

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Robert C. Weaver has acknowledged the adverse impact of relocation on many Negro families:

The contradiction between national purpose and local prejudice * * * has long been evident. In many cities, low-rent public housing programs are restricted to the crowded older areas, and have resulted in the construction of new housing in an environment of blight and segregation. The Federal urban renewal program has provided the means by which local public agencies could eliminate blighted housing and deteriorated areas of the central cities; but the net gains of this program have been seriously affected in many cities because of the existence of racial prejudice and discrimination. Local attempts to relocate families displaced by urban renewal projects into decent housing and better neighborhoods have been unsuccessful in many instances * * *. We have recognized these problems, and Federal programs are increasingly emphasizing more effective relocation at the local level. But the basic problem still harrasses us.²⁰

Large families and the elderly are also severely affected by urban renewal displacement. The difficulties of housing large families have already been noted in connection with the shortage of large units in low-rent public housing. Large units are also in short supply in the private housing market, particularly where housing codes are enforced with respect to occupancy limits. This is one reason why code enforcement, while likely to cause less dislocation than clearance, still cannot avoid relocation entirely. Even so, public action to conserve and rehabilitate older, spacious dwellings seems a promising approach to accommodating displaced large families.

The elderly have special housing problems stemming from the "more or less inherent qualities of the aging process itself—decreasing physical ability and increasing psychological withdrawal among them—and by social forces that are almost equally as inherent, such as early retirement and the impersonality of urban living."²¹ With generally low income and an inadequate supply of housing attuned to their needs, the elderly are especially vulnerable to disruption caused by urban renewal and other property acquisition proposals of government. The problems are compounded for the nonwhite elderly. As a consequence of this vulnerability and the growing size of the elderly population, particularly in urban areas, considerable attention is being directed toward their relocation when forced to move.

The Special Senate Committee on Aging, in October 1962, formed a Subcommittee on Involuntary Relocation of the Elderly. It reported in preliminary findings that the elderly represent the most difficult group to relocate satisfactorily and that in many cities production of housing suitable for them and within their economic means is not keeping pace with the rate at which such units are being torn down as a result of changes in urban land uses.²²

A special study of the problems of elderly relocatees is now being conducted jointly by the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Urban Studies and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, under a Ford Foundation grant. An interim report

²⁰ Robert C. Weaver, "Major Factors in Urban Planning," *The Urban Condition*, ed. Leonard J. Duhl (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 103.

²¹ University of Pennsylvania and National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, *Essays on the Problems Faced in the Relocation of Elderly Persons* (June 1963) (mimeo.), p. 29.

²² U.S. Senate, *Developments in Aging, 1959 to 1963*, a report of the Special Committee on Aging, 88th Cong., 1st sess., Rept. No. 8, p. 112.