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The experience of a research group in studying Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) programs provides the framework for a discussion of the methodological difficulties of conducting research on disadvantaged groups. However, the report does not deal with the programs and operations of NYC itself. Four problem areas are described. (1) criterion, program, and "moderator" variables; (3) data collection techniques; and (4) interviewing. The complexity of the milieu in which poverty programs operate makes it difficult to judge their effectiveness. Hence, experimentation is needed in establishing new guidelines and methods. Practical suggestions in these areas are offered. For other phases of this study, see UD 007 866, UD 007 868 and ED 020 407. (NH)

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED OUT-OF-SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CORPS PROGRAMS

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN EVALUATIVE RESEARCH INVOLVING DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

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METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN EVALUATIVE RESEARCH INVOLVING DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

America's War on Poverty has produced, and can be expected to continue to produce, various strategies designed to improve the circumstances of disadvantaged persons. The evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies constitutes an important and challenging research problem. Because research with disadvantaged groups is still relatively new, dependable guidelines for conducting such research are not yet available. During the last two years, we have been conducting studies in this area and have found it necessary to experiment with new techniques. This paper attempts a critical analysis of our experience in the hope that the methodological considerations developed in the course of our research may be of value to other research efforts.

Selected urban out-of-school Neighborhood Youth Corps programs in five cities have been studied during the last two years. Our research design reflects the difficulty in conducting research with these populations.

The complexity of the milieu in which anti-poverty programs operate makes it extremely difficult to identify causal relationships between program effort and program effect and requires the use of control groups in order to have a baseline for judging program effects. The long-range objective of youth programs, to help the youth become functioning adults, makes it essential that the studies be longitudinal and cover a time span of sufficient length to permit a determination as to the adult adjustment of the youth. The design of our studies, therefore, included experimental and control groups to be followed through interviews for a five-year period.

In the course of our research, we have learned some of the hard lessons of implementing a longitudinal, experimental-control group design, with the negative lessons of what not to do often as important as the positive indications of which research methods are essential to productive research and can be carried through effectively. These conclusions are presented here in the belief that they may serve researchers and program personnel interested in the evaluation of the effectiveness of programs operating in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

I

Selection of Study Groups

Experimental-control group design logically begins with the selection of the individuals who will comprise the experimental group--the sample of the population which has undergone the experience whose effects are being examined; and, in our study of NYC programs, we constituted experimental groups of enrollees and ex-enrollees in several cities. In general, the size of the sample determines the number of variables which can be analyzed. In the NYC research, the many variables of interest made relatively large samples necessary, and experimental groups of from 125 to 150 individuals in each city were constituted in order to assure completed interviews for at least 100 respondents.

In various parts or phases of our research, we used three different methods for selecting experimental study groups: (a) groups composed of all individuals entering the program within a selected period of time (Entry Sample); (b) groups composed of individuals terminating from the program within a selected period of time (Termination Sample); and (c) samples selected at random from all individuals enrolled in the program on a selected date (Current Enrollee Sample). Broadly speaking, since all experimental study groups represent the program population of research interest, they could be termed "samples." As we shall see, the characteristics of the program population reflected in the experimental study group vary, to some extent, with the selection techniques employed. Strictly speaking, therefore, the designation "sample" should be reserved, perhaps, for those study groups that are constituted by conventional randomized sampling procedures.

Each of these methods possesses practical and theoretical advantages and disadvantages which should be recognized by the researcher. The different methods of sampling do not provide equivalent samples. In general, the current enrollee sample is more likely to include the long-tenure subject and will over-estimate the average time an individual is likely to stay in the program. Over a sufficiently long period of time, the entry and termination samples will be equivalent; but, over short periods of time, the termination sample will reflect the rate of entry into the program immediately prior to the selection of the sample. Thus, after periods of high intake, the termination sample is more likely to include short-tenure subjects, and after periods of low intake, it will be more likely to include long-tenure subjects. The time span that should be allowed for the development of post-program data obviously differs with the selection method used. The termination sample, for example, minimizes the chronological difficulties of follow-up information. In a particular research project, the implications of the various methods of study group selection in terms of group characteristics and data availability should be carefully weighed. The characteristics of the three types of samples are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Entry Sample

Selecting the experimental study group at the time the subjects enter the program has the important advantage of assuring equal exposure to the program components. The optimum time span during which the sample is selected is determined, in part, by the effect of opposing tendencies. A short period of time reduces the effect of program changes but increases the effect of seasonal variations in the composition of the sample. For example, the applicants applying for the program in September, December, and June may differ significantly due to such factors of school enrollment, and employment conditions. Seasonal variations are, of course, reduced by selecting the sample at random over the span of a year. A period of sample selection of this length, however, increases the effect of program changes. During the course of a year, the program is likely to be changed significantly and the subjects entering at the beginning of the year are exposed to markedly different program influences than those who enter at the end of a year. The researcher must analyze each situation he plans to research and develop the best compromise between reducing sample or program fluctuations.

From a practical point of view, the entry sample also suffers from length of time necessary from the date the sample is selected until information about program effects is available. In general, in studies of out-of-school NYC programs, it takes between three and six months to constitute samples of the required size for a sophisticated study, the subjects can stay in the program as long as two years, and then an additional period of at least six months is needed for the subject to acquire sufficient post-NYC experience to permit an evaluation of program effects. A time span of over three years between the beginning of the study until useful information is available for all the subjects is often too long for practical evaluation purposes. Program administrators usually need the information at an earlier time if it is to be useful to them for improving programs. Another adverse result stemming from the long time span between selection of the sample and information about outcomes is the possibility that policy change may outdate the information, and, thus, the research reflecting an earlier period of the program has become obsolete.

Retrospective studies, in which the sample is selected from an earlier time period, can reduce the time lag between the initiation of the research and the report of the findings. Such retrospective entry samples necessarily involve the use of program records, and the adequacy of a program's files to provide selection and program data must be considered by the researcher. Even if program records are adequate, the possibility that the information may be outdated because of policy changes must also be taken into account.

We have concluded from the above considerations that entry samples are useful for intensive studies of program components and policies, and are most likely to develop theoretical insights into program functioning. On the other hand, because of the long time lag between the initiation of the study and the availability of results, they are of only limited value for evaluating the effectiveness of particular programs and suggesting corrective action.

Current Enrollee Samples

A sample taken at random from enrollees participating in the program at any given date has the advantage of reducing the time between the constitution of the sample and the completion of the research. It also simplifies the sample selection process since the exact composition of the population from which the sample is to be selected is known at the time of sample selection, which is not always true for an entry sample. For example, after having committed himself to an entry sample, the researcher may find that a budgetary freeze has virtually stopped enrollment. He cannot then change his design but must, of necessity, wait out the freeze, and in the meantime, some of his experimental subjects may have terminated from the program while others have not entered.

The disadvantage of the current enrollee method of sample selection is that it tends to overestimate the average stay in the program since long-term enrollees have a better chance of appearing in the sample than short-term enrollees. Another disadvantage of this method is that all data or program experience of subjects prior to the date of sample selection must be collected from records.

Termination Sample

Samples selected from all enrollees terminating from the program within a prescribed period of time permit the shortest time lag between program experience and follow-up information. These samples are also relatively easy to constitute and, on any selected follow-up date, provide for approximately equal periods of post-NYC experience for each subject in the sample.

There are, however, almost always distortions in the composition of termination samples related to the rate at which new enrollees have been entering the program. It was found, for example, that a termination sample selected in a period directly following intensive recruitment tends to include more subjects with short tenures; whereas, a sample selected at the end of a period of restricted recruitment tends to have a higher proportion of enrollees with long enrollment. Thus, any termination samples selected during the first two years of the NYC program must inevitably underestimate the average length of time enrollees stay in the program because there will be some enrollees who have not yet terminated from the program. Table 1 demonstrates this effect by comparing a termination and a current enrollee sample selected from the same program and approximate time period.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF TERMINATION AND CURRENT ENROLLEE SAMPLES
ON LENGTH OF TOUR IN N.Y.C.

Months in Program		Current Enrollee Sample	Termination Sample
0-3 months		13%	30%
4-9 months		35%	36%
10 months or more		52%	34%
	TOTAL	100%	100%
Average number of months		10.3	6.0

The current enrollee sample averaged significantly longer tenure, ten months after the selection of the sample, than did the termination sample. About a quarter of the current enrollee sample was still enrolled in the NYC at the time the study was completed. When sufficient time has elapsed for all these subjects to have completed their tour, the difference between the two samples will be even greater.

It is thus concluded that termination samples are useful for providing relatively quick feedback on program effects, but that the samples are highly sensitive to changes in recruitment rates. This means that the researcher should take into account the recruitment rate preceding the selection of his sample when he is interpreting the data. When there have been long, stable periods of steady recruitment, entry and termination samples will have approximately the same characteristics, but these stable periods have seldom occurred in the NYC. Besides the frequent changes in policies, NYC programs at the local level have been in the past, and can be expected in the future, to be deeply affected by budgetary freezes and thaws.

Control Groups

A control group is used in social research to establish a baseline for judging program effects and should match the experimental group on all relevant variables except for participation in the program. Our experience suggests that groups which are initially matched on age, sex, race, and school grade completed will also be found to be reasonably well matched on other demographic variables such as family background, recorded police contacts, and IQ test scores. In general, the greater the number of variables on which the two groups match, the more confident the researcher can be in the ultimate value of his results. The advantages and disadvantages of various sources of control group subjects are discussed below.

1. Random Assignments

Ideally, the control group is the "same" as the experimental group except that the experimental group participates in the NYC program. Such an ideal might be approached if qualified applicants to the program could be assigned alternately to experimental and control groups. While no two individuals are exactly alike, such a method randomizes individual differences, and the two resultant groups could confidently be expected to be highly similar. As a practical matter, it is only possible to use this technique when there is a surplus of applicants over program quotas sufficiently large to comprise the control group. Even then, the denial of program participation to implement a research design raises the ethical question of denying advantages to individuals in order to study the effects of deprivation.

2. Applicants Who Are Not Accepted for the Program

Although it is not often feasible to alternate applicants between the experimental and control samples, there may be a substantial number of applicants who were not accepted in the program. Such individuals can be considered as candidates for the control group. Since there are likely to be systematic differences between applicants who are accepted and those who are not, it is important that the control group derived from unsuccessful applicants be matched with the experimental group on all available relevant variables. As was indicated above, in our experience, if we matched the groups on age, sex, race, and year of school completed, we found that they also tended to match on variables developed from information later obtained in the interview process. It will be impossible, of course, to control for the motivational factors which may have caused the applicant to be accepted or not accepted in the program. It is possible that there may be diametrically opposite factors involved in the failur. : an applicant to enroll in a program. On the one hand, he may be more employable and may have found a job prior to the time he was notified of a possible NYC enrollment. On the other hand, he may lack the persistence necessary to get into the NYC and may never have followed up on his application. The possibility that subtle motivational factors differentiate successful and unsuccessful applicants should always be kept in mind. Experience has shown that--notwithstanding these imponderable factors--it may be possible to develop useful control groups from applicant files.

3. Employment Service Files

The State Employment Services, particularly the Youth Opportunity Centers, have applications from youths who did not enter the Neighborhood Youth Corps. The names of these applicants, if they can be made available for research purposes, provide a possible source of control subjects. We have found that the most practical procedure is first to select individuals from the files by random sampling procedures until a group of a predetermined size is constituted. Substitutions are then made by random selection from the applicant population until the experimental and control groups are matched on sex, race, age, and school grade completed.

4. Nomination from School

An individual in the experimental group may be matched by contacting the school where he was formerly enrolled and attempting to locate a comparable individual who matches the experimental subject on all of the relevant variables and who is considered by the school authorities to be comparable in attitude and school behavior. Theoretically, this is a promising way of establishing control samples. But, since one individual succeeded in enrolling in the NYC and the other did not, there still has been no control established for the motivational factor. Nevertheless, unless the NYC is enrolling a substantial proportion of the population, this motivational factor may not be crucial. As a matter of practice, however, we found that the information possessed by the school administrators was inadequate and the addresses were so out of date that the problems of locating the subjects were aggravated beyond what was customarily encountered.

5. Nomination of Peers

Subjects in the experimental sample may be asked to nominate friends or acquaintances who are similar to experimental subjects except that they lack NYC experience. We have not tried this method but feel that it offers some possibilities. Of course, there would remain the motivational factors related to why the experimental subject was in the NYC and the other was not. On the other hand, the location problem might be simplified because a current address could usually be obtained for the control subject.

II

Data Requirements

In evaluation research, data must be obtained relating to three types of variables, which we have chosen to call criterion, program, and moderator variables. The criterion variables are the standards against which the effectiveness of the NYC program might be judged and include measures of post-NYC employment, community adjustment, attitude change and the like. The program variables are the program components or characteristics which might influence the "success" of the program such as type of work assignment, type and quality of counseling, job development, and remedial education. The moderator variables are the characteristics of the youth which must be considered when studying the the relationship between program and criterion variables, such as family background, employment history, sex, age, etc. Moderator variables are also used for matching experimental and control groups and for differential analysis of the data. The measurement of each of these types of data is discussed below.

Criterion Variables

The criterion variables, the changes in social and work adjustment which might be attributed to NYC experience, were observed at three levels. The first is what happens after the youth leaves the NYC program, the second is what happens while the youth is in the program, and the third, observable changes in the youth. Measures at each of these levels were developed and are discussed below.

1. Increased Employability

Steadiness of employment, pay rate, and level of work are all considered ingredients of this criterion. A completely successful outcome would be steady employment in a job with an adequate pay rate offering reasonable promise of continued employment during the working career of the ex-enrollee. A less successful outcome would be steady employment in a job with an adequate pay rate but with limited future prospects. For example, employment in unskilled work such as carwashing, even though the work is currently steady and reasonably well paid, might lead to future problems when the industry is automated. A still poorer outcome would be intermittent employment or a low pay rate. The worst outcome, of course, would be no employment at all.

The information on employment is obtainable without serious problems through either interviews or mail questionnaires. We have not yet had any experience getting this information from employers, although this is planned during a latter phase of the research contract.

2. Community Adjustment

The amount of criminal or delinquent behavior of the subject is an important measure of his community adjustment. One indicator of delinquent or criminal behavior is the number of his official contacts with the police reported on the police blotter. Because of the confidential nature of this information, it is not always obtainable. So far, we have been able to obtain it for each of our research sites after convincing the proper authorities of the importance of the research studies and developing procedures to assure confidentiality. The results, however, are difficult to interpret because of wide variation in practices among police departments and between different socio-economic groups. We also found significant differences in the rate of police contacts correlated with age. It is essential for the interpretation of police-contact data that control group comparison be available.

3. Self-Support

The extent to which the ex-enrollee is supporting himself is another measurement of community adjustment. This information is obtainable through interviews and mail questionnaires. A major problem in interpreting the data concerns classifying the status of the married woman. A determination needs to be made as to the extent to which the husband is providing adequate support for the family.

4. Additional Education

The extent to which the ex-enrollee has improved his educational achievements and trained himself for future jobs is an important interim measure predicting eventual outcomes. This information is obtainable through questionnaires and interviews but is very difficult to analyze because of the wide variations in the amount of time spent in these activities and the range of possible educational and training programs. The questions need to be carefully designed and the coding of the responses requires the exercise of good judgment.

5. Changes in Attitudes and Behavior

Current attitudes and behavior are important predictors of outcomes but the lack of well-developed, reliable measuring instruments limits the analysis of these characteristics. We have done some exploratory work through use of interviewer ratings of respondents. We do not know the degree of reliability of these measures but suspect that it is very low. We have found, however, that these ratings are useful for comparing large groups of individuals. Further work is being done in developing better instruments which can be administered at various stages of the NYC program.

Program Variables

The NYC program attempts to increase the employability of its enrollees by providing counse..ing, remedial education, work experience, and training in occupational skills. The following measurable program variables have been identified as possible factors influencing program outcomes which can be related through statistical analysis to the criterion variables described above.

1. Length of work week and hourly pay. This information is easily obtained.

2. Counseling program including the qualifcations of counselors, approach to counseling and the setting in which it is conducted, and the emphasis placed on counseling. This information can be obtained from a description of the counseling program and from interviews with enrollees.

3. Characteristics of work station including type of agency, amount of support given to NYC program, services provided, working conditions, and attitudes of other employees toward enrollees.

4. Nature of work experience including size of work group, skills required for the job, type of work, enrollee's perception of the value of the job, and enrollee's interest in the job.

5. Supervisor's behavior including discipline, relationship with enrollee, attitude toward enrollee and attention paid to training.

Moderator Variables

The identification of relevant moderator variables is of obvious importance to the analysis of program effectiveness, and the data requirements of such variables should be carefully considered. Some important moderator variables such as sex, race, age, and school grade completed are ordinarily available at the time of the constitution of study groups. Other related moderator variables such as quality of school performance and delinquency can be developed from school or police records, while moderator variables such as family composition and welfare assistance status often can be developed from program records (for the experimental group). Prior to follow-up contact, information about the experimental group is usually more extensive than that about the control group. The nature of preliminary information in the experimental group may well suggest the types of data that should be developed from the individuals in the comparative study groups.

In the NYC research, a more intensive analysis has suggested that enrollees can be classified into types, each of which requires a somewhat different program emphasis. The following preliminary typology has been developed to guide our research and is being tested by the longitudinal data.

1. Disadvantaged Graduate Type

This individual is fully socialized and has taken advantages of the educational opportunities available to him. He sufferes primarily from defects in the system and needs opportunity to acquire needed skills and to be considered for suitable jobs. A very limited program can often show dramatic results with this type.

2. Adverse Situation Type

Like the disadvantaged graduate, this type is reasonably well socialized; but, because of an adverse situation such as economic need or pregnancy, dropped out of school before graduation. Such an individual primarily needs an opportunity but his deficiencies in education and training are frequently sufficiently severe to require long-term remediation.

3. Rebel Type

An enrollee of this type has rejected society's values and frequently has a long history of delinquent acts. He needs to develop the conviction that it is possible to satisfy his needs through legitimate channels, and then to receive the training which makes this possible.

4. Low Self-Esteem Type

An enrollee of this type has lost confidence in himself and he needs to develop self-esteem through experiencing success.

Each of these four types requires substantially different program emphases and the same program component will affect each of them differently. The relationship between program and criterion variables, therefore, can be studied more productively by recognizing these types as moderator variables.

III

Data Collection Techniques

There are a number of possible methods for collecting data: questionnaires, interviews, observations, official records, special reports, etc. While we are using a number of sources, most of the data in our completed studies has been obtained from the official records and from the subjects themselves. Most of what we have learned relates to the problems of collecting data from subjects and we are therefore limiting our discussion to this aspect of data collection.

There are three possible ways of getting information from the subjects in the experimental or control groups: telephone, mail questionnaire and personal interview. In our studies, primary use was made of personal interviews, and the extent of our experience warrants the separate consideration of interviewing in the next section of this report.

In the NYC studies, the telephone was used primarily to check information. Since it was felt that the quality of information obtainable through the telephone would not be satisfactory, the telephone was not used in data gathering. However, limited use was made of mailed questionnaires with the results described below.

Mailed Questionnaires

In one phase of our research, short questionnaires were mailed to former NYC enrollees and approximately one-third responded. Several months later, two equivilant samples of former enrollees, one from a different program in the same city and the other from a different city, were asked to complete questionnaires and were promised pay of $1.50 upon receipt of the completed questionnaire. The response rate from both of these samples was approximately 40 percent. At the same time, a second mailing was sent to the initial sample with an offer to pay. An additional 13 percent of the sample responded and it was concluded that the offer to pay and the follow-up mailing had about an equal effect on increasing the response rate (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

OUTCOMES OF MAILED REQUESTS FOR TERMINEE SELF-REPORTS, THREE TERMINATION SAMPLES

Mailings and Outcomes	Pittsburgh City (N=121)	Pittsburgh HWA (N=127)	Cincinnati (N=125)
		Percent	
Completed and Returned:			
1st mailing, no remuneration	--	32	--
1st mailing, remuneration	41	--	39
2nd mailing, remuneration	--	13	--
Total	41	45	39
Returned by Post Office (not delivered)	16	13	11
No response	44	42	50
TOTAL	101	100	100

By use of a combination of techniques, it has proved possible to get a response rate of between 40 to 45 percent of former NYC enrollees through use of short, mailed questionnaires. The completion rate might be increased, perhaps, through additional follow-ups and efforts to obtain current addresses.

The differences between respondents and non-respondents in this study were less than might have been expected (see Table 3). On selected variables of race, sex, education, school grade completed, there were no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents. There was, however, a tendency for respondents to have left the program for a job or further training and for non-respondents to have left prematurely on their own initiative.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON ON SELECTED VARIABLES OF RESPONDENTS AND NON-RESPONDENTS, TERMINATION STUDIES[a]

Variables	Respondents (N=155)	Non-respondents (N=218)
	Percent	
Male, white	19	16
Male, Negro	35	42
Female, white	8	7
Female, Negro	38	35
Completed 8th grade or less	25	22
Mean school grade completed	9.8	9.7
In the NYC 3 months or less	33	37
Nature of NYC termination:		
Programmed	49	38
Administrative	19	18
Premature: NYC initiative	13	15
Premature: Other	19	29
Above-average improvement in overall employability[b]	46	36

[a]Pittsburgh City, Pittsburgh HWA, and Cincinnati.

[b]Two Pittsburgh studies only.

Even under the best of circumstances, the completion rate of mailed questionnaires is likely to be substantially less than that of the personal interview, which has achieved a completion rate of 80 percent under optimum conditions. It should also be noted that a great deal more information can be obtained through the interview since it is probably not practical to request the respondent to complete more than a two-page, mailed interview. The cost of a personal interview, however, is much higher and the time span of the interview period is much longer. It seems thus that in many situations, the mailed questionnaire is a useful technique for getting information about terminated enrollees and can be made more useful by following up non-respondents through interviews.

IV

Interviewing

The characteristics of the populations being studied, different in several important respects from populations traditionally studied in social research, tend to require interviewers with qualifications different from those of interviewers traditionally used--white, middle-class housewives, and college students. The young, disadvantaged, urban Negroes who figure prominently in the NYC studies are very mobile, although much of their mobility is within an urban area, or even, an urban neighborhood. Frequently, they not only do not leave forwarding addresses but intentionally make location difficult. The interviewer, therefore, frequently must develop locating information from neighborhood residents, who are often suspicious and unwilling to give information to help locate subjects. Once located, the young persons figuring in the NYC studies appeared to be no more difficult to interview than middle-class subjects.

The characteristics of the population studied thus entail special approaches to locating subjects and conducting the interview. Our experience in this area is summarized in the following paragraphs.

Qualifications of Interviewers

In general, we have found that the usual sources of interviewers for survey research work do not provide the type of person needed to conduct interviews with disadvantaged groups, particularly those in urban areas. The personal qualities described below appear to be more important than specific experience with any particular type of work.

1. Knowledge of Living Practices of Disadvantaged Groups

It is important that the interviewer understand how disadvantaged groups live and know how to go about locating subjects. This qualification ordinarily rules out white interviewers, although there are exceptions.

2. Persistence

An important quality of an interviewer is his determination to locate the subject. A good interviewer takes pride in his ability to complete the interview and will use a great deal of ingenuity and persistence in locating the subject and getting him to provide the information required for the interview.

3. Approach

An effective interviewer has to be skillful in getting the subject to agree to the interview. He has to be skilled at avoiding alarming the subject, reassuring him, convincing him of the importance of cooperating, and eliciting his response until the information has been obtained.

4. Flexibility of Work Schedule

An interviewer should have hours available for interviewing which correspond to the times that the subjects are most likely to be home. Our experience indicates that the best time to complete the interview for most subjects is in the early evening or on weekends. He also should have reasonably large blocks of time available since it has proved to be more efficient for the interviewer to devote a minimum of four hours at a time to the interviewing in order to get the best results. Since interviews often have to be conducted at night, or on weekends, the availability and suitability of an interviewer for unusual hours and inner-city work must be determined at the outset. Again, white interviewers--particularly white female interviewers--are, prima facie, usually to be avoided.

The appearance of the interviewer is an important factor determining the response made to him both from the point of view of locating the subject and achieving a completed interview. His clothing, manner, race, and approach can all be important to the accomplishment of his mission. The tenecity of the interviewer and his knowledge regarding the habits of the population being surveyed have an important bearing on how successful he will be in locating the subject and securing a complete interview.

Although, in general, the appearance of an interviewer should be such as to allay the impression of being an "outsider," his personal qualifications may well enable him to succeed even though his appearance or background might engender suspicion. In some instances, for example, off-duty police officers proved to be successful interviewers, as were probation and parole officers.

Probably the best results are obtained by considering the interviewers as a team with different members bringing different qualities to the team effort. There should be a mixture of Negro and white, male and female, and different age groups. Interviewers should be available at different times of the day and days of the week so that all possible hours are covered. A team with a range of qualities and talents gives the supervisor flexibility in assignment and permits differential assignments so that there is the maximum likelihood that the interview can be completed.

Location of Respondents

We have found that one of the most effective time-saving techniques is to do everything possible to establish correct addresses before attempting interview contact with the respondent. The subjects of the NYC study samples proved to be highly mobile, and the addresses obtained at the time the sample was selected were incorrect in about 50 percent of the cases. This mobility is a function both of the age of the sample and their socio-economic status. They are at the age when they are leaving home and establishing their own households. The girls get married with the resultant change in names; individuals of this socio-economic class move frequently. For the most part, the mobility is within the city or even a section of the city. While the mobility within the city is much greater than it is for middle-class subjects, this population is less prone to make long-distance moves. It is obvious that mobility and consequent obsolescence in location information will increase if there are urban renewal or public housing programs under construction in the research site. For all of these reasons, it can be expected that a significant portion of the time of the interviewer will be absorbed attempting to locate the subjects.

In addition to the high mobility, it is much more difficult to get information about where the subject may have gone than is typical for middle-class subjects. The subjects do not always leave forwarding addresses and, in many cases, may make a deliberate effort to make it difficult for bill collectors, police or personal enemies to locate them. Neighbors are often suspicious of strangers asking questions and will not supply information even when it is known.

Because of the difficulties of locating the subjects, every possible method must be used systematically in order to achieve an adequate completion rate. The methods which we have tried will be discussed below.

Post Office Correction of Mailing Address

The post office provides an inexpensive service which we have found will provide new addresses for about 25 percent of the subjects. Postal regulation number 123.51 provides for a procedure known as Correction of Mailing List. This procedure involves the preparation of a 3 X 5 index card for each person for whom a current address is needed. In the upper, left-hand corner of the card is stamped or written the name and address of the organization desiring to verify an address. The name and address to be verified are typed or printed clearly on the card or on a gummed label attached to the card leaving adequate space for corrections to be made.

All the cards with addresses for one particular post office are sent to the postmaster of that city with a letter indicating the number of cards enclosed and a money order to cover the charge. The minimum charge is $1.00, but if there are 20 cards or more, the cost is $.05 per card. For third and fourth-class post offices, a list of names and addresses may be submitted rather than separate 3 X 5 cards. The post office will distribute the cards to the various mail carriers whose responsibility it will be to check the addresses, make corrections, add the zip codes, and return the cards to the post office. When all of the cards have been returned, they will be forwarded to the research organization. Occasionally, a change is made in the name (as when a girl gets married) or a name spelling is corrected by the mail carrier. Most important, the address will be marked as "OK," corrected if information is available, or annotated as "addressee unknown," "no such number," "moved, left no forwarding address," or "no mail receptacle," etc.

Once the target date has been set for the survey to begin, at least four weeks should be allowed from the time the cards are first submitted to the post office until the last of them are returned. However, the time required will vary considerably depending on the number of cards submitted and the efficiency of the post office personnel.

Another method which we have tried is the use of a registered letter. Since this letter must be signed for by the recipient, the researcher can obtain information as to whether the initial address was correct.

We have found this to be an expensive way to locate respondents which does not work any better and perhaps not as well as the Correction of Mailing List card described above. A charge of $1.10 per addressee is made when the postman is requested to show to whom, when and where the letter was delivered. But, either the respondent or a member of his family may sign for the letter which means the delivery of the letter is not necessarily an assurance that the respondent's correct address is being used. He may have moved elsewhere and the letter was claimed by a member of his family who intended to give it to him.

Selective Service Forwarding of First-Class Mail

The draft status of male subjects is public infomation and can be obtained through the local draft board. Draft registrants are required by law to keep their draft board informed about their current addresses but this information is considered confidential and will not be supplied by the local draft board. However, the draft board will forward a letter to the subject in which he can be requested to supply his current address. The procedures prescribed by the Selective Service are:

> Any person desiring to have first-class letter forwarded to a registrant shall enclose that letter in an envelope showing no return address, with the name of addressee thereon, and bearing sufficient postage to cover mailing costs. The envelope containing such letter shall be mailed to the local board enclosed in another envelope, addressed to the registrant in care of the local board, together with a note, dated and signed by the writer of the letter, requesting that the enclosed letter be forwarded, stating the relationship of the writer to the addressee and the reason the registrant's address is not known. Unless it appears to the local board that it is being used as as a forwarding agent for bulk mailing, the local board shall forward the enclosed letter to the registrant at his last address on record . . .

We followed the procedure of enclosing a stamped, return 3 X 5 card for the recipient to list his name and address. In addition to forwarding the letters, the draft boards to whom the letters were submitted supplied information on those who were deceased or currently in the Armed Forces. This was helpful in avoiding unnecessary time-consuming and costly effort to locate those subjects for interviewing.

Another aid to location efforts is to supply the field supervisor and interviewer with as much information about the family and friends of the respondent as possible. Subjects within the age group of the NYC enrollees frequently are located most easily through their parents but, to complicate matters, the parents often have a different name than the subject. If the names of the brothers or sisters and the schools they are attending are known, respondents can often be located by contacting the brother or sister through the school.

The beginning point for attempting to locate the respondent should be the last known address. This is also true for respondents who are listed by the post office as having moved with no known forwarding address. If the inquiry at the listed address does not produce results, the interviewer should then inquire around the neighborhood. The next-door neighbor, the resident who has lived in the area for the longest period of time, or a local store are obvious places to begin. These location efforts can be supplemented by the use of the following formal information sources:

1. Telephone Directories--the telephone directory or the information operator may be a rapid source of information regarding the address of a respondent who has moved if the name under which the telephone was listed is known.

2. Reverse or Street Address Telephone Directory--telephone companies have a directory which lists subscribers by street addresses. The best procedure to use this list is to call the telephone company business office, explain the purpose of the need for information, and request the opportunity to check some of the names for which the interviewer has the street address but no house number, telephone number or the first name of the person in whose name the phone is listed. The reverse directory usually lists streets, names of residents of each house number on the street and telephone numbers.

3. City Directory--the city directory lists all residents by their street addresses rather than their last name, whether they have a telephone or not. The city directories are not usually as current as the street address telephone directory but are sometimes useful for the location of respondents who do not have a telephone.

4. Mail Carrier--a personal contact with the mail carrier may sometimes develop information which is more current or more complete than

that developed through the mail check described above.

5. Agency or Organizational Files--there are a number of agencies which might have information regarding the address of respondents such as the public welfare department, the social service exchange for private welfare agencies, the public housing authority, juvenile authorities and police files, the local Economic Opportunity Office, or the state employment service.

6. Specialists at Respondent Location--specialists may be used to find subjects who are very mobile or who are difficult to interview. When the easy-to-find respondents have been interviewed, an unusually skilled interviewer may be designated to track down all the difficult-to-locate respondents. Or, early in the interview period, a specialist may be hired to locate respondents. One study, for example, has employed a burial insurance salesman, a person familiar with the residence area, who is able to move about the area inquiring about respondents without arousing suspicion.

Obtaining Interview

It has been our experience that interviews are seldom refused directly. The refusal is more likely to be indirect in that the interviewee will refuse to identify himself, will avoid the interviewer or will say he is too busy and ask the interviewer to come back on some other occasion. It is, therefore, important that the interviewer establish the legitimacy of his inquiry. It can be expected that strangers will be viewed with suspicion by members of a ghetto area and, therefore, the interviewer must establish immediately that he has no hostile intent; he is neither a bill collector nor a law enformement officer investigating a crime. Various interviewers have used different techniques for avoiding suspicion. Some say it helps to identify themselves as a representative of The George Washington University; others say it is better to identify themselves as a representative of the local poverty agency. Probably, the specific strategy should vary depending on the situation in the neighborhood. In general, it seems best for the interviewer to avoid attracting attention to himself by his manner of dress or approach. For the most part, Negroes should be used in Negro neighborhoods and whites, in white neighborhoods.

There are so many factors which influence the ability of the interviewer to secure an interview that it is difficult to generalize from situation to situation. For reasons which are hard to identify, it is often possible for one interviewer to secure an interview which proved to be impossible for another. For these reasons, it is advisable to send out a different type of interviewer when the respondent refuses or appears to be evading the interview. Often by sending out a man instead of a woman, or vice versa, or someone with different personal qualities, it is possible to secure such interviews.

Conduct of the Interview

The situations encountered are so varied that no general prescription can be made regarding the conduct of the interview. The interviewer must make the best of the situations he encounters and be prepared for almost any kind of distraction. Disadvantaged groups typically live in over-crowded conditions where privacy or a reasonable amount of quiet are likely to be almost non-existent.

It may be impractical to attempt to move the interview to a locale where privacy can be obtained. The suggestion that the interview can be conducted better in the interviewer's car may be interpreted as a sex advance or as an indirect way of forcing the subject away from his home. The interviewer, therefore, must develop skill in conducting the interview under adverse situations, simultaneously keeping the distractions to a minimum. One of the most difficult problems to handle will be that of interference by other adult members of the family who insist on participating in the interview and supplying the answers.

Payment for the Interview

Another issue which was carefully considered was the wisdom of paying the respondent or requesting his cooperation without pay. Our experience with interviews indicated that once the respondent could be located, it was almost always possible to complete the interview. On the basis of this experience and the advice of persons experienced with this population, it was decided not to pay the respondents for agreeing to be interviewed. It is possible, however, that payment can be justified on economic grounds to reduce the number of call-backs necessary to complete the interview. We plan to investigate this possibility during future interviewing.