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How we feel about country--

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America is still a great place to live and work, most Americans believe, but not as good as it was 5 or 10 years ago.

And, along with the sense that things are getting worse, public-opinion polls show, a substantial percentage of Americans have a growing feeling that they are losing control over important aspects of their lives.

The corollary of this declining sense of self-sufficiency is an increased demand for government and employers to do more to meet some of America's needs. And with inflation and the economic squeeze — a recent consumer poll reports the most pessimism in the poll's 22-year history — support is softening for the past decade's social causes, except for women's liberation.

There also is a widespread conviction that morals and standards of honesty are weakening, that the standard of living has declined, and

The public opinion polls put it all together

that the future is less bright. By contrast, an overwhelming majority of Americans still believe in the importance of the traditional family, and a happy home life is the leading goal of four out of five of those interviewed.

These are some findings of recent public-opinion polls of Americans views of their lives and aspirations. They include a survey taken in late 1973 by Daniel Yankelevich, Inc. for the Institute of Life Insurance; several by the Gallup Poll; one by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center; by Louis Harris; and by Patrick Caddell, George McGovern's presidential-campaign pollster.

The Yankelevich poll shows that of nine important areas of their lives, Americans' sense of personal con-

trol has declined in seven. The exceptions are the ability to control family size (improved birth-control methods generate optimism here) and the ability to find a better paying job. Gallup finds the percentage of Americans who favor large families the lowest since he began polling 38 years ago and down dramatically since 1968. Only 19 percent say the ideal number of children is four or more, compared to 41 percent in 1968; two is the most popular number now.

The seven areas in which the sense of control has declined are: improving the quality and availability of medical care; providing for retirement; saving money; providing children with a college education; financial provision for dependents if the household's head dies unexpectedly; improving the

neighborhood; and preventing inflation. People feel least control over inflation, but the percentage hasn't changed greatly. Today 74 percent feel "little control"; five years ago the figure was 71 percent.

Americans' feeling of control over improving their neighborhoods has dropped, the polls show, mostly because of increased fear of crime. The feeling of having some or a great deal of power to improve their neighborhoods exists among 73 percent of whites, down from 82 percent in 1968. Only 63 percent of blacks and other nonwhites feel this control now, down from 73 percent in 1968.

Such feelings of powerlessness are greatest, as might be expected, among the poorest and least-educated Americans. Of people with \$5000 or less annual income, the polls show, 40 percent believe they have little ability to improve their neighborhoods; the percentage was 26 five years ago. Among those making \$15,000 or more per year, 17 percent share this feeling now; only 9 percent felt that way in

the good and the bad

1968.

Eighty percent of the respondents in the Yankelevich

study listed a happy family life as their principal desire. Another Yankelevich poll

showed that working-class young people are increasingly frustrated by their jobs

and prevailing attitudes on sex, patriotism, religion, and life-style, while college students are more inclined to work within the system than they were in 1971. Both groups wanted more sexual freedom (61 percent of students, 47 percent of nonstudents).