ABSTRACT. A principal components analysis performed by David M. Smith on 47 U.S. state level indicators of social well-being yielded several components. The first two of these are socio-economic well-being and social pathology. Structural hypotheses are offered to explain state differences in these components. The structural variables condensed by a principal components analysis of state political, economic and social structure measures are differentiation, flexibility-rigidity, and progressive industrialization. These, along with several population measures, determine a substantial part of the variance in the two measures of social well-being.

1. PREDICTING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

The social indicators 'movement' — as it has been called by some — seeks measures that go beyond purely economic concerns and enlarge their scope in the direction of social well-being or the quality of life. Such indicators are often normatively or idealistically chosen in that the movement discusses goals and hopes to develop measures of well-being that could guide social policy. The movement is troubled by two questions. First, are there any common dimensions underlying the many indicators of poverty, health, crime, illiteracy, diet, housing, unemployment and the like? There has been little conceptual organization among the many indicators proposed. This lack of a conceptual framework has meant in general a problem by problem approach to the solution of social ills, despite the fact that we know that the persons who are poor typically suffer from an interrelated web of social problems. Moreover, such troubled individuals tend to cluster. These facts lead us to infer that it must be possible to find some small number of underlying dimensions that would stand for a wide range of social symptoms.

The second question troubling the social indicators movement follows from the first. If indeed there are clusters of people troubled by a range of social problems, what are the social structures that create these clusters of people? What are the political, social and economic structures that create pockets of poverty, illness, and all the rest?
The social indicators movement has been interested in the development of measures as scientifically adequate and widely accepted as the commonly used economic indicators. Many such have been suggested and the topic has been the focus of several national conferences and a number of research studies. Some of these have progressed in the direction of conceptualization by condensing a number of indicators chosen from a normative point of view into a smaller number of dimensions or components. One such study is especially relevant for the present discussion because it is based on comparisons of the 48 United States. It is included in David Smith's review of indicator research: *The Geography of Social Well-Being in the United States* (Smith, 1973). It used 47 measures of well-being in a principal components analysis that generated two components on which 26 of these had high loadings. Together these two components explained 52 percent of the variance. These were general socio-economic well being and social pathology. When Smith made an inter-city comparison, he found two similar dimensions. It is the purpose of the present study to find what political, social and economic structures explain these two components of social well-being, namely socio-economic well-being and social pathology.

The present research tests hypotheses that focus on state to state differences in these two dimensions of the quality of life and tries to find the state economic, political and social structures that cause their variation. There are three aspects of state structure used to explain differences in the quality of life: structural differentiation, flexibility of the political and social structure, and progressive or flexible economic structure. Added to a number of indicators of these concepts are measures Smith found related to the quality of life, population change and urbanization.

Differentiation is derived from Durkheim's organic solidarity and is defined as a complexity-growth aspect of social structure. It implies population size, the division of labor and the growth of specialization. A number of researchers have worked on the problem of measuring community differentiation. In one such study, F. Young and Fujimoto defined differentiation as the degree to which diverse areas of social meaning are publicly discriminated (F. Young, 1965). Since the public discrimination of diverse areas of social meaning serves as a fairly good definition of an institution, this is another way of saying that differentiation is defined and can be measured in terms of increasing institutional complexity. Taking off from this tradition, MacCannell developed a state level measure of institutional complexity that will be used here along with other more familiar measures of differentiation.