

II. THE DATA

A. CITY SAMPLE

The cities chosen were the 20 large cities for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes price data gathered in connection with compilation of the Consumer Price Index. They are listed below:

*Atlanta	Minneapolis
*Baltimore	*New York
Boston	Pittsburgh
*Cincinnati	*Philadelphia
*Chicago	Portland, Oreg.
Cleveland	*St. Louis
*Detroit	*San Francisco
Houston	Scranton
Kansas City	Seattle
*Los Angeles	Washington, D.C.

*Price data available for 1952-58.

B. PRICE DATA

A yearly average price for each of seven services categories was computed and used in this study. A simple arithmetic mean was used to summarize all the price quotations within a category into an annual quotation. There are seven prices for each city for each year.

The following are the categories and the items included:

Laundry service: Semifinished and finished.

Dry cleaning: Man's shirt, delivered and women's dress, cash and carry.

Automobile service: Brake relining and chassis lubrication.

Hospital room rates, per day rate for the following types of accommodation: Men's pay ward, semiprivate room, private room.

Medical service: Office visit to general practitioner, house visit by general practitioner, obstetrical case, appendectomy (surgeon's usual fee excluding anesthetic).

Dental service: Tooth filling amalgam, one surface; tooth extraction without complication, including X-ray.

Personal-care services: Man's haircut; shampoo and wave set, plain, short hair.

Monthly prices are given for the five largest cities; the remaining 15 cities are priced 4 times per year such that five of them are priced each month. All data came from the BLS and can be found in the publications mentioned below.

Data for December 1952 and for 1953-54 is from "Average Retail Prices: Collection and Calculation Techniques and Problems," Bulletin No. 1182 (June 1955). Only the 10 cities marked with asterisks in the list above are reported. Data for the full 20-city sample for 1955 is given in "Average Retail Prices," Bulletin No. 1197 (June 1956). Data for 1956-58 was taken from BLS worksheets in the Division of Prices and Cost of Living and will be published in the future.

C. UNSKILLED WAGE RATES

There are no wage data available for workers in service industries on a city basis. The Bureau of Labor Statistics does, however, publish periodically Bulletins in the series entitled "Occupational Wage Surveys." Data on wages in office, professional, maintenance, and custodial occupations are given for a number of large cities annually (or at times, less regularly) by these publications.

A composite unskilled wage rate was computed for each city and year using data from the "Occupational Wage Survey" series. Six occupations were chosen to be representative of the level of skill typically required in unskilled service industries. The average of the wage paid to workers in these six occupations was then used as an estimate of the level of wages paid in unskilled service industries in the same city and year.

The six occupations chosen were male janitors, female janitors, male laborers (material handling), female packers (shipping), office boys, and female file clerks (class B), all employed in nonmanufacturing industries.