

was virtually eliminated. We did that, at least in part, out of love for the elderly. Can we love women heading households? Probably not—but we will like them better when there are fewer of them, and when more of them work.

But wait, I hear you cry. What about the deficit? Don't we have to keep our pockets zipped to bring down the deficit? There are two answers to that. First, while it is true that the federal government will need \$100 billion in taxes or spending cuts precisely at the time when I envisage budgets being slack, I expect that to be in the bag by that day next summer when the Congress adjourns. We can expect a lot of talk about restructuring taxes during the next few months, but the breakthrough will probably be something simple like a national sales tax dressed up as a value-added tax, plus, perhaps, fewer brackets in the personal income tax.

More important, the states are not in deficit now, and they will have even larger surpluses (following a lean year) a few years down the road. The action in welfare is not going to be in Washington. Quietly, in the beneficent shadow of benign neglect, change will emanate from the statehouses.

In 1988 a new era can open—one in which, having licked poverty through transfers, we can keep it licked through jobs. At long last we can achieve President Johnson's original objective of eliminating poverty through a hand up rather than a handout. The window of opportunity is narrow, the birthrate is already on the rise. We need to get to work now. ◀

Center for research and retrieval of data from the SIPP and ISDP

In September 1984 the Census Bureau released the first report from its new Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).¹ The SIPP is the most important source of data on the poor since data collection from social experiments began almost twenty years ago. According to the Census Bureau it will

provide a better understanding of the level and changes in the level of well-being of the population and of how economic situations are related to demographic and social characteristics of individuals. The data collected in SIPP will be especially useful in studying federal transfer programs, estimating program cost and effectiveness, and assessing the effect of proposed changes in program regulations and benefit levels. Analysis of other important national issues, such as tax reform, social security program costs, and national health insurance can be expanded and refined, based on the information from this new survey.²

The novelty of the new data series lies in its continuous monitoring of events in the lives of individuals, such as marriage, divorce, and job loss, and relating them to detailed sources of income, including government transfers.

For a history of the SIPP and its pilot, the Income Survey Development Program (ISDP),³ see the accompanying box.

With funding from the National Science Foundation, Martin David and Alice Robbin are establishing a Research Clearinghouse and Data Center at the Institute for Research on Poverty to provide access to the new data series to interested users throughout the country. This center will carry out four major services:

- It will integrate data and documentation through an information management system.
- It will provide access to the data through a nationwide dial-in system.
- It will furnish instruction and workshops for new users of the system.
- It will develop solutions to problems related to the analysis of data.

¹Sheldon Danziger, Peter Gottschalk, and Eugene Smolensky, "The Effects of Unemployment and Policy Changes on America's Poor," *Journal of Social Policy*, in press. Also available as IRP Discussion Paper no. 770-84, 1985.

²Irwin Garfinkel and Elizabeth Uhr, "A New Approach to Child Support," IRP Reprint no. 488, 1984.

³The results of Supported Work are reported in Robinson G. Hollister, Jr., Peter Kemper, and Rebecca A. Maynard, eds., *The National Supported Work Demonstration* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

⁴See "Measuring the Effects of the Reagan Welfare Changes on the Work Effort and Well-Being of Single Parents," in this issue of *Focus*.

⁵Steven Cole, Sandra Danziger, Sheldon Danziger, and Irving Piliavin, "Poverty and Welfare Reciprocity after OBRA: Some Preliminary Evidence from Wisconsin," IRP mimeo, October 1983, p. 23.

⁶Dan Feaster, Peter Gottschalk and George Jakubson, "Impact of OBRA on AFDC Recipients in Wisconsin," discussed in "Measuring the Effects," this issue.

⁷*Birth and Fortune: The Impact of Numbers on Personal Welfare* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

Data and documentation will be integrated by incorporating both into a relational database management system. This system will provide rapid access to information while carefully preserving the logic imposed on the data by the survey design. The data will be organized to suit the requirements of researchers, whether they are studying eligibility for a particular program or the circumstances surrounding a specific event (such as a layoff), or want a broad picture of the well-being of families or households. The database management system will make it significantly easier to incorporate each of these points of view, and several others, into a study of particular problems, such as teenage unemployment.

Data will be made available on a University of Wisconsin-Madison computer. Storage of the data, electronic mail, and some documentation services will be furnished without charge. Capability that is being implemented combines some features of the established bibliographic databases, such as the National Technical Information Service and data services provided to time-series analysts by companies such as Data Resources, Inc., and Chase Econometrics. On-line services will include a bibliography of publications on SIPP and ISDP and technical memoranda, a codebook, and data. The codebook and documents will be presented in a form that can easily be searched for key words, authors, or specific entries.

The center will combine electronic mail with a bulletin board to allow users of the data to communicate with one another and to leave memos on problems encountered in a file of working documents that can easily be read by others. The center's consultants will provide assistance to members of the center via electronic mail.

Prospective users of SIPP or the earlier ISDP data should contact Dr. Alice Robbin, Institute for Research on Poverty, 3412 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, Madison WI, 53706 (608) 262-4574 or 262-6358. □

¹For a detailed discussion of the SIPP see Martin David, "Insights, Innovation, and Challenges for the SIPP," Social Systems Research Institute, Discussion Paper no. 8409, University of Wisconsin, Madison, April 1984; and Martin David, ed., "Scientific Potential of SIPP: Critiques of Its Content and Methods," *Journal of Economic and Social Measurement* (formerly *Review of Public Data Use*), in press.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-70, No. 1, "Economic Characteristics of Households in the United States, Third Quarter 1983" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, September 1984), p. 27.

³For a discussion of the ISDP see David, "Measuring Income and Program Participation," in David, ed., *Technical, Conceptual and Administrative Lessons of the Income Survey Development Program* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1983), pp. 1-20.

History of ISDP and SIPP

In 1975 the Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services authorized a major program to study income measurement, the Income Survey Development Program (ISDP), to be carried out jointly with the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Because the severe limitations of the March Income Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS) could only be rectified by making substantial changes in the survey instrument and procedures, the ISDP was designed to provide sufficient detail to measure program eligibility, interaction among programs, in-kind and cash income, and movement into and out of federal programs. Fieldwork began in 1977 with experimental measurements at test sites and progressed to quarterly interviews with 9500 households in 1979. The 1979 data include six measurements on individuals over an 18-month period. Administrative records were also sampled and reports were validated against those records.

The interagency interaction resulted in the inclusion of much innovative subject matter in the ISDP; the program was terminated, however, in mid-fiscal year 1982 and little research has been done to date. Public use files were released in 1983 and will be available through the Research Clearinghouse and Data Center.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) embeds designs of the ISDP in a continuing program of measurement of income. SIPP is the most extensive and precise tool to date for investigating the economic well-being of people in the United States, the relationship of economic situations to demographic and social characteristics of individuals, and the consequences of economic and social processes of change. SIPP was funded during fiscal year 1982, and the first sample panel of 20,000 households was fielded in October 1983. A second panel will begin in 1985. It will include an additional 6000 households. Each household will be interviewed every four months for two and a half years. The strategy of data collection will produce "sufficient data for longitudinal analyses while providing a relatively short recall period for reporting monthly income."¹

The first wave of the SIPP panel was released in October 1984; the second wave is slated for release in late January 1985.

¹Roger Herriot and Daniel Kasprzyk, "Survey of Income and Program Participation," Working Paper Series No. 8405, U.S. Bureau of the Census (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1984), pp. 5-6.