

# THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF URBAN FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

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THE CANVASS of approximately 700,000 urban households made by the National Health Survey in the winter of 1935-36 provided information on the approximate money income or relief status of urban families for the 12-month period preceding the date of the canvass. The size and selection of this sample makes the surveyed population generally comparable with the urban population as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Economic relationships apparent from analysis of these data may be regarded, therefore, as roughly indicative of similar relationships prevailing generally among urban families though the income distribution in the sample may be somewhat influenced by the disproportionately high representation of cities with 100,000 or more population.<sup>2</sup>

In the National Health Survey, family income represents the total money income of all members of a household related to the head.<sup>3</sup> The income of nonrelated lodgers or roomers and servants was not obtained, except to the extent that the amounts which they paid for board and lodging were regarded as part of the family income. No income value was attributed to ownership of a home or any other property. One-third or more of the families reported home ownership, but it is not known to what extent ownership was offset by mortgage charges or other indebtedness on the property.

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the basis, purpose, and scope of the study of family composition and a summary analysis of the surveyed population, see Sanders, Barkev S., "Family Composition in the United States," *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1939), pp. 9-13.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Public Health Service, National Institute of Health, *The National Health Survey: 1935-1936: The Relief and Income Status of the Urban Population of the United States, 1935-1938*, pp. vi-viii.

<sup>3</sup> "Income.—Income is defined to include salaries, wages, business profits including those from boarding and lodging houses which supplied the main income of the family, income from boarders and lodgers in private families, and income from investments; it thus represents an approximate net yearly income of the family. Families were not asked to report the exact amount of income but to locate themselves in the appropriate interval . . ." *The National Health Survey*, *ibid.*, p. 2.

The distribution of family income for these urban households is similar, in broad outline, to that indicated in the estimates of the National Re-

Table 1.—Percentage distribution, by economic status, of urban families canvassed in the National Health Survey<sup>1</sup> and of urban families included in estimates of the National Resources Committee<sup>2</sup>

Economic status	National Health Survey		National Resources Committee estimates, urban families of 2 or more
	All urban families	Urban families of 2 or more <sup>3</sup>	
Relief.....	16.0	16.6	16.5
Nonrelief:			
Under \$1,000.....	28.2	25.9	22.6
\$1,000-\$1,499.....	22.5	23.2	20.0
\$1,500-\$1,999.....	15.9	16.7	15.6
\$2,000-\$2,999.....	10.9	11.5	15.1
\$3,000-\$4,999.....	4.1	4.4	6.8
\$5,000 and over.....	1.8	1.8	3.4

<sup>1</sup> Computed from U. S. Public Health Service, National Institute of Health, *The National Health Survey: 1935-36: The Relief and Income Status of the Urban Population of the United States, 1935-1938*, p. 1, table 1; families of unknown income omitted.

<sup>2</sup> Computed from National Resources Committee, *Consumer Incomes in the United States*, August 1938, p. 101, table 20-B, and p. 97, table 9-B. See also p. 74, footnote 17, for correction of relief estimates by data of National Health Survey.

<sup>3</sup> Computed by elimination of 1-person families tabulated in family composition study.

sources Committee for the fiscal year 1935-36, despite the fact that these two studies are dissimilar in some respects.<sup>4</sup> The general resemblance is shown in table 1.

## The Income of Bio-legal Families

For the purposes of the study of family composition undertaken by the Social Security Board, it was necessary to adopt a definition of family different from that used by the National Health Survey,<sup>5</sup> in order to identify relationships pertinent to problems and policies in social insurance. As defined in the present study, a "bio-legal" family includes: (a) one or both spouses and their *unmarried* children, if any, including adopted or foster children, living together as a family unit; or (b) *unmarried* sisters and/or brothers, including adopted or foster brothers and sisters, living

<sup>4</sup> Estimates of the National Resources Committee include imputed rental value of owned homes and cover a period when incomes were somewhat higher. In the higher-income groups schedules were supplemented by Federal income tax data.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

together as a family unit; or (c) persons living in extra-familial groups, as here defined, or by themselves, who are considered as separate one-person families. Except when otherwise specified, "family" is used subsequently in this article within the meaning of this definition.

Among the 703,000 urban households included in the survey, there were 931,400 bio-legal families, or an average of approximately 1.3 families per household. In 57 percent of these families, including more than 69 percent of the individuals in the surveyed population, the bio-legal family constituted the entire household. In these single-family households the income reported in the National Health Survey, for the family as there defined, coincides with that used in this study for the bio-legal families. When the household was composed of two or more bio-legal families, there was no way to attribute to each the appropriate part of the total income recorded in the survey schedule; the combined income for these derived families was therefore attributed to each. Unrelated members of the household whose income was not reflected in the household income were classi-

fied according to the income of the household of which they were a part.

The income assignment of the canvassed population therefore is as follows:

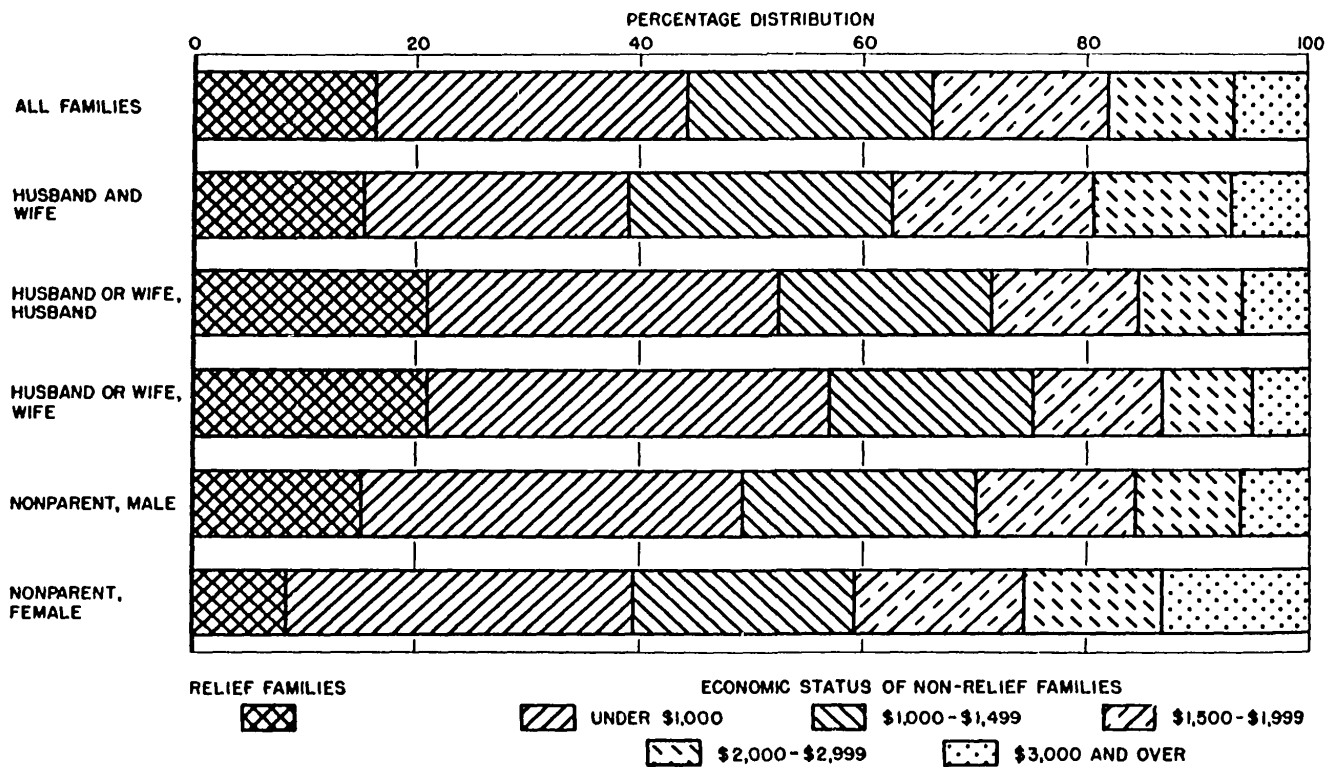
(a) For about 70 percent of the individuals included in the sample, the family income reported is the income of the bio-legal family to which the individuals belonged;

(b) For an additional 26 percent of the individuals who lived in households with two or more related bio-legal families, the assignment of the aggregate income to each family *overstates* the per capita income but is a reasonably valid index of the economic level of the households in which these individuals live;

(c) For the remaining 4 percent or less, consisting of roomers, lodgers, and servants, it may be said that, except for the last, the income of the household is a rough index of their economic level.

On the basis of these considerations it is believed that the method, though not wholly precise, serves the present purpose. It must be observed, however, that the procedure applied leads to overstatement of income for most bio-legal families in

**Chart I.—Distribution of all urban bio-legal families and of families of specified types by economic status (see table 2)**



**Table 2.—Number <sup>1</sup> of urban bio-legal families of specified types <sup>2</sup> and economic status, and percentage distribution by economic status**

Type of family <sup>1</sup>	All families	Economic status of family								Unknown
		Relief families	Nonrelief families							
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999	\$5,000 and over	
Number of families <sup>1</sup>										
All types.....	931,370	145,143	741,772	245,783	194,542	140,456	90,770	40,403	20,818	44,464
Husband and wife.....	554,186	82,380	452,168	120,232	127,460	94,761	67,059	25,598	11,048	19,048
Husband or wife, husband.....	63,599	12,758	47,781	19,089	11,478	7,902	5,618	2,452	1,242	8,000
Husband or wife, wife.....	176,844	35,618	133,395	60,617	30,681	19,812	13,478	5,595	3,212	7,881
Nonparent, male.....	62,782	8,885	40,410	19,886	12,165	8,198	5,595	2,365	1,201	4,487
Nonparent, female.....	73,968	5,502	50,028	19,959	12,758	9,783	8,020	4,393	4,115	9,438
Percentage distribution <sup>2</sup>										
All types.....	100.0	16.4	83.6	27.8	21.9	15.8	11.2	4.6	2.3	-----
Husband and wife.....	100.0	15.4	84.6	23.6	23.8	17.7	12.5	4.9	2.1	-----
Husband or wife, husband.....	100.0	21.1	78.9	31.5	18.9	13.1	9.3	4.1	2.0	-----
Husband or wife, wife.....	100.0	21.1	78.9	35.9	18.1	11.7	8.0	3.3	1.9	-----
Nonparent, male.....	100.0	15.2	84.8	34.0	20.9	14.1	9.6	4.1	2.1	-----
Nonparent, female.....	100.0	8.5	91.5	30.9	19.8	15.2	12.4	6.8	6.4	-----

<sup>1</sup> Data are preliminary and subject to revision.  
<sup>2</sup> Bio-legal families are classified by types as follows: (1) husband-and-wife families: both spouses with or without unmarried children; (2) husband-or-wife families, husband: the male spouse, with or without unmarried children; (3) husband-or-wife families, wife: the female spouse, with or without unmarried children; (4) nonparent families, male: an unmarried male as

the head with or without unmarried sisters and/or brothers; (5) nonparent families, female: an unmarried female as the head with or without unmarried sisters and/or brothers. An individual living in an extra-familial group as here defined, or by himself, is classified as a separate bio-legal family.  
<sup>3</sup> Excludes families of unknown economic status.

multiple-family households, although it may occasionally lead to understatement. If an aged parent lives with a married son or daughter, the income of the parent may be grossly overstated; so also may be the incomes of roomers and lodgers who, as already indicated, were classified as separate bio-legal families.

Families were classified under "relief" <sup>6</sup> when any member of the family was reported to have received relief at some time during the preceding 12 months; doubtless some families in this category were wholly or partly self-supporting during at least part of this 12-month period. On the other hand it is possible that some families failed to report receipt of relief during the survey year. Clark Tibbitts, Field Director of the National Health Survey, reported in this connection:

"It appears that the number of families who reported the receipt of relief to Health Survey enumerators is approximately the same as the number of families likely to be found on the rolls

<sup>6</sup> The National Health Survey defined "relief" as follows: "Families were identified as having received relief, if at any time during the year covered by the report one or more members had had assistance such as work relief (but not PWA or CCC wages), direct relief, mothers' pension, pension for the blind, or a grant for any similar purpose from public funds administered by a Federal, State, or local government. Families which reported the receipt of relief were not asked to specify the amount of income received during the year." *The National Health Survey*, *ibid.*, p. 2.

of relief agencies at any one moment. Because of the turnover in the relief population the total number of different families assisted during a year should be larger than the number on the rolls at any one time."<sup>7</sup>

The method used is such as to limit the value of the data for the measurement of the aggregate income of the surveyed population. The limitations do not, however, impair the usefulness of the data for the purpose of the present study, i. e., the use of income data as a scale to rate the economic status of various groups in the population classified by age, marital status, and the like; to analyze the relative economic insecurity of families of given types; and to estimate the costs of extending to such groups provisions to promote greater economic security.

**Distribution of Families by Economic Status**

Table 2 shows the distribution of bio-legal families according to economic status as measured by the receipt of relief or by reported income. In the survey group as a whole, more than two-fifths (44.2 percent) of the families of known economic status were in households which received relief during the survey year or had an income of less

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

than \$1,000; more than one-third (37.7 percent) had from \$1,000 to \$2,000; and somewhat less than one-fifth (18.1 percent), \$2,000 or more.

Within the total group, wide variations in income are evident among families of different types. The complete families—that is, families including both husband and wife, with or without unmarried children—had a more favorable economic status than the group as a whole in that a smaller proportion were in the relief and the under-\$1,000 categories and more were in the groups with \$1,000–\$1,999 or \$2,000 and over.

In some respects the nonparent families with a female head show a more favorable distribution in that nearly 26 percent of this group were in households with incomes of \$2,000 or more, while in husband-and-wife families the corresponding percentage is about 19. This contrast is, however, partly spurious, since it arises from the definition of nonparent families with a female head; these are largely one-person families consisting of unmarried women living in the homes of relatives or living as roomers, lodgers, or servants in the homes of others. Under both circumstances the household income attributed to them may fail to reflect their actual economic status. Only 25 percent of these families constitute single-family households, while for husband-and-wife families the corresponding percentage is 78.

The least favorable status was that of families

which included only one spouse. Among such families, designated according to the head as “husband or wife, husband” and “husband or wife, wife,” 53 percent and 57 percent, respectively, were in groups for which relief or income of less than \$1,000 was reported, while 32 and 30 percent reported family incomes of \$1,000–\$1,999, and 15 and 13 percent, incomes of \$2,000 and over. The differences in income distribution by family types are shown graphically in chart I. It is evident that the income status is least favorable for families in which the wife is the head and the husband is absent. The low economic status found among these broken families is especially significant, since nearly a fifth included children under the age of 16.

The overstatement of income for multiple-family households is relatively least important in husband-and-wife families and most important in nonparent families. As a group, one-spouse families, especially those without the male, are the least favored; conversely the husband-and-wife families are the most favored. This statement, however, applies only to the family entity; the relationships indicated in tables 2 and 3 will be markedly modified when other factors, such as the size of family, are taken into consideration.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The average size of families, which will be considered in a subsequent analysis, is as follows: husband-and-wife families, 3.5; husband or wife, husband, 1.5; husband or wife, wife, 1.8; nonparent, male, 1.1; and nonparent, female, 1.2.

**Table 3.—Percentage distribution of urban bio-legal families of specified economic status by type of family, and index numbers of relative percentage distributions by economic status**

Type of family	All families	Economic status of family								Unknown
		Relief families	Nonrelief families							
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000–\$1,499	\$1,500–\$1,999	\$2,000–\$2,999	\$3,000–\$4,999		
Percentage distribution										
All types.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Husband and wife.....	69.5	60.8	60.0	61.3	65.5	67.5	67.2	63.4	63.1	44.2
Husband or wife, husband.....	6.8	8.8	6.4	7.8	5.9	5.6	5.0	6.1	5.9	6.9
Husband or wife, wife.....	19.0	24.5	18.0	24.7	15.8	14.1	13.5	13.8	15.4	17.6
Nonparent, male.....	0.7	0.1	0.7	8.1	0.2	5.8	5.6	5.8	5.8	10.1
Nonparent, female.....	8.0	3.8	8.0	8.1	0.6	7.0	8.1	10.9	19.8	21.2
Index (base=percent of families of specified type in all families)										
Husband and wife.....	100	95	102	80	110	113	113	107	80	74
Husband or wife, husband.....	100	129	94	115	87	82	82	90	87	101
Husband or wife, wife.....	100	129	95	130	83	74	71	73	81	93
Nonparent, male.....	100	91	100	121	92	87	81	87	87	161
Nonparent, female.....	100	48	100	101	82	88	101	130	218	265

### Distribution of Individuals by Economic Status

Of 2.5 million persons included in this sample of the urban population, more than two-fifths (43 percent) were in families which received relief during the survey year or reported incomes of less than \$1,000; less than two-fifths (39 percent) were in families with incomes of from \$1,000-\$1,999; and less than one-fifth (18 percent) in families with \$2,000 or more. As may be seen from table 4, there is a considerable variation in the income distribution of the individuals who are in families of different types. While individuals in nonparent families with a female head were apparently the most favored group, this position is probably a reflection of the method of income assignment rather than of actual income status. Second in rank were individuals in husband-and-wife families. Among these, 40 percent were in families which reported relief or incomes of less than \$1,000, 41 percent in families with \$1,000-\$1,999, and 19 percent in families with \$2,000 or more. The apparent advantage of persons in these families may be lessened when the larger size of these families is taken into consideration.

Persons in broken families in which the wife is the head show the least favorable income distribution. Among these persons, 58 percent were in families reporting relief or incomes of less than \$1,000; 29 percent in income groups with \$1,000-\$1,999, and 13 percent in groups with \$2,000 and more. The next least favored group consists of persons in families with the male spouse only. Among these persons, 49 percent were in families which reported relief or family incomes of less than \$1,000; 34 percent had incomes of \$1,000-\$1,999; and 17 percent incomes of \$2,000 and over.

Table 5 indicates the distribution of the 2.5 million individuals and of individuals in various age groups according to economic status. It is apparent that there are significant differences and that the economic status of children under 16 is the least favorable. Of nearly 650,000 children, 49 percent were in families reporting relief or incomes of less than \$1,000; 37 percent in families with incomes of \$1,000-\$1,999; and 14 percent were in those with incomes of \$2,000 and over.

The next least favored group consists of persons

Table 4.—Number<sup>1</sup> and percentage distribution<sup>2</sup> of individuals in urban bio-legal families by economic status and by type of family

Type of family	All individuals	Economic status of family								Un-known
		Individuals in relief families	Individuals in nonrelief families							
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999		
Number of individuals <sup>1</sup>										
Total.....	2,504,104	453,217	1,951,462	578,523	538,845	394,309	279,071	110,312	50,342	99,426
Husband and wife.....	1,926,389	336,668	1,523,764	408,612	437,084	324,209	228,726	87,804	37,830	66,087
Husband or wife, husband.....	95,386	10,604	71,120	25,114	17,417	12,916	9,415	4,214	2,044	4,662
Husband or wife, wife.....	325,847	80,133	232,158	100,180	65,787	30,182	24,791	10,229	4,980	18,566
Nonparent, male.....	70,984	10,152	65,828	21,746	13,654	9,427	6,604	2,928	1,469	5,004
Nonparent, female.....	85,498	6,760	68,592	22,862	14,903	11,635	9,530	5,137	4,619	10,146
Percentage distribution <sup>2</sup> by economic status										
Total.....	100.0	18.8	81.2	24.1	22.4	16.4	11.6	4.6	2.1	-----
Husband and wife.....	100.0	18.1	81.9	22.0	23.5	17.4	12.3	4.7	2.0	-----
Husband or wife, husband.....	100.0	21.6	78.4	27.7	19.2	14.2	10.4	4.0	2.3	-----
Husband or wife, wife.....	100.0	25.7	74.3	32.1	17.8	11.6	7.9	3.3	1.6	-----
Nonparent, male.....	100.0	15.4	84.6	33.0	20.7	14.3	10.0	4.4	2.2	-----
Nonparent, female.....	100.0	9.0	91.0	30.3	19.8	15.4	12.7	6.8	6.0	-----
Percentage distribution by family type										
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Husband and wife.....	76.9	74.3	78.1	70.6	81.1	82.2	81.9	79.6	74.2	66.4
Husband or wife, husband.....	3.8	4.3	3.6	4.3	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.9
Husband or wife, wife.....	13.0	17.7	11.0	17.3	10.4	9.2	8.0	9.3	9.0	13.6
Nonparent, male.....	2.9	2.2	2.9	3.8	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.9	5.0
Nonparent, female.....	3.4	1.8	3.5	4.0	2.8	2.9	3.4	4.7	8.9	10.1

<sup>1</sup> Data are preliminary and subject to revision.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes individuals in families of unknown economic status.

**Table 5.—Number<sup>1</sup> of individuals of specified ages in urban bio-legal families of given economic status, and percentage distribution<sup>2</sup> by economic status of family**

Age group (years)	Economic status of family									
	All individuals	Individuals in relief families	Individuals in nonrelief families							Unknown
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999	\$5,000 and over	
Number of individuals <sup>1</sup>										
All ages.....	2,504,104	453,217	1,051,462	578,523	538,815	394,369	279,071	110,312	50,312	99,423
Under 16.....	647,639	167,350	463,984	139,889	140,570	94,347	60,132	20,497	8,549	16,305
16-24.....	401,916	72,236	308,737	92,910	84,176	61,469	41,125	18,264	7,763	20,943
25-44.....	821,732	119,614	671,150	183,934	189,479	142,120	100,804	38,244	16,569	30,938
45-59.....	401,595	60,281	325,405	92,445	82,091	65,995	50,872	22,681	11,321	18,909
60-64.....	82,068	11,414	66,562	22,647	16,036	12,033	9,195	4,296	2,355	4,092
65 and over.....	142,591	22,086	113,327	45,861	26,067	18,029	13,612	6,144	3,614	7,181
Percentage distribution <sup>2</sup>										
All ages.....	100.0	18.9	81.1	21.0	22.4	16.4	11.6	4.6	2.1	.....
Under 16.....	100.0	26.5	73.5	22.2	22.3	14.9	9.5	3.2	1.4	.....
16-24.....	100.0	19.0	81.0	24.4	22.1	16.1	11.6	4.8	2.0	.....
25-44.....	100.0	15.1	84.9	23.3	24.0	18.0	12.7	4.8	2.1	.....
45-59.....	100.0	15.6	84.4	24.0	21.3	17.1	13.2	5.0	2.9	.....
60-64.....	100.0	14.6	85.4	29.1	20.6	15.1	11.8	5.5	3.0	.....
65 and over.....	100.0	16.3	83.7	33.9	19.2	13.3	10.1	4.5	2.7	.....

<sup>1</sup> Data are preliminary and subject to revision.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes individuals of unknown age and individuals in families of unknown economic status.

in ages 16-24. Among these, 44 percent were in relief families or families with an income of less than \$1,000; 38 percent were in the income group \$1,000-\$1,999; and 18 percent in the income group \$2,000 or over. The most favored groups were persons in ages 25-59. The aged persons have an intermediate position. Their proportion

in relief households was not appreciably different from that found among persons in ages 25-59, but a much larger proportion are found in families reporting incomes of less than \$1,000. With respect to sex, there were no marked differences in any age group in the economic status of males and females

**Table 6.—Percentage distribution<sup>1</sup> of individuals in urban bio-legal families of specified economic status, by age and index numbers of relative percentage distribution by economic status of family**

Age group (years)	Economic status of family									
	All individuals	Individuals in relief families	Individuals in nonrelief families							Unknown
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999	\$5,000 and over	
Percentage distribution <sup>1</sup> by age										
All ages.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 16.....	25.9	37.0	23.8	24.2	26.1	23.9	21.6	18.6	17.0	16.6
16-24.....	16.1	15.9	15.8	16.1	15.6	15.6	15.8	16.6	15.5	21.3
25-44.....	32.8	26.4	34.5	31.9	35.2	26.1	30.2	34.7	33.0	31.4
45-59.....	16.2	13.3	16.7	16.0	15.2	16.8	18.2	20.6	22.6	19.2
60-64.....	3.3	2.5	3.4	3.9	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.9	4.7	4.2
65 and over.....	5.7	4.9	5.8	7.9	4.9	4.6	4.9	5.6	7.2	7.3
Index (base = percent of individuals of specified age in total)										
Under 16.....	100	143	92	93	101	92	83	72	66	64
16-24.....	100	99	98	100	97	97	98	103	96	132
25-44.....	100	80	105	97	107	110	110	106	101	96
45-59.....	100	82	103	99	94	104	112	127	140	119
60-64.....	100	76	103	118	91	91	100	118	142	127
65 and over.....	100	86	102	139	86	81	86	98	126	128

<sup>1</sup> Excludes individuals of unknown age.

Table 6 gives the percentage distribution of individuals in the sample according to age for the entire group and for the specific income categories. It is to be noted that the proportion of children in the sample population, which is not materially different from that reported in the 1930 census, is almost five times the proportion of persons in ages 65 and over. Children constitute about one-fourth of all persons in the surveyed population but more than one-third (37 percent) of all persons in relief families.

The reader must be cautioned, however, that to understand the full economic significance of these comparisons between persons in different ages and in families of different types it is important to consider additional factors, including the composition of the household and the size of the family, which will be discussed in subsequent articles.

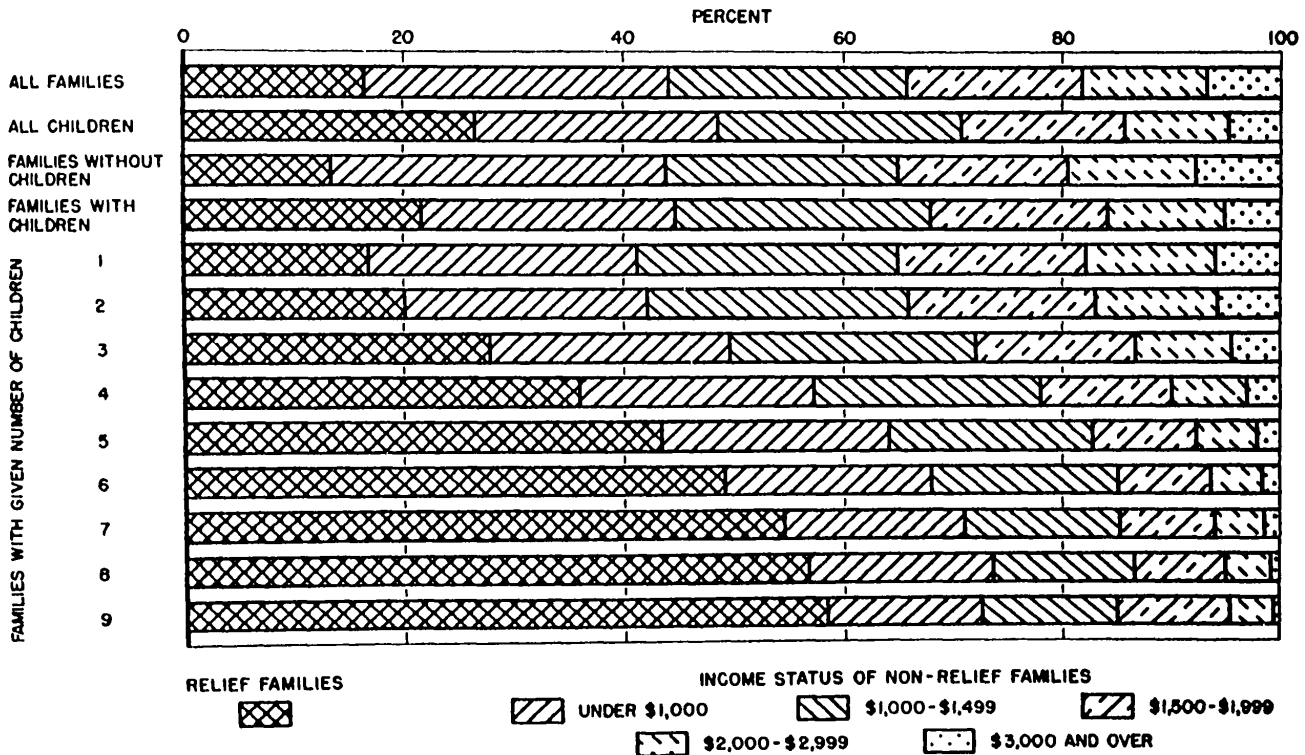
### Economic Status of Urban Children

The present analysis indicates that the income distribution of children is distinctly the least favorable, especially since the method of attributing

the income of the larger family to each of the bio-legal families tends somewhat to understate the unfavorable economic status of the children. The economic status of children must be of special concern, since it largely determines the opportunities of the citizens of the future. Two-thirds of the families considered in this study had incomes of less than \$1,500, that is, incomes inadequate to support families of substantial size. (See table 7.) The economic status of the families with children under age 16 is distinctly less favorable than that of families without children. Thus among families without children, 13 percent reported relief status; among those with children, 22 percent. Except in the income category of less than \$1,000, the distributions invariably favor the families without children. This difference in favor of families without children will become greatly more enhanced when size of family is taken into consideration.

The statistical picture is still less favorable when the economic distribution of children—rather than families—is considered. Of the 648,000 young children in urban families, nearly 27 percent of those for whom income information was provided

Chart II.—Distribution of all urban bio-legal families, all children under age 16, families without children, and families with given number of children, by economic status (see tables 5 and 7)



**Table 7.—Percentage distribution of urban bio-legal families with and without children under age 16, by economic status**

Children per family	Total number of families <sup>1</sup>	Economic status of family							
		All families	Relief families	Nonrelief families					
				Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999	\$5,000 and over
All families.....	880, 015	100.0	10.4	27.7	21.9	15.8	11.3	4.6	2.3
Families without children.....	560, 201	100.0	13.3	30.5	21.2	15.6	11.6	5.0	2.8
Families with children <sup>2</sup> .....	320, 714	100.0	21.6	23.0	23.2	10.2	10.7	3.8	1.5
1 child.....	158, 218	100.0	16.8	24.4	23.0	17.2	11.8	4.3	1.6
2 children.....	92, 724	100.0	20.1	22.0	23.9	17.1	11.2	4.0	1.7
3 children.....	41, 645	100.0	27.0	21.8	22.5	14.7	8.8	2.9	1.4
4 children.....	18, 582	100.0	35.9	21.3	20.7	12.1	7.0	2.2	.8
5 children.....	8, 609	100.0	43.3	20.9	18.0	9.6	5.6	1.5	.5
6 children.....	4, 115	100.0	49.2	18.9	17.1	8.6	4.7	.9	.6
7 children.....	1, 716	100.0	54.5	16.5	14.2	8.7	4.5	1.1	.5
8 children.....	667	100.0	56.7	16.9	13.0	8.4	4.2	.7	.1
9 children.....	298	100.0	58.4	14.1	12.4	10.4	4.1	.3	.3

<sup>1</sup> Excludes families of unknown income status.  
<sup>2</sup> Excludes families with unknown number of children.

were in relief families. At least 22 percent were in families with incomes of less than \$1,000 a year, and another 22 percent were in families with annual incomes of \$1,000-\$1,499 (tables 8 and 9). In other words, 71 percent of the child population were in homes with incomes which were inadequate or barely adequate to supply the minimum necessities for these growing children. By contrast only 1.4 percent of the child population was found in families with incomes of \$5,000 or over.

What is particularly striking is the relation between the percentage of families reporting relief and the number of children per family. (See table 7 and chart II.) The distribution of children in families with specified numbers of children is analyzed according to family income in table 8. About three-fourths of all children in the sample of the urban population were in families

in which there were two or more children under the age of 16. These families include, on the average, more than five persons each. Among these children, 30 percent were in relief families and 73 percent in families on relief or having incomes of less than \$1,500. Hence, nearly three-fourths of these children, who may be considered representative of the large majority of children in American cities, were in families whose incomes fall below any standard wholly compatible with the needs of growing and developing children.

The larger the number of children in the family, the worse their economic condition. For example, 26 percent of the young children were in families with four or more children; among these children, over 42 percent were in families which were or had been on relief, an additional 20 percent were in families with annual incomes of less than

**Table 8.—Percentage distribution of children under age 16 in urban bio-legal families by number of children per family and by economic status of family**

Number of children per family	All children <sup>1</sup>		Economic status of family							
	Number	Percent of total	All children	Children in relief families	Children in nonrelief families					
					Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999	\$5,000 and over
1 or more.....	630, 994	100.0	100.0	26.5	22.1	22.3	14.9	9.5	3.3	1.4
2 or more.....	472, 776	74.9	100.0	29.8	21.3	21.8	14.2	8.8	2.9	1.2
3 or more.....	287, 328	45.5	100.0	36.1	20.9	20.4	12.3	7.2	2.2	.9
4 or more.....	162, 393	25.7	100.0	42.3	20.2	18.7	10.6	5.9	1.7	.7
5 or more.....	88, 065	14.0	100.0	47.8	19.3	17.0	9.2	5.0	1.2	.5
6 or more.....	44, 720	7.1	100.0	52.1	17.7	15.5	8.7	4.6	.9	.5
7 or more.....	20, 030	3.2	100.0	55.6	16.3	13.6	8.8	4.4	.9	.4
8 or more.....	8, 018	1.3	100.0	57.2	16.0	12.7	9.1	4.2	.6	.2
9 or more.....	2, 682	.4	100.0	58.4	14.1	12.4	10.4	4.0	.4	.3

<sup>1</sup> Excludes children in families of unknown economic status or with unknown number of children.



\$1,000, and another 19 percent were in families with annual incomes between \$1,000 and \$1,500. Thus, more than 62 percent of these children were in families on relief or with incomes under \$1,000, and 81 percent were in families with less than \$1,500. The economic status of these urban children is readily evident from a consideration of the adequacy of these amounts for families which have six and more members.

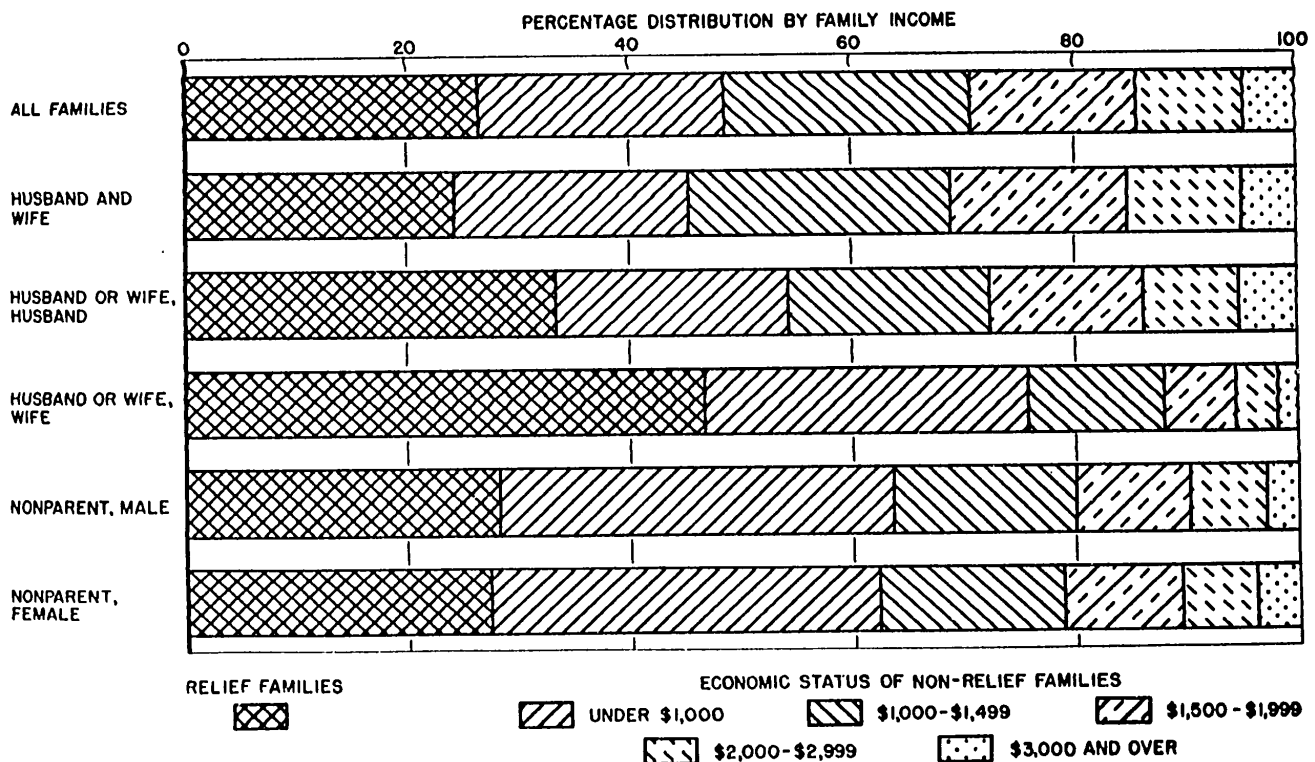
Table 9 shows the special economic handicap suffered by children in broken homes, as contrasted with children in homes with both parents. In families with both husband and wife, 24 percent of the children were found in relief families, 21 percent in families with an annual income of less than \$1,000, and 24 percent in those with an annual income of \$1,000-\$1,499. That is, nearly 70 percent of the children with both parents were in families with incomes of less than \$1,500 and with an average membership of about five persons. By contrast, in families with mother only, in which nearly 10 percent of all the children were found, almost half of the children (46.9 percent) were in relief families; 29 percent were in families

with incomes of less than \$1,000, and 12 percent in those with incomes of \$1,000-\$1,499 a year. Almost nine-tenths of these children in fatherless families were, therefore, in families with insufficient or scarcely adequate income for proper child development. (See chart III.)

The economic status of children in other broken families, while not as serious as that in families with the mother only, is nevertheless decidedly worse than among children in families with both parents. It is fortunate that 87 percent of all urban children were in families with both husband and wife, but even among these, as has already been remarked, about 70 percent were in households where family income was so low as to endanger or make very difficult their chance for normal growth and healthful development.

The method of income classification used, as already indicated, results in some overstatement of family income status for children in households comprising more than one bio-legal family, since in such households additional persons may be dependent on the income ascribed to each bio-legal family; about 24 percent of all the children

Chart III.—Distribution of urban children under age 16 in all families and in families of specified types, by economic status (see table 9)



**Table 9.—Percentage distribution of children under age 16 in urban bio-legal families by economic status and by type of family**

Type of family	Total number of children	Economic status of family								
		All children	Children in relief families	Children in nonrelief families						
				All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$2,999	\$3,000-\$4,999	\$5,000 and over
Distribution by family income										
All types.....	1 630,094	100.0	26.5	73.5	22.1	22.3	14.9	9.5	3.3	1.4
Husband and wife.....	548,644	100.0	24.2	75.8	21.1	23.6	16.0	10.2	3.5	1.4
Husband or wife, husband.....	10,536	100.0	33.3	66.7	20.9	18.3	13.8	8.6	3.6	1.5
Husband or wife, wife.....	57,508	100.0	46.9	53.1	29.0	12.1	6.4	3.7	1.4	.5
Nonparent, male.....	6,470	100.0	28.3	71.7	35.2	16.5	10.2	6.9	2.2	.7
Nonparent, female.....	7,786	100.0	27.5	72.5	34.8	16.6	10.6	6.7	2.6	1.2
Distribution by type of family										
All types: Number.....	2 647,419	3 647,419	167,337	463,657	130,570	140,577	94,316	60,131	20,524	8,539
Percent.....		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Husband and wife.....	562,274	86.9	79.4	89.7	83.0	92.0	93.0	93.3	92.6	92.8
Husband or wife, husband.....	11,051	1.7	2.1	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.9	1.9
Husband or wife, wife.....	59,171	9.1	16.1	6.6	11.9	4.9	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.7
Nonparent, male.....	6,748	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.6	.8	.7	.7	.7	.5
Nonparent, female.....	8,175	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.9	.9	.9	.9	.9	1.1

<sup>1</sup> Excludes children in families of unknown economic status or with unknown number of children.  
<sup>2</sup> Excludes children in families with unknown number of children.

were in multiple-family households. It is probable, therefore, that the actual economic circumstances of the children included in the urban sample were more unfavorable than is indicated by this preliminary analysis.

More explicit comparisons of the various types of families included in the sample and of individuals of given age, sex, and marital status will be possible as the result of analyses which are now in progress. The preliminary data on income available from this study of family composition indicate that some two-thirds of the sample urban popula-

tion are members of families which fall below or barely attain a level of income commensurate with standards widely accepted as minimal for health and decency, and that an even larger proportion of the children are in such families. While these statements are sufficiently disquieting, whatever bias arises from the method of the study or from factors still to be explored probably tends to make the present preliminary conclusions an overstatement, rather than an understatement, of the income of the urban population of the United States.