

of the Department of Commerce, Office of Business Economics. The hearty reception these data got from market analysts probably stems from two factors: (1) it was the first survey covering the total population, and (2) the detailed statistical reports became available at a time when the business community was acutely aware of the need for a better understanding of the characteristics of consumer demand.

The titles of a series of reports by the Curtis Publishing Company in 1938 to 1940 indicate the kinds of analyses which were made, for example, "Market Patterns in Eight Large Cities" and "Who Owns Fire, Health and Accident, and Automobile Insurance." The 1935-36 survey data and the small-scale nationwide survey in 1941 were also extensively used in more scholarly studies which had relevance to market research, for example, the National Bureau of Economic Research, "Studies in Consumer Installment Financing;" the Twentieth Century Fund 1947 study, "America's Needs and Resources;" and "The Economics of Installment Buying," by Reavis Cox.

The BLS Survey of Consumer Expenditures in 1950 was limited to urban areas, but the sample included 91 metropolitan areas and urban places. Through a grant from the Ford Foundation to the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the expenditures, income, and savings data were tabulated and published in highly disaggregated form—one-variable classifications for large cities and three-variable classifications for 9 classes of cities and for the urban United States.<sup>3</sup> In addition, much of the supplemental information, such as ownership of durables and quantities purchased, was published or made available to analysts through special tabulations. Thus, the 1950 data found their way by many routes into a wide variety of marketing studies which ranged from analysis of the market for a single item, or class of items, in a single city, or class of cities,<sup>4</sup> to the calculation of demand relationships for major classes of commodities and services<sup>5</sup> and the development of consumption models.

#### SURVEY OF CONSUMER EXPENDITURES, 1960-61

Before discussing some of the market uses which are being made of data from the most recent survey, the Survey of Consumer Expenditures in 1960-61, I will review its essential features. In this survey, detailed information on annual expenditures, incomes, and changes in assets and liabilities was obtained from 13,728 families and single consumers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics collected information for 1960 and 1961 from 9,476 families residing in 66 metropolitan areas and small urban places, and for 1961, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, from 2,285 rural nonfarm and 1,967 rural farm families. Information for 1959 for Anchorage, Alaska, was included in the national summaries. Thus, for the first time since 1941, information is available for a representative cross section of all American families—urban, rural nonfarm, and rural farm. Information for 1959, 1960, 1962, or 1963 is also available for 10 other cities which were not a part of the national sample.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the detailed expenditure, income, and saving data, information on 1-week's purchase of food items was obtained for urban and rural nonfarm families. Information on many family characteristics, their living arrangements, and a selected inventory of household durables was also recorded for each family.

The primary purpose for the urban portion of the survey was to revise the Consumer Price Index, and this use was a controlling factor not only in the design and content of the survey but also in priorities established for processing and disseminating the data. From the beginning of the project, the need for general purpose tabulations and for making the data available to special purpose users was recognized, and a substantial volume of data was provided in the General Purpose Tabulation Program.<sup>7</sup> The data have been tabulated separately for the urban segment of 66 metropolitan areas and urban places and have been combined for the 4 broad census geographic regions and the total United States—

<sup>3</sup> "Study of Consumer Expenditures, Incomes, and Savings," University of Pennsylvania, 1956-57, Volumes I-XVIII.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Smith, Arthur L., "Good and Bad Cosmetic Markets," *Drug and Cosmetic Industry*, August 1954.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Lippitt, Vernon, "Determinants of Consumer Demand for House Furnishings and Equipment" in *Consumption and Savings*, Volume I, University of Pennsylvania, 1960.

<sup>6</sup> Cincinnati, Ohio (1959); Houston, Tex., Kansas City, Mo.-Kans., Milwaukee, Wis., Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn., and San Diego, Calif. (1963); Fairbanks, Alaska (1959); Juneau and Ketchikan, Alaska (1960); and Las Vegas, Nev. (1962).

<sup>7</sup> For description, see "Survey of Consumer Expenditures, 1960-61: List of Statistical Reports," Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, September 1966.