
Response to Reciprocity Under Public Assistance and SSI

by Thomas Tissue*

This research focuses on the attitudes, perceptions, and program preferences of aged and disabled persons who received public assistance in 1973 and supplemental security income payments in 1974. The Social Security Administration gathered the data in a nationwide survey of the low-income aged and disabled. Most respondents did not feel embarrassed or bothered about receiving public assistance in 1973 and were generally satisfied with their treatment by the welfare agency. Response to SSI in 1974 was even more favorable. Satisfaction with agency performance remained at a high level and feelings of embarrassment generally declined. SSI was preferred over public assistance by most respondents. Administrative efficiency and the size of cash benefits apparently were more important considerations than the degree of stigma perceived.

Poverty, stigma, and bureaucratic red tape have been recurring themes in the critical discussion of public assistance in America. The extent to which the welfare system can, should, or does eliminate poverty has commanded most of the attention. As it has attempted to meet economic need, however, it has been accused of shaming and embarrassing recipients, mishandling their cases, and consistently violating their privacy, autonomy, and dignity.¹ Though it may be true, as Lewis Coser claims, that "the very granting of relief, the very assignment of the person to the category of the poor, is forthcoming only at the price of degradation of the person who is so assigned,"² a widespread suspicion exists that welfare's public reputation and style of doing business have created an additional element of discomfort for those who must rely upon its benefits.

When the new supplemental security income (SSI) program was established, it promised to alleviate at least part of the "welfare problem" encountered by the needy aged, blind, and disabled. In January 1974, adult welfare caseloads were shifted from State and local control to this new Federal system of income maintenance.³ The

Federal program guaranteed a minimum income to every eligible recipient regardless of place of residence. It also assured all transferred individuals that their SSI benefits would be at least as large as those they would have received from public assistance had the program switch not occurred.

Subjectively, the SSI program aimed for a reduction in welfare stigma—the label of moral inferiority attached to poor people supported by public aid.⁴ The principal tactic was to put a great deal of distance between the new program and its much maligned predecessor. The SSI program avoided the words "welfare" and "public assistance" in its title and in the publicity surrounding its establishment. Words such as "caseloads," "clients," and "caseworkers" did not appear in the operating vocabulary of the new program.

The SSI program was not intended to cover that portion of the total welfare population receiving aid to families with dependent children (AFDC). Instead, it was concerned only with those whose age or infirmity allowed them special exemption from popular hostility and suspicion. As one observer has noted, "the disabled, the aged, the blind are regarded as occupying a special moral place in society—a place where the nor-

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¹For the most spirited of the criticisms, see chapter 5 in Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, Pantheon, 1971.

²Lewis A. Coser, "The Sociology of Poverty," *Social Problems*, fall 1965, page 144.

³James C. Callison, "Early Experience Under the Supplemental Security Income Program," *Social Security Bulletin*, June 1974.

⁴Bernard Beck, "Welfare as a Moral Category," *Social Problems*, winter 1967, and John P. Alston and K. Imogene Dean, "Socioeconomic Factors Associated with Attitudes toward Welfare Recipients and the Causes of Poverty," *Social Service Review*, 1972.

mally assumed relation between dependency and demoralization is either inoperative or irrelevant."⁵

Finally, administrative responsibility for the SSI program was assigned to the Social Security Administration, an established agency with a history of disbursing insurance benefits rather than welfare payments and a beneficiary population that included rich and middle-income persons as well as the poor. Some observers expressed concern for the public image of the social insurance programs. It seemed likely, however, that joint administration of the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance (OASDI) program and SSI by a single agency would blur the distinction between the two programs and thus work to the reputational advantage of the latter.⁶

Procedurally, SSI was organized as a straightforward and businesslike operation. Welfare departments had been accused of digging too deeply into the personal lives of recipients and of forcing them to accept unwanted service or advice as a condition for receiving cash benefits. The use of an individualized budget approach to benefit calculation required the welfare worker to make an exhaustive examination of the recipient's needs and expenditures. The procedure was not only a source of annoyance to recipients but also introduced an element of subjectivity and unpredictability into the basic payment process itself. It was alleged that few clients understood how their grants were calculated or the amounts to which they were legally entitled. As a result, most of them approached the agency as supplicants rather than as citizens with rights.⁷

In fairness to the welfare establishment, it should be noted that much of this kind of criticism was based on anecdotal evidence or scattered empirical data. Nevertheless, the SSI program seemed designed to avoid such difficulties. The Commissioner of Social Security announced⁸ that "social security will work toward a sophisticated kind of referral system. But not beyond that. There is no intention for us to perform as a

⁵David Matza, "Poverty and Disrepute" in *Contemporary Social Problems* (R. K. Merton and R. A. Nisbet, eds.), Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966, page 626.

⁶Robert J. Myers, "With SSI, Who Needs Social Security?," *Challenge*, November/December 1973, The President's Commission on Income Maintenance Programs, *Background Papers: Income Conditioned Grants*, The Commission, 1970, Charles L. Schultze, Edward R. Fried, Alice M. Rivlin, and Nancy H. Teeters, *Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget*, Brookings Institution, 1972.

⁷Scott Briar, "Welfare from Below: Recipients' Views of the Public Welfare System," *California Law Review*, May 1966, Robert Harris, "Selecting a System of Income Maintenance for the Nation" in *Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Readings on Income Maintenance* (Richard L. Edwards, ed.), MSS Information Corporation, 1972, Alan Keith-Lucas, "The Political Theory Implicit in Social Casework Theory," *American Political Science Review*, December 1953, and Philip Lichtenberg and Jeanne C. Pollock, "Clients and the Sense of Responsibility," *Public Welfare*, October 1967.

⁸Robert M. Ball, "Income Maintenance for the Aged and the Handicapped," *Public Welfare*, winter 1971, page 38.

primary service agency." The Social Security Administration also would not concern itself with details of a recipient's personal life that were not germane to the calculation and delivery of his cash benefits. The SSI program would employ "a matter-of-fact, non-manipulative bureaucratic mode that simply certified eligibility and proceeded to make a regular payment. With such an approach, no attempt would be made to exert influence or control over the life style of the recipient."⁹

The rules for administering the program were explicit and nationally uniform. Instead of calculating financial need on a case-by-case basis, a presumptive need standard was to be applied to all cases in the Federal system. This approach obviously could speed up processing. And, as has been suggested, it could also help a great deal in reducing the social stigma of reciprocity.¹⁰ In any event, speed, consistency, and impersonal efficiency were to be hallmarks of the new administrative style.

In retrospect, how well did the new system work out for the recipients themselves? A detailed analysis of SSI's financial impact, published earlier this year, demonstrated unspectacular yet consistent improvement.¹¹ In the first year of the program's operation, comparatively few persons were moved out of poverty by SSI but most of the transferred individuals did experience an increase in cost-adjusted income. As intended, the greatest income increases accrued to persons who had been the poorest before SSI was implemented.

This article was prepared as a complement to the analysis of SSI's financial impact. It is based on the reported perceptions of persons who have received both public assistance and SSI payments. It deals with their feelings of embarrassment and discomfort under the two programs, their evaluation of agency efficiency and tact, and their general preference for public assistance or SSI as a vehicle for meeting their income needs. Was receipt of public assistance as degrading and unpleasant as is commonly supposed, and, if so, did SSI represent an improvement or simply more of the same under a different name?

Methodology

The Survey of the Low-Income Aged and Disabled (SLIAD) was a two-stage panel survey designed to evaluate many aspects of the SSI program. During the last 3 months of 1973—the period immediately preceding the implementation of the program—detailed per-

⁹Beryl A. Radin, "The Implementation of SSI: Guaranteed Income or Welfare?," *Public Welfare*, fall 1974, page 8.

¹⁰Martha N. Ozawa, "SSI: Progress or Retreat?," *Public Welfare*, spring 1974.

¹¹Sylvester J. Schieber, "First Year Impact of SSI on Economic Status of 1973 Adult Assistance Populations," *Social Security Bulletin*, February 1978.

Table 1.—Adult assistance recipients Number of respondents in 1973 and number of 1973/1974 respondents as percent of those responding in 1973, by type of recipient and State

Item	OAA						
	United States	California	Georgia	Mississippi	New York	Texas	Remainder of U S
Number (in thousands)							
Respondents in 1973	1 665	258	81	77	98	173	978
Respondents in both 1973 and 1974 ¹	1 225	185	63	60	71	129	716
Proportion of total responding in 1973	0 74	0 72	0 78	0 78	0 73	0 75	0 73
	AB/APTD						
Number (in thousands)							
Respondents in 1973	1,158	202	41	29	151	31	703
Respondents in both 1973 and 1974 ¹	788	149	27	20	107	18	466
Proportion of total responding in 1973	0 68	0 74	0 66	0 70	0 71	0 57	0 66

¹ Nonproxy respondents reinterviewed in 1974 who received PA in 1973 and 1974

sonal interviews were conducted with 17,551 aged, blind, and disabled persons who had been selected by the Social Security Administration to represent various segments of the noninstitutionalized SSI target population. Nearly 16,000 members of the original panel were reinterviewed in late 1974.¹²

The analysis is restricted here to a special subset of SLIAD's initial public assistance samples. It includes only persons who (1) received old-age assistance (OAA), aid to the permanently and totally disabled (APTD), or aid to the blind (AB) when interviewed in 1973, (2) received SSI at the time of the 1974 interview, and (3) were interviewed in person rather than by proxy in both years. The latter point is important because proxy respondents were not asked to answer the attitudinal questions that form the substance of this report. Roughly three-fourths of the 1973 OAA recipients and two-thirds of the APTD/AB recipients met all of these special criteria (table 1). The excluded portions of these caseloads do not represent noninterview loss or sample attrition in the usual sense. Many individuals were rejected because their experience was not relevant to the research question at hand. That is, some recipients died or entered institutions shortly after the 1973 interview, some received SSI payments only briefly or not at all, and some were physically unable to give opinions.

With respect to basic demographic characteristics, the study subsamples match well with the total survey populations from which they were drawn. At the national level, each subsample was nearly identical with the total 1973 population in terms of sex, race, marital status, place of residence, homeownership, poverty status, age, and education (table 2). The national subsamples can be assumed to be representative of the pub-

¹²For a discussion of the survey's design and sampling plan, see Erma Barron, *Survey Design, Estimation Procedures, and Sampling Variability* (SLIAD Report No. 5), Office of Research and Statistics, Social Security Administration, 1978. An overview of the survey's intent can be found in Thomas Tissue, "The Survey of Low Income Aged and Disabled: An Introduction," *Social Security Bulletin*, February 1977.

lic assistance populations that received OAA or AB/APTD in 1973 and were subsequently transferred to the SSI program. The special utility of these subsamples lies in the fact that they include only those persons who experienced both aid programs directly and were able to respond to questions about reciprocity in both situations. It should be noted that the welfare questions were not asked retrospectively. That is, respondents were asked about public assistance while they were receiving it in 1973 and asked about SSI while they were SSI recipients in 1974. These data were merged in a single record only after both waves of interviews were complete.

The original samples were drawn to provide independent estimates for five key States—California, Georgia, Mississippi, New York, and Texas—and the rest of the United States. Each of the key States maintained a relatively high caseload, several had especially interesting program features (New York's lien law, for example, and Texas' constitutional prohibition against certain kinds of payments), and, as a group, they offered a useful mix of State "types." The data on dual-year respondents in table 2 show that New York recipients were predominantly unmarried, lived almost exclusively in very large cities, and had relatively low poverty rates. In Mississippi, only one-third of the recipients were white, a sizable group were married, and virtually none lived in large cities. Texas recipients were most likely to have monthly incomes below the poverty line, and California had the highest proportion of whites on the rolls.

Because the estimates are based on sample data, they may differ from the results that would have been obtained if all members of the population had been surveyed. The standard error is a measure of sampling variability that indicates the amount by which sample estimates vary, by chance, from results theoretically obtainable from a comparable survey of the entire population.

Standard errors of the difference between percentage estimates are presented in tables 4–10 to provide a way of assessing changes that occurred from 1973 to 1974. If

Table 2 —Demographic characteristics 1973 respondents and 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

Characteristic	1973 re- spondents	1973/1974 respondents						
		United States	California	Georgia	Mississippi	New York	Texas	Remainder of U S
OAA								
Total number (in thousands)	1 665	1,225	185	63	60	71	129	716
Percent								
Women	70	71	68	70	66	76	69	71
White	73	72	84	60	36	65	71	74
Married	27	28	29	34	41	11	30	27
Living in large cities of 100,000 or more persons or suburbs of large cities	29	28	49	10	3	69	21	24
Owning their homes (solely or jointly)	31	32	29	40	45	2	47	31
With nuclear family monthly income below poverty level	68	70	6	87	76	51	95	81
Median								
Age	74	73	73	73	73	73	74	73
Years of education	7	7	8	5	6	7	6	6
95 percent confidence interval								
Age	74-75	73-74	73-74	73-74	72-74	72-74	74-76	73-75
Years of education	6-7	6-7	8-9	5-6	5-6	7-8	5-7	6-7
AB/APTD								
Total number (in thousands)	1,158	788	149	27	20	107	18	466
Percent								
Women	57	61	62	62	65	60	63	60
White	67	66	74	54	32	55	61	68
Married	22	23	27	31	35	15	27	22
Living in large cities of 100,000 or more persons or suburbs of large cities	41	42	50	16	7	72	32	36
Owning their homes (solely or jointly)	15	16	17	23	33	1	30	17
With nuclear family monthly income below poverty level	75	75	35	89	89	70	93	88
Median								
Age	54	55	56	57	58	53	56	55
Years of education	8	8	10	6	7	9	7	8
95 percent confidence interval								
Age	53-55	55-56	56-58	56-59	57-60	53-55	55-58	54-57
Years of education	8-8	8-9	9-11	6-7	6-8	8-9	6-8	8-8

the absolute difference between percentage estimates is greater than twice the standard error of the difference, it is statistically significant at the 95 level. In other words, a difference of the size observed can be expected to occur by chance fewer than 5 times out of 100 chances if the true difference is zero.

The standard error of the difference is computed as follows:

$$\sigma_D = \sqrt{\sigma^2_A + \sigma^2_B - 2\sigma_{AB}}$$

where *D* is the difference between percentage estimates, σ^2_A is the variance of the first estimate, σ^2_B is the variance of the second estimate, and σ_{AB} is the covariance of both estimates. If *D* is greater than $2\sigma_D$ then estimate *A* and estimate *B* are statistically different at the 95 level.

The standard errors of differences between percentage estimates other than those comparing 1973 and 1974 may be approximated by equating σ_{AB} (the covariance term) to zero. Approximate standard errors for estimated percentages are given in table I. They provide an indication of order of magnitude rather than the precise standard error for any specific item. Standard errors for values not specifically shown may be obtained by linear interpolation.

Findings

Assistance Characteristics in 1973

Of the OAA recipients studied, only 14 percent had received welfare payments before the opening of their current case. Sixty-four percent had received aid continuously for 5 years or longer, however. Forty-seven percent had spoken to someone from the agency on the telephone during the preceding year, and 60 percent had met with an agency employee face to face during that time. The median nuclear-family welfare payment (that is, the amount received by the respondent and his spouse/minor children, if present) was \$80 in the 1973 study month.

By contrast, persons receiving AB/APTD were more likely to have had previous experience with welfare agencies (24 percent had received aid in the past) but had been receiving aid for a shorter period of time since the opening of their current case (only 46 percent had received benefits for 5 years or longer). They were more likely than OAA recipients to have had contact with the welfare agency in the previous year, both on the phone (69 percent) and in person (78 percent). Their median amount received was considerably higher than that of the older recipient group.

Table 3.—Assistance characteristics Number and percent of 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State
[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	United States	California	Georgia	Mississippi	New York	Texas	Remainder of U S
OAA							
Total number	1 225	185	63	60	71	129	716
Receiving aid before current case opening							
Number reporting	1 169	174	62	59	67	127	679
Percent	14	13	11	6	16	7	17
Receiving aid for 5 years or more since current case opening							
Number reporting	1 155	174	60	59	65	123	675
Percent	64	60	65	62	47	67	66
Spoke with caseworker in preceding year—							
By telephone							*
Number reporting	1 000	163	51	52	52	109	574
Percent	47	71	48	30	47	36	43
In person							
Number reporting	1 120	169	60	58	61	121	651
Percent	60	59	63	74	64	49	61
Receiving monthly welfare payment							
Number reporting	1 198	180	63	60	68	128	700
Median amount	\$80	\$107	\$64	\$72	\$95	\$48	\$82
95-percent confidence interval	78-83	101-115	59-72	70-74	88-105	40-59	76-86
AB/APTD							
Total number	788	149	27	20	107	18	466
Receiving aid before current case opening							
Number reporting	764	145	27	20	103	18	451
Percent	24	24	16	13	20	17	26
Receiving aid for 5 years or more since current case opening							
Number reporting	759	144	27	20	103	17	447
Percent	46	45	45	41	43	37	47
Spoke with caseworker in preceding year—							
By telephone							
Number reporting	673	138	24	18	88	16	390
Percent	69	81	61	41	62	60	67
In person							
Number reporting	744	143	27	20	97	17	440
Percent	78	72	81	82	79	70	80
Receiving monthly welfare payment							
Number reporting	775	147	27	20	105	18	458
Median amount	\$113	\$172	\$87	\$75	\$159	\$94	\$104
95-percent confidence interval	110-117	166-176	82-96	74-77	150-168	90-99	98-111

State-by-State comparisons in table 3 yield scattered items of interest. In California, recipients were most likely to talk with their caseworker on the telephone, in New York, the OAA caseload contained more recent welfare arrivals than did those of the other States. Of somewhat more immediate interest perhaps, the data bring out the expected differences in payment level between the two most populous States and the three predominantly rural Southern States. Clearly, California and New York were paying their adult recipients—both aged and disabled—much more than were Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas.

Perception of Stigma

Stigma here is confined to three special aspects of recipient discontent. Feeling bothered by one's aid status, being embarrassed to tell friends or relatives that one is a recipient, and perceiving community disrespect or disdain for assistance program participants. Except for the program referent (the welfare program in 1973, SSI in 1974) identical questions were asked during each interview wave. The questions and their precoded response categories appear in tables 4, 5, and 6.

When the 1973 responses of OAA and AB/APTD recipients in these tables are examined separately, a number of distinct patterns emerge. First, a hierarchy is apparent among the items themselves. Within each aid category, more persons were "bothered" than "embarrassed", perceptions of community censure were rarest of all. Clearly, the most common dimension of dissatisfaction with public assistance reciprocity in 1973 was one that did not rely solely on the real or imagined opinions of others.

Second, the disabled felt worse about their situation than did the aged. Nationally, they were markedly more likely to be bothered by their welfare status, reluctant to disclose their reciprocity to others, and pessimistic about the community's opinion of them. With few exceptions, these basic aged/disabled response differences persisted within the States when they were considered individually.

Third, recipients in the best-paying States—California and New York—were the most troubled about receiving aid. The specific differences produced by State comparisons within each aid category, particularly with regard to the perception among the aged of community disrespect, are often too small to be statistically signifi-

Table 4.—Response to whether bothered by receipt of welfare/SSI payments¹ Number reporting and percent answering "yes" among 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

[Numbers in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD, 1973	SSI, 1974	
United States	1,171	1,147	0.98	764	739	1.01
Number reporting	30	14		44	25	
Percent						
California	175	172	2.16	144	139	2.15
Number reporting	41	20		54	33	
Percent						
Georgia	62	60	4.72	27	26	2.60
Number reporting	27	17		41	23	
Percent						
Mississippi	60	58	1.50	20	20	2.58
Number reporting	15	7		28	15	
Percent						
New York	66	67	3.94	104	101	2.82
Number reporting	37	19		49	26	
Percent						
Texas	126	120	1.78	18	17	3.07
Number reporting	28	13		43	26	
Percent						
Remainder of U S	682	671	1.44	451	435	1.40
Number reporting	28	13		41	23	
Percent						

¹ "Are you ever bothered by the fact that you have had to accept aid from (the welfare agency/SSI)?" yes no

cant, but the direction of the relationship is consistent throughout. Overall, recipients from the low-paying Southern States had a less difficult time adjusting to welfare status than did those in California and in New York.

Finally, most persons did not report negative reactions to welfare reciprocity in 1973. Even among the disabled, less than half were bothered by receipt of aid, only one-third were embarrassed to tell others about it, and one-fifth perceived disrespect in the community. The rates were even lower for the aged. Dissatisfaction with recipient status certainly did exist before the implementation of SSI but it was far from universal. If credence can be placed in survey responses such as these, it simply is not true that all or even most aged and disabled welfare recipients felt troubled or humiliated by the experience in 1973.

Nevertheless, SSI appears to represent a real step forward in terms of reducing client discomfort. As table 4 shows, the proportion of the aged who were bothered by SSI status was less than half that bothered by welfare status a year earlier. An appreciable rate of decline occurred among the aged in each of the States. A similar pattern is evident among the disabled, both nationally and within the five key States.

Table 5 reveals an even more impressive decline in the proportion of recipients with feelings of embarrassment. Here the rates dropped from 22 percent to 9 percent among the aged, and from 34 percent to 14 percent

among the total disabled population. Comparable reductions in the prevalence of embarrassment occurred within each of the States in both major aid categories.

The decline in the perception of community hostility or contempt was more modest than that observed for being bothered or embarrassed (table 6). Disabled New Yorkers and both the aged and disabled in California perceived a marked decline in community disrespect, but only minor differences were observed elsewhere. It should be kept in mind that the recipients' opinion of their reputation in the community was such that comparatively little room for improvement was left under the SSI program.

One of the side effects of SSI's overall reduction in negative response to aid status is an attenuation of the patterns noted earlier for 1973. To some extent, the disabled in 1974 continued to be unhappier than the aged, and Californians and New Yorkers remained marginally more discontented than the others. At the same time, however, the absolute percentage-point differences between high and low States were smaller in 1974 than in 1973 for both aid programs and all three stigma questions. In other words, where one lived seemed to make a greater difference under the separate State programs in 1973 than it did under the unified Federal program in 1974. Similarly, the differences between the aged and disabled tended to diminish in the 1-year period, both nationally and within States.

Table 5.—Response to whether embarrassed to tell friends or relatives about receipt of welfare/SSI payments¹ Number reporting and percent "very" or "somewhat" embarrassed among 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

[Numbers in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD, 1973	SSI 1974	
United States	1,172	1,148	0.86	763	740	0.89
Number reporting	22	9		34	14	
Percent						
California	175	172	1.93	144	140	1.99
Number reporting	34	17		43	20	
Percent						
Georgia	62	59	1.63	27	26	2.44
Number reporting	17	8		25	8	
Percent						
Mississippi	60	59	1.08	20	20	1.45
Number reporting	10	4		15	6	
Percent						
New York	67	67	2.56	104	101	2.34
Number reporting	41	16		40	19	
Percent						
Texas	127	121	1.54	18	17	1.79
Number reporting	18	6		27	11	
Percent						
Remainder of U S	682	669	1.33	451	436	1.25
Number reporting	20	7		31	12	
Percent						

¹ "Would you feel embarrassed to tell your friends or relatives that you are (getting welfare/receiving SSI)?" very embarrassed somewhat embarrassed not embarrassed don't know

Table 6—Response to whether people in community have less respect for welfare/SSI recipients¹ Number reporting and percent answering “yes” among 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

[Numbers in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB-APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD 1973	SSI 1974	
United States	1 169	1,217	0 74	764	781	0 85
Number reporting	11	7		21	13	
Percent						
California	174	184	1 71	144	147	1 98
Number reporting	17	9		27	15	
Percent						
Georgia	62	63	2 09	27	27	1 14
Number reporting	12	8		14	12	
Percent						
Mississippi	60	59	1 30	20	20	1 37
Number reporting	7	5		12	7	
Percent						
New York	66	71	2 13	103	106	2 71
Number reporting	14	9		26	13	
Percent						
Texas	127	128	1 58	18	18	1 88
Number reporting	7	7		15	11	
Percent						
Remainder of U S	680	712	1 15	452	463	1 13
Number reporting	11	6		19	12	
Percent						

¹ As far as you can tell how do people in this community seem to feel about persons who receive (public welfare/SSI)? Do they seem to have less respect for a person because he needs and uses this kind of help? yes no don't know

entitled The proportion of persons reporting the prompt arrival of checks showed improvement, attributable

Table 7—Response to whether treated courteously by worker¹ Number reporting and percent answering “always” among 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

[Numbers in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA, 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD, 1973	SSI 1974	
United States	1,973	1 145	1 45	765	740	1 29
Number reporting	77	79		67	76	
Percent						
California	175	170	2 52	144	140	2 23
Number reporting	74	79		63	72	
Percent						
Georgia	62	60	1 91	27	26	2 10
Number reporting	84	86		80	83	
Percent						
Mississippi	60	59	1 10	20	20	2 46
Number reporting	88	84		83	86	
Percent						
New York	67	67	3 06	104	101	3 13
Number reporting	67	72		59	66	
Percent						
Texas	127	121	3 56	18	17	3 01
Number reporting	79	80		80	80	
Percent						
Remainder of U S	682	669	2 28	453	435	1 94
Number reporting	76	79		69	79	
Percent						

¹ “Thinking back on your experience with the (welfare department/SSI program) have you been treated with courtesy and respect?” always most of the time only some of the time never don't know

Table 8—Response to whether received welfare/SSI checks on time¹ Number reporting and percent answering “always” among 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

[Numbers in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD 1973	SSI 1974	
United States	1,173	1 148	1 47	765	742	1 30
Number reporting	76	83		68	77	
Percent						
California	175	172	2 67	144	140	2 65
Number reporting	85	81		72	71	
Percent						
Georgia	62	60	1 73	27	26	2 23
Number reporting	83	84		82	83	
Percent						
Mississippi	60	59	1 84	20	20	1 57
Number reporting	86	85		78	82	
Percent						
New York	67	67	2 70	104	102	2 46
Number reporting	69	81		61	78	
Percent						
Texas	127	120	2 57	18	17	2 89
Number reporting	70	87		62	82	
Percent						
Remainder of U S	682	670	2 34	452	437	1 93
Number reporting	75	83		67	79	
Percent						

¹ “Thinking back on your experience with the (welfare department/SSI program) have you gotten your checks on time?” always most of the time only some of the time never don't know

Agency Treatment

Recipients gave the public assistance agencies much higher marks for administration than might have been anticipated on the basis of the system's reputation for client care (tables 7, 8, and 9) Among the aged, 77 percent felt that the agency had always treated them with respect and courtesy A similar proportion (76 percent) felt that they had always been paid on time, and an even greater majority (85 percent) were convinced that they had always been paid the correct amount The disabled were somewhat less likely to cite courteous treatment (67 percent) or prompt payment (68 percent) They were equally satisfied with the accuracy of the payment 85 percent reported that they had always received the right amount

Compared with the others, welfare recipients in New York were less often convinced that they had been treated courteously, and both New Yorkers and Texans were comparatively less pleased about the punctuality of their payments Although the differences are slight, Mississippians seemed to be most satisfied with the overall performance of their agencies

For the aged, the shift to SSI produced little net change nationally in the area of agency treatment Perception of courteous treatment remained at the same high level, and only a slight decline was seen in the proportion of recipients who reported that their checks always contained the full amount to which they were

Table 9.—Response to whether received correct amount in welfare/SSI check¹ Number reporting and percent answering "always" of 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and state

[Number in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD, 1973	SSI 1974	
Total United States	1,172	1,145	1.28	765	739	1.00
Number reporting	85	82		85	83	
California	175	172	2.42	144	140	2.63
Number reporting	80	82		83	79	
Georgia	62	59	2.75	27	26	1.90
Number reporting	87	85		89	84	
Mississippi	60	58	3.44	20	20	2.48
Number reporting	91	86		92	86	
New York	67	67	2.60	104	101	1.74
Number reporting	85	79		85	87	
Texas	127	119	4.42	18	17	2.83
Number reporting	86	83		83	79	
Remainder of U S	681	670	1.89	452	435	1.40
Number reporting	85	82		85	84	

¹ Thinking back on your experience with the (welfare department/SSI program) does the (welfare/SSI) check include the full amount to which you are entitled?
 always most of the time only some of the time never don't know

mostly to the increased rate of satisfaction in New York and Texas, and in the grouped States that formed the "remainder of U S" category

The disabled perceived more consistently courteous treatment from SSI than from welfare, and better performance with regard to the prompt delivery of checks. As was the case among the aged, however, they found no general improvement in the accuracy of the payment computation. The disabled in New York still said that they encountered high rates of rudeness under SSI, but the States with the least favorable assessments of welfare generally made the greatest gains with respect to their approval of SSI.

Overall, the most interesting aspect of the findings on agency treatment would appear to be the absence of perceived abuse under public assistance. Under the circumstances, SSI seems to have done about as well as could be expected—holding to the high welfare standard in most cases and improving on it here and there.

General Rating and Program Preference

Nearly half the aged (48 percent) and disabled (45 percent) welfare recipients reported that the public assistance agency was doing a "good" job in meeting their needs in 1973 (table 10). The SSI program did better than that for both groups in 1974. Among the aged, program ratings went up substantially in Georgia,

Texas, and the residual State category. As far as the disabled were concerned, SSI received a decidedly higher endorsement than had public assistance everywhere except in California, New York, and Mississippi.

Viewed separately, the 1974 ratings suggest that SSI received a cooler reception in New York than it did anywhere else. The proportion of aged who assessed SSI's performance as good ranged from 56 percent to 58 percent in the other four States and in the remainder of the country, but SSI got a good rating from only 47 percent of the aged in New York. Among the disabled, SSI's good ratings ranged from 51 to 61 percent elsewhere, but only 36 percent of the New Yorkers gave the new program a comparably high evaluation.

Table 11 reports the responses to the only question that called for a direct comparison between the two aid programs. Recipients were asked at the end of the 1974 interview to compare SSI with its public assistance predecessor and decide which was the better program. Nationally, SSI won easily. More than half the recipients in each aid category picked SSI outright, approximately a third could not choose, and only a small minority—6 percent of the aged and 8 percent of the disabled—found public assistance preferable to SSI. Once again, however, New Yorkers lagged behind. Along with their counterparts in California, the aged in New York were least likely of the OAA transferees to prefer SSI to public assistance. Among the disabled,

Table 10.—Overall rating of welfare/SSI program¹ Number reporting and percent rating programs "good" among 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

[Number in thousands]

State	OAA/SSI			AB APTD/SSI		
	Response to—		Standard error of difference	Response to—		Standard error of difference
	OAA, 1973	SSI 1974		AB/APTD 1973	SSI 1974	
Total United States	1,164	1,147	1.57	760	740	1.19
Number reporting	48	56		45	55	
California	174	172	2.42	143	140	2.74
Number reporting	57	57		47	51	
Georgia	62	60	2.94	27	26	2.98
Number reporting	39	56		38	52	
Mississippi	59	59	3.71	20	20	5.43
Number reporting	52	56		48	57	
New York	67	66	1.90	102	100	1.45
Number reporting	48	47		34	36	
Texas	125	120	3.77	17	17	2.32
Number reporting	43	58		44	59	
Remainder of U S	677	670	2.46	450	436	1.74
Number reporting	47	57		47	61	

¹ All things considered, what kind of a job is (welfare/SSI) doing to meet your needs? good fair poor mixed don't know

Table 11.—Preference for welfare or SSI program ¹ Number and percentage distribution of 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient and State

Preference	OAA/SSI						
	United States	California	Georgia	Mississippi	New York	Texas	Remainder of U S
Total number reporting (in thousands)	1,219	185	63	60	71	128	712
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
SSI is better	57	49	61	63	48	65	59
About the same can't decide, don't know	37	43	35	29	38	32	36
SSI is worse	6	8	4	8	13	3	5
	AB APTD/SSI						
Total number reporting (in thousands)	783	147	27	20	107	18	463
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
SSI is better	64	61	67	74	50	67	67
About the same can't decide, don't know	28	31	28	21	28	27	28
SSI is worse	8	8	5	5	22	6	4

¹ From your point of view does SSI seem to be better, about the same, or worse than the old public assistance programs?

New Yorkers stood apart from all the others in their comparatively low endorsement of the new program. In fact, nearly one-fifth of them preferred the AB/APTD program to SSI.

Reasons for Choosing SSI

Why did a majority of recipients prefer SSI? A large part of the answer is money. Table 12 summarizes the reasons recipients themselves gave for making this choice. Among those who preferred SSI, the disabled were somewhat more receptive than were the aged to the new program's administrative efficiency and its personal treatment of them, but the amount of the benefit was by far the most frequently cited reason for selecting SSI.

Does that mean that stigma and agency administrative style are irrelevant to program preference? Not entirely, perhaps, but it is obvious that efficiency matters more than reputation. Table 13 relates various aspects of program response and experience to the rate at which SSI was chosen over public assistance. Feeling bothered, embarrassed, or discredited in the community bore little direct relation to program preference. Persons who perceived an SSI stigma were generally no less likely than others to prefer the new program to the old one. In fact, a slight negative relationship existed between the community opinion variable and SSI preference among the disabled.

A favorable reaction to the SSI style of conducting business did seem to matter. The belief that one had been treated courteously and paid promptly and accurately produced consistently higher rates of SSI selection in each major category. The amount of increase in the cash payment was also associated with an SSI preference—the greater the increase the greater the likelihood that its recipient would prefer SSI to public assistance.

Considered jointly, net increase in payment and degree of satisfaction with SSI's administrative procedures had a cumulative effect on preference rates (table 14). Clearly the most satisfied recipients were those who experienced the greatest cash increase and the most favorable response to the manner in which their case was being administered.

Summary and Observations

These findings have a decidedly positive tone overall. Most aged and disabled welfare recipients did not feel embarrassed or troubled about receiving aid in 1973 and very few of them thought that other people denigrated their worth simply because they received welfare payments. The vast majority felt that their agencies treated them with respect and processed their payments efficiently. Nearly half of them gave the agency the highest rating possible—good, rather than fair or poor—when asked to assess its overall success in attending to their needs.

Though welfare was better appreciated than had been anticipated originally, SSI achieved an even higher de-

Table 12.—Reasons for choosing SSI over welfare. Number and percent of 1973/1974 respondents, by type of recipient

Reason	OAA/SSI	AB APTD/SSI
Total number reporting (in thousands)	696	499
Percent ¹		
Amount of payment	78	68
Administrative efficiency	14	21
Services available	12	11
Personal treatment given applicants, beneficiaries	10	16
Attitude of personnel	6	10
Agency's reputation	6	6

¹ Respondents could check more than 1 reason.

gree of approval. The three indicators of stigma showed significant declines following the transition to the new program, and SSI's administrative ratings were as

Table 13.—Respondents choosing SSI over welfare. Number and percent of 1973/1974 respondents, by reaction to SSI and change in monthly payment and type of receipt

Reaction to SSI and change in monthly benefit	[Numbers in thousands]			
	OAA/SSI		AB APTD/SSI	
	Number reporting	Percent	Number reporting	Percent
Total	1 219	57	783	64
Bothered by receipt				
Bothered	164	60	185	67
Not bothered	981	61	552	67
Embarrassed to tell friends				
Very somewhat	101	58	105	65
Not at all don't know	1 046	61	634	67
Perceive community disrespect				
Yes	81	61	98	70
No don't know	1,134	57	681	63
Treated courteously				
Always	906	64	564	71
Less than always, don't know	238	49	174	55
Paid				
Promptly				
Always	952	62	573	69
Less than always don't know	194	52	168	60
Accurately				
Always	939	64	616	70
Less than always, don't know	205	45	121	51
Change in monthly payment				
No gain includes loss	253	37	177	48
Gained				
\$1-24	294	52	149	59
25-49	337	65	196	70
50 or more	297	74	241	76

favorable as (and occasionally better than) those given to the public assistance system. SSI got more "good" ratings than did welfare and was the clear choice when recipients were asked to pick the system they preferred. From the perspective of needy persons who had experienced both programs, SSI represented a definite step forward.

The data also raise a number of analytical questions that are more difficult to resolve with the information available here. Why, for instance, did aged and disabled welfare recipients respond so favorably to the pre-SSI aid programs? Perhaps they expected so little that they were happy with anything they got from the agency,¹³ or maybe the poor themselves have not been as sensitive to the indignity of reciprocity as outside observers and advocates of change have been.¹⁴ Without discounting either of those explanations entirely, it is possible to suggest another that emphasizes the difference between the adult and children's assistance programs and the poor fit produced by an attempt to lump them together into a single welfare image.

In the first place, the aged, blind, and disabled have a claim to popular sympathy and understanding that is not enjoyed by other classes of the dependent poor. Recipients of OAA and AB/APTD were predominantly old (even among the disabled, the median age nationally was 54), unable to work, destitute, sick, and solitary. They were the "truly needy" in that their dependency

¹³Scott Brnar, *op cit*.

¹⁴Nathan Glazer, "Beyond Income Maintenance—A Note on Welfare in New York City," *The Public Interest*, summer 1969.

Table 14.—Respondents choosing SSI over welfare. Number and percent of 1973/1974 respondents, by agency treatment, change in monthly payment, and type of recipient

Agency treatment	[Number in thousands]							
	Change in monthly payment							
	No gain		Gained					
			\$1-24		\$25-49		\$50 or more	
Number reporting	Percent	Number reporting	Percent	Number reporting	Percent	Number reporting	Percent	
	OAA/SSI							
Treated courteously								
Always	174	43	218	58	253	70	233	79
Less than always, don't know	67	28	53	43	61	64	48	67
Paid promptly								
Always	195	41	229	55	268	71	233	79
Less than always, don't know	47	28	45	53	47	59	48	71
Paid accurately								
Always	171	42	225	57	271	71	246	79
Less than always, don't know	70	30	47	46	43	60	35	64
	AB-APTD/SSI							
Treated courteously								
Always	119	54	105	65	145	76	184	82
Less than always, don't know	49	42	33	53	39	64	46	66
Paid promptly								
Always	127	52	108	63	143	75	182	81
Less than always don't know	41	46	32	55	41	67	49	71
Paid accurately								
Always	131	55	113	63	158	75	201	81
Less than always, don't know	37	32	26	55	25	64	29	63

was seldom attributable to failure of will or character. Instead, they were victims of social factors or personal calamities beyond their control and personal responsibility. No one chooses to be old or physically maimed, and not even the toughest-minded welfare critic disputes the basic claim of such persons to assistance of one sort or another. Commenting on the perceived legitimacy of their needs, Gilbert Steiner points out that "no quid pro quo for relief payments can be demanded of these groups. Just becoming a victim of blindness, disability or old age represents the recipients' part of the barter. It may not be a fair trade, but it is entered into in good faith by both sides."¹⁵

Adult assistance recipients also may not have received the same agency treatment accorded their AFDC peers. Even before the implementation of the SSI program, many States had formally separated the social service and income-maintenance functions for large segments of their adult assistance caseload. Services, casework intervention, and special agency contact, under such an arrangement, occurred only when the adult assistance recipient himself specifically requested them. Otherwise, the client-agency relationship consisted of little more than a recurring monthly payment and an annual recertification of eligibility. As table 3 shows, 40 percent of the aged and 22 percent of the disabled recipients in late 1973 had not met a single agency employee face to face in over a year. Furthermore, the kinds of rough treatment for which welfare agencies have received the bitterest criticism—bed checks, midnight raids, coercive family planning, "suitable home" standards of eligibility—have not been at all prominent in the discussion of adult assistance.¹⁶ In other words, the needy aged, blind, and disabled, though numerous, constituted a curiously marginal part of a public assistance phenomenon that is often considered and debated as if it were an AFDC question alone. If such persons found reciprocity less degrading than might be anticipated on the basis of the general welfare literature, the reason may lie in the fact that the old and incapacitated have always been treated more sympathetically than their AFDC counterparts and have been subjected to a great deal less abuse, interference, and public ridicule.

The bases for regional variation in response to welfare reciprocity are also open to speculation. Obviously, the welfare programs themselves differed a great deal from place to place even within a single aid category. No single payment standard or financial formula was applied nationwide. California and New York paid their recipients a great deal more than did Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas. Mississippi, however, imposed a very

low marginal tax rate on other forms of income, which allowed recipients to keep most of the nonwelfare money they could obtain. States also had a free hand in designing the administrative aspects of the welfare program. Some ran the system themselves, others delegated operational responsibility to their counties. Unquestionably, the administrative procedures applied to a given case differed a great deal from one jurisdiction to another, as did the attitudes of workers and informal styles of program operation. In other words, response to welfare status and the agency could be expected to vary across the country because each State's recipients were responding to a different welfare program.

It is not likely that program variation is the whole story, however. The personal characteristics of recipients can be expected to play a part, too. Compared with Southerners, recipients in the North more often were urban and better-educated. They were less likely to be poor, having higher welfare payments and more income from nonwelfare sources as well. Urban recipients were generally healthier and better-housed than those living in rural areas.¹⁷

With these distinctions in mind, the California and New York caseloads can be viewed as a welfare elite of sorts—in regard to life chances, personal history, and current level of living. That persons who had it the best resented welfare reciprocity the most is a paradox, perhaps, but it is consistent with the findings of earlier studies. An analysis of the McLain pension movement in California concluded that "Those who have some hold upon the material foundations of respectability are more likely to sustain the aspiration and resent the loss."¹⁸ The most privileged recipients revealed the greatest "status anxieties." Another study found that older men whose self-descriptions were least congruent with a dependent role—those with few health problems, the capacity to work, and a youthful self-image—were most embarrassed about receiving OAA.¹⁹ If it is true that reciprocity is most easily legitimated or justified to oneself under conditions of greatest privation and lifelong absence of opportunity, it is hardly surprising that recipients in Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas could accept welfare status with more equanimity than those in New York and California.

By design, SSI eliminated the administrative variation that had existed from State to State under public assistance. All cases were transferred to the Social Security Administration, to be processed identically regardless of

¹⁵Gilbert Steiner, *Social Insecurity: The Politics of Welfare*, Rand McNally, 1966, page 113.

¹⁶Joe R. Feagin, *Subordinating the Poor: Welfare and American Beliefs*, Prentice Hall, 1975.

¹⁷John L. McCoy and David L. Brown, "Health Status Among Low-Income Elderly Persons: Rural-Urban Differences," *Social Security Bulletin*, June 1978, and Sylvester Schieber, *Housing Conditions of Aged Welfare Recipients*, paper presented at annual meeting of Eastern Economics Association, April 27, 1978.

¹⁸Frank Pinner, Philip Selznick, and Paul Jacobs, "Summary and Conclusions: Old Age and Political Behavior" in *Social Welfare Institutions* (Mayer N. Zald, ed.), Wiley and Sons, 1965, page 171.

¹⁹Larry L. Wells, "Welfare Embarrassment," *Gerontologist*, summer 1972.

location or previous welfare custom All recipients would deal with new workers operating within a new standard bureaucratic system Procedurally at least, SSI was a unified Federal program from which State and local governments were largely excluded The hypothesis that regional variation in the response of recipients would diminish with the introduction of a single Federal program has been borne out by the findings of

this study The range of response attributable to place did decline for each of the outcome variables examined here It would have been surprising if these differences had vanished entirely The personal characteristics of recipients did not change simply because SSI supplanted the assistance programs, and it does not seem likely that generic dissatisfaction with the public dependency role can be eliminated by adjusting or tinkering with the aid

Table I.—Approximate standard errors of estimated percentages of all OAA and AB/APTD recipients

[68 chances out of 100]

Size of base	Estimated percentage											
	1 or 99	2 or 98	5 or 95	8 or 92	10 or 90	15 or 85	20 or 80	25 or 75	30 or 70	35 or 65	40 or 60	50
United States, OAA and AB/APTD												
50,000	0 75	1 07	1 69	2 12	2 36	2 83	3 19	3 47	3 69	3 86	3 97	4 03
75 000	62	88	1 39	1 75	1 95	2 34	2 64	2 88	3 07	3 20	3 31	3 40
100,000	54	77	1 22	1 53	1 70	2 05	2 32	2 53	2 69	2 82	2 91	2 99
150,000	44	63	1 00	1 27	1 41	1 70	1 92	2 09	2 22	2 32	2 39	2 43
200 000	38	55	88	1 11	1 24	1 49	1 69	1 84	1 96	2 05	2 11	2 15
250 000	35	50	79	1 01	1 12	1 36	1 54	1 69	1 80	1 89	1 95	2 01
300 000	32	45	73	90	1 03	1 25	1 42	1 55	1 65	1 72	1 78	1 82
350,000	30	42	68	86	96	1 17	1 33	1 45	1 54	1 62	1 67	1 71
400,000	28	40	64	81	91	1 10	1 25	1 37	1 46	1 53	1 58	1 62
450,000	26	38	61	77	86	1 05	1 19	1 31	1 39	1 46	1 51	1 54
500 000	25	36	58	74	83	1 01	1 15	1 26	1 35	1 42	1 47	1 52
750,000	21	30	49	62	70	85	97	1 07	1 14	1 20	1 25	1 29
1,000,000	18	26	43	55	62	76	87	95	1 02	1 08	1 12	1 16
1,250,000	16	24	39	50	56	69	79	87	93	98	1 01	1 05
1,500 000	1 5	22	36	47	52	64	74	81	87	91	95	98
1 750 000	1 4	20	34	44	49	61	69	76	82	86	89	93
California OAA and AB/APTD												
2,500	3 60	5 06	7 84	9 74	10 76	12 78	14 29	15 44	16 32	16 97	17 41	17 74
5 000	2 54	3 56	5 52	6 85	7 56	8 97	10 02	10 82	11 43	11 88	12 19	12 41
7,500	2 07	2 90	4 49	5 57	6 14	7 28	8 13	8 78	9 27	9 63	9 87	10 04
10,000	1 79	2 51	3 88	4 80	5 30	6 28	7 00	7 56	7 98	8 28	8 49	8 64
25,000	1 13	1 57	2 42	2 99	3 29	3 89	4 33	4 66	4 91	5 09	5 21	5 28
50 000	79	1 10	1 68	2 07	2 28	2 68	2 97	3 19	3 36	3 47	3 55	3 59
75 000	64	89	1 36	1 67	1 83	2 14	2 37	2 54	2 67	2 76	2 81	2 84
100,000	55	77	1 16	1 42	1 56	1 82	2 01	2 15	2 26	2 33	2 37	2 38
125 000	49	68	1 03	1 26	1 38	1 61	1 77	1 89	1 97	2 03	2 07	2 08
150 000	45	62	93	1 14	1 24	1 44	1 59	1 69	1 76	1 81	1 84	1 84
175 000	41	57	86	1 04	1 14	1 31	1 45	1 54	1 60	1 64	1 67	1 66
200 000	38	53	80	96	1 05	1 22	1 33	1 41	1 47	1 51	1 52	1 52
225 000	36	50	74	90	98	1 13	1 24	1 31	1 37	1 39	1 41	1 40
250 000	34	47	70	85	92	1 06	1 18	1 22	1 27	1 29	1 31	1 29
275,000	32	45	64	80	87	1 00	1 09	1 15	1 19	1 21	1 22	1 21
Georgia OAA and AB/APTD												
2,500	1 85	2 62	4 12	5 16	5 73	6 86	7 71	8 38	8 90	9 29	9 56	9 80
5 000	1 32	1 87	2 95	3 70	4 11	4 93	5 56	6 05	6 43	6 72	6 92	7 10
7,500	1 08	1 54	2 43	3 05	3 39	4 08	4 60	5 01	5 33	5 57	5 75	5 90
10,000	94	1 34	2 12	2 67	2 97	3 57	4 03	4 40	4 68	4 89	5 05	5 19
25 000	60	86	1 38	1 75	1 95	2 36	2 68	2 92	3 12	3 27	3 38	3 48
50 000	44	63	1 01	1 28	1 44	1 75	1 99	2 18	2 33	2 44	2 53	2 61
75,000	36	52	84	1 08	1 21	1 47	1 68	1 84	1 97	2 07	2 15	2 22
100,000	32	46	75	95	1 07	1 31	1 49	1 64	1 76	1 85	1 92	1 99
Mississippi, OAA												
2,500	2 47	3 49	5 46	6 83	7 57	9 05	10 17	11 04	11 71	12 21	12 56	12 85
5 000	1 75	2 49	3 90	4 88	5 41	6 48	7 29	7 92	8 41	8 77	9 03	9 25
7 500	1 44	2 03	3 20	4 01	4 45	5 34	6 01	6 54	6 94	7 25	7 47	7 66
10,000	1 25	1 77	2 79	3 50	3 88	4 66	5 25	5 71	6 07	6 34	6 53	6 70
25 000	80	1 14	1 80	2 27	2 53	3 04	3 44	3 75	3 99	4 18	4 31	4 44
50,000	57	82	1 31	1 65	1 84	2 23	2 52	2 76	2 94	3 08	3 19	3 28
75,000	47	68	1 08	1 38	1 54	1 86	2 12	2 32	2 47	2 60	2 68	2 77
100,000	41	59	95	1 21	1 36	1 65	1 87	2 05	2 19	2 30	2 38	2 46
Mississippi AB/APTD												
2 500	1 54	2 17	3 38	4 21	4 66	5 54	6 21	6 72	7 11	7 41	7 61	7 76
5 000	1 09	1 54	2 39	2 98	3 29	3 92	4 39	4 75	5 03	5 24	5 38	5 49
7 500	89	1 25	1 95	2 43	2 69	3 20	3 59	3 88	4 11	4 28	4 39	4 48
10 000	77	1 09	1 69	2 11	2 33	2 77	3 11	3 36	3 56	3 70	3 80	3 88
25 000	49	69	1 07	1 33	1 47	1 75	1 96	2 13	2 25	2 34	2 41	2 45
50 000	35	49	76	94	1 04	1 24	1 39	1 50	1 59	1 66	1 70	1 74

Table I.—Approximate standard errors of estimated percentages of all OAA and AB/APTD recipients—Continued

[68 chances out of 100]

Size of base	Estimated percentage											
	1 or 99	2 or 98	5 or 95	8 or 92	10 or 90	15 or 85	20 or 80	25 or 75	30 or 70	35 or 65	40 or 60	50
New York OAA and AB/APTD												
2 500	2 82	3 96	6 16	7 67	8 48	10 09	11 30	12 23	12 94	13 46	13 83	14 11
5 000	1 99	2 80	4 36	5 42	5 99	7 13	7 98	8 64	9 14	9 51	9 76	9 96
7 500	1 62	2 29	3 55	4 42	4 89	5 81	6 51	7 04	7 45	7 16	7 95	8 12
10,000	1 41	1 98	3 08	3 83	4 23	5 03	5 63	6 09	6 45	6 71	6 89	7 03
25 000	89	1 25	1 94	2 41	2 67	3 17	3 55	3 84	4 06	4 23	4 34	4 42
50,000	63	88	1 37	1 70	1 88	2 24	2 50	2 70	2 86	2 97	3 05	3 11
75 000	51	72	1 12	1 39	1 53	1 82	2 04	2 20	2 33	2 42	2 48	2 53
100 000	44	62	97	1 20	1 32	1 57	1 76	1 90	2 01	2 09	2 14	2 18
125 000	40	56	86	1 07	1 18	1 40	1 57	1 70	1 79	1 86	1 91	1 95
150 000	36	51	79	98	1 08	1 28	1 43	1 55	1 63	1 70	1 74	1 77
Texas OAA												
2 500	3 16	4 46	6 97	8 69	9 63	11 49	12 90	13 98	14 82	15 44	15 88	16 24
5 000	2 24	3 16	4 95	6 19	6 85	8 19	9 20	9 98	10 58	11 03	11 35	11 61
7 500	1 83	2 59	4 06	5 07	5 63	6 73	7 56	8 21	8 71	9 08	9 34	9 56
10 000	1 59	2 25	3 53	4 41	4 89	5 85	6 58	7 15	7 59	7 92	8 15	8 34
25 000	1 01	1 44	2 26	2 84	3 15	3 78	4 26	4 64	4 93	5 14	5 30	5 44
50,000	72	1 03	1 63	2 04	2 27	2 74	3 09	3 37	3 58	3 74	3 86	3 97
75,000	59	84	1 34	1 69	1 88	2 27	2 57	2 80	2 98	3 12	3 22	3 32
100,000	52	74	1 17	1 48	1 65	1 99	2 26	2 47	2 63	2 75	2 84	2 93
125,000	46	66	1 06	1 34	1 49	1 80	2 05	2 34	2 38	2 50	2 58	2 66
150 000	43	61	97	1 23	1 38	1 66	1 89	2 06	2 20	2 31	2 39	2 46
175 000	40	57	91	1 15	1 28	1 56	1 77	1 93	2 06	2 16	2 24	2 31
Texas AB/APTD												
2,500	1 27	1 80	2 83	3 55	3 94	4 72	5 31	5 77	6 13	6 40	6 59	6 76
5,000	90	1 28	2 03	2 55	2 83	3 40	3 84	4 18	4 44	4 64	4 78	4 91
7 500	74	1 06	1 67	2 10	2 34	2 82	3 18	3 47	3 69	3 86	3 98	4 09
10 000	65	92	1 46	1 84	2 05	2 47	2 79	3 04	3 24	3 39	3 50	3 60
25 000	42	60	96	1 21	1 35	1 64	1 86	2 04	2 17	2 28	2 36	2 43
50,000	30	43	70	89	1 00	1 22	1 39	1 52	1 63	1 71	1 77	1 83
All other States												
2,500	3 63	5 13	8 03	10 04	11 13	13 30	14 94	16 22	17 20	17 94	18 45	18 89
5 000	2 58	3 65	5 73	7 17	7 95	9 52	10 71	11 63	12 35	12 89	13 27	13 59
7 500	2 11	2 99	4 70	5 90	6 54	7 84	8 83	9 60	10 20	10 63	10 95	11 24
10 000	1 83	2 60	4 10	5 14	5 70	6 84	7 71	8 39	8 91	9 31	9 59	9 84
25,000	1 17	1 67	2 65	3 33	3 71	4 47	5 05	5 50	5 86	6 13	6 32	6 50
50 000	84	1 20	1 92	2 42	2 70	3 27	3 70	4 04	4 31	4 52	4 67	4 81
75,000	69	99	1 59	2 02	2 25	2 73	3 10	3 39	3 62	3 80	3 93	4 06
100,000	60	87	1 40	1 78	1 99	2 41	2 74	3 01	3 21	3 37	3 49	3 60
250 000	39	57	94	1 20	1 35	1 65	1 88	2 07	2 22	2 34	2 42	2 51
500 000	29	42	70	90	1 02	1 26	1 44	1 59	1 71	1 80	1 87	1 95
750,000	24	36	60	77	87	1 08	1 24	1 37	1 48	1 56	1 62	1 69
1,000,000	21	32	53	69	78	97	1 12	1 24	1 34	1 41	1 47	1 53

programs themselves. To the extent that these feelings and the extra-program conditions that give rise to them are distributed unevenly across the country, it is reasonable to predict at least some regional variation in the response of recipients, regardless of the program structure or aegis under which aid is distributed.

A final point should be made about the significance of stigma and its place in the evaluation of a program such as SSI. Undeniably, money was the major issue in the federalization of the adult assistance programs. Moreover, the ongoing success of SSI will always be determined with primary reference to the amount of aid it distributes, the level of living it sustains, and the speed and efficiency with which it accomplishes indi-

vidual case processing. Recipients themselves appear to base their program preferences on the bread-and-butter issues of cash increases and administrative efficiency. These priorities are easily understood by a population in which poverty was and is even now the rule. Nevertheless, feelings of dignity and self-respect do matter and are legitimate benchmarks by which to assess the performance of any public program. They are particularly important in evaluating one that deals with a segment of the population that has nowhere else to turn for the necessities of life. That SSI did manage to reduce the negative feelings of recipients while accomplishing its major financial objective is an important and basically decent accomplishment.