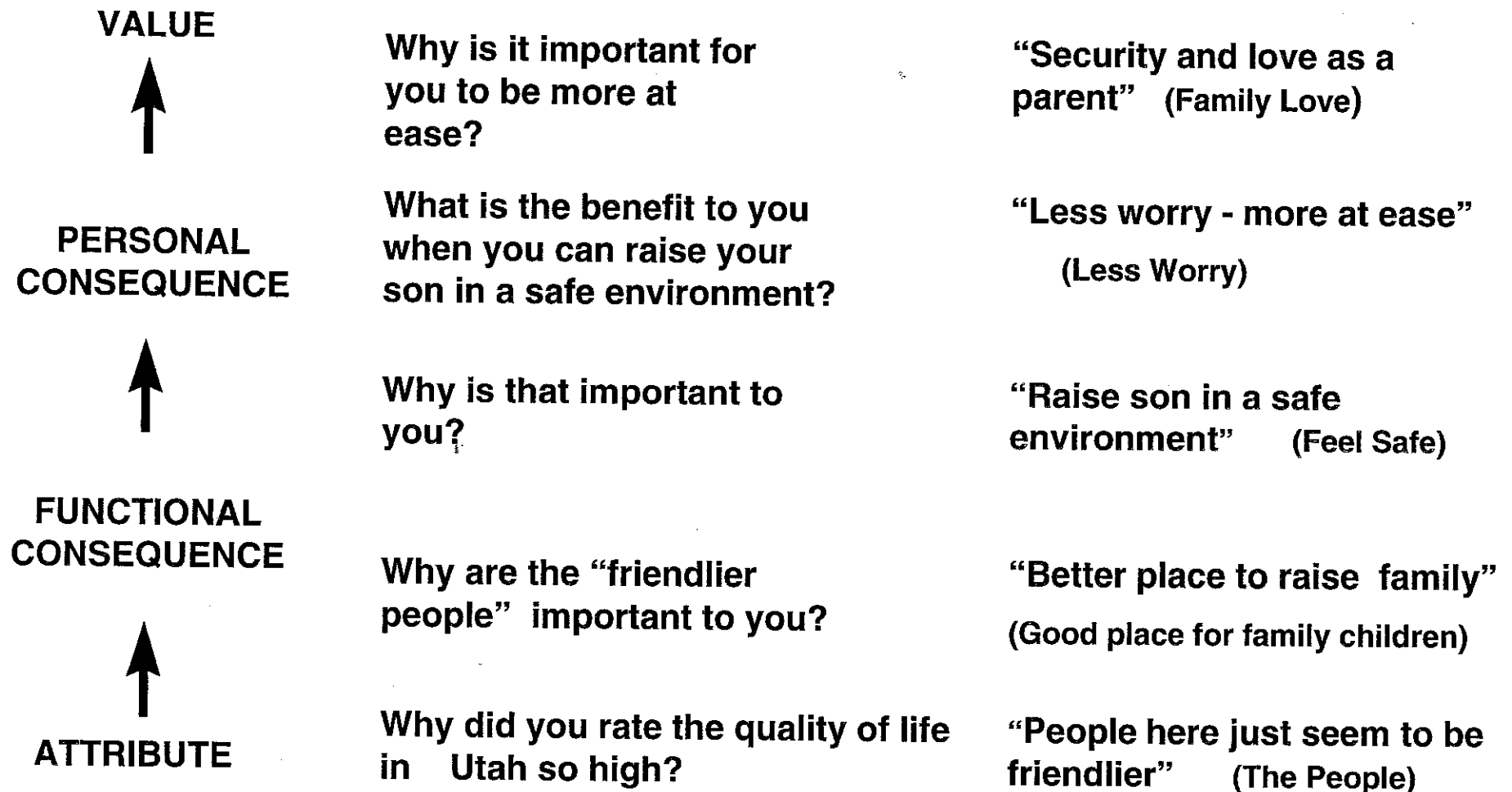
**Identifying the best means
to activate the hinge is the
purpose of this research**

Conceptual Framework for Communications Strategies

People operate on three basic levels in translating and prioritizing messages and choices about products, organizations, ideas, and even life.

- Attributes**
- Consequences**
- Personal Values and Emotions**

Example of the VISTA Process

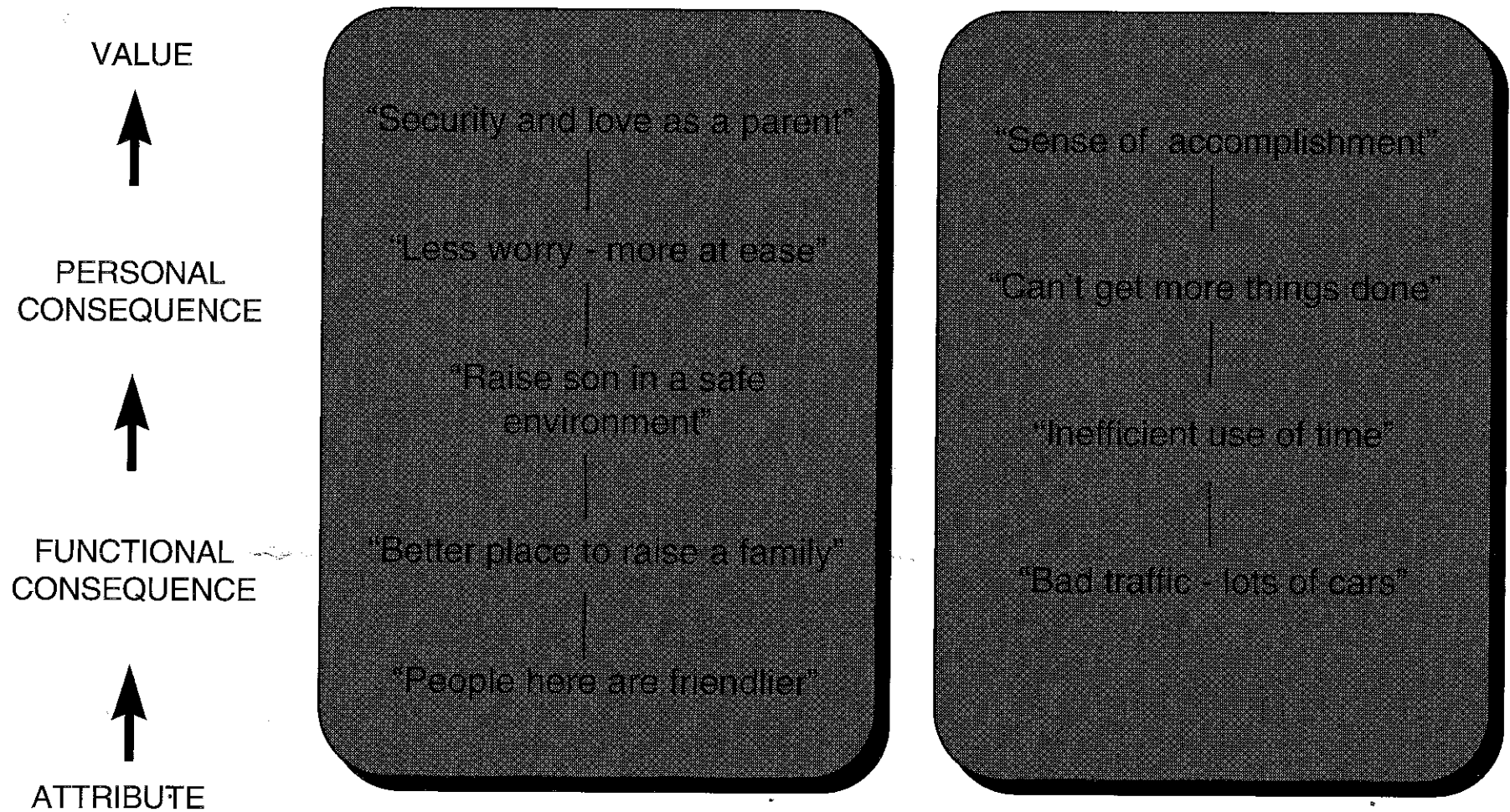


VISTA Process:

Positive and Negative Ladders

Positive Ladder

Negative Ladder



Core Values of Wasatch Front and Back

The values system along the Wasatch centers around a sense of peace or peace of mind emanating from a feeling of safe haven based on living with people who prize and share a common sense of honesty, morality, and ethics.

- **Dominates above all other values orientations**
- **Supported by dedication to family and providing opportunities and experiences to help children handle life's problems**

Core Values of Wasatch Front and Back

Utah's scenic beauty / outdoor recreation operates POSITIVELY at a secondary level providing diverse opportunities and activities to be with the family, or relax and feel less stress, which contribute to peace of mind, freedom, and enjoyment.

Core Values of Wasatch Front and Back (cont.)

**Traffic / infrastructure and crime both operate
NEGATIVELY to undermine the core values system**

- **Neither as strong as the positives of the people**
- **About the same level of strength as scenic
beauty / outdoor recreation**

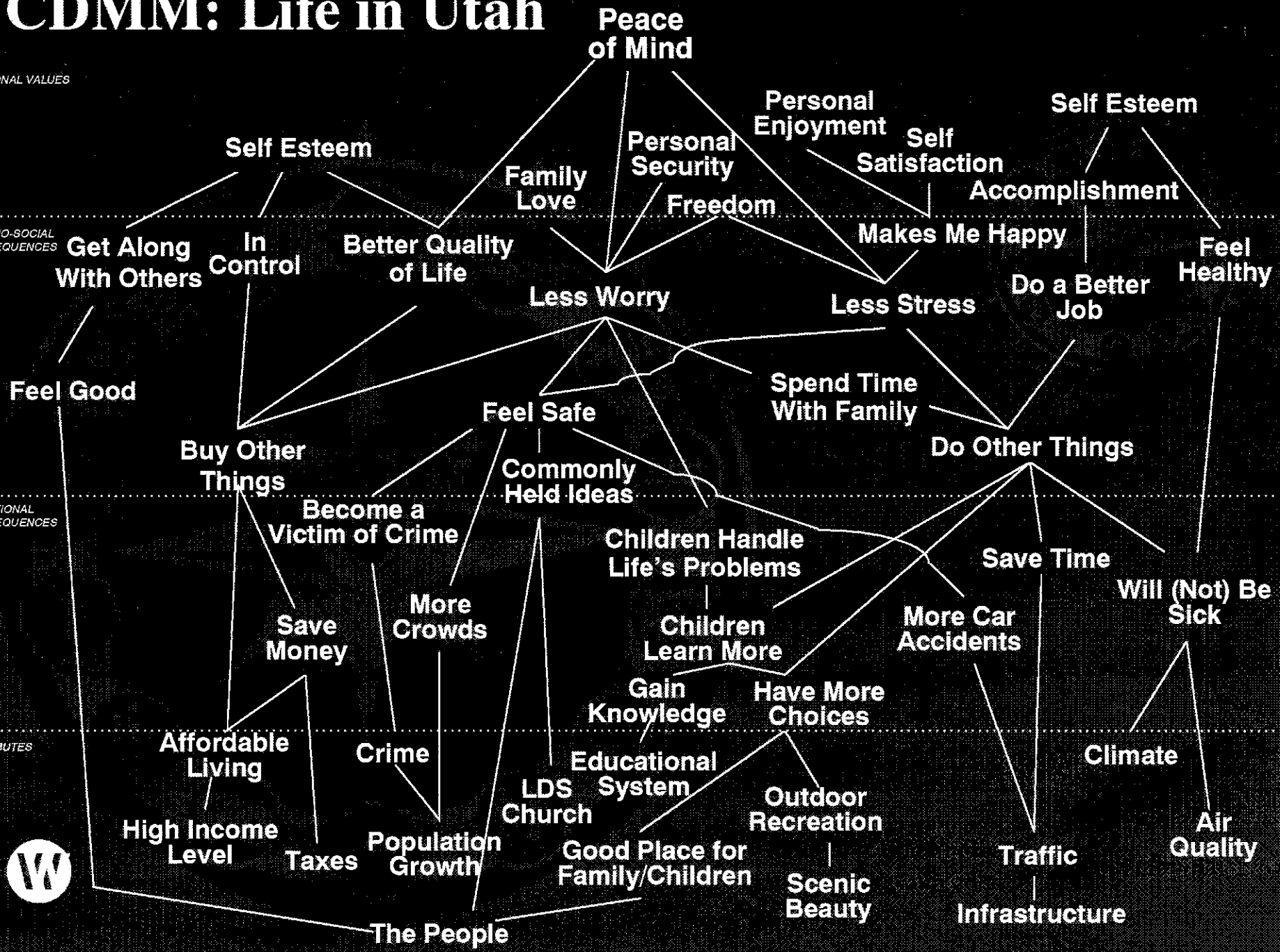
CDMM: Life in Utah

PERSONAL VALUES

PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

ATTRIBUTES



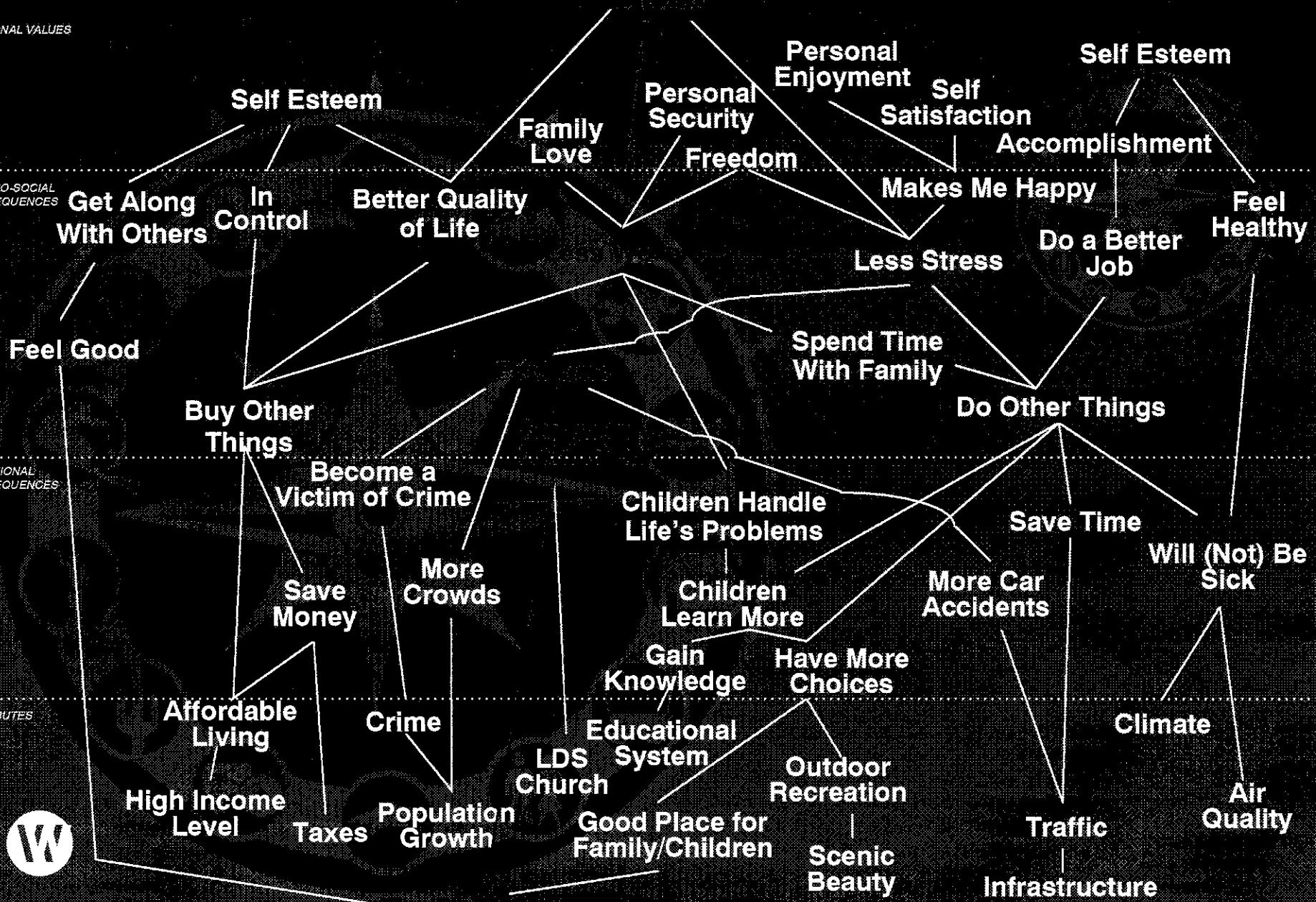
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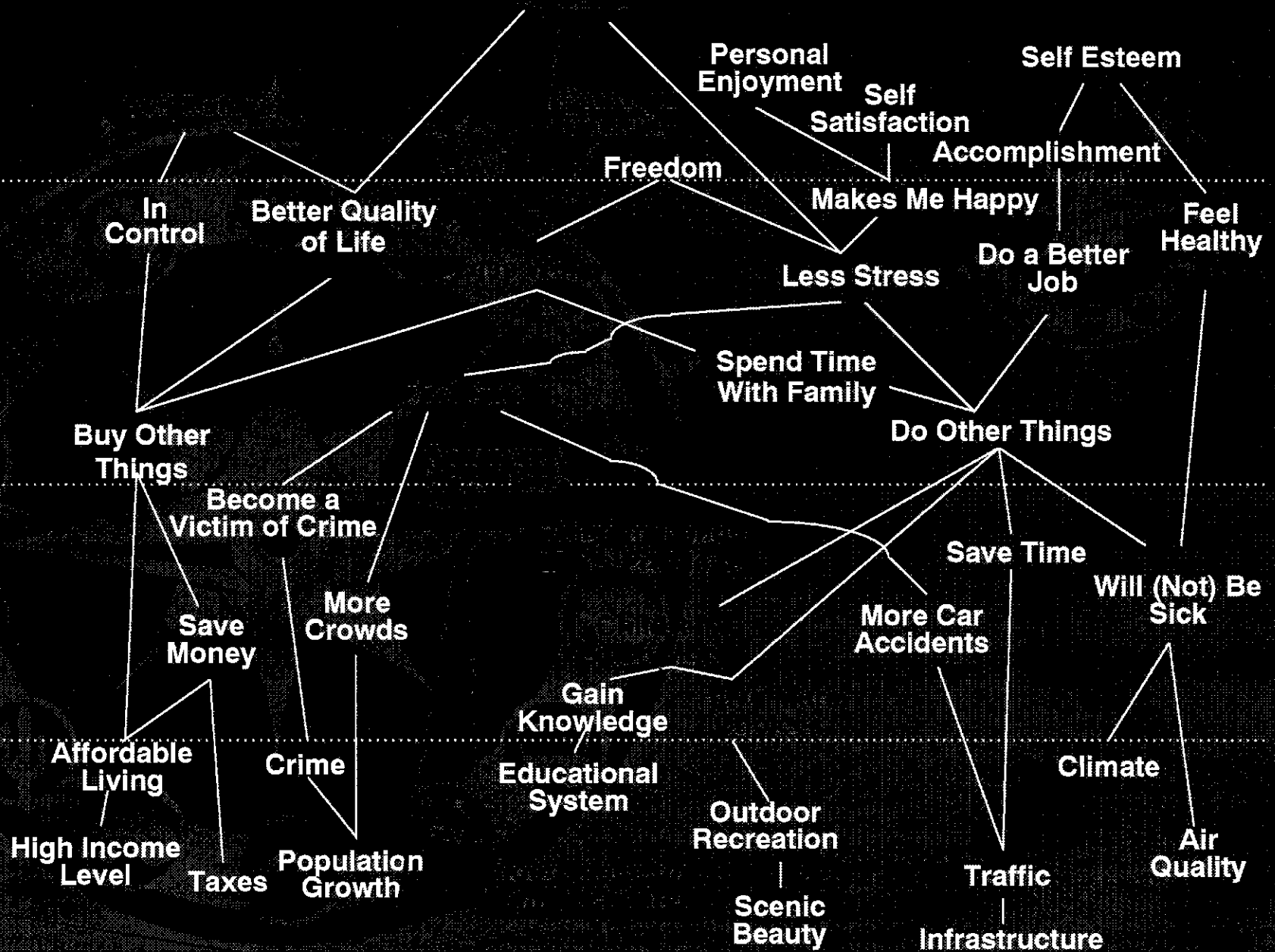
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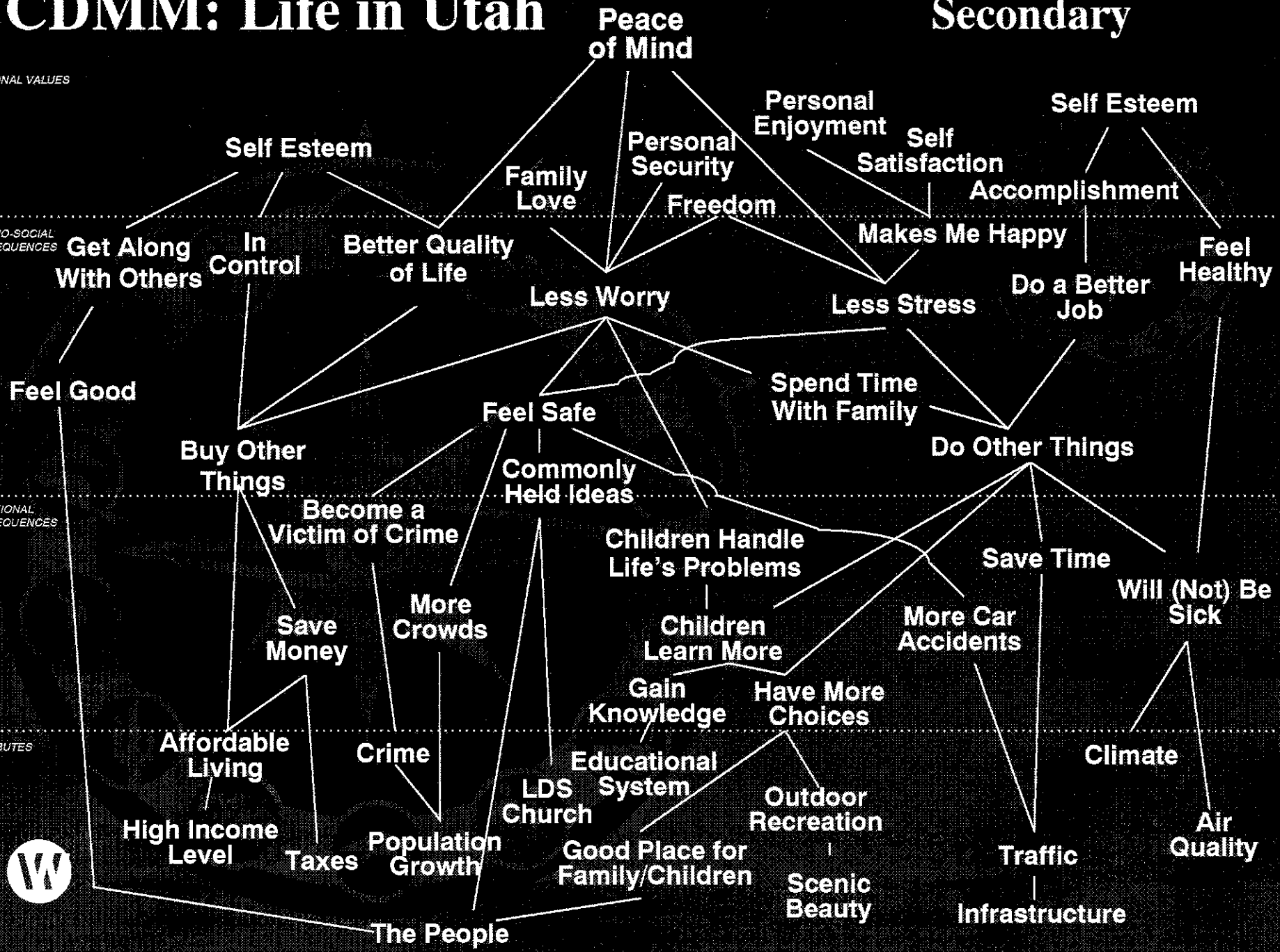
Secondary

PERSONAL VALUES

PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

ATTRIBUTES



CDMM: Life in Utah

PERSONAL VALUES

Self Esteem

Personal Security

Self Satisfaction

Freedom

PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Get Along With Others

In Control

Better Quality of Life

Feel Healthy

Feel Good

Buy Other Things

Commonly Held Ideas

FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Become a Victim of Crime

Children Handle Life's Problems

Will (Not) Be Sick

Save Money

More Crowds

Children Learn More

ATTRIBUTES

Affordable Living

Crime

Gain Knowledge

Have More Choices

Climate

High Income Level

Taxes

Population Growth

Educational System
LDS Church

Outdoor Recreation

Air Quality

Good Place for Family/Children

Scenic Beauty

The People



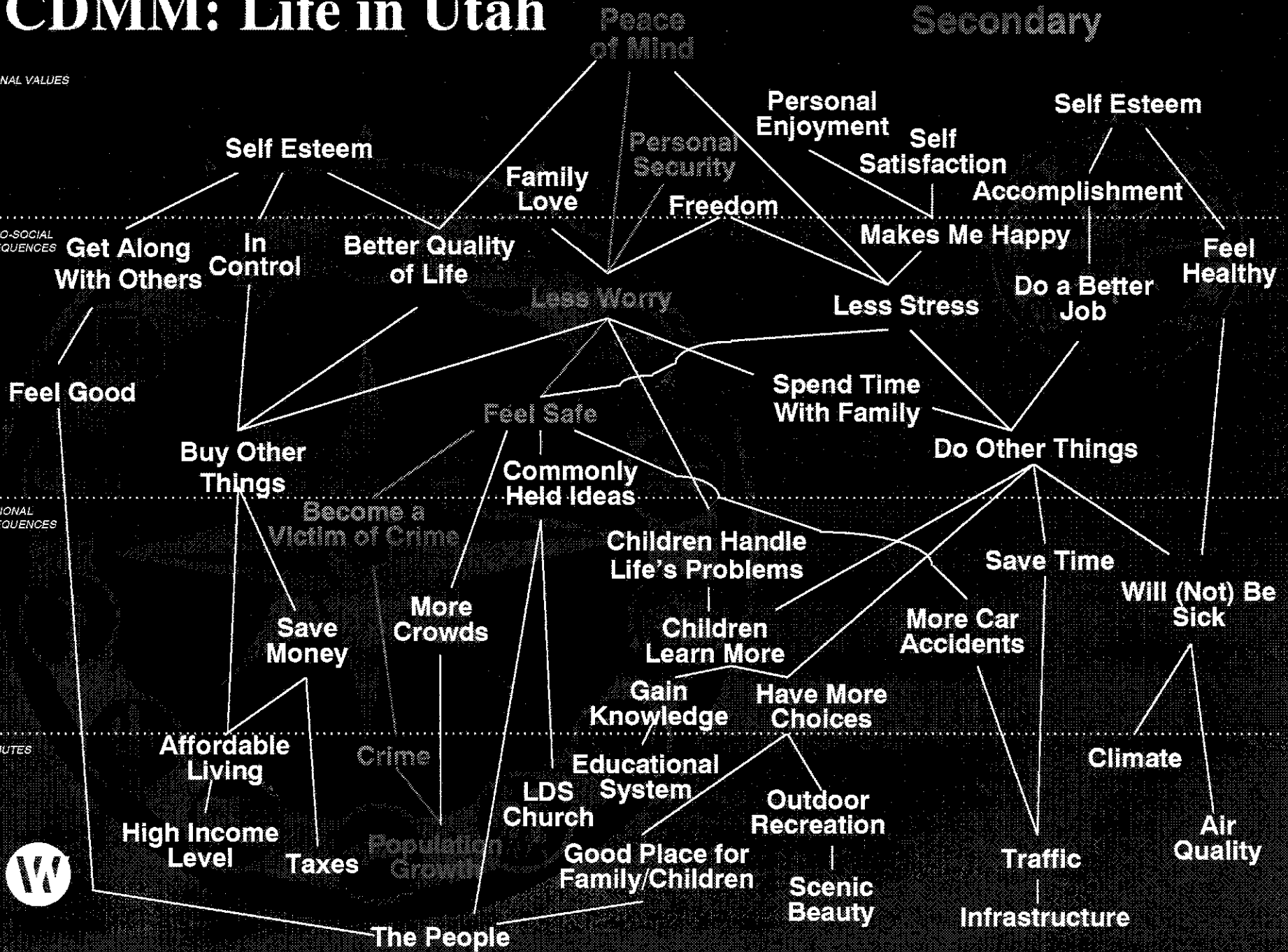
CDMM: Life in Utah

PERSONAL VALUES

PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

ATTRIBUTES



Impact of Future Growth on Core Values

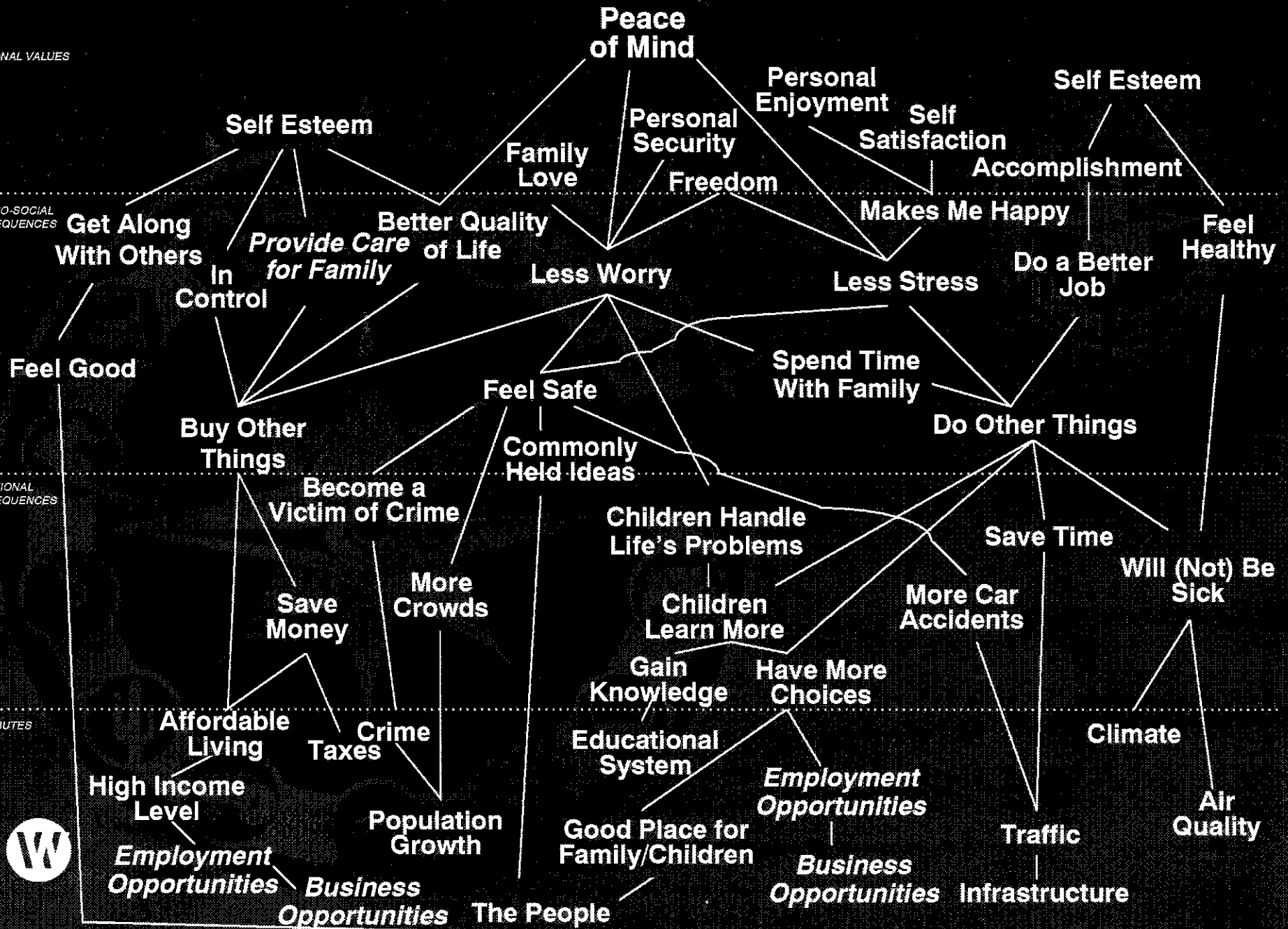
CDMM: Future Growth in Utah

PERSONAL VALUES

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CDMM: Future Growth in Utah

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CDMM: Future Growth in Utah

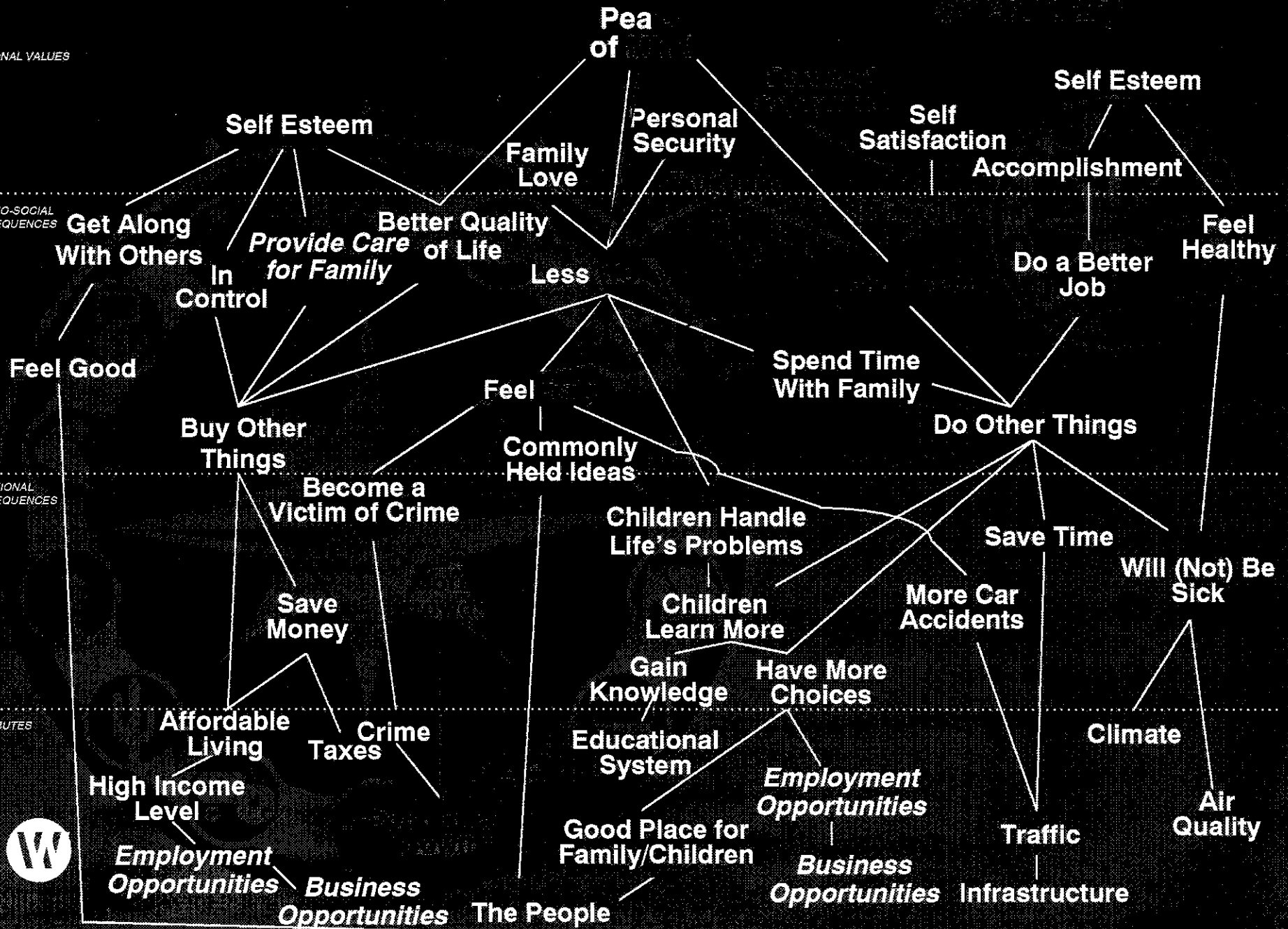
Secondary

PERSONAL VALUES

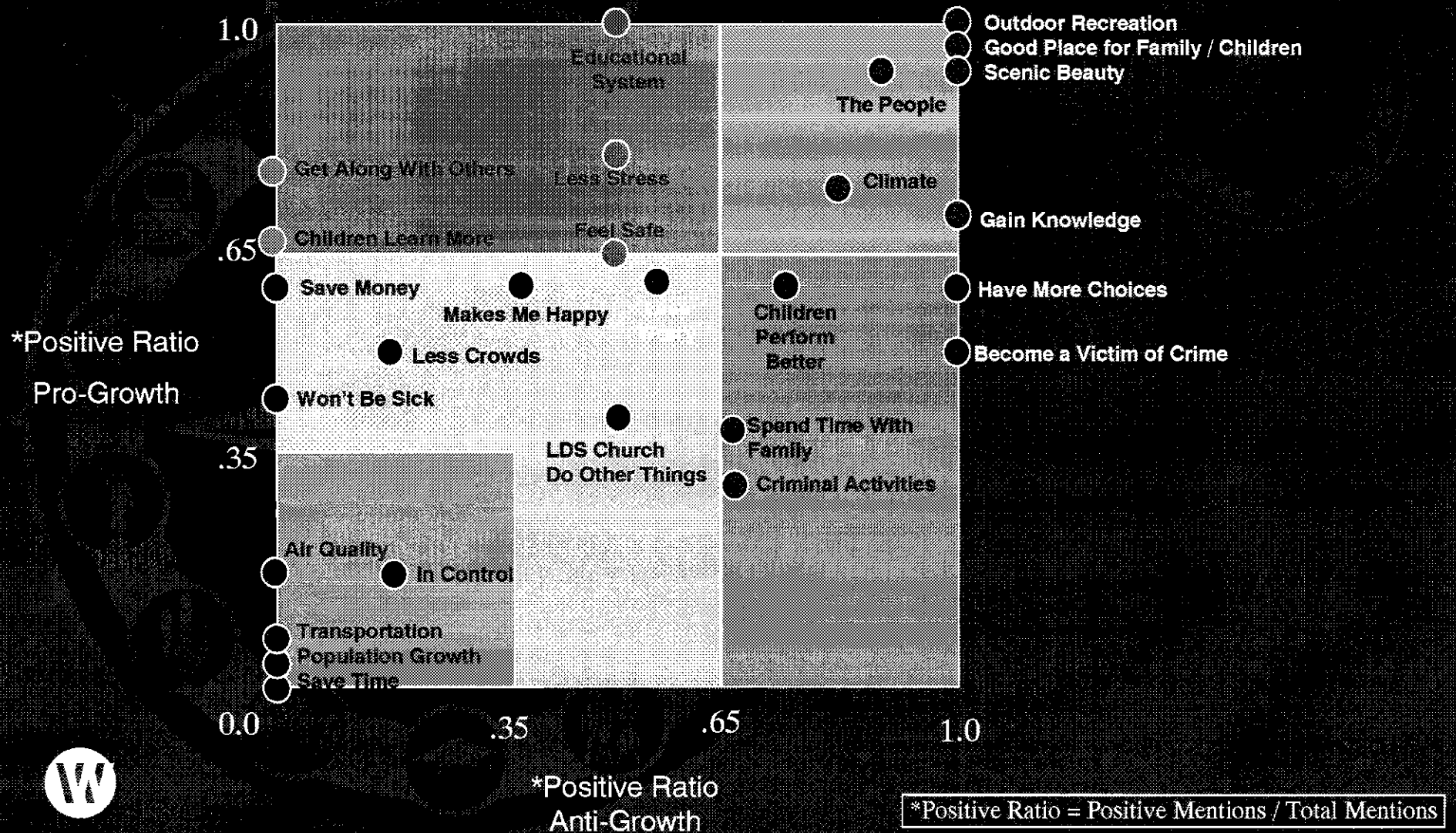
PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

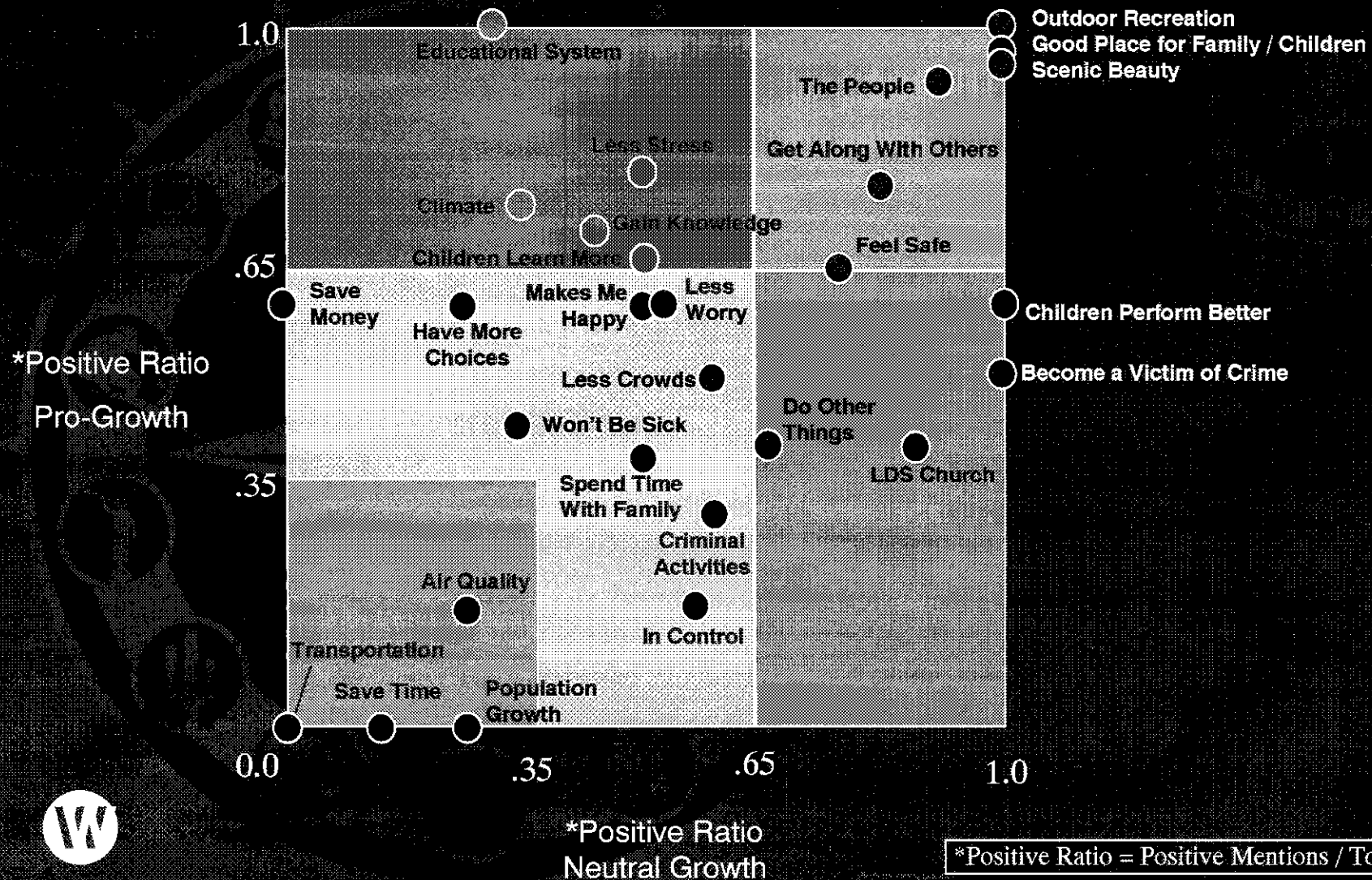
ATTRIBUTES



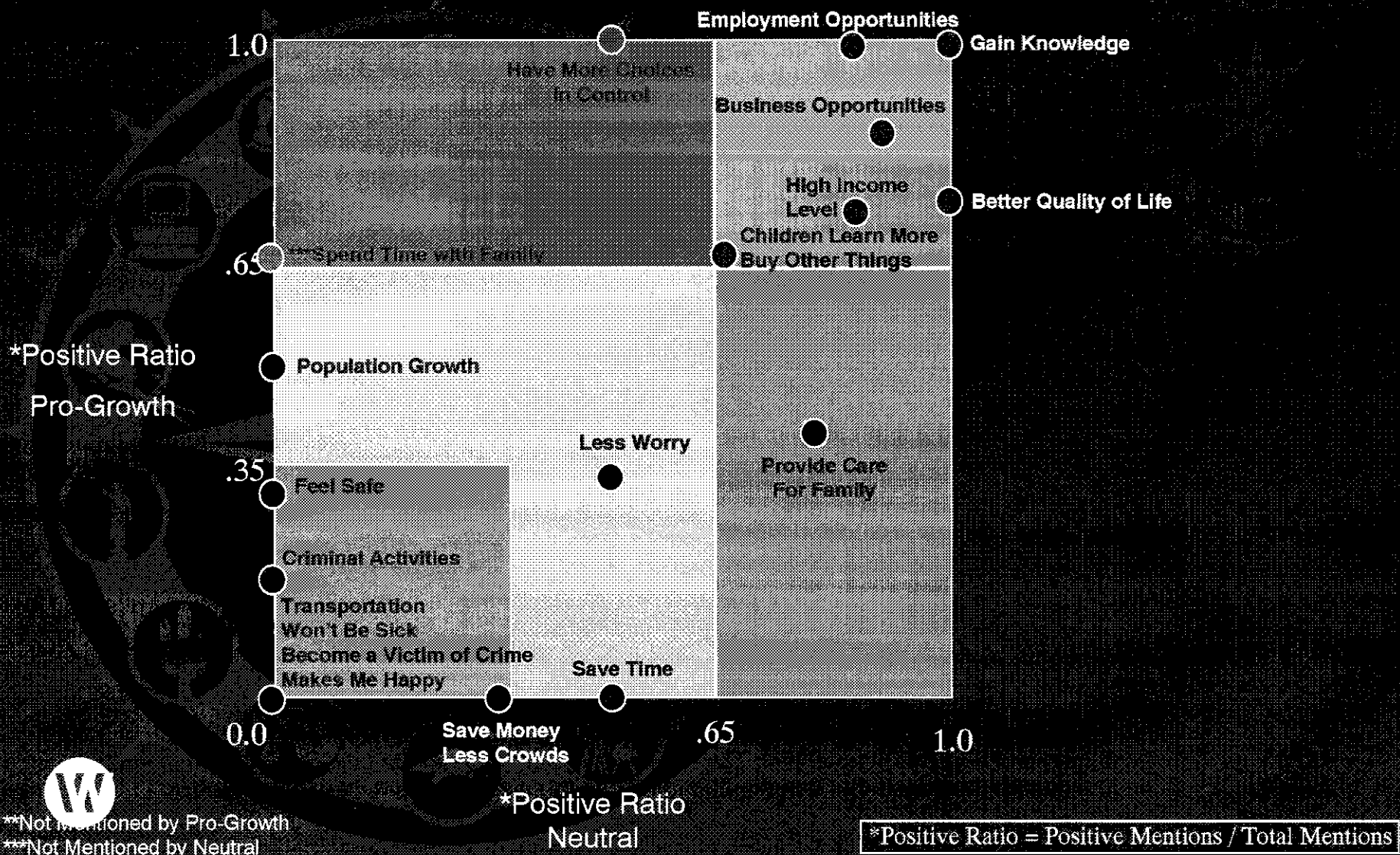
Quality of Life in Utah: Pro-Growth Vs. Slow-Growth



Quality of Life in Utah: Pro-Growth Vs. Neutral



Future Growth in Utah: Pro-Growth Vs. Neutral



Strategic Imperatives

- **At the end of the generation, the yardstick by which you will be judged is the degree to which your plans, initiatives, and projects have continued to promote an environment that draws and supports people who prize a common sense of honesty, morality and ethics which has afforded this generation, and extends to the next, a feeling of safe haven and peace or peace of mind.**

Strategic Imperatives

- **Utah's scenic beauty and the outdoor recreation it affords are sacrosanct - not negotiable. All growth should be evaluated based on its ability to positively impact the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities available, thereby providing enjoyable ways for people and families to be together, relax, and remove themselves from the cares of the world.**

Strategic Imperatives

- **Simultaneously, planners and leaders must continue to address the two concerns which contribute the greatest manifest threats to the core values of the people on the Wasatch Front and Back**
 - ◆ **Crime (as a direct threat)**
 - ◆ **Traffic / Infrastructure (indirectly robbing people of time to be doing things that matter more)**

Strategic Imperatives

- **Recognize the higher level importance and motivational power behind “safe haven” and ability to “do other things” in selection of new projects and focusing attention on future problems / challenges not currently on the public radar screen.**

Strategic Imperatives

- **Encourage and promote only those new businesses and jobs which demonstrate high regard for the core “people” characteristics and/or positive contributors to continued enjoyment of Utah’s scenic beauty.**

Strategic Imperatives

- **Harness the power and energy of a people who recognize a role and responsibility in safeguarding the things they most value in the state.**
 - ◆ **Elevate awareness**
 - ◆ **Correct misperceptions**
 - ◆ **Engage in dialogue and planning**
 - ◆ **Let them know of organized and coordinated efforts to protect and promote our common values**