STATISTICS ON POVERTY
IN THE UNITED STATES**

1. Studies of Incidence and Characteristics


This article reports income and work experience by family responsibility and sex and industry and occupational group of employed family heads for the year 1963. It also contains an analysis of 1960 Census data for low-wage workers by occupation, age, sex, educational attainment, family responsibility, and race.


Analyzes the relative importance of various sources of income for a representative sample of persons aged sixty-two and over in the year 1962. The extent of poverty in this group is indicated by the fact that one-third of the non-married had incomes less than $810 and one-third of the couples had incomes less than $2200.


The material presented in this paper analyzed the composition of the low-income group and changes in it over a ten-year period. The author found that, although the number of low-income receivers had decreased, their share of total income had remained the same.


An interestingly written interpretation of the Census Bureau income statistics which shows how such personal characteristics as race, color, educational attainment, and sex correlate with income level.

* Prepared by Hazel C. Benjamin, Librarian.
** Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
A detailed statistical study of the various factors which determine family income for a cross-section of the population which was produced at the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. Within this framework, the economic situation of the poor and the disabled is examined and compared with that of the rest of the population and assessment is made of the possibility that these low-income groups "will solve their problems in this generation or the next."


The first of these articles describes the method used in the Division of Research and Statistics of the Social Security Administration to develop an index of poverty for households of different sizes and types. Subsequent articles give details regarding race, age, sex, employment status, sources of income, and other characteristics of individuals and households in poverty as defined by the SSA index.


Contains statistical data on the characteristics of farm and nonfarm poor families for the year 1959.


Contains summary statistics for selected characteristics of families residing in poverty and nonpoverty areas in standard metropolitan statistical areas with a 1960 population of 250,000 or more. Also includes a description of the methodology used for determining poverty areas.

This report includes detailed tables showing the incidence of poverty by various characteristics such as family size, residence, and sex, color, age, and employment status of family head. Over the period covered, the poverty rate dropped from 22 to 15 percent, but there was no significant change in the relative distribution of income. Families headed by women, nonwhite men, and white men over sixty-five accounted for 64 percent of the poor.


A detailed analysis of Census Bureau figures on income distribution by year in terms of constant dollars. Changes in the characteristics of low-income families during the period showed an increase in the number headed by a person sixty-five or over and in families headed by a woman. There was also an increase in the proportion of families living on fixed incomes and transfer payments.


This report of changes over the period 1960 to 1966 shows 35 percent of nonwhite families below the poverty level in 1966 compared with 49 percent in 1960. However it also shows that in the poorest areas "conditions are stagnating or deteriorating." In addition to income, the study includes data on population distribution, employment, education, housing, health, family composition, military service, and voting behavior. It concludes with a special report on conditions in low-income metropolitan areas.

Watts, Harold W. "The Iso-Prop index: an approach to the determination of differential poverty income thresholds." Journal of Human Resources (Journals Dept., University of Wisconsin Press, P. O. Box 1379, Madison, Wis. 53701), Winter, 1967. pp. 3-18. $2.00.

Describes in technical terms the development of an index including components for family size and geographical location which can be used to make family income comparable for all families and to establish differentiated "poverty lines" for families in differing circumstances.
2. Criticisms of Methods of Measuring Poverty


The study papers included in this volume in part discuss various definitions of poverty and their effects on its measurement. In particular, Victor R. Fuchs points out the shortcomings of using annual income data and the need for “additional evidence leading to a truer measure of economic well-being” and John T. Dunlop lists a number of points which need to be kept in mind when “appraising the concepts and statistics of poverty.”


Contends that the $3000 poverty line accepted by the Council of Economic Advisers in 1964 is not valid and results in “a significant overestimate of the relative incidence of poverty” among certain groups and “a seriously mistaken diagnosis of the problem.”

Haber, Alan. “Poverty budgets: how much is enough?” *Poverty and Human Resources Abstracts* (University of Michigan, P. O. Box 1567, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106), May-June, 1966. pp. 3-22. $7.50.

A criticism of the definition of poverty developed by the Social Security Administration on the grounds that the data on which it is based are inaccurate and “greatly understate the poverty income levels.”


Argues that a static poverty line is unsound in a dynamic economy because it fails to recognize the relative nature of “needs.” The author also shows how it affects analysis of reduction in poverty and changes in the composition of the poor.


A technical review of existing statistics available from various federal agencies which points out their shortcomings and makes suggestions for their improvement.