

ANTI-POVERTY AND THE CITIES

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Dimensions of Poverty.—In March 1965 the Bureau of the Census in its Current Population Survey obtained special information for the Social Security Administration and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The data permitted an analysis of the characteristics of the poor and non-poor in the United States on the basis of 1964 income.

In March 1965, of the total population of almost 190 million, 64 per cent resided in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's), 31 per cent in central cities, and 33 per cent in suburbia—outside central cities but within the SMSA's. Of the remaining 36 per cent of the people who lived in non-metropolitan areas, 29 per cent lived in non-farm communities and 7 per cent lived on farms.

There was considerable difference in the distribution of white and non-white population which constituted about 12 per cent of the total. Non-whites were more heavily concentrated in SMSA's, 68 per cent compared with 63 per cent; and non-whites were especially more concentrated in central cities, 52 per cent contrasted with 28 per cent. Only 16 per cent of the non-whites resided in suburbia contrasted with 35 per cent of the whites. Non-whites were somewhat more often residents of farms, 8 per cent compared with 7 per cent of the whites; and less often residents of non-farm communities outside SMSA's, 24 per cent compared with 30 per cent.

Of the total population in the nation some 34.3 million persons or some 18 per cent were "poor" according to the index of the Social Security Administration based on a sliding scale which sets \$3200 as the threshold for poverty for a family of four. Of the white population 23.6 million or 14 percent were poor, whereas among non-white 10.6 million or over 47 per cent lived in poverty.

Almost half of all the poor, 48 per cent lived in metropolitan areas, 29 per cent in central cities and about 18 per cent in suburbia. Of the white poor 46 per cent lived in SMSA's; of the non-white poor 53 per cent. But whereas less than one-fourth of the white poor lived in central cities, 24 per cent, over four-tenths of the non-white poor, 42 per cent, were central city residents.

That poverty is primarily concentrated in urban places, as are most of the American people, is further indicated by the fact that only 13 per cent of the poor, both white and non-white, lived on farms. Of the total poor 40 percent were located in non-farm areas outside SMSA's, 42 per cent of the white poor and 35 per cent of the non-white poor.

The distribution of households in the United States closely paralleled that of the total population. Of the 60 million households in 1965, 47.7 million contained families and 12.3 per cent comprised unrelated individuals. Non-white households, having larger average size than whites constituted a smaller proportion of total households, 10.6 per cent, than of the total population. Non-whites made up a somewhat smaller proportion of all households containing families, 9.9 per cent, and a larger proportion of all households containing unrelated individuals 13.6 per cent.

Of the total number of families, 6.8 million, or 14.3 per cent, were poor. There were 4.9 million poor white families, making up 11.4 per cent of all white families. There were a smaller number of poor non-white families, 1.9 million, but they constituted over 40 per cent of all non-white families. Of the total number of households comprising unrelated individuals 43 per cent were poor, 41 per cent of the white, and 59 per cent of the non-white.

Over a fourth of the poor families in the nation (27.6 per cent) and nearly two-fifths of the households of unrelated individuals (38.5 per cent) were resident in central cities. An additional two-fifths of all poor families (41.2 per cent) and over a third of the unrelated individuals (36.0 per cent) resided in non-farm areas outside SMSA's.

Of the non-white poor families over two-fifths (42.8 per cent) as compared with about one-fifth of poor white families (21.9 per cent) were concentrated in