

Although for the three types of stores prices in general showed little difference between the two areas there was usually a rather wide dispersion in the ratios of prices for the different items. In order to determine whether a few of the 18 commodities usually accounted for these extreme price differences between stores located in the different income areas, all price relatives of 105 or more, and of 95 or less, for the 6 cities combined were classed by commodity. It was found that these extremes in both the high and low ranges were scattered among the 18 commodities. The data on which this analysis is based are shown in detail in the appendix tables.

B. Within the same income area, by type of store: This study indicates that in both income areas prices charged by small independent food stores are usually higher than those charged by large independents or chains for the same quantity and the same brand (or quality) of the 18 items included in the survey. For this comparison, price relatives for all the individual comparisons between income areas for the same type of store were used. That is, if in large independent stores in both income areas of a city prices were reported for three brands of flour, all three price relatives were used. These relatives were then arrayed, and the median determined. There were usually 18 to 24 comparisons for each array; medians based on less than 10 comparisons are so indicated in the table below:

[Average price in small independent stores=100]

	Low-income area		Higher income area	
	Chains	Large independents	Chains	Large independents
CPI quality:				
Atlanta.....	98.50	99.50	97.00	99.50
Chicago.....	98.50	96.00	190.50	99.50
Houston.....	101.50	98.50	98.50	97.50
Los Angeles.....	92.00	99.00	90.50	98.00
New York City.....	97.50	100.00	96.00	97.50
Washington.....	100.00	98.00	93.00	92.50
Volume selling quality in low-income area stores:				
Atlanta.....	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.00
Chicago.....	¹ 99.50	96.00	97.50	100.00
Houston.....	102.50	98.50	100.00	98.00
Los Angeles.....	² 89.00	95.50	¹ 88.00	95.00
New York City.....	100.50	100.00	97.50	99.50
Washington.....	93.00	94.00	95.50	96.50

¹ Based on 8 comparisons.

² Based on 7 comparisons.

If the price relationships among the three types of stores found for the 18 food commodities included in this study are representative of the relationships for the full range of commodities purchased by low-income families, it is likely that there are differences in prices paid by low-income families and higher income families because of differences in the types of stores in which the two make the major volume of their purchases. There are no retail sales data for food by income area for these cities. Nor are there any family expenditure data to indicate the type of store, or the geographic area within the city, in which families in the various income groups make their purchases. However, based on the observation of the BLS agents who collected the data in this study, there are relatively few grocery chains in the very low income areas, especially in the larger cities. Many of the stores listed in the grocery route lists were not full line grocery stores, but were beer parlors or pool halls that sold a few food items or delicatessens.

If the major volume of purchases of the low-income families are made in the small neighborhood grocery stores, and the major volume of purchases of higher income families are made in large grocery stores, price differences for the same quality goods appear to be associated with the size of the store in which purchases are made rather than with differences in the geographic location of the stores.

CONDITION OF FRESH MEAT AND PRODUCE

Some foods are especially subject to deterioration as a result of such factors as conditions to which they are subjected in the distribution system, the manner and frequency with which they are handled by the stores' customers, and the