

APPENDIX 13

TESTIMONY OF LAWRENCE PODELL, PH. D., PROFESSOR OF URBAN STUDIES, GRADUATE DIVISION, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

In the course of conducting research upon public assistance recipients in the City of New York, data have been gathered which pertain to some of the questions that the Subcommittee wishes discussed at these Hearings. These data have undergone only preliminary analysis but, given the dearth of research evidence in this area of inquiry, their relevance was such that it seemed desirable to report them to the Subcommittee.

DATA FROM THE PROJECT "UTILIZATION OF HEALTH SERVICES BY WELFARE RECIPIENTS"

A survey was conducted in the summer of 1966, using a systematically drawn sample of families on the New York City welfare rolls, in which 2179 mothers * were interviewed. The survey, supported by a grant from the U.S. Public Health Services,** was primarily concerned with the utilization of health services by welfare recipients. But questions were asked about the topic of welfare itself.

WELFARE HISTORIES

About fifteen percent of the mothers on welfare reported that their parents were publicly assisted at one time or another. Respondents born and/or reared in New York City showed a greater tendency to indicate that their parents were on welfare than did immigrants reared elsewhere. Many of those on welfare have parents who lived on the farms or in the towns of the South and Puerto Rico. As poor as their parents may have been, they may not have been on welfare; the nature of public assistance in these areas was and is very different from that of New York City. For a migrant population, the absence of intergenerational public dependency cannot be equated with the absence of intergenerational poverty.

These observations help to explain why Puerto Rican respondents, the newest arrivals, were least likely to indicate that their parents were ever on welfare. Among Puerto Rican respondents, 9% reported that their parents were on welfare at one time or another, compared to 16% of the white and 21% of the Negro respondents.

About a quarter of the mothers on welfare reported that they had a brother or sister on welfare at the time of the interview. Another tenth indicated that, although they did not have a sibling on the rolls at that time, they had a brother or sister who was publicly assisted at one time or another.

Based upon their statements, six in ten mothers on welfare had neither parents nor siblings who were ever publicly assisted. Less than one in ten had parents and siblings who were on welfare at one time or another.

WELFARE EXPECTANCIES

How did mothers on welfare in New York City view the future? A quarter of them expected that they would surely be on the rolls the following year; another third said they would probably be on. In other words, nearly six out of ten expected to continue to be publicly assisted.

*Included in the survey were 954 Puerto Rican, 1,017 Negro, and 208 white mothers of families on welfare.

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