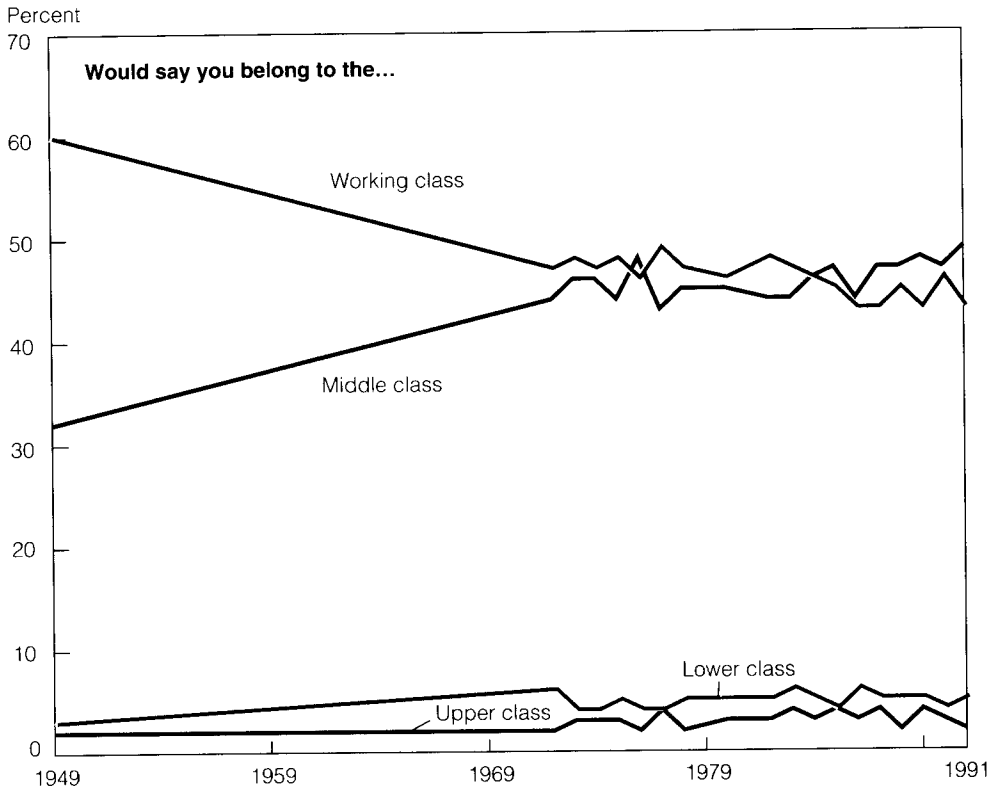


HOW WE CLASSIFY OURSELVES

Are the rich getting richer, the poor, poorer? Are middle class incomes stagnating? A number of economic analyses have tried to answer these questions recently, with conflicting results. Reviewing public opinion on the question, however, presents a clear finding: the middle class has been growing and is clearly dominant.

Question: **If you were asked to use one of these four names for your social class, which would you say you belong to—the middle class, lower class, working class, or upper class?**

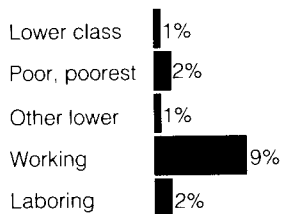


	Lower class	Working class	Middle class	Upper class
1949	3%	60%	32%	2%
Z				
1972	6	47	44	2
1973	4	48	46	3
1974	4	47	46	3
1975	5	48	44	3
1976	4	46	48	2
1977	4	49	43	4
1978	5	47	45	2
1980	5	46	45	3
1982	5	48	44	3
1983	6	47	44	4
1984	5	46	46	3
1985	4	45	47	4
1986	6	43	44	3
1987	5	43	47	4
1988	5	45	47	2
1989	5	43	48	4
1990	4	46	47	3
1991	5	43	49	2

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, latest that of February-April, 1991.

Question: **What word would you use to name the class in America you belong to?**

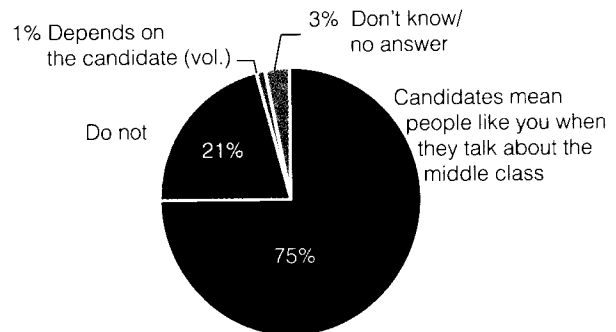
In 1939, in response to this question, Americans volunteered 22 different class categories



Only 15% described themselves as "lower class"

Note: Other categories include: upper class=2%; other upper=1%; upper middle 2%; other upper middle=1%; middle 39%; average=5%; white collar=1%; other middle=1%; farming=1%; business=1%; lower middle and unemployed/idle=less than .5% each; Don't know=28%.
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune*, December 1939.

Question: **When presidential candidates talk about the middle class, do you think they mean people like you?**






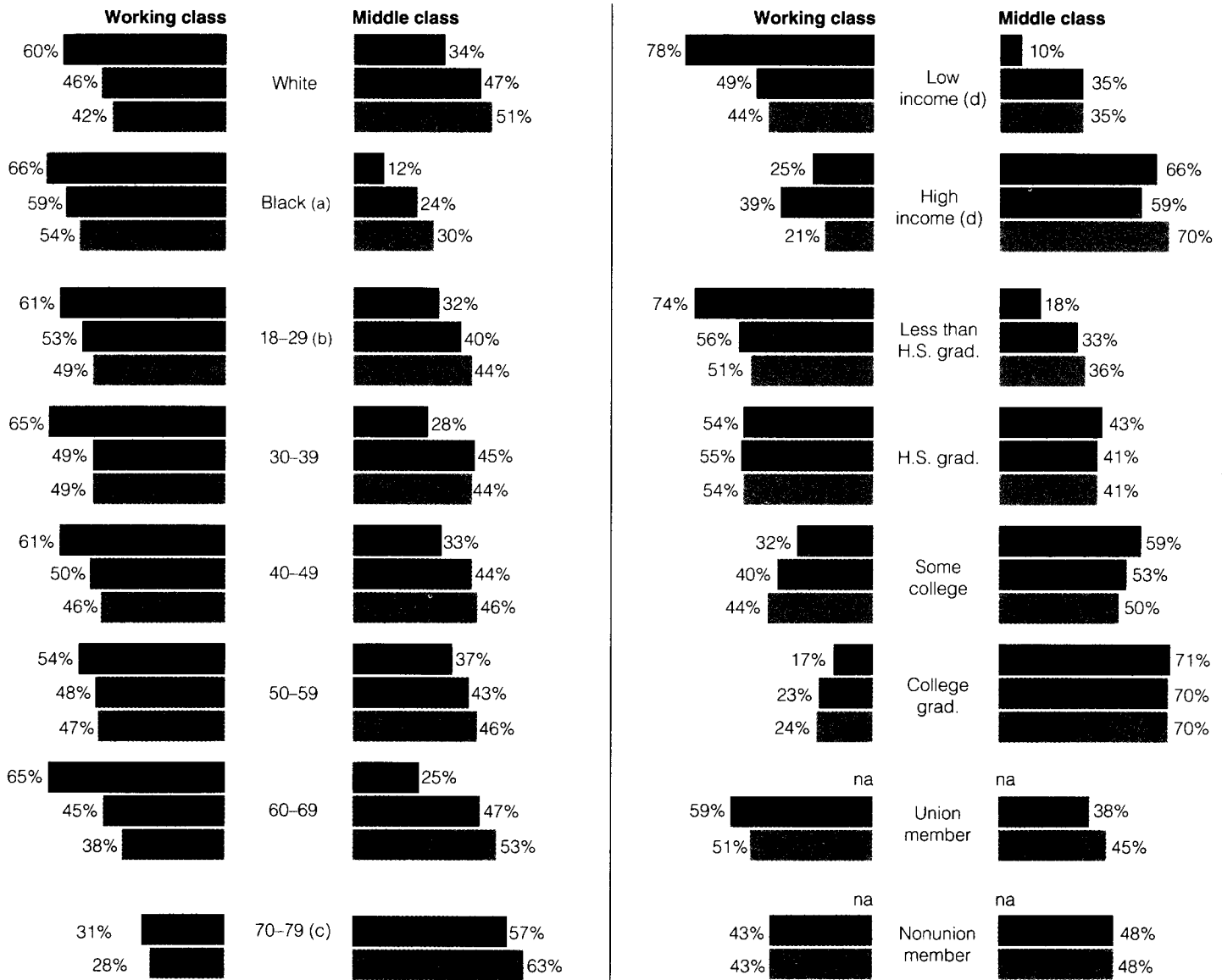
Source: Survey by CBS News/*New York Times*, January 22-25, 1992

The Rise of the Middle Class

How much we are a middle class country can be seen by looking at the data below. Most groups in the population have become more middle class over time.

Question: **If you were asked to use one of these four names for your social class, which would you say you belong to—the middle class, lower class, working class, or upper class?**

 1949 (All=60% working class; 32% middle class)
 1975-88 (All=48% working class; 45% middle class)
 1988-91 (All=44% working class; 48% middle class)



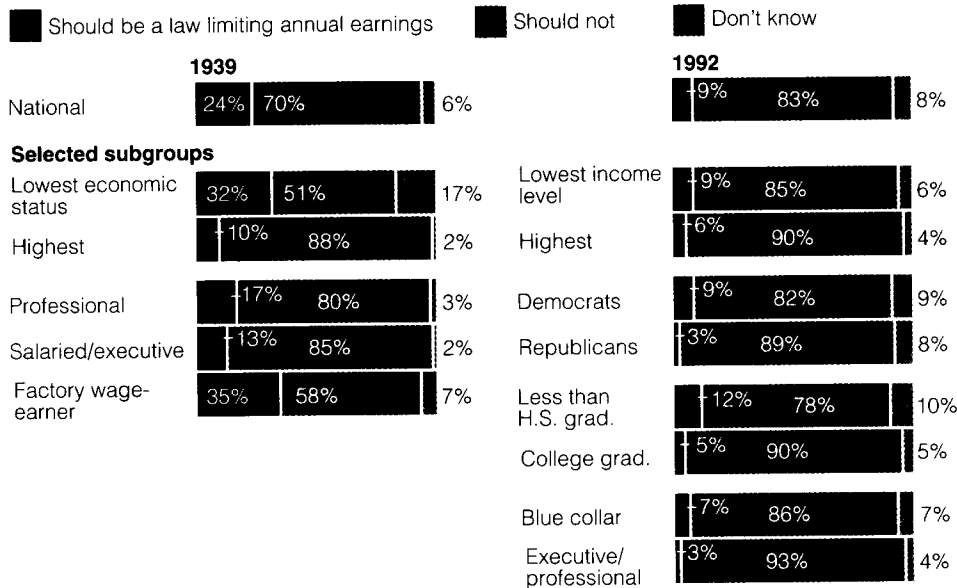
Note: (a)=sample of blacks in 1949 was small (99). (b)=21-29 years in 1949 survey. (c)=sample in 1949 was too small to analyze. (d) economic status coded by interviewer in 1949; in 1975-88, "low income" refers to respondents with income less than \$6,000 and "high income" to those with \$20,000 or more; in 1988-91, "low income"=less than \$10,000 and "high income"=\$50,000 or more. na=not available for 1949 survey. Data from surveys conducted in 1975-1978 and for 1988-1991 were combined for more reliable analysis of groups.

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, latest that of February-April, 1991.

Little Support for Limiting Earnings

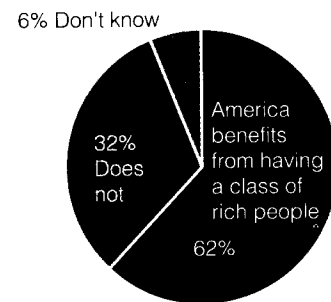
Even fewer Americans today than in 1939 believe that limits should be placed on individual earnings. This is a widely shared view. Democrats and Republicans, the young and the old, whites and blacks are in agreement about what it takes to be part of the middle class.

Question: **Do you think there should be a law limiting the amount of money any individual is allowed to earn in a year?**



Note: In 1939 and 1992 there were no significant differences by sex, marital status, or age. In 1939, economic status was coded by interviewer. In 1992, "lowest income" = less than \$15,000, "highest income" = \$50,000 or more.
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Reports 92-2), latest that of January 11-25, 1992.

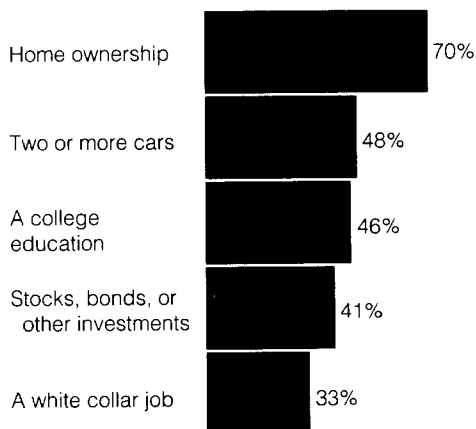
Question: **Does America benefit from having a class of rich people or not?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 17-20, 1990.

Question: **Which of the following do you think Americans need to be considered as part of the middle class?**

To be considered part of the middle class, need...



We created a scale based on these five items to see if there would be significant differences among groups in the population over how many items one needed to be middle class. Differences were minor.

32% of 18-24 year olds said one needed four or five of them; 32% of those 60 years+ gave that response

25% of whites compared to 28% of blacks said four or five

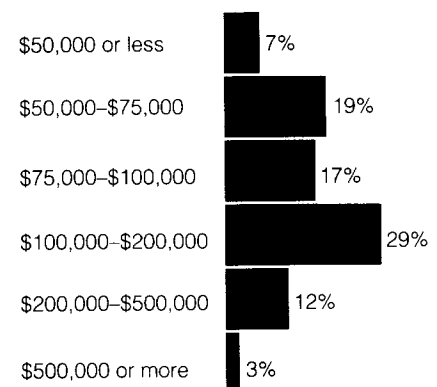
29% of those with less than a H.S. diploma compared to 22% of college grads said four or five

25% of Republicans compared to 26% of Democrats said four or five

Source: Survey by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman for Time and CNN, December 17-22, 1991.

Question: **There is a lot of talk about the middle class and the rich. In your opinion, how much income would someone have to make in a year to be too rich to be considered middle class?**

Income someone would have to make in a year to be too rich to be considered middle class

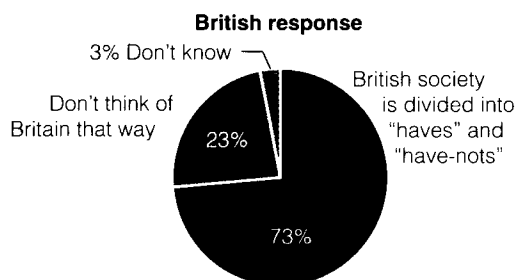
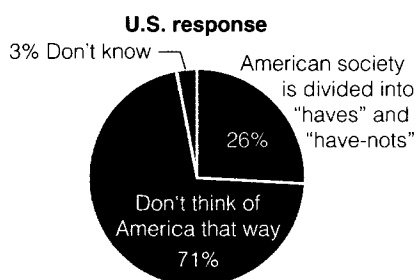


Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, February 9-11, 1993.

"Haves" and "Have-Nots"

A Gallup question asking whether our society is one of "haves" or "have-nots" produces very different responses in Britain and in the United States. Seven in ten Americans see their nation as a nation of "haves," whereas nearly three-quarters of Britons see their nation as a nation of "have-nots."

Question: **Some people think of (American society/British society) as divided into two groups, the "haves" and the "have-nots," while others think it's incorrect to think of (America/Britain) that way. Do you, yourself, think of (America/Britain) as divided into haves and have-nots, or don't you think of (America/Britain) that way?**

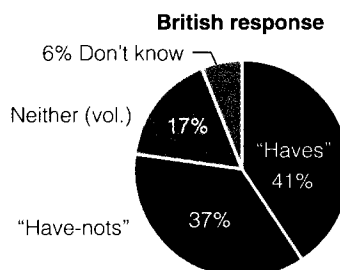
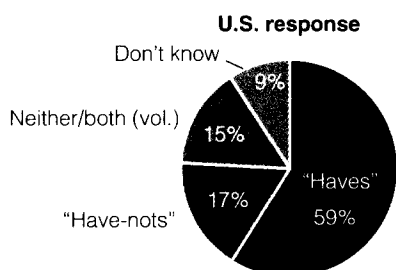


Note: Majorities of all age, political, regional, educational, and religious groups did not think of American society as divided into "haves" and "have-nots." Seventy-three percent of whites did not agree with the characterization, 54% of non-whites did not agree with it.

Note: In October 1984, 63% of Britons said their society was divided into "haves" and "have-nots."

Question: **If you had to choose, which of these groups would you say you belong to, the "haves" or the "have-nots"?**

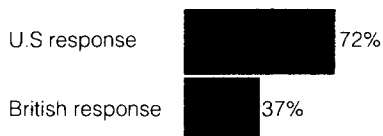
Consider self among the...



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, July 1-7, 1988 (U.S.) and March 23-28, 1988 (U.K.)

Question: **Please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statement...**

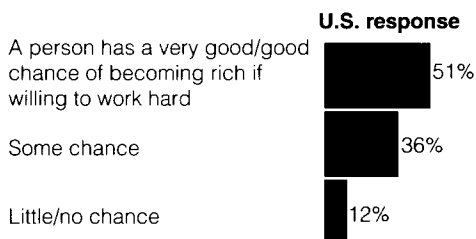
Agree, the way things are in (name of country), people like me and my family have a good chance of improving our standard of living



Source: Surveys by the International Social Survey Program by the National Opinion Research Center (U.S.) and Social and Community Planning Research (U.K.), 1987.

Question: **How good a chance do you think a person has to become rich today, if the person is willing to work hard? (U.S.)**

Question: **Do you think everyone starting out life in Britain has a good chance of becoming rich if he or she wants, or not? (Britain)**



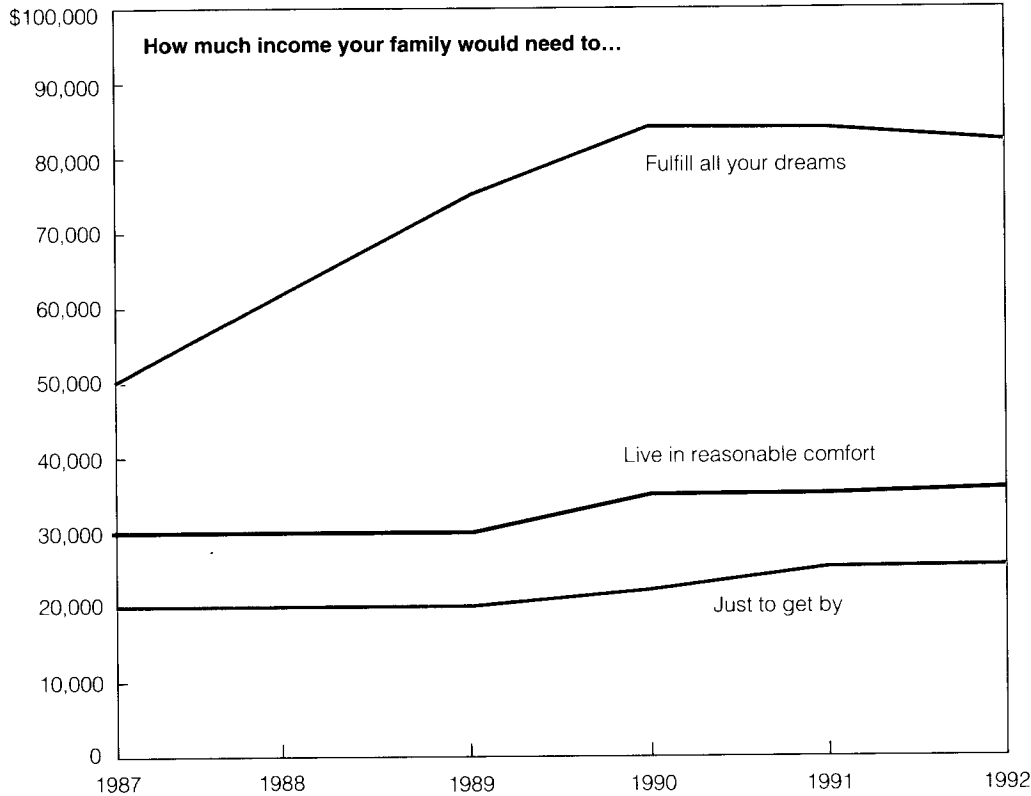
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, May 17-20, 1990 (U.S.), and Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., January 3-8, 1992.

Modest Expectations

Since 1987 the Roper Organization has asked Americans what they and their families need just to get by, to live in reasonable comfort, and to fulfill all of their dreams. The findings have been remarkably constant and modest. In 1992, the median response to fulfill all dreams was \$82,100; just to get by, \$25,300.

Question: **Thinking about the needs of you and your family, how much income per year would you say you and your family need to live in reasonable comfort? How much income per year do you feel your family would need just to get by? And how much per year would you say you and your family would need to fulfill all your dreams?**

Median response

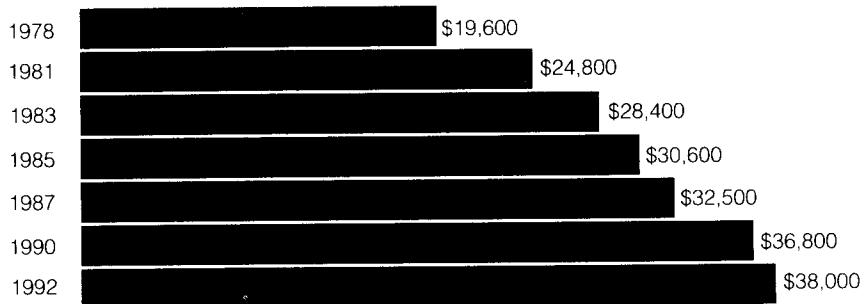


Median response

	Just to get by	Live in reasonable comfort	Fulfill all your dreams
1987	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$50,000
1989	20,000	30,000	75,000
1990	22,100	35,000	84,000
1991	25,100	35,100	83,800
1992	25,300	35,800	82,100

Question: **In order to live in reasonable comfort around here, how much income per year do you think a family of four needs today?**

Income family of four needs to live in reasonable comfort (median response)



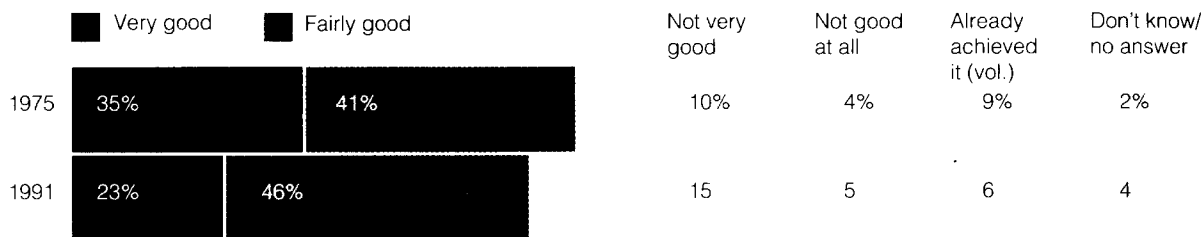
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Reports 92-5), latest that of April 4-11, 1992.

The Good Life

A large majority of Americans think they will live the "good life" though the percentage is shown by two Roper polls to have dropped since 1975. A look at the material and nonmaterial things that constitute the good life is displayed below.

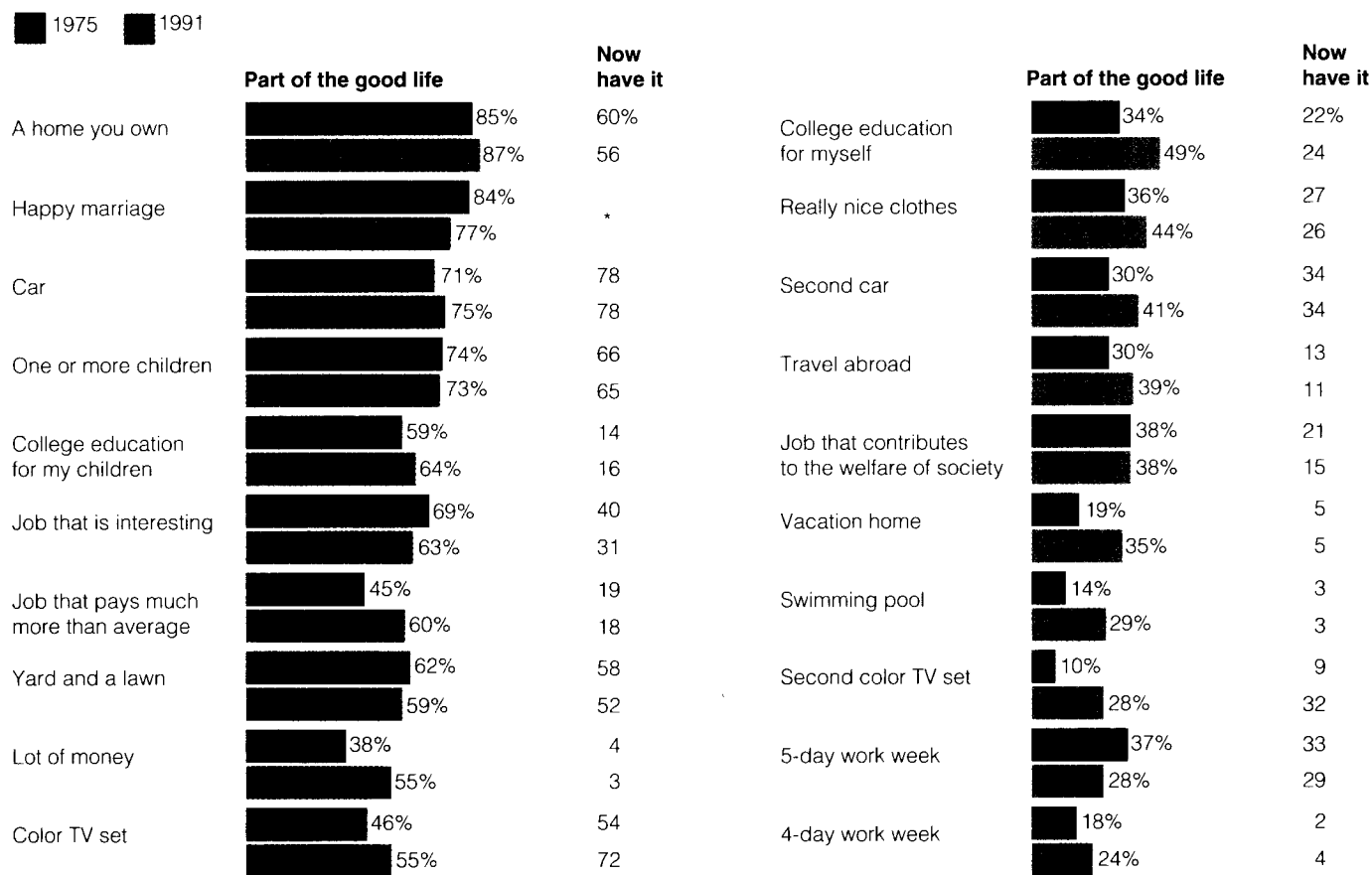
Question: **Thinking of your concept of the good life, how good do you think your chances are of achieving it—very good, fairly good, not very good, or not good at all?**

Chances of achieving the good life



Question: **We often hear people talk about what they want out of life. Here are a number of different things. When you think of the good life—the life you'd like to have, which of the things on this list, if any, are part of that good life as far as you are personally concerned?**

Question: **Now would you go down that list and call off all the things you now have?**



Note: *Change in the composition of the sample made results for this category incomparable.
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Reports 92-1). Latest that of December 1-8, 1991.

Consumer Comforts

Opinion surveys show doubts about whether we are living better than in the past, but by the measure of consumer expenditures and of ownership of many consumer items shown below, we have rapidly improved our material status.

Television

Have a TV

1950 ■ 14%
1953 ■ 49%

1991 Percent of total households with televisions = 98%

Average number of sets per home = 2.1

Percent of TV households with cable = 59%

Percent who own a VCR

1987 ■ 46%
1992 ■ 68%

Have high definition TV = 1%

Have hand-held portable TV/VCR unit = 3%

Travel

Have flown

1937 ■ 33%
1975 ■ 71%

U.S. travelers abroad

1980 = 22,365,000
1990 = 43,558,000

Telephones

Households with service

1970 ■ 87%
1991 ■ 94%

Have a car phone

1987 ■ 1%
1992 ■ 5%

Cordless phone

1987 ■ 18%
1992 ■ 35%

Answering machine

1987 ■ 17%
1992 ■ 45%

Call waiting

1987 ■ 26%
1992 ■ 42%

Automobiles

Own a car

1940 ■ 67%
1989 ■ 91%

Own two cars

1940 ■ 9%
1989 ■ 37%

Own a sports car

1992 ■ 8%

Credit/debit cards

Have one or more credit cards=61% in 1992

Number of VISA cards

1981 = 65,000,000
1990 = 135,600,000

Have one or more ATM cards=40% in 1992

Recreation expenditures

(Billions, 1987 dollars)

1970 = \$ 91.3
1990 = \$256.6

Miscellaneous consumer expenditures

(Billions, constant 1987 dollars)

Books and maps

1970 = \$10.5
1990 = \$15.4

Magazines, newspapers, sheet music

1970 = \$13.2
1990 = \$20.8

Flowers, plants, seeds

1970 = \$ 4.0
1990 = \$ 9.6

Admission to spectator amusements including movies, theater, opera, and spectator sports

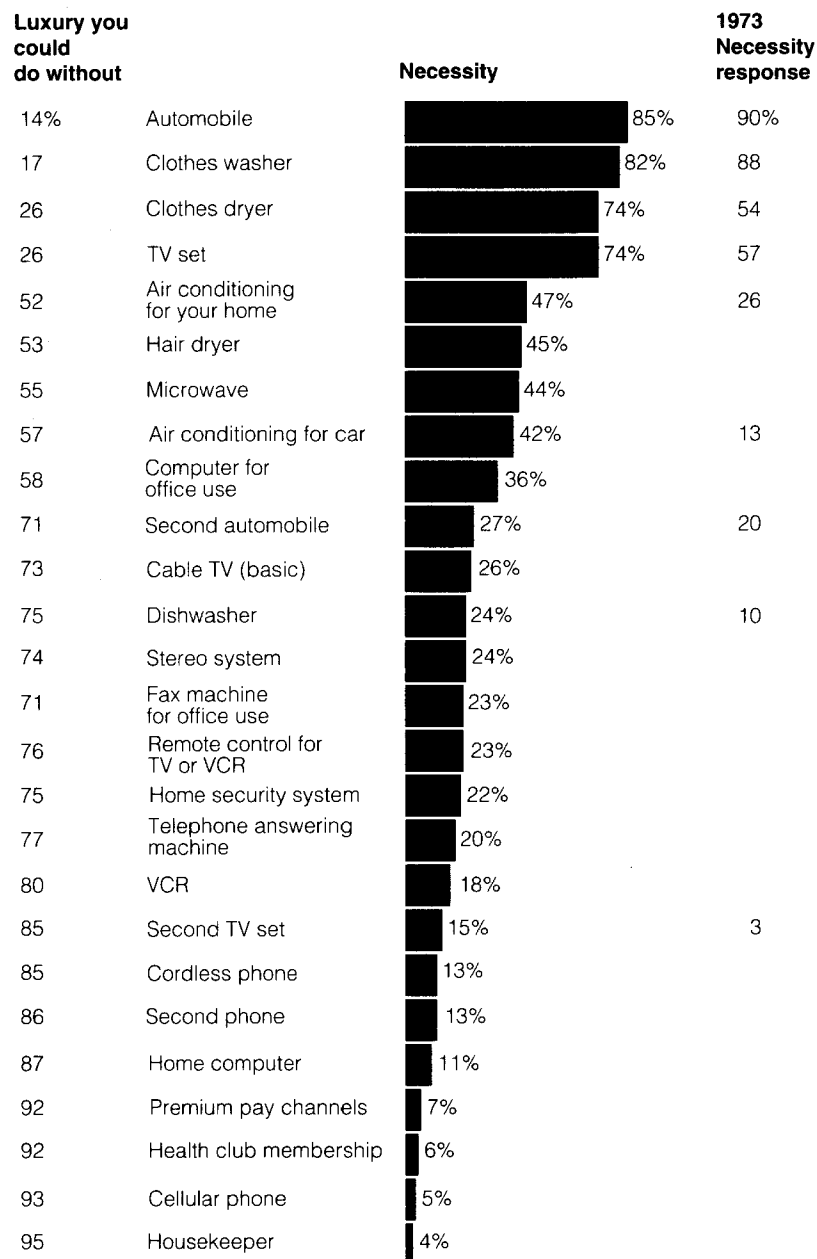
1970 = \$ 8.2
1990 = \$11.2

Source: TELEVISION: 1950, 1953 Gallup data, percentage of total households with TVs, average number of TVs per home, cable, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1992, p. 551; VCRs, high definition TV and hand-held TV, The Roper Organization; TRAVEL: 1937, Gallup, 1975, The Roper Organization; TELEPHONES: 1970, 1991 Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1992, p. 551; Car phone, cordless phone, answering machine, call waiting, The Roper Organization; TRAVEL: 1937 Gallup, 1975, The Roper Organization; U.S. travelers abroad, U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration; AUTOMOBILES: ownership, The Roper Organization; CREDIT CARDS: own credit/debit cards The Roper Organization; VISA cards, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1992, p. 504. RECREATION EXPENDITURES: Statistical Abstract 1992, p. 234; MISCELLANEOUS CONSUMER EXPENDITURES: Statistical Abstract 1992, p. 234.

Necessities and Luxuries

Judging by the data on this and the previous page, many Americans have items they consider luxuries. Most of us would not be willing to do something illegal or marry someone we did not love, or work at a job we hated to become rich. Working 12–14 hours a day all year was a closer call.

Question: **Now, here is a list of all kinds of things. Would you read down that list and tell me for each one whether you personally think of it pretty much as a necessity or pretty much as a luxury you could do without?**



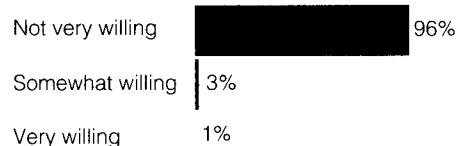
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Reports 93–1), latest that of November 28–December 12, 1992.

Indecent Proposals?

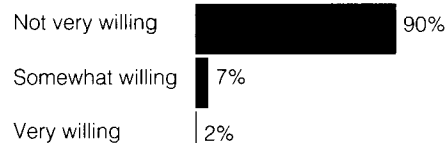
Question: **Think for a moment about some sacrifices you could make which enable you to become rich. How willing would you be to do each of the following if it were guaranteed to make you rich?**

Willingness to do each of the following if it were guaranteed to make you rich

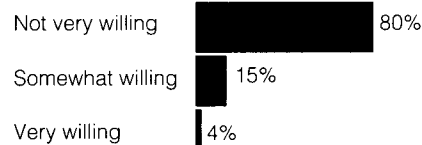
Do something illegal



Marry a rich person you did not love



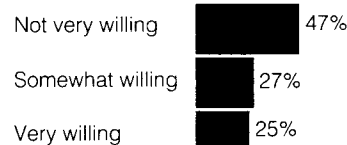
Not see much of your family



Work at a job you hated



Work between 12–14 hours a day year around



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 17–20, 1990.