

THE FEDERAL WITNESS SECURITY PROGRAM:  
CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES IN  
IDENTITY AND LIFE STYLE

Fred Montanino

1987







NCJRS

MAR 24 1987

ABSTRACT

ACQUISITIONS

THE FEDERAL WITNESS SECURITY PROGRAM: CONTINUITIES AND  
DISCONTINUITIES IN IDENTITY AND LIFE STYLE

Fred Montanino

Yale University

1987

The Federal Witness Security Program, a relatively new strategy of protection, has done much to encourage witness cooperation. The program provides a means of protection for witnesses (and family members) with criminal connections who are willing to testify against their former comrades. The government moves its clients to new communities and redesigns their social identities. This strategy lies on the frontier of social experience. To maintain their physical existence, clients of the program undergo a process of social death and rebirth.

Clients in the program must adopt new names, biographies, and social identities in order to be absorbed into the communities where they move and to navigate through daily life. That is a difficult transition for people to manage both emotionally and tactically: one's name and past are neither lightly regarded nor easily discarded--the costs of doing so can be high.

© 1994

1994

© 1994

For all the obvious benefits to program participants, their study reveals that such a transformation breaks the continuity of the social life cycle and generates social and personal distress. Social distress grows from being "set adrift" in the social structure, and personal distress results from being forced to abandon the comfort and stability that comes from a continuous sense of existence between past and present life.

This study indicates that the transition may have, nonetheless, some beneficial effects. Some people, especially witnesses, felt they were released from undesirable pasts, underwent a dedeviantization process, and saw the change as positive.

Distress profiles were generated for relocation to new communities and navigating in society with a new, assumed name. Significant variation was found in the degree of distress and alienation that program participants experienced. This variation had more to do with situational variables (e.g., community connectedness, number of people in hiding with the witness, and whether children were present) rather than demographic characteristics.

Finally, there was a positive relationship between client distress over relocation, assumption of new identity, and alienation. Alienation tended to decrease with time as these people generated a past personal biography and attachment to their new lives and communities.



THE FEDERAL WITNESS SECURITY PROGRAM: CONTINUITIES AND  
DISCONTINUITIES IN IDENTITY AND LIFE STYLE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of

Yale University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

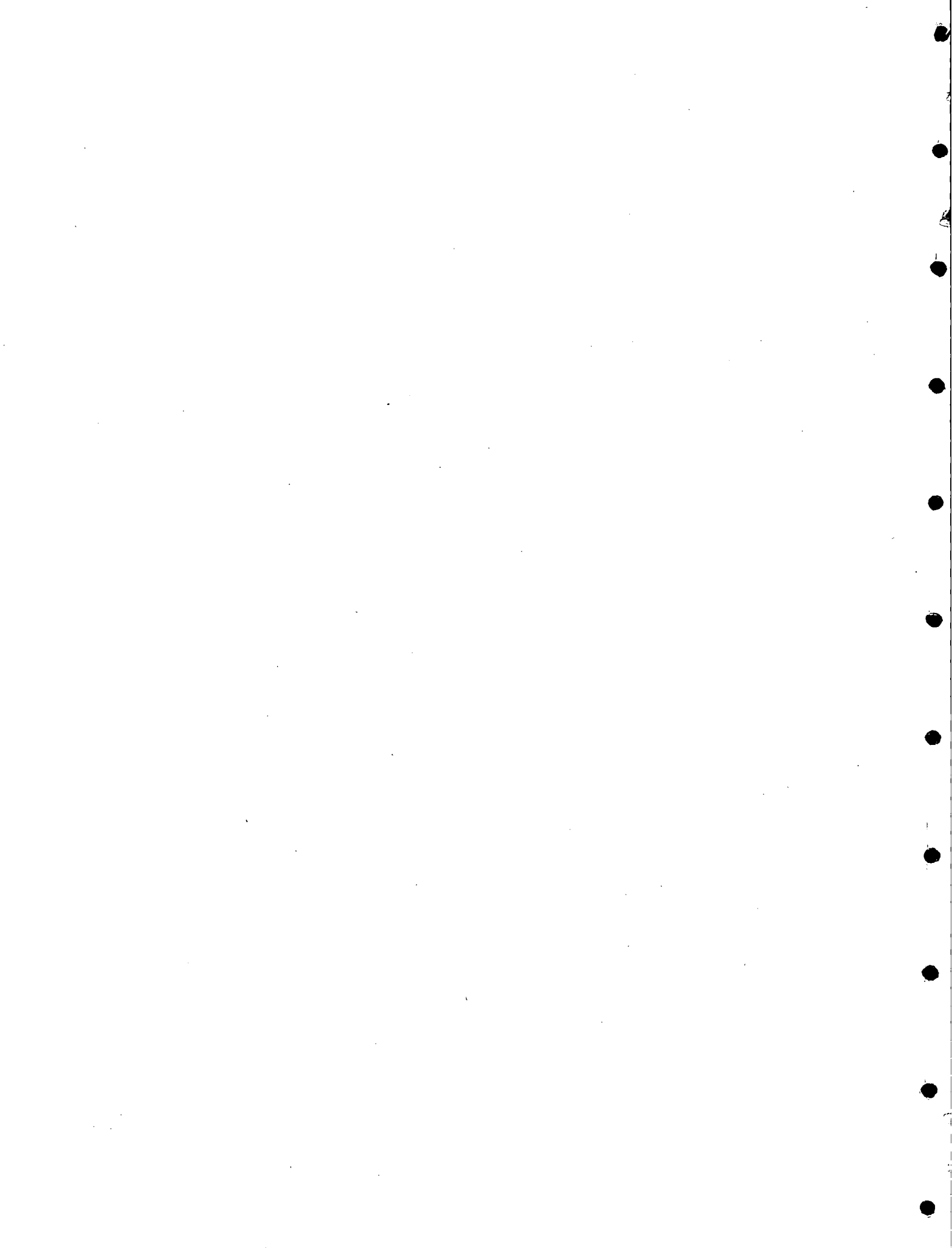
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Fred Montanino

May 1987

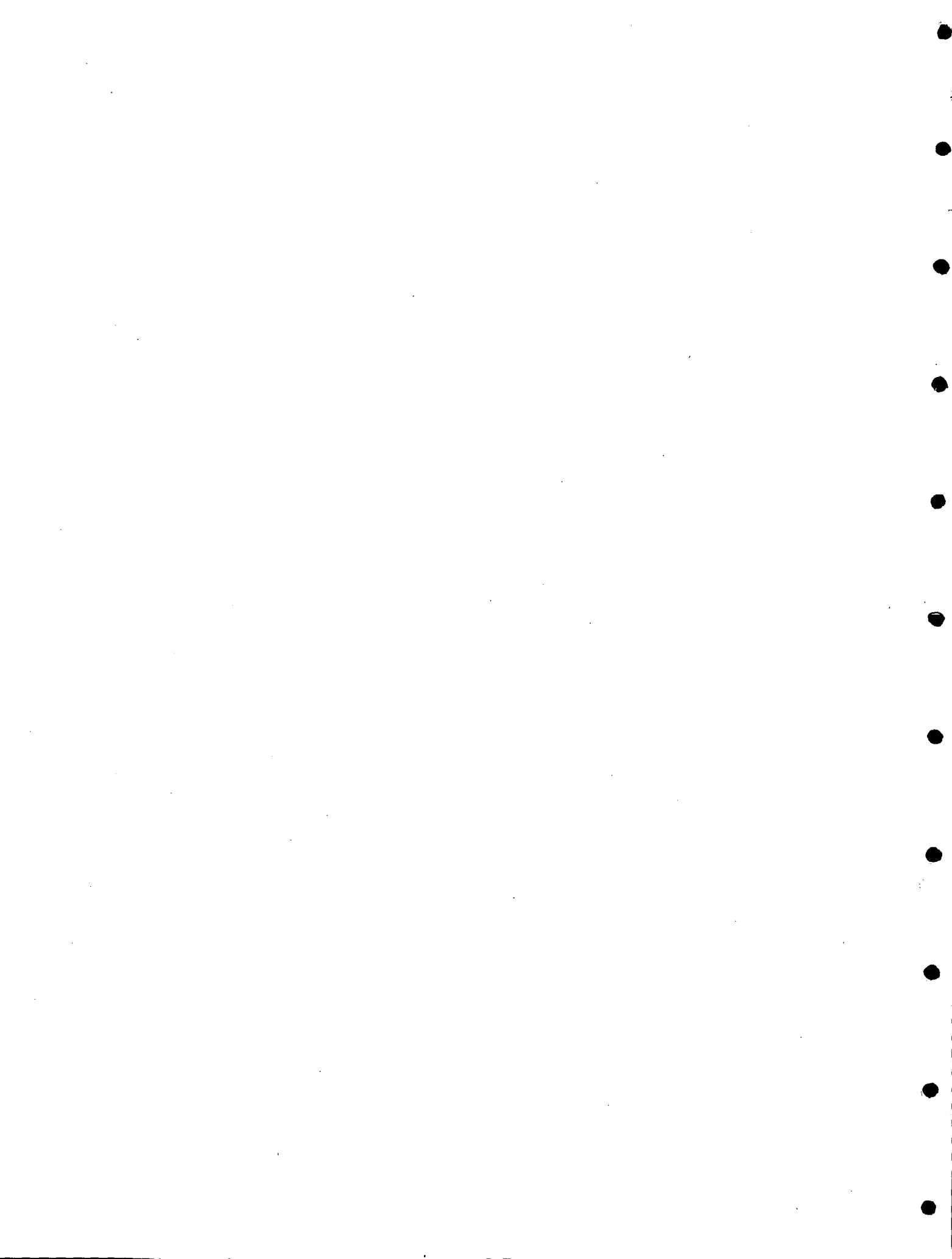




©Copyright by Fred Montanino 1987

---

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



## PREFACE

I would like to thank the National Institute of Justice and the United States Marshals Service for the support which made this work possible. Special gratitude to Howard Safir, former Chief of the Witness Security Program, for granting me access, and to Marilyn Mode, Associate Chief of the Program, for her time and enthusiasm throughout the project--our numerous meetings were critical. I would like to thank Dr. Charles Wellford for introducing me to the Marshals Service. Thanks to the Yale Office of Grants and Contracts and to Joan Cianciolo who administered my grant through the Sociology Department. Special thanks to Pam Colesworthy who brought my manuscript together at the end. Drs. James Moneymaker and Richard Lovely were most helpful during the analysis stage of the research. Thanks to Drs. Robert Kelly, Edna Erez, and Raymond Duff, M.D. for sharing their thoughts and comments with me. I am especially indebted to Professors Wendell Bell, Kai Erikson, and Jerome K. Myers for their untiring work on this manuscript and my intellectual development at Yale. To Professor Edward Sagarin, who influenced my thinking more than anyone, I wish you were here. To my wife, Linda, who worked on and lived with this project from the beginning, I'm glad you are.

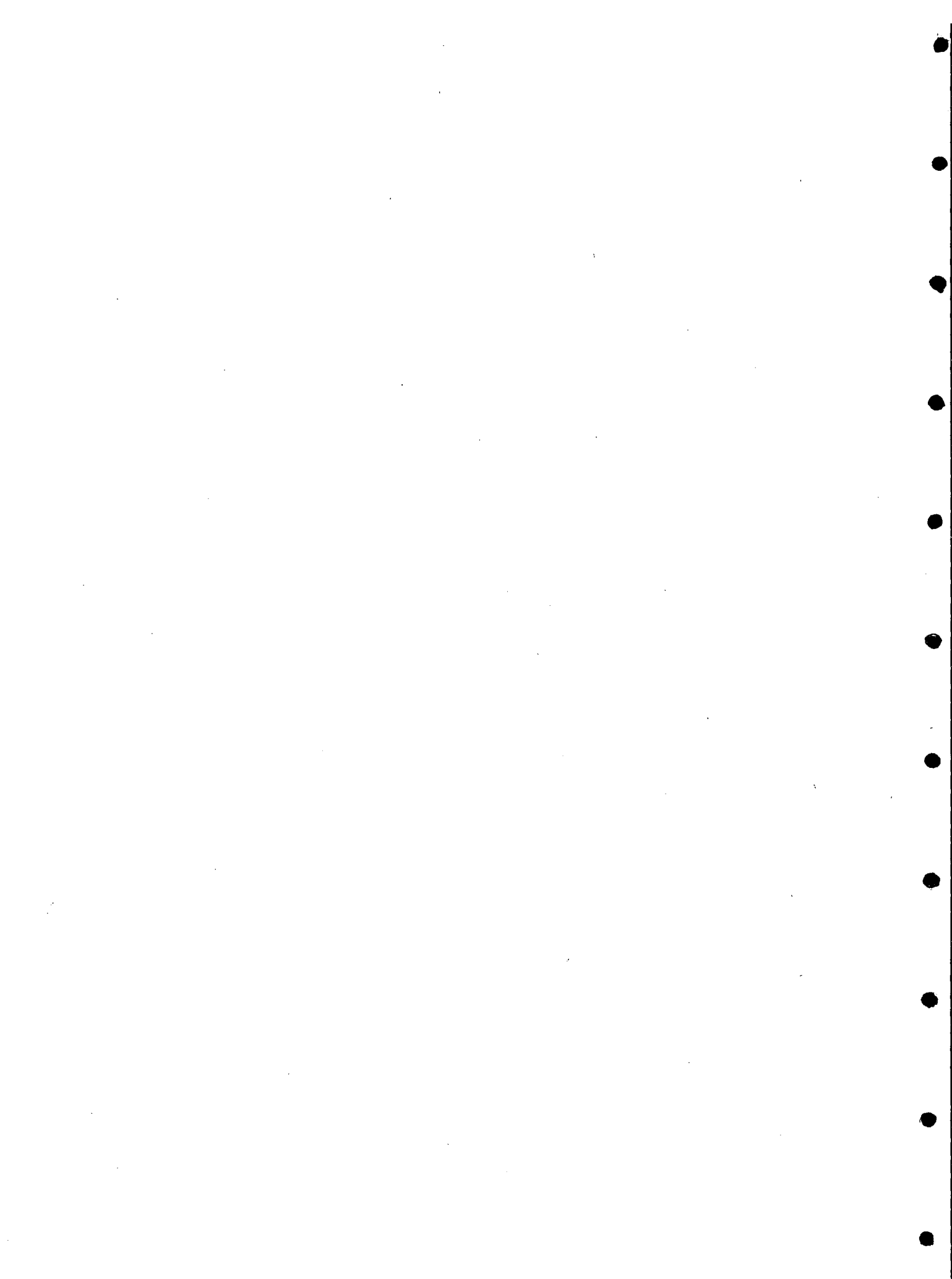
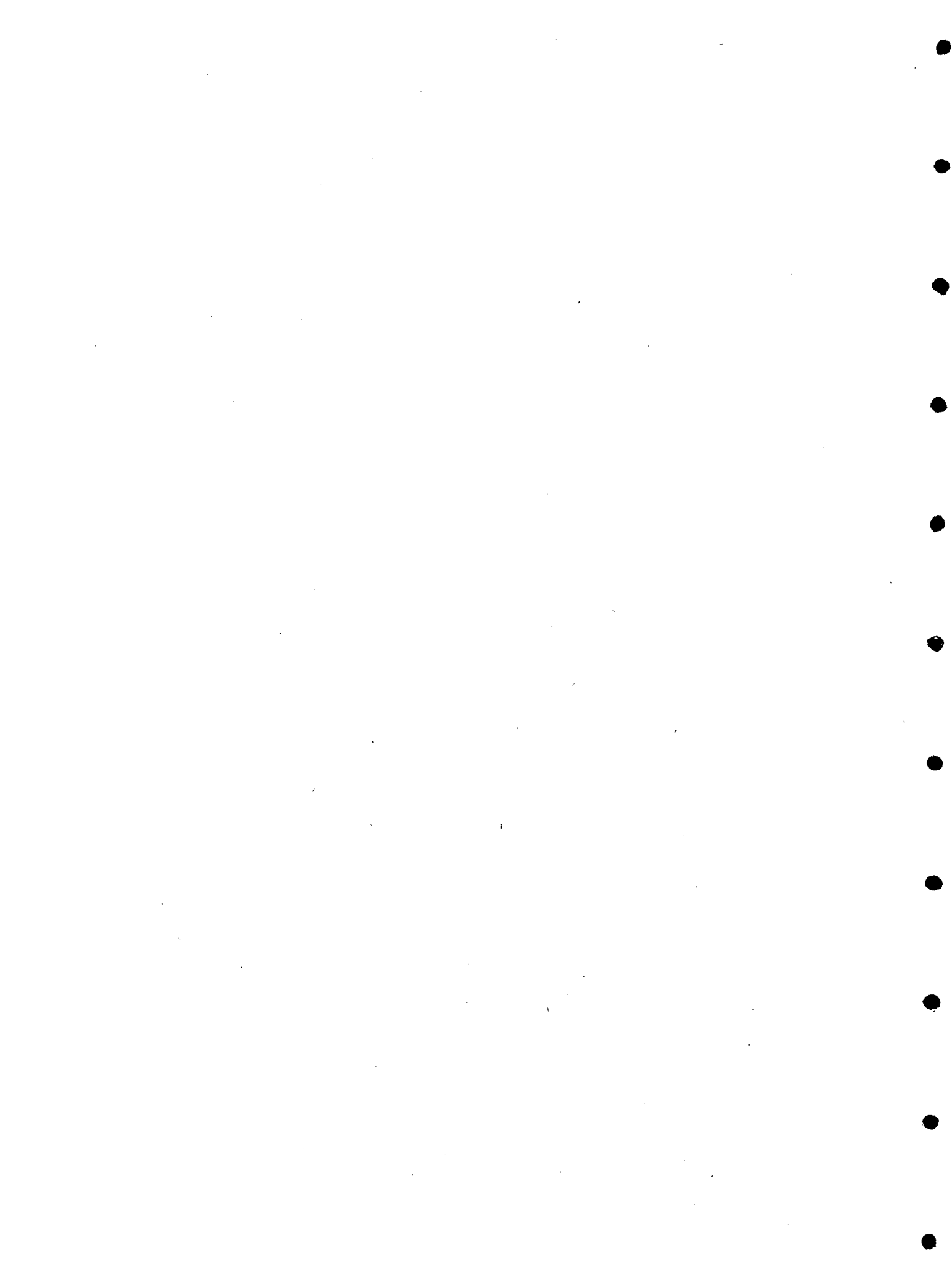


TABLE OF CONTENTS

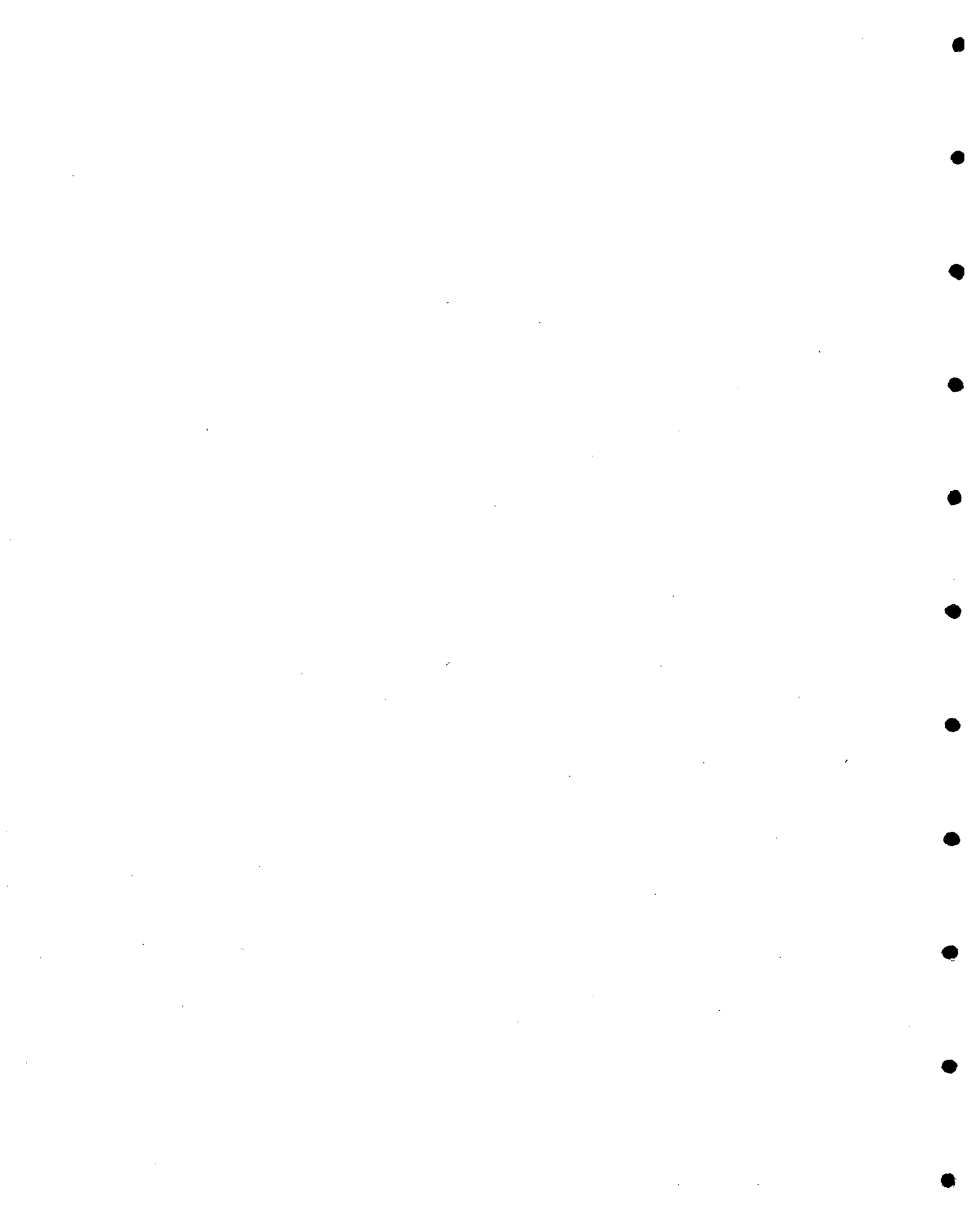
PREFACE . . . . .	iii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II. NATURE OF RESEARCH . . . . .	26
CHAPTER III. FINDINGS . . . . .	47
CHAPTER IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	96
REFERENCES . . . . .	106



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Percentage of 1978-1983 Households that Left the Program by 1983 by the Number of Dependents in Each Household . . . . .	31
Table 2.	Percentage of Households with Completed Questionnaires Compared with All Households Remaining in the Program in 1983 by the Number of Dependents . . . . .	34
Table 3.	Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Gains and Losses of Community Contacts after Relocation According to Types of Contacts . . . . .	59
Table 4.	Correlation Coefficients of Distress and Alienation Scales with Losses in Selected Types of Community Contacts after Relocation . . . . .	61
Table 5.	Correlation Coefficients of Distress and Alienation Scales with Patterns of Church Attendance (Based on Dummy Variables) . . . . .	63
Table 6.	Correlation Coefficients of Distress Over Daily Use of New Name with Witness Status and Sex . . . . .	72
Table 7.	Correlation Coefficients of Distress Over Use of New Name with Witness Status and Education . . . . .	73
Table 8.	Regression Coefficients Explaining Distress Over Use of New Name . . . . .	75
Table 9.	Percentage of Respondents Who Were Unemployed by Nature of Relocation and Sex . . . . .	83
Table 10.	Regression Coefficients Explaining Distress Over Relocation . . . . .	84
Table 11.	Correlation Coefficients of Alienation with Witness Status and Sex . . . . .	90
Table 12.	Regression Coefficients Explaining Alienation . . . . .	92



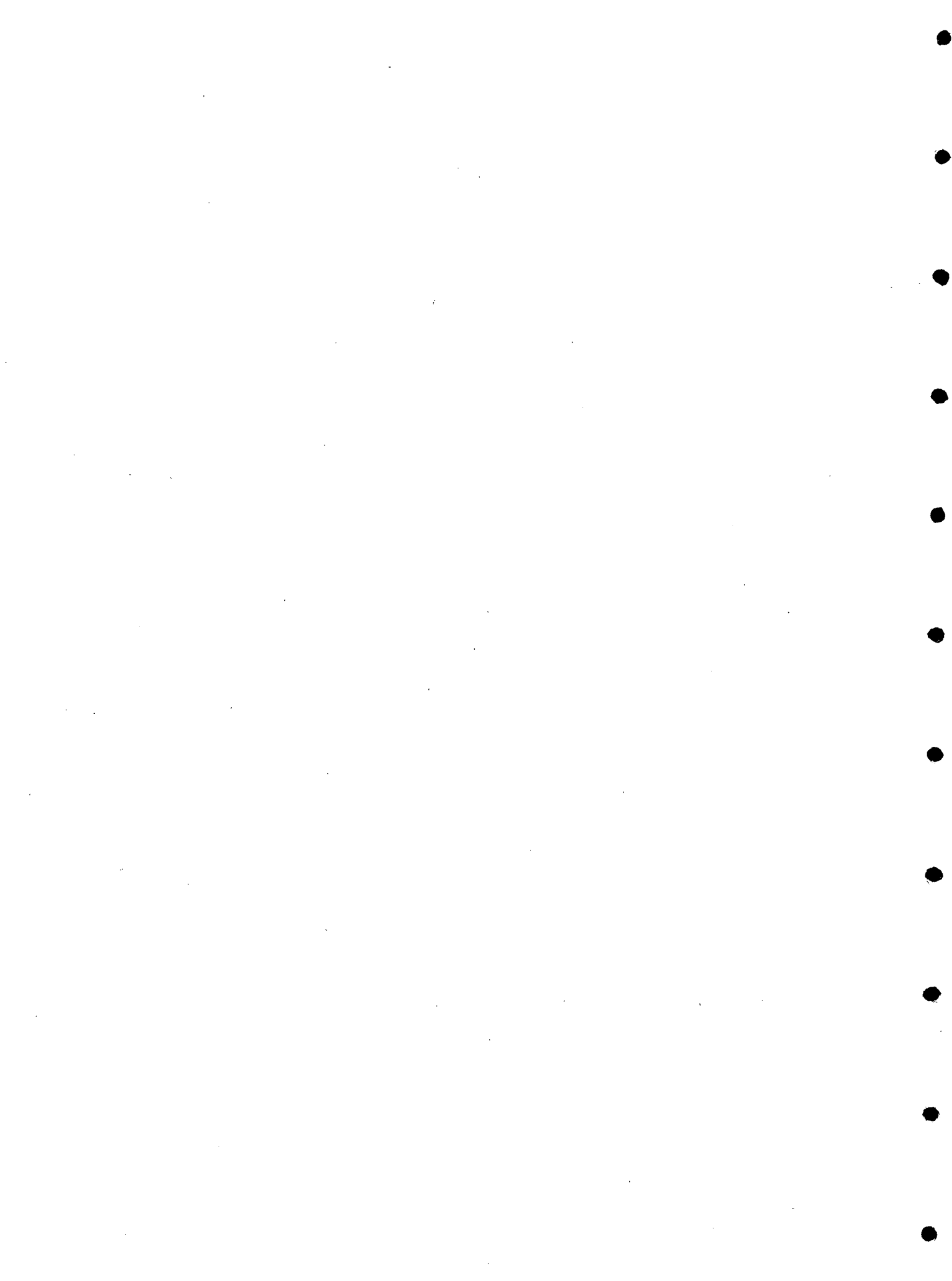


## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There are approximately 16,000 people in this country who have left their pasts behind with the help of the federal government.<sup>1</sup> They live under new identities in various communities throughout the country. Their ranks swell daily as the United States Department of Justice continues to make important criminal prosecutions with the aid of the Federal Witness Security Program.<sup>2</sup>

Title V of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970<sup>3</sup> requires the Attorney General to take steps for the care and protection of government witnesses and their family members whose lives, by virtue of their testimony, have been placed in jeopardy. This federal legislation represents the most comprehensive and methodical effort by government to take the initiative against such serious criminal activity as organized crime, white-collar crime, narcotics distribution, and public corruption. The legislation was directed at (1) generating legal mechanisms that would provide information and evidence upon which federal prosecutors could act in criminal matters, (2) creating inducements for individuals to become government witnesses, (3) ensuring the optimum use of such witnesses, and (4) creating a secure pool of witnesses upon which to draw. The legislation, for obvious reasons, promoted a Witness Security Program which "relies principally on the secret relocation of witnesses



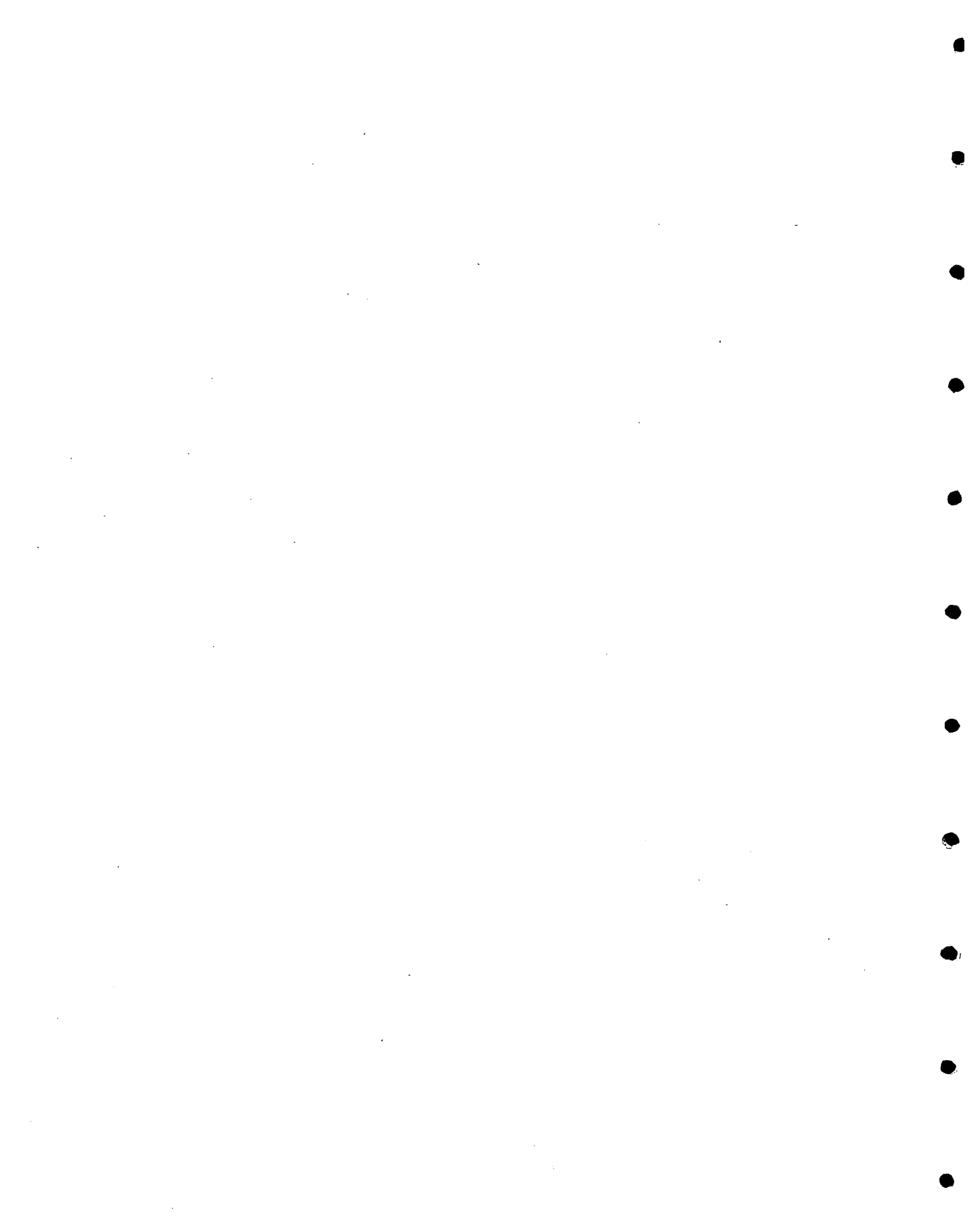
to places of safety and well-being for them and their families."<sup>4</sup>

Although the Witness Security Program was not officially established by Congress until 1970, the Justice Department had been experimenting with witness protection and relocation earlier. For example, during the 1960s, witnesses were being recruited and twenty-nine witnesses were officially listed under the protection of the United States Marshals Service by 1969.<sup>5</sup> Among the early protected witnesses were such people as Gary Rowe, Pascal Calabrese, and Joseph Barboza.<sup>6</sup>

Rowe was an undercover FBI informant who was instrumental in combatting the Ku Klux Klan at the height of the civil rights struggle in the 1960s. Calabrese was a professional thief who had been recruited into the program by the first Justice Department Organized Crime Strike Force in Buffalo in 1966; he later testified against members of the Stefano Maggadino organized crime family in 1967. Barboza was a brutal street enforcer who was involved in gang wars in Boston; he was instrumental in jailing Raymond Patriarca (the head of the New England mob) in 1967.

The extreme usefulness of informants had been demonstrated as early as 1963 by the case of Joseph Valachi.<sup>7</sup> Momentum for witness protection and relocation was aided by the resistance to legal wiretapping that had begun to develop in the Johnson administration. During this time, officials in high administrative circles and in Congress began to view wiretapping as a legitimate law enforcement tool only for investigation of subversive activities, and without recourse to this tactic the law enforcement effort against organized crime had to rely increasingly on "insiders" who would come forward and testify.<sup>8</sup>

In the period before 1970, two major government initiatives helped



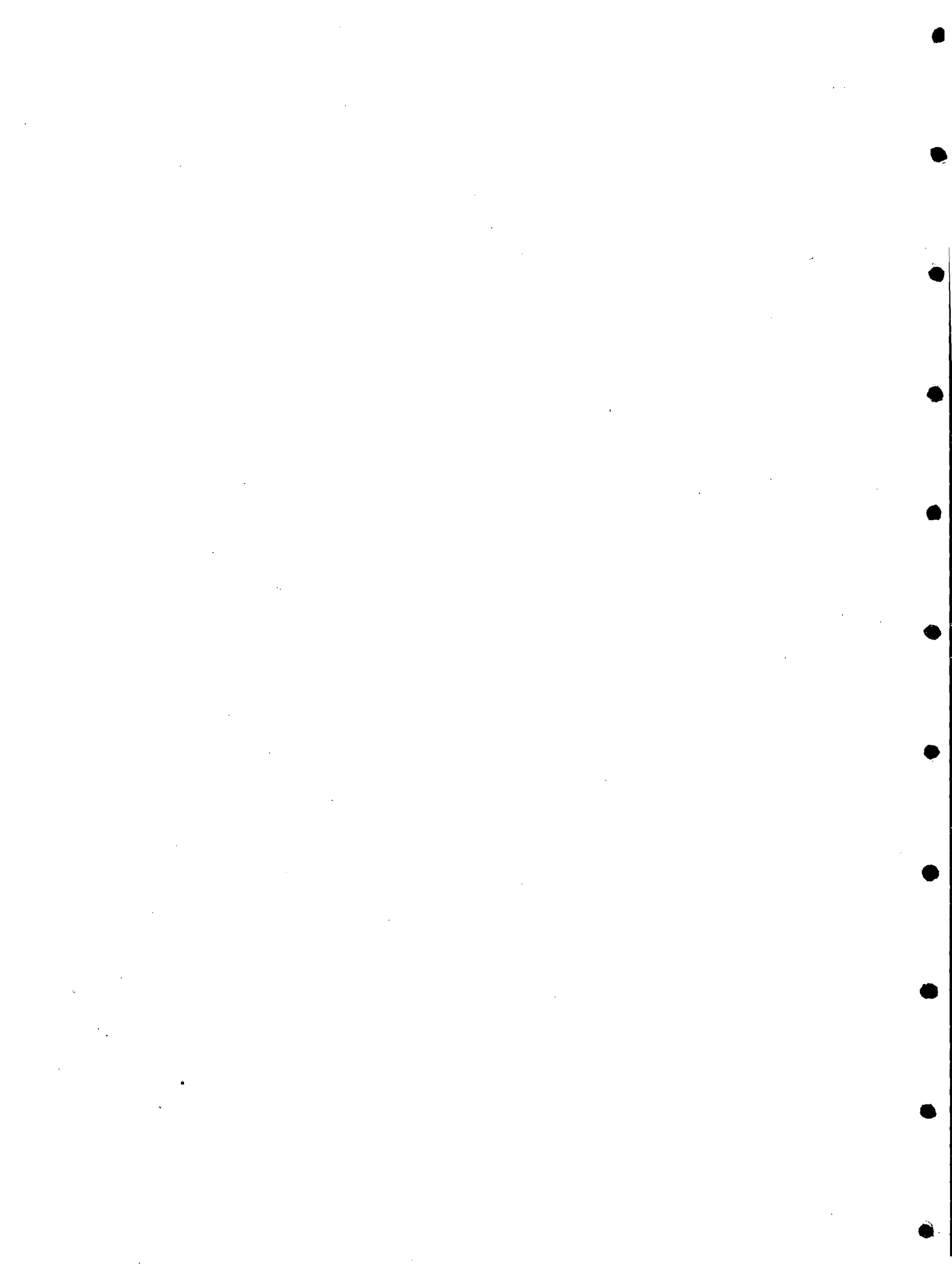
set the stage for the Organized Crime Control Act and the growth of the Witness Security Program. The Task Force Report on Organized Crime from the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice addressed witness protection in 1967 with the following recommendation:

The Federal Government should establish residential facilities for the protection of witnesses desiring such assistance during the pendency of organized crime litigation . . . . After the trial, the witness should be permitted to remain at the facility so long as he needs to be protected. The Federal Government should establish regular procedures to help federal and local witnesses who fear organized crime reprisal to find jobs and places to live in other parts of the country, and to preserve their anonymity from organized crime groups (1967: 19; emphasis added).

Following this recommendation, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 provided immunity for "cooperative" witnesses. It states:

Whenever in the judgment of a United States Attorney the testimony of any witness . . . in any case or proceeding before any grand jury or court of the United States . . . is necessary to the public interest, such United States Attorney, upon approval of the Attorney General, shall make application to the court that the witness shall be instructed to testify . . . and upon order of the court such witness shall not be excused from testifying . . . on the grounds that the testimony . . . required of him may tend to incriminate him or subject him to penalty . . . . No such witness shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty . . . concerning what he is compelled, after having claimed his privilege against self-incrimination, to testify . . . nor shall testimony so compelled be used as evidence in any criminal proceeding against him in any court" (1968: 216).

Viewed from a historical perspective, the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, with its authorization for the establishment of a system of witness



protection and relocation, seems a logical culmination of earlier administrative and legislative initiatives.

Program participation and procedure

Recruitment as a federally protected witness is commonly initiated in the field by investigative agents who regard the program as an important asset, compensating for some major restrictions placed on police procedures. In a sense, the government has decided to capitalize on errors that criminals make--their failures, squabbles, and divisions. Criminals who are rejected or double-crossed by their colleagues, who are apprehended by the authorities, or who just "want out" constitute 95 percent of the program enrollment.<sup>9</sup>

Participation in the program is voluntary, and the prospective clients are essentially offered an opportunity to make a new start in life in return for their assistance and testimony. Three formal conditions must be met to be eligible:

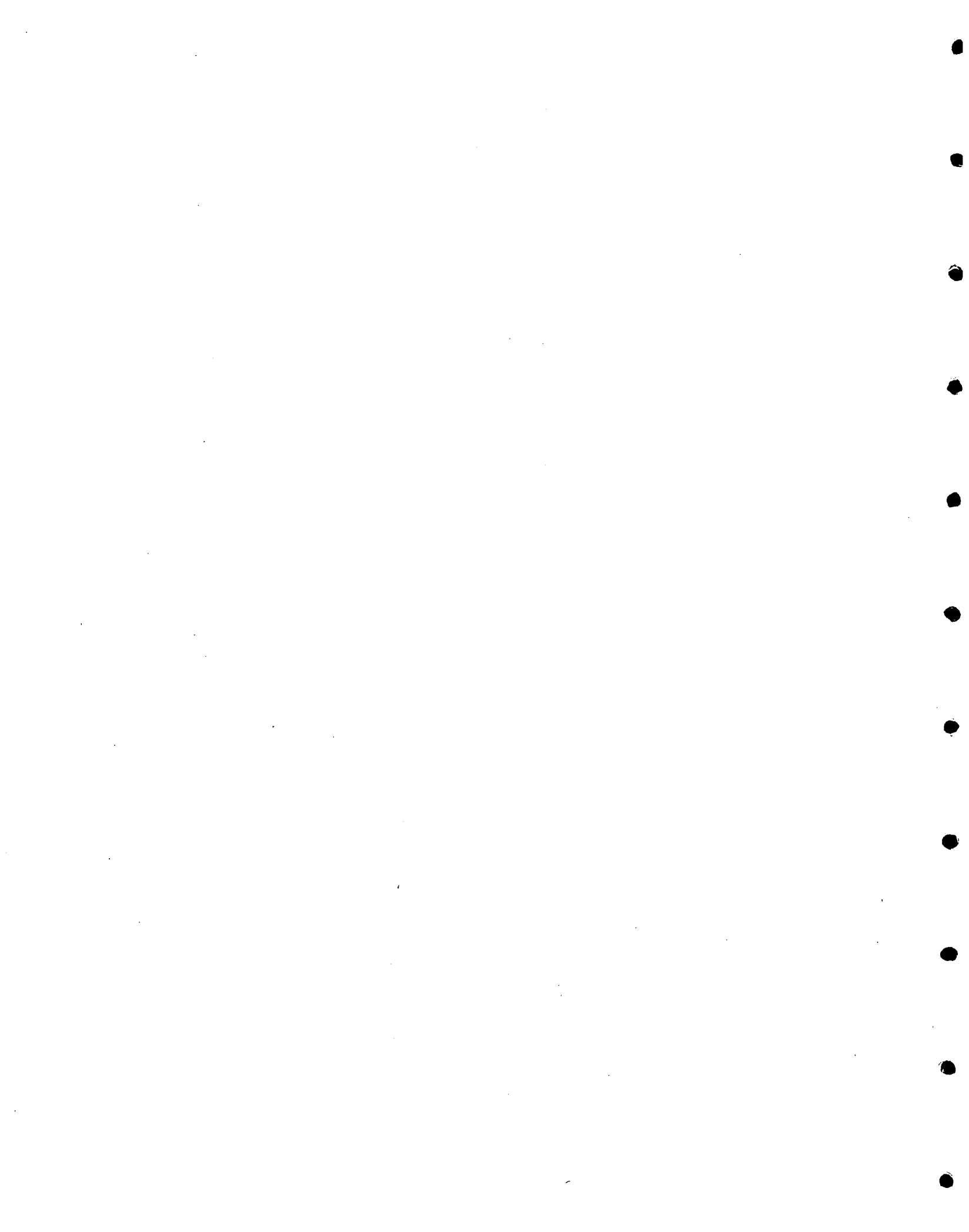
the person is a qualifying witness or potential witness in a specific case in process or during and after a grand jury proceeding;

evidence in possession indicates that the life of the witness and/or that of a member of his family is in immediate jeopardy; and

evidence in possession indicates that it would be advantageous to the federal interest for the Department of Justice to protect the witness and/or family or household member.<sup>10</sup>

Application for an individual's participation in the program can be made to the Department of Justice by any number of prosecutors' offices-- federal, state, and local. Acceptance into the program is determined by the Office of Enforcement Operations, Department of Justice. Protection and maintenance of accepted participants and overall administration of



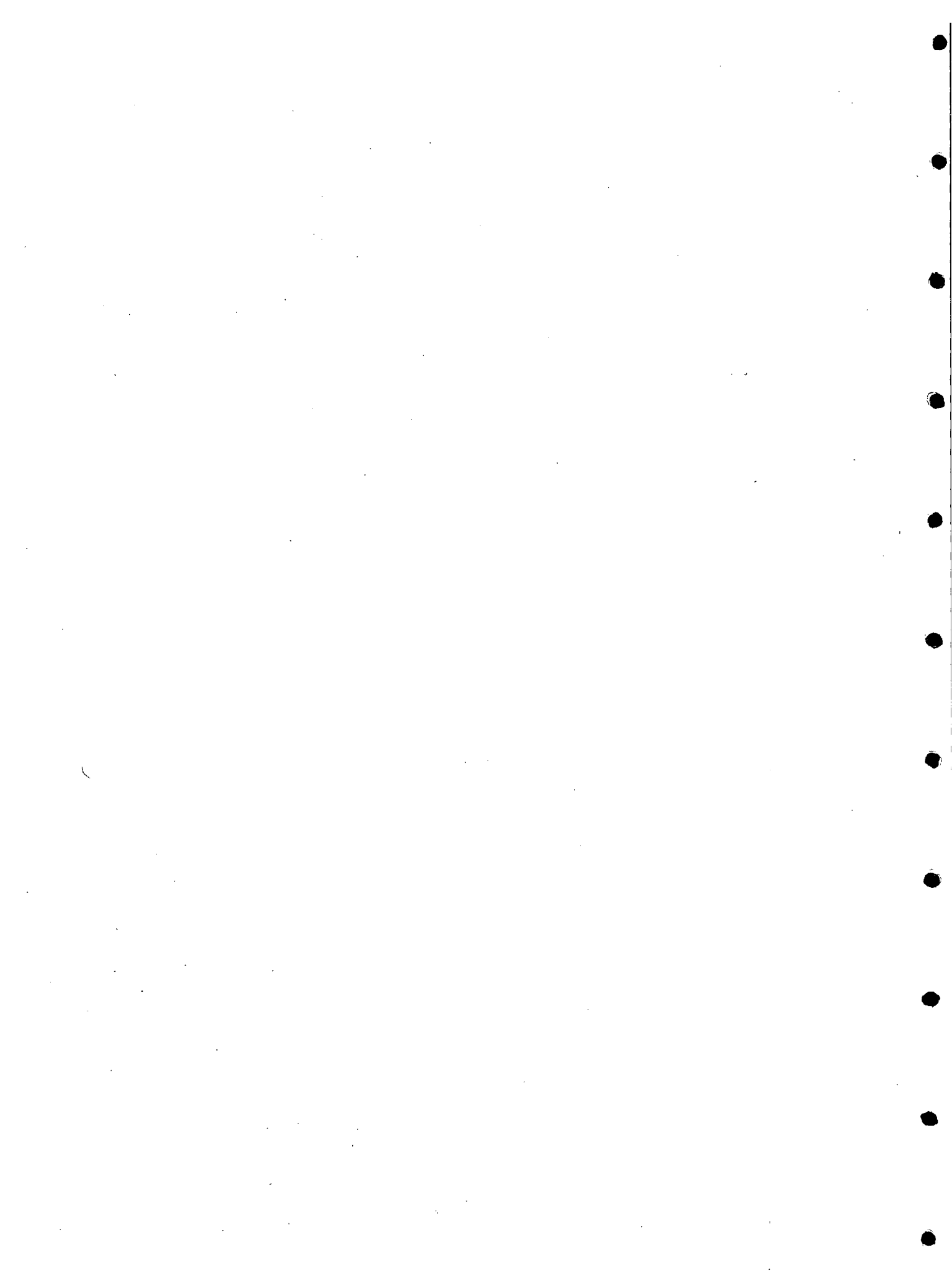


the Witness Security Program is the responsibility of the United States Marshals Service, a bureau of the Department of Justice.<sup>11</sup>

Clients who are considering enrollment in the program are told that their new start in life and their physical security require secret relocation to a new area of residence and the establishment of new identities for them and their family members. Once debriefed, they are turned over to the United States Marshals Service which is responsible for constructing their new identities, supplying new documentation, choosing an area of relocation, moving them, and providing physical care and protection.<sup>12</sup>

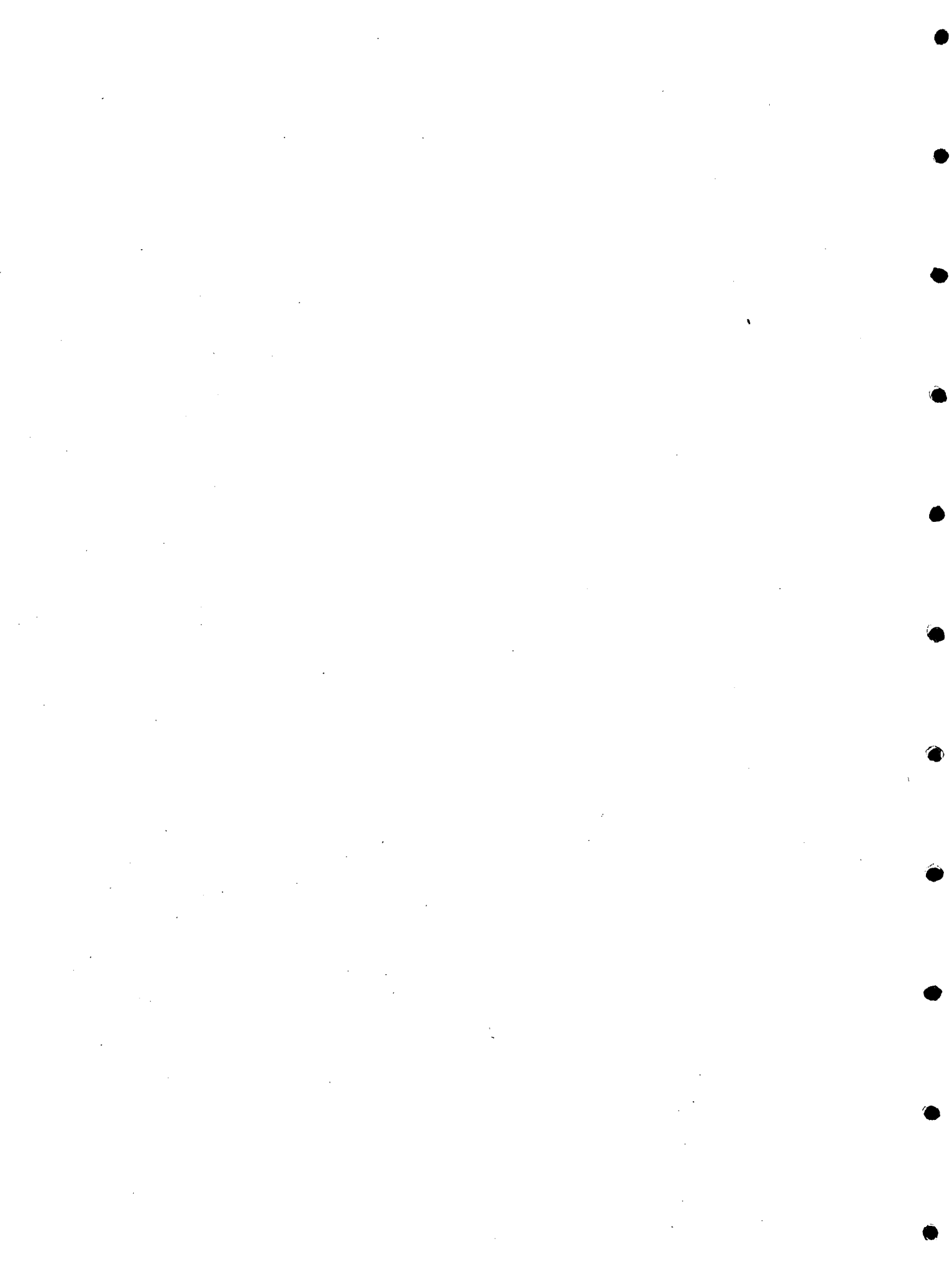
Program officials admit that a certain amount of temporary upheaval is experienced because of these unique security procedures, but they are quick to point out that such procedures are the most effective form of protection--far superior to the old system of "safe houses" where witnesses and family members are often crowded together for months at a time under armed guard.<sup>13</sup>

The Witness Security Program progressed from an experimental beginning, where protection and relocation were offered to a handful of extremely important witnesses and informants on a case-by-case basis, to become an integral part of the war against organized crime. The United States Marshals Service set about the task of perfecting and routinizing a process that was on the frontier of social experience--that of effecting the social death of one or more persons and their subsequent rebirth as new persons. Given the task the government set for itself, it is not surprising that the history of the program was marked by a great deal of attention and controversy in the media and elsewhere. At the very same time that various reports sponsored by government and industry



(such as those produced by the National Conference on Organized Crime, the National Association of Attorneys General, and the United States Chamber of Commerce<sup>14</sup>) were touting the program in a favorable light, national attention was being captured by investigative journalists specializing in organized crime, who began drawing a very critical picture for the public, often with the aid of disillusioned early participants in the program. The controversy and publicity surrounding the program culminated in two major events, a Senate subcommittee hearing and the formation of an internal review board, which did a great deal to shape the current face of the program. The Department of Justice viewed, with considerable dismay and urgency, the various allegations of program abuse and problems that were being publicized by Fred Graham, Tom Renner, Leslie Waller, and others.<sup>15</sup> The fact that former members of the program were telling their stories of disillusionment and distress to these journalists and anyone on Capital Hill who would listen was even more alarming. Allegations of "security breaches, delays in furnishing proper documentation, the lack of meaningful job assistance, long term subsistence payments to witnesses, the treatment of prisoner/witnesses, unfulfilled witness expectations, and the failure of Government to deal with the human problems posed by the uprooting of families and wiping out of their past"<sup>16</sup> prompted the first Senate hearings on the program in 1978 before the Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure.

Such allegations were threatening the efficacy of the program. Those in the Department of Justice who wished to see the program survive and improve organized an internal review committee which came out with its report in time for the first Senate Subcommittee Hearings. The Report of the Witness Security Program Review Committee contained twenty-



eight recommendations for program improvement, the bulk of which have been put into effect. It is with this history in mind and these documents that have been generated in its course that I seek to construct an understanding of the problems faced by both government personnel and relocated people, particularly as they relate to the assumption of new identities and lives.

#### The Cycle of Social Death and Social Rebirth

The concept of social death and social rebirth is used here to describe the effacement of the past life of an individual or individuals and their subsequent resurrection as new persons with new identities, names, and pasts. Social death and rebirth are inseparable, which is why I think of them as a single concept. In the case of the Federal Witness Security Program, the creation of the cycle is a cooperative enterprise, with the prospective clients of the program entering into a voluntary contract with the government. For clients of the program (and this is probably true for other persons who go underground, disappear, or in some other way cease to continue as the same persons they formerly had been<sup>17</sup>), social death is almost always a response to excessively stressful personal and social circumstances. It will only be successful if witnesses and their family members make a determined effort, and, to that extent, lending substance to their own social death is one of their most important contractual obligations.

In essence, witnesses find themselves in a position where their past social identity needs to be as completely obliterated as possible. They cannot share their pasts with others, and they face a future in which their relations with others are dominated by concealment and pretense.



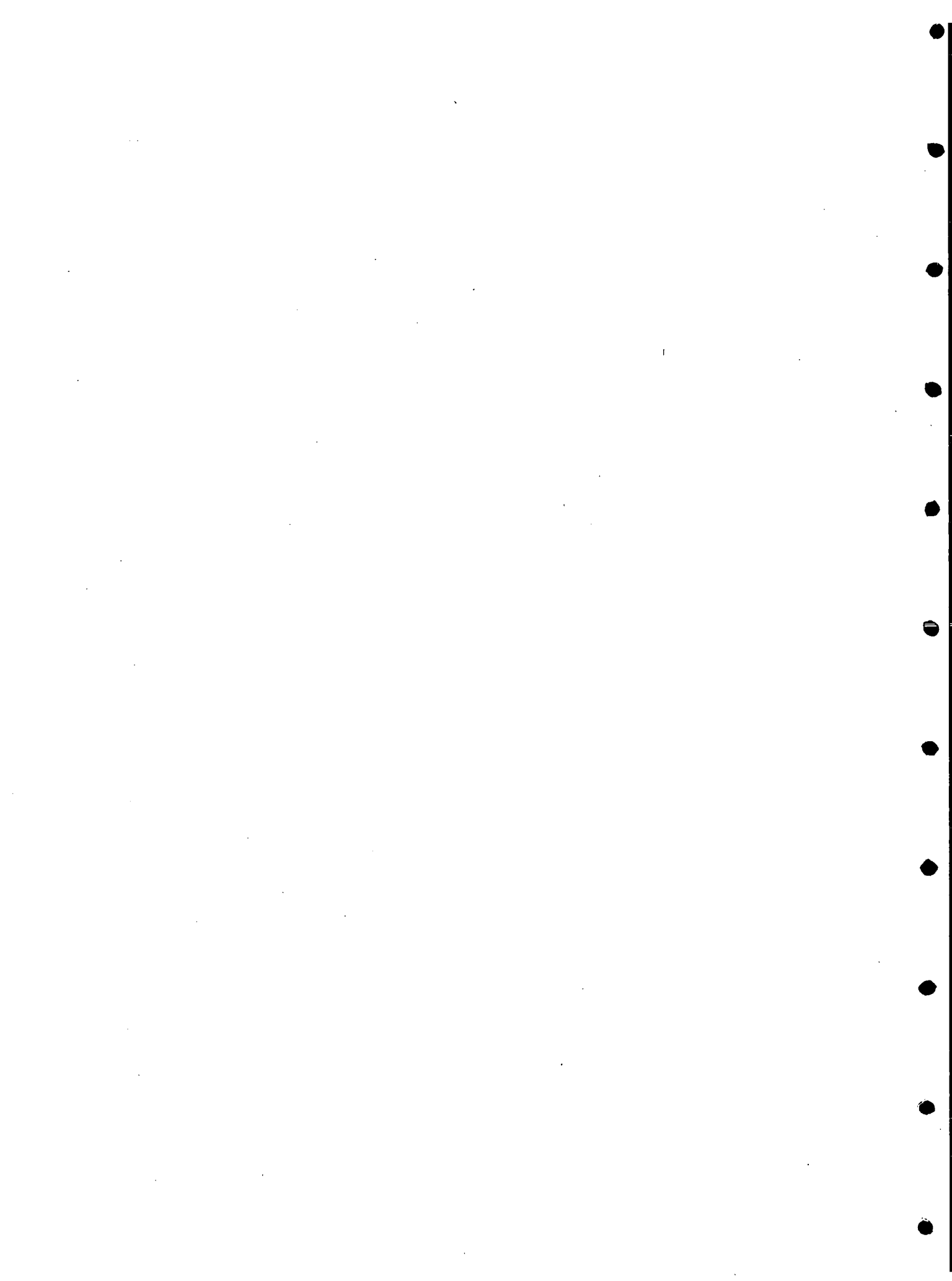
They cannot remain close to anyone who has been part of their past, either physically or socially, and their social death calls for secret relocation to another part of the country where they will be strangers in a new community.

Although well planned out by the United States Marshals Service with regard to security, for the witness this change of residence is typically abrupt, involving precious little forethought, preparation, or choice. Witnesses are often required to deal with a radically different physical and social environment and are always required to sever, with very little explanation, relations with relatives, friends, and whatever networks of acquaintances they may be part of. All outward forms of identification such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, social security cards, marriage licenses, and voter registration cards must be surrendered. Similarly, school and service records must be abandoned along with any other type of document or record that reveals past identity--and in the process all the history associated with such documents is relinquished.

Also, these people are literally stripped of their name and whatever possessions are associated with it that can endanger them. To maintain physical existence, protected witnesses and their families have to bring their social existence to an abrupt end.

The United States Marshals' main responsibility is the physical security and well-being of the witnesses. The social death and rebirth cycle represents to them the only feasible long-term strategy for preventing their physical death. The Marshals are aware that it is a strategy of protection which requires the active cooperation of the potential victims, and they have developed a rather detailed document to

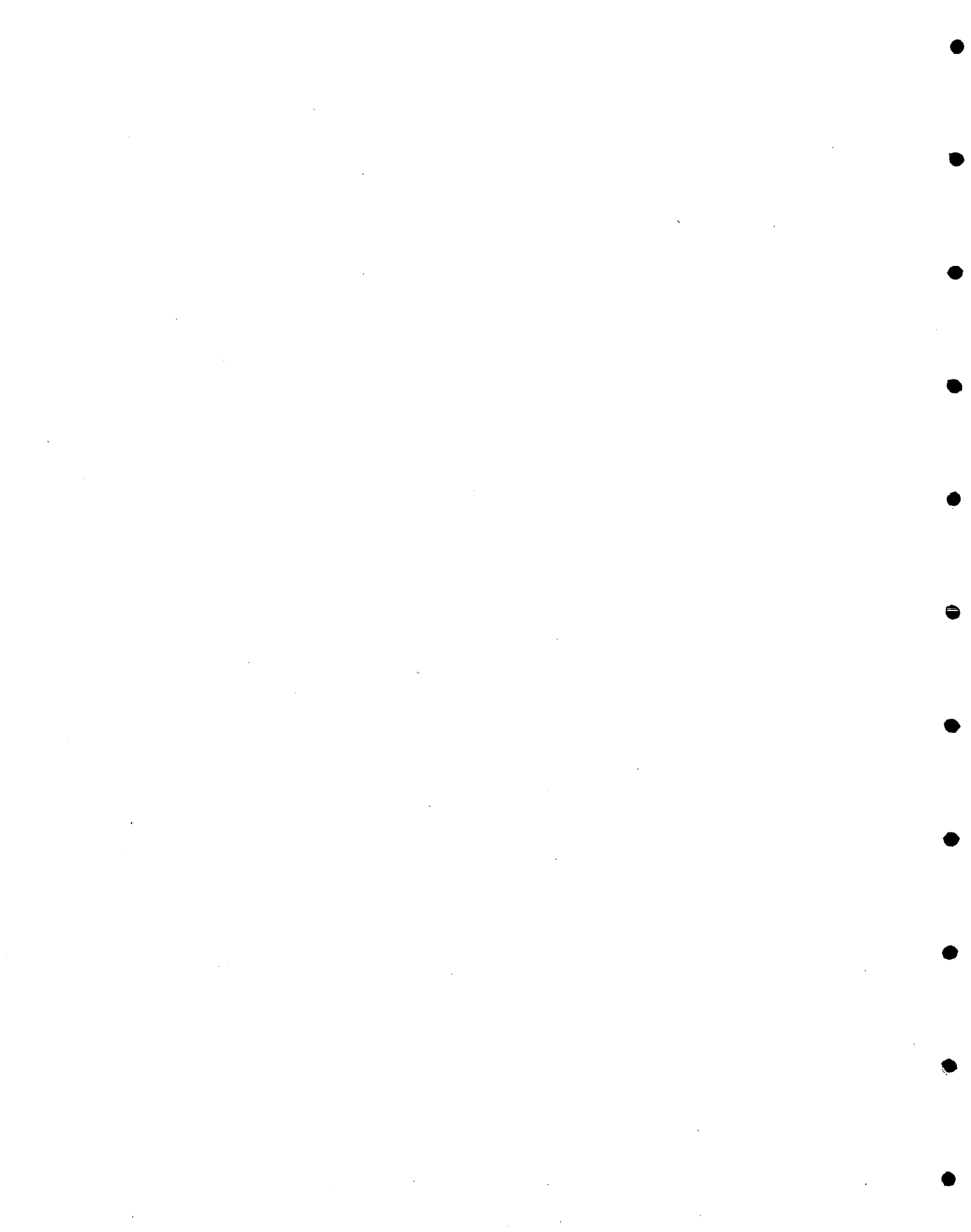




alert their clients to this fact and to clarify the rights and obligations of each party in the social death and rebirth cycle. All adult entrants into the program must read and sign an official "Memorandum of Understanding." This memorandum makes it clear at the outset that security depends on cooperation. It is stipulated, for example, that willful acts by witnesses which jeopardize their own security, such as returning to the "danger area" where they were recruited or having direct contact with people from their past life without specific authorization, are grounds for termination from the program. The memorandum indicates that clients must be ready to relocate immediately, and that the Marshals may move them to a temporary site until after the trial and then to a permanent one. The Service agrees to provide twenty-four hour protection when the witness is required to return to the danger area to converse with government attorneys or provide testimony in court.

Experience with the process has taught the Marshals that various circumstances of their clients' past lives can jeopardize the viability of social death and, hence, the security of their charges. What I will call "unresolved relationships" with people who were part of their past life can compromise the process of social death. Credit and custody matters have proven to be especially troublesome. Since clients of the program must testify and are neither literally dead nor officially recognized as dead (with a death certificate), the sanctity of their social death becomes less secure the more that people from their past life exert efforts to resurrect them.

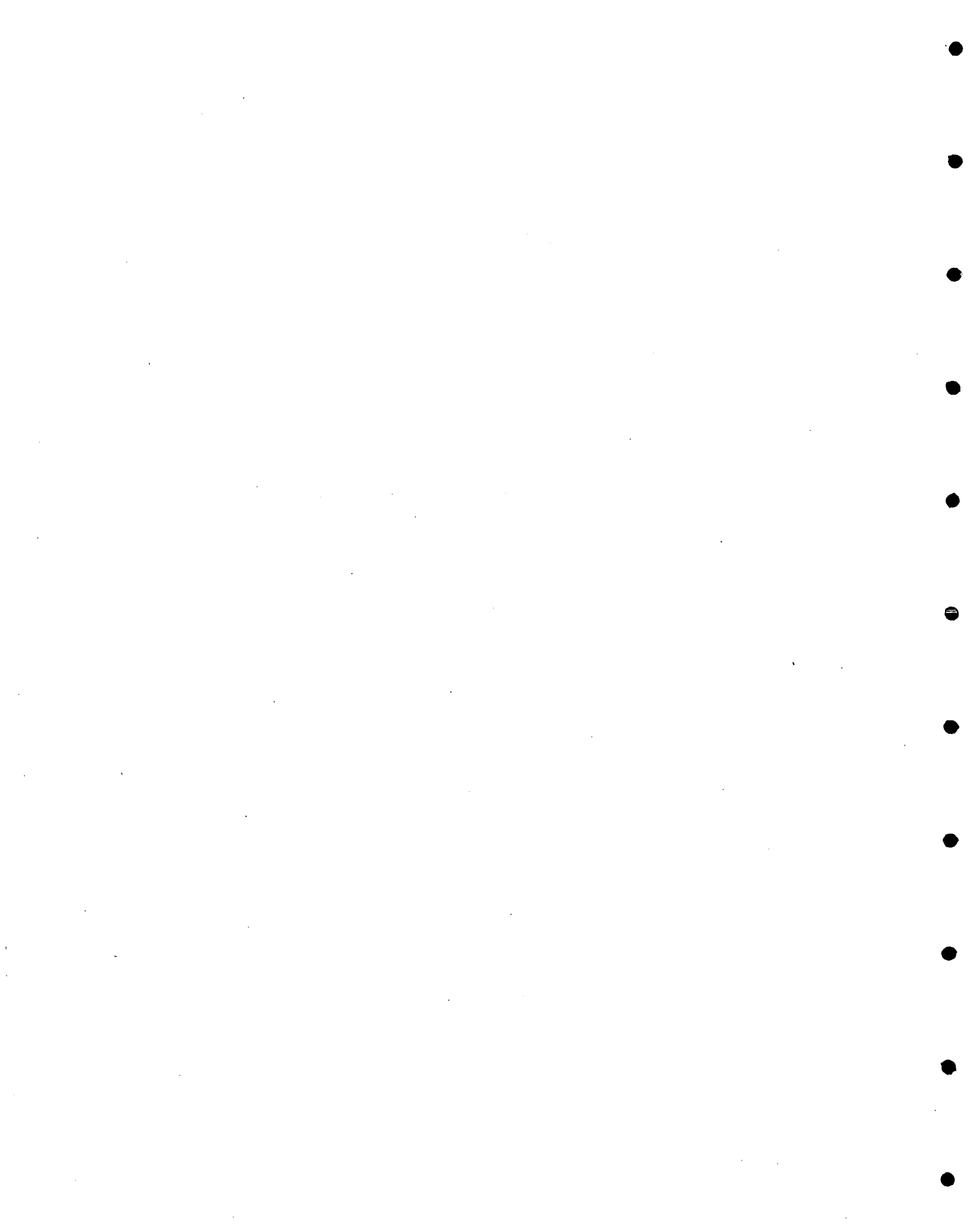
The United States Marshals Service, then, acts as the gatekeeper between past and present life. As custodians of such a secret, the



Service controls the continuity of their clients' social existence. When it is confronted by people from its clients' past who have legitimate grievances to resolve, it is hard pressed to keep the gates closed, and in fact will not.<sup>18</sup> Thus, witnesses are required to notify the Marshals of any credit or family custody matters, as well as other grievances in which they may be embroiled.

The Marshals have developed routine procedures for acting as an intermediary between their clients and anyone from their past life who searches for them so that inquiries and attempts at location and identification can be anticipated. Such procedures are aimed at protecting the new identity of their clients and not at shielding them from grievances. Witnesses are warned from the outset that the Service will not shield them from litigation or other legitimate claims. If witnesses are required to make an appearance as their old selves, the Service will act as intermediary and provide protection for those purposes. Throughout the process, the confidentiality of the new identity is maintained since such grievances do not require that it be disclosed in order for them to be resolved.

From the Marshals' point of view, permitting mail to be forwarded both limits the clients' abdication of old responsibilities and decreases the distress associated with abandoning past life. Such procedures are offered as long as the witness "requests them or wants them."<sup>19</sup> In essence, the witness agrees to complete a change of address order so that all mail addressed to the old name is routed to a post office box number used by the Marshals Service. Although notified of the availability of mail forwarding, the "Memorandum of Understanding" goes on to point out that the "witness acknowledges the necessity to terminate correspondence,

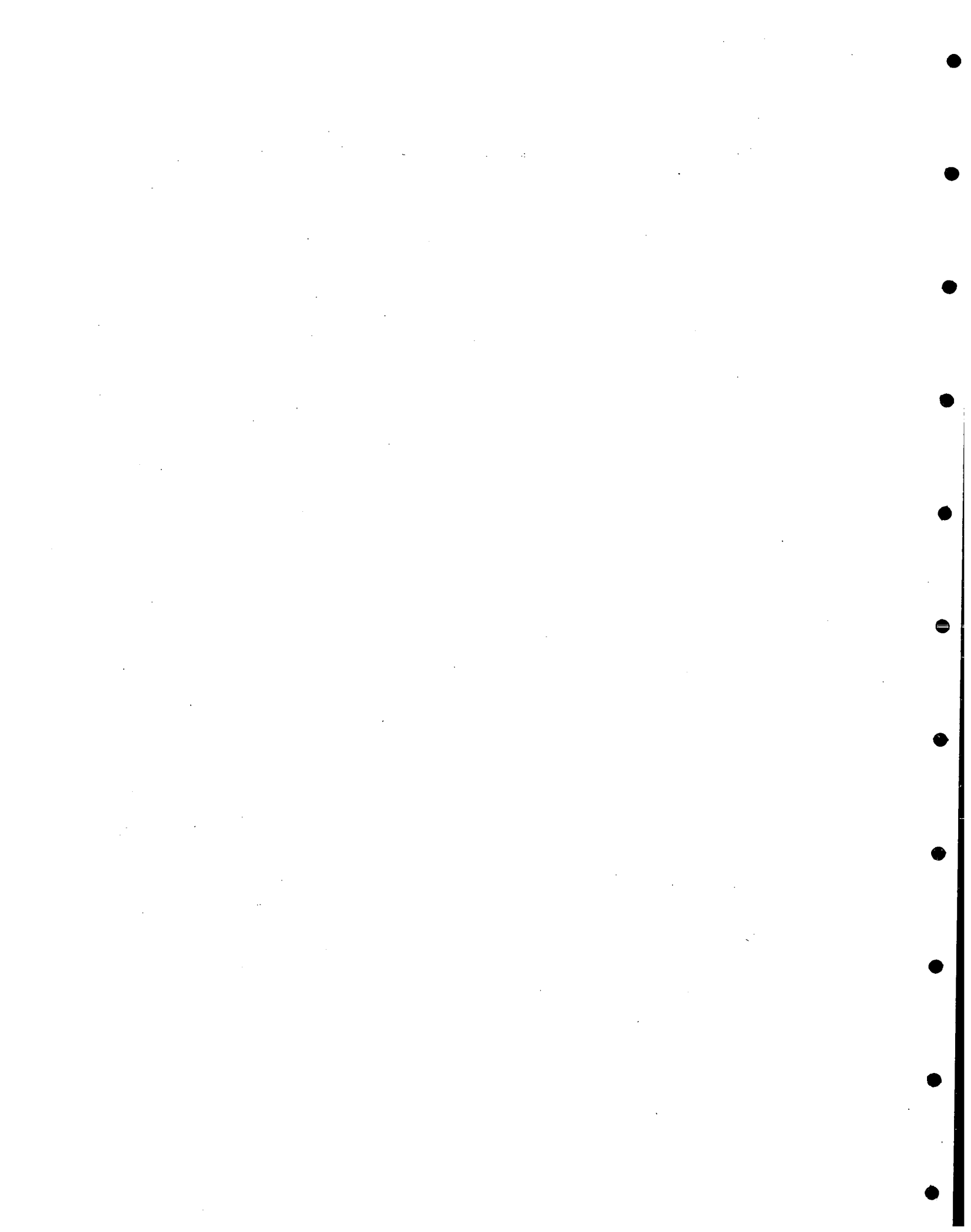


where possible, with persons known prior to entry into the Witness Security Program for reasons of security." If correspondence is necessary with people from the past life, as in the case of credit and custody matters, the witness must agree to "present all mail addressed to correspondents having knowledge of his/her past identity . . . to the United States Marshals Service for forwarding to ensure the confidentiality of his/her new identity and address."

Rebirth: The moral boundaries  
of new identity

Rebirth is accomplished in part by supplying the clients with new documentation. It is pointed out in the memorandum that "only new documentation which, in the opinion of the United States Marshals Service, is essential for the witness's security will be provided. Fictitious or false records will not be provided . . . and this documentation will not be used for fraudulent purposes . . . . Any obligations which may be incurred by utilizing this documentation are liabilities of the witness and not those of the U.S. Government."

The actual mechanics of the rebirth process are rather straightforward. Forms are attached to the memorandum which the prospective client must sign. Among other things, these forms authorize the Marshals to act on behalf of the witness in petitioning the courts for an official name change and the Social Security Administration for a change in social security number. Thus, the new identity documents are, as the Marshals point out, authentic. The request for a new social security number is routed through a special division of the Social Security Administration called the Office of Security and Program Integrity. Members of this special division are the only ones involved in the number change, which



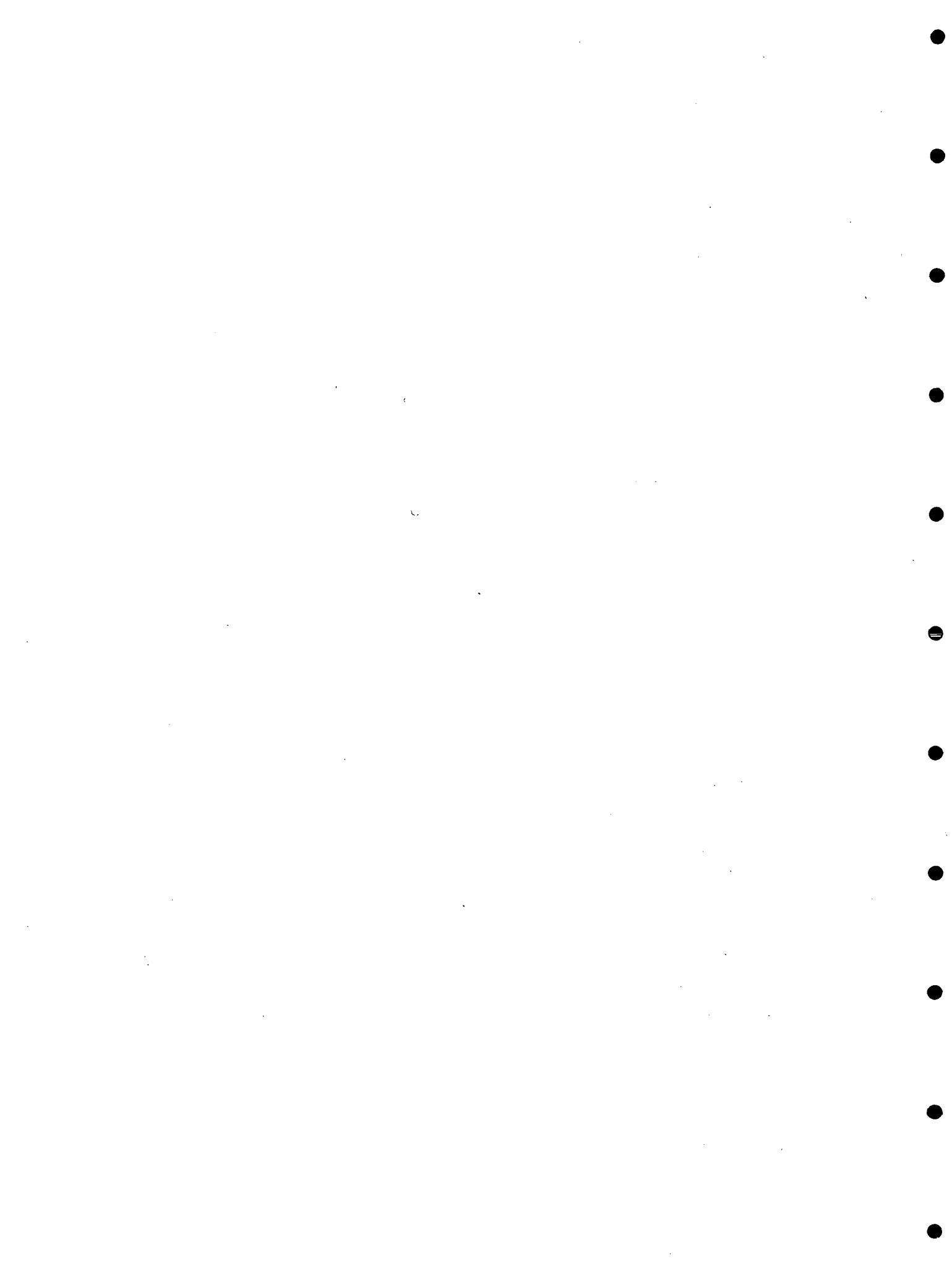
keeps the records under very strict security; they know only the new identity and not the old one. The Director of the Office of Security and Program Integrity recently testified:

We receive from the U.S. Marshals Service with respect to each witness three pieces of information at the time a new number is to be issued. One of these, of course, is the completed application for a social security number with the names, dates, and places of the new identity. We also receive a waiver from the individual making the application authorizing us to release information--essentially the new number--to the U.S. Marshals on his or her behalf. The only information that we receive about the old identity is simply the old social security number. We do not even get the original name of the individual nor the location from which he or she is being removed or anything else . . . . Thus . . . we do not know the true identity of the individual whose case we are handling. We do not call up the old record; we do nothing with the old number at all at that point. This seems to us to provide the maximum amount of security . . . . We do not call up the old record until a claim is filed by the witness . . . which . . . may be years later. We take every precaution to avoid any inadvertent release of the information about the new identity of the witness including having the material handled only by people who have been cleared to do so.<sup>20</sup>

All social security claims or requests from witnesses are routed through this office which makes the link between the old and new number necessary only when a benefit request requires it. Driver's licenses and birth certificates bearing the new identity are then secured for the witness.<sup>21</sup>

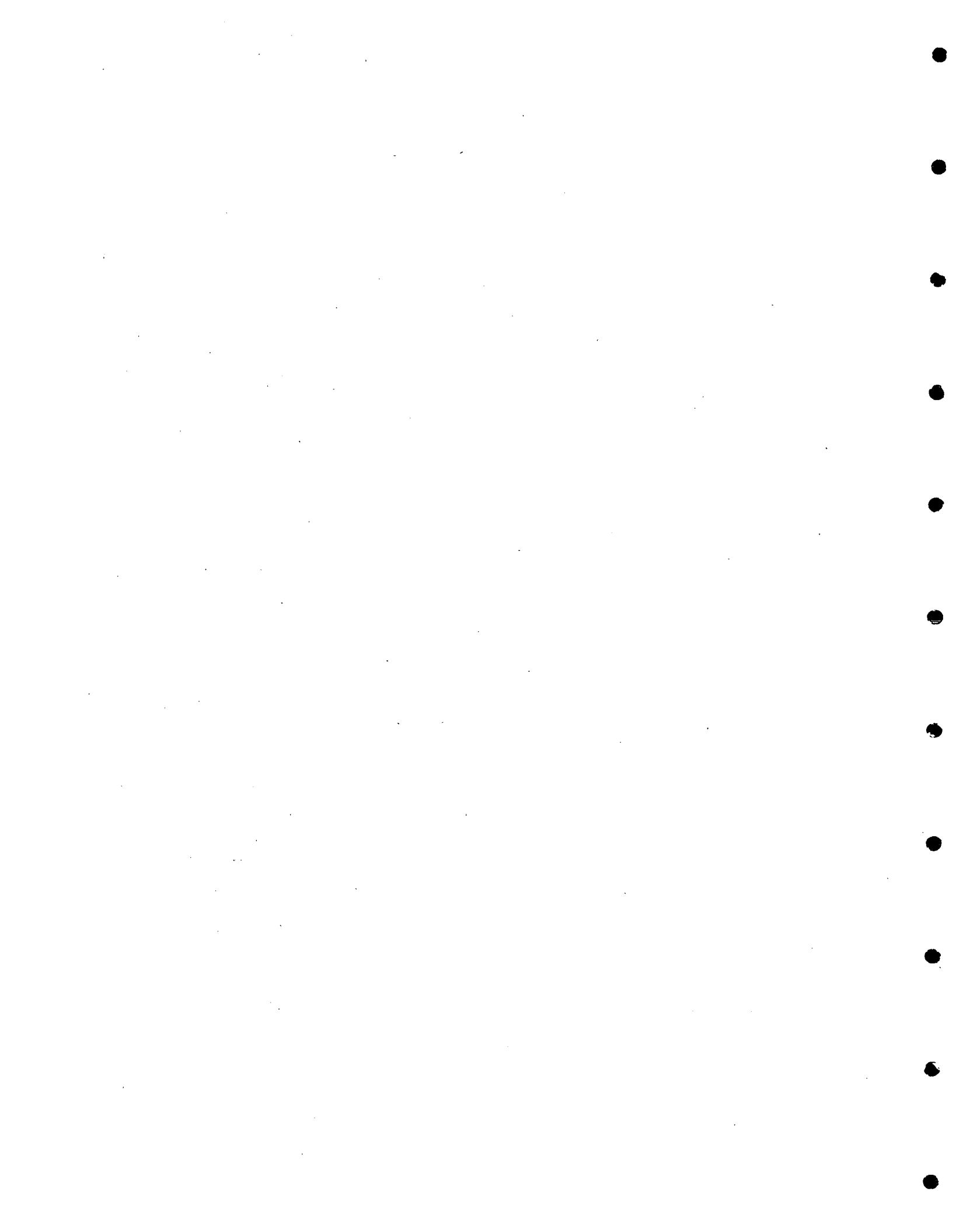
In order to help their clients adjust to a new life and identity, the Marshals provide various support services. The witnesses are reimbursed for their travel to the new community, and the Marshals arrange, through a commercial moving establishment, for the relocation of their household goods. The witnesses can also expect to receive, should they qualify, a subsistence payment which is "determined by family size and geographic area [of relocation], and is based on Bureau of Labor





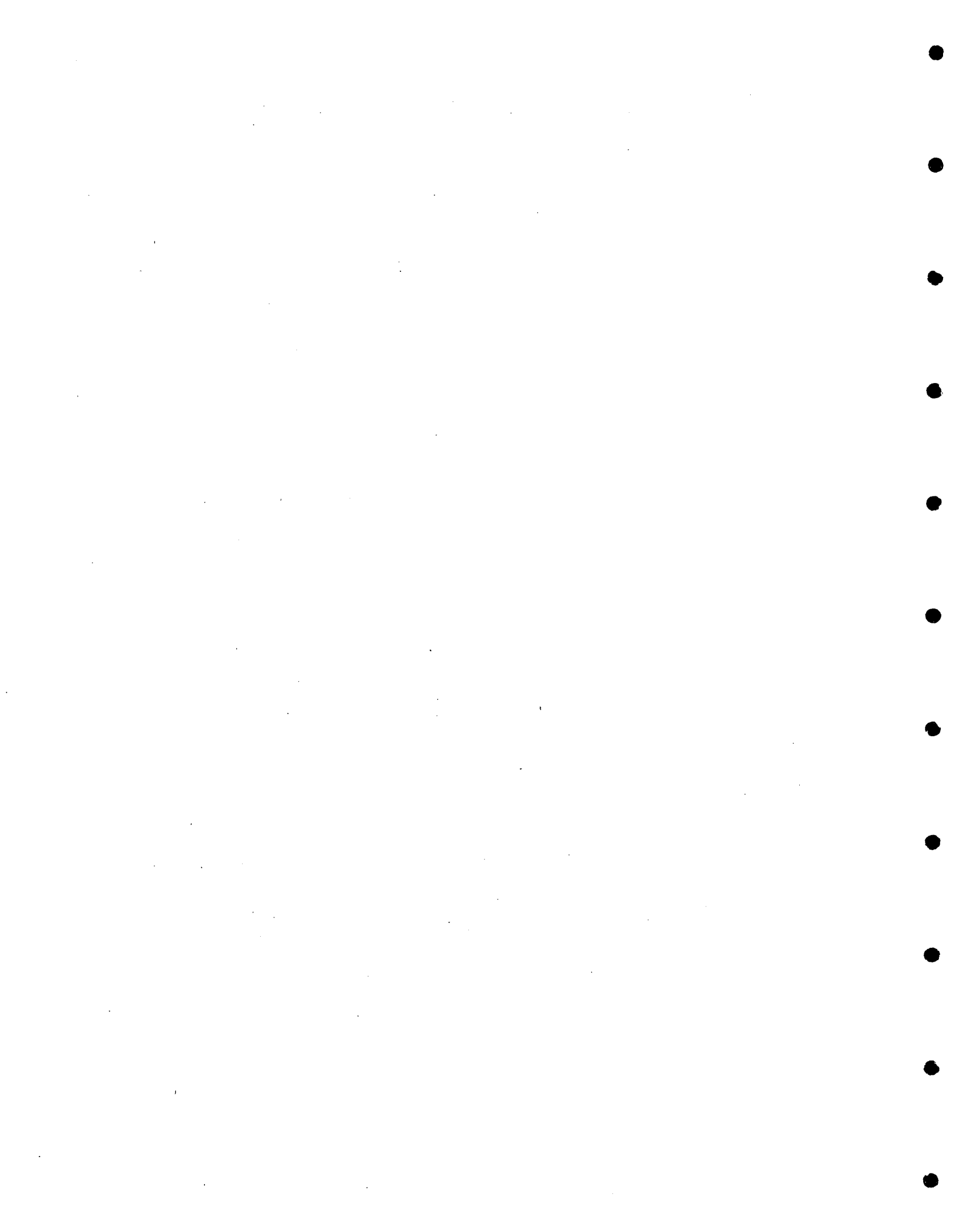
Statistics Tables."<sup>22</sup> Clients are made aware that the Service will assist them in getting housing in the new area, that rents will be deducted from their subsistence payment, and that they could live in detached homes, apartments, motels or even government installations during the course of their odyssey. The Marshals take pains to point out in the memorandum that the government will not purchase real property on their behalf or act as surety or guarantor in this respect. Should illness occur, witnesses are "eligible for emergency or major medical treatment . . . during the time they receive subsistence" and "normal" or routine medical treatment will be arranged by the local United States Marshal through private facilities.

The memorandum stresses to the witnesses that they cannot expect to make a life out of testifying, that the object of the program is not only relocation but reintergration, and that the government is not in the business of collecting wards. The witness can only get this precise message from the following memorandum excerpt: "Each witness is expected to acquire employment within sixty (60) days following his or her permanent relocation. The United States Marshals Service will assist the witness in attempting to locate one job opportunity. The job opportunity which may be located will be equal to the witness's last job in either type, prestige, or pay . . . . The witness is expected to accept . . . . If the witness fails to accept, he or she will be terminated from subsistence." Witnesses are told that resumes will not be provided by the Marshals but that employment verification can be made if the witness refers the prospective employer to the Service. Further, such verification will be accompanied by disclosure of the witness's background and criminal record, if any. The relocated people are



instructed in their quest for employment not to represent themselves as consultants or employees of the United States Marshals Service or any other government agency. The Marshals require employer referral for a dual reason: on the one hand it is felt that a prospective employer, although not entitled to know the witness's past identity, has a right to know his character; on the other hand the Marshals need to be able to check the character of the prospective employers since they may be potential security risks. It is also felt that prospective employers should be alerted to the possible dangers that come along with their new worker and should be made aware that they can (and would be wise to) call upon the Marshals Service if anyone comes around asking questions about their new employees.<sup>23</sup>

These are the parameters within which rebirth must take place. Such a rebirth may have to last a lifetime and must retain at least a minimum level of legitimacy and at the same time imbue those who undergo it with a sense of responsibility for their new identity. The Marshals Service has made it clear with the memorandum that it will not sanction the abdication of responsibility by the witness. The rebirth and new identity must be a moral and responsible one, it must limit the liability and suffering of those who are left behind in the witness's past. The rebirth is designed to save the life of the witness, protect society from dangerous predators through their testimony, and also protect those who come into contact with the "reborn" witness. For all its benefits, social death and rebirth is still a transition which breaks the continuity of the social life cycle, a transition which generates distress. As one witness puts it:



I'm a born again person with no name, no past, no history. I can't go anywhere, can't do anything. I can't say who I am.<sup>24</sup>

#### Sources of Distress: Theoretical Considerations

The life situation in which clients of the program find themselves may result in social and personal distress, first, in their complete burial of past life and, then, in their struggle to adjust to a new identity and the community into which they are relocated.<sup>25</sup> Social distress grows from being "set adrift" in the social structure, and personal distress grows from being forced to abandon the comfort and stability that comes from a continuous sense of existence between past and present life. There is a substantial body of social scientific literature that would be applicable in seeking to understand the sources of distress inherent in the protected witness experience.

The crucial significance of personal name (especially surname) in social life and the connection of social and personal identity with daily social interaction is widely established and extensively written about (see Benson, 1974; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Durkheim, 1965; Goffman, 1959, 1963, 1971; Hartman, 1951, 1958; McCall and Simmons, 1978; Mead, 1934; Murdock, 1949; Strauss, 1959; Ullman, 1965; Weitzman, 1970). One's name is a crucial aspect of the way one relates to one's community. People gain recognition through similar family names, imprint this family name on property, surround its bestowal with significant ritual and ceremony, and trace common lineage and ancestry through it. Naming is a process which confers legitimacy to persons and binds them together. To give up a name, especially in the sense that protected witnesses do, is tantamount to giving up one's place in a collectivity and relinquishing

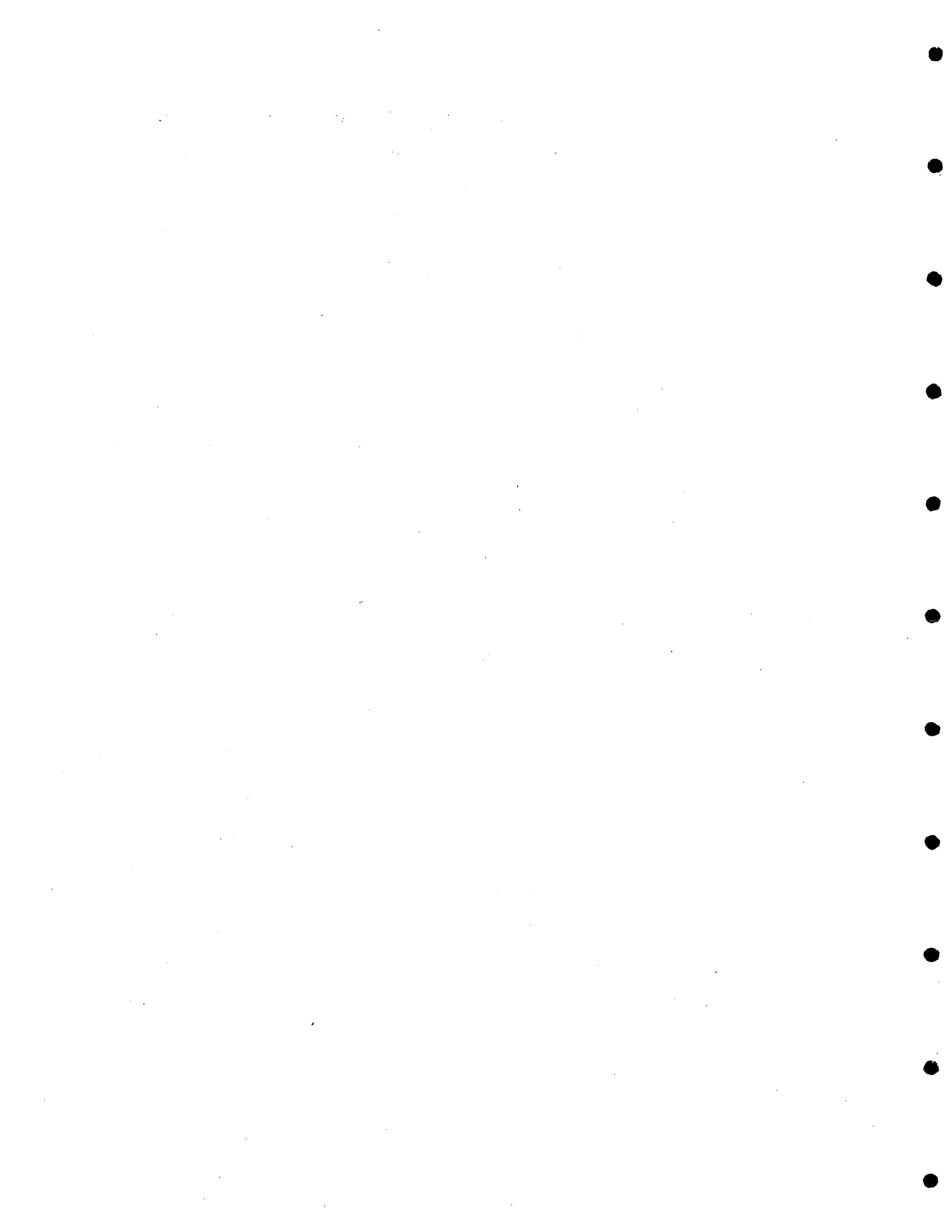


the networks of mutual interest, trust, friendship, and help that are a part of that collectivity. Witnesses and their family members surrender a name and everything it symbolizes and represents. They give up all the significant others that the name tied them to--causing them to experience a sense not only of having lost something important but of being lost themselves.

It is a generally accepted notion that self-image depends, in large part, upon constant relations with the objective world (James, 1961)--upon a sense of "self-sameness" over time that others recognize and acknowledge in the course of daily life and social interaction (Erikson, 1959). The relocated people undergo a transition that entails, of necessity, a sharp disruption of constant relations with the objective world. Clients of the program are generally deprived of familiar surroundings and are involved in relations with others who do not know, and cannot be made privy to, their past. Thus, the others with whom they interact daily are ill-equipped to provide whatever continuity human beings need to maintain a secure identity.

People who find themselves in the program must be careful not to jeopardize their much sought-after anonymity. Deception, pretense, and false presentations as to who they are become the basis of their existence. Almost every encounter represents the danger of self-disclosure through incongruities in the way they present themselves and unthinking slips of one kind or another. Their overriding goal is to pretend not to have been who in fact they were, and to pretend to be who in fact they know they are not. This is "strained interaction" with a vengeance, an extreme example of what Goffman called "avoidance techniques" (see Goffman, 1968, 1969).





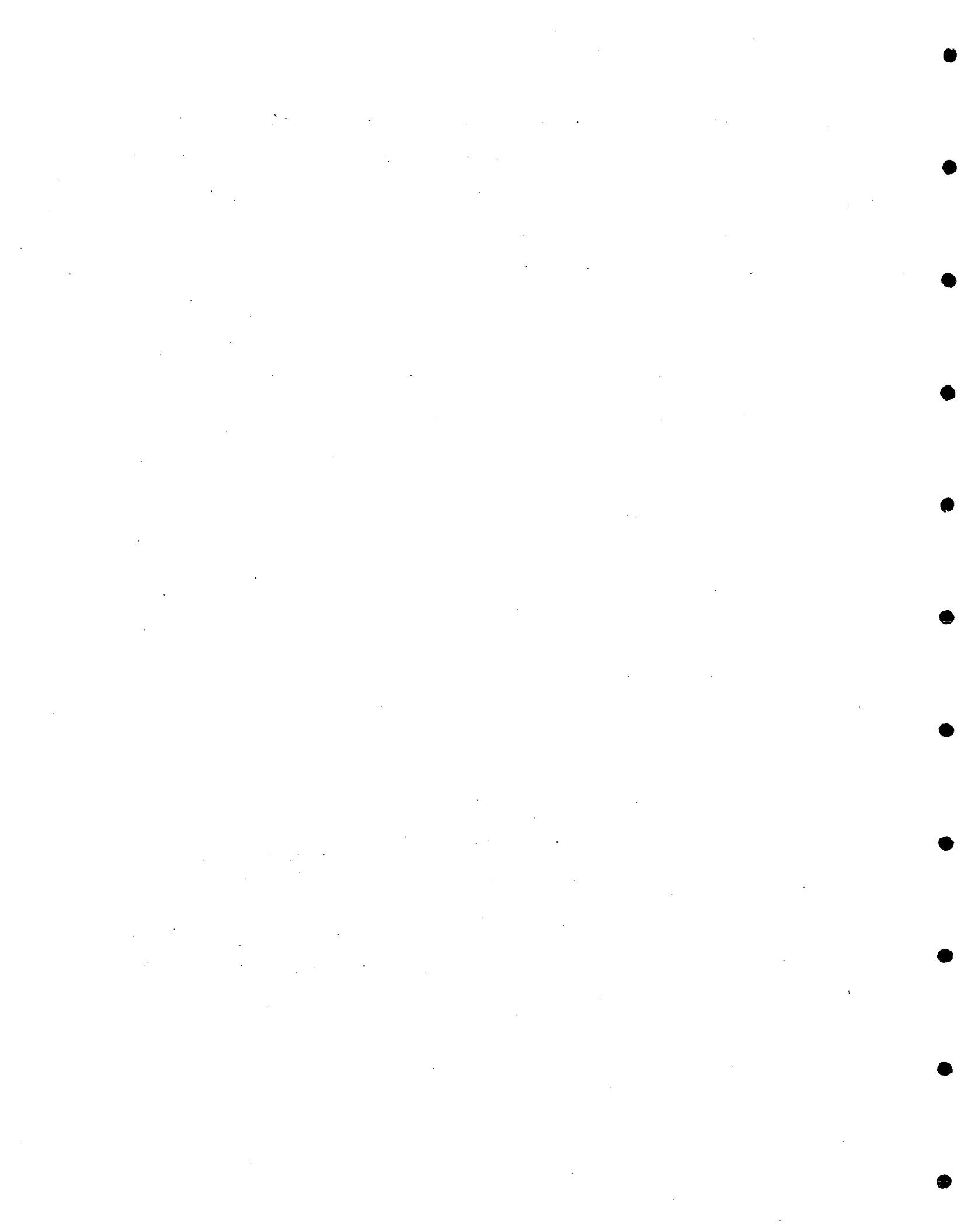
Secrecy is a pervasive aspect of all human conduct. Bok points out: "To restrain some secrets and to allow others freer play; to keep some hidden and to let others be known; to offer knowledge to some but not all comers; to give and receive confidences and to guess at far more; these efforts at information control permeate all human contact" (1982: 20). Simmel also sees secrecy as a key element in relations between people. He states, "The secret is . . . the hiding of realities by negative or positive means . . . . Whether there is secrecy between two individuals or groups, and if so how much, is a question that characterizes every relation between them. For even where one of the two does not notice the existence of a secret, the behavior of the concealer and hence the whole relationship is certainly modified by it" (1950: 330). Goffman, too, devotes a great deal of attention to secrecy and concealment in discussing misrepresentation and the playing of discrepant roles (1959).

According to Bok, an individual needs to have a certain amount of control over secrecy and openness in the interests of protecting and securing "identity, plans, actions and property." Such control is necessary for "equilibrium" in personal life and even "survival" (1982: 105-106). Further, she tells us that:

. . . not only does control over secrecy and openness preserve central aspects of identity; it also guards their changes, their growth or decay, their progress or backsliding, their sharing and transformation of every kind (1982: 21).

In support of this claim she points to accounts of spies and undercover agents who have attested to the negative effect of prolonged secrecy and concealment upon their judgment, their behavior, and their individual sense of identity.

To sustain the high levels of secrecy necessary for the position



they are in, witnesses use a variety of means. They may simply avoid social interaction, for example, or if this is not possible, fabricate or lie about their past, risking either exposure or an assessment of them as not being frank, open, or honest. Their secret thrusts them into the position of seeking social isolation in the midst of a social order that requires high levels of contact and participation. Simmel points out:

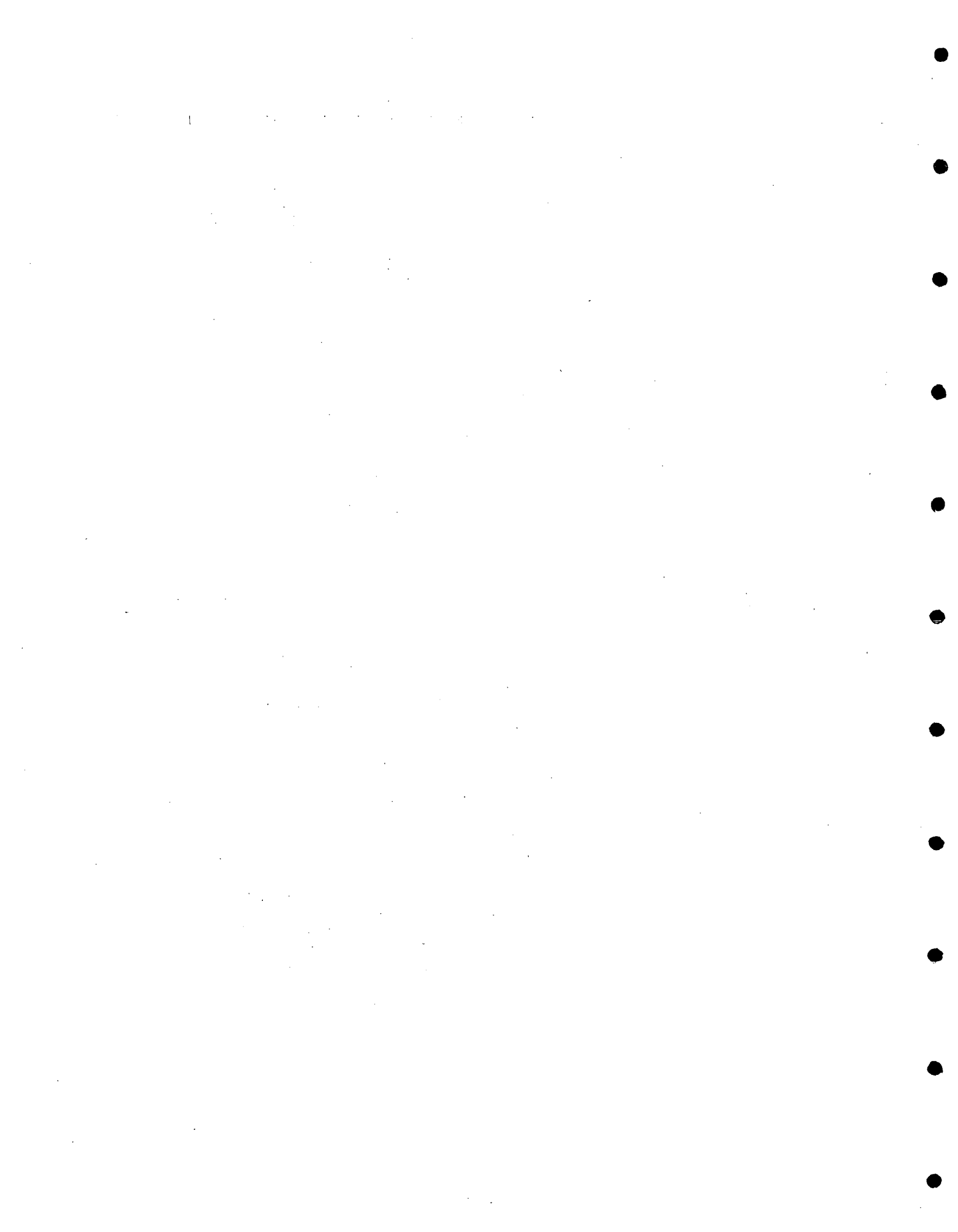
In the interest of interaction and social cohesion, the individual must know certain things about the other person. Nor does the other have the right to oppose this knowledge from a moral standpoint, by demanding the discretion of the first: he cannot claim the entirely undisturbed possession of his own being and consciousness, since this discretion may harm the interests of society (1950: 323).

In other words, witnesses are confronted with the fact that it is not socially acceptable to be too secretive about oneself--especially regarding demands for information about one's past. Such requests for disclosure are viewed as wholly legitimate by others, and since clients of the program cannot hide within a cloak of discretion in this respect, they are confronted daily with having to manage information about themselves which skirts dangerously close to betraying a fatal secret.

Secrets create special tensions and conflicts with which witnesses must deal. Simmel tells us:

The secret . . . is full of the consciousness that it can be betrayed, . . . is surrounded by the possibility and temptation of betrayal; and the external danger of being discovered is interwoven with the internal danger . . . of giving oneself away. The secret puts a barrier between men but, at the same time, it creates the tempting challenge to break through it by gossip or confession--and this challenge accompanies its psychology like a constant overtone (1950: 333-334).

Thus, witnesses must deal with the internal threat that they will betray their secret inadvertently and the external threat that others will be



driven to penetrate that secret, or will discover it without meaning to.

Simmel points out:

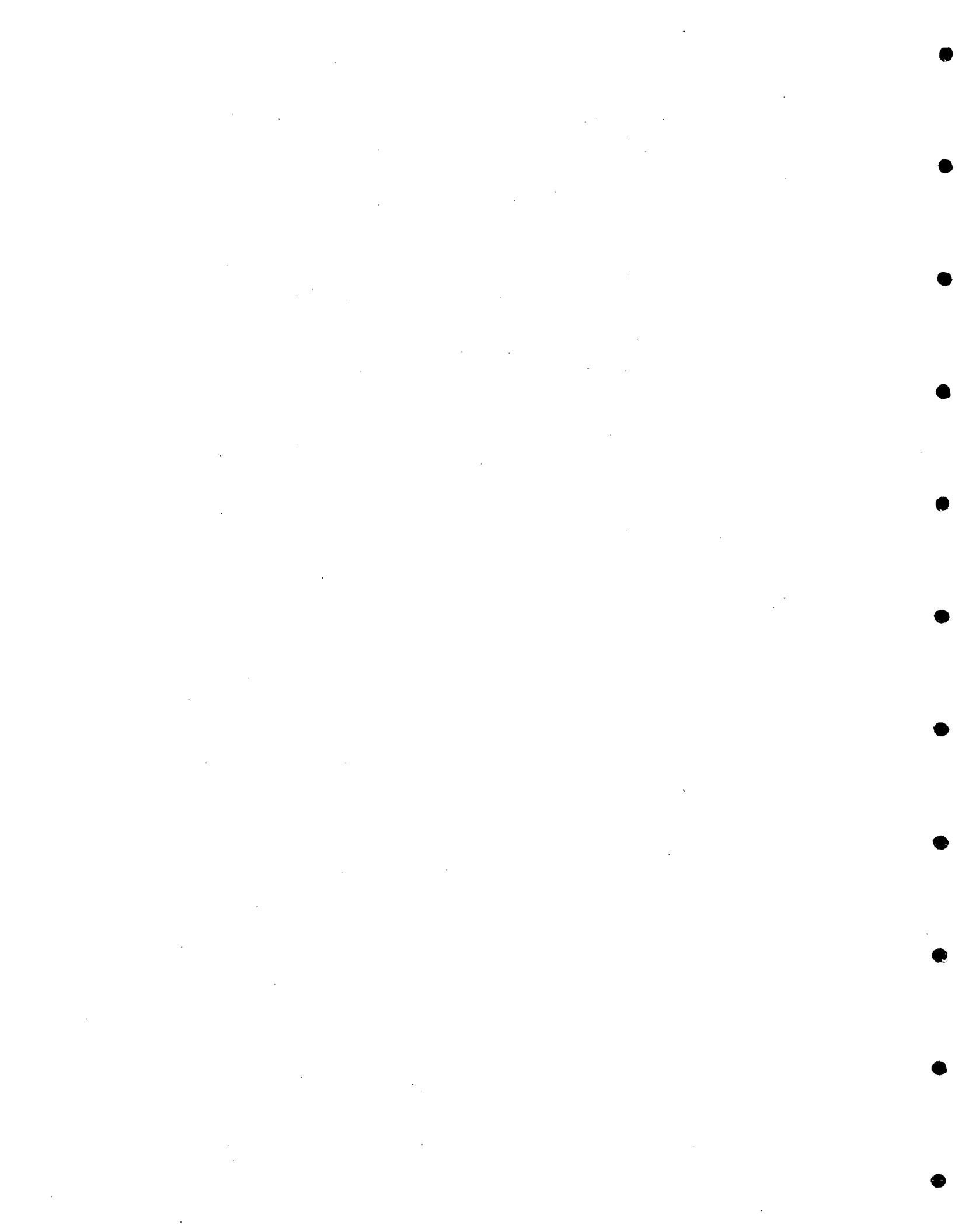
No matter how much every decent person tells himself that he must not muse on what the other hides, that he must not exploit the slips and helplessness of the other, knowledge nevertheless occurs so automatically, and the results confront us with such striking suddenness, that mere good will has no power over it (1950: 324).

There is every reason to believe that clients of the program are likely to experience a deep and pervasive sense of powerlessness. What seem like everyday routine matters to others become monumental problems for them. They cannot provide addresses, employment records, credit references, or any other records from the past attesting to who they have been. Although they are provided with a new name, it is one which cannot be given an officially fabricated history. These people reenter society anew, and they become, in a world of "records, dossiers, and files," very unusual, if not unique.<sup>26</sup> This places them at a disadvantage in applying and competing for, among other things, employment, housing, and credit. As Gary Haak, a refugee from mob wars in Rochester, New York, put it:

When I left home I had excellent credit. I had a good deal of work experience. I had a high school education and some college credits. Gary Haak was a real person. Now in my new identity I am a man without a past. I have no documentation for my past whatsoever. I am a man who never went to school. I have no former addresses or phone numbers. Have you ever tried to get a telephone or rent an apartment or buy a home or auto or life insurance without giving former addresses or former phone numbers . . . ? One recourse is to lie.<sup>27</sup>

Lying on this scale is a problem both to individuals and the social institutions to which they must relate. As Simmel notes:

Truthfulness and lie are of the most far-reaching significance for relations among men . . . .  
Existence rests on a thousand premises which the



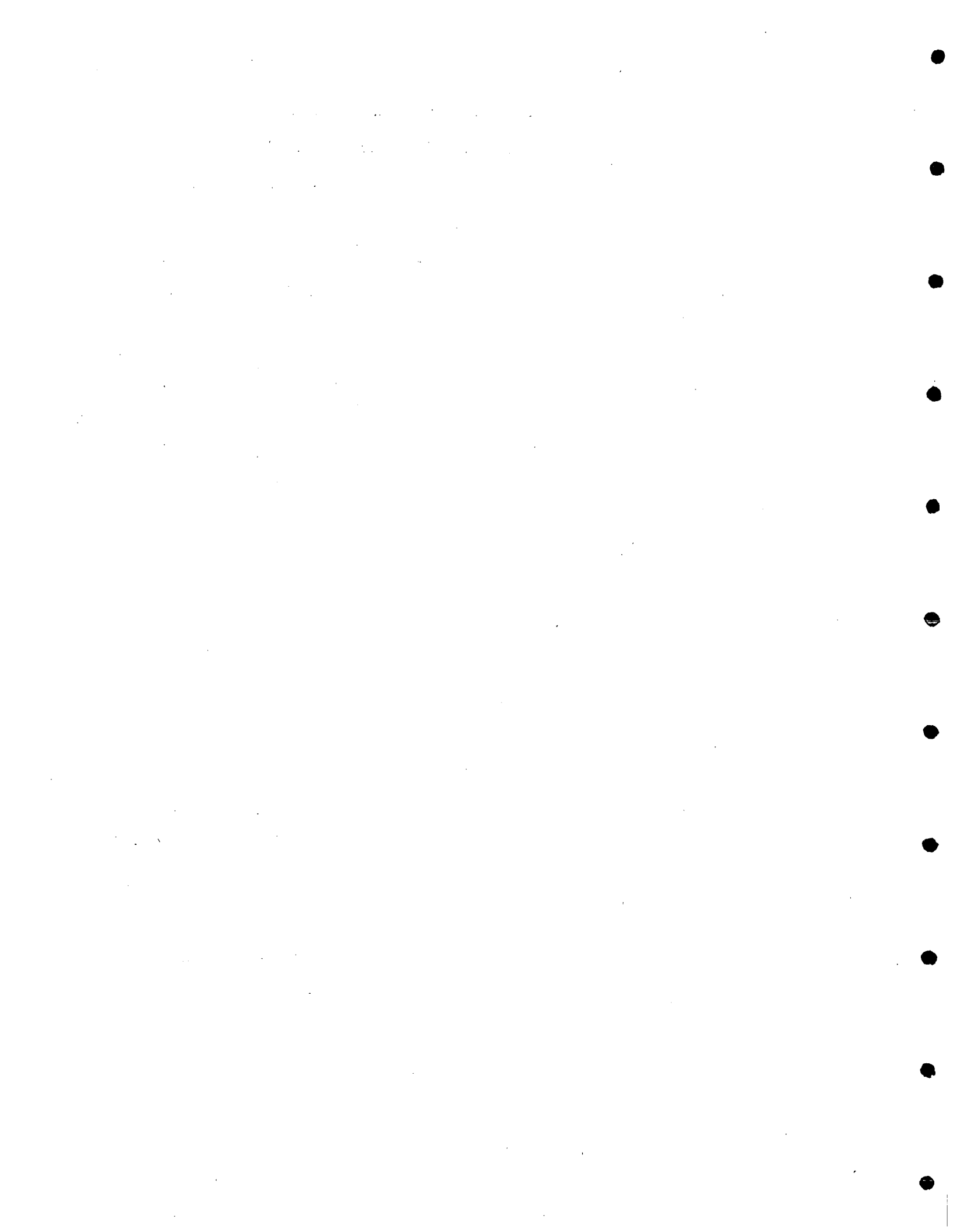
single individual cannot trace and verify to their roots at all, but must take on faith. Our modern life is based to a much larger extent than is usually recognized upon the faith in the honesty of the other . . . . We base our gravest decisions on a complex system of conceptions, most of which presuppose the confidence that we will not be betrayed. Under modern conditions, the lie, therefore, becomes . . . something which questions the very foundations of our life . . . if we were not deterred from it by the utmost severity of moral law; then the organization of modern life would be simply impossible; for modern life is a "credit economy" in a much broader than a strictly economic sense (1950: 312-315).

To ensure the integrity of this "credit economy," Simmel tells us there is a force he calls "enlightenment" at work in society which ". . . aims at the removal of the untruths operating in social life" (1950: 315). The stress placed on those who must lie, then, is not only built into the individual but into the social structure itself. Since clients of the program are creatures of the social order, they cannot help feeling distress over having to lie, and further, to feel a sense of personal distance from others.

#### Social identity and alienation

So there is a vast difference between the minor concealments and fabrications that all of us use to ensure our privacy in everyday situations and the kinds of deception, concealment, and lying which witnesses must practice. Lying per se is not an uncommon practice, as I have suggested, and it is unlikely that the everyday concealments of human life are especially stressful to the witness. What stresses them is the inability to be truthful when and with whom they want to be, especially regarding the details of their past. The simple fact is that witnesses do not have a choice; they must lie. Most individuals in

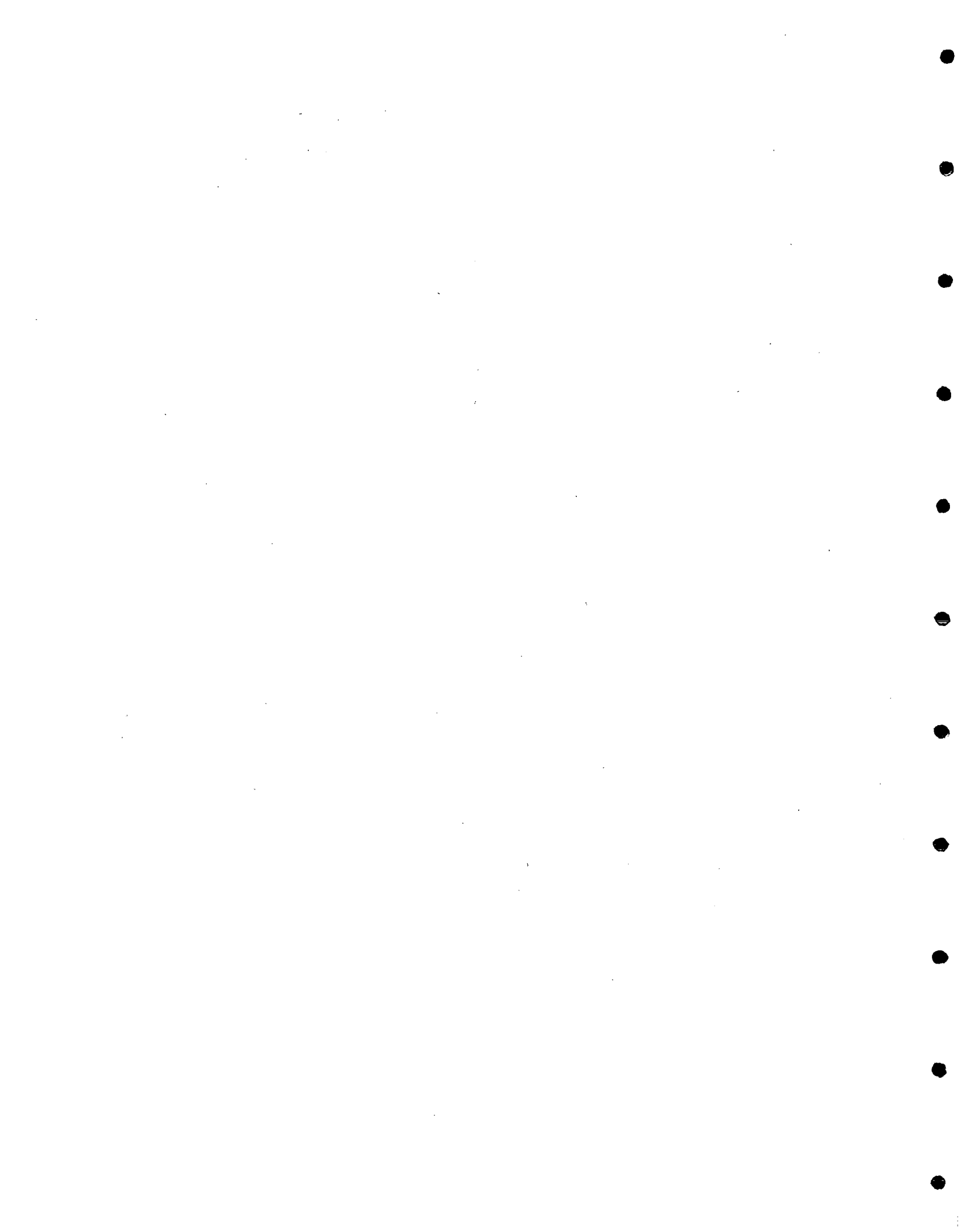




society can decide what to conceal from whom, and on what levels, but witnesses clearly cannot. Clients of the program find themselves in a position where they must lie at almost all levels with virtually everyone they come into contact with. They cannot move out of their shell of privacy or share inner parts of themselves even with chosen others. One witness who married after he enrolled in the program provides an extreme example: "The hardest part of all this is having to lie to my new wife; I wish the Marshals would tell me when I can tell her about my past; it isn't easy to keep it concealed from her."

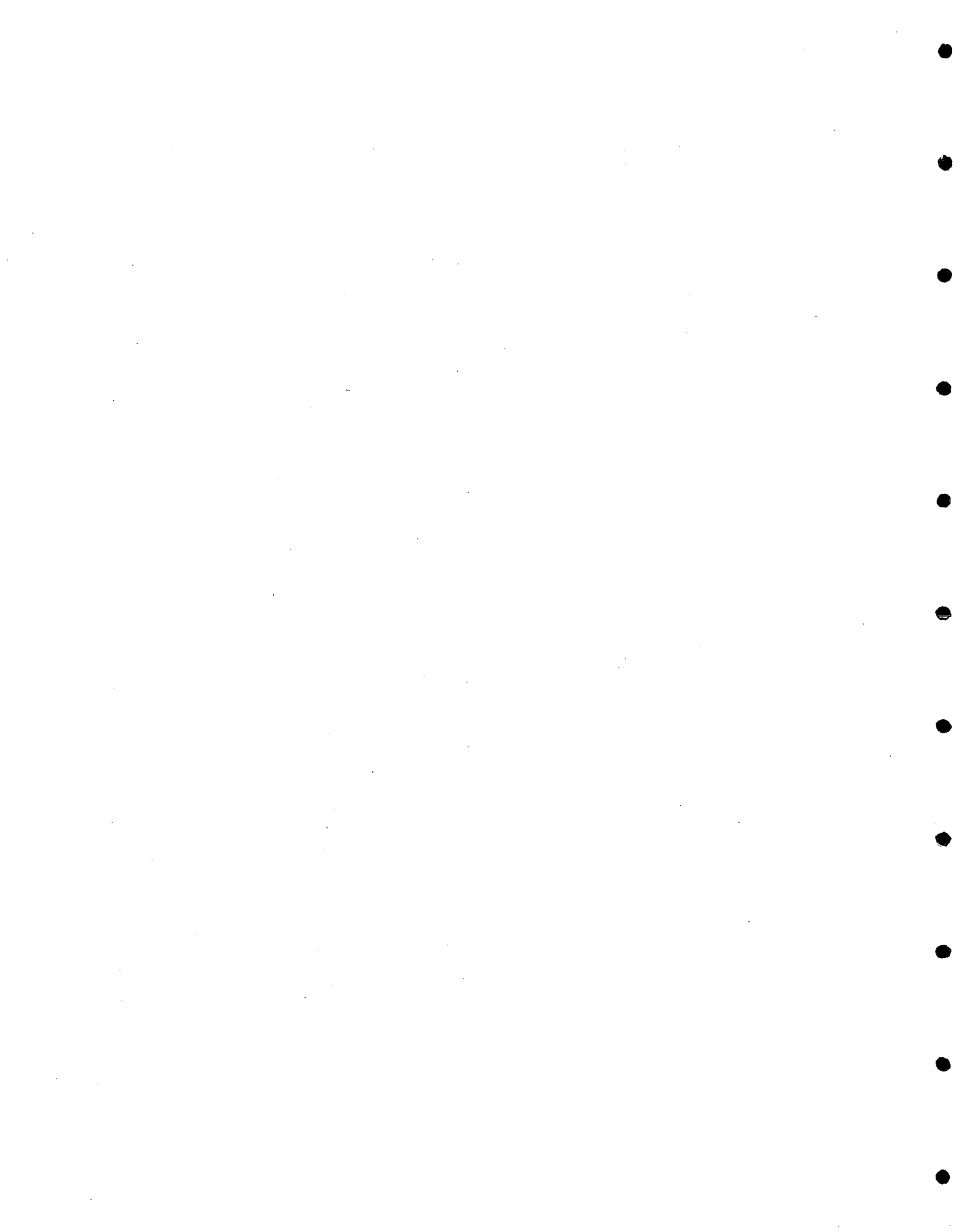
In fact, this inability to share their privacies with someone else probably adds to their feelings of powerlessness and isolation, creating in them a sense of alienation. They are truly the "strangers" that Schutz (1964) describes, people who live in the community yet are not part of it, remaining on the fringes and "from the outside looking in." Their situation is not the result of ostracism but of self-imposed distance. From the viewpoint of the witness, integration into the community network must be seen as dangerous at best. Some witnesses have had to make six or more moves after their enrollment in the program because their "cover" had been blown. Each time such a move is made, they must adjust all over again to a new name and social identity. From their perspective, then, alienation and isolation provide more security than would integration into the community--reversing the experience of most members of society.

People are known by their likes and dislikes, their strengths and weaknesses, their ethnic and religious identifications, their occupations and recreations, and so on. All these behavioral patterns are identifiers. To exercise old familiar patterns while integrating into



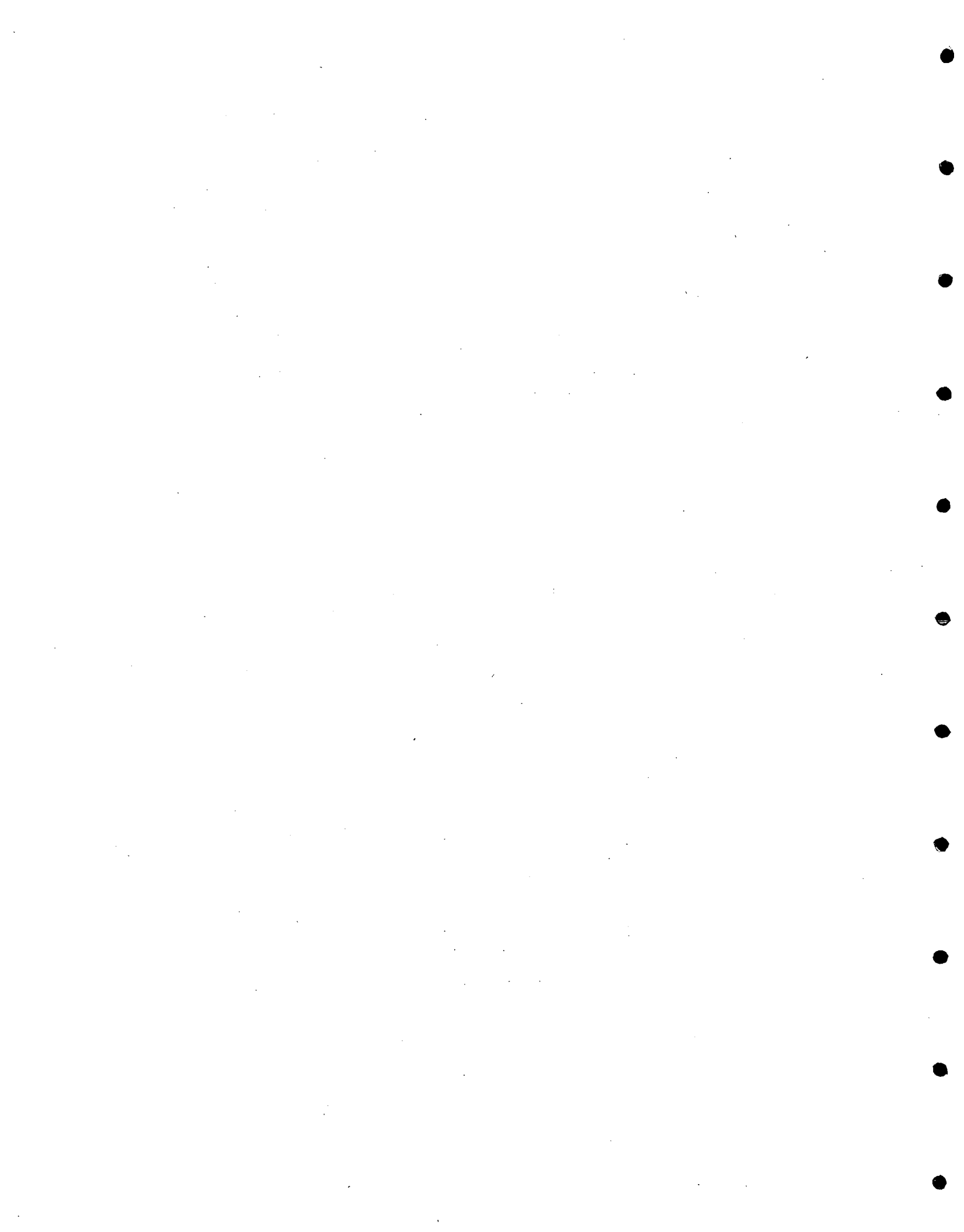
the community is to take quite a chance. If clients remain on the fringes of a community, they can exercise those old familiar patterns with a much greater sense of personal security, and to maintain that form of continuity may be strengthening. Thus, for program members, being alienated has both reason and function.

Protected witnesses expressed a sense of powerlessness related to their lack of ability to navigate among the institutions of society. Social organizations do not recognize them because of their lack of a verifiable past. This lack of identification, naturally, is a form of alienation, and it is to a large extent unavoidable. It seems to be the case that a solid social identity and an accountable past provide the individual with a sense of, and the ability to achieve, identification, integration, and power. Indeed, one must be prepared to be accountable for his past acts. As Faulkner points out, ". . . you--everyone--must, or anyway may have to, pay for your past; that past is something like a promissory note with a trick clause in it which, as long as nothing goes wrong, can be manumitted in an orderly manner, but which fate or luck or chance can foreclose on you without warning" (1950: 140).



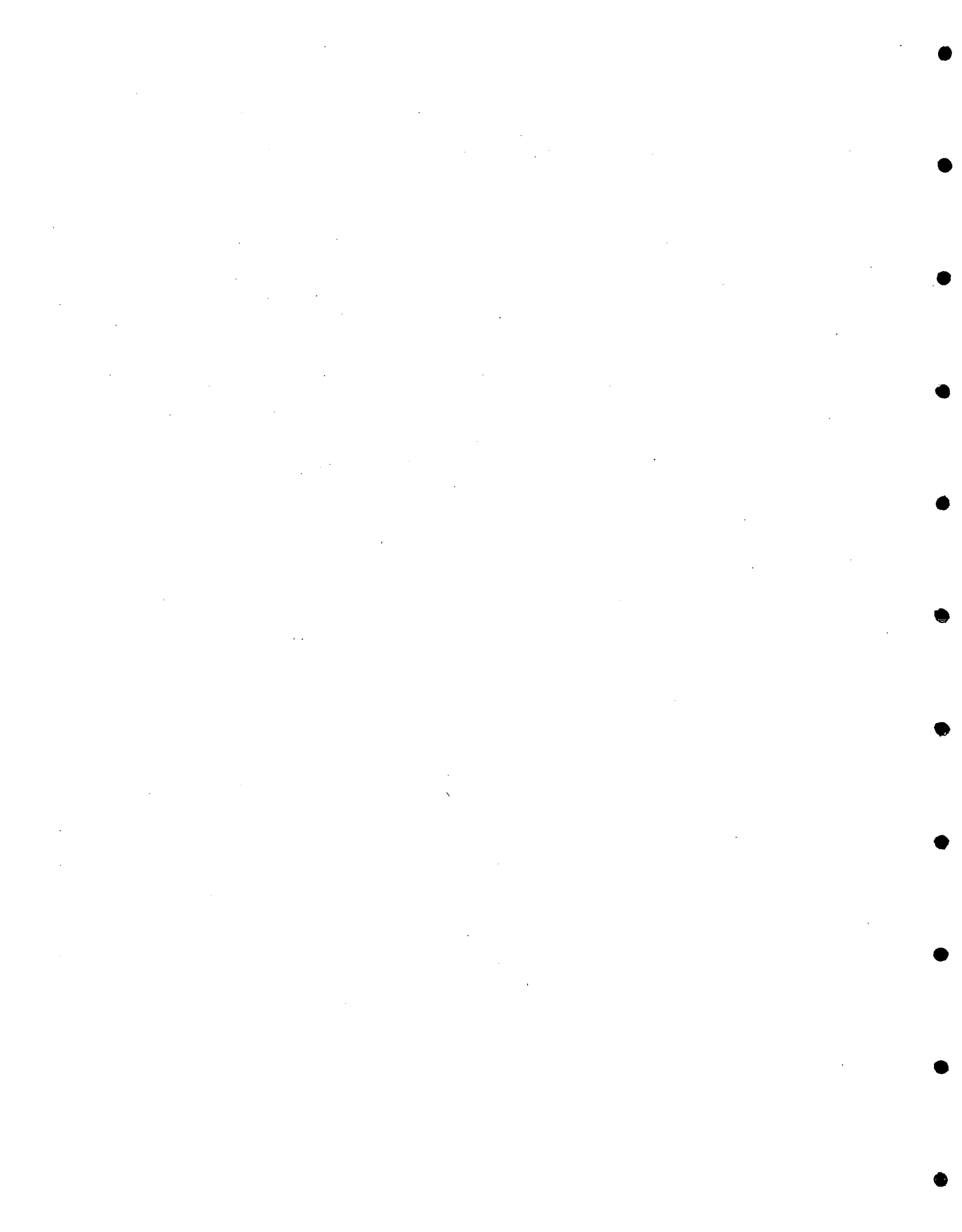
Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Witness Security Program, Hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, 96th Congress, 2nd session, December 15-17, 1980. The Justice Department's strategy permits no more than thirty principal witnesses and their family members to enroll in the program per month.
- <sup>2</sup>Much attention has been paid to the witness in criminal proceedings, and especially to the importance of witness cooperation (see, for example, Cannavale and Falcon, 1976; Knudten, 1977; National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1973; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society, 1967). In addition, there has been specific concern over witnesses' fear of physical reprisal and getting people to testify in instances where they are intimidated by the offender (see Goldstock and Coenen, 1980). As early as 1967, the President's Commission recommended that the government should establish residential care facilities or safe houses for witnesses whose lives were in jeopardy.
- <sup>3</sup>Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, United States Statutes at Large, 91st Congress, 2nd session, volume 84, part 1, Public Laws, pp. 923-926. Title V was strengthened and superceded by the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, Chapter 224--Protection of Witnesses, Articles 3521-3528. To get an idea of violence directed at witnesses see Organized Crime and the Use of Violence, Hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, 96th Congress, 2nd session, parts 1 and 2, May 2, 5, 1980.
- <sup>4</sup>See comments, p. 10, recommendation number 1, "Program Continuation," in U.S. Department of Justice, "Report of the Witness Security Review Committee," 1978. This appears on p. 279 of Witness Protection Program, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 95th Congress, 2nd session, March 20, 23, April 14, 1978.
- <sup>5</sup>"Report of the Witness Security Review Committee," Appendix B, Table 1.
- <sup>6</sup>Barboza and Messick, 1975; Rowe, 1976; Waller, 1976.
- <sup>7</sup>Maas, 1968.
- <sup>8</sup>Mollenhoff, 1972.
- <sup>9</sup>Ninety-five percent are criminally involved because basically there are two ways that one may qualify as a witness in criminal proceedings. The first way is to be an "expert" such as is found in medical and technical fields; the second way (the predominant way for program witnesses) is to be a party to and/or witness of the criminal event. For the rules governing witness participation in criminal proceedings see, for example, Beeman, 1964; Liebenson, 1961; Liebenson and Wepman, 1964; Maguire, 1959; Wall, 1965). The 95 percent estimate was provided by the United States Marshals Service.



- <sup>10</sup>"Report of the Witness Security Review Committee," pp. 11-12.
- <sup>11</sup>This structure is suggested in the Witness Security Program. It is also described in a letter from Marilyn Mode, Associate Chief of the Witness Security Program, to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, Yale University.
- <sup>12</sup>The United States Marshals Service is responsible for a great deal more, including maintaining detailed records so that witnesses may be notified and called upon when they are needed. William Hall, Director of the United States Marshals Service, in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 96th Congress, 1st session, April 10, May 2, 16, 1979, stated that the Marshals are responsible for "the service of civil and criminal processes, the execution of arrest warrants, the movement and custody of unsentenced federal prisoners, . . . the protection of government witnesses, . . . of federal court facilities, judges, jurors, and other trial participants, . . . prevention of civil disturbances, restoration of order in riot or mob violence situations, the security and protection in the movement of nuclear warheads for the Strategic Air Command, and other law enforcement special functions at the direction of the Attorney General" (1979: 56).
- <sup>13</sup>These safe houses were under the administration of the United States Marshals Service until 1975 when they were disbanded. (See Witness Protection Program.)
- <sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of Justice/LEAA, Report of the National Conference on Organized Crime, 1975; The National Association of Attorneys General, Organized Crime Control Legislation, 1975; Deskbook on Organized Crime, 1972.
- <sup>15</sup>Graham, 1977; Teresa and Renner, 1973; Waller, 1976.
- <sup>16</sup>Witness Protection Program, introductory statement.
- <sup>17</sup>Weitzman, 1970.
- <sup>18</sup>Comprehensive Crime Control Act, Title 18, USC, Articles 3523 and 3524 lay out routinized procedures for dealing with child custody and civil litigation matters.
- <sup>19</sup>Hearings before the Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, April 10, May 2, 16, 1979, p. 62.
- <sup>20</sup>Witness Security Program, pp. 213-214.
- <sup>21</sup>Thirteen states, three territories, and the District of Columbia do not cooperate in issuing birth certificates.





- 22 The amount of the payments is determined by the Office of Management and Finance, Department of Justice, and handled by the Witness Support Unit of the United States Marshals Service. Criteria such as the number of dependents and the cost of living in the area of relocation are used. See "Report of the Witness Security Review Committee."
- 23 The Marshals provide psychological diagnostic testing for the witnesses which aids in determining the type of work for which they are suited.
- 24 From transcript of ABC news program "20/20," "Hostages of Fear," October 2, 1980, p. 5. This is one witness's view of his future. My work also suggests that such people may experience freedom from a horrible past and personal stigma, and experience an unlimited future.
- 25 The problems of adjusting to a new community as an outsider are insightfully dealt with by Schutz, 1964. Schutz captures not only the problems but the feelings of being on the periphery of a community.
- 26 Wheeler (1969) tells us that records, dossiers, and files are maintained for almost every official aspect of our life, and many of the authors in this book point to the potential abuses of files. Everyone needs to return to a past personal biography and, although not explicitly stated, the trouble one can encounter when one has no parallel life on record is readily imaginable.
- 27 Witness Security Program, p. 62.



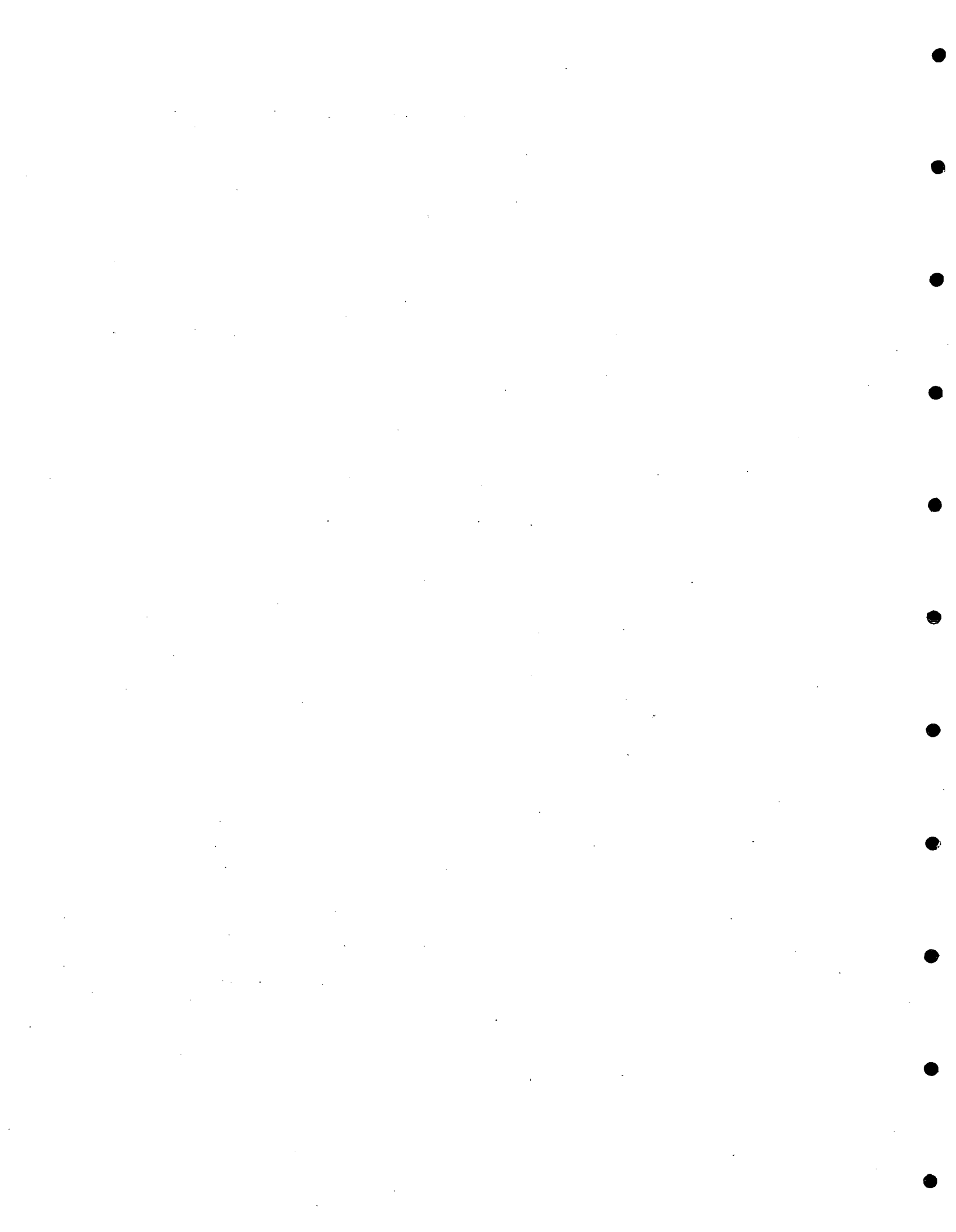
## CHAPTER II

### NATURE OF RESEARCH

My original concern was with discontinuities in identity and life style. I could have pursued this interest by studying other populations--amnesiacs, transsexuals, expatriates, for example. But relocated witnesses seemed to me to offer the most interesting possibility. Compared to these other populations, witnesses are the only group in which there is a systematic total change of identity, in which the state employs all its power to help them in the process of hiding their old identity and giving them a new one. The state can use its considerable resources to move witnesses in physical space as well as social space, an advantage not available to people in those other groups. But there was a hitch. Access to relocated witnesses was extremely difficult because they were living under a death threat and hiding within new identities. I could only study them, of course, if special precautions were worked out, for this is a population very much at risk.

#### Access routes

There were two relatively safe ways of gaining access to protected witnesses and their families. From time to time they resurface publicly and one possibility would have been to try to make contact with them.<sup>1</sup> A second possibility involved the United States Marshals Service. Since the Marshals help these people change their identities and relocate them



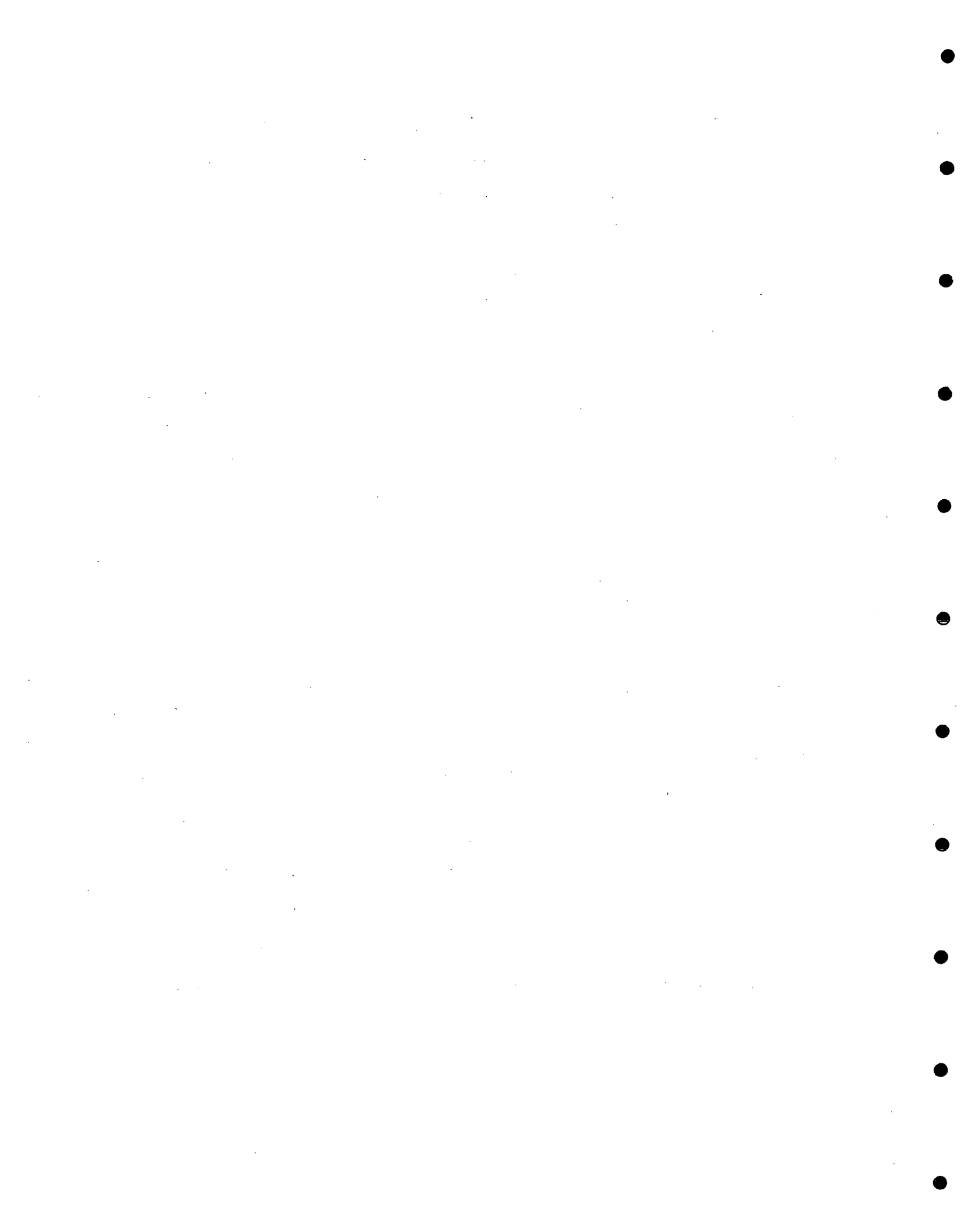
in other parts of the country, they serve as a link between their clients' past and present lives.

Clearly, a sample of witnesses still in hiding was preferable to a group of persons who, for one reason or another, had decided to resurface. And, luckily, Howard Safir (then Chief of the Federal Witness Security Program) made that possible. I obviously could not directly interview witnesses in hiding without endangering everyone concerned, so an arrangement was made for the Marshals to act as go-betweens.

Use of custodians or intermediaries in making contact with subjects who are in a sensitive, vulnerable, or dangerous situation is not an unknown practice, and it has many advantages when dealing with, for example, mental patients, prisoners, and, in this case, protected witnesses. Such a practice has received attention in the literature on research methods and is described comprehensively by Boruck and Cecil:

Where . . . potential respondents are unavailable to the researcher . . . or where the researcher prefers not to have direct access, then a custodian (or intermediary) may be incorporated into an alias based system for linkage . . . . The custodian or agent takes responsibility for transmitting inquiries and instruction from the researcher to the respondent; responses are supplied under an alias from one time to the next. The use of an intermediary here may be justified on the grounds that cooperation is more likely if the inquiry is channeled through an agency with which the respondent is familiar; . . . [this] insulates the researcher from the respondent and so prevents certain forms of corruption of the system. . . . channeling both the researcher's inquiry or instrument and the respondent's reply through the . . . custodian . . . in addition may serve a screening function, depressing the likelihood of deductive disclosure, eliminating unnecessary or inappropriate respondent types . . . (1979: 108).

And, one may add, in the case of protected witnesses, the screening function provided by the Marshals would serve to prevent inadvertent



disclosure by the respondents about their past whereabouts to the researcher. After consulting with the United States Marshals Service about its security requirements, I decided upon a self-administered questionnaire with opportunity for open-ended responses.

#### Sample Selection and Field Administration

Due to the unusual nature of my research population, special attention had to be paid to procedures for field administration. The possibility of mailing, or, more precisely, having the Marshals mail the questionnaire directly to the potential respondents was discussed because it seemed the most expedient and cost-effective procedure. This was the method which Senate and House Subcommittees used in their investigations. The Marshals' experience with these congressional investigations, however, taught them that this was not the most secure method of gathering information about their clients. It seems that some witnesses who received the questionnaire through the mail chose not to participate, and simply threw it in the trash or left it lying around. This resulted in a number of them having to be relocated because the discarded questionnaires were discovered (by a neighbor or someone else) and the witnesses were identified.

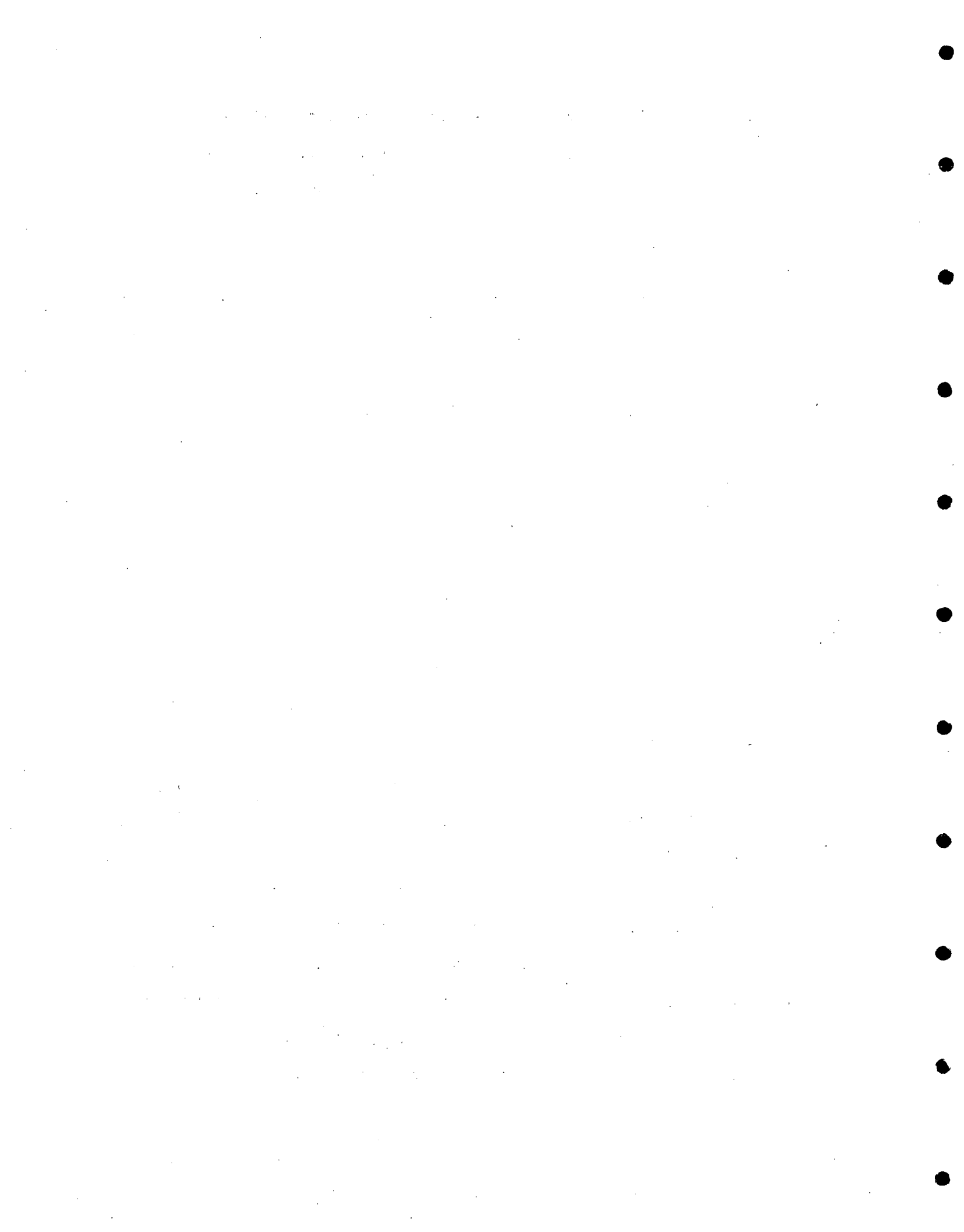
As a result, the Marshals required that all questionnaires, filled out or left blank, be returned to Witness Security Headquarters. Although relatively more expensive and time consuming, a procedure was devised for the questionnaires to be distributed and returned by the specific United States Marshal or Deputy Marshal who had regular contact with each potential respondent.





The questionnaires, with an introductory letter explaining the study to the potential respondents and instructions for both the respondent and contact Marshal, were delivered to Witness Security Headquarters. The questionnaires and accompanying materials were then distributed to the specific contact Marshals, located throughout the country, who were charged with the care and protection of the potential respondents who were randomly selected for participation in the study. The contact Marshals would then, during their regular contact with the clients, present the questionnaires to them with the introductory letter and the instructions. These documents (1) explained the purpose of the research; (2) notified the respondents that they were randomly selected; (3) informed them that their participation was purely voluntary; (4) pointed out that if they chose to participate they were not obliged to answer every question; (5) indicated that should they participate they were to be extremely careful and conscientious not to provide their past or present name or location; (6) noted that the questionnaire was designed to be self-administered so that they had the right and their contact Marshal the obligation to allow them to fill it out in private; and (7) asked them to place the questionnaire in an accompanying blank envelope, seal it, and return it to the contact Marshal whether they had filled it out or not.

The contact Marshal was instructed to provide privacy for the respondent but to remain close enough so that when the respondent finished he could ensure that the sealed envelope containing the research materials was returned. The contact Marshal was further instructed to return the sealed envelope to Witness Security Headquarters. The raw data were then maintained at headquarters under the United States



Marshals' standard security procedures. I traveled to Witness Security Headquarters on several occasions where the data were made available to me for coding and extraction of the open-ended responses.

Sample period: Enrollment  
and the attrition rate

Although the Witness Security Program had been officially operating since 1970 (and experimentally before then), it was decided to administer the questionnaires only to people who enrolled in the program from 1978 to 1983. This was done for two reasons. First, as I pointed out in Chapter I, the recommendations contained in the "Report of the Witness Security Review Committee" changed program operations to the point where clients who enrolled before the recommendations were implemented were likely to have a different experience than those who enrolled afterward. Second, the publicity which the program received at the time resulted in a massive sampling of clients, first by the Witness Security Review Committee and then by the Senate Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure of the Committee on the Judiciary, both of whom were looking into the program. There was concern about placing excessive stress upon those same witnesses through repeated interviewing, and therefore it was decided to select only households enrolled in the program from 1978 to 1983.

Of the client households entering the program in that time span, 44 percent had left the program by the time of my study and were not a part of the population from which my sample was drawn (see Table 1). As the table shows, the highest attrition rate of 51 percent occurred among clients who lived alone, while witnesses relocated with a spouse and children have lower rates. This finding is not surprising, since it can

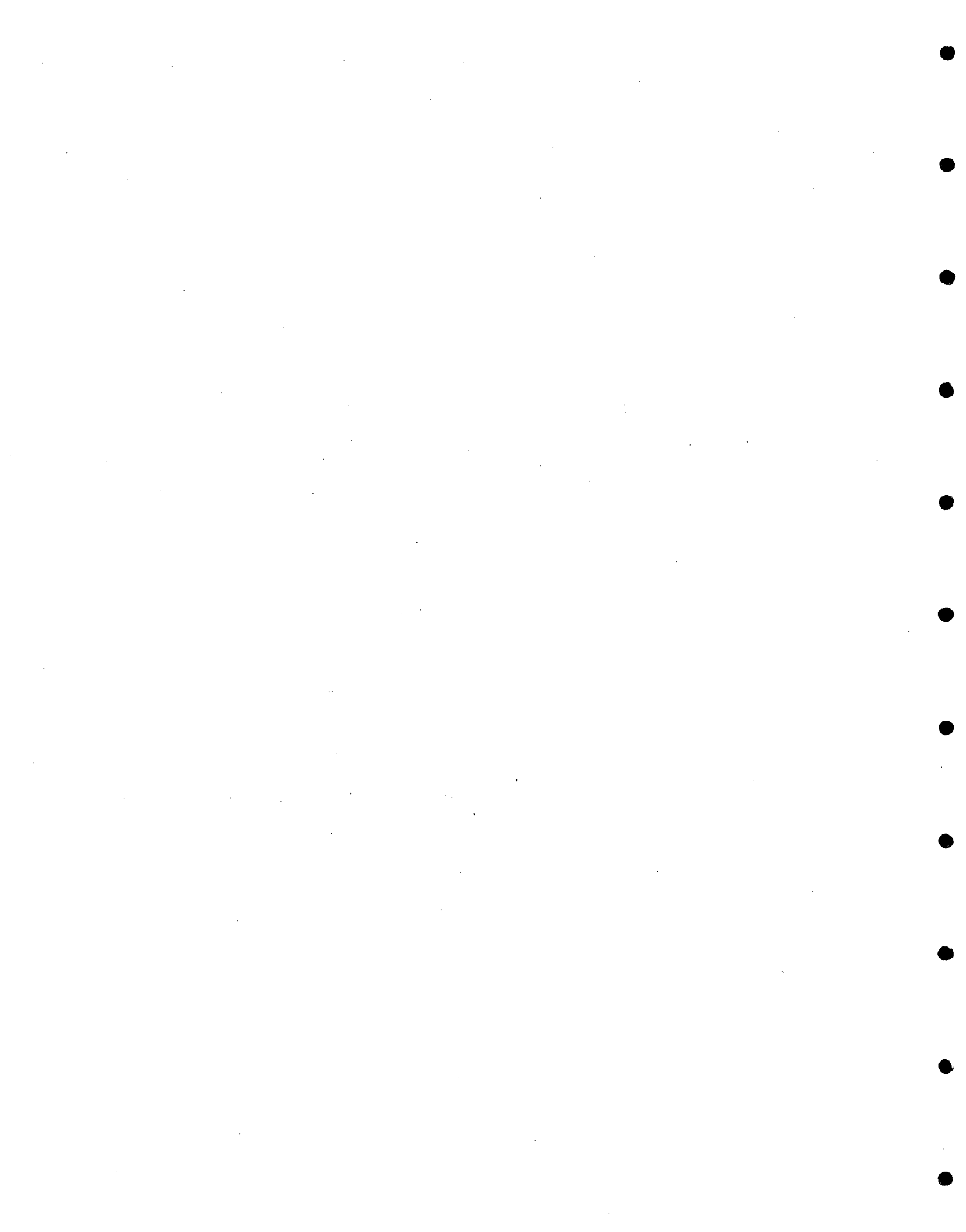
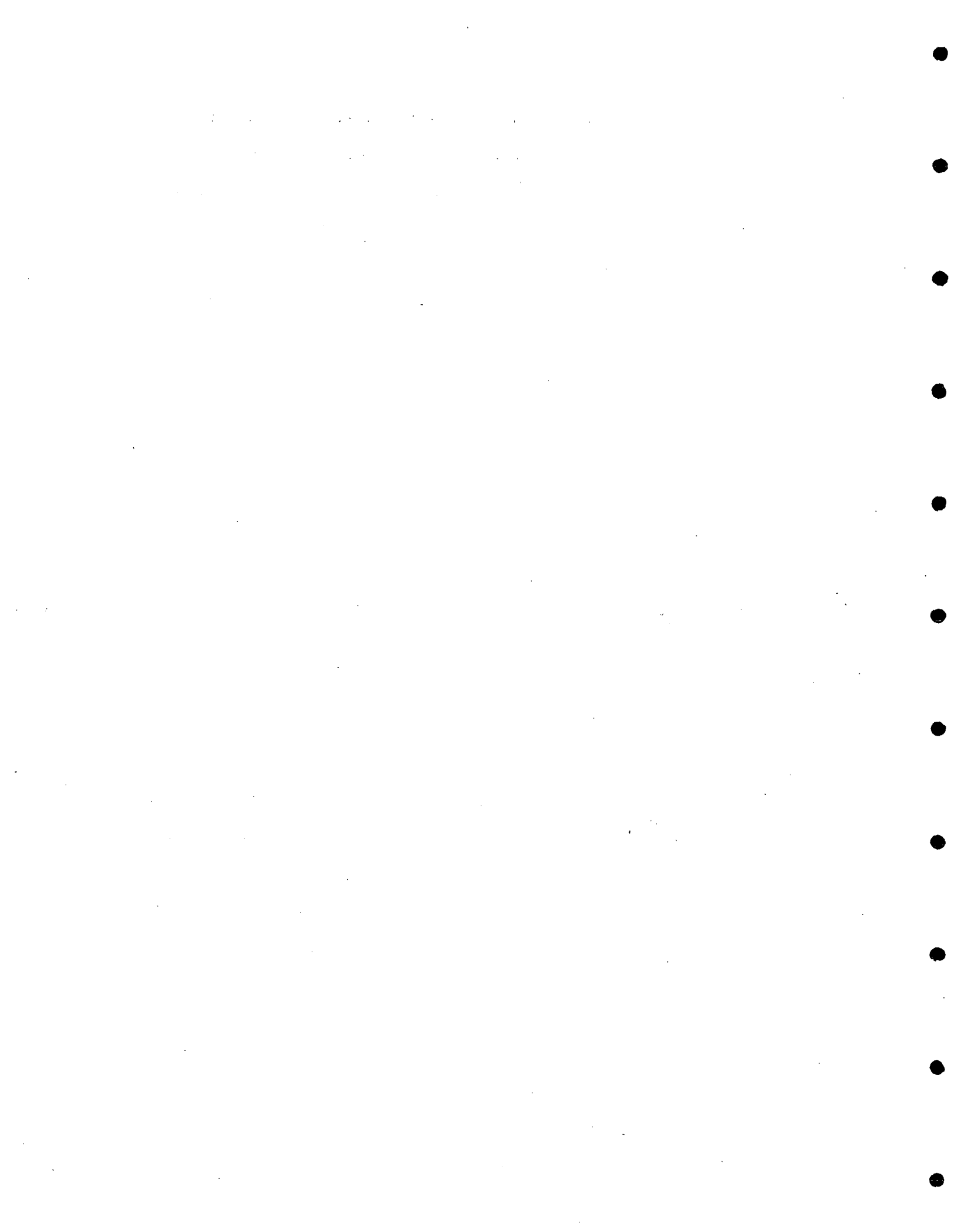


Table 1. Percentage of 1978-1983 Households that Left the Program by 1983 by the Number of Dependents in Each Household<sup>2</sup>

Number of Dependents in Each Household	Number of Households Upon Which Percentages are Based	Percentage that Left the Program
No dependents	863	51%
One dependent	250	41
Two dependents	187	31
Three dependents	144	38
Four or more dependents	150	37
All Households in the Program, 1978-1983	1,594	44



be readily assumed that witnesses who relocated with other family members (as opposed to those who relocated alone) would have a greater commitment to the program because more lives than their own were at stake. It is reasonable to assume many who live alone quit because of loneliness and lack of a supportive family group. It may also be the case that clients leave the program because they are not satisfied with the services they receive. If this is so, then those who live alone are in a better position to act on their discontent than those who are relocated with their family.

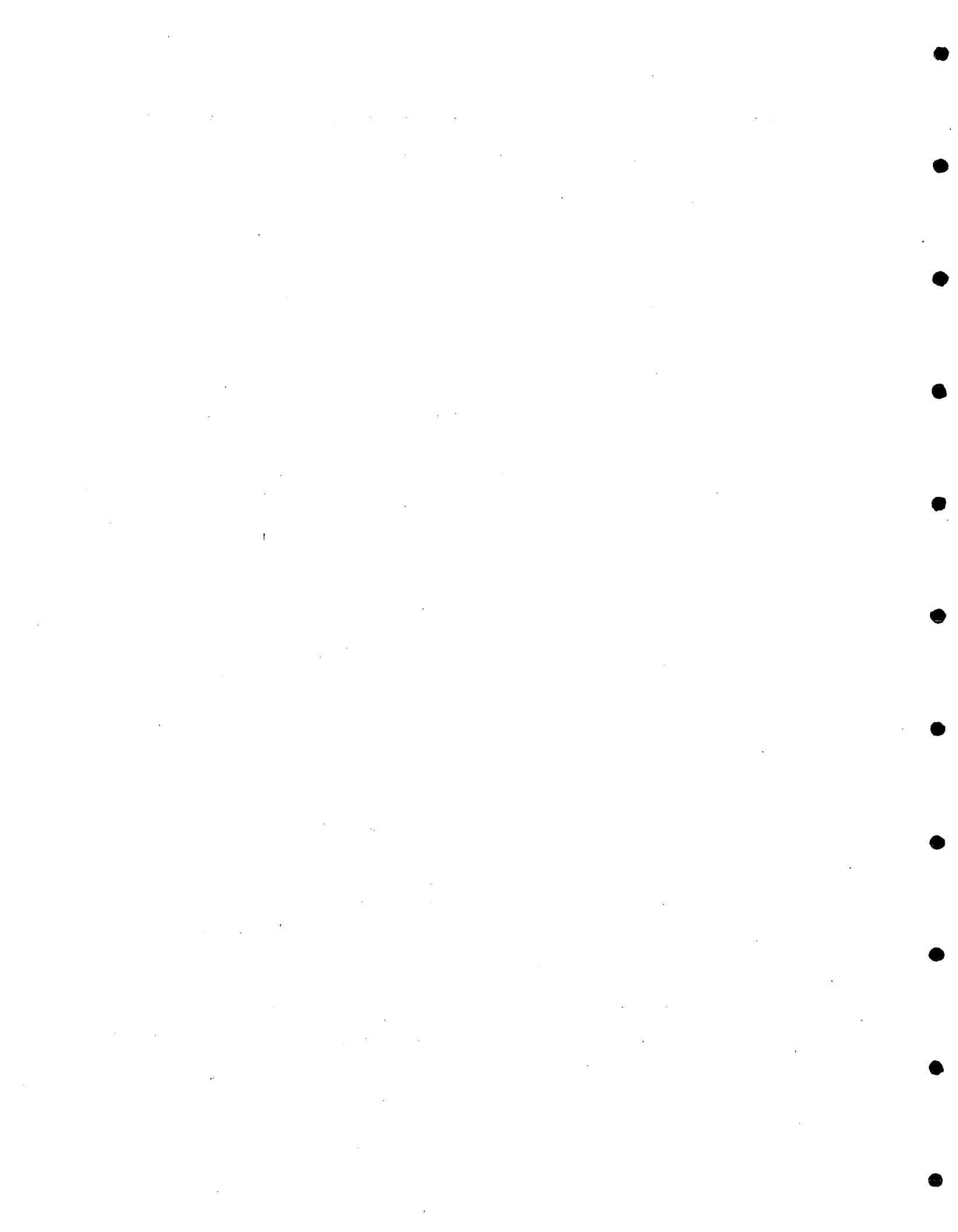
Reasons for this attrition rate, of course, are carried only in the memories of those who have left the program, so we have no way of knowing whether the people who left the program have the same general characteristics as those who stayed. The relative handful of ex-witnesses who have gone public might offer some limited insight, but they have not been considered here. Their number is too small in any event.

#### Sample specifications

The sample was drawn from 886 households, representing 56 percent of the 1,594 households that enrolled during this time period. Three hundred and ten questionnaires were put into the field.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the field administration had the optimal capacity of canvassing approximately 35 percent of the existing households.

Of the questionnaires put into the field and returned to Witness Security Headquarters, 175 were returned fully completed, 12 were partially completed, and the balance were "voluntary nonresponses." This represents approximately a 60 percent response rate. The respondents were chosen for the sample on a stratified random basis. That is, within





each witness "household by dependents" category, a single respondent from selected households was chosen at random for the questionnaire administration. This is a national sample, and the questionnaires were administered in all relevant federal judicial districts with the exception of those in the state of California.<sup>4</sup>

The number of completed questionnaires returned from the field distributed by the size of household shows a fairly even spread (see Table 2). The only group which was not comparable to others within the sample (of completed questionnaires) were those witnesses who relocated with four or more dependents. This group was only 5 percent of the sample, while the other remaining categories constituted anywhere from 19 percent to 29 percent each.

When comparing the sample to the actual number of active witness households in each category, the sample data seem to be most representative of those witnesses who brought one, two, or three dependents with them into hiding. Thus, if the results of the questionnaire administration can be said to speak to a larger population of program members, then it would certainly be that population of witness households where the witnesses brought others with them into the program and enrolled between 1978 and 1983.

#### Demographic Characteristics: Putting Program Members into Perspective

Because of their pivotal role in the government's war on organized crime and the often sensational media coverage that accompanies the relative handful who have emerged into the public light, there may be a general tendency to envision the people that I have studied as somehow different from the general population. From the viewpoint of their

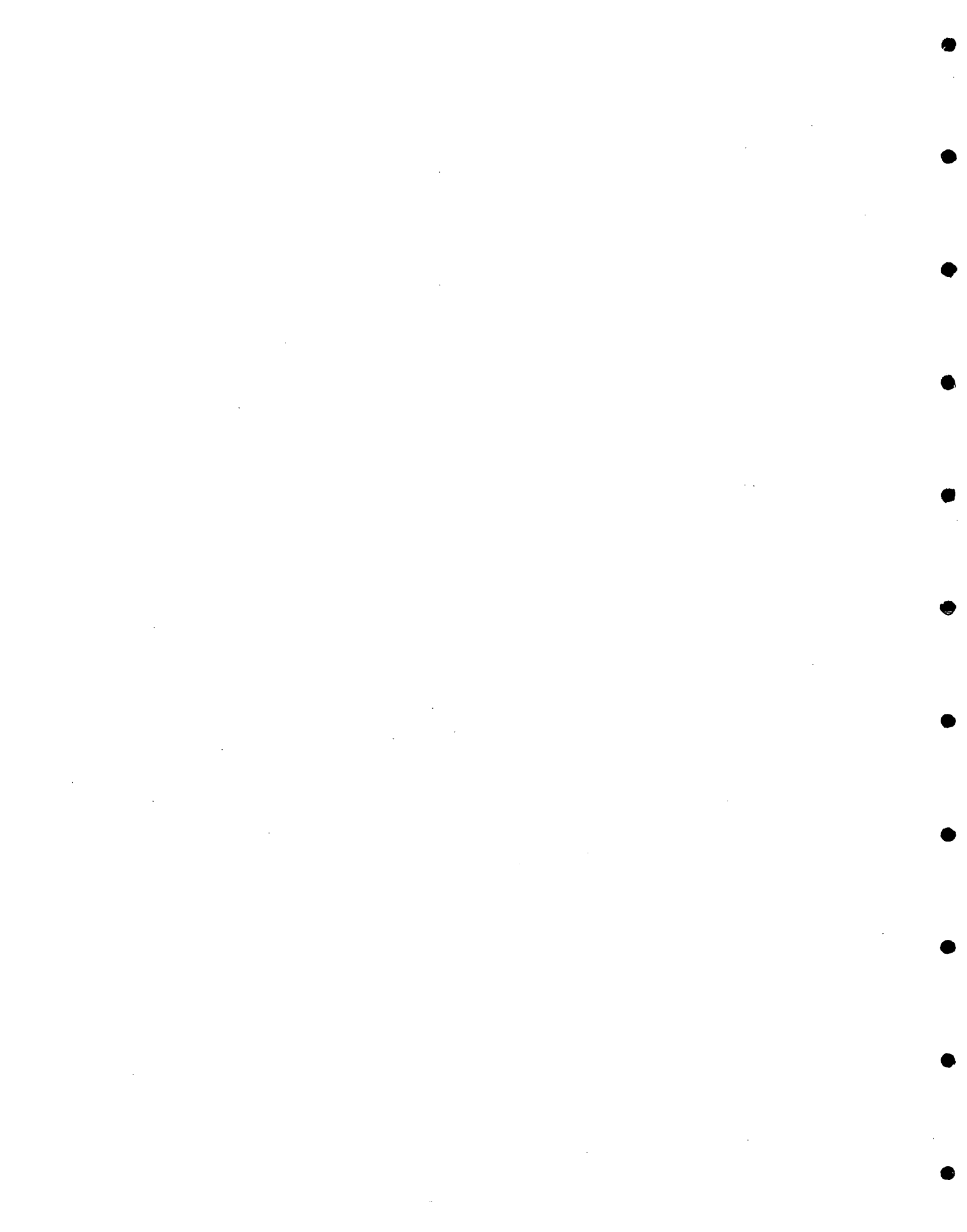


Table 2. Percentage of Households With Completed Questionnaires Compared with All Households Remaining in the Program in 1983 by the Number of Dependents

Number of Dependents in Each Household	Percentage of Households with Completed Questionnaires	Percentage of All Households
No dependents	21%	48%
One dependent	29	17
Two dependents	19	14
Three dependents	26	10
Four or more dependents	5	11
Total (Number of cases)	100 (175)	100 (886)



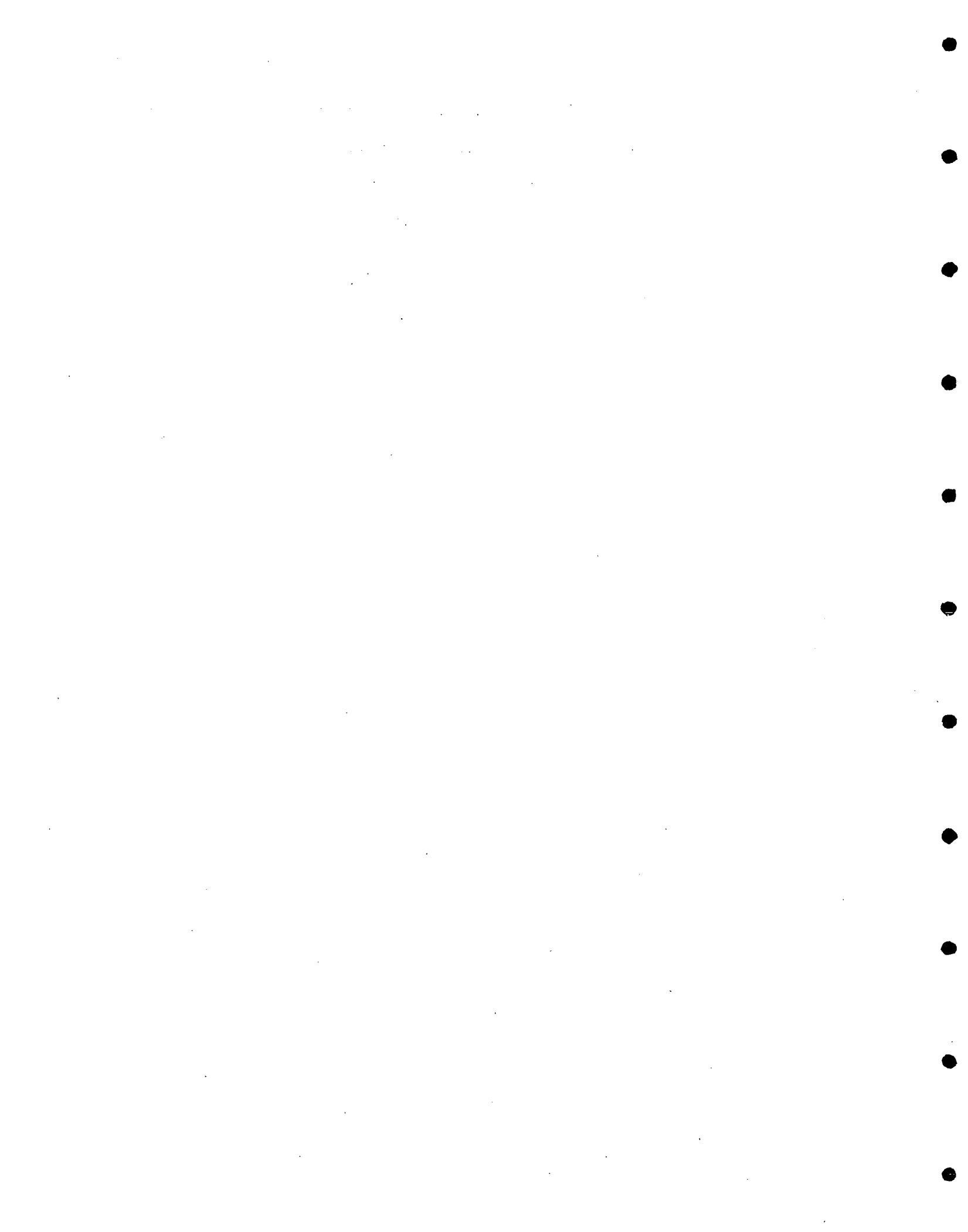
demographic characteristics, however, they appear to be ordinary people who are caught in the throes of extraordinary events. They have average educational backgrounds, come from conventional neighborhoods, live in typical family groupings, and are of average age. Yet, clearly, their enrollment in the program and their involvement in organized crime does set them apart in certain respects.

Although organized crime has made attempts to modernize and substitute pens for pistols, it remains, nonetheless, predominately the business of men, so it is hardly surprising that a great majority of the witnesses are male. My sample contained 95 male respondents and 80 female, but 92 percent of the males indicated that they were witnesses while only 25 percent of the females did so. Two of the female respondents failed to identify themselves as witnesses or nonwitnesses. Below is a breakdown of witness status by sex.

<u>Witness Status</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Witnesses	107	62
Male	87	50
Female	20	12
Nonwitnesses	66	38
Male	8	5
Female	58	33
	—	—
Totals	173	100

Not only are most males witnesses, but they clearly dominate the witness population as well, while the females dominate the nonwitness population.

Seventy percent of the respondents reported being 39 years old or younger. Among them, the 30-39 year old age category predominated--that is, it was the category where all the central tendencies (mean, median,



and mode) clustered. This should not be surprising since this is roughly the case with the general population as a result of the postwar baby boom. Below is a breakdown of the sample by respondent age category and percentage of respondents in each category.

<u>Age Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
18-29	31.0
30-39	39.4
40-49	21.7
50-59	5.1
60 and over	2.8
	<hr/>
	100.0
	(N=175)

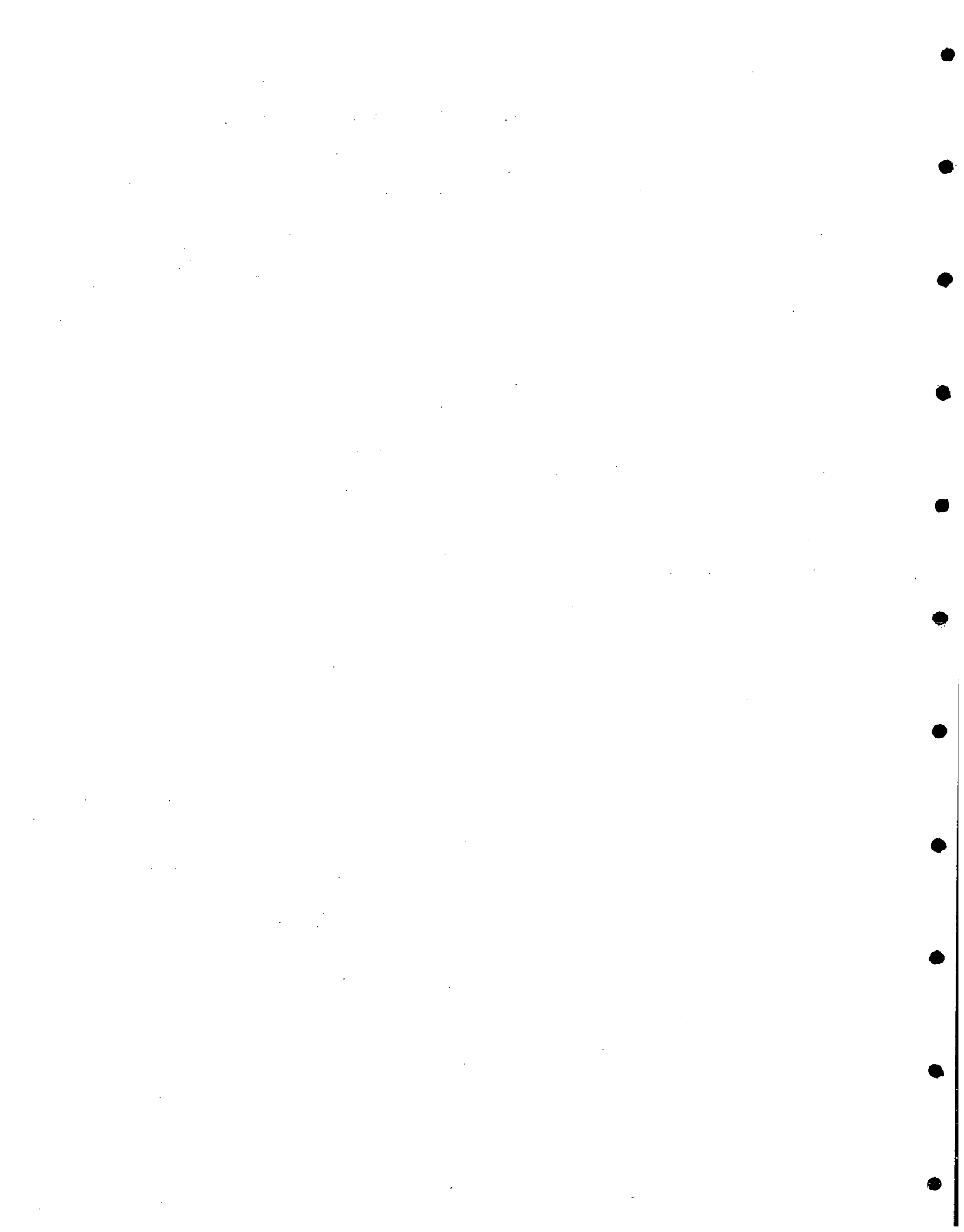
In every age category, except one, there were more males than females and more witnesses than nonwitnesses. The only exception was in the age category 18-29, where there were more females than males and more nonwitnesses than witnesses. We may presume that many clients in the 18-29 age group were wives or companions of witnesses in the 30-39 age group.

Sixty-eight percent of the witness respondents reported bringing an adult spouse or cohabitant into the program with them. The remaining witnesses either entered the program alone (21 percent) or brought only children with them (11 percent). Thus, 79 percent of the witness respondents stated that they were in hiding with someone else.

Fifty-five percent of the sample households included children; of these, 87 percent had either one or two children and the remaining 13 percent had three or more. Seventy-four percent of the children in hiding were elementary school age or younger.

The sample exhibited an average degree of educational attainment.



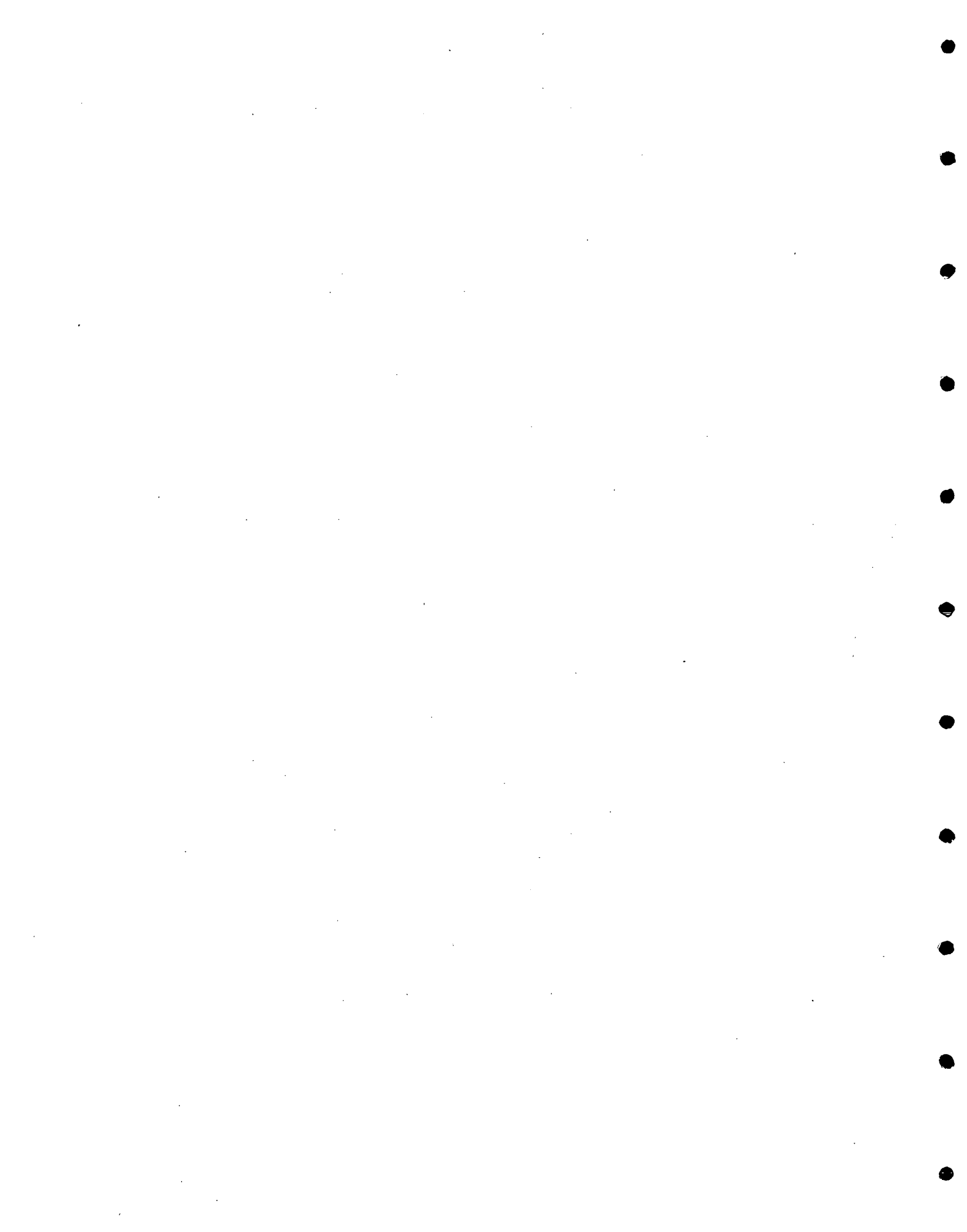


Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they had some college education. The majority of the respondents reported having nine to twelve years of formal education. A minority (8 percent) reported graduating from college or having post-baccalaureate training. Formal educational achievement was broken down into standard age grade groupings and is reported below.

<u>Highest Educational Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Elementary School (grades 1-8)	3.5
Some High School (grades 9-12)	50.9
Some College (13-15)	37.2
College Graduate	6.0
College plus	2.4
	-----
	100.0
	(N=175)

Regarding race, 140 respondents (80 percent) reported that they were Caucasian, 27 (15 percent) Black, and 7 (5 percent) Hispanic. Thus, this sample is comparable to the racial breakdown of the general population.

Fifty-one percent (85 persons) moved from one urban area to another when they were relocated. Twenty-three percent (39 persons) were moved from a rural area to an urban area. Nineteen percent (31 persons) made an urban-to-rural move and 7 percent (11 persons) made a rural-to-rural move. The fact that so many clients are concentrated in urban areas is not surprising. From a security point of view, there is a great deal more anonymity in urban areas. From a logistic point of view, locating witnesses in urban areas facilitates the work of the witness protection units, which tend to be located in cities and near federal district



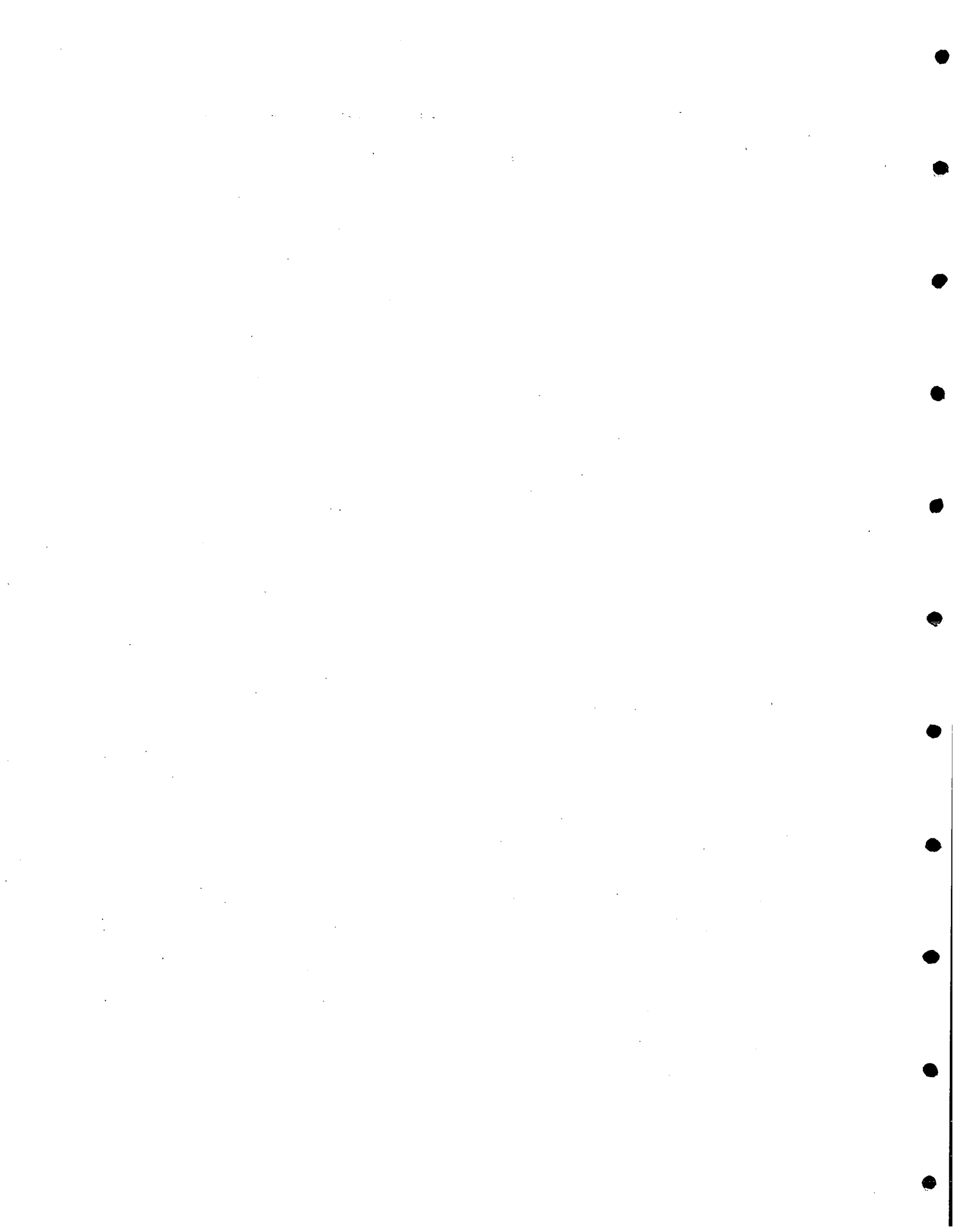
courts. Moreover, most of the witnesses and their families are themselves of urban origins.

Work patterns among program clients

Respondents were asked whether they were currently working, and, if so, how long. Thirty-eight percent (64 persons) indicated that they were currently working. Of these, 64 percent (41 persons) were witnesses and 36 percent (23 persons) were nonwitnesses. The amount of time respondents reported working is as follows:

<u>Amount of Time Working</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
5 months or under	38.7
6-11 months	17.7
12-23 months	12.9
24-35 months	11.3
36-47 months	9.7
48 months or more	9.7
	-----
	100.0
	(N=64)

Almost 57 percent of the program participants who do work have been doing so for under one year. The sample contains some extremes in that some members of the program who have been active for more than four years report working less than five months, and others enrolled five months report working as long. But there is usually some initial lag in finding employment. This is due, in large part, to the fact that after initial enrollment the witness spends a great deal of time for the first one or two years making appearances in federal court in connection with various prosecution efforts. It may be the case that long-term active enrollment in the program is due not only to the continuing need to testify during the first few years, but also to an inability to obtain suitable



employment. This inability to gain suitable employment is understandable if you consider the "job skills" the witness has to offer and the Marshals' obligation to inform the potential employer of any criminal convictions. There are other factors that may contribute to such long-term inability to obtain employment. For example, if the witness has a marketable work skill that can only be put to use in an industry that has been infiltrated by organized crime or otherwise makes him visible to the organized crime subculture, the security risk is forbidding.

Furthermore, he may have a legitimate work skill which is rendered useless because of the specific nature of his relocation. For example, a witness who has construction skills and experience in steam fitting or boiler work might, if relocated to a desert climate, be unable to market his skill because there would be very little demand for it. It seems a matter of common sense to assume that program members would have greater success in obtaining employment if they were relocated to an area or community which was the same in significant ways as the one where they were recruited; however, security concerns could sometimes make this impossible. In other words, someone who is relocated from an urban to a rural area should experience greater difficulty in securing employment when compared to others who moved to an urban area from another urban area. It is in fact the case that 25 percent of the urban-to-rural movers were employed compared to 75 percent of the rural-to-rural movers. Rural-to-urban movers fare a little better, but still only 30 percent of them secured employment. As expected, urban-to-urban movers did better than either urban-to-rural or rural-to-urban movers, with a 42 percent employment rate.

Age also played a part in employment. Clients in the older age



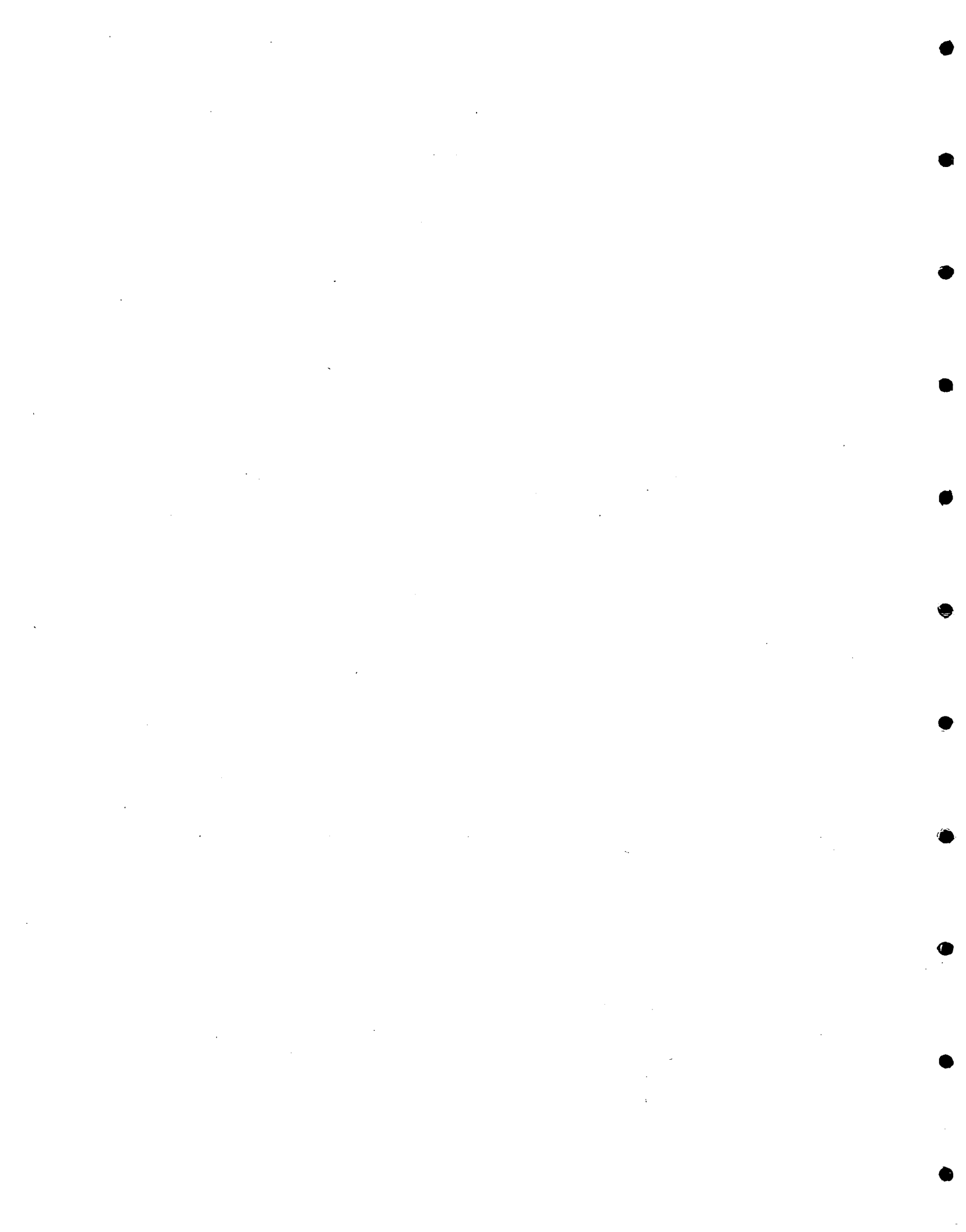
brackets tend to be enrolled in the program longer than those in younger age brackets, as one would expect, and clients who are 50 years old or more tend to be unemployed relatively more than those who are younger.

This information has been culled from a sample where witnesses have been enrolled from under five months to over four years, with an average time of 27 months actively spent in the program.

Enrollment in the program requires that one move and change one's place of residence. Moving, per se, is a common experience with which, under normal circumstances, individuals become more at ease the more times they do it. Thus, it seemed reasonable to examine how frequently program members moved before and after program enrollment. But, before we consider the number of moves respondents made before and after program enrollment, let me note that the latter are usually arranged for security purposes--usually because it is believed that the witness's "cover" has been blown. When that is the case, each move after program enrollment requires another change of name and identity. Hence, common sense would dictate that frequent moves after program enrollment would probably generate increased stress instead of ease. Single witnesses tend to make more moves after program enrollment than witnesses with family members. In any event, it may be reasonable to expect that those who have had preprogram experience with moving would probably adjust better to relocation if only because they have had experience playing the role of stranger in a new community.

A final question asked the respondents to report whether they had spent any time in prison. Although I had expected a high non-response rate on this question, only 15 respondents chose not to answer it. Thirty-three percent reported serving some time in prison, while 67





percent reported they had not. Of the 53 persons reporting they had served time in prison, 49 (92 percent) were witnesses, and only 4 people (8 percent) were nonwitnesses. Slicing these data another way, 46 percent of the witnesses reported serving time while only 6 percent of the nonwitnesses indicated they had.

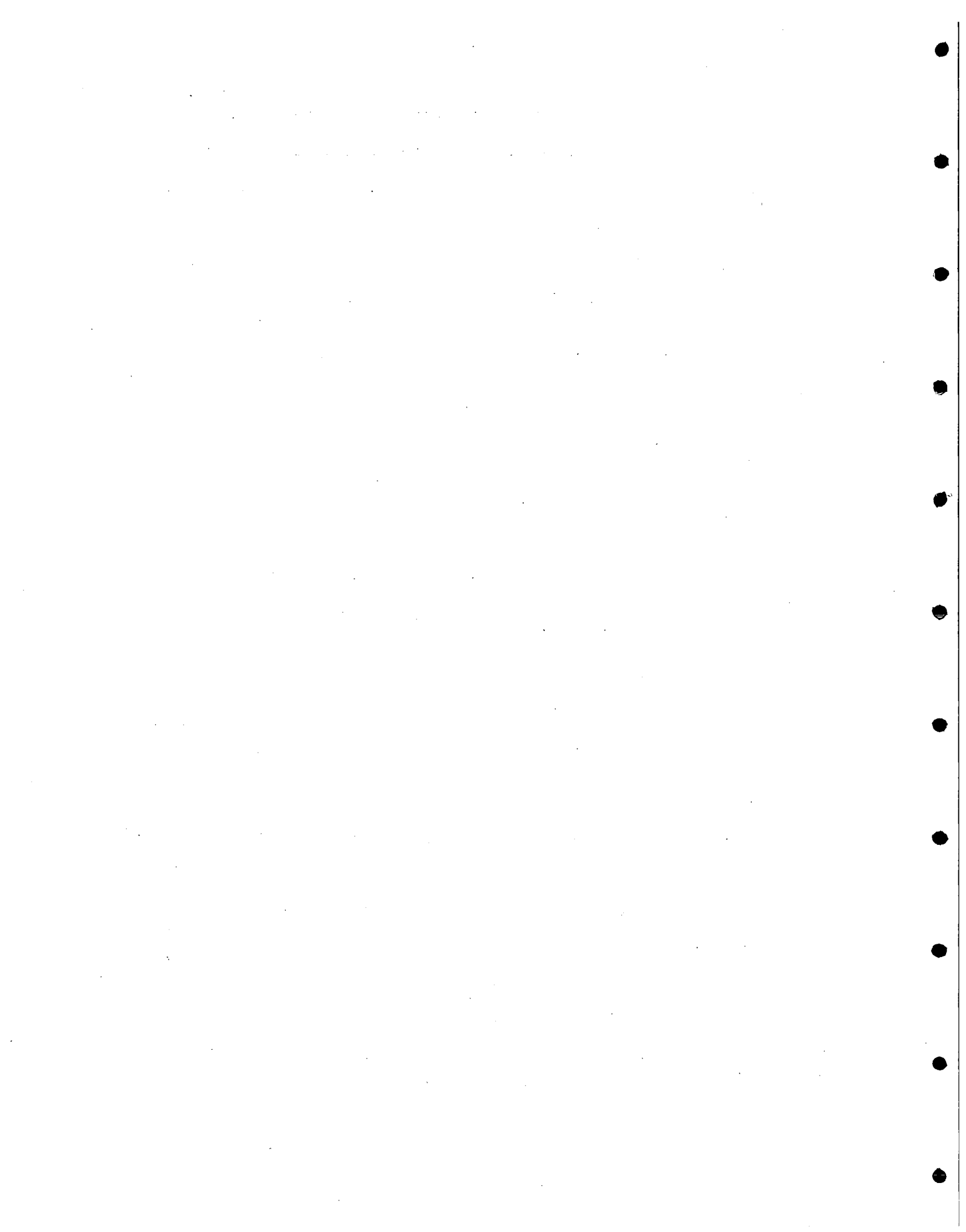
As noted in Chapter I, 95 percent of the witnesses had been "criminally involved" in the estimate of the United States Marshals Service. If that is indeed true, the percentage of witnesses who report having spent time in prison may seem low. The estimate of the Marshals may be too high or the witnesses may not be reporting accurately. In any event, it is well known that the number of people who are imprisoned is but a portion of those who commit or are convicted of crimes.

#### Constructing Scales to Measure Distress

Early glances at the data on protected witnesses showed that some experienced a great deal of distress in adjusting to their new life while others experienced little or none. Distress clearly varies across groups, then, but to learn the extent of the variation it seemed useful to construct measures. Scales were constructed that would measure relative degrees of distress as a result of participation in the program. Scales were also constructed to measure relative degrees of alienation and community connectedness.

As indicated in the previous chapter, both common sense and the available literature would lead us to suspect a certain amount of distress among people who experience this type of relocation.

First, the literature alerts us to the problems of adjusting to a new name. Name, and especially its use in daily social life, ties the



individual to others and the wider social collective. Successful social navigation requires an ability to be at ease in this aspect of self-presentation. Below are the specific questions designed to measure distress over the use of a new name. The response categories for the items (unless otherwise noted) are as follows: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

It is difficult to adjust to the fact that others call me by a new and different name.

I am self-conscious about using my new name.

When I am in the company of others I find it difficult and strenuous to respond consistently to my new name.

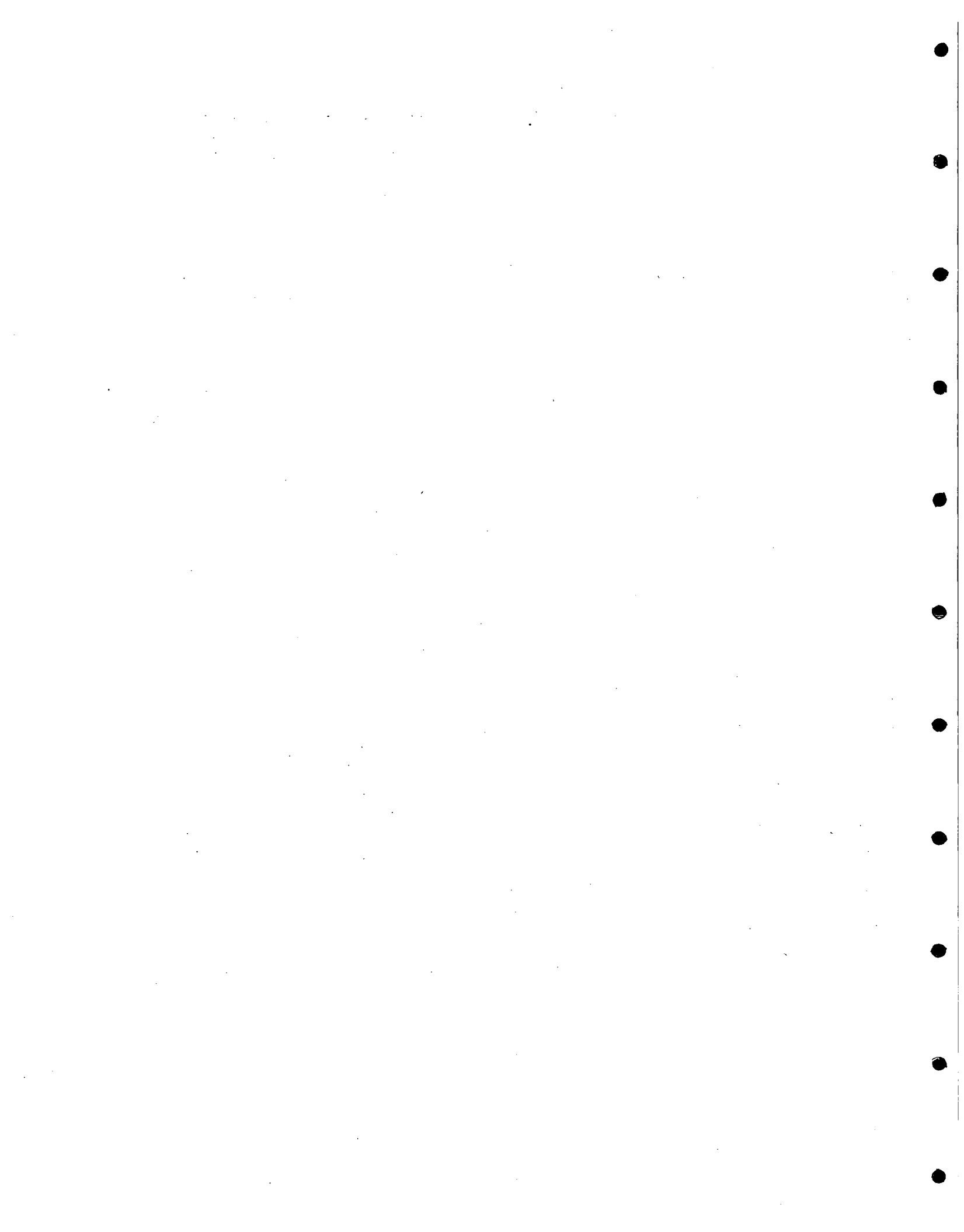
Whenever possible, I try to avoid using any name at all when dealing with other people.

Generally keeping a past name secret is extremely stressful and difficult.

When filling out various forms that require my name, I find myself writing my old one by accident. (Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)<sup>5</sup>

Lack of a sharable past and the need to lie hamper the individual in adjusting on this level. The ability of people to achieve continuity between past and present name and social identity may be influenced by (among other things) how invested they were in their past name and identity, how much time they have had to become accustomed to their new name and identity, and how skillful and creative they have been in incorporating past and present perceptions of self within the framework of their new name and identity.

Second, I adapted a "community connectedness" scale from the work of Fischer (1970). This scale was designed to measure how connected the individual was to his or her old community in comparison with the new



location. The items in the scale asked these people to report on their involvement in community organizations, their patterns of everyday interaction, their church involvement, and so on. It also asked them about their attachments in each community, old and new. The respondents were asked to check off under old and new community which of these activities they participated in. Below are the items on this scale:

Stop and talk with neighbors when I meet them.

Belong to PTA.

Have an informal chat with my neighbor in my home or in my neighbor's home.

Belong to neighborhood associations other than PTA.

Go out to dinner, movie, etc.

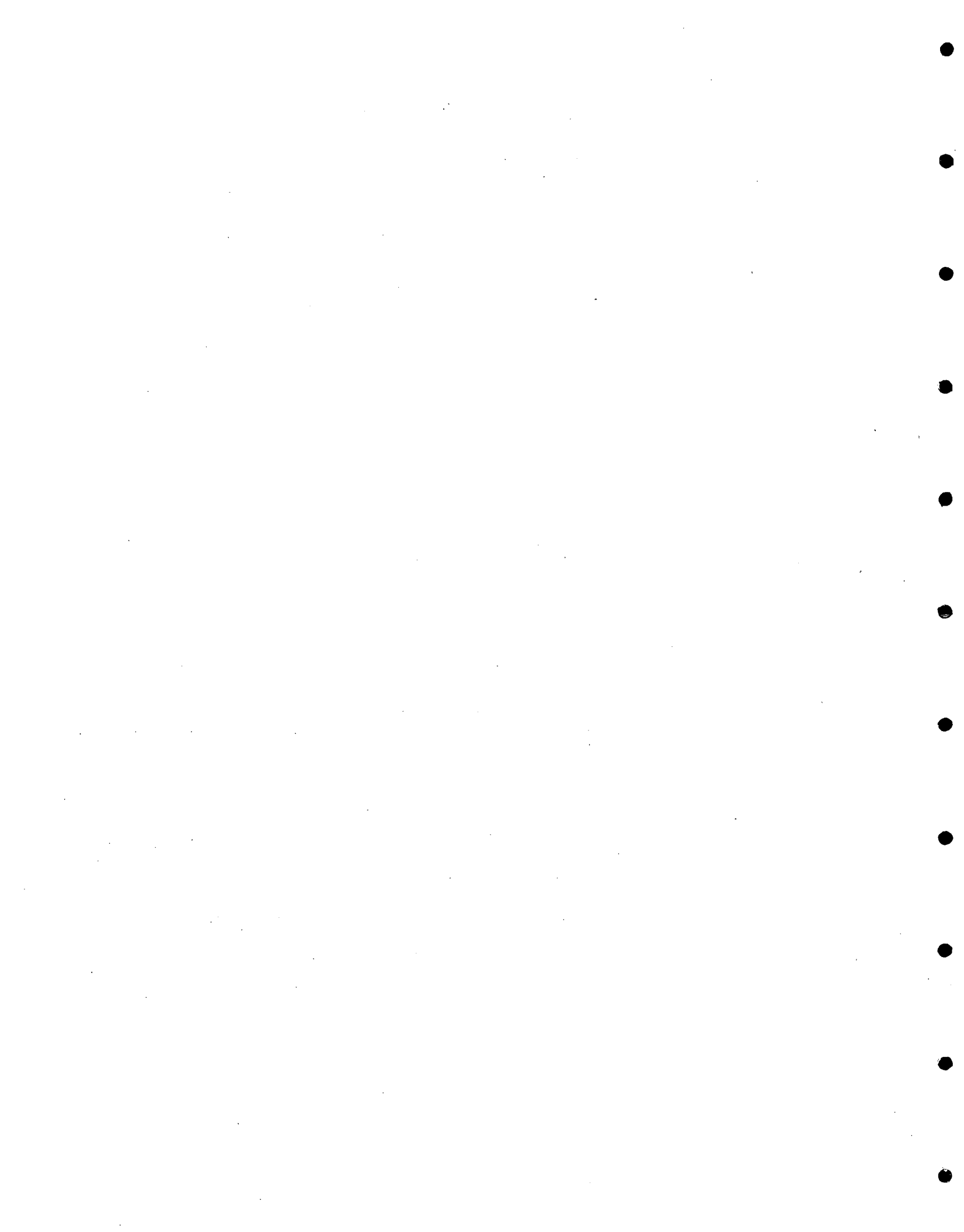
Attend temple or church in neighborhood.

Attend temple or church related social activities.

Have social activities with friends.

Take advantage of community sponsored social events.<sup>6</sup>

In constructing a scale to measure the degree of client distress over relocation, perceptions of the new community are crucial. A new residence for them is more than just a place to be; it is a place to start a new life. Whether one becomes adjusted to the new community, then, and is integrated into it depends a great deal upon the ability of that community to accommodate likes, dislikes, tastes, and the general life style to which the client has been accustomed. The specific items designed to tap perceptions of the new community are given below. The response categories for the items are: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."



The new community offers me as much opportunity for a fulfilling life as the old one.

There are as many community events and services to take advantage of in my new community as in my old one.

If I had a choice, I would continue to live where I am.

The new community into which I was placed is basically the same in essential ways as the one from which I came.

I feel I am as much a part of the new community as the one I left.

The physical make-up and surroundings of the new community are similar to the old one.

The new community seems extremely alien and strange to me.

Essentially, the climate and terrain in my new location agree with me.

The community into which I was placed offers me the opportunity to do the things I enjoy.

If I had an absolutely free choice when I moved, the location and community where I presently am is just as good as the one I would have picked.

Witnesses and their family members were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to shed light on matters concerning social isolation and alienation. The scale was designed to measure feelings of meaninglessness, isolation, and powerlessness regarding their experience as a whole in the program. Did they experience a sense of powerlessness over events in their lives? Did they develop a sense of meaninglessness or incomprehensibility in their personal and social affairs? Did they experience a sense of isolation in their new community? The items designed to measure isolation and alienation are given below. The response categories for the items are: "Strongly Agree," "Agree,"





"Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

As a result of the experience of relocation and establishment of a new identity, I have to some degree lost a basic sense of just "who I am."

As a result of this experience I find it generally more difficult to interact and relate to people.

As a result of this experience the world around me seems a great deal more uncertain and as a result I feel that I generally have less control over my life.

As a result of this experience I generally feel more vulnerable to events and people that surround me.

This series of questions, more than the others, requires the respondent to take a deeper look inside himself, assess the changes that have occurred within and around him, and identify whatever long-term repercussions the experience has had upon him.



Notes

- <sup>1</sup>See, for example, Barboza and Messick, 1975; Graham, 1977; Hoffman and Pecznick, 1976; Teresa and Renner, 1973, 1975; Waller, 1976.
- <sup>2</sup>Until the 1984 legislation, there was no program requirement that witnesses keep the U.S. Marshals Service abreast of their whereabouts. Thus, leaving the program does not necessarily connote failure to adjust; in fact, adjustment and fulfillment of trial and other obligations may have resulted in the witnesses' leaving.
- <sup>3</sup>U.S. Marshals' manpower considerations and time constraints placed on me by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, Yale University dictated this sample size.
- <sup>4</sup>California was left out of the sample at the request of the U.S. Marshals Service who explained to me that resources at the time prevented their sampling.
- <sup>5</sup>Use of a new name in daily interaction  $\alpha=.786$ , relocation  $\alpha=.860$ , community connectedness  $\alpha=.798$ , general effects  $\alpha=.762$ . All of these scales are additive. Reliability analysis was conducted on each scale in order to identify those questions which, statistically, were depicted as creating errors in measurement. Factor analysis was also executed on the scales. This procedure allowed me to determine how many dimensions of the witness experience the questions were measuring and which dimensions were the most important.
- <sup>6</sup>Factor analysis indicated that the strongest dimension within the community connectedness scale was constituted by those items that related to church or temple and related activities.



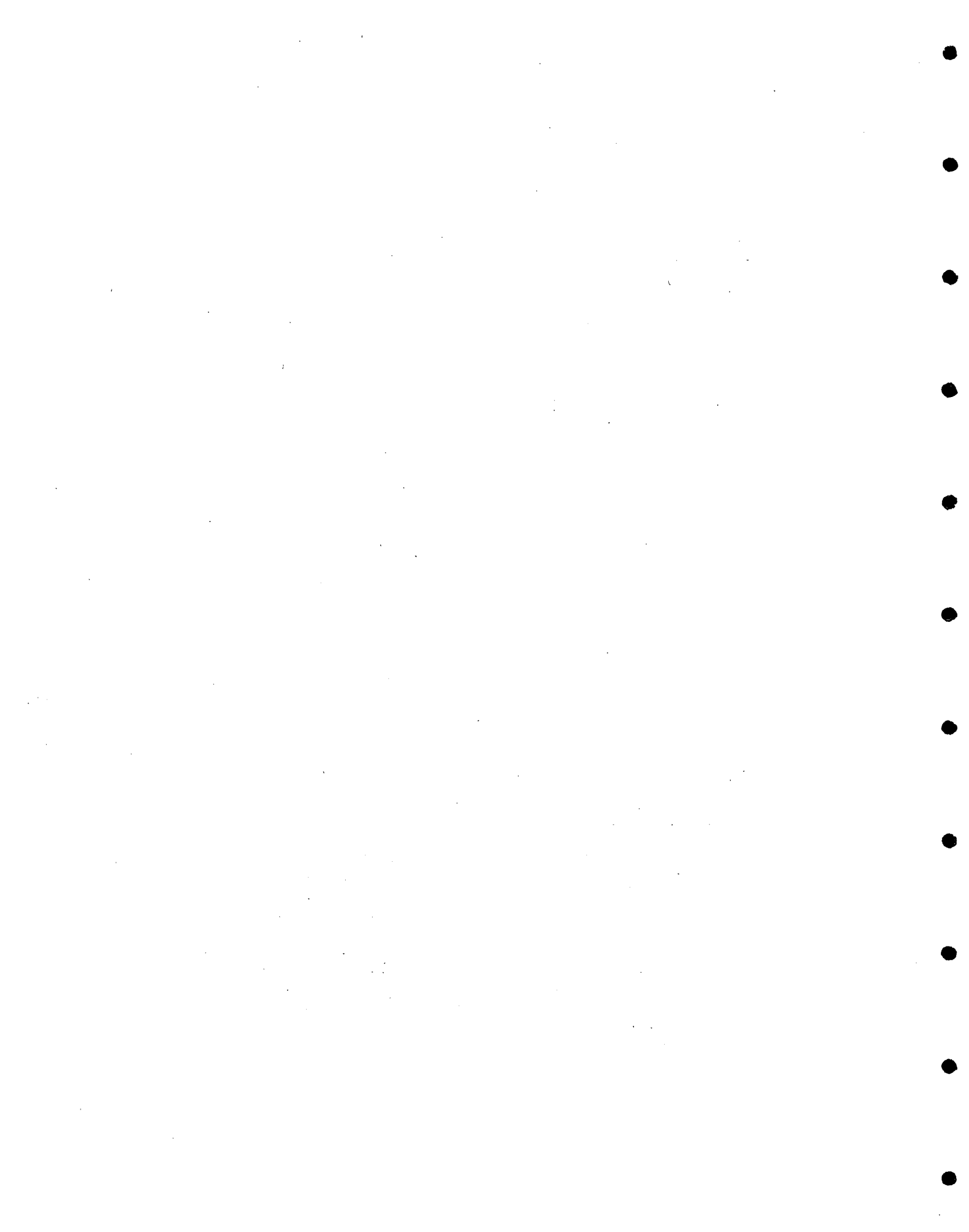
## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS

I like the safety involved in [my] new name and identity. It has helped me to forget my past and start over with a new and better outlook on life. This change is much better than I thought it would be. I have a real feeling of freedom from a horrible past. As far as friends are concerned, it doesn't matter. Generally I haven't had any real problems, but I am a person who likes change and new states.  
(male witness)

A new name is very important; you are nothing without a name. Still, you have no background, you are like a newborn baby, with no past and no future. You don't know people and you are living a lie. You have trouble looking for work, buying something, looking for apartments, and meeting people. My husband killed himself. He was unable to find work. I have mental problems from living under such stress. You always feel like you have [only] one foot in the door.  
(female nonwitness)

The wide range of reactions individuals have to the protected witness experience is amply demonstrated by the above statements. The responses of program participants ran the emotional gamut from relief, hope, and feelings of having been saved, to uncertainty, despair, and feelings of loneliness. It is not surprising that such diversity of experience exists in relation to program involvement. The important question becomes: Can we identify the factors responsible for scattering program participants along this spectrum?



Name and identity: Some general observations on the transition

I asked the respondents how they felt about their changed name and identity; what they thought were the best and worst aspects of it. I also asked how important they believed name and identity were in their daily lives. Almost inevitably witnesses (who were usually male) commented favorably on the transition. As one male witness pointed out:

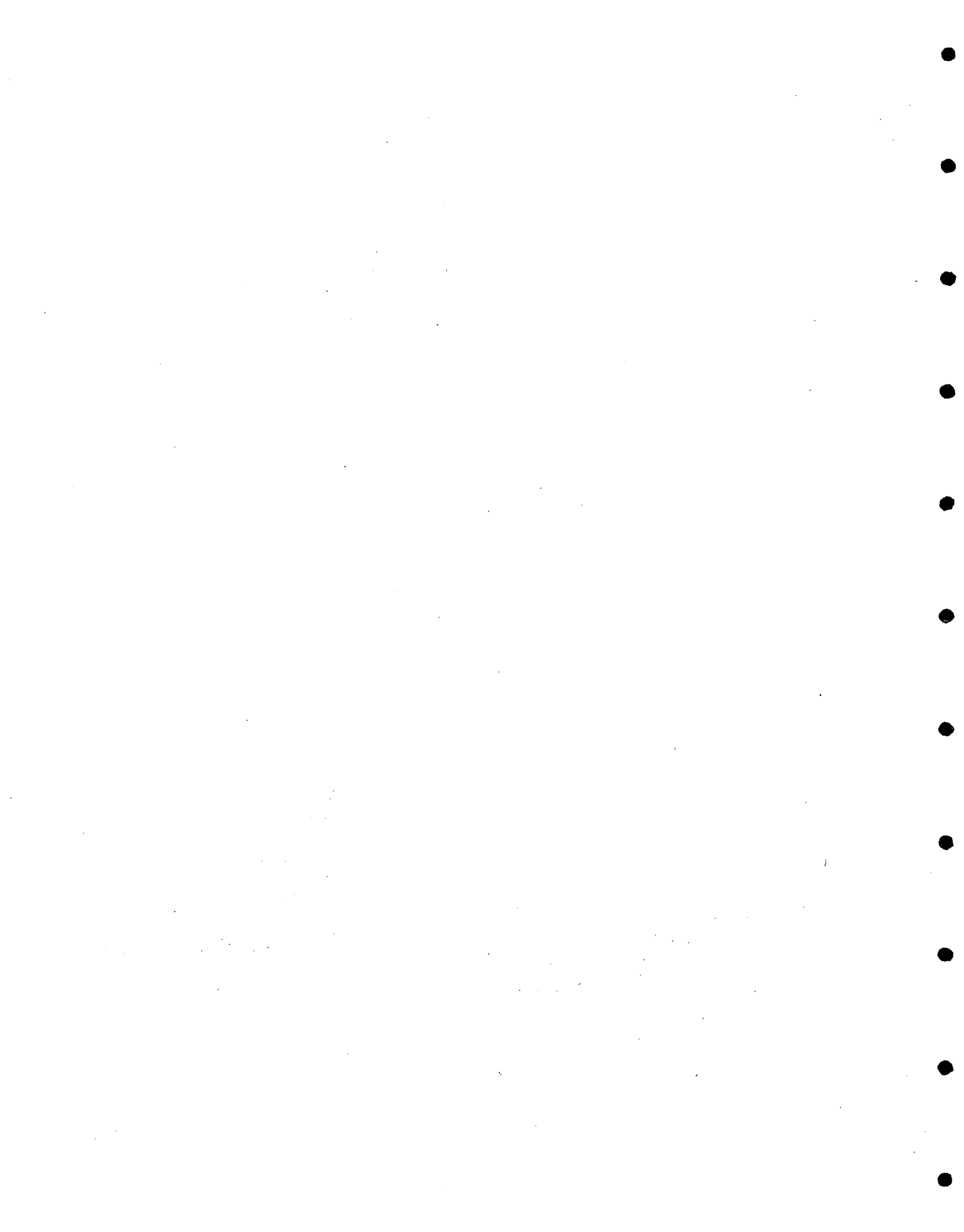
A name is very important because it reflects you as an individual. I thought it would be fairly easy [to make this change] with all the traveling I had done, but actually letting go of the past proved to be a bit of a problem. It's an adventure in itself: the chance to change the course of your life, both socially and personally, for the better without having affiliations from the past interfering. I'm more trusting of others. I don't have the anger or resentment that I've carried for years. I have a new outlook on life as a whole.

Here, distress is clearly muted by the chance to reform and to leave a life of crime. Such an opportunity, in fact, resulted in this respondent being more at ease with other people and himself. Another respondent expressed the same sentiment more succinctly: "New name and identity gave me a new life with no fears. I just have a better feeling about myself." (male witness)

Feelings of relief and hope are often mingled with a sense of personal reform, as reflected in the following witnesses' words:

New name and identity gave me an opportunity to reestablish myself in a new environment and relive a good, useful, normal life. [It] made me a better person, enabled me to get reestablished in the community and have a new life with peace of mind. Only by having a name you use without blemish can one reestablish self in [the] community, earn self-respect, and have peace of mind. The change was much easier than I had anticipated because I adjusted myself mentally and personally to the change. Yes, I took a positive attitude. (male witness)





It was like being reborn. It gave me a chance at a new life, to establish a meaningful existence. I feel like a new person; a great weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I now feel that I can contribute to society. (male witness)

New name and identity gave me a chance to erase all detrimental personality traits and problems. I became a much stronger, disciplined person, much more aware of my surroundings. I appreciate life more. (male witness)

For many witnesses, the distress over changed name and identity was mediated by a more important factor, a sense of security and well-being.<sup>1</sup>

This is evident in the following responses:

There was very little problem adjusting to a new name. There are few problems because only you and your family are aware of it. It mostly affects the children until they get used to it. My new name has no effect in changing me. In fact, it helps to make me feel secure and puts protection on my family. I thought at first it would be difficult, but after choosing it myself, and other people saying it to me, I adjusted. The person knows how extremely important it is to protect his security so it's a must that you do adjust and be on your P's and Q's at all times. (male witness)

Although this experience has made me a liar to new friends and my family, what I like best about my new name and identity is simply just not getting found and killed. (male witness)

The changed name and identity was stressful--but the security was good, and you can't change the stressful things without changing the security, and the security is the most important of all. The worst part was getting on a plane and saying goodbye to my whole life and family. (male witness)

In addition to feelings of safety and reformation, what I have elsewhere called "ddeviantization"<sup>2</sup> played an important role in allaying the distress of many witnesses. It is important to note that frequently the past name and identity which the witness surrendered was "spoiled." Many witnesses had criminal records: 46 percent of them reported serving



time in prison. Thus, despite their discomfort with the change, there was the very large inducement of a fresh identity, without which entering various new forms of life would have been very difficult for them. Their own pasts would have spoiled the alternatives available to them. Many witnesses and some of their family members pointed specifically to this "dedeviantization" process:

New name and identity gives me a feeling of a new chance in life. There is no record of past legal problems. I have the feeling of a clean slate and of protection of my family from my past indiscretions. (male witness)

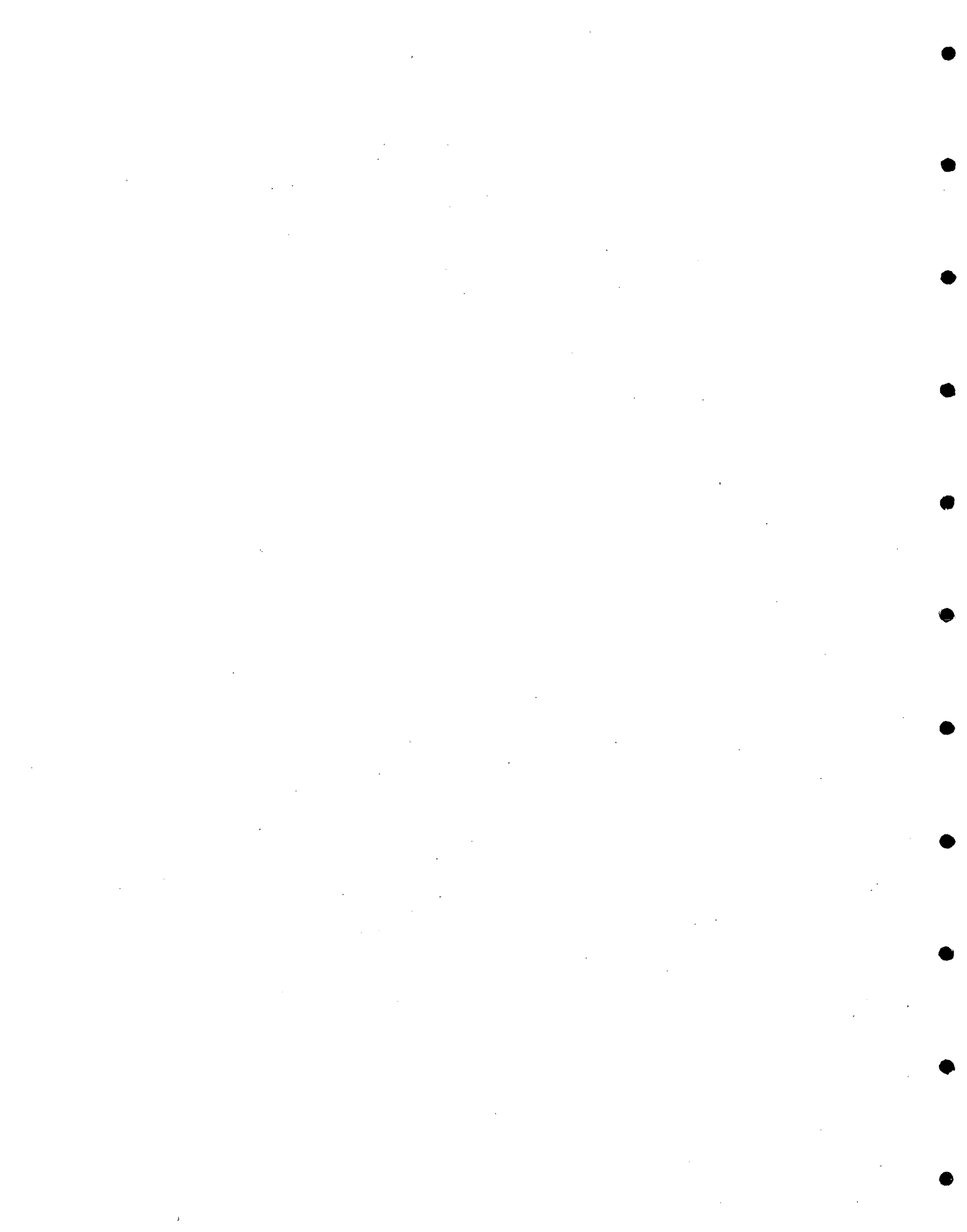
Your name is what you stand for and what you made of yourself. New name and identity gives me a chance to start clean. I can hold my head up anywhere I go. (male witness)

Name at times can carry a stigma. My new name is common, not obvious; it is clean and fits my personality. (male witness)

I like the fact that nobody knows me with my new name and identity. I no longer have to live with people knowing my past mistakes. (male witness)

In contrast to the witnesses who, by and large, took comfort from the positive aspects of a new name and identity, the nonwitnesses (usually female spouses) often exhibited feelings or uncertainty, loneliness, despair, and distress. As one woman stated:

Having to change the names of my parents left me with a sense of nonentity and made me feel as though I were denying my parentage. I felt severe stress over the complete dissociation of family, including children. This doesn't occur when you marry but does occur when assuming a new identity. I liked being able to choose a name that allowed me to retain my ethnic background. Still, I have to be aware constantly that it is an assumed name. I've become introverted and extremely cautious in dealing with people. Although an assumed name gives one security, one's true identity and family name is a source of pride, a sense of belonging--to give up one's name is to give up one's sense of belonging.



I thought it would be similar to one's taking a new name in marriage, but in changing my name I've also had to deny my background, thereby denying my existence. Material things can be replaced, but one's roots and ties cannot. Possessions are meaningless without the nearness of loved ones. Complete freedom to be myself, to be with my family and long-time friends is denied me now because of circumstances I feel are beyond my control. (female nonwitness)

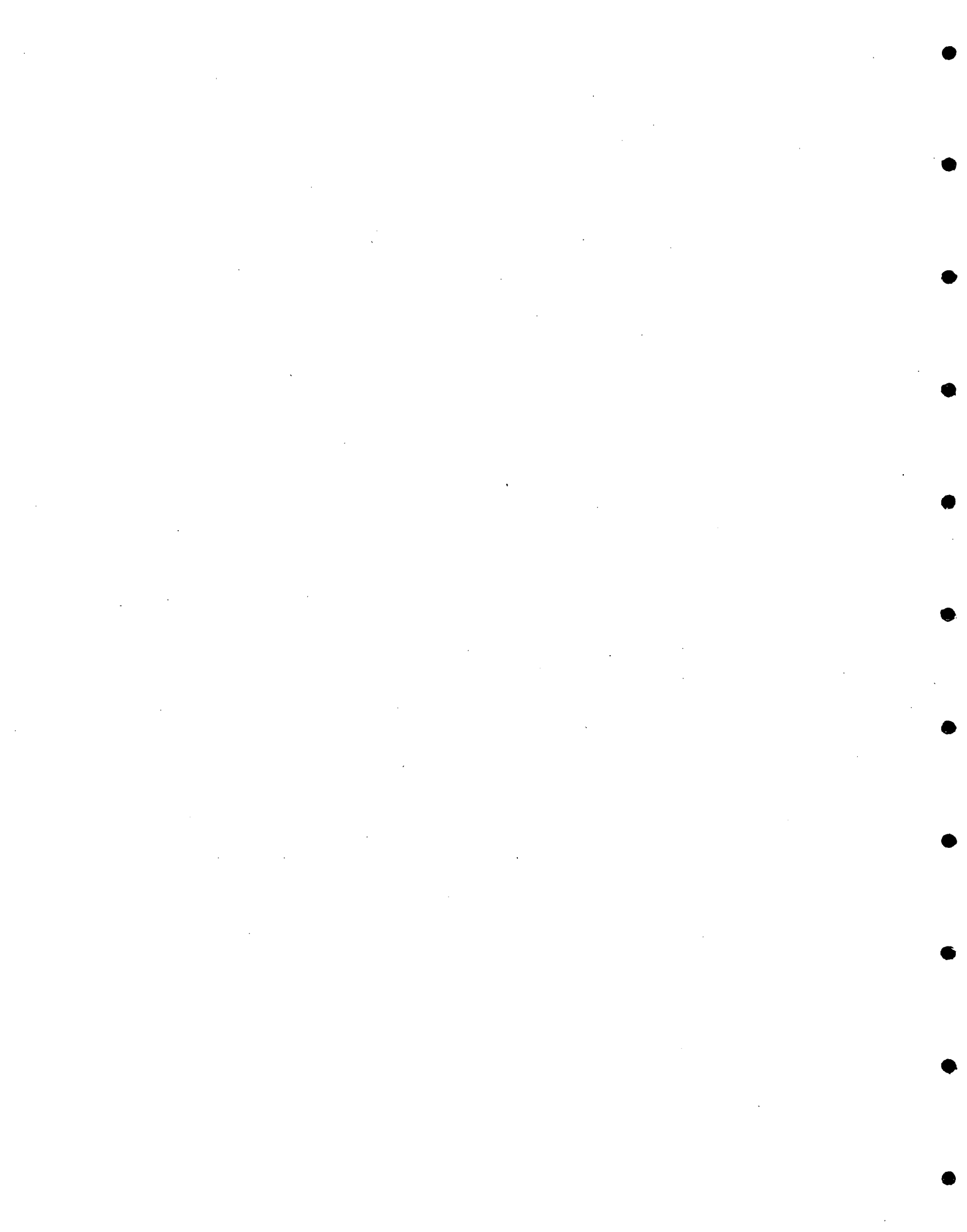
Despite the common lore pointing to the erosion of kinship in modern life, this program participant and many others like her communicated, very vividly, the continued vitality of the family and how important such a collective identity can be to one's sense of self. Loss of surname, to the extent that it ties the individual to the family, was especially important to those respondents who indicated that they were distressed by the change.

This loss was lamented by respondents not only for themselves but also for children who were relocated with them, and children born in hiding who will never have a chance to know their roots and heritage and experience this connection. The following voices illustrate this sentiment:

Name is important because it's your identity. Leaving the family was hard. I wish my kid could have my right name. (male witness)

I miss my family and friends, especially because at the time I was pregnant and no one has ever seen my child and that is very hard for us all. (female nonwitness)

Name is very important because it's you. It helps to make a person who and what they are today. This experience has to some degree made me lose a basic sense of just who I am and I can't forget who I was. I am very unhappy and confused--I have a baby and knowing she won't have her real name and tight family ties really bothers me. (female nonwitness)



Lineage and surname provide, if not direction, then at least a sense of attachment, origin, and rootedness. The continuity and sense of well-being that kinship provides operate undetected and are taken for granted; kinship is not even missed until the kin connections are suddenly obliterated. In this sense kin connections parallel the experience many people have with physical health. The importance and vitality of bodily functions remain taken for granted, even abused, and are not appreciated until impaired in some debilitating or noticeable manner.

The people who reported distress over changed name and identity described its causes and manifestations in fine and often vivid detail, while those who reported a relatively better adjustment had a harder time explaining why. In either event, personal name was seen as an important link with society. It ties individuals to a family and is the basis of one's personal reputation. It is intimately tied to one's past and is an indicator of who one is. Respondents felt that they should be comfortable with their names and not have to lie about them. Personal name was important to them whether they were distressed or relatively adjusted. The value of name and identity was described as its ability to provide a sense of belonging and roots, and whether the reputation associated with it was a good one. The experience of these people teaches us, at the very least, that navigating in society without a verifiable name and past personal biography is tremendously difficult.

Personal distress over  
new name and identity

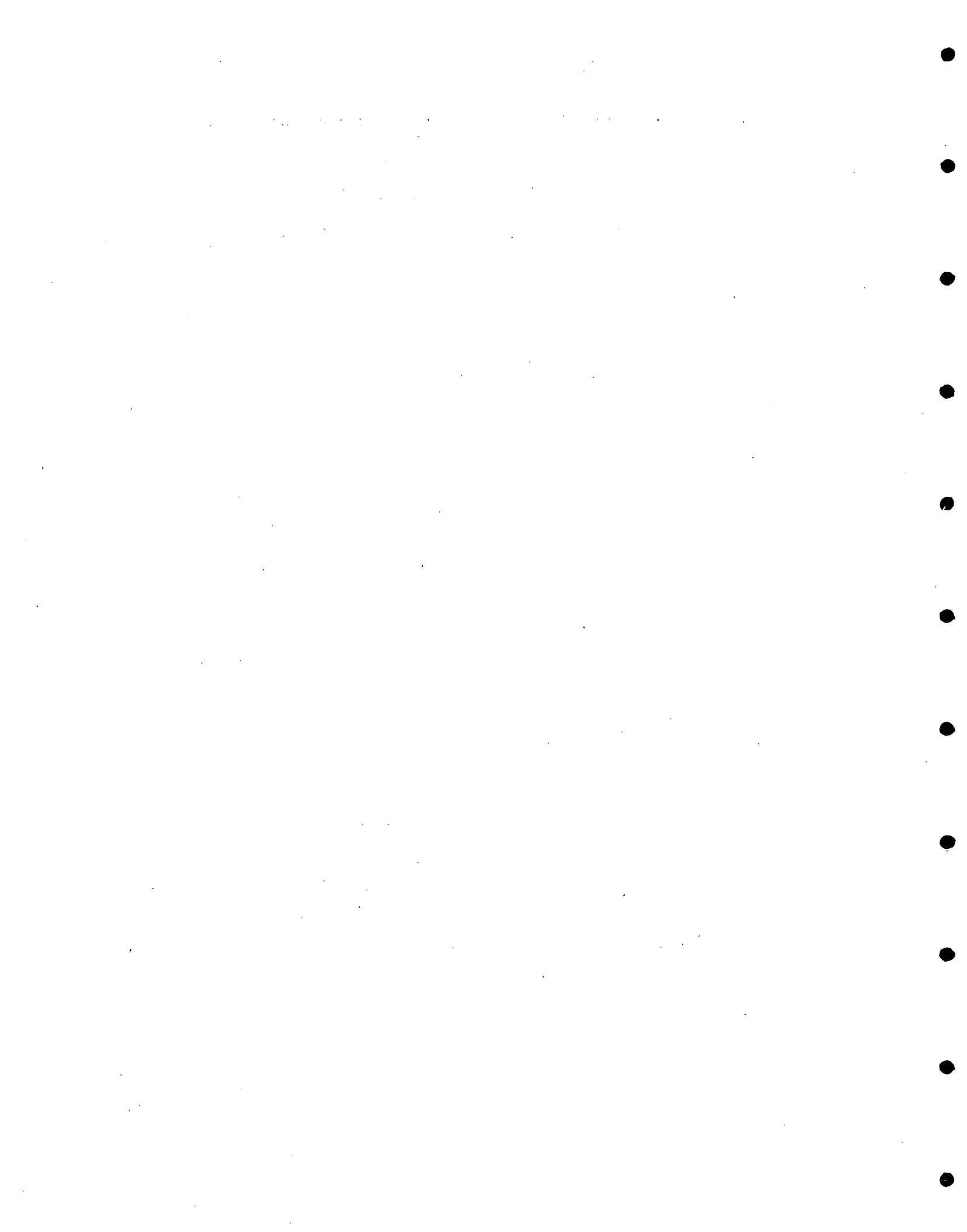
Analyzed on an individual question-by-question basis, a number of closed-ended questions provided some insight on personal distress over new name and identity.<sup>3</sup> One statement was worded, "Generally, adjusting





to new name and identity posed serious problems." Respondents were asked to respond, "Yes, it posed serious problems" or "No, it did not." Approximately 70 percent of the respondents indicated that adjusting to new name and identity did not pose serious problems; 30 percent said it did. Generally, witnesses tended to testify that it posed little problem, while their spouses tended to belong to the problem ridden category. Using distress or "serious problems" as the high (positive) pole, I discovered that those who reported moving more frequently after enrolling in the program were somewhat more likely to report serious problems ( $r=.178$ ,  $p=.011$ ) than those who moved less. Those who reported being unemployed were somewhat more distressed ( $r=.160$ ,  $p=.019$ ) than those who were employed. Also, those who had not served time in prison were somewhat more likely to have more serious problems and distress ( $r=.128$ ,  $p=.049$ ) over their new names and identities than those who had served time.

Respondents were asked: "On the whole, do you like your new name and identity?" Approximately 86 percent said that they liked their new name and identity while 14 percent said they did not. Contrary to what one might expect, the respondents expressed increasing dislike of new name and identity (positive pole) as the time they spent in the program increased ( $r=.170$ ,  $p=.013$ ). Such a finding may be explained, however, by the fact that the number of times a client moved after program enrollment tended to increase over time, and each relocation required establishment of a new name and identity. In fact, as the number of moves after joining the program increased, so did dislike of new name and identity to a small degree ( $r=.153$ ,  $p=.024$ ). The data seem to show that one can receive new name and identity just so many times before the process



itself becomes increasingly distasteful. Although the overall correlation is small, people who moved six times were four times more likely to dislike their new name and identity than people who moved only once. The effect is shown below:

<u>Number of Moves After Program Enrollment</u>	<u>Percentage of Respondents Who Dislike New Name and Identity</u>
1	10
2	11
3	16
4	24
5	25
6	40

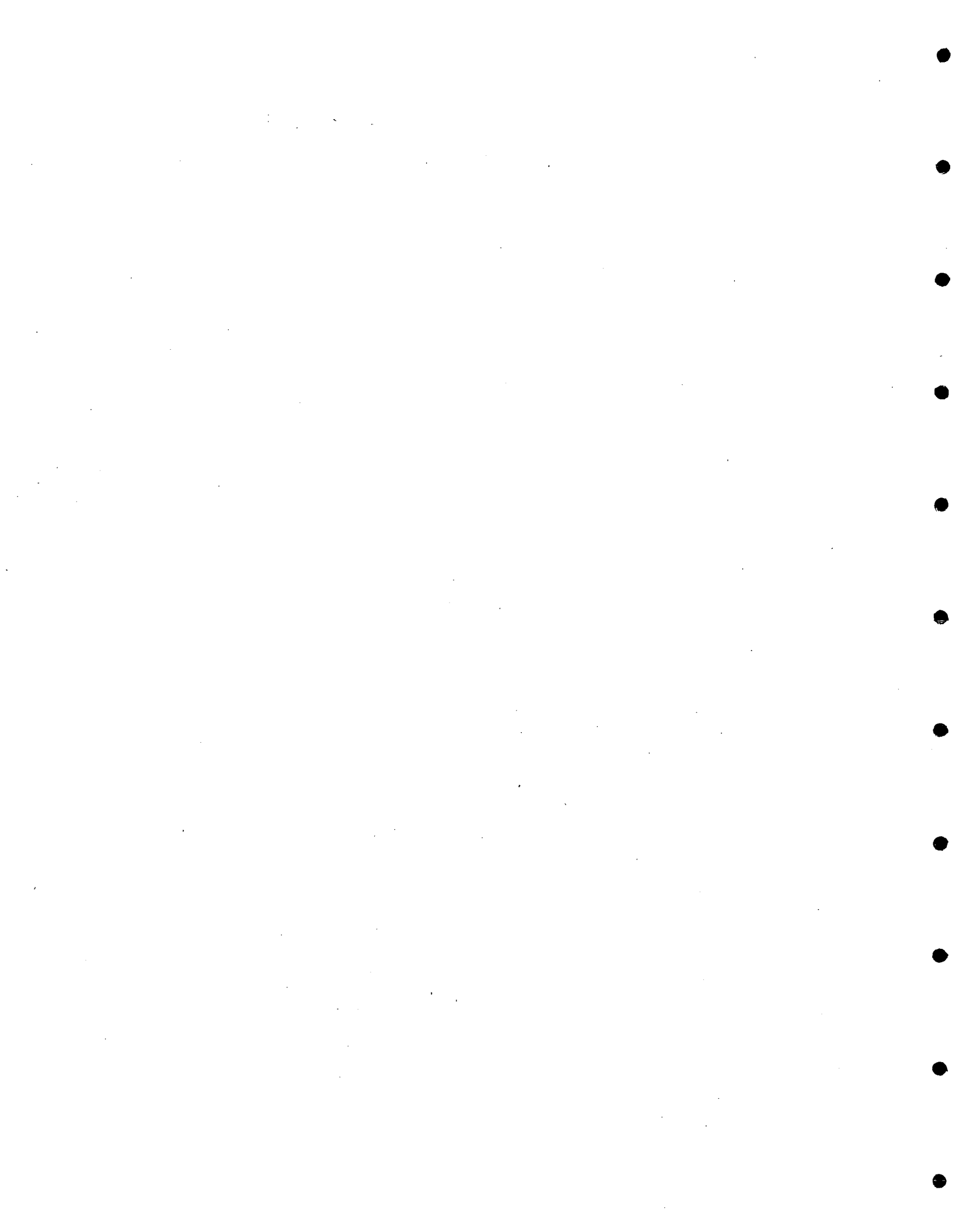
I asked the respondents, "How important do you feel a name is in your overall life and daily activities?" Responses to this query ranged from:

A name by itself means nothing . . . . It's not the name that is important but the person you are . . . . You can't judge a book by its cover. (male witness)

to:

A name is very important because it is who I am. You are nothing without a name . . . . A name is very important, it ties into self-image, it identifies who one is. A name is very important because it is the first linkage everyone has with society in general. (male witness)

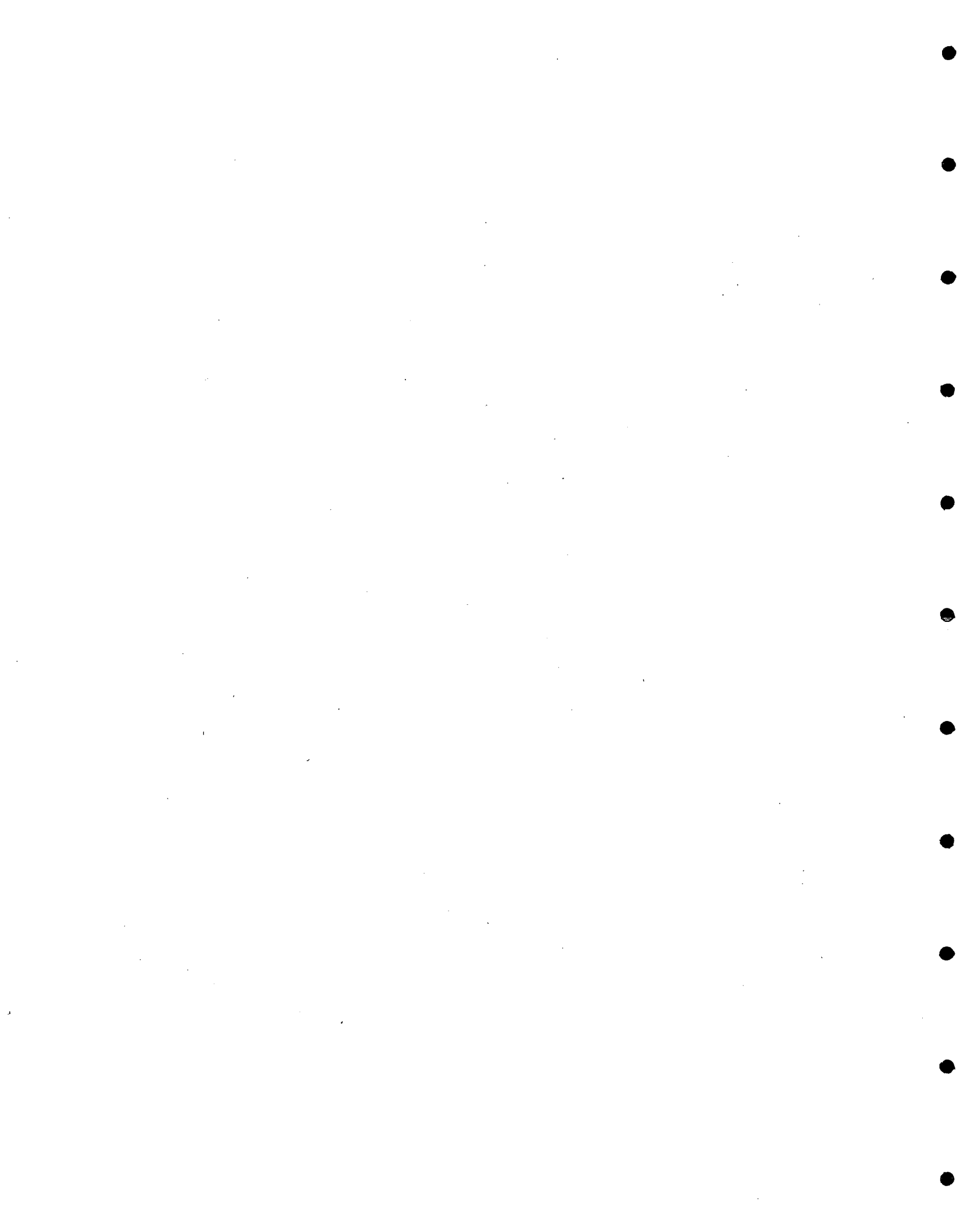
For some (22 percent) name was thought of as superficial, having little impact upon self, not really essential or important in the scheme of things. To many others (78 percent) name was very important, a source of identity, a major link with others in society. Further, these data show that the older a person was, the more likely he was to view name as important in daily life ( $r=.199$ ,  $p=.004$ ). This is illustrated below.



<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Percentage Who Feel Name is Important</u>
18-29	71
30-39	76
40-49	86
50-59	90
60 and over	100

Those respondents who actively practiced religion, compared to those who did not, perceived their name to be more important ( $r=.275$ ,  $p=.004$ ). Generally, those who switched social landscapes in their relocation (moved from rural-to-urban locales or urban-to-rural locales), as opposed to those who made a more continuous relocation (rural-to-rural or urban-to-urban moves), felt that name was less important in daily life. Those who made a rural-to-urban move felt least strongly: 40 percent of them perceived name to be unimportant ( $r=-.193$ ,  $p=.006$ ). Witnesses (who are usually male) felt somewhat more strongly about the importance of name ( $r=.162$ ,  $p=.017$ ) than nonwitnesses (who are usually female). This latter finding is consistent with the finding presented at the opening of this chapter. It was pointed out then that witnesses tended to comment favorably on the transition because changed name and identity offered them safety, dedeviantization, and a chance to leave a life of crime behind.

I also asked for a simple yes or no response to the following statement: "My name pretty much reflects the way I see myself, that is, the image I have of myself." Fifty-nine percent of the clients felt their new name reflected the way they saw themselves or the image they had of themselves, while 41 percent felt it did not (distress, or positive pole). Witnesses experienced somewhat less distress in adapting their self-image to their new name ( $r=-.216$ ,  $p=.002$ ) than nonwitnesses.



As one female nonwitness put it:

I have a very depressing feeling that I am neither my old identity nor my new one, but somewhere in between the two--in limbo.

And other female nonwitnesses pointed out:

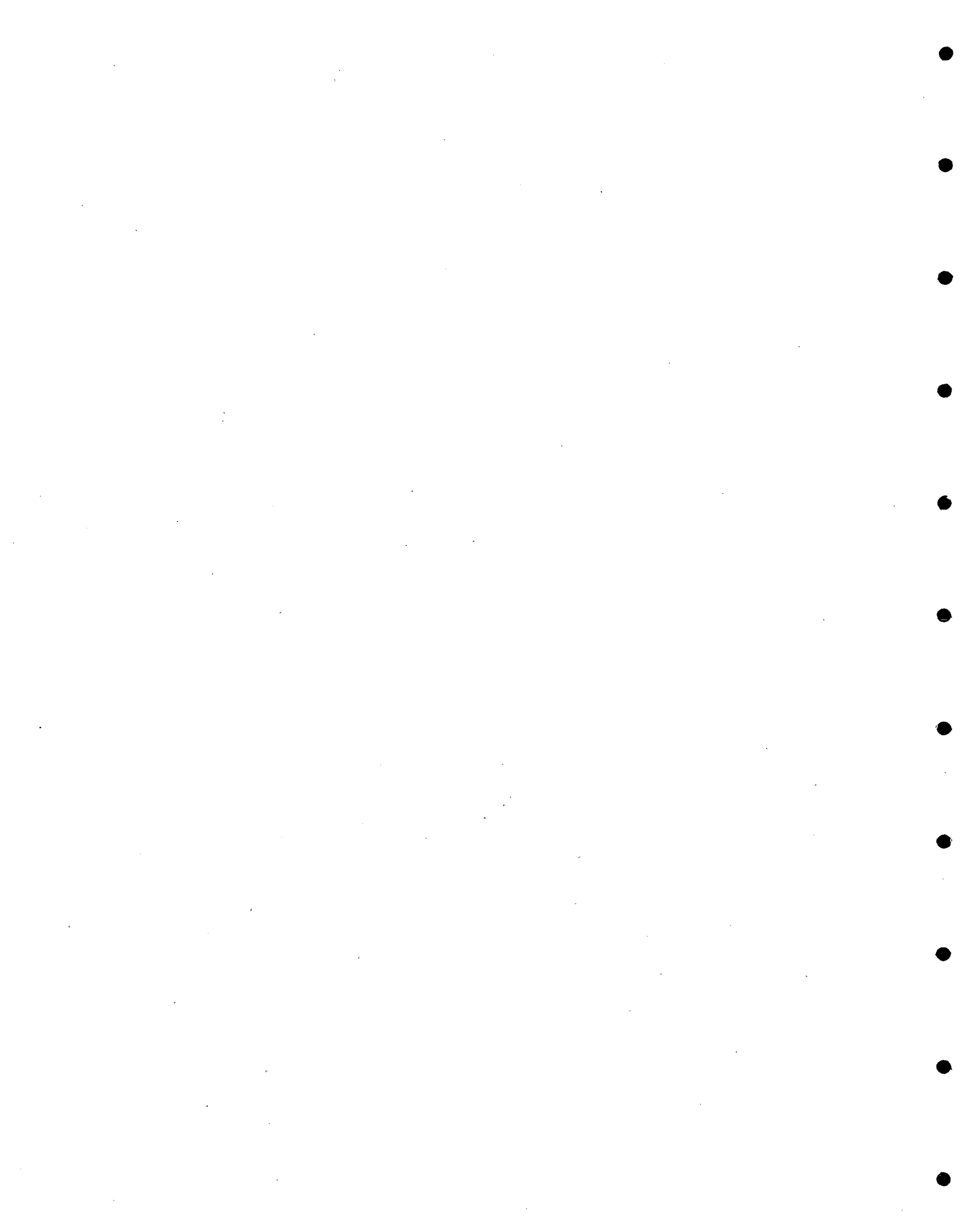
I can't relate to my new name. I feel as though I am lying every time I say it. You always feel like you're really someone else.

By having a new identity, I feel I've lost my background and I'm no longer my true self.

Seventy percent of the witnesses adjusted in this respect, while 30 percent were distressed. Only 40 percent of the nonwitnesses adjusted, however, while 60 percent of them were distressed. It may very well be the case that witnesses had gone through a change in self-image since they had just taken the government's side and testified against their former cohorts, thus breaking sharply with their past. To have a new name seemed to witnesses an opportunity to mark and reflect this change. Nonwitnesses had made no such change, and a new name to them seemed, at best, a burden. Whereas witnesses spoke with relief and hope of becoming someone better, nonwitnesses lamented their confusion and loss.

Whether the respondent was working played an important part in their ability to integrate self-image with new name. Three of every four respondents who were currently working reported little distress in this respect ( $r = -.158$ ,  $p = .021$ ). In other words, only 25 percent of those working reported trouble adapting self-image to new name. As pointed out in Chapter II, more witnesses than nonwitnesses worked, so this finding is not surprising. Education was slightly related to decreasing the distress of adapting self-image to new name ( $r = -.129$ ,  $p = .048$ ). That is, the higher the educational attainment of the respondent, the more likely





he or she was able to integrate self-image with new name.

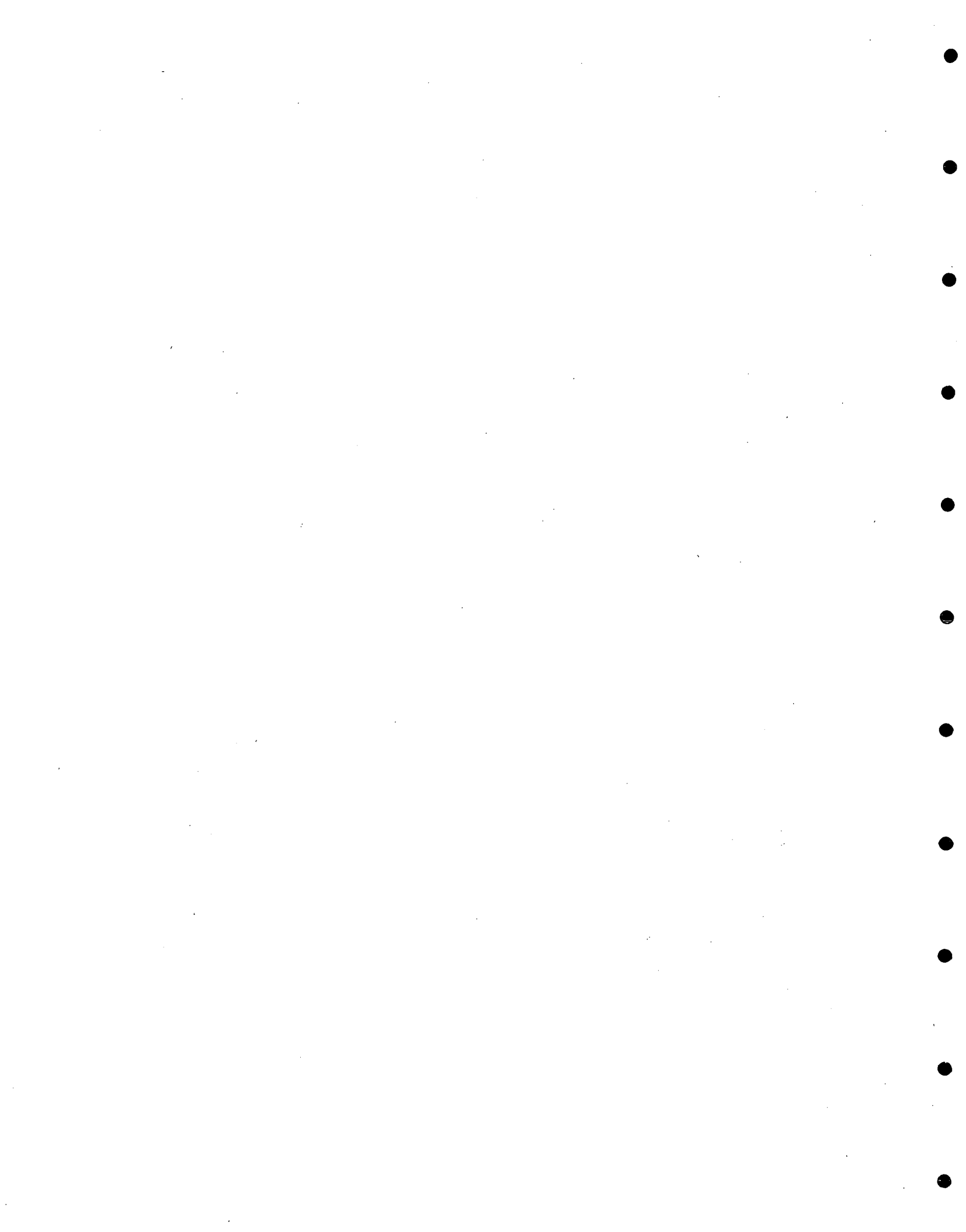
One's self-image is multifaceted, and in an effort to further understand the experience of program participants they were asked to respond to the following statement: "Generally, my new name reflects my family heritage and ethnic background."

Although family heritage and ethnic background are part of self-image, I discovered that in responding to this statement program members relied on different aspects of their new lives than the ones they used previously in their more general assessment of name and self-image.

For one thing, the witness versus nonwitness distinction was less pronounced. In fact, compared to the earlier assessment of more general self-image, there was less of a difference between these two groups with 54 percent of the witnesses and 40 percent of the nonwitnesses experiencing very little distress on this count.

Increasing education (especially sixteen years and over) encouraged a person to view new name and identity as representative of family heritage and ethnic background; as educational status increased, distress over this aspect of new name and identity decreased ( $r=-.660$ ,  $p=.016$ ). Either the more educated cared less about such connection or they had the foresight to take this into account when deliberating with the Marshals Service on their new name. It is the Marshals' policy to allow client input in the selection of their new name.

Those who reported practicing an organized religion were somewhat less distressed over how representative their names were ( $r=-.196$ ,  $p=.005$ ) than those who did not. This may be so because practicing an organized religion brought into the program from past life provides continuity and may by itself be perceived as part of family heritage and



ethnic background.

Those who lived alone were least likely to view their new names as reflecting family heritage and ethnic background. They were the most distressed, 65 percent of them reported substantial distress. Those who lived with children were the least distressed; only 30 percent of them felt that their new names failed to reflect their family heritage and ethnic background ( $r=-.166$ ,  $p=.023$ ). The presence of children preserved heritage, while being alone and the attendant loneliness that goes with it added to the feeling of its loss. Also, children have a way of preserving family ritual and tradition.

Although not an especially strong relationship, as age increased, distress over this aspect of new name decreased ( $r=-.121$ ,  $p=.056$ ).

In summary, working witnesses who were older, more highly educated, engaged in active religious practices, and living with children were more likely to feel that their new name reflected their self-image, family heritage, and ethnic background.

#### Community Connectedness

Serious adjustment problems can stem from the loss of community contacts. Generally, program participants lost twice as many community contacts in their move than they gained. What sort of contacts are most likely lost or gained? Table 3 addresses this question.

The types of contacts for which the respondents reported the greatest loss were social activity with friends and general casual social interaction with neighbors. Participation and membership in formal organizations such as the PTA and local church associations seemed more stable between the old and new communities. This pattern of community

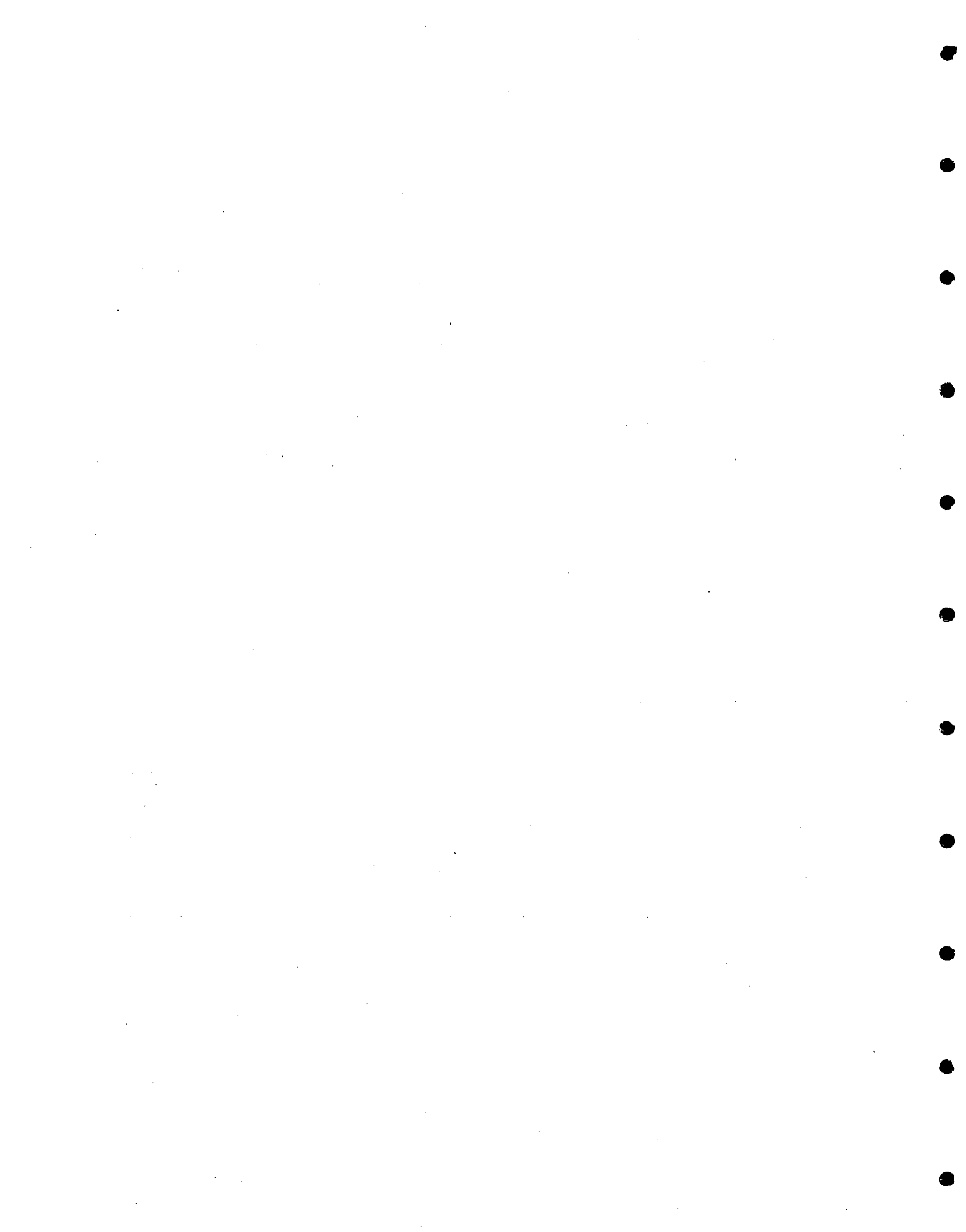
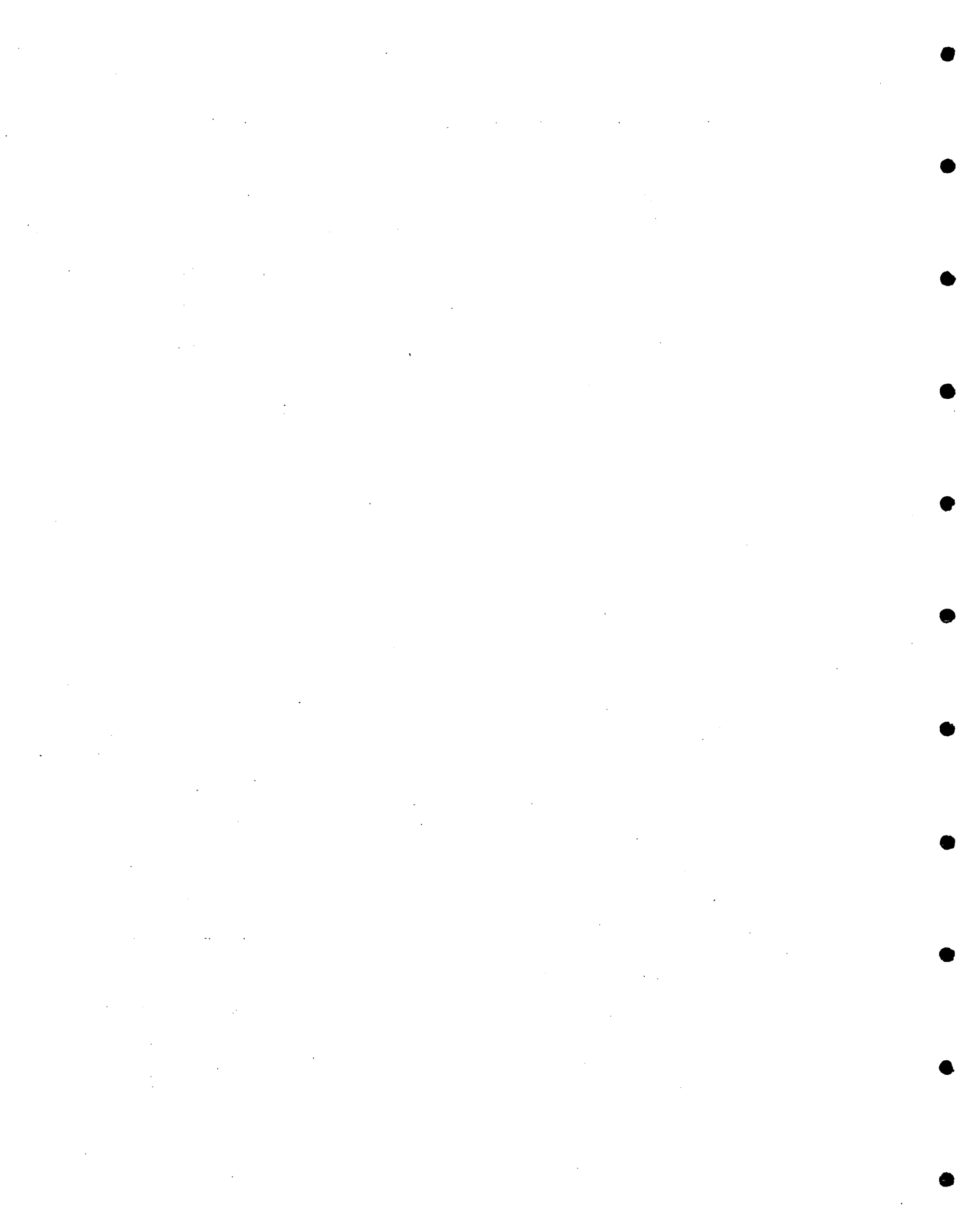


Table 3. Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Gains and Losses of Community Contacts after Relocation According to Types of Contacts (N=175)<sup>4</sup>

Types of Contacts	Contacts After Relocation			Total
	Gained	Stayed the Same	Lost	
Friends (social activities)	20%	46%	34%	100%
Neighbors (casual social interaction)	9	57	34	100
In-home chats (with neighbors/friends)	13	62	25	100
Community recreation facilities	17	60	23	100
Informal street chats	9	73	18	100
Local church services	15	68	17	100
Associations other than PTA	10	73	17	100
Church affairs other than services	9	74	17	100
PTA	6	77	17	100



contacts was especially pronounced in those instances where the witness moved with his spouse and children.

The greater loss of social activity with friends, casual social interaction with neighbors, in-home chats with neighbors or friends, and the use of community recreation facilities, should not be surprising since it is especially in these types of encounters that people try to bridge social distance and expect a certain amount of sharing and disclosure in the name of social intimacy. With encounters and activities such as these, clients of the program perceived the greatest need to lie, conceal, and deal with others in a less than honest and forthright manner. Thus, they avoided such contacts. Ironically, these types of contacts and activities are sorely needed by program participants to establish a sense of belonging and connectedness and they must shun them. Loss of such sociability and community contacts by clients translated into poor integration in the community and increased their distress over relocation, new name, and their feelings of alienation. Table 4 illustrates this.

By creating dummy variables, the impact of church attendance (an important dimension of community connectedness) can be explored in a great deal more depth. Questions six and seven of the community connectedness scale asked about church involvement. Measures were constructed which examined (1) the impact of new attendance (where none previously existed), (2) the continuation of church attendance, and (3) the cessation of attendance after entering the program. This approach allowed a more detailed explanation of the effect of church attendance on distress as measured by the various dependent scales. It also permitted a view of respondent characteristics which lent themselves to one of



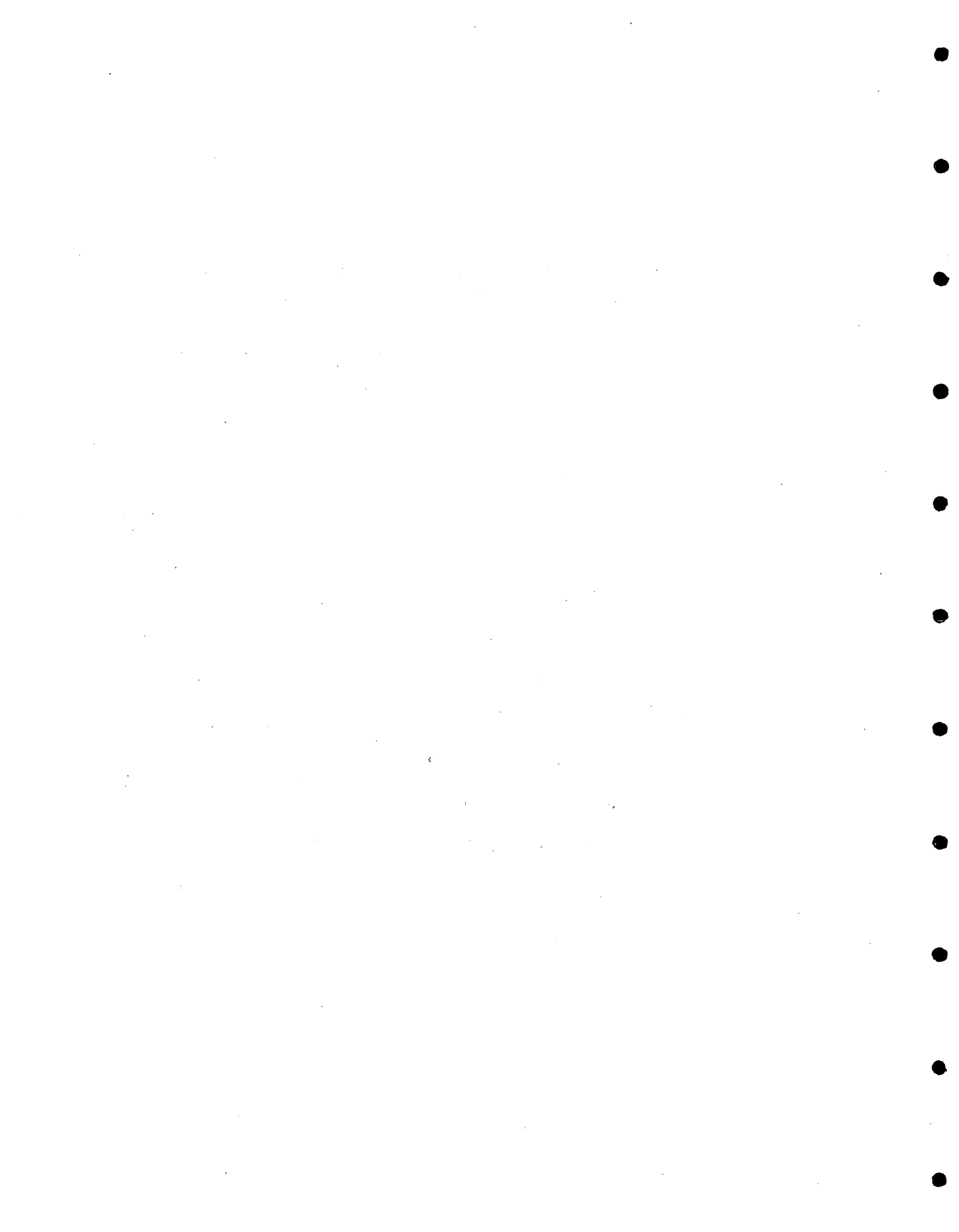


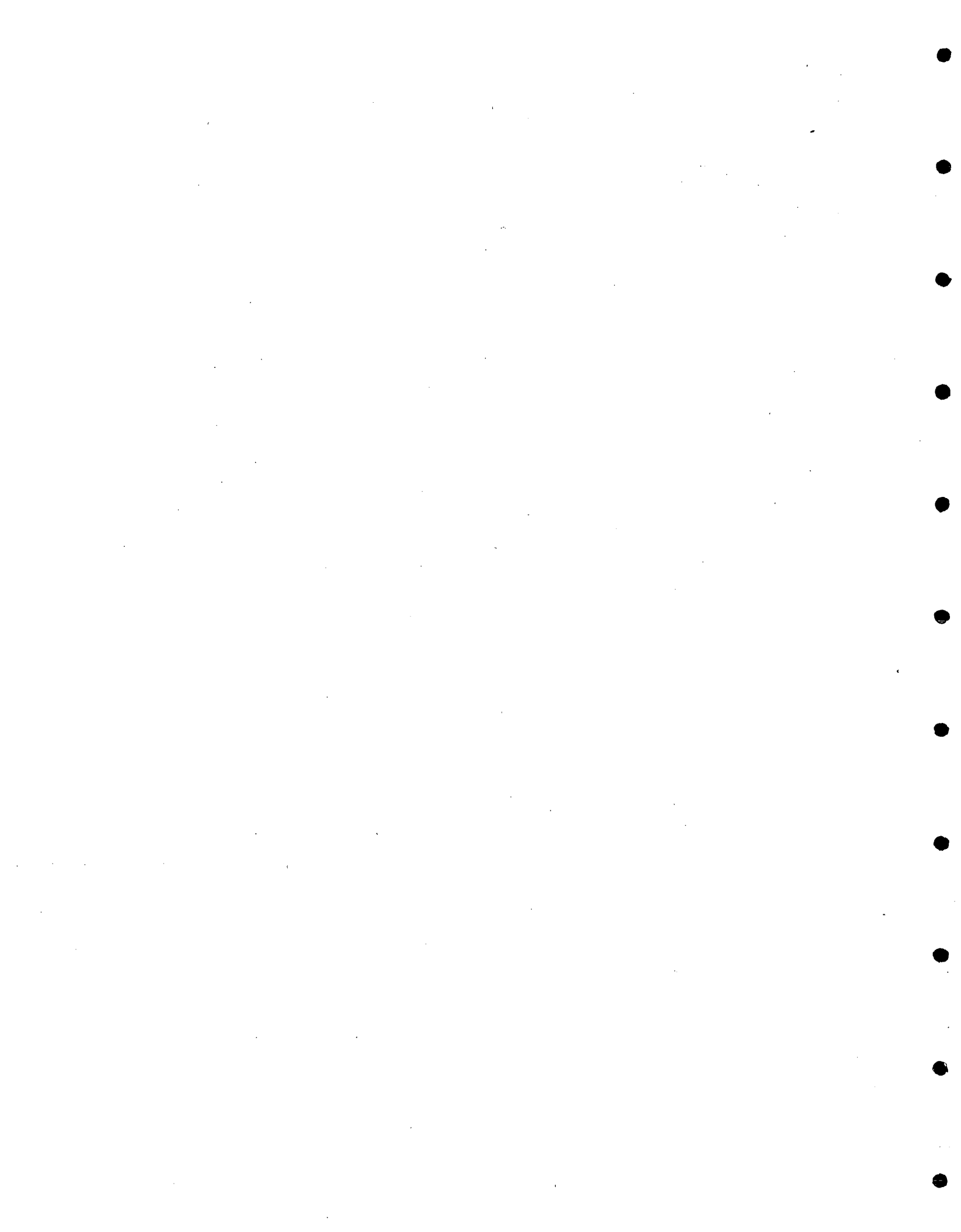
Table 4. Correlation Coefficients of Distress and Alienation Scales with Losses in Selected Types of Community Contacts After Relocation (N=175)

Distress and Alienation Scales	Losses in Selected Types of Community Contacts After Relocation			
	In-home chats (with neighbors/friends)	Neighbors (casual social interaction)	Friends (social activities)	Community recreation facilities
Distress over use of new name	.205**	.204**	.140	.252**
Distress over relocation	.322**	.361**	.171*	.336**
Alienation	.292**	.346**	.152*	.260**

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress



these patterns as opposed to the other two.<sup>5</sup> Table 5 shows the result.

Of obvious and particular importance was the increased distress that happened when those who previously attended church ceased to do so after program enrollment and relocation to their new area of residence. Such people experienced distress over use of their new names, their relocation, and they felt alienated as well.

Clients of the program consistently expressed adverse feelings over having to lie, conceal, and make up ad hoc cover stories about their past. They spoke of anxiety over being caught in lies and inconsistencies with all of the fear of discovery and embarrassment that goes with it. Further, they pointed out that keeping the stories they told consistent among different neighbors and among their own family members was very arduous and strenuous. Many of the following statements illustrate this very clearly. One female respondent stated flatly, "I hate having to be a walking talking liar." Others made the same point more elaborately.

There have been many awkward moments with people so I try to stay away from them. But the stress, loneliness, and frightening thoughts hit me the hardest when I am alone. (female nonwitness)

I hate the fact that when I meet people on a personal basis I can't form an honest relationship with them. My youngest [child] would blurt out our old name in front of people and it would get very awkward trying to explain my way out of it. (female nonwitness)

It is very hard keeping things straight. A couple of times people have caught me off guard and asked me questions such as what's your maiden name? I would have to stop and think about it for a minute. It's hard enough dealing with a last name change, but your maiden name, your parents' names; . . . that's a lot of names to keep straight and remember. (female nonwitness)

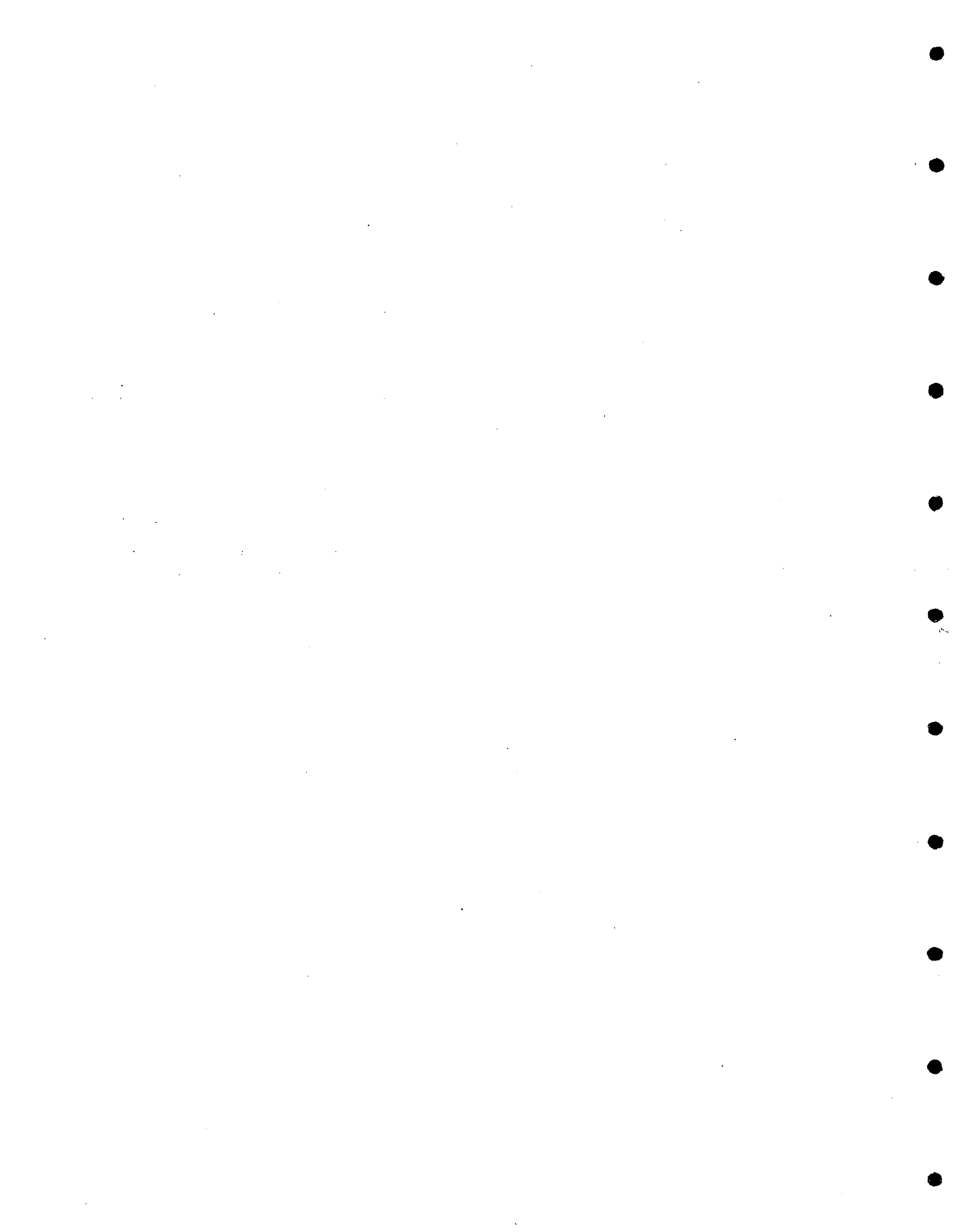


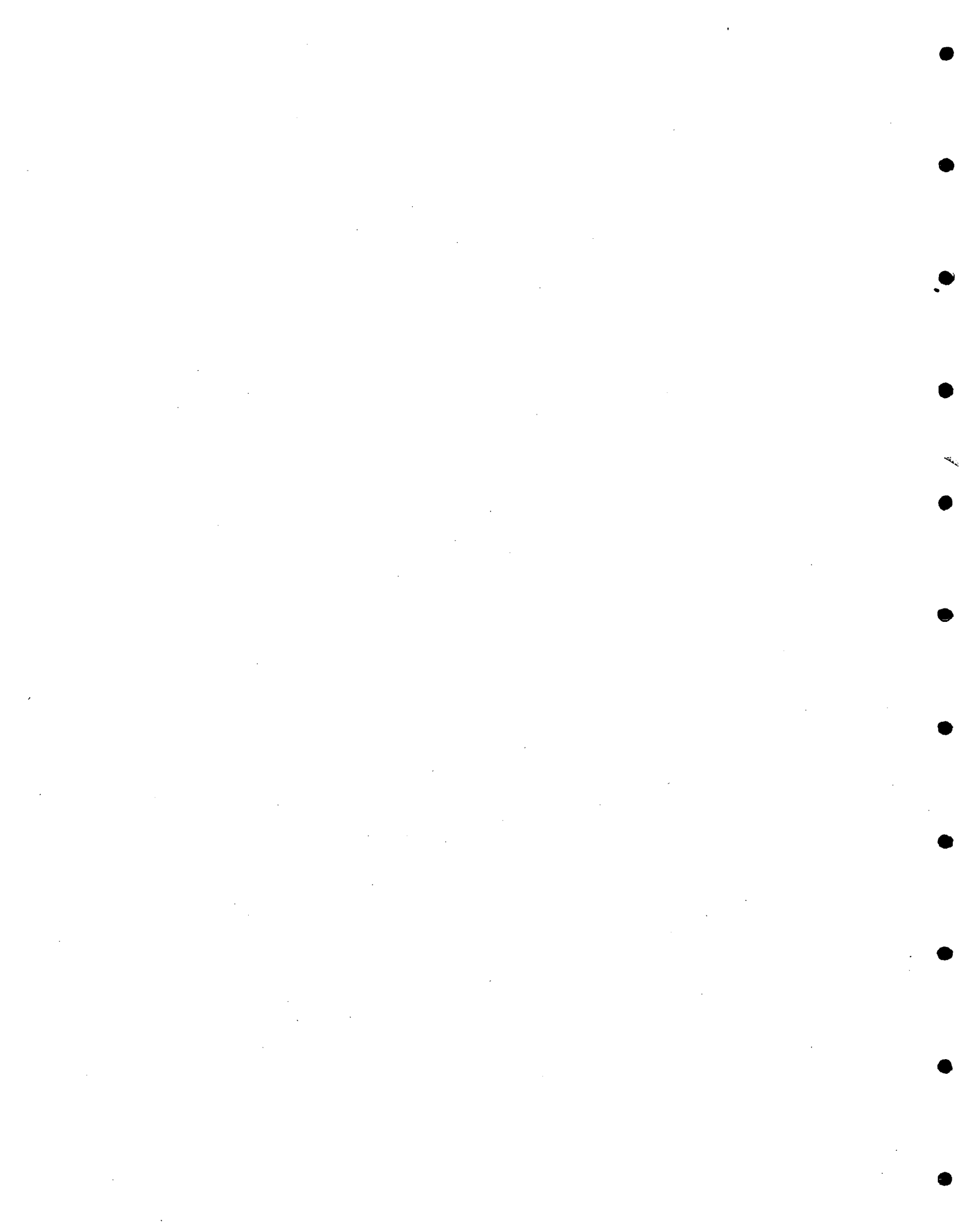
Table 5. Correlation Coefficients of Distress and Alienation Scales with Patterns of Church Attendance (Based on Dummy Variables) (N=175)

Distress and Alienation Scales	Patterns of Church Attendance		
	Attend in New Area but not Old	No Change in Attendance	Attended in Old Area but not New
Distress over use of new name	-.129	-.165*	.325**
Distress over relocation	-.097	-.187*	.322**
Alienation	-.218**	-.034	.244**

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress



A few times I have been social with people and they have asked me where I originally came from, so I make up a place to tell them. They turn around and say that they are from there too or know the place I told them I was from and they start to ask me about different things in that place, like places to eat, areas to live . . . . Since I made the place up, I can't answer them and this makes me very nervous and is very embarrassing and makes me very uncomfortable. (male witness)

When I receive mail in my old name I have to make sure that the envelopes are destroyed because sometimes people come into the house and they may see them. When people come to the house to visit for dinner, I avoid saying anything about my past. All of your talk with them must be kept on a very general level. This has at times proved very awkward and embarrassing. (male witness)

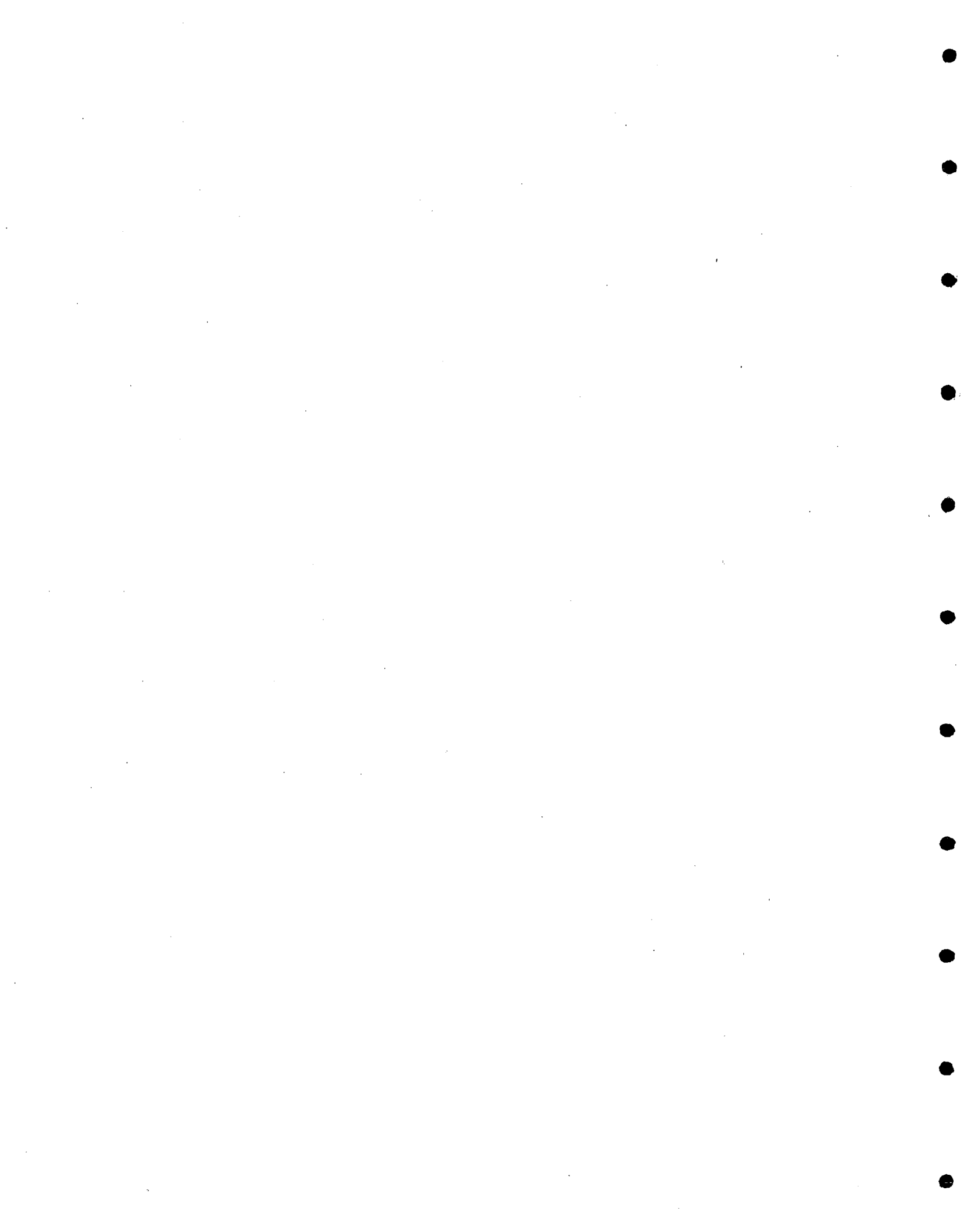
It's very hard to get friendly with any people because you have to keep making things up about your past, and it's even harder to keep things you made up about your past straight. I can't tell people where I'm from, how I get my money, or anything about my past life. I hate having to lie to people in the neighborhood. (male witness)

It is very hard trying not to get mixed up when you're talking to other people, when you are going around talking about your childhood and thinking up a good fairy tale to tell your kids. (female nonwitness)

In the words of one mother, the lying syndrome created stress not only in her neighboring with others in the community but also between herself and her children:

Lying has been very stressful for me because my children keep forgetting their new name. The first day back in school my youngest daughter forgot how to spell it and that seemed to have caused a lot of problems. Being dishonest has affected my children's behavior. My children feel [that] having a new name and identity is being dishonest in many ways. Because of this problem, my children have been very distant with me and have not been telling me the truth about many subjects we discuss.



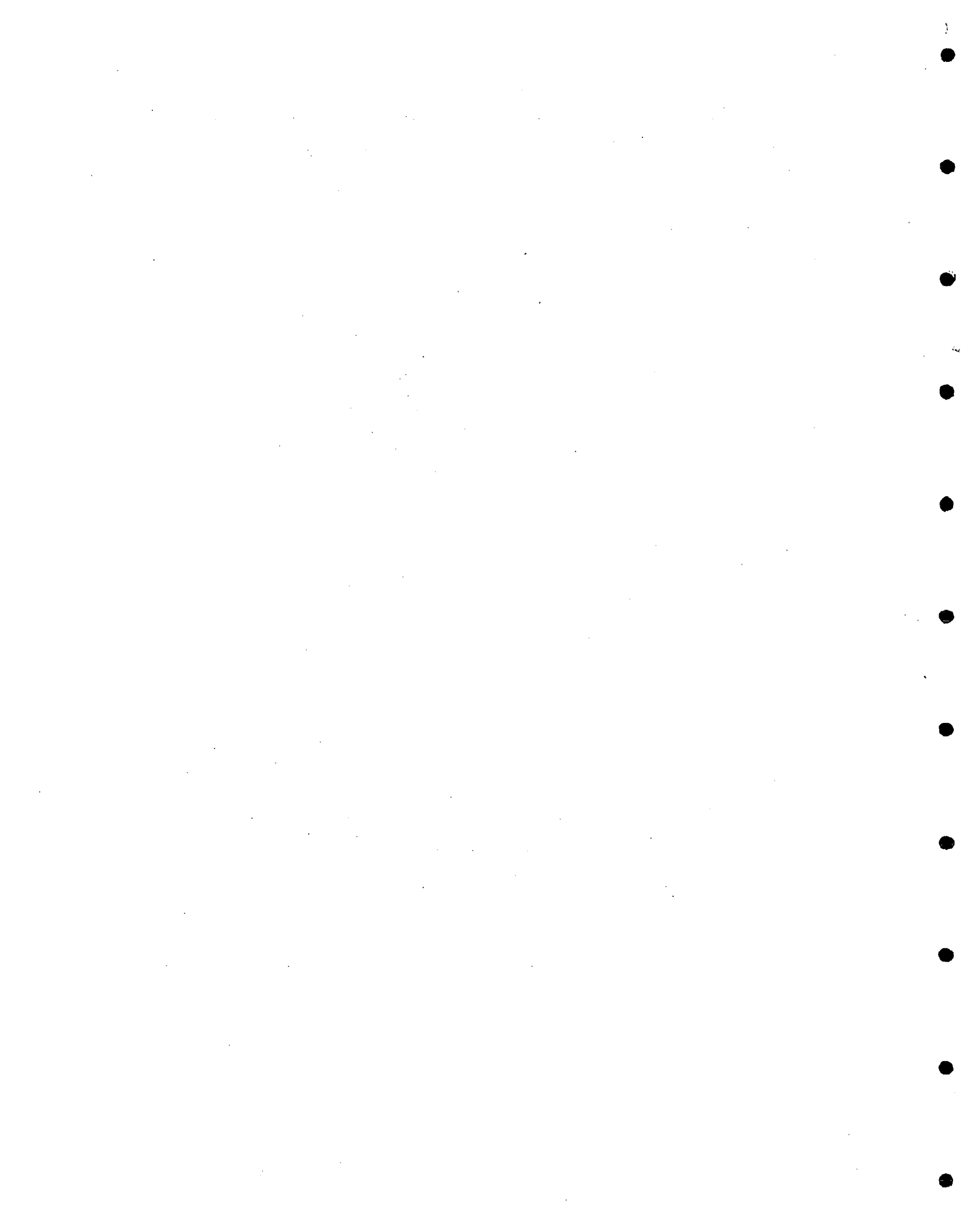


Thomas Cottle has dealt with the problem of lying and mistrust in family settings and its negative effects on children in a series of perceptive studies and in his book Children's Secrets. Writing directly about this problem as it affects children in the Witness Security Program, Dr. Raymond Duff has stated:

. . . about children of those in the program: like all children, they, especially the younger ones, usually take their cues regarding adjustment from their parents. If the parents do well, so do they, and so far as I know there is no difference by sex. However, as children grow problems may arise. In fact, I believe they usually will. Like all people, children grow up asking the question, "Who am I?" When they discover that their grandparents are a mystery, they become apprehensive. Where is their historical continuity which peers have and often cherish? Where are the graves? By age 5 to 8, most children have a clear concept of the reality and permanence of death. They seek explanations. I think the child who is more curious will ask for more explanations. The explanation should be truthful as often as possible even if that truth may sometimes hurt. This is so because without truth, mystery, anxiety, and mistrust are increased together, often potentiating the other.

If children could be told at an age appropriate time (related to age, ability to keep secrets, etc.) what was necessary to protect their parents and themselves, perhaps that would help. Or would it? Perhaps such information would only lead to rebellious adolescent behavior foolishly seeking the meeting of relatives. I do not know what that might involve in the program. I could imagine some hazards.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Duff's letter rings true in details that parents of children in hiding know and keep to themselves. In light of his words, it is easier to understand the distance that grew between mother and children. Her children were old enough to know that they were being told to lie and to reject their past, but obviously not old enough to appreciate the extreme

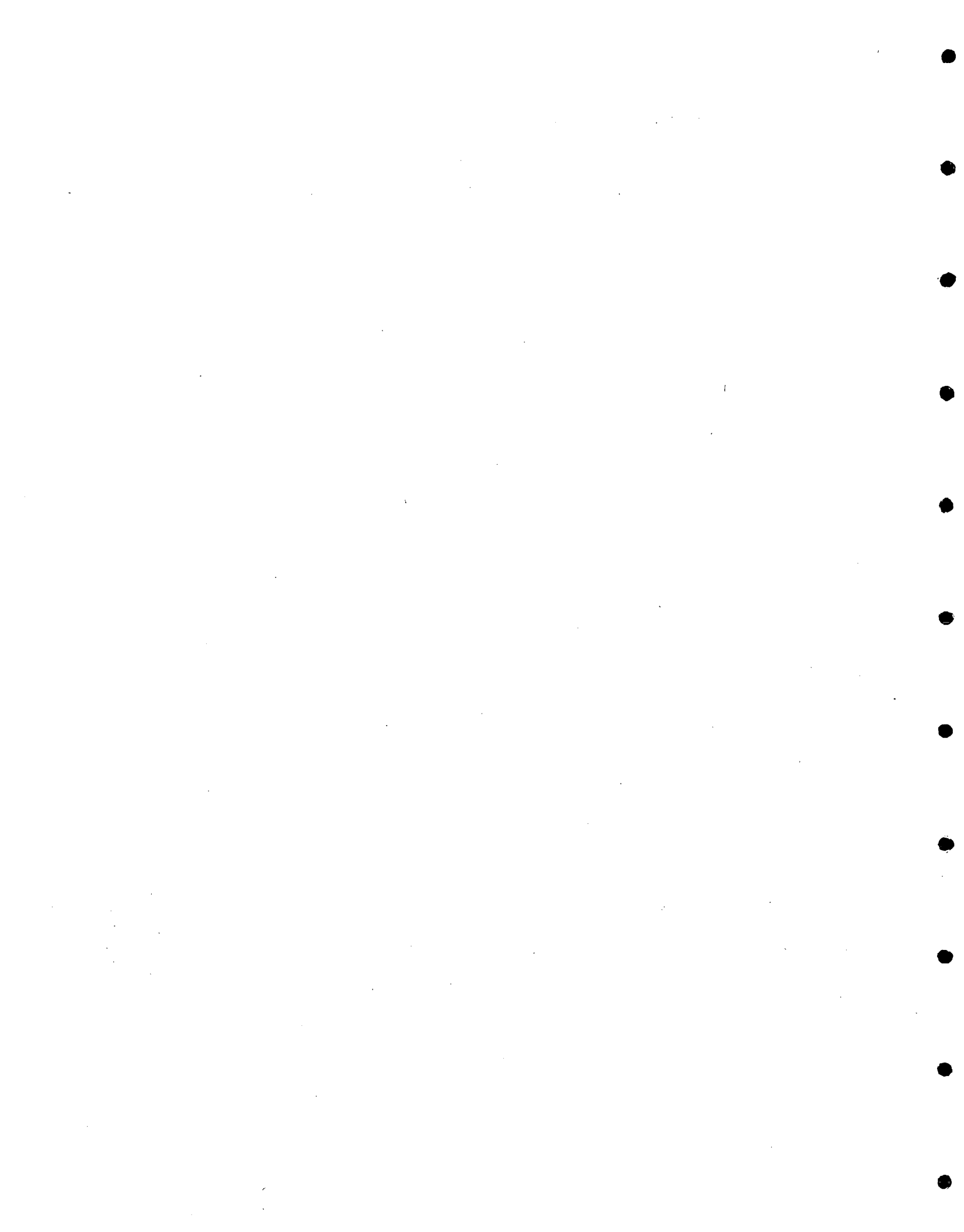


importance for the protection of their parents and themselves by doing so. Such children were placed in a situation where truth gave way to mystery and mistrust--all of which may have led them to become distant and less than forthright with their mother.

It should not be surprising that socialability, neighboring, and church and community involvement were significantly related not only to distress over relocation but alienation as well. One uses a new name in interaction with others in the community, and the limits on such use can affect how one behaves with them. Lying and the need to conceal can lead to avoidance, poor community connectedness, distress over relocation, isolation, and ultimately to a sense of alienation. It is only reasonable to assume that how strongly one is connected to the community will affect distress over the experience generally.

#### Social Navigation: The Daily Use of New Name

In order for people to survive and strive towards achieving their basic goals in life, they must navigate through a sea of social relations. Keeping in mind that one's name is an important part of this process, I would like to draw attention to the questions that comprised the scale on p. 42 in the previous chapter. These questions sought to measure the distress that program participants experienced in using a new, assumed name during daily life and social interaction with others. (Questions that probed respondents' personal distress over assumed name and identity, having been considered earlier, are absent from this scale.) The main task was to identify respondent characteristics which influenced their distress over navigating in society with an assumed name. On this point several plausible hypotheses can be generated.



Connectedness to community should play a role in the respondents' degree of distress. Increased social contact should provide experience and practice with assumed name. Thus:

H1 The more connected people are to the community, the less distress they will experience.

Discarding your name and assuming a new one at older ages should prove to be more stressful than at younger ages. It stands to reason that increasing age brings with it stronger attachment to name because of the length of time one has had it. Thus:

H2 The older the client when discarding an old name and adopting a new name and identity, the more the distress.

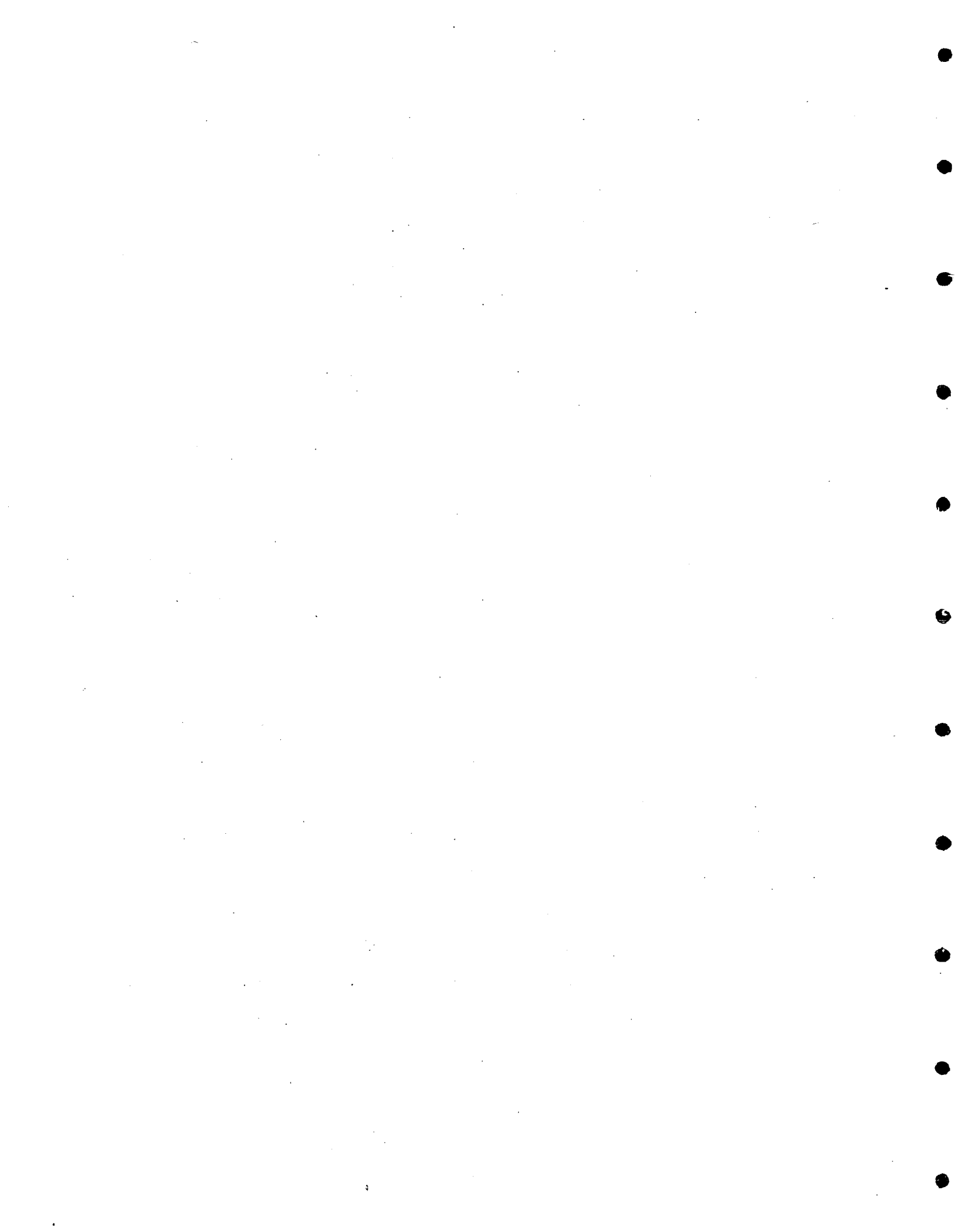
The longer the period of time a client participates in the program, thinking of himself in terms of the assumed name and identity, the easier it should be for him to use it during daily life and social encounters. Self-consciousness should decrease over time, and chances for becoming habituated should increase. Thus:

H3 The more time people have in the program, the less distress they will experience.

The individual's mobility pattern before joining the program may influence distress. Frequent moves before program enrollment provide one with a sense of familiarity with the status of a stranger making social presentations of oneself in search of recognition and acceptance by others in a new community. Thus:

H4 The more residential moves people make before enrolling in the program, the less distress they will experience as a result of their participation in the program.

Impression management calls for a certain amount of alert, agile, and skillful effort. Going on the assumption that higher education, among other things, aids the individual in developing and sharpening



interpersonal skills, it then makes sense to postulate that the educational attainment of respondents would influence the amount of distress they perceive. Thus:

H5 The more highly educated a client is when an old name and identity are discarded and a new one adopted, the less distress a person will experience.

Children cannot truly understand the nature of a death threat and the importance of keeping their past name secret for the safety of themselves and their parents. Therefore, it stands to reason that people in hiding with children would experience more anxiety about keeping past name and identity secret. Also, the more people who know about the change in name and identity (including children), the greater the chance of a slip-up. The more people who know the witness's secret, the more vulnerable the witness is to others. Thus:

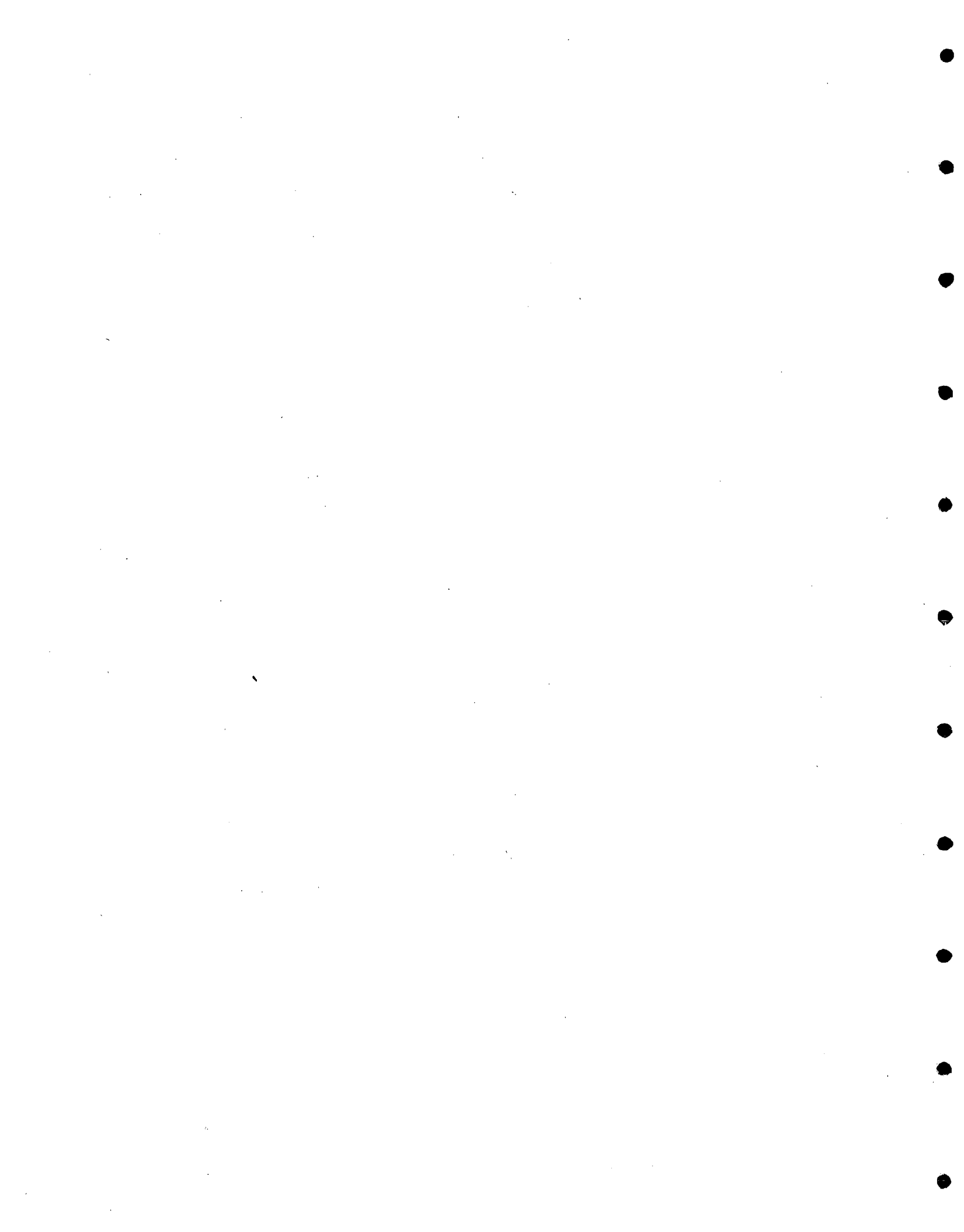
H6 The presence of children increases distress over keeping past name and identity secret.

Many witnesses were criminally involved before relocation (as opposed to other members of their households) and their former world called for secrecy, concealment, and fabrication. Indeed, their skills in this area needed to be very strong. They had been intimate with the brutality and callousness of their former cohorts, and thus may more readily appreciate the absolute necessity to adjust. They may experience less distress, moreover, because they feel they are leaving an unsatisfactory life behind. They have the most to gain from a new identity and the most to lose without it. Thus:

H7 Witnesses should experience less distress than nonwitnesses.

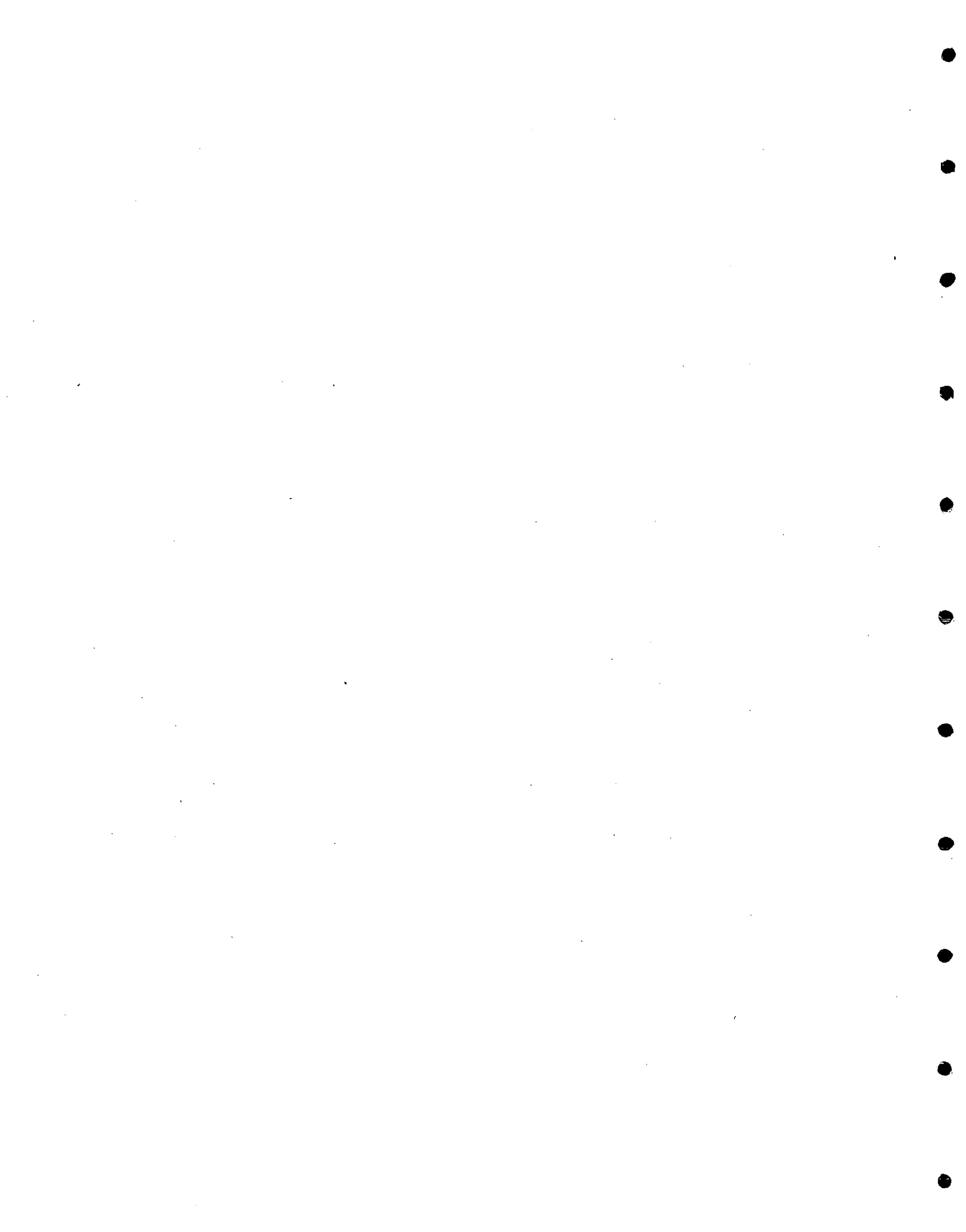
The scale measured the ease, or lack of it, that respondents experienced while navigating under an assumed name. It was not designed





to tap any personal feelings or intimate sense of distress over the loss of one's identity, nor did it ask the respondents to report, in any psychological sense, whatever confusion they felt over just exactly who they are. It was a measure which aimed at investigating characteristics which helped or hindered them in "passing" during their daily life.

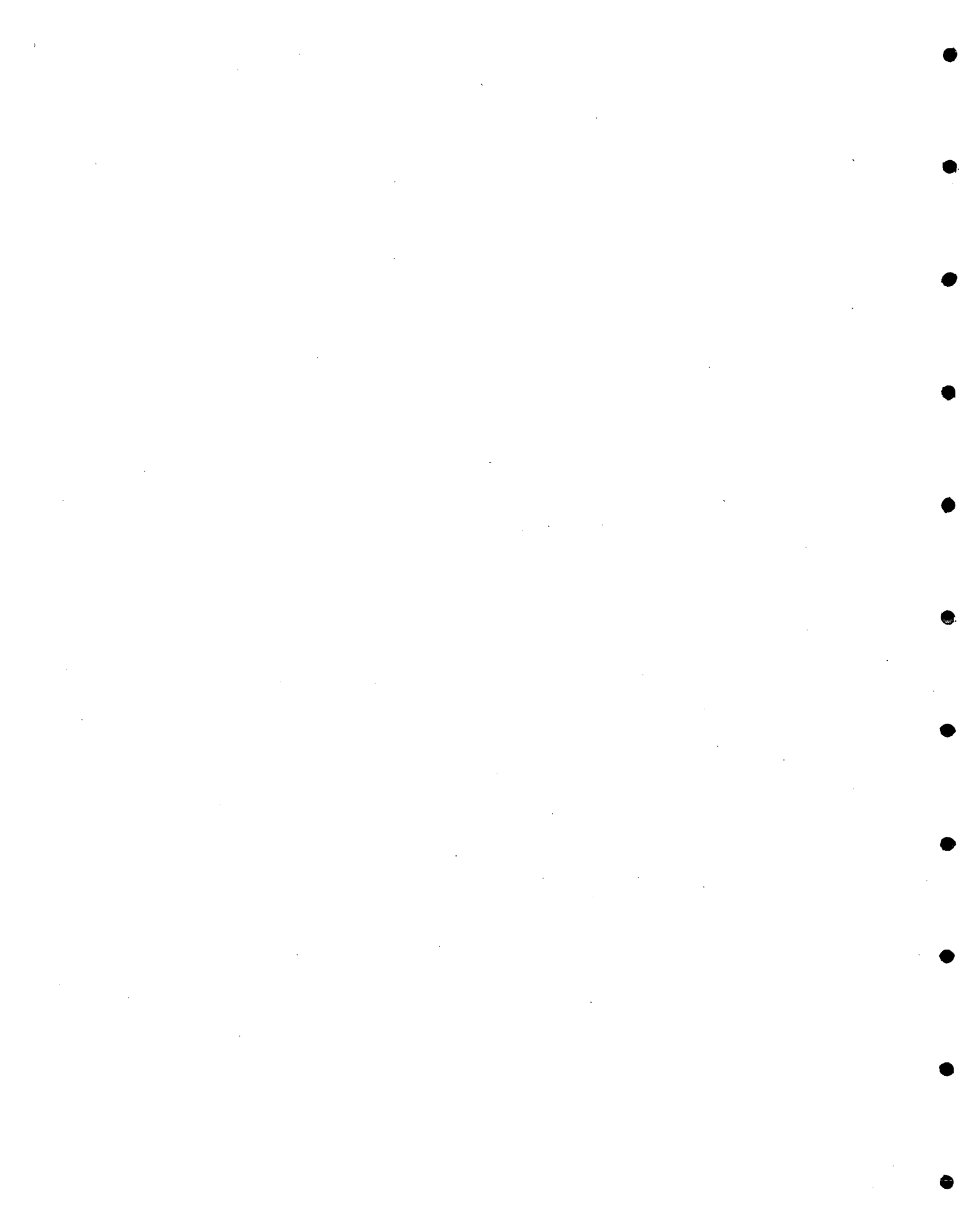
Since this scale measured distress over social interaction, disciplinary wisdom dictated that in addition to standard independent demographic variables, other variables which take into account the social context of the interaction might also play a part in explaining the variance in distress measured by this scale: these can be described as situational independent variables. An examination of the previous hypotheses will reveal some to be demographic in nature and others to be situational in nature. Some emphasize, for example, age and education; others stress whether children are actively in hiding, the amount of time clients have spent in the program, the number of moves clients made before program enrollment, and whether they were the actual witness. One might conjecture that the contextual situational variables will explain more, but not to the total exclusion of the traditional demographic ones. These people bring their situation, experiences, and demographic characteristics into social encounters. They play the interaction game to the best of their ability, hoping to pass and to avoid slips, embarrassment, and harmful disclosure. Thus, both types of independent variables are included in the causal model seeking to explain distress over the use of new name.



Analysis of dependent variable:  
Distress over use of new name

The scale used to measure respondent distress over the use of a new assumed name was constructed from six Likert-type questions. Each of the questions was coded from 1 to 5, where 5 indicated the most distress. Thus, the minimum possible score was 6, and the maximum was 30. The actual scores of the respondents ranged from a low of 6 through a high of 29. The median score was 14 and the mean score averaged out to less than 1 point more (14.89). Twenty-five percent of the sample scored 20 or higher, clearly falling into a distressed range. Since the median of 14 was 2 points above what would be considered an absolutely non-distressed score (because a score of 12 would have meant that the respondent "disagrees" that he was distressed over the use of new, assumed name), more than half the sample, although not clearly distressed, was not clearly adjusted either.

The goal of this analysis was to determine the set of independent variables which best explained the variation observed in this scale. The independent variables were classified into demographic and situational. Core demographic variables such as age, sex, race, and education did not show statistical significance based on simple order correlations. When education was analyzed in more detail, college education appeared to help limit distress ( $r=-.171$ ,  $p=.024$ ), while having only a primary education seemed to increase distress a little ( $r=.143$ ,  $p=.072$ ). Being either a witness ( $r=-.202$ ,  $p=.010$ ) or making frequent residential moves before enrolling in the program (especially four or more moves,  $r=-.183$ ,  $p=.015$ ) slightly reduced the distress over use of new name. Witness status and the related issue of who was more distressed--male or female witnesses,



male or female nonwitnesses--are illustrated in Table 6.

Clearly the dominant effect was due to witness status. Male nonwitnesses ( $r=.221$ ) were more distressed than male witnesses ( $r=-.149$ ). Since there were only eight male nonwitnesses, one should be cautious in interpreting the difference. Further, although not statistically significant, we do see a reversal of the sign in the female case (female witnesses,  $r=-.034$ ; female nonwitnesses,  $r=.107$ ). Generally, witnesses were slightly less distressed over the daily use of new name than nonwitnesses. Thus, witness status was an appropriate variable to include in the causal model.

The analysis of education by witness status with distress over use of new name offered an opportunity to examine any interaction between witness status and education. To do this, dummy variables were created which isolated witnesses and nonwitnesses by education.

In Table 7, note that less educated nonwitnesses showed the most distress over use of new name ( $r=.283$ ), while witnesses who were highly educated showed the least ( $r=-.157$ ). The former was statistically significant at the .01 level, while the latter was statistically significant at the .05 level.

Continued analysis on the remaining independent variables such as time spent in program, work status, number of moves after program enrollment, time spent in prison, and living situation did not produce any statistically significant relationships. The only noteworthy finding was related to living situation: single parents had the highest overall mean distress score for use of a new assumed name.

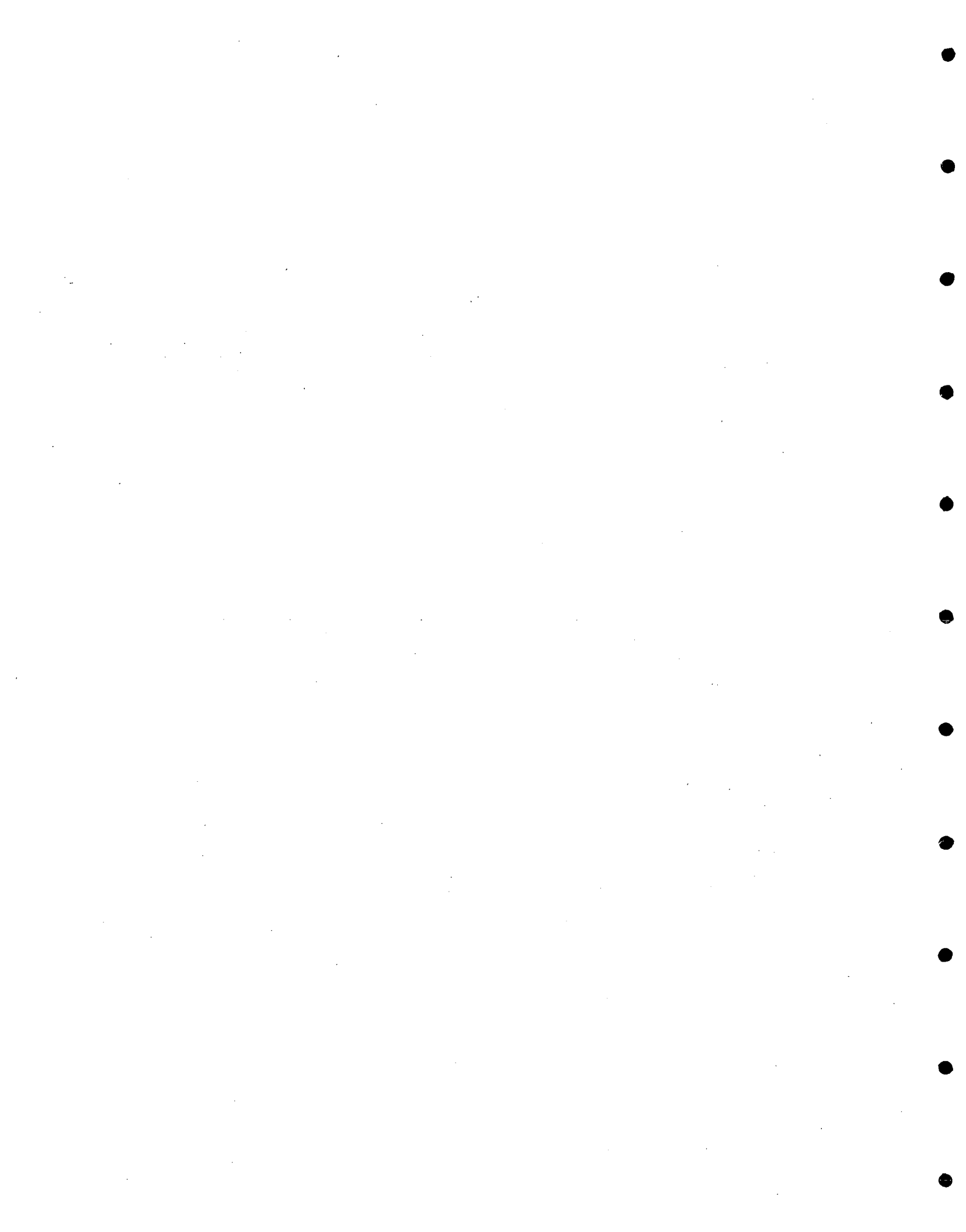


Table 6. Correlation Coefficients of Distress Over Daily Use of New Name With Witness Status and Sex (N=173)

Witness Status and Sex <sup>a</sup>	Distress Over Use of New Name
Male Witness (87) <sup>b</sup>	-.149*
Male Nonwitness (8)	.221*
Female Witness (20)	-.034
Female Nonwitness (58)	.107

<sup>a</sup>A new dummy variable called WISTSEX was created which had four categories:

If WIST=1 and SEX=1 then WISTSEX=Male Witness

If WIST=1 and SEX=2 then WISTSEX=Female Witness

If WIST=2 and SEX=1 then WISTSEX=Male Nonwitness

If WIST=2 and SEX=2 then WISTSEX=Female Nonwitness

<sup>b</sup>The number of cases on which the correlation is based is given in parentheses.

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress



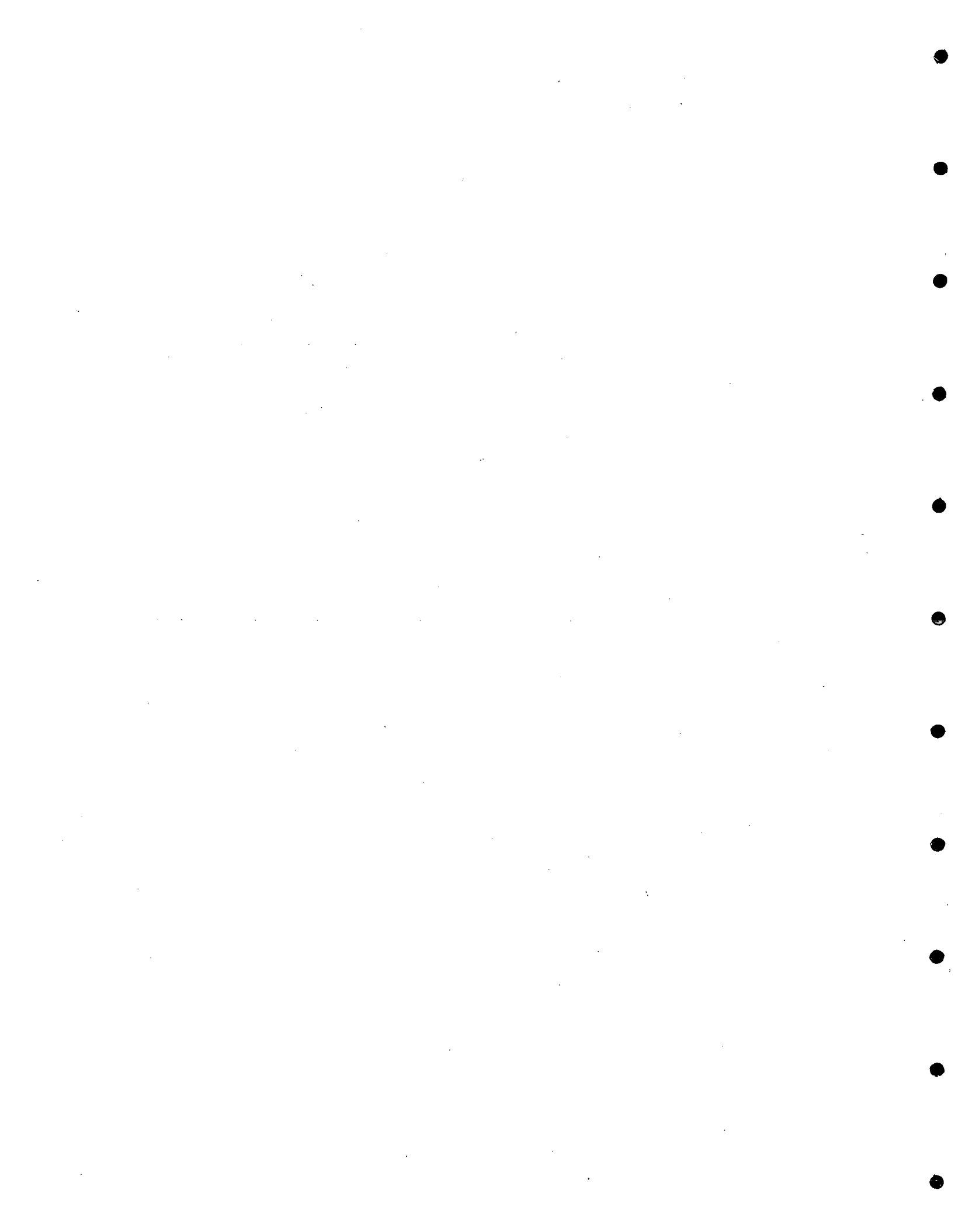


Table 7. Correlation Coefficients of Distress Over Use of  
New Name With Witness Status and Education (N=168)

Witness Status and Education <sup>a</sup>	Distress Over Use of New Name
Less Educated Nonwitness (34) <sup>b</sup>	.283**
Less Educated Witness (57)	-.077
Highly Educated Nonwitness (30)	-.039
Highly Educated Witness (47)	-.157*

<sup>a</sup>A new dummy variable called WISTEDU was created which had four categories:

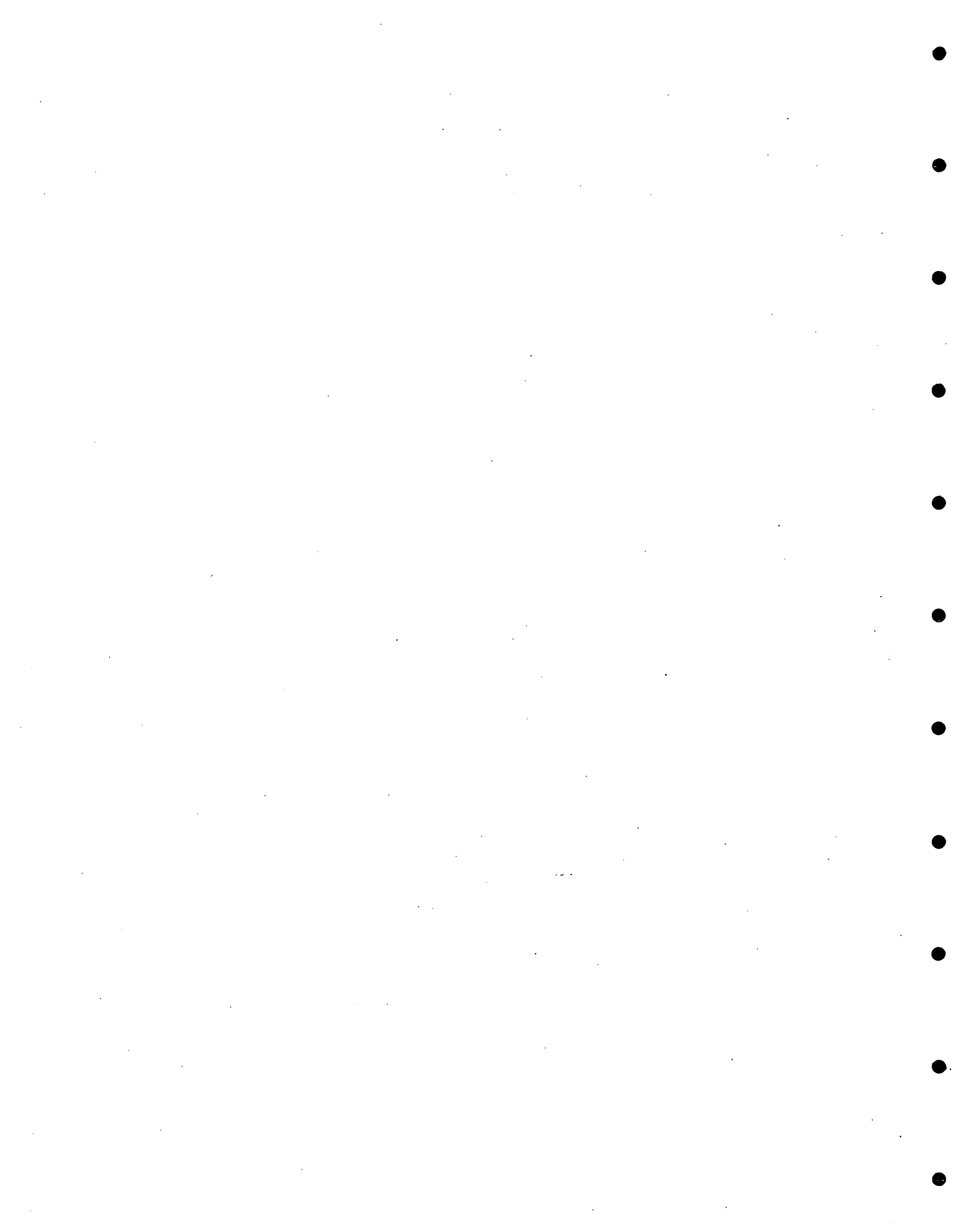
- If WIST=1 and EDU=1 then WISTEDU=Less Educated Witness
- If WIST=2 and EDU=1 then WISTEDU=Less Educated Nonwitness
- If WIST=1 and EDU=2 then WISTEDU=Highly Educated Witness
- If WIST=2 and EDU=2 then WISTEDU=Highly Educated Nonwitness

<sup>b</sup>The number of cases on which the correlation is based is given in parentheses.

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress



Developing a causal model explaining distress over the use of new name

It was fairly evident that the following independent variables would best explain distress over use of new name: (1) community connectedness, (2) witness status, (3) education, (4) number of residential moves before program enrollment, and (5) living situation. Also, as controls I added sex, age, and race. The regression results are shown in Table 8. Education, community connectedness, witness status, the number of residential moves a client made before enrolling in the program, and living situation all played an important part in the causal explanation of distress over the daily use of new name in society. All these variables, with the exception of education, are more situational than demographic in nature. Program participants judge their own sense of distress by how smoothly they navigate through social encounters. Successful social navigation calls for skillful impression management. Skillful impression management depends, in large part, on the subject's particular situation and experience--explaining the greater significance of the situational independent variables. More light can be shed on this issue by examining the hypotheses that the model either confirmed or rejected.

Summary: Distress Over Use of New Name

<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Supported</u>
H1	Community Connectedness	Yes
H2	Age	No
H3	Time in Program	No
H4	Number of Residential Moves Before Program Enrollment	Yes
H5	Education	Yes
H6	Living Situation	Yes (partially)
H7	Witness Status	Yes

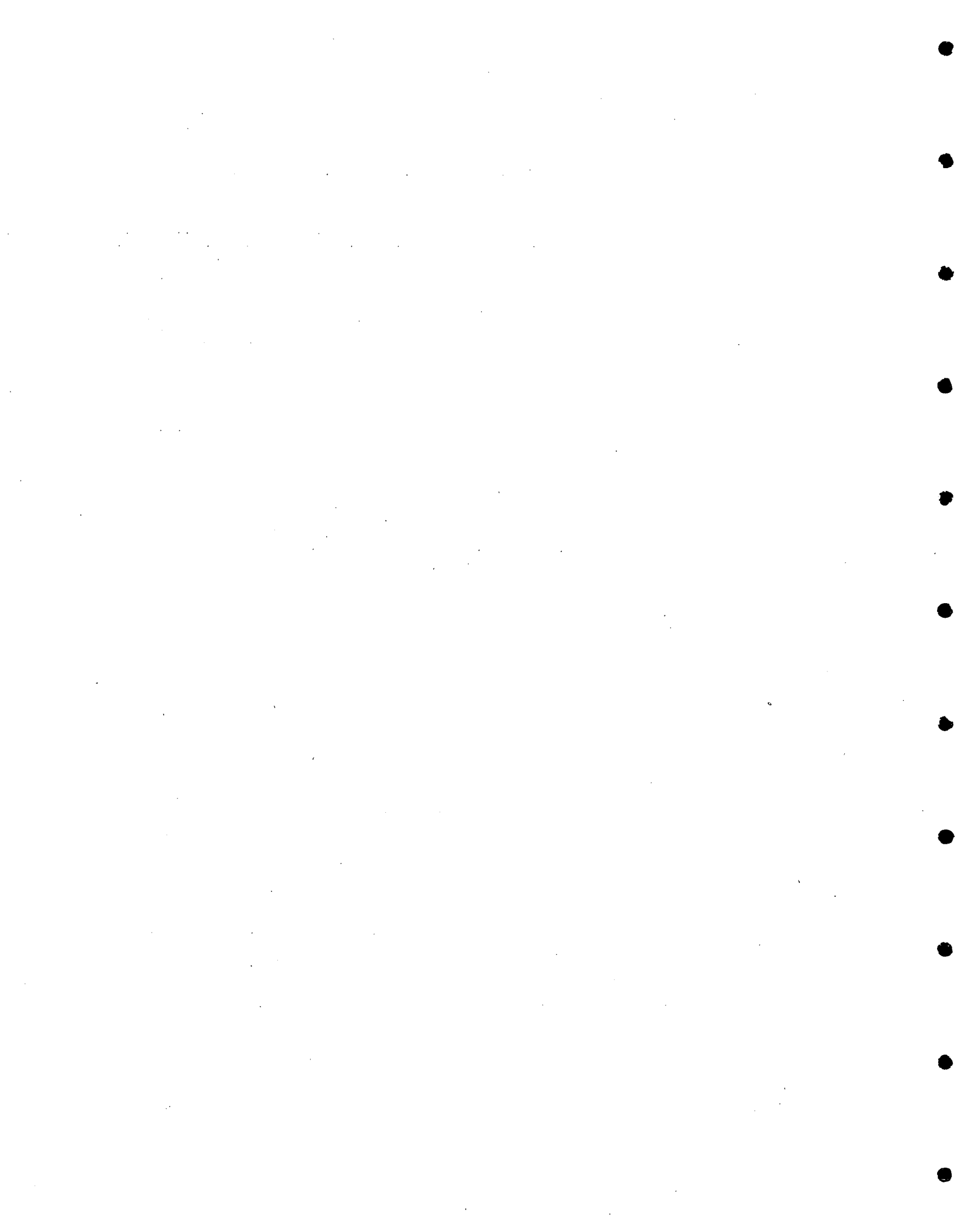


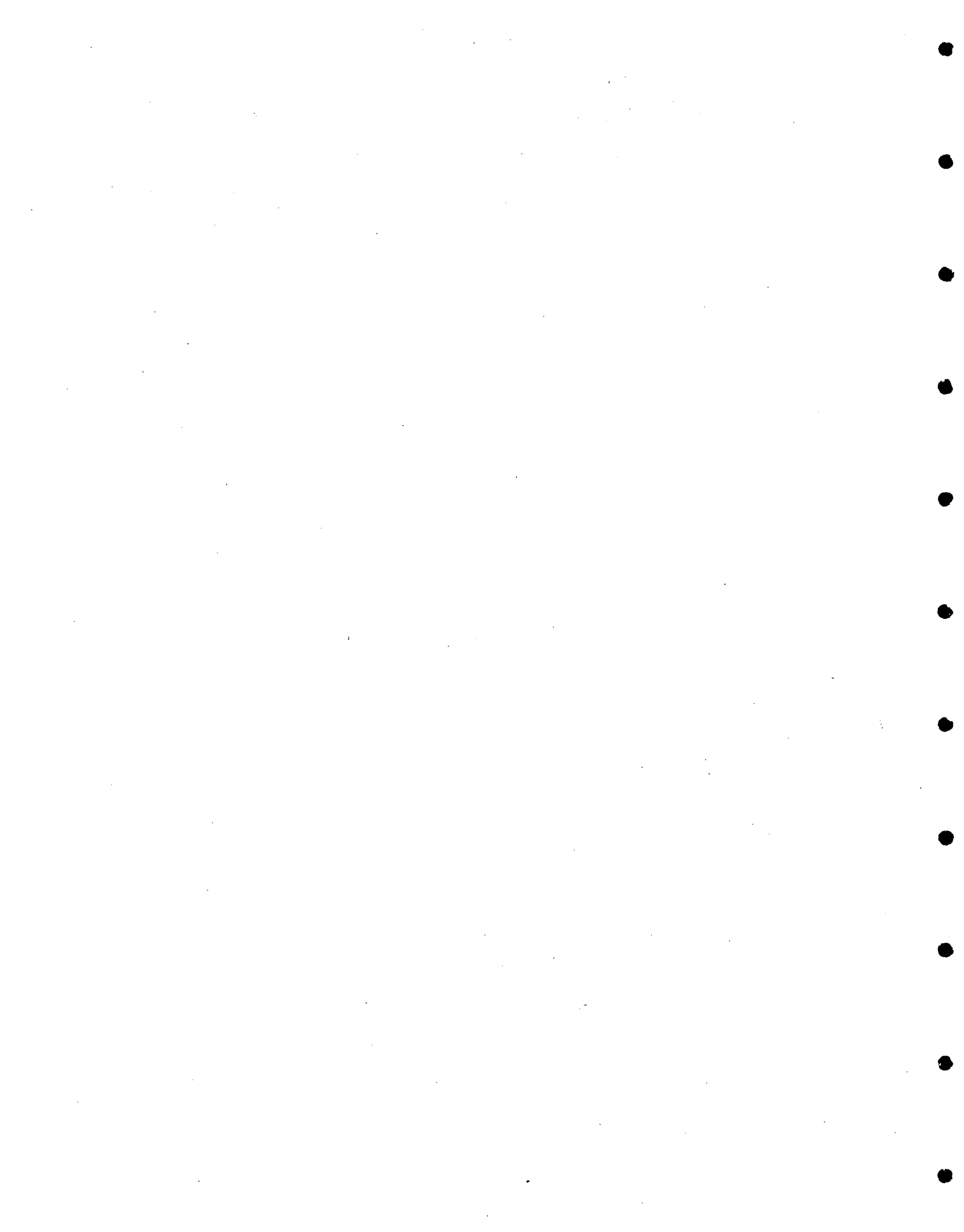
Table 8. Regression Coefficients Explaining Distress Over Use of New Name (N=171)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables <sup>a</sup>	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients	Standardized Regression Coefficients
Distress Over Use of New Name	Community Connectedness (high connectedness)	-.634*	-.312*
	Witness Status (witness)	-2.898*	-.228*
	Number of Residential Moves Before Program Enrollment (four or more moves)	-2.339*	-.183*
	Education (college)	-1.965*	-.158*
	Living Situation (single parent)	2.970*	.153*
	Sex (male)	-1.449	-.116
	Age (50+)	.426	.068
	Race (white)	-.695	-.044
		$R^2 = .225$	

<sup>a</sup>The high pole for each variable is given in parentheses.

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress



### Summary and explanation

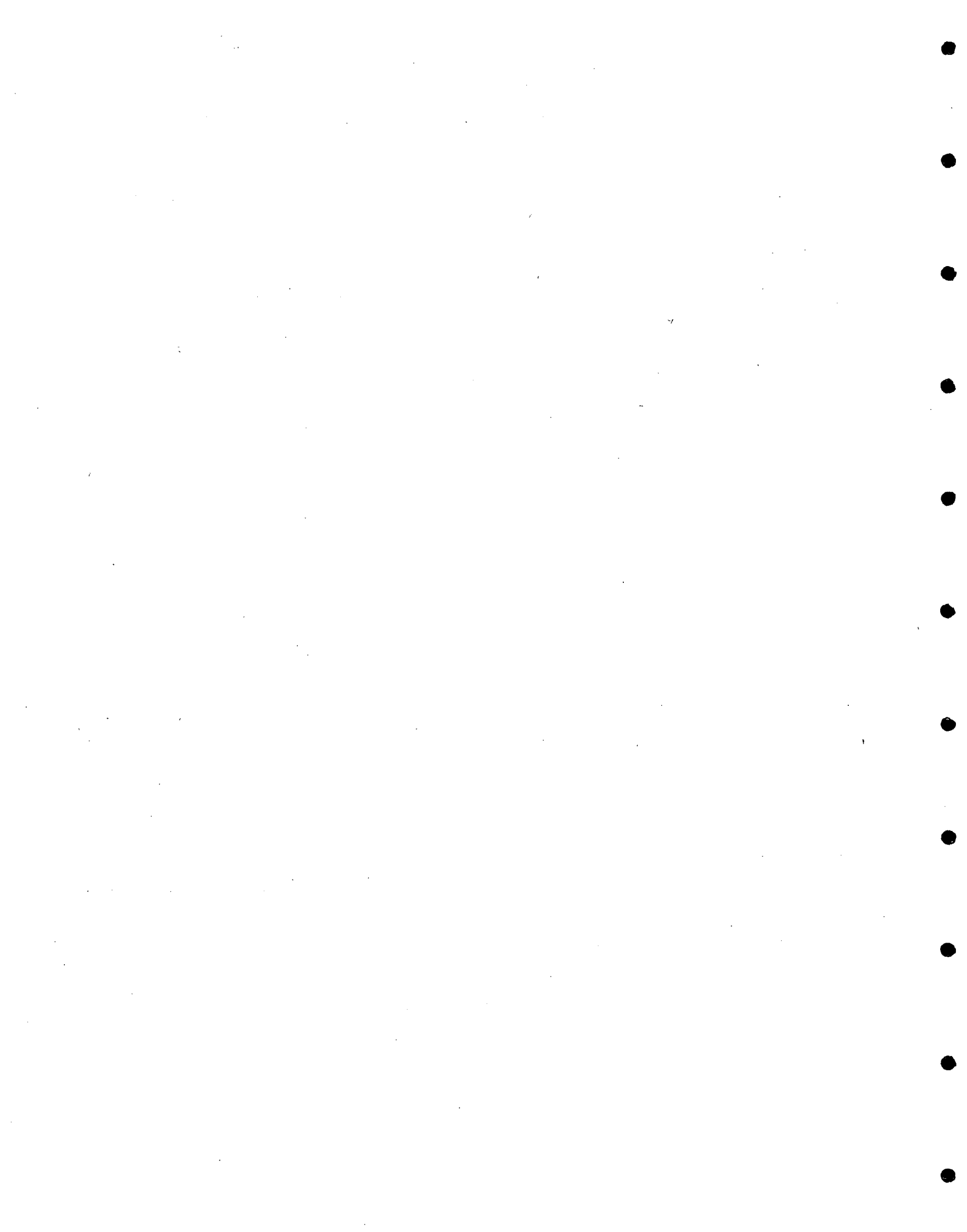
With the first hypothesis, increased community contact was felt to lead to decreased distress. This hypothesis was confirmed. It should be fairly obvious from my previous discussion of community connectedness that stability is a key element in minimizing distress. Witnesses and their family members who maintained continuity in their level of community involvement between their old and new communities fared better than those who did not. Program members who experienced disruption in community involvement--those who lost involvement in the new community where previously they had involvement in the old--fared much worse.

Hypothesis 2 was disconfirmed. Age had relatively little to do with one's ability to navigate in society with a new name. Although earlier in the chapter (p. 54) I said that the older one was the more likely one was to view name as important in daily activities, it seems that the importance one placed on name in daily life and the ability to navigate in society with a new name were not directly related.

Hypothesis 3 was disconfirmed while hypothesis 4 was confirmed. The amount of time spent in the program had no relationship with distress over use of new name.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the number of residential moves a client made before entering the program had a significant relationship with distress over use of new name. This was especially true if one made four or more moves before program enrollment. Increased preprogram residential moving decreased the distress over use of new name.

Hypothesis 5 was confirmed. College education, although not especially strong, was statistically significant, and worked in the direction of decreasing distress over use of new name. This hypothesis was based on the notion that skillful impression management was crucial

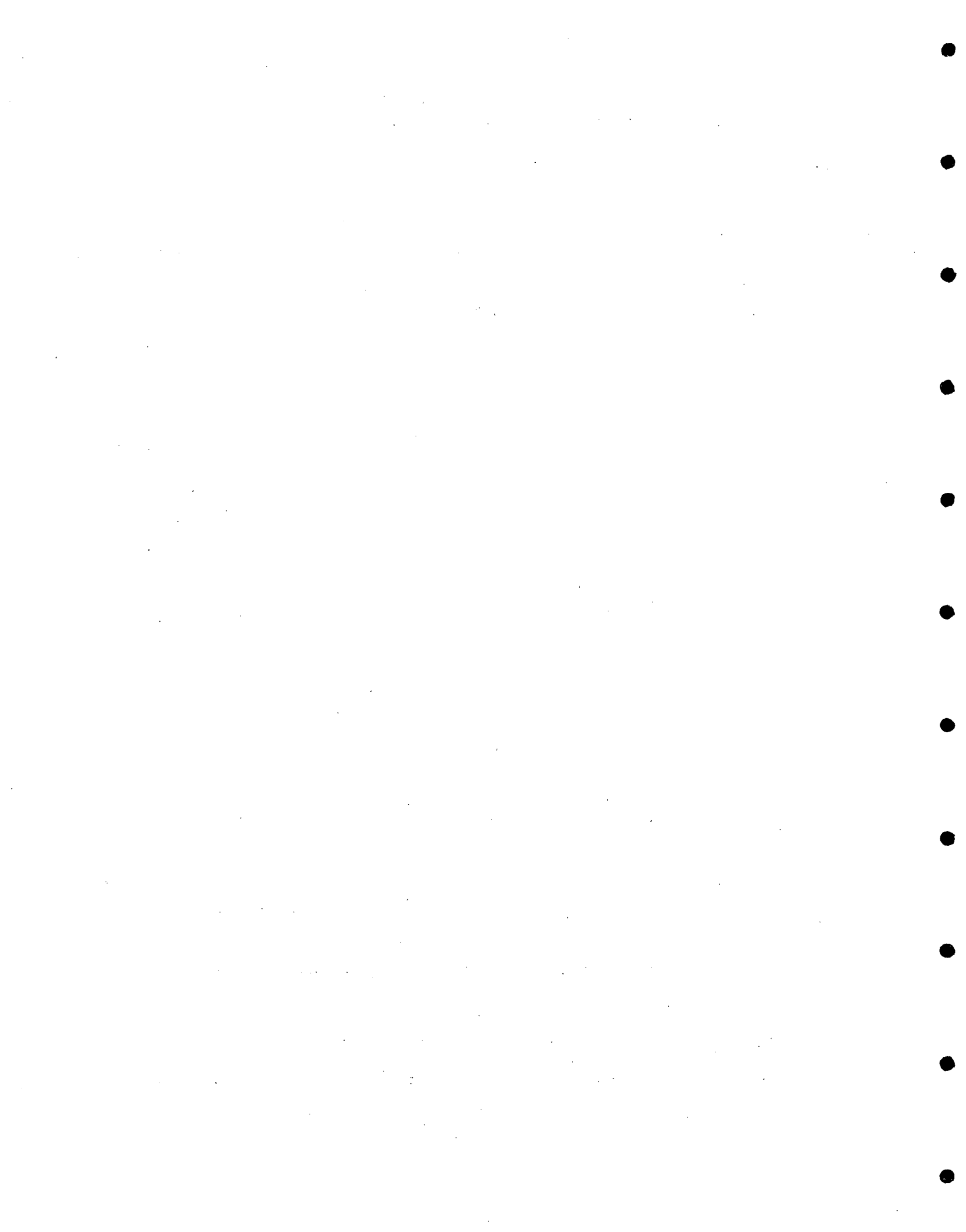




for successful social navigation. For impression management to be successful, one had to be skillful, alert, and agile during daily social interaction. The general assumption was that higher education aided the individual in doing so.

Hypothesis 6 was partially confirmed by the causal model. Single parents experienced the most distress over the daily use of new name, while intact families, even those with young children, experienced comparatively less distress. Why is that? One can imagine that there is an issue of control involved. Childless adults seeking to pass under an assumed name can work out strategies for doing so in advance. Adults have greater perception of the importance of successful passing since they know the consequences of failure all too well. Even when the family unit includes children, having two adults around provides greater control: the children are not left in the care of "outsiders" or alone and unsupervised, as may be the case in the single parent situation. This lack of control is exacerbated by the fact that children sometimes cannot appreciate the necessity of living under a new name and may not be well versed on how to keep their past name a secret. Whether the child's disclosure will be taken seriously by other children or even adults is not the issue. At the very least the child is likely to place the parent in awkward, contradictory, and embarrassing situations. Parents are put in the position of having to explain, perhaps on a moment's notice, their child's inadvertent self-disclosure.

Hypothesis 7 proved correct and statistically significant. Witnesses experienced less distress than nonwitnesses. The reason may be that 95 percent of them were criminally involved and thus have more experience with secrecy, concealment, and fabrication. Further,



witnesses may invest more deeply in adjusting because they know the consequences of failure all too well.

### Distress Over Relocation

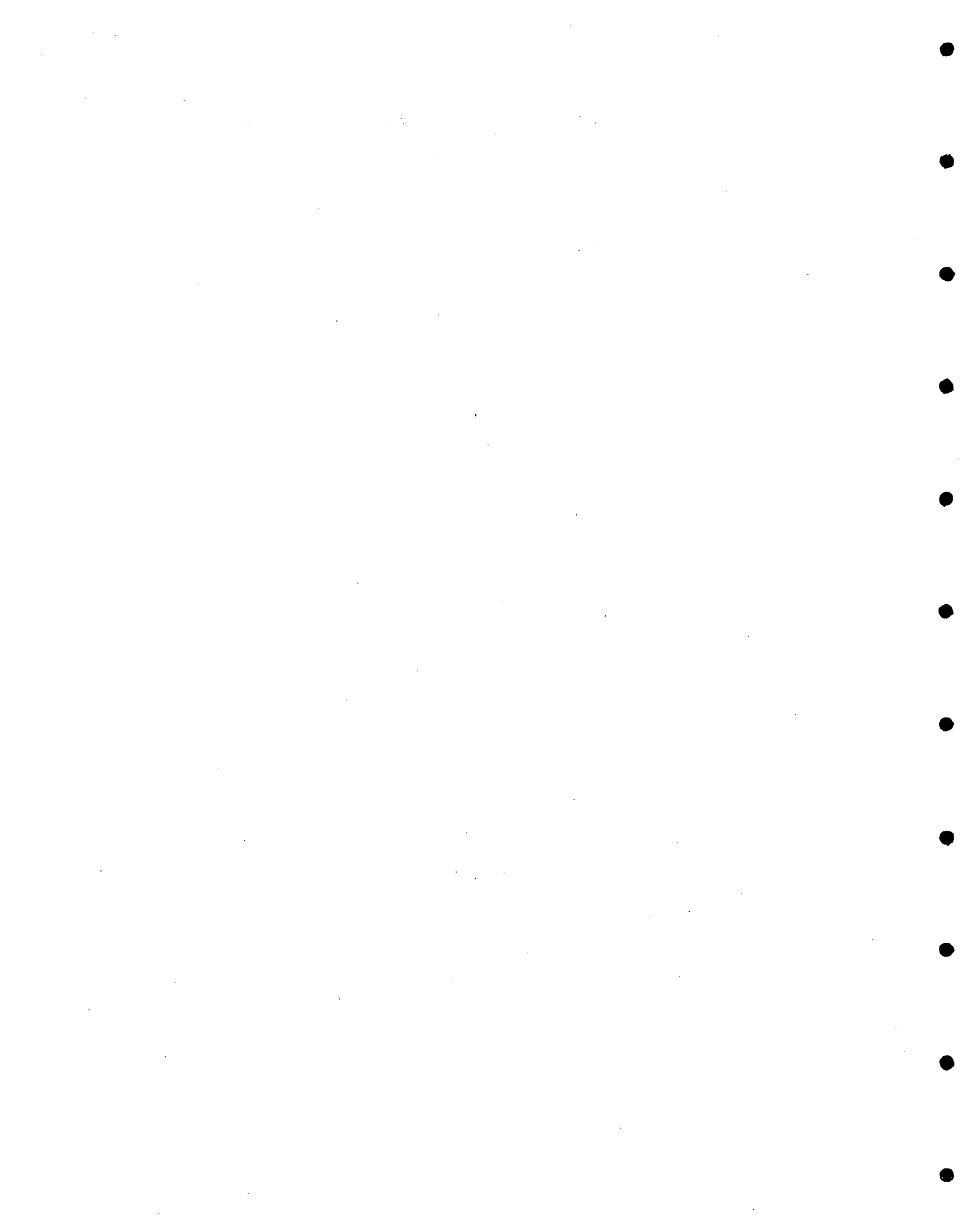
In contrast to the Community Connectedness Scale, the Distress Over Relocation Scale was much more personal in its probing. With the Distress Over Relocation Scale, personal feelings of comfort, the degree of happiness respondents felt in the new community, and whether the new community had the potential to offer them fulfilling lives were of central concern. The Likert questions that comprised the Relocation Scale<sup>8</sup> focused on the attitudes of respondents to their new living area-- its population density, terrain, climate, social organization, and the quality of life they perceived their new community to afford them. These questions were concerned with the respondents' impressions, feelings, and attitudes regarding their new living area. They were quite separate, independent, and substantially different from the Community Connectedness Scale.

Several hypotheses about the factors that influence distress over relocation are given below.

Community connectedness may influence distress over relocation. The more involved you are with community relations and organizations, the easier it is for you to adjust to the relocation. Thus:

H1 The more connected people are to the community, the less distress they will experience over relocation.

In the model dealing with distress over relocation, distress over the use of new name in daily life was used as an independent variable. Individuals receive their new names before they move to permanent locations. The experience of using an assumed name will influence,



encourage, or discourage community participation, and failure to participate can lead to isolation and distress. Thus:

H2 The more distressed people are over the use of a new name, the more distressed they will be over relocation.

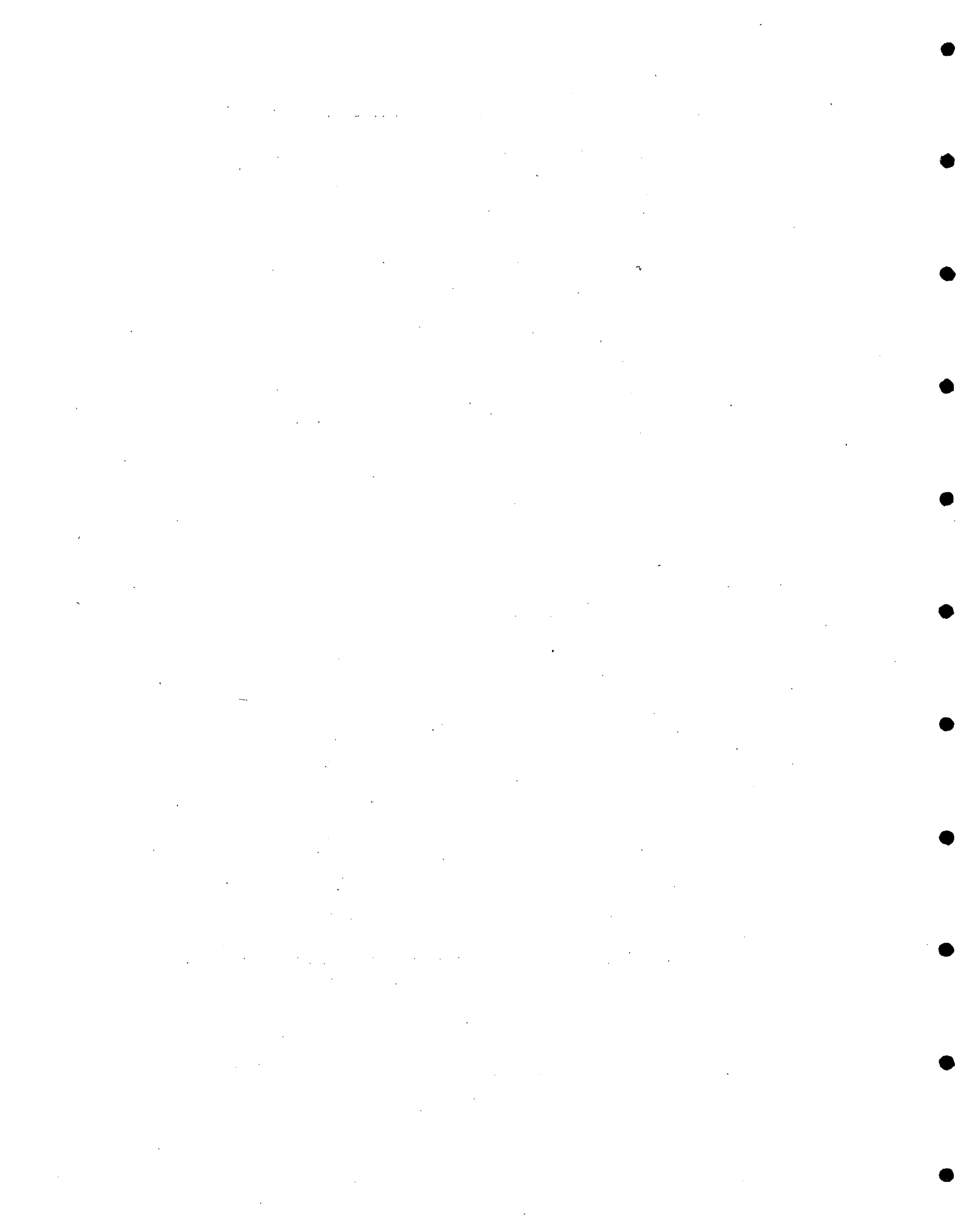
Living alone in the area of relocation should prove more distressing than living with another adult partner because it produces feelings of isolation. An adult partner may lend support and favorably influence perceptions of the new area. Thus:

H3 Living with another adult partner results in less distress over relocation.

It seems a matter of common sense that the amount of time spent in the program, all other factors held constant, will influence distress over relocation--with distress decreasing over time. The individual, we may assume, becomes more familiar with, established in, and used to the new area of relocation. Thus:

H4 The more time people spend in the program, all other factors held constant, the less distress they feel over relocation.

Program members can be relocated anywhere in this large and diverse country. Regions differ not only in climate, terrain, and population density, but also in styles of living, customs, and ideological outlooks on life. These differences are pronounced when one compares urban with rural living. Respondents who said they had made an urban-to-urban or rural-to-rural relocation experienced essentially a move to the same type of place--one, presumably, that would be easier to adapt to. Such adaptation is aided by what has been called "recipe knowledge" in the sociological literature.<sup>9</sup> People who perceive themselves to have made a dissimilar move (i.e., rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural) should have greater feelings of displacement, loneliness, discomfort, distress, and



are armed with recipe knowledge which is insufficient in helping them blend into their new community. Thus:

- H5 People who move to similar places have less distress over relocation than people who move to places of a different type.

Employment is a key element of self-esteem and self-fulfillment, so it seems reasonable to assume employment reduces distress over relocation. Thus:

- H6 Employed people have less distress over relocation than unemployed people.

Release from prison or avoiding it altogether should affect the distress over relocation respondents experience. Better to be a free person anywhere instead of in prison. Thus:

- H7 People with prison experience have less distress over relocation than people without such experience.

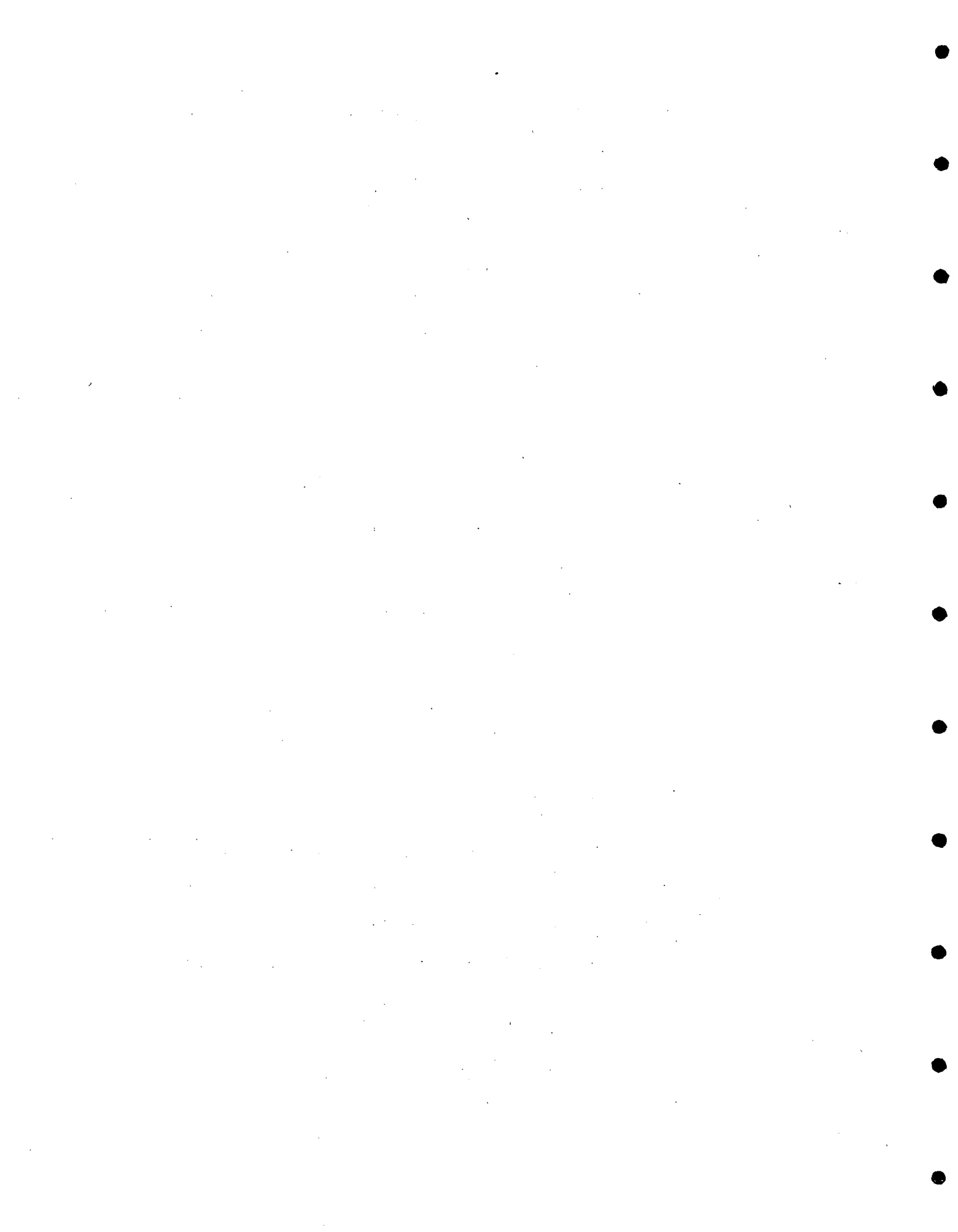
Analysis of the dependent variable:  
Distress over relocation

Based on a comparison of means tests and correlations, distress over relocation showed no relationship with any of the core demographic variables (sex, age, race, education). Hispanics had a much higher mean distress score than others, but there were too few of them in the sample to be statistically significant.

Having been in prison slightly reduced the distress over relocation ( $r = -.147$ ,  $p = .056$ ). Although there was no way of determining whether respondents moved directly from prison, this may very well have been the case. If so, relocation would have meant freedom to them--accounting for the decrease in distress.

Nonwitnesses scored slightly higher than witnesses on the distress scale, about 1.5 points higher, but not enough to assert statistical





significance. Thus, with distress over relocation, the witness versus nonwitness distinction fell away.

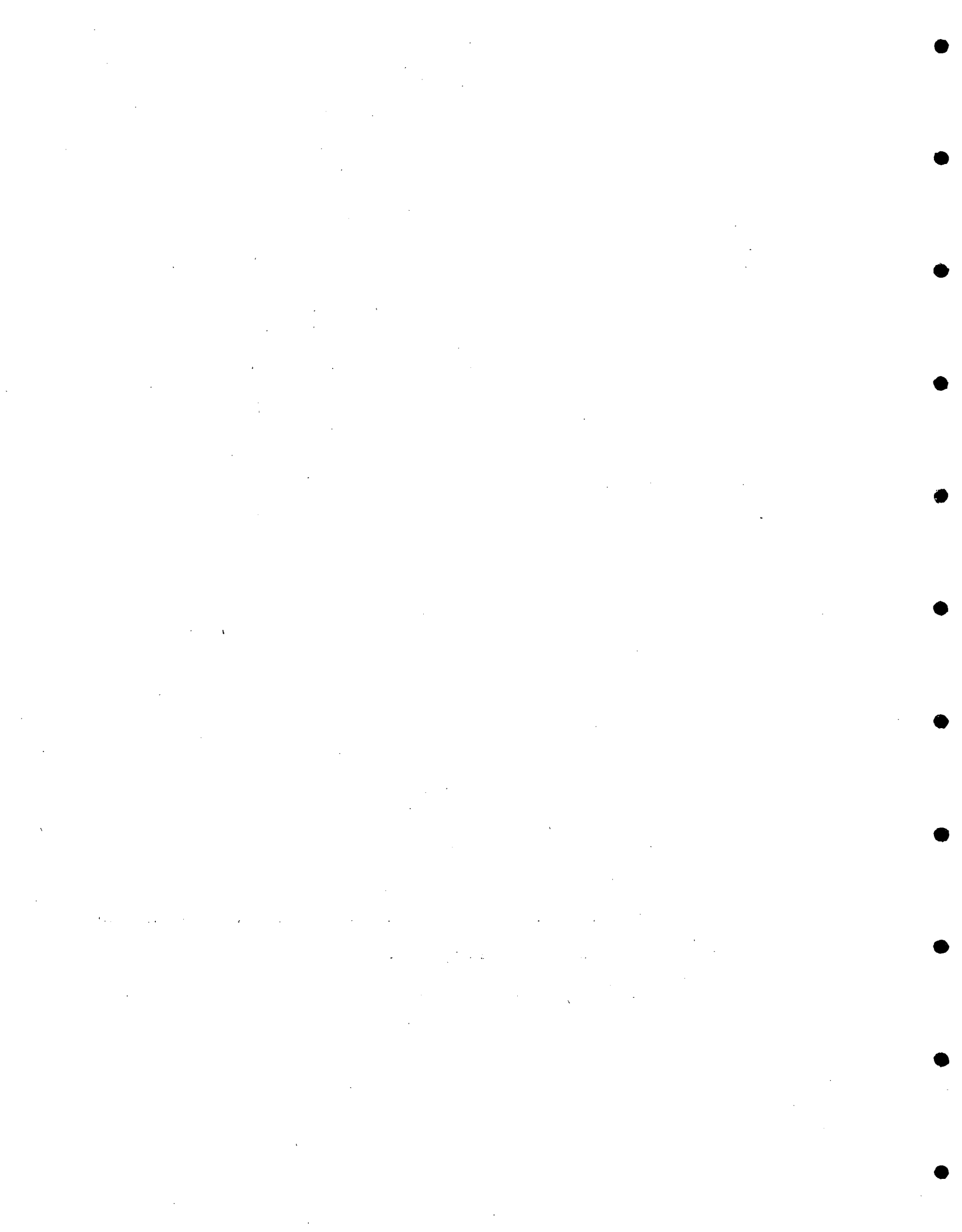
Living situation had some very moderate effects on distress over relocation. Those who lived alone were somewhat more distressed ( $r=.131$ ,  $p=.080$ ) than those who live with another adult partner ( $r=-.153$ ,  $p=.040$ ). Childless couples were the least distressed, while couples with high school age children were the most (based on their mean scores on the distress scale).

The amount of time spent in the program and the frequency of moves after enrollment, by themselves, showed no statistical significance. As expected, when the two were combined, those who were in the program a short time and moved around frequently showed somewhat more distress ( $r=.138$ ,  $p=.060$ ).

Work status, nature of  
the move, and distress

Respondents who were employed experienced slightly less distress over relocation ( $r=-.188$ ,  $p=.010$ ) than those who were unemployed. However, the length of time a client had been working showed no effect on distress over relocation.

The nature of the move clients made showed some statistically significant effect on their distress over relocation. Those who moved from a rural area to another rural area were somewhat less distressed ( $r=-.215$ ,  $p=.004$ ), while those who moved from an urban area to a rural area experienced somewhat more distress ( $r=.181$ ,  $p=.016$ ). Generally, people who made similar moves (i.e., rural-to-rural or urban-to-urban) and perceived some continuity in their move experienced relatively less distress ( $r=-.208$ ,  $p=.005$ ) than those who made different moves (i.e.,



urban-to-rural or rural-to-urban) and perceived some discontinuity in their move ( $r=.230$ ,  $p=.002$ ). It seems that it was slightly more stressful to relocate to a different social and spatial environment than it was to move to a similar one. Further, whether the move was similar or different affected males more than females. Males showed an eight point reduction on the mean distress score for similar moves, while there was only a one point reduction for females. Generally, males adjusted slightly better to an urban-to-urban move than did females. But these findings may be due to differing rates of unemployment in the new living area (see Table 9).

Unemployment rates were lower for males who made a similar move (44.8 percent) than they were for females (70.9 percent). Forty-eight percent of the males who made an urban-to-urban move were unemployed compared to 74.2 percent of the females who made the same type of move.

#### Developing a causal model of distress over relocation

The following independent variables seem the best suited to explain distress over relocation: (1) community connectedness, (2) nature of relocation, (3) distress over use of new name, (4) living situation, (5) employment or work status, (6) whether time was served in prison, and (7) time in program. This particular model, or choice of independent variables, was based on the notion that in causal explanation one should use as few independent variables as possible without excluding a variable which might affect the dependent variable.

Reviewing the causal model explaining Distress Over Relocation in Table 10, one can see four statistically significant independent variables.

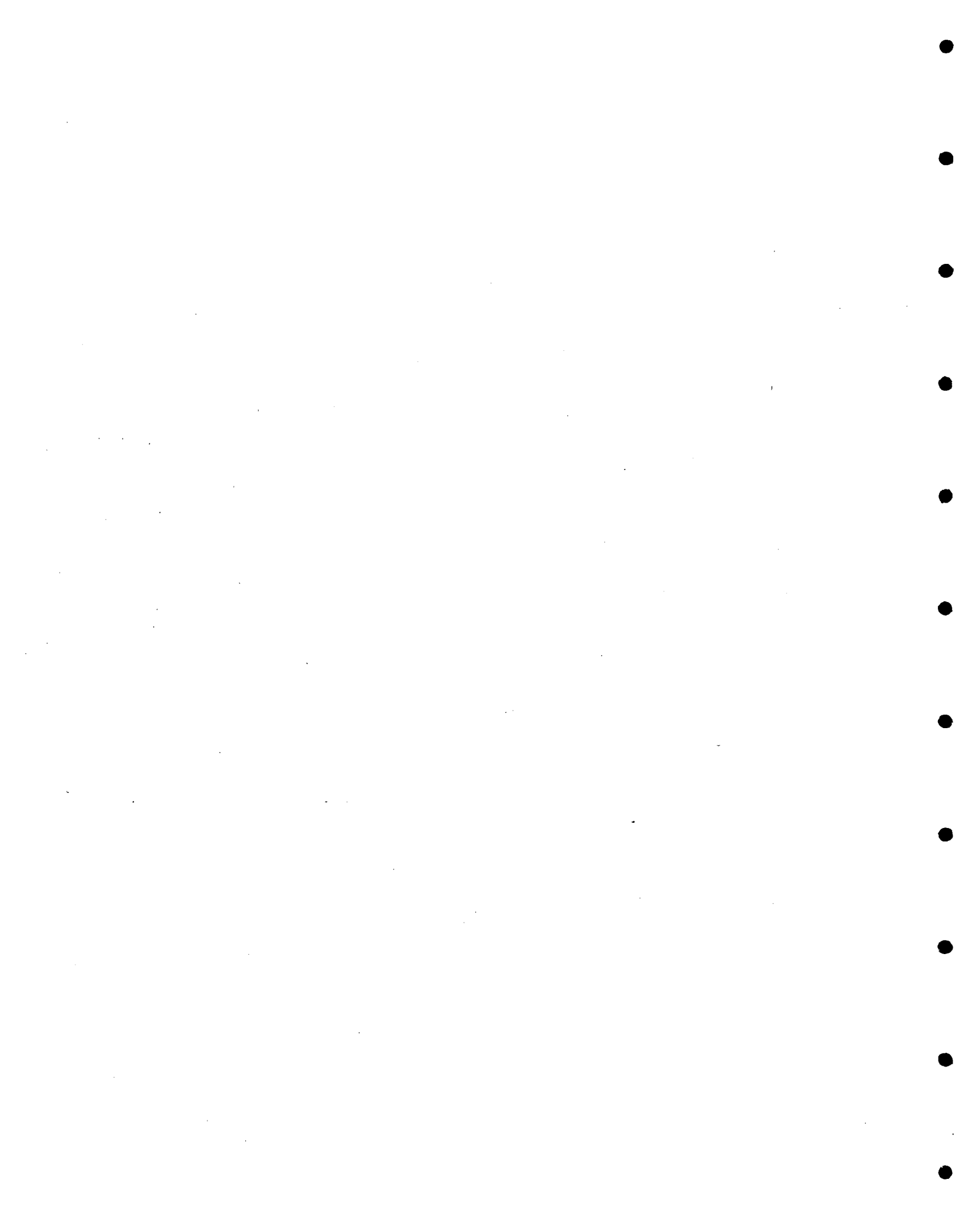


Table 9. Percentage of Respondents Who Were Unemployed  
by Nature of Relocation and Sex

Nature of Relocation	Percentage Unemployed				
	Male		Sex Female		Total
	percent	(N)	percent	(N)	percent (N)
Whole Sample	52.5	(90)	73.5	(76)	62.0 (166)
Similar Move	44.8	(58)	70.9	(38)	55.0 (96)
Urban-urban	48.0	(50)	74.2	(35)	58.8 (85)
Rural-rural	25.0	(8)	33.3	(3)	27.2 (11)
Different Move	66.0	(32)	76.0	(38)	71.4 (70)
Urban-rural	68.7	(16)	80.0	(15)	74.2 (31)
Rural-urban	62.5	(16)	73.9	(23)	69.2 (39)

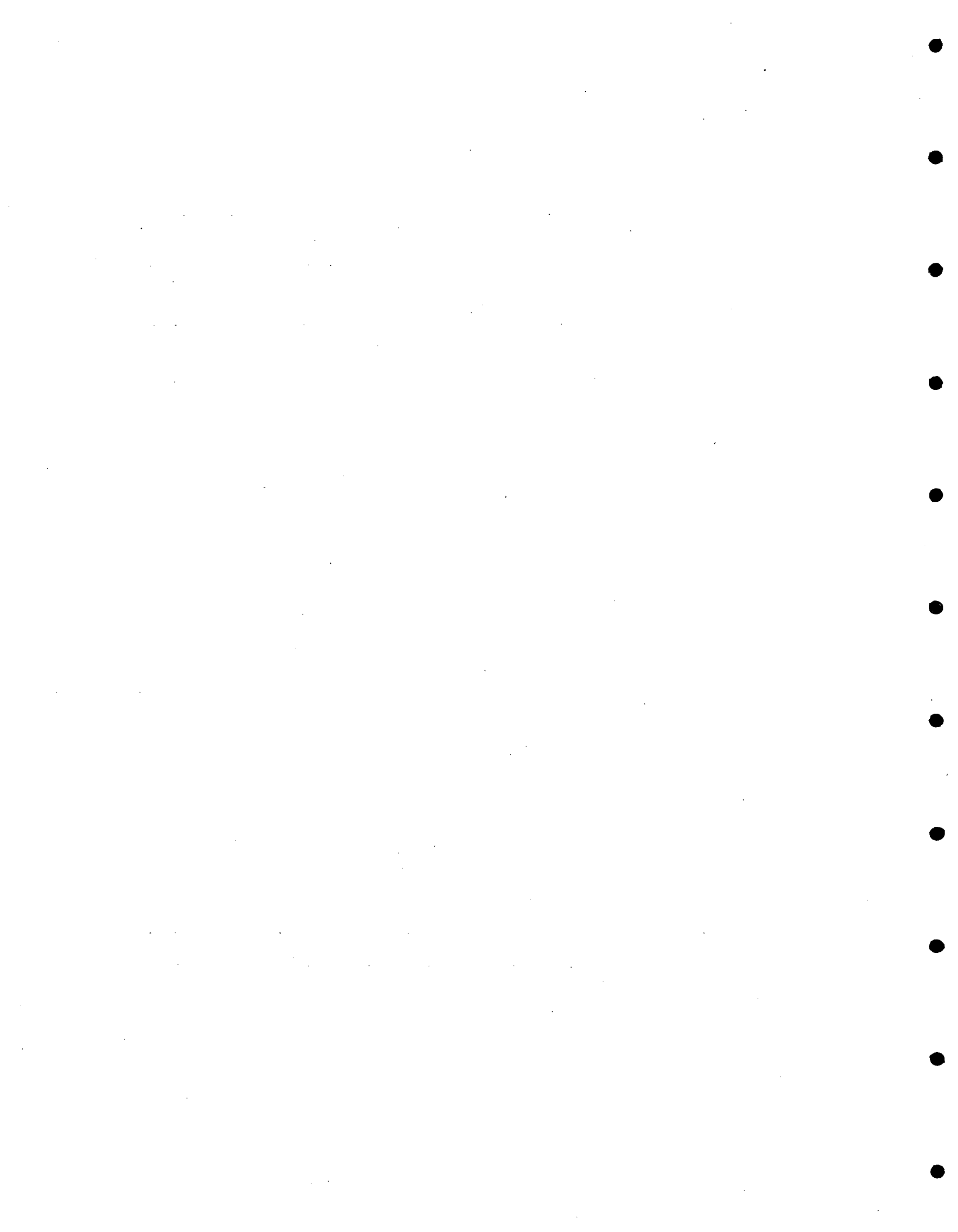


Table 10. Regression Coefficients Explaining  
Distress Over Relocation (N=168)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables <sup>a</sup>	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients	Standardized Regression Coefficients
Distress Over Relocation	Community Connectedness (high connectedness)	-1.147*	-.343*
	Nature of Relocation (residential move to different place: urban-rural; rural-urban)	3.772*	.183*
	Distress Over Use of New Name (high distress)	.282*	.172*
	Living Situation (with another adult)	-2.764**	-.128**
	Employment Status (employed)	-2.155	-.103
	Time in Program (over three years)	2.953	.097
	Prison (prison time)	-1.337	-.061
			$R^2 = .305$

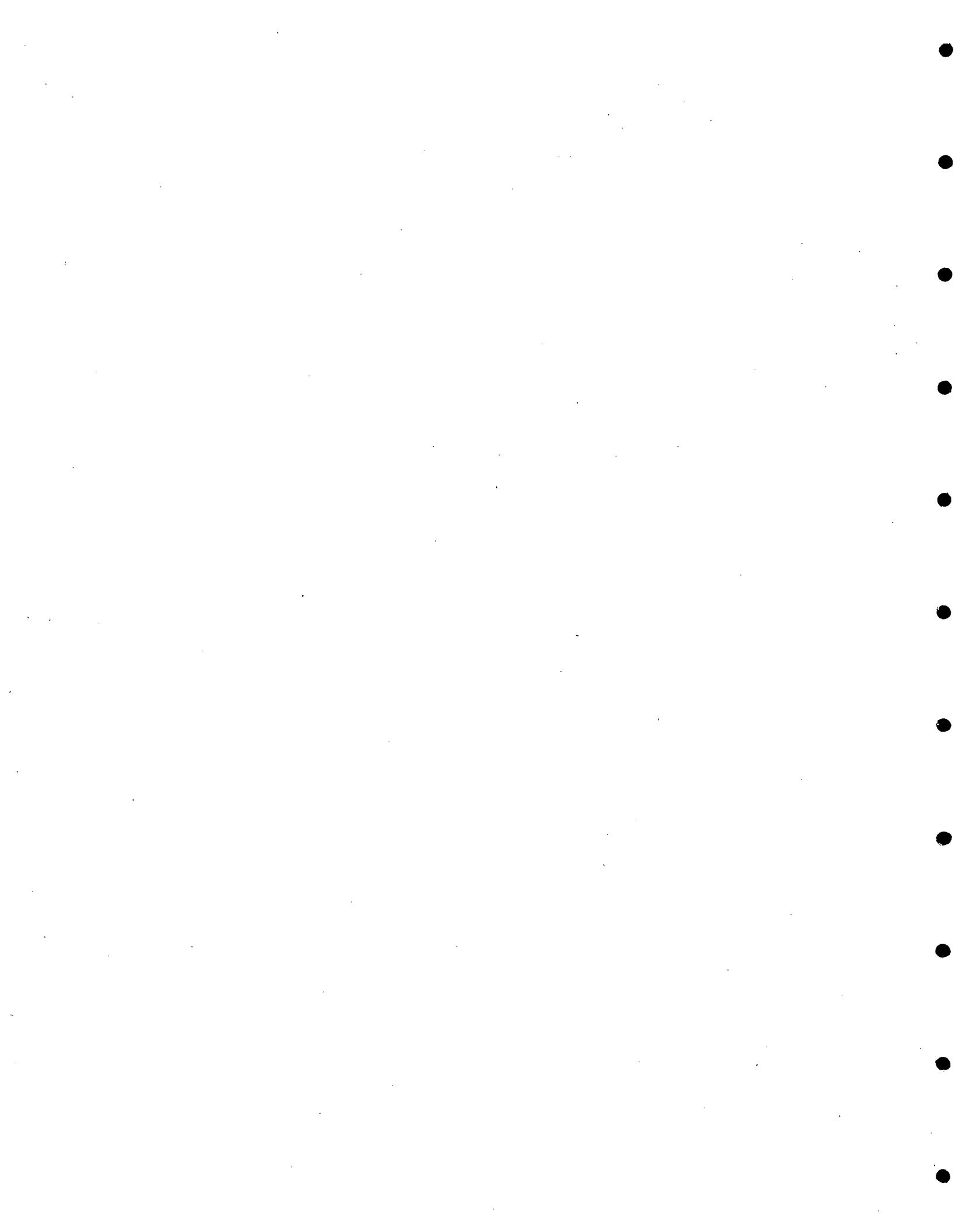
<sup>a</sup>The high pole for each variable is given in parentheses.

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

\*\*Significant at the .10 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress





Community connectedness had a clear, statistically significant relationship with distress over relocation. Also, the nature of relocation, distress over use of new name, and living situation were important as well. The amount of time in program, employment status, and whether prison time was served did not prove statistically significant.

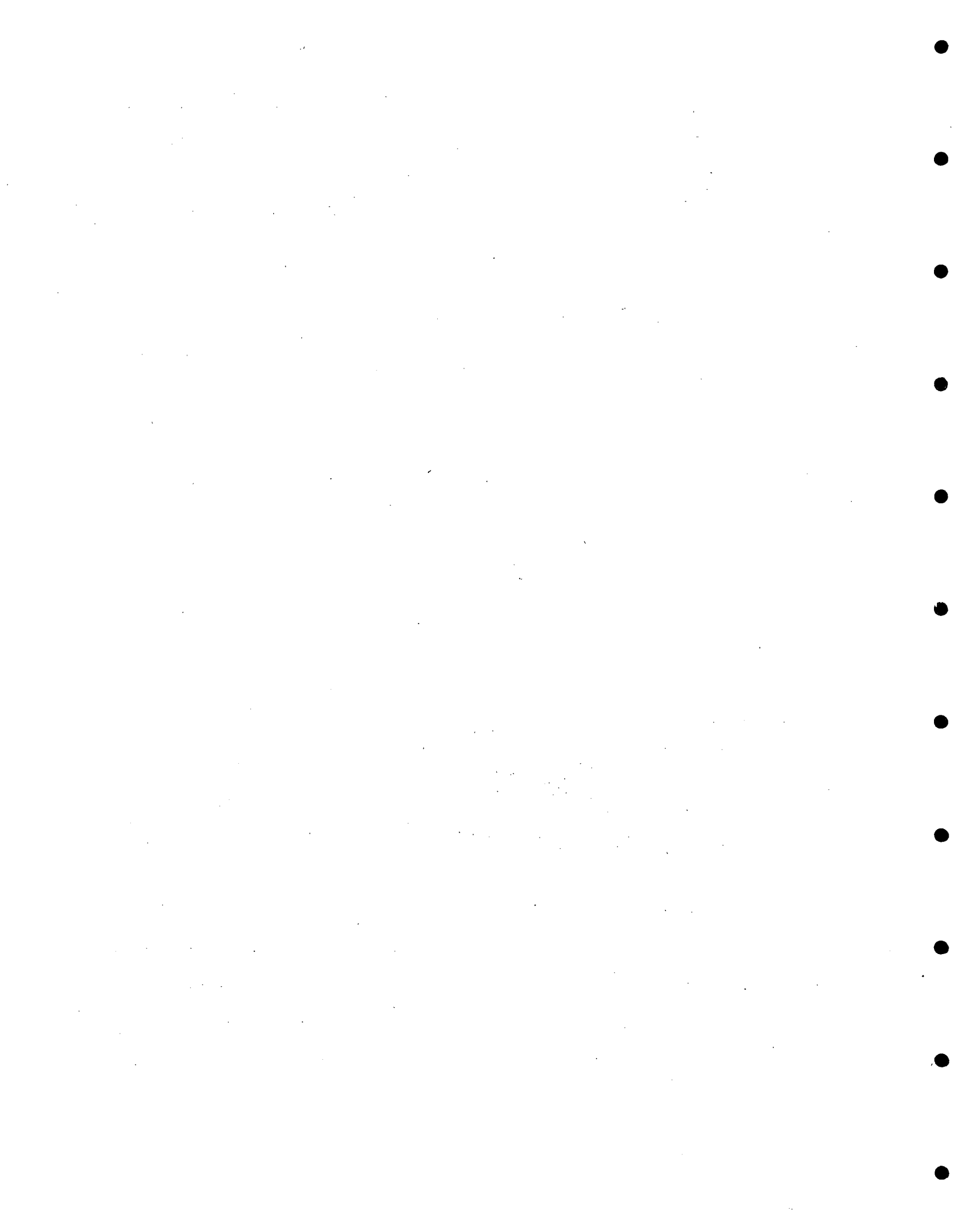
Summary: Distress Over Relocation

<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Supported</u>
H1	Community Connectedness	Yes
H2	Distress Over Use of New Name	Yes
H3	Living Situation	Yes
H4	Time in Program	No
H5	Nature of Relocation	Yes
H6	Employment Status	No
H7	Prison	No

Summary and explanation

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. The more an individual was connected to the new community, the less distress was experienced over relocation. Again, clients who fared better maintained at least the same level of community connectedness they had in their old community. Perhaps increased connection in the new community reduced distress because individuals were more likely to view the new area as similar to the old-- they perceived themselves to be busy, or they perceived the new area to offer as much as the old area. They also may have perceived the new area to offer them a fulfilling life.

Hypothesis 2 was also confirmed. It was reasoned that the comfort or discomfort of using an assumed name would affect client perception of the relocation. As distress over the use of new name increased, so did distress over relocation. In fact it is difficult to imagine people



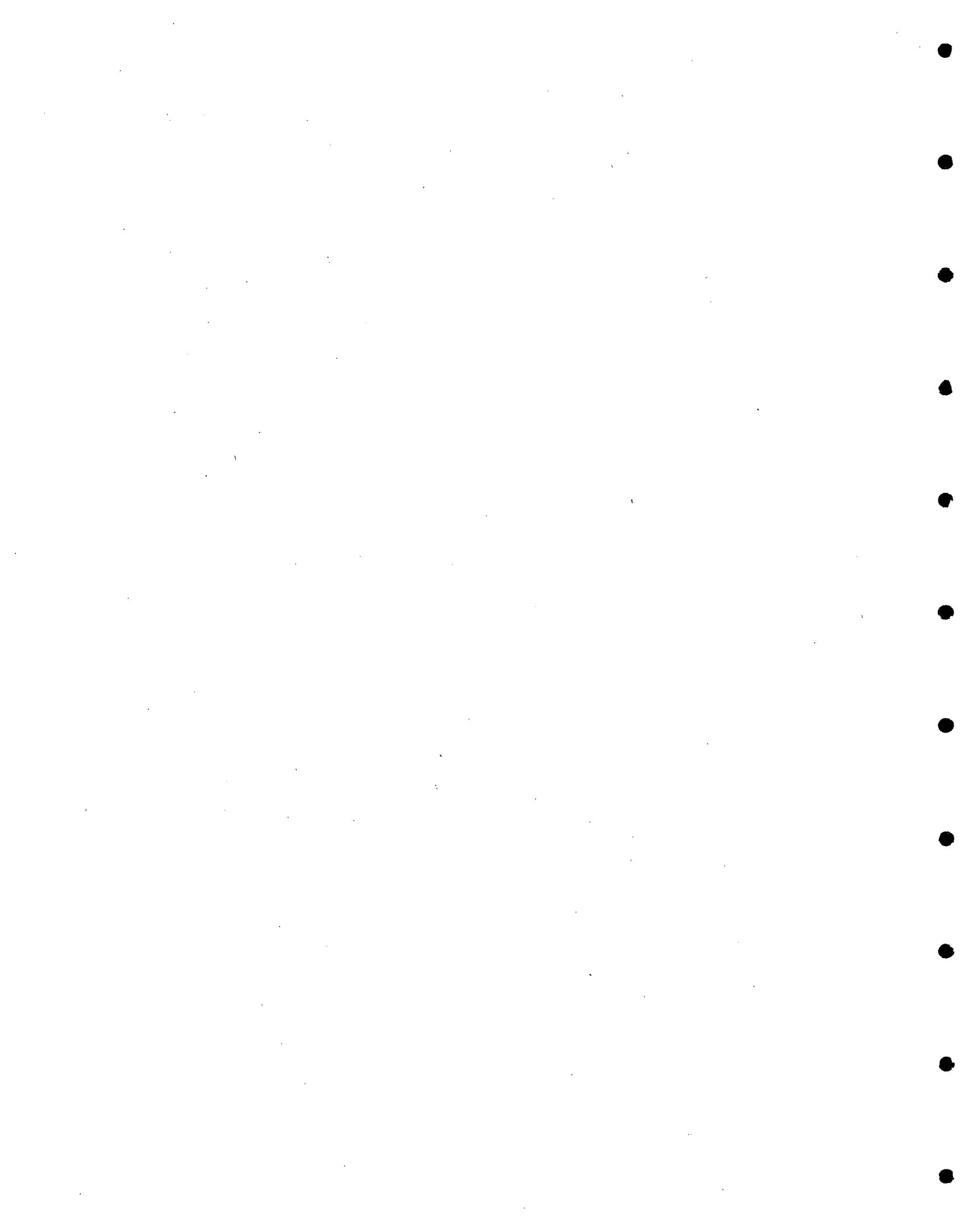
being happy with their relocation if they were so distressed over using their new name that they shunned social interaction. People need to interact with others in their new community if they are ever going to feel that the place to which they have moved offers them an opportunity for a fulfilling life.

Hypothesis 3 was confirmed. Living with another adult partner, as opposed to living alone, resulted in less distress over relocation. The strangeness of living in a new area was mitigated by the presence of another adult or a familiar partner.

Hypothesis 4 was disconfirmed. The data showed that the length of time spent in the program did not result in a lessening of distress. It may be the case that people have moved a number of times during their period in the program because of the need to relocate every time security is breached. Thus, there is no way of asserting that those in the program the longest were in the same community all the time. Also, people were not required to stay in the program after they were stable and reintegrated, and many of those who have adjusted over time may have left--and are, of course, not part of this sample.

Hypothesis 5 was confirmed. Continuity of social and spatial surroundings led to less distress over relocation. Relocating to similar areas seemed to take the edge off the "strangeness" one might otherwise feel.

Hypothesis 6 was disconfirmed. Employment was not related to distress over relocation. Although earlier analysis seemed to indicate that employment was an important factor, it seems that other factors (such as the nature of the relocation) intervened to negate the effect of employment. Similarly, hypothesis 7 was disconfirmed. Prison experience



had no apparent effect on the distress one was likely to encounter in relocating.

#### Program Participation and Alienation

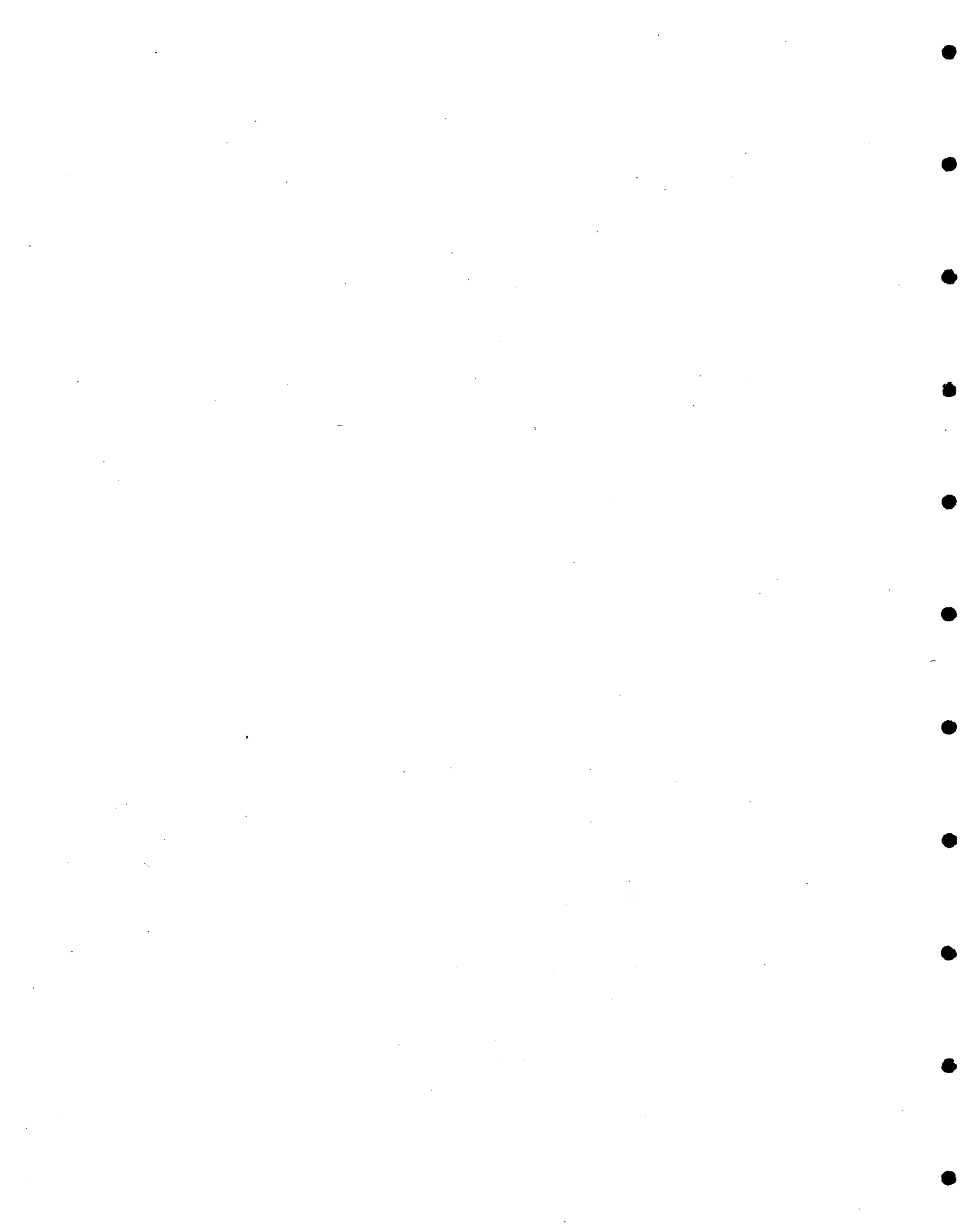
This scale measured respondents' feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and isolation. I suspected that such feelings would emerge, to a greater or lesser degree, as individuals struggled to adjust to their new identity and location. Alienation, here, means an enduring rather than a transient state of mind. The following responses demonstrate that there is little consensus among respondents. Some respondents spoke of strong feelings of alienation; others felt they experienced greater control over their lives and found them more meaningful. On the one hand:

I'm by myself, my family and loved ones don't know where I am or who I am, and I can't see or be with them. I'm dealing with people with different backgrounds than I'm used to. I wanted a second chance; the person I wish to become is suffering growing pains. I'm not even the person I was. (male witness)

You can't account for your life in the past . . . you just live a lie. You live from day to day, you never know what the future will hold. I always felt that by this time in my life I would be somewhere and feel safe. Now, it seems I'm struggling to survive. I lost my husband because of this program, he could not adapt to living a lie and giving up our family and the security we had. I lost everything. I lost the person I loved. I am alone and struggling. I have to cope from day to day with no one to tell my problems to. (female nonwitness)

On the other hand:

I have more control over my life. Before, my life was going nowhere and my goals were uncertain. This experience has helped me now complete my goals. I feel safe, I can enjoy life more, and I relate to others better. (male witness)



I believe it is all up to the person to mentally adjust themselves and forget the past. In my daily life they only know me as I am, new name, business associate. . . . I have no problems communicating. Only the inspector knows who I am and myself so I don't worry about meeting people and business contacts. I have more control of my life and I have earned the respect of my neighbors and business associates. I belong to church organizations and go to civic affairs. (male witness)

The powerlessness, isolation, and despair reflected in the first pair of responses are absent in the second. These responses tend to lean overwhelmingly in one direction or the other, and were chosen specifically because of this. Other responses were less defined and more mixed. Clearly, the task was to get a general measure of such feelings across the client sample.

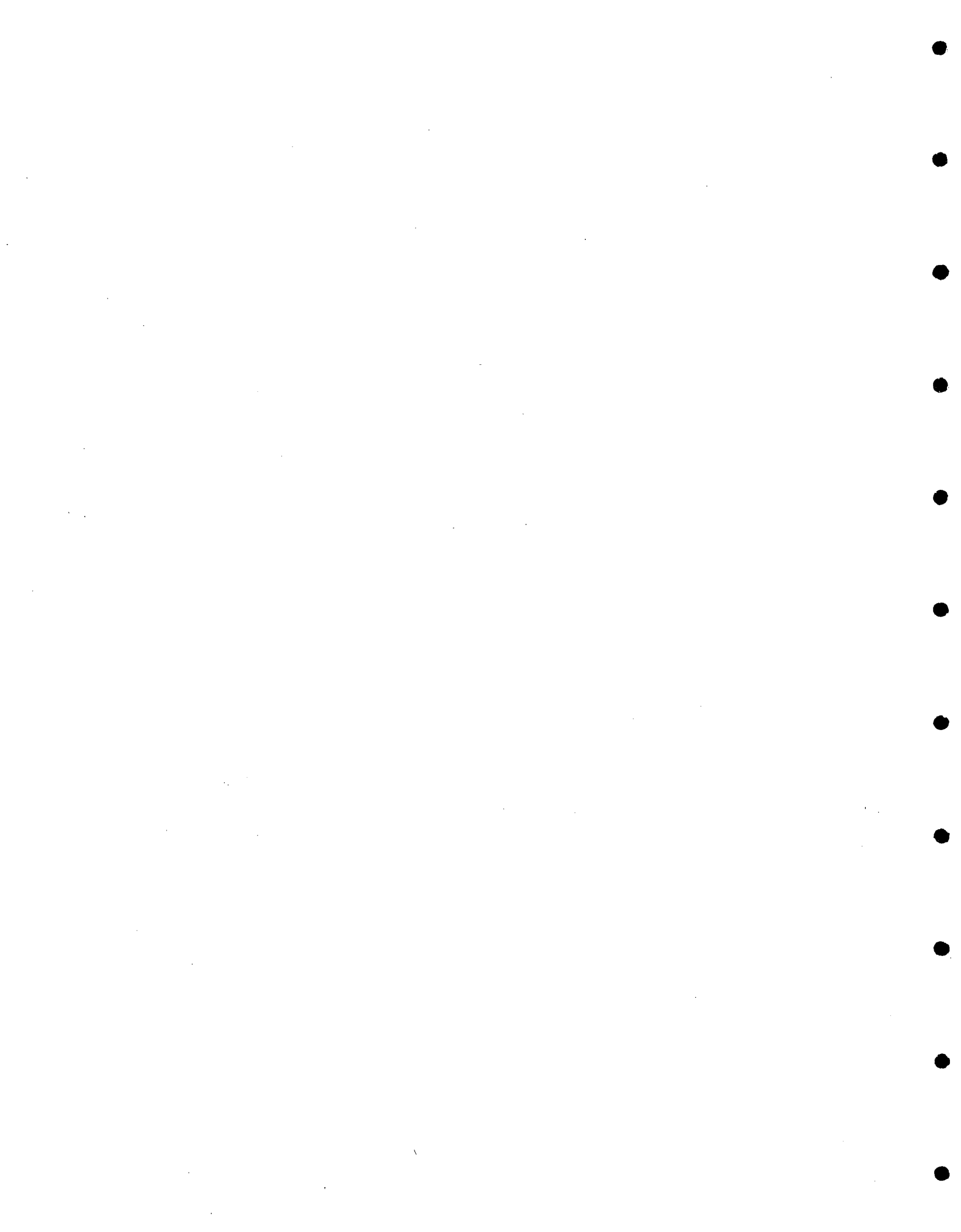
Analysis of dependent variable: Alienation

The scale used to measure alienation was constructed from four Likert-type questions. Having been coded from 1 through 5, the lowest possible score was 4 and the highest was 20. The median was 10 and the mean score averaged out to only .68 points higher than the median. Twenty-five percent of the sample fell into a distressed range (scoring 15 to 20); another 25 percent fell into a non-distressed range (scoring 5 to 10); and 50 percent fell in between.

The goal of this analysis was to determine what independent variables influenced clients' feelings of alienation. Three hypotheses were made at the outset. It stands to reason that community connectedness should influence clients' alienation. Thus:

- H1 The more connected people are to the community, the less alienated they should feel.





Whether one is working or not should affect client feelings of alienation as well. Work should provide one with a sense of meaning and integration. Thus:

H2 Employed people should feel less alienated than unemployed people.

It also stands to reason that successful adjustment to the use of new name and to relocation should lead to diminishing alienation. Thus:

H3 People who are more distressed over the use of their new name and relocation should feel more alienated than people who are less distressed.

#### Developing a causal model of alienation from program participation

Only a few variables appeared to have any connection with alienation. The only non-scaled items which had some slight connection with the alienation scale were sex ( $r=.160$ , female), serving time in prison ( $r=-.182$ ), and being employed ( $r=-.186$ ).

By creating dummy variables we can view the relationship between sex and witness status with regard to alienation (see Table 11). Previously, female witnesses followed the distress pattern of their male counterparts more closely than the female nonwitnesses. Table 11 shows a break in this pattern. In this instance, female witnesses followed female nonwitnesses more closely in the direction (or sign) of their distress. In other words, both female witnesses and nonwitnesses experienced distress, while the male witnesses did not. Thus, sex, rather than witness status, seemed a likely variable to include in the causal model.<sup>10</sup>

A regression model was developed using three non-scaled items as independent variables and three scaled items. They were sex, work

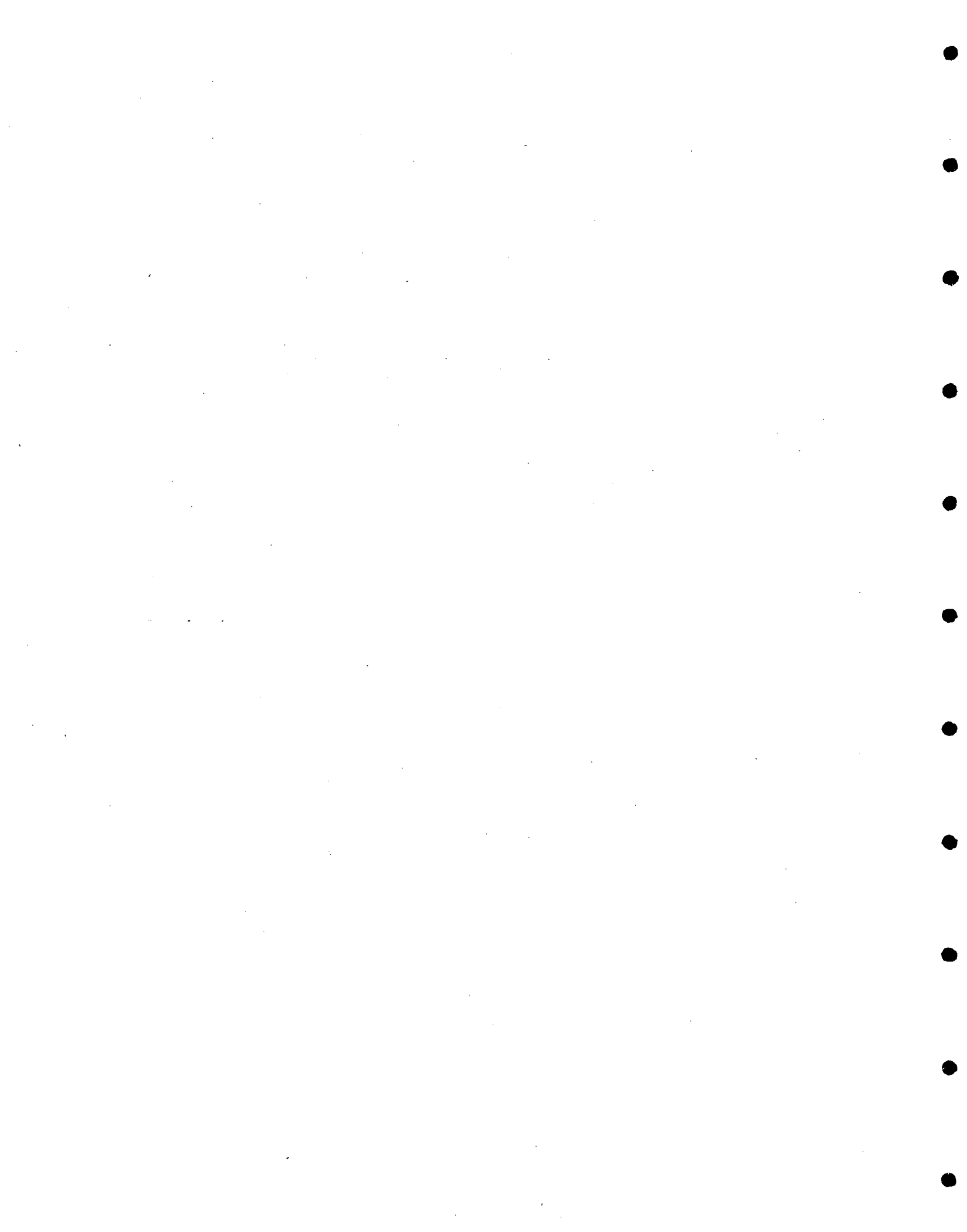


Table 11. Correlation Coefficients of Alienation  
With Witness Status and Sex (N=173)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables <sup>a</sup>	Correlation Coefficients
Alienation	Male Witness (87) <sup>b</sup>	-.190*
	Female Witness (20)	.143
	Male Nonwitness (8)	.071
	Female Nonwitness (58)	.091

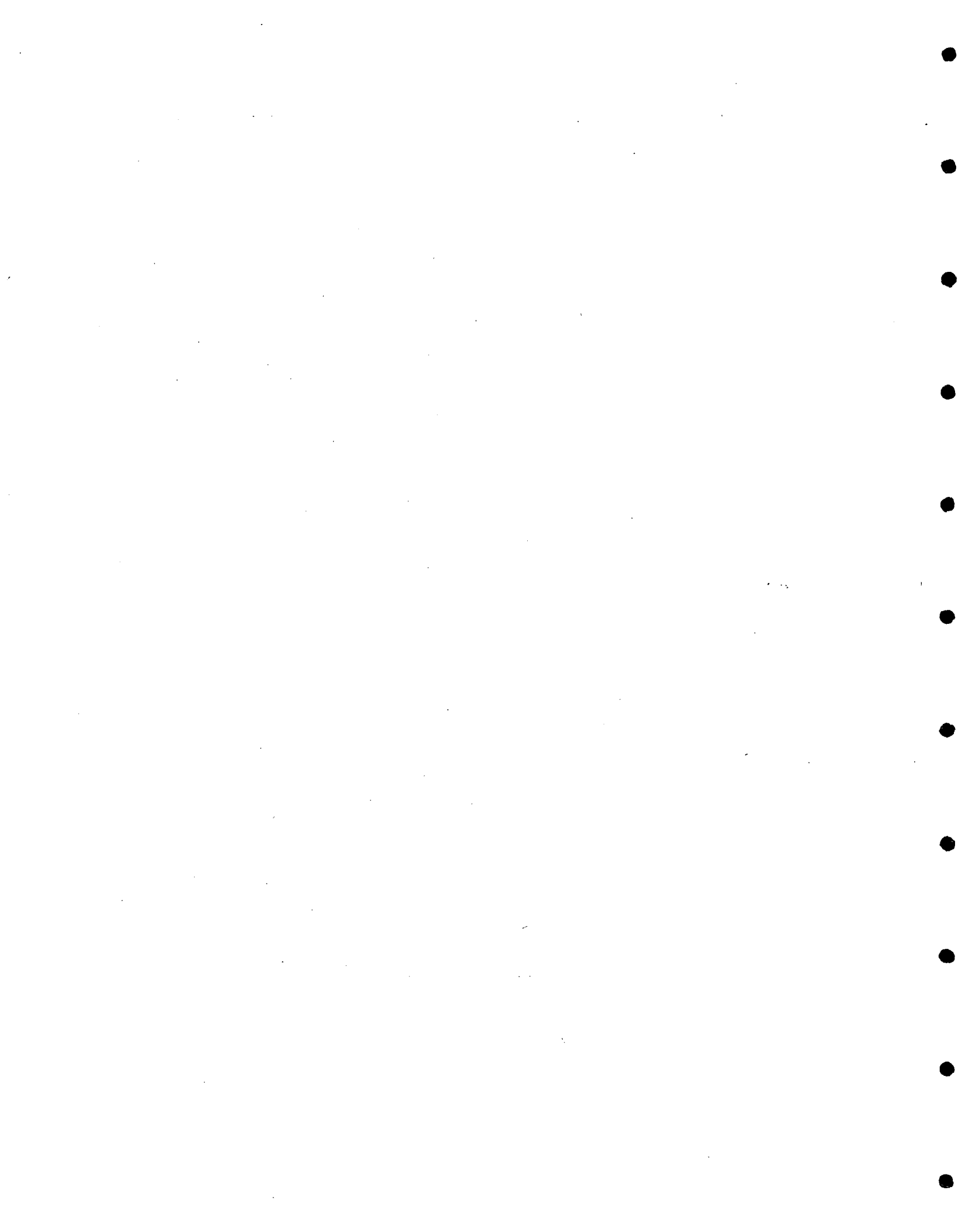
<sup>a</sup>A new dummy variable called WISTSEX was created which had four categories:

- If WIST=1 and SEX=1 then WISTSEX=Male Witness
- If WIST=1 and SEX=2 then WISTSEX=Female Witness
- If WIST=2 and SEX=1 then WISTSEX=Male Nonwitness
- If WIST=2 and SEX=2 then WISTSEX=Female Nonwitness

<sup>b</sup>The number of cases on which the correlation is based is given in parentheses.

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress



status, and prison (non-scaled items) and distress over use of new name, distress over relocation, and community connectedness (scaled items). The addition of sex and prison to the model generated two additional hypotheses.

H4 Females should be more alienated than males.

H5 Those who served time in prison should be less alienated than those who did not.

Regarding hypothesis 5, it was assumed that imprisonment was the ultimate alienating experience and would make the potential alienation growing from program participation pale in comparison.

Examining the results of the multiple regression (see Table 12), it can be seen that none of the non-scaled items (sex, work status, and prison) proved statistically significant in explaining alienation. Of the scaled items, community connectedness, for the first time, failed to exert significant influence, despite the fact that there was every indication that it should have. The only hypothesis confirmed by the model was:

H3 People who are more distressed over the use of their new name and relocation should feel more alienated than people who are less distressed.

Stated another way, successful adaptation in the program resulted in little perception of alienation. With failure to adapt, however, feelings of distress over use of new name and relocation generated a sense of alienation.

#### Distress Profiles Over Use of New Name and Relocation

The regression models explaining distress over use of new name and relocation allow the development of distress profiles--that is, they allow the listing of client characteristics which are likely to indicate

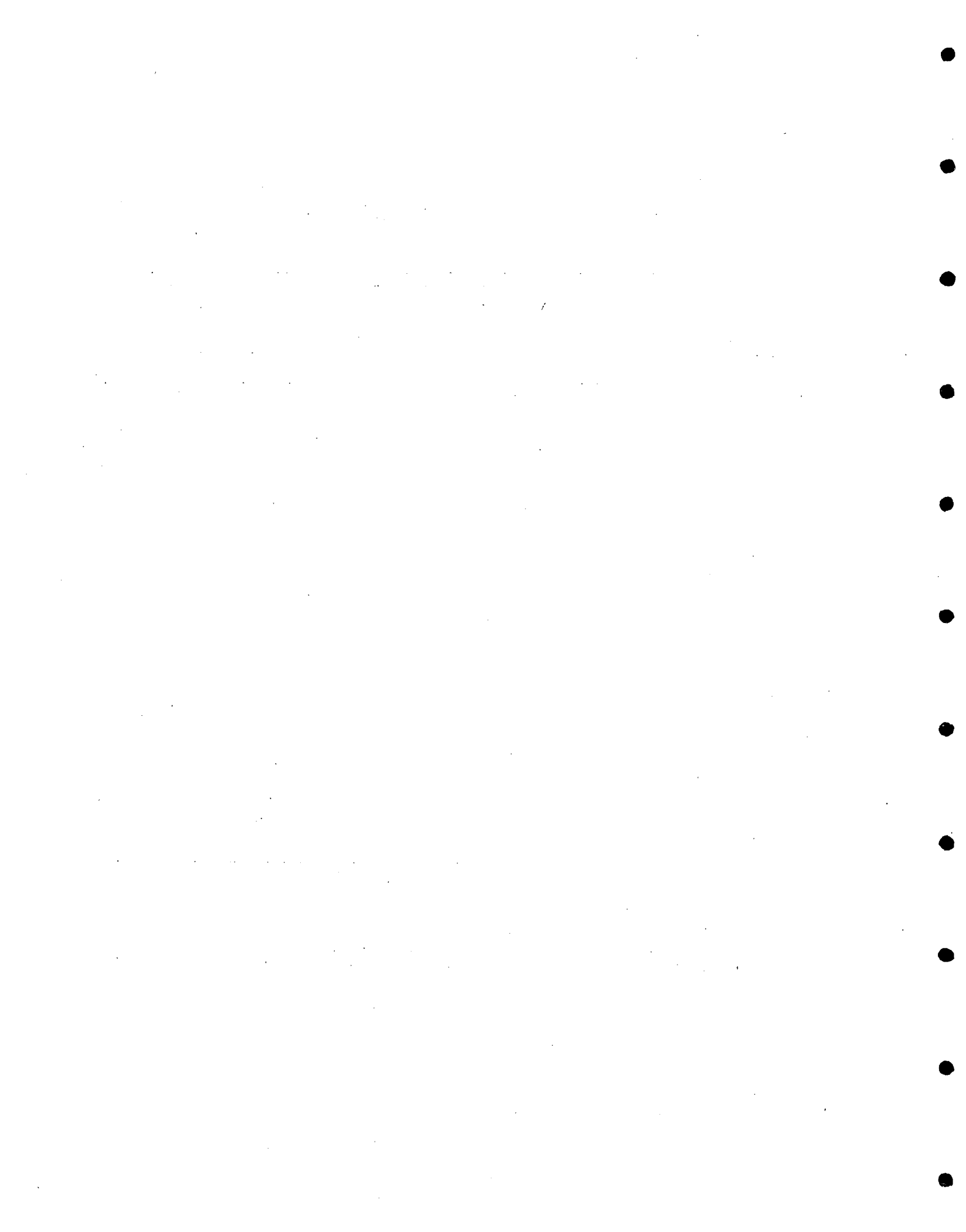


Table 12. Regression Coefficients Explaining Alienation (N=168)<sup>11</sup>

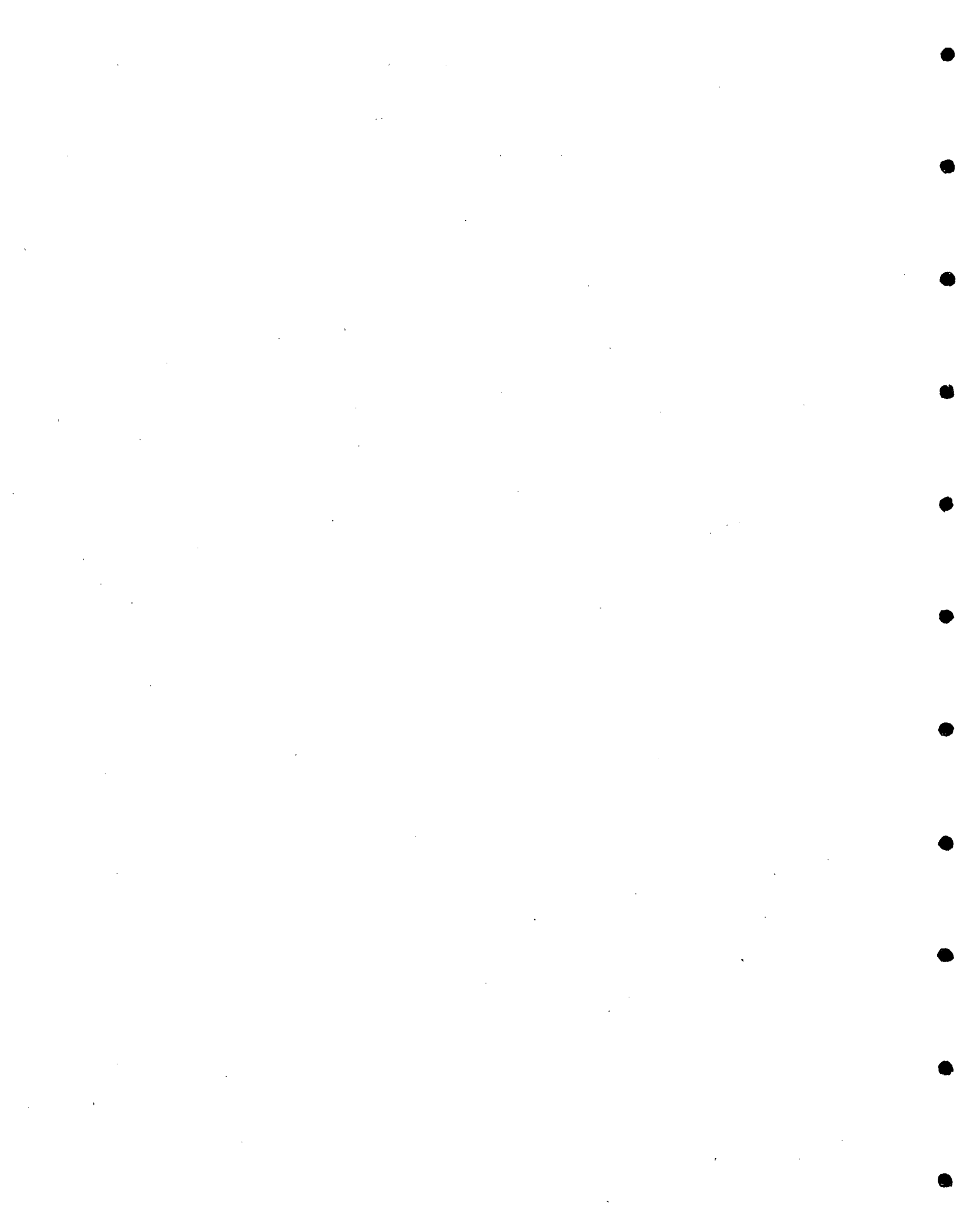
Dependent Variable	Independent Variables <sup>a</sup>	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients	Standardized Regression Coefficients
Alienation	Distress Over Use of New Name (high distress)	.349*	.446*
	Distress Over Relocation (high distress)	.106*	.222*
	Sex (female)	.852	.088
	Community Connectedness (high connectedness)	-.137	-.086
	Work Status (unemployed)	.764	.076
	Prison (prison time)	-.504	-.048
		$R^2 = .400$	

<sup>a</sup>The high pole for each variable is given in parentheses.

\*Significant at the .05 level or below.

- = decrease in distress, + = increase in distress





distress over use of new name and relocation respectively.

The following client characteristics are likely to be associated with high distress over the use of a new name:

- (1) Clients who are poorly connected to the new community, especially where they were fairly well connected to their old one.
- (2) Nonwitnesses.
- (3) Clients who moved rarely before enrolling in the program.
- (4) Clients who have little education.
- (5) Single parents.

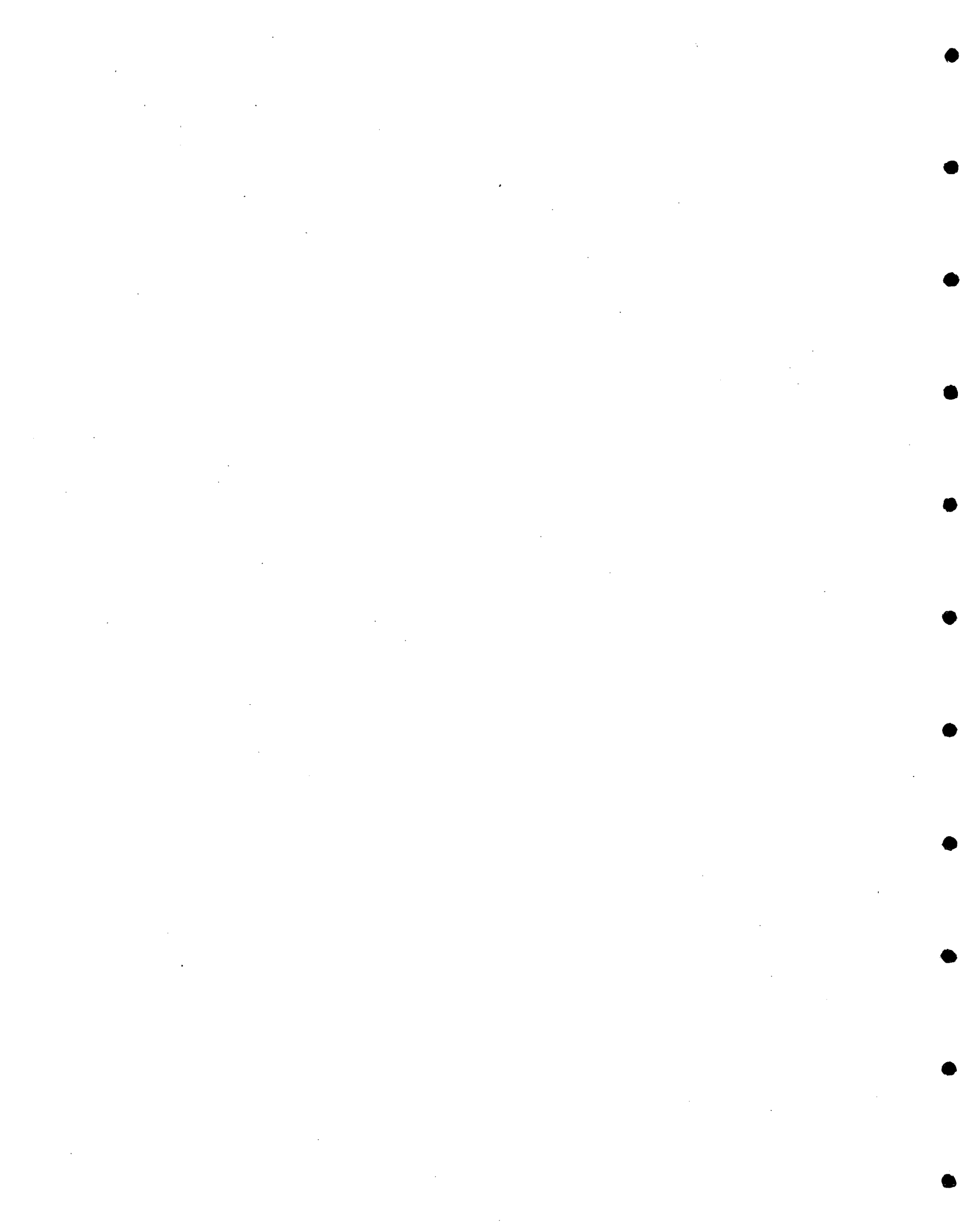
The following client characteristics are likely to be associated with high distress over relocation:

- (1) Clients who are poorly connected in the new area of relocation, especially if they lost the degree of community connection they had in their old area.
- (2) Clients who make essentially different moves (moves that are different in degree of urbanization).
- (3) Clients who are distressed over use of new name.
- (4) Clients who live alone.

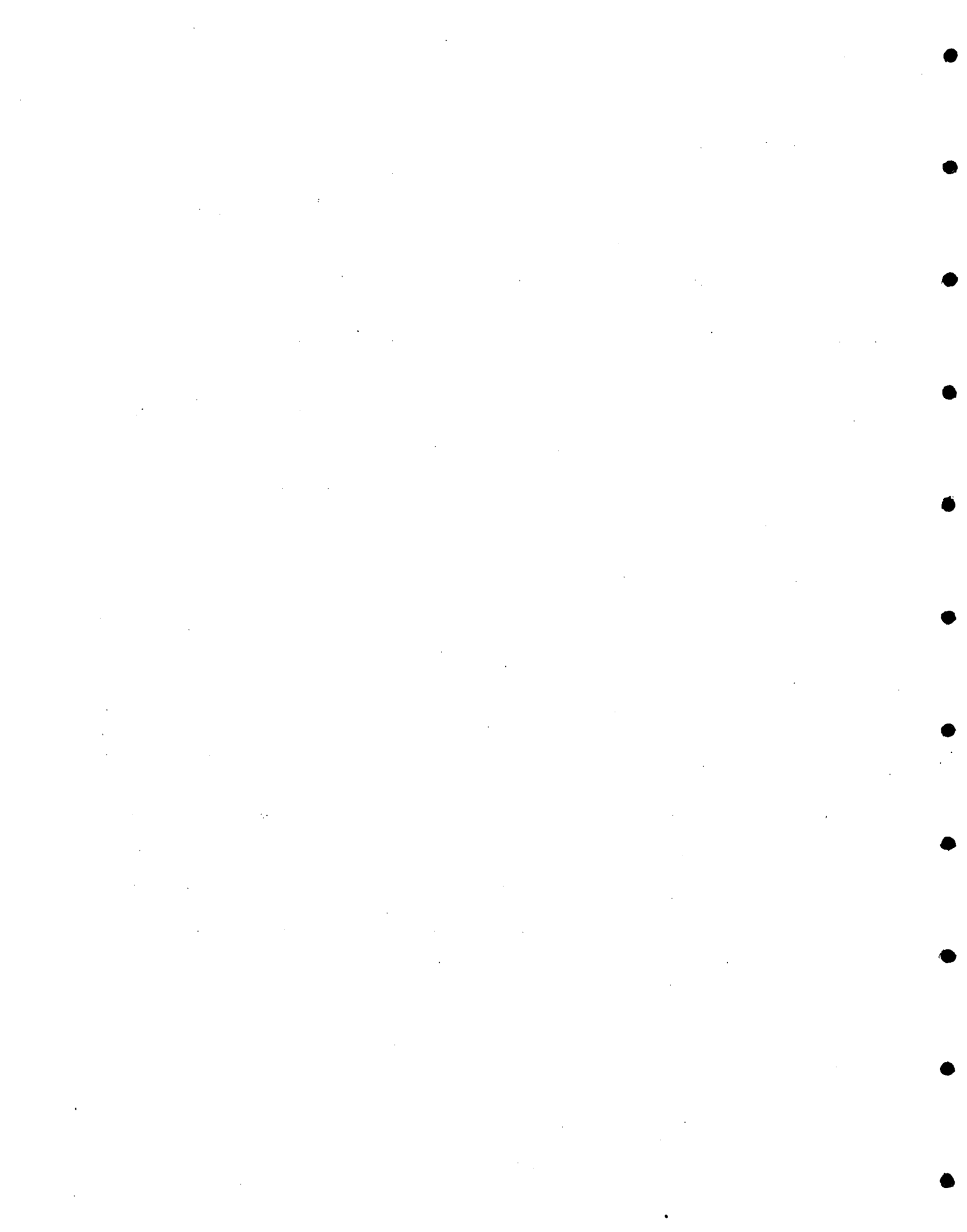


Notes

- <sup>1</sup>The concern with security was verbalized by nonwitnesses as well. Perhaps witnesses tended to be more verbal about it because they have a deeper grasp of the seriousness and sincerity of the death threat and maybe even some general idea of who may carry it out and how.
- <sup>2</sup>The concept of dedeviantization has received attention, especially in the literature on social deviance (specifically in alcohol rehabilitation). In an earlier work (Montanino, 1977), I argued that Alcoholics Anonymous was not truly a dedeviantization process since its members, although sober, went around wearing their label on their sleeve and broadcasting to others their former state. In the case at hand--the protected witness transition--the process of dedeviantization is perhaps as purely exemplified as one is likely to find.
- <sup>3</sup>The N in all cases was 175.
- <sup>4</sup>In addition to the type of community contacts lost and gained, some general patterns emerged with regard to respondent characteristics that were related to being relatively well connected versus poorly connected. The presence of elementary school age children increased the likelihood of fostering if not social neighboring at least organizational involvement ( $r=.274$ ,  $p=.001$ ). Single parents also had relatively high connectedness, presumably because of the help they needed in caring for their children ( $r=.250$ ,  $p=.001$ ). Older respondents on the average had fewer connections ( $r=-.153$ ,  $p=.043$ ). Further, the respondents in the program the longest had the lowest mean connectedness, and those who moved often after program enrollment were more poorly connected.
- <sup>5</sup>The following patterns of church attendance emerged. Single parents who did not attend church prior to program enrollment tended to attend church after program enrollment ( $r=.220$ ), as well as did Blacks ( $r=.151$ ) and other respondents with children ( $r=.173$ ).
- <sup>6</sup>Personal correspondence from Raymond S. Duff, M.D., Department of Pediatrics, Yale Medical School.
- <sup>7</sup>The amount of time spent in the program did not make it into the final regression model. Earlier, the amount of time spent in the program had given some hint of a polynomial relationship--but the results of a quadratic regression model failed to give much support to this notion.
- <sup>8</sup>The scale measuring the distress over relocation was constructed from ten Likert-type questions. The lowest possible score a respondent could report was 10 and the highest was 50. The median score was 26 and the mean only 1.7 points over this. Twenty-five percent of the sample fell into a range than could be considered absolutely distressed (40-50); another 25 percent fell into a range which indicated absolute lack of distress (10-20); and 50 percent fell into a range which indicated neither absolute distress nor adjustment (21-39). Overall, respondents' scores did range from 10-50.



- <sup>9</sup>Recipe knowledge means essential knowledge about community institutions and operations which are second nature in operation to an individual as he or she goes about accomplishing the goals they set for themselves in the community (see Berger and Luckmann, 1967).
- <sup>10</sup>A multiple regression was run using witness status and sex as independent variables to predict perceived alienation (dependent variable). Sex proved far more explanatory than witness status. A decision was made to include sex without interaction with witness status in the final model, fully realizing that as a result sex may "bully" its way to significance with no seeming cause. This was a risk that needed to be taken in the name of parsimony.
- <sup>11</sup>One should note the rather strong relationship between distress over use of new name and alienation (.446). It could be argued that this relationship emerged because of the seeming similarity between Likert questions on the Use of New Name Distress Scale and Likert question number 2 of the Alienation Scale (see Chapter II, pp. 42 and 45). I wish to emphasize that I do not believe that this is, in fact, the case. Such scales to begin with were separated in the questionnaire and clearly distinct from one another; further, it was emphasized to the respondent that with regard to answers on the alienation scale they were to look at long lasting, more enduring effects of their experience, and put aside daily social interaction with others.



## CHAPTER IV

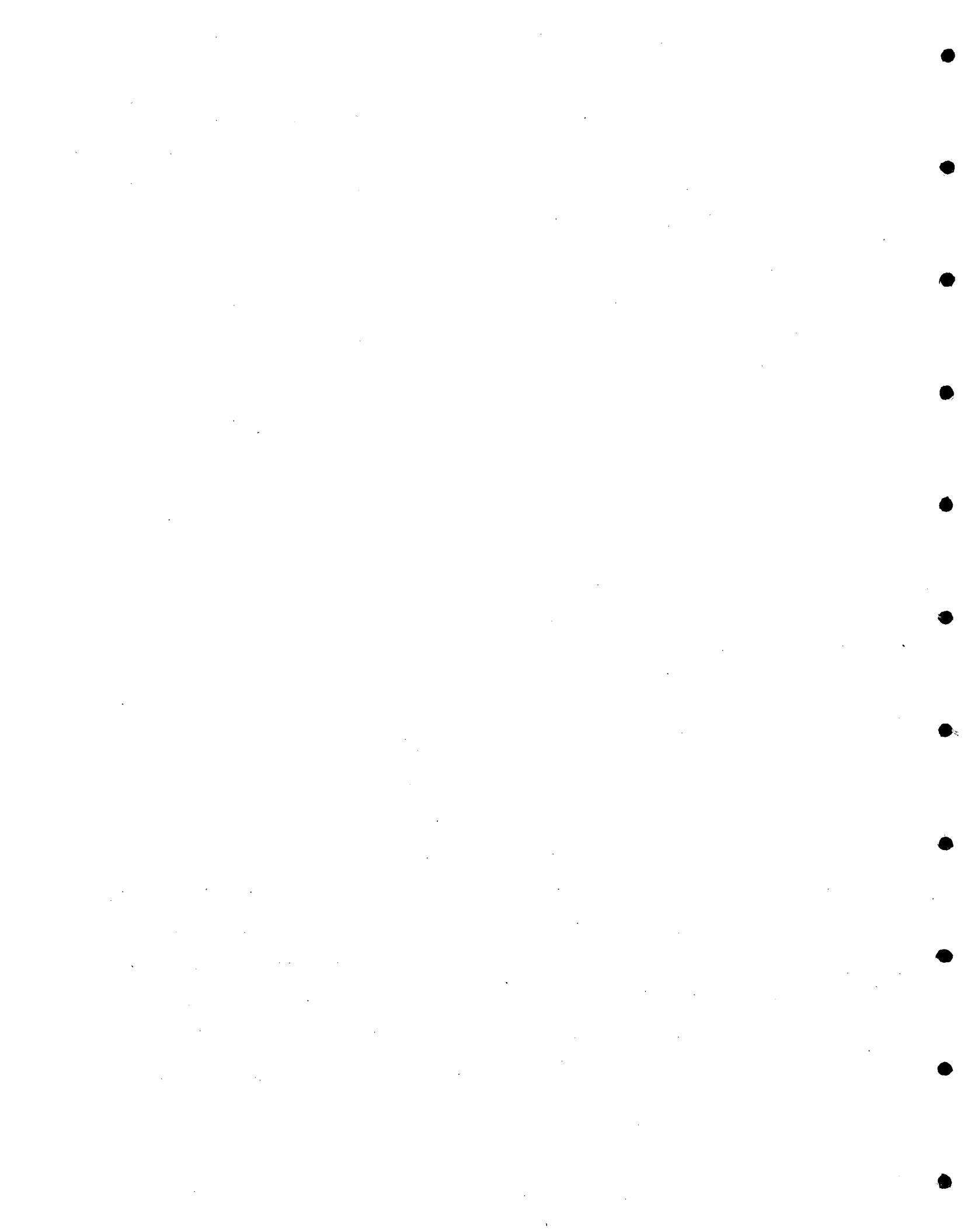
### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Organized crime is dangerous not only because the participants place themselves above common legal restrictions and orderly, conventional social behavior, but also because they are linked into powerful networks that resort to violence and are difficult to penetrate. To combat such crime, law enforcement is given the authority, although limited by the fourth amendment as interpreted by the United States Supreme Court, to use extraordinary investigative techniques, such as intrusive wiretapping and covert infiltration.

The Federal Witness Security Program is a relatively new strategy in the struggle against organized crime--a means of protection for witnesses with criminal connections who are willing to testify against their former comrades. The government moves its clients to new communities and redesigns their social identities. These clients are required to become integrated into a wholly new social life. This strategy of protection lies on the frontier of social experience.

Although the literature does not offer many examples of comparable social experience, I thought it was reasonable to assume that these people would encounter a certain amount of distress as a result of this transition. Scales were constructed to measure the participants' degree of distress over the use of a new name and relocation, and also to





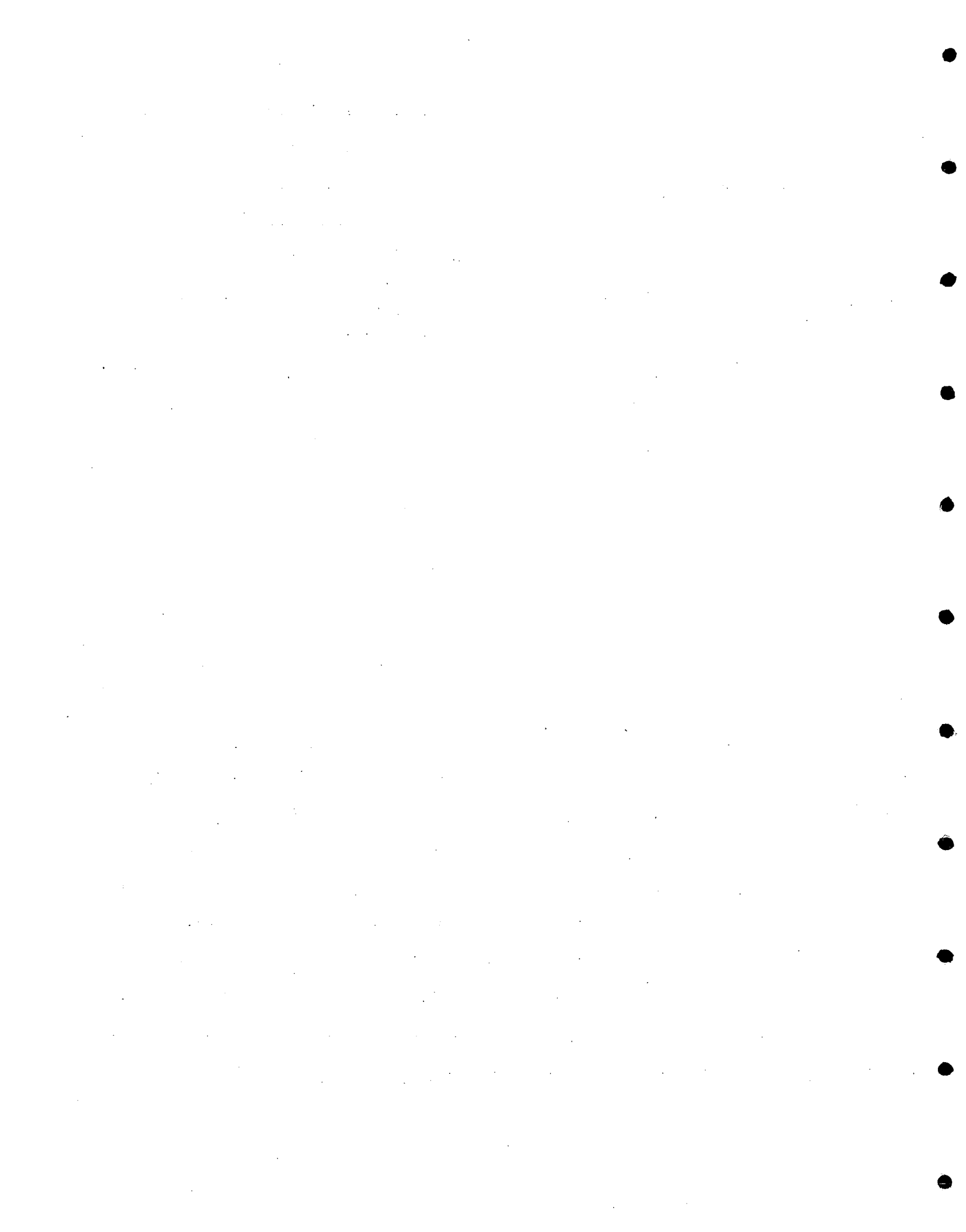
measure their degree of connectedness to the new communities, and their general sense of alienation.

Since these people were living under a death threat and actively in hiding from potential assassins, personal contact with them was clearly impossible. Therefore, the United States Marshals Service was asked to serve as intermediary by distributing (and retrieving) self-administered questionnaires to witnesses and their family members throughout the country. This procedure yielded 175 responses from people actively enrolled in the program.

Clients in the program have to adopt new names, biographies, and social identities in order to become absorbed into the communities where they move and to navigate their way through daily life. That is clearly a very hard transition for people to manage both emotionally and tactically: we may assume that one's name and past are neither lightly regarded nor easily discarded, and that the costs of doing so can be high.

The people I studied have proven most of this to be the case. Most respondents pointed to various forms of distress they experienced, although most also felt that such distress was worth enduring because of the safety and security the relocation provided.

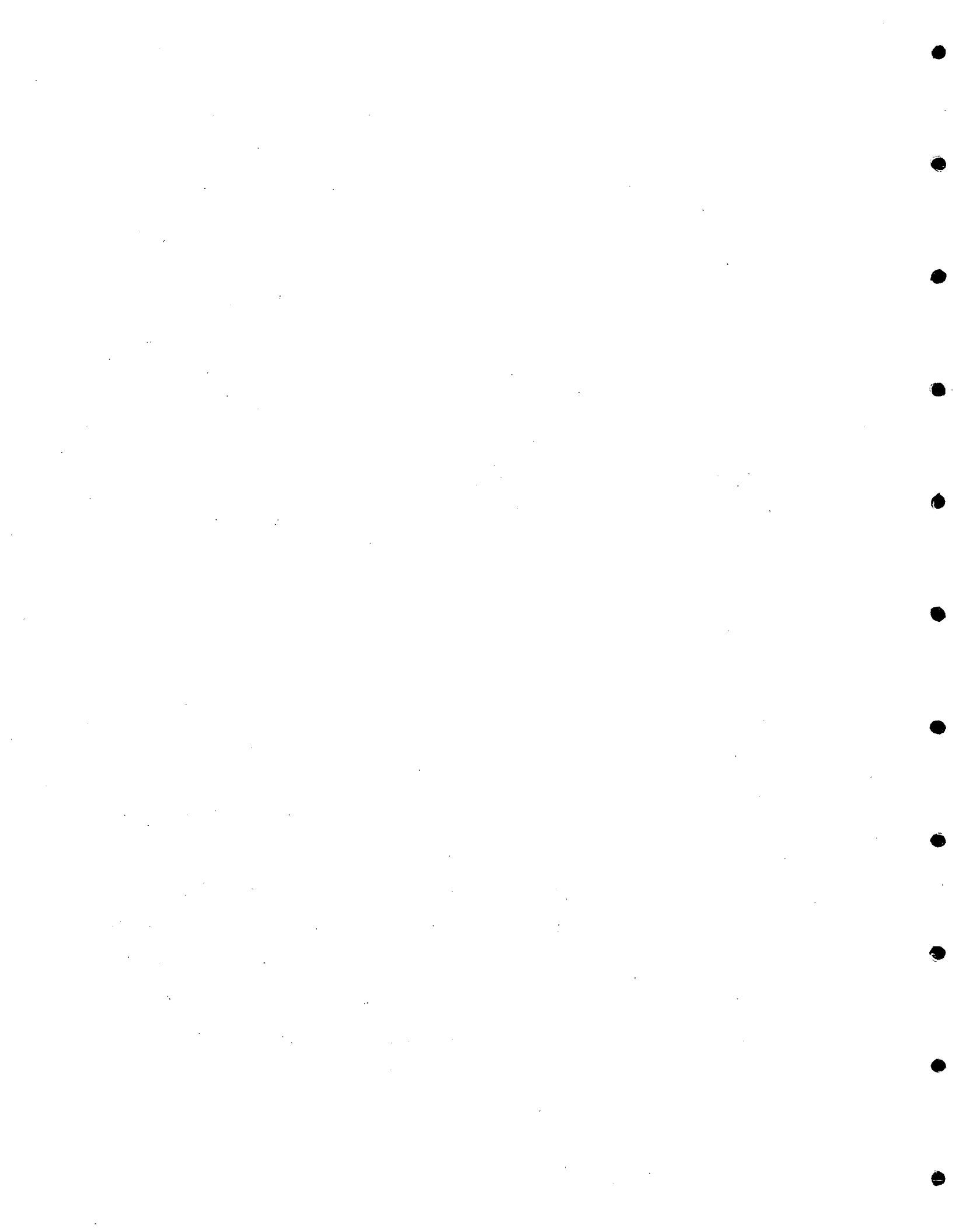
Many of the witnesses (often part of the criminal subculture themselves) saw the transition as a positive change in self-image and a release from a horrible past, and adjusted to the transition more readily. Nor is that surprising. The place they previously occupied in the social world was a disvalued one and full of danger; thus, they had little stake in maintaining the continuity of their former identity. Participation in the program offered people in this position a chance to



start over again, to become dedeviantized. The only distress they did point to was having to guard against inadvertent self-disclosure and "blowing their cover" during daily life and social interaction.

Nonwitnesses, however, who were usually family members of the witnesses and also in hiding, perceived the transition in a different light. The nonwitnesses were not criminally involved for the most part and had very little to gain from the dedeviantization process. However, they too lived under a death threat and became the unfortunate baggage the witnesses brought with them into the program. How knowledgeable such people were of their family member's criminal involvement is a matter of speculation. Minimal or even superficial knowledge is a reasonable assumption since their testimony could not generally be useful to the government. They can be compared in many respects to people described by Goffman (1963) as victims of courtesy stigma: those associated with a deviant person who were not themselves deviant.

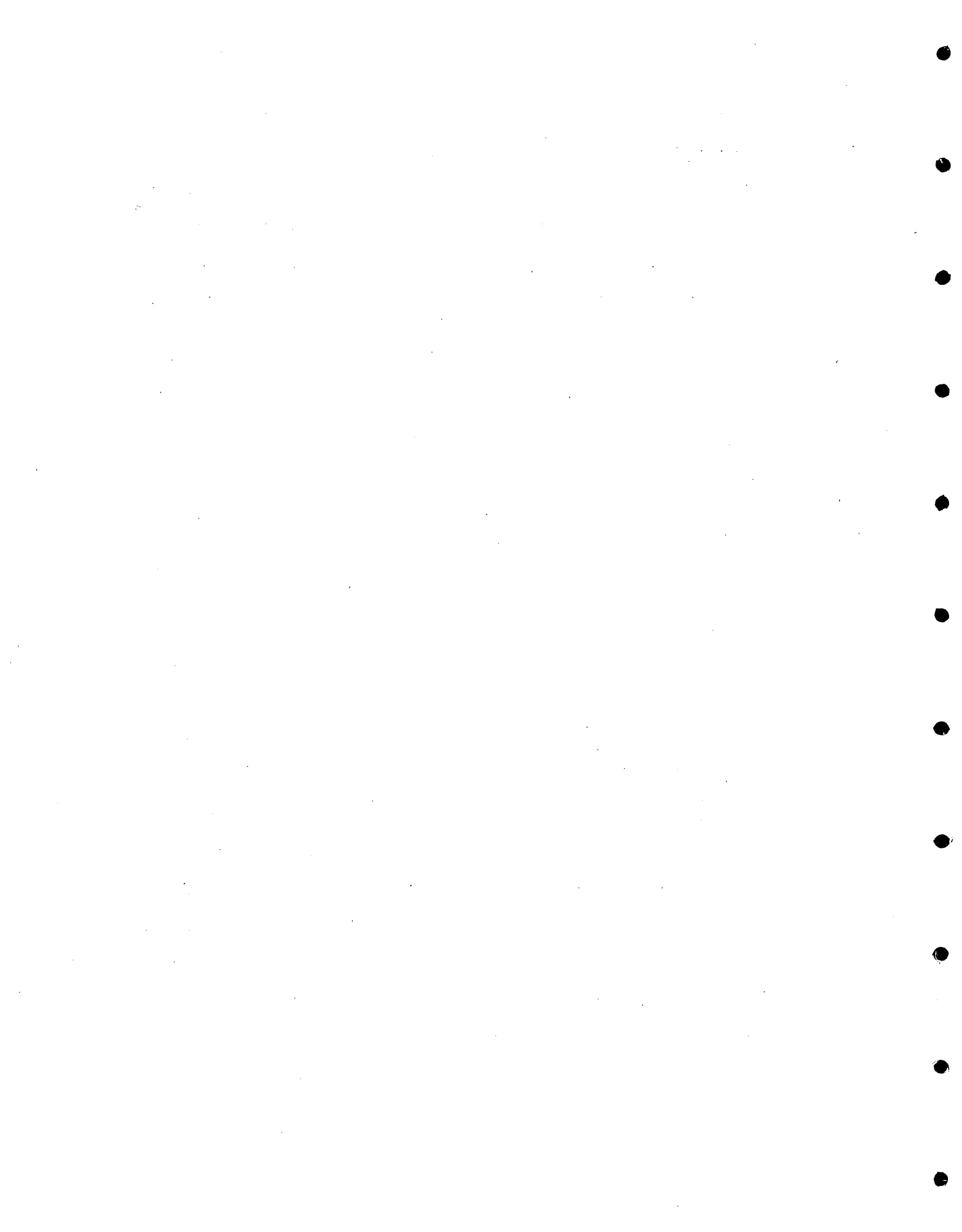
The nonwitnesses were a great deal more distressed than the witnesses. They lamented the loss of significant others from their past life--parents, brothers, sisters, close family friends--and they lamented broken ties to collectivities based on trust, friendship, and help. For many, their abandonment of surname and family lineage resulted in loss of a sense of attachment, origin, and rootedness--thus, creating confusion over self-image. They complained they were no longer their true selves, or were somewhere between the old and the new. They clearly seemed lost or at least confused about their specific placement in the social world. Finally, inability to share their pasts with others on an everyday basis detracted from their ability to maintain a positive self-image and added to their feelings of discontinuity in identity and life style.



Whether the transition resulted in distress and discontinuity or in adjustment and improved self-image, most respondents (78 percent) believed that personal name was very important--that it was a source of identity and a major link with others in society. At the very least, it was viewed as a vehicle by which people get credit for what they do and something to which reputation was attached. They felt that you should be comfortable with a personal name and should not have to lie about it.

In using an assumed name in daily life, program participants were required to be secretive, to lie and make up ad hoc cover stories about their past. Clients of the program made it very clear that they were distressed over having to do so. They found distressing, as well, living with the anxiety over the potential social embarrassment that results from being caught in inconsistencies. One way they dealt with this was by avoiding social contact whenever possible. Evidence indicates that such avoidance did occur, since participants in the program lost community contacts because of their relocation twice as often as they gained fresh ones. Further, the types of contacts for which the respondents reported the greatest loss were ones that involved casual social interaction with neighbors and social activities with friends--contacts where presumably the exchange of bits and pieces of information about each other was most expected.

All of us use fabrication, deception, and concealment from time to time, if only to ensure our own privacy. We have a choice regarding the details we provide about ourselves to others. Witnesses and their family members, however, do not have a choice: they must lie to all the people they come into contact with at practically all levels of disclosure. They cannot share any significant part of themselves with others, and

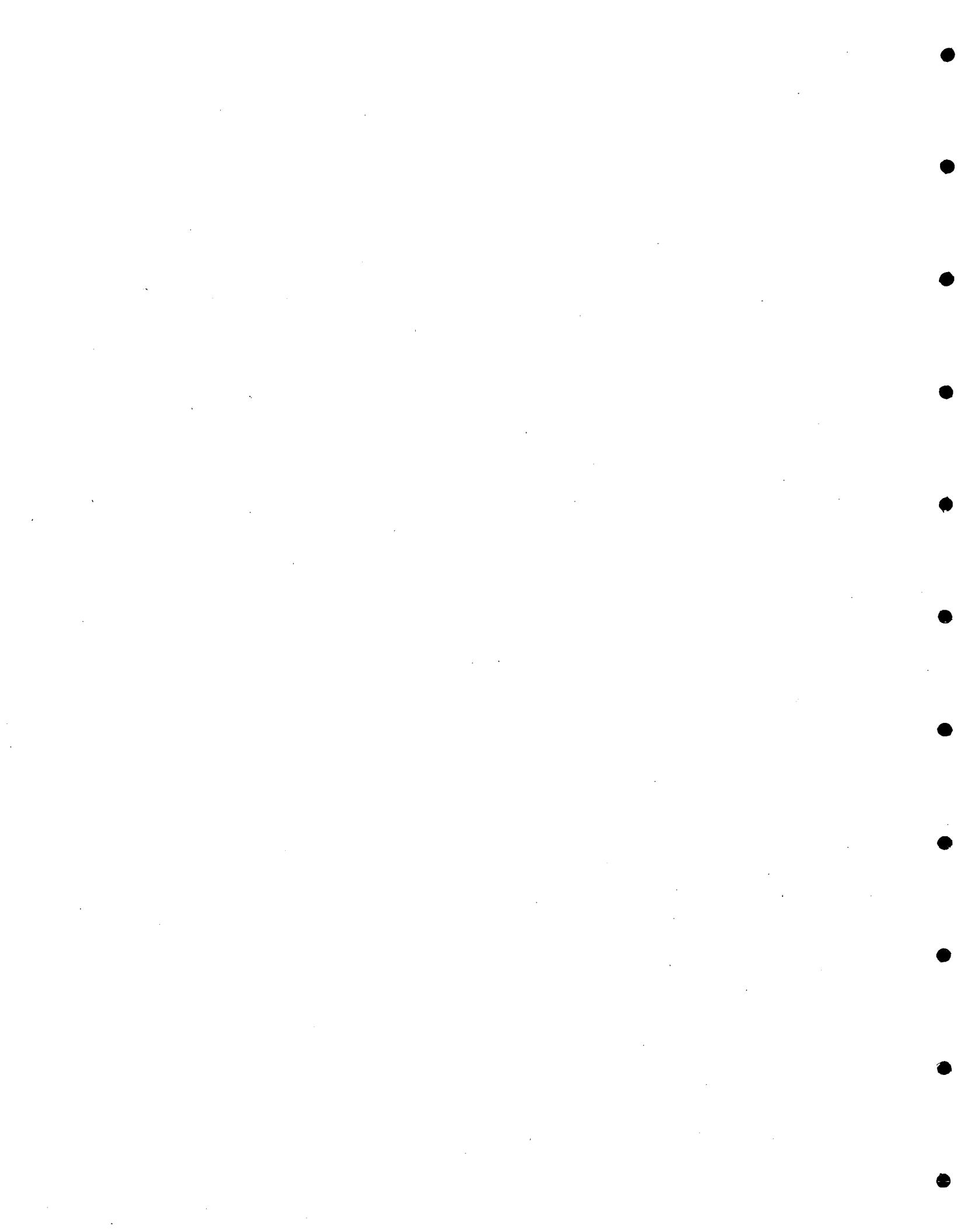


this creates in them a sense of alienation. Their alienation is presumably a result of self-imposed distance rather than ostracism.

My data showed a clear relationship between personal alienation and distress people experience because of a new name and relocation. Their degree of alienation depends a great deal on how much distress they experience over their new name and social identity, as well as their distress over their relocation to a new community. Greater distress on both levels leads to stronger feelings of alienation and powerlessness while better adjustment on both levels leads to less strong feelings. Finally, it stands to reason that those in the program a short time are more likely to feel alienated, and that such feelings tend to diminish as time passes and the individuals involved go about the business of building new social networks and learning to accept their fabricated biographies.

The "Distress Over Relocation" measure showed virtually no salient relationship with any of the traditional demographic variables such as sex, age, race, and education. Hispanics did show some relatively high distress, but there were too few of them in the sample to assert statistical significance. Those who reported living alone experienced the most distress, while childless couples experienced the best adjustment. For couples who moved with children, their distress depended upon how old their children were. Those who relocated with high school age children experienced more distress than those who relocated with children under high school age. Deputy Marshals and other personnel at Witness Security Headquarters mentioned to me in passing that very young children seemed to adjust better than older ones because of their greater capacity for imagination and "make believe" game playing. Moreover, high





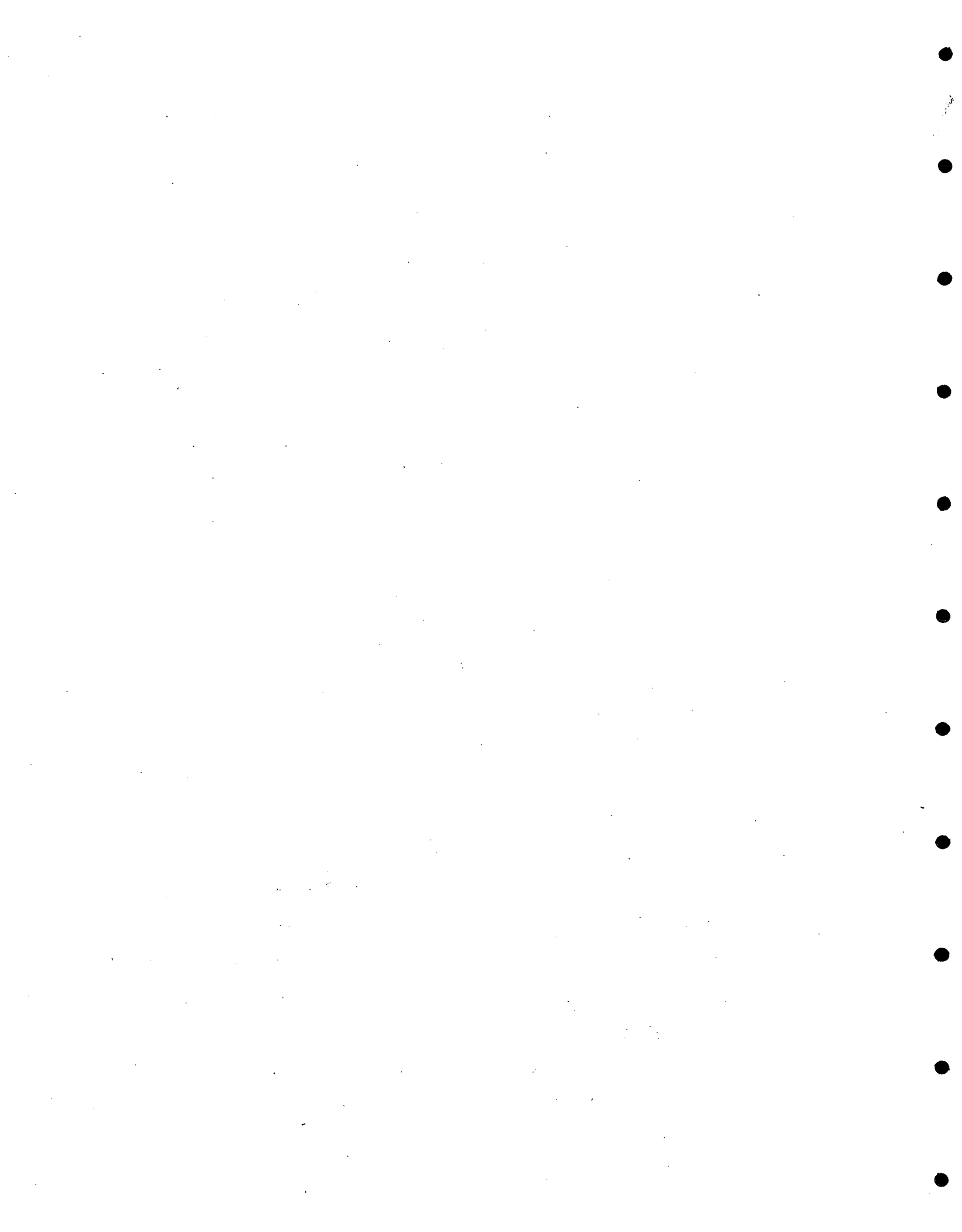
school age children have to give up established social networks upon relocation and may find it more difficult to adjust than younger children who do not have any such social networks.

Distress over relocation does not show any significant relationship with time spent actively enrolled in the program. But when the amount of time actively spent in the program is combined with the number of relocations one experiences after program enrollment, some significant relationships emerge: the more times one is required to relocate, the greater the distress.

Those who reported that they are currently employed experienced less distress than those who reported current unemployment. The amount of time that one has been employed does not seem to exert influence: those who report having jobs, despite the length of employment, adjust better.

The amount of discontinuity involved in the relocation also influences distress. It is more stressful to relocate to a different social environment than to a similar one. Clients who moved from a rural area to a rural area experienced the least distress. Those who moved from an urban to a rural area experienced the most distress. Urban-to-urban movers fared better than both rural-to-urban movers and urban-to-rural movers. Also, employment patterns seem to correlate with these aspects of mobility. The highest employment rate occurred among rural-to-rural movers, followed by urban-to-urban movers, while the poorest employment rate occurred with urban-to-rural movers, followed by rural-to-urban movers.

Finally, distress over relocation is affected by other situational variables. As community connectedness increases, distress decreases. Similarly, as distress over the use of a new name increases, so does



distress over relocation. As distress over a new name and relocation increases, so does alienation.

Placing the Federal Witness  
Experience in Perspective

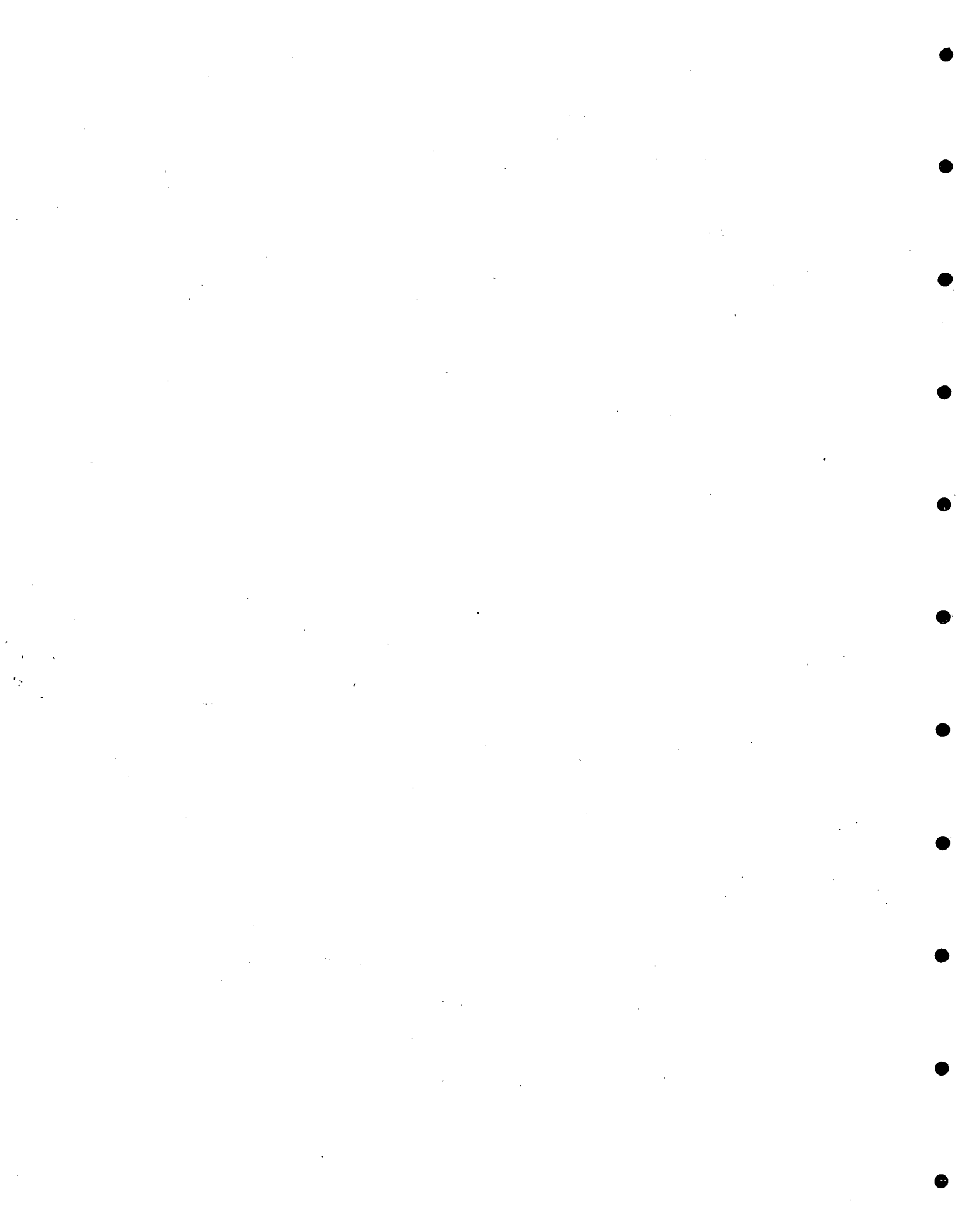
This research has dealt with people who have experienced an unusually sharp and abrupt change in the flow of their lives. While it is true that change punctuates the entire life span, it is hard to imagine any change as disruptive and discontinuous as this. I would like to place the protected witness transition in the context of other major and important life transitions as I bring this study to a close.

There are major and important life transitions not experienced as unusually sharp or abrupt, posing problems perceived, by and large, to be pedestrian in nature. This is especially true of those that are actively and voluntarily sought, such as marriage and parenthood. Transitions such as these are widely expected by others and often seem in the natural order of things.

Similarly, entrance into the labor force can be conceived of as an important but not particularly abrupt life transition. Such a transition is made slowly, for the most part, and is preceded by schooling, training, and other forms of preparation.

These types of transition can be viewed as movements into new statuses in which the individual was an active searcher. Such changes are expected in the life course and are thus rehearsed, planned, and thought through in advance; they follow normatively and institutionally developed social patterns.

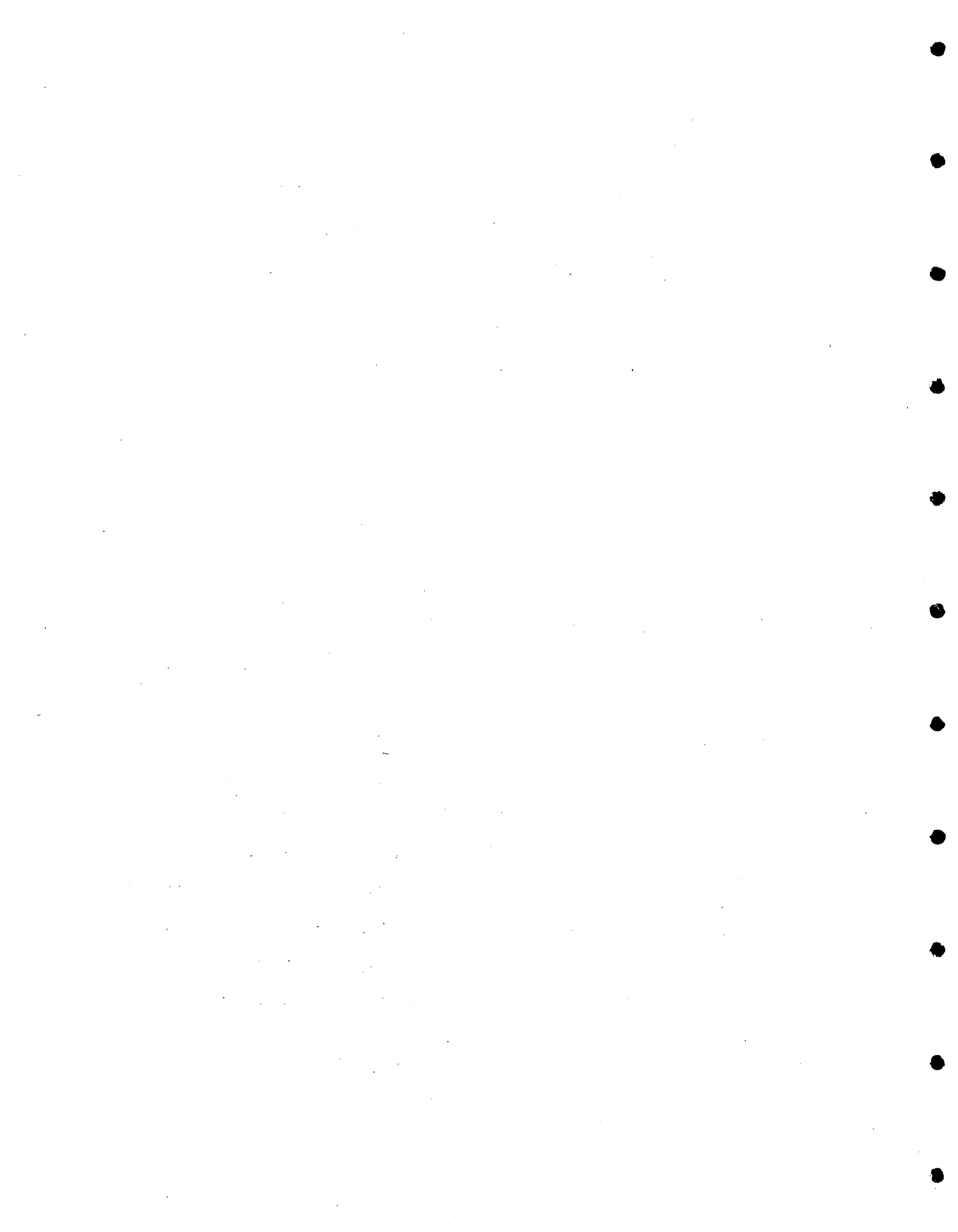
There are instances, however, where the past may have been left behind because change was unavoidable, beyond control, or inevitable--



where individuals are passive and even reluctant recipients of new statuses instead of active searchers. Widows and widowers, refugees, and those who suddenly become unemployed are examples. These new statuses have been thrust upon individuals, and the transition tends to be sharper, more abrupt, and more discontinuous. They often require sweeping and painful adjustments in personal and social image, and they frequently assault stable, secure, and taken-for-granted patterns of social interaction; but they, like the easier transitions noted above, do not require secrecy or an obliteration of the past.

Widows or widowers often find it difficult to reconcile themselves to their new circumstances. Refugees are often perplexed by and perplexing to those they come into contact with in their new surroundings. Workers who face unemployment after long careers in the workplace are, in a real sense, forced to start life all over again, often in midlife. However wrenching the change, the person is not considered as basically a different individual. Adjustment may be difficult but does not require abandonment of one's social identity or one's past.

There are a number of major life transitions, however, which because of their socially marginal or overwhelming nature seem a great deal more radical, discontinuous, and problem ridden. It is among this group, rather than the ones just described, that the protected witnesses seem more rightfully to belong. Those who become physically handicapped in later life--blind or paraplegic, for example--face enormous problems of social adjustment. Transitions such as these restrict life in obvious ways, and although there is a certain amount of "passing" and "denial," depending on the visibility of the change, "disavowal" becomes an

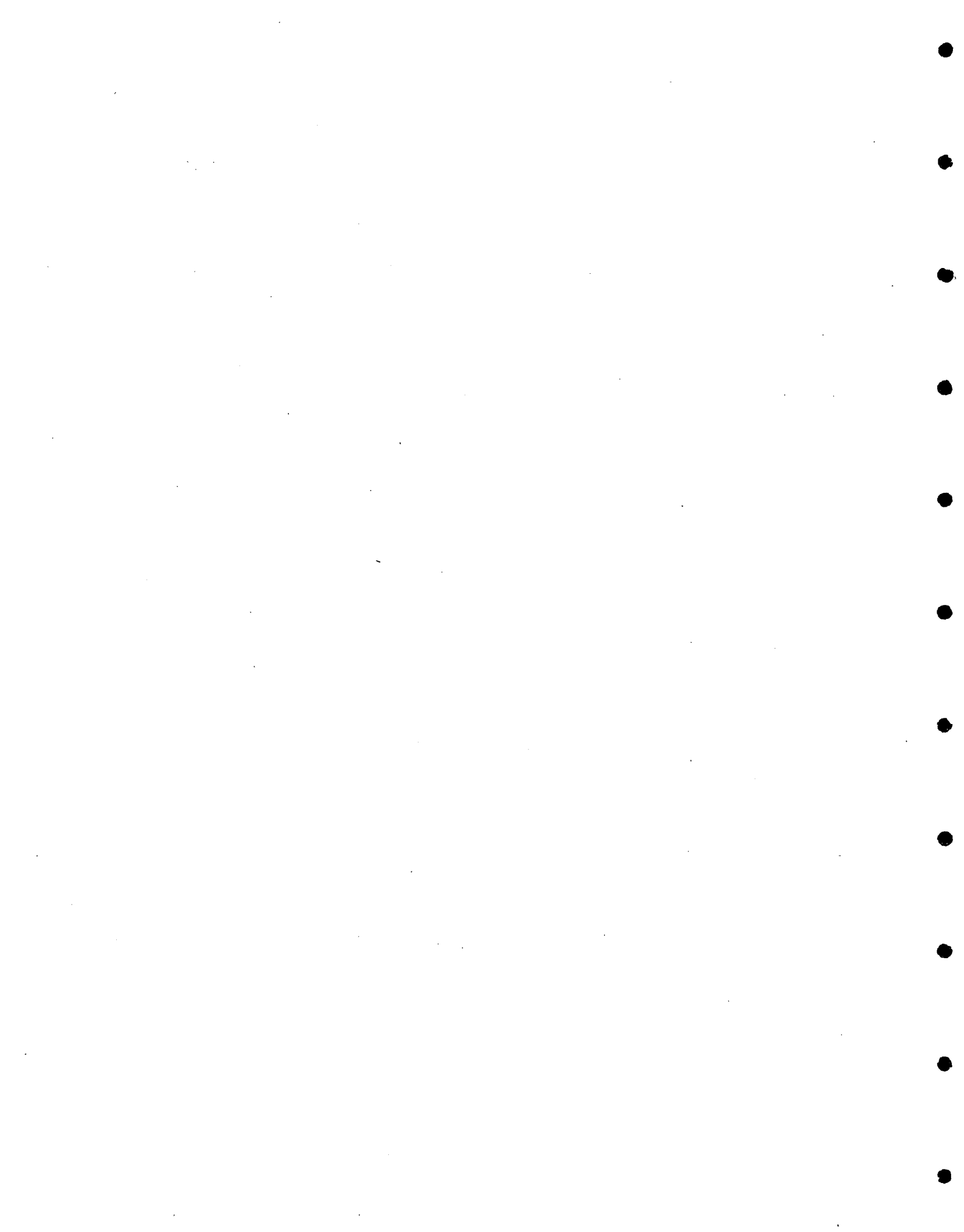


essential mechanism for maintenance of a relatively stable personal and social image.

Hansen's disease or leprosy, to cite another example, can remain dormant for years, and, contrary to common biblical conception, is not acutely visible or even contagious until its advanced stages. Such a disease poses serious problems for those afflicted in later life. They are confronted immediately with a crucial decision of whether or not to go public about the transition, or to employ a strategy of secrecy and concealment and try to pass in a world of normals. They face enormous problems of adjustment to spoiled social and personal image, although those problems are sometimes helped by collective life with others similarly situated.

The protected witness experience is obviously a radical transition. Perhaps even more than those described, it reflects the rather precarious and fragile nature of social existence. Clients are required to make presentations of self to a world of others which is sharply incongruent with who they had been, or recognized to have been in the past. Like refugees, they find themselves in a somewhat alien and perplexing role in the new community, but the "social distance" stems not from their cultural differentness but rather from the fact that they cannot let others in the community become too familiar or close. Secrecy and concealment dominate their lives and the strategic interaction game they play is much like that of spies behind enemy lines. It is, for them, literally a life-or-death matter. Like the newly unemployed they cannot return to their old line of work, not because they have been made technologically obsolete or economically expendible, but rather because even this part of the past has to be obliterated in the interest of





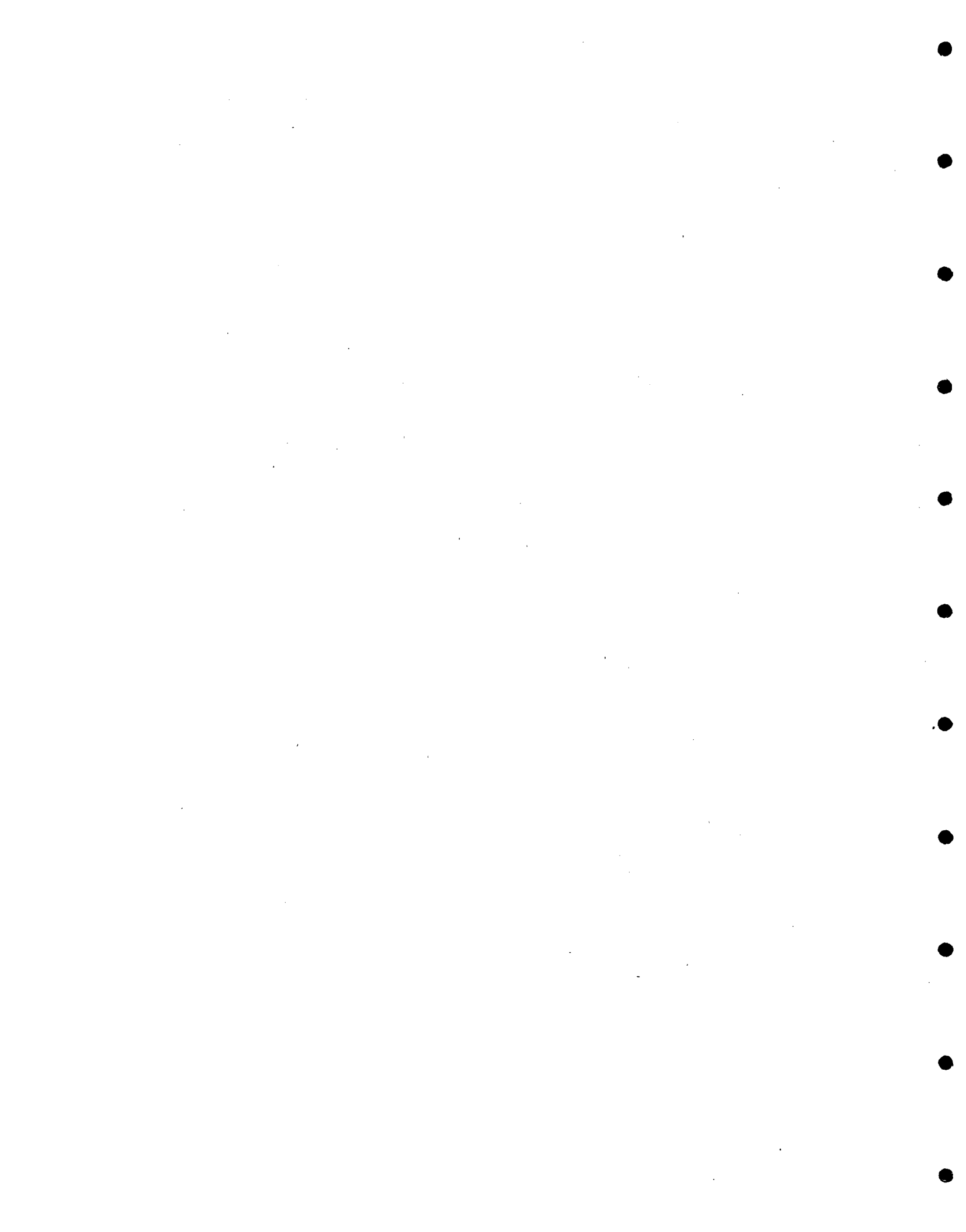
security. They cannot, without great risk, even pursue interests and hobbies which they had cultivated in their past life for fear of discovery. Where the leper is feared by others, the protected witness fears all others. Both are isolated, but the witnesses cannot compensate by associating with others similarly situated. They are wholly on their own.

In closing, it seems fitting to return to the original theme of identity and comment on the future of these people. It may be impractical to imagine witnesses and their family members ever returning to the lives they had once known because those lives as they know them are not there anymore and the security risk is forbidding. But the human spirit is resilient, and because of this there is hope with time they may experience a sense of comfort and familiarity with their new selves at least equal to, and perhaps better than, that which they had known as the persons they were.

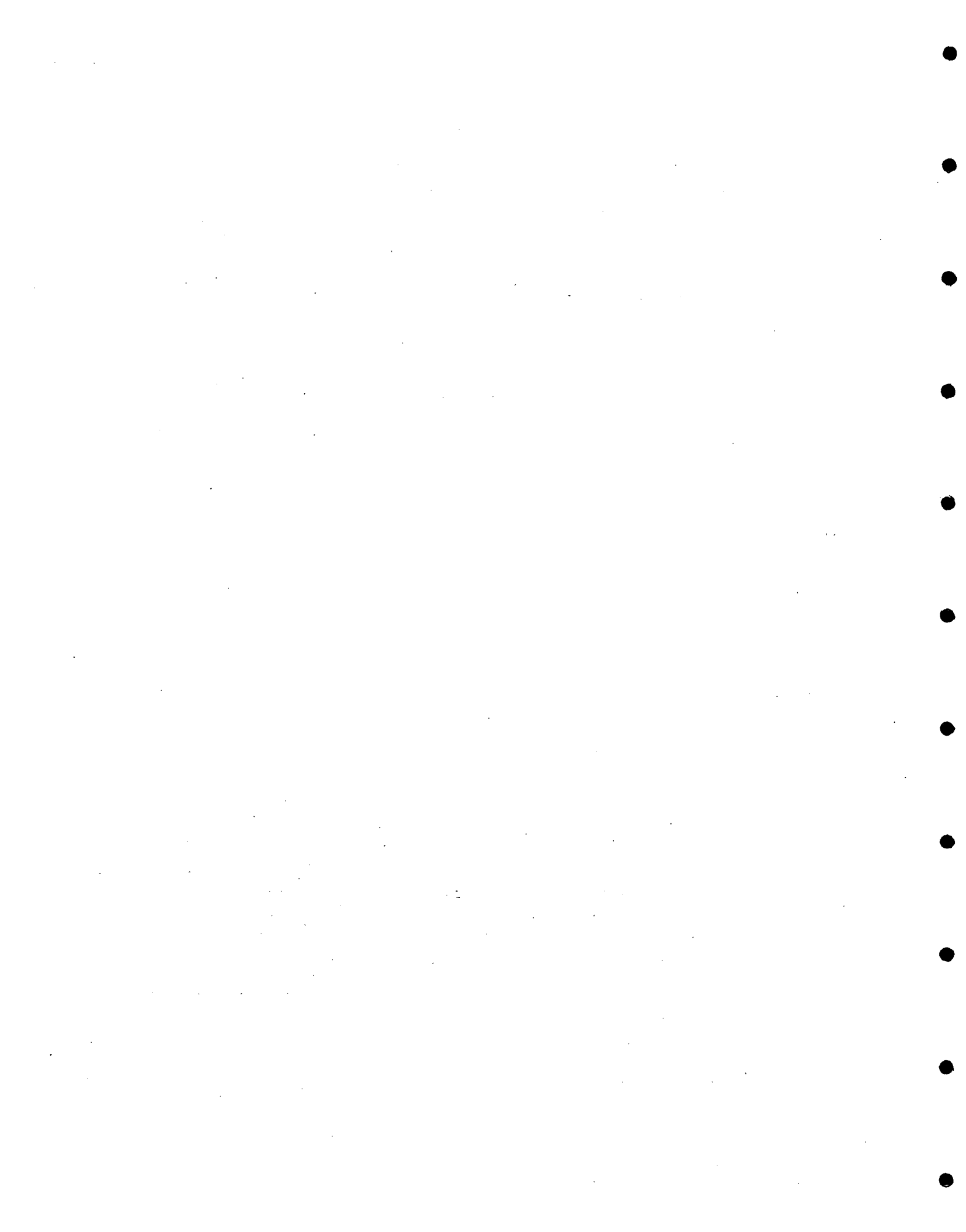


## REFERENCES

- ABC News. "Hostages of Fear." Segment of "20/20." New York: Media Transcripts, 1980.
- Barboza, J., and H. Messick. Barboza. New York: Dell, 1975.
- Beeman, J. The Pathologist as Witness. Muldelein, IL: Callahan, 1964.
- Benson, L. Images, Heroes and Self Perceptions: The Struggle for Identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.
- Berger, P., and T.L. Luckmann. The Social Construction of Reality. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.
- Bok, S. Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation. New York: Pantheon, 1982.
- Boruck, R.F., and J.S. Cecil. Assuring the Confidentiality of Social Research Data. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979.
- Cannavale, F., and W.D. Falcon. Witness Cooperation. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1976.
- Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984. United States Statutes at Large, 98th Congress, 2nd session, Public Law 98-473, pp. 1837-2199, 1984.
- Cottle, T.J. Children's Secrets. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1980.
- Deskbook on Organized Crime. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1972.
- Duff, R.S. Correspondence received from the Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine, Yale University, New Haven, CT (December 8, 1982).
- Durkheim, E. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. New York: Free Press, 1965.
- Erikson, E. "Identity and the life cycle." Psychology Issues 1 (1959): 1-171.
- Faulkner, W. Requiem for a Nun. New York: Random House, 1950.
- Fischer, C.S., R.M. Jackson, C.A. Stueve, K. Gerson, and L.M. Jones. Networks and Places: Social Relations in the Urban Setting. New York: Free Press, 1977.
- Goffman, E. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959.

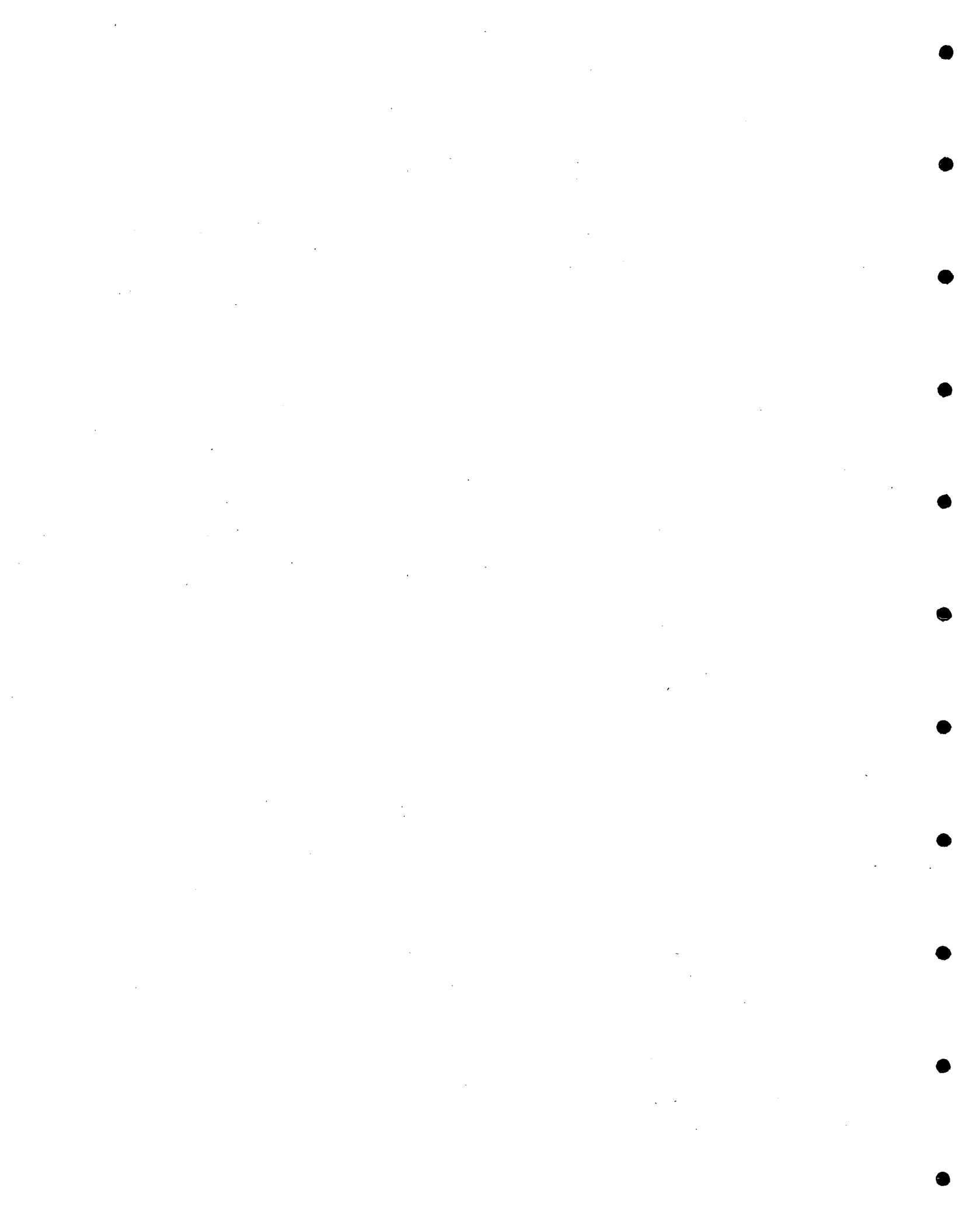


- Goffman, E. Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Behavior in Public Places. New York: Free Press, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Strategic Interaction. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Relations in Public. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Goldstock, R., and D.T. Coenen. "Controlling the contemporary loan shark: Law of illicit lending and the problem of witness fear." Cornell Law Review 65 (1980): 127-289.
- Graham, F. The Alias Program. Boston: Little, Brown, 1977.
- Hartman, A.A. "Criminal aliases: A psychological study." Journal of Psychology 32 (1951): 49-56.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Name styles in relation to personality." Journal of General Psychology 59 (1958): 289-294.
- Hoffman, P., and I. Pecznick. To Drop a Dime. New York: Putnam, 1976.
- James W. Psychology. New York: Harper and Row, 1961 (originally published by Henry Holt and Co., 1892).
- Knudten, R.D. Victims and Witnesses: Their Experiences with Crime and the Criminal Justice System. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977.
- Liebenson, M. You the Expert Witness. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Liebenson, M., and J. Wepman. The Psychologist as Witness. Muldelein, IL: Callahan, 1964.
- Maas, P. The Valachi Papers. New York: Bantam Books, 1968.
- McCall, G., and J.L. Simmons. Identities and Interactions. New York: Free Press, 1978.
- Maguire, J.M. Evidence of Guilt. Boston: Little, Brown, 1959.
- Mead, G.H. Mind, Self and Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.
- Mollenhoff, C.R. Strike Force: Organized Crime and the Government. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- Montanino, F. "Alcohol use and abuse." Pp. 326-367 in E. Sagarin and F. Montanino, eds. Deviants: Voluntary Actors in a Hostile World. New York: General Learning Press, 1977.



- Murdock, G. Social Structure. New York: MacMillan, 1949.
- National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.
- National Association of Attorneys General. Organized Crime Control Legislation. Committee on the Office of Attorney General. A.F. Summer, Chairman. Washington, D.C.: LESA, 1975.
- Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. United States Statutes at Large, vol. 28, USC Public Statutes 524. Public Law 90-351, June 19, 1968.
- Organized Crime Control Act of 1970. United States Statutes at Large, 91st Congress, 2nd session, vol. 84, part 1, Public Laws, pp. 923-962, 1970.
- President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967.
- Rowe, G. My Undercover Years with the Ku Klux Klan. New York: Bantam Books, 1976.
- Schutz, A. "The stranger: An essay in social psychology." In A. Broderson, ed. A. Schutz, Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory. The Hague: Martinus Nijolf, 1964.
- Simmel, G. The Sociology of George Simmel. Translated by K. Wolff. New York: Free Press, 1950.
- Strauss, A. Mirrors and Masks. New York: Free Press, 1959.
- Teresa V., and R.T. Renner. My Life in the Mafia. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Vinnie Teresa's Mafia. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975.
- Ullman, A. Sociocultural Foundations of Personality. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.
- U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice, Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings. 96th Congress, 1st session, April 10, May 2, 14, 1979. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Congress. Senate. Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Governmental Affairs. Hearings: Witness Security Program. 96th Congress, 2nd session, December 15-17, 1980. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Organized Crime and the Use of Violence. 96th Congress, 2nd session, May 2, 5, 1981, parts 1, 2. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.





- U.S. Congress. Senate. Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure, Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings: Witness Protection Program. 95th Congress, 2nd session, March 20, 23, April 14, 1978. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Department of Justice. "Report of the Witness Security Review Committee." L.S. Gibson, Chair. Unpublished, in-house document, 1978.
- U.S. Department of Justice/LEAA. Report of the National Conference on Organized Crime (October 1-4, 1975). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Wall, P. Eye Witness Identification in Criminal Cases. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1965.
- Waller, L. Hide in Plain Sight. New York: Dell, 1976.
- Weitzman, L. "Social Suicide: A Study of Missing Persons." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970.
- Wheeler, S., ed. On Record: Files and Dossiers in American Life. New York: Russell Sage, 1969.

