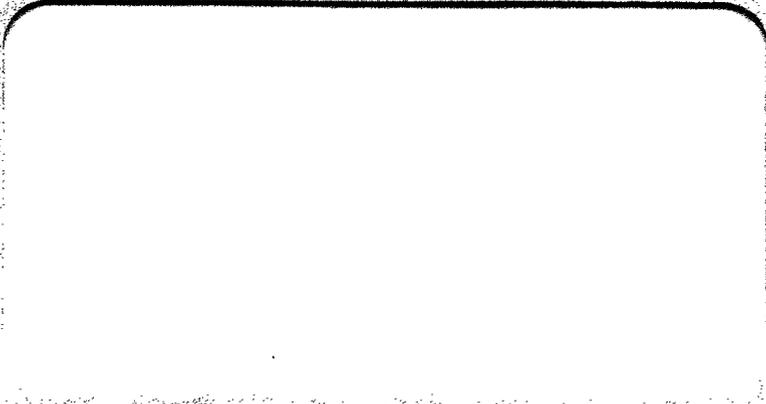


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THE QUALITY OF THE DATA COLLECTED IN  
THE RECIPIENCY HISTORY TOPICAL  
MODULE OF SIPP

July 20, 1992

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This work was prepared as one task of a competitively awarded contract; the total amount of the contract is **\$2,854,698**.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the people who contributed to this report. Pat Doyle, Tom Fraker, and Allen Shirm of **Mathematica** Policy Research, Inc., provided technical consultation and review. Kathy Short of Census Bureau provided useful advice at the early stages of the project. Thomas **Good** edited the final document, and Chiquita Payne and Debbie Jones prepared the final manuscript.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the past decade, a wealth of research has examined turnover in welfare program participation and the duration of time on welfare. The two main sources of data to support analyses of these issues are the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).

This report evaluates the data collected in the Reciprocity History Topical Module, a special supplement to SIPP. The module asks two types of questions. First, respondents who are currently participating in a government program are asked to provide the month and year in which they began to receive benefits. Second, the module asks all respondents about their history of food stamp, AFDC, SSI, Medicaid, and public housing reciprocity prior to the beginning of the survey period.

In this report, we first examine the extent of nonresponse to the topical module questions. We then evaluate the quality of the responses to the questions on the beginning date of food stamp and AFDC reciprocity by comparing SIPP data with food stamp and AFDC administrative data. With few exceptions, it appears that the data collected in the Reciprocity History Topical Module are of good quality.

- The nonresponse rate to the question on the beginning date of current reciprocity is low for most programs. The nonresponse rate for the Food Stamp Program is 18 percent, and 12 percent for AFDC (the lowest among the 19 programs considered). The rate for Medicare is the highest, at 53 percent. The overall nonresponse rate excluding Medicare is 17 percent.
- The nonresponse rates to the reciprocity history questions vary widely among programs. The nonresponse rates to the question on when a person first received food stamps and AFDC are 17 and 21 percent, respectively, while the rates for SSI, Medicaid, and public housing are much higher, ranging from 30 to 45 percent.
- The distribution of time on AFDC, based on the beginning dates of current reciprocity, closely resembles the distribution of time on AFDC found in administrative data.

The topical module questions on the beginning dates of reciprocity provide a measure of the length of time on the program *up to* the beginning of the survey period. Information collected in other parts of the SIPP interview from the same respondents provide a measure of the time spent on the program *after* the beginning of the survey. The relevant issue is whether these two measures of duration are comparable, since they are collected with very different methods (one retrospectively, and the other longitudinally). We compared the distributions of time on food stamps and AFDC before and after the beginning of the survey and found that the two types of data are highly comparable.

We conclude that the data in the module will be useful to researchers who study the dynamics of program participation. We also provide some recommendations for improving some aspects of the topical module:

- The wording of the question on the beginning date of program reciprocity is ambiguous and should be changed. The question should emphasize that it refers to the beginning date of the *current* spell of reciprocity, and not the beginning date of the *first* spell ever experienced by a person.
- The number of program sources for which a beginning date is asked could be reduced, to lessen the burden on respondents and perhaps reduce the nonresponse rate. The list of programs should also be refined to include only those programs that are of greatest policy interest.
- Due to the high nonresponse rates to the lifetime reciprocity questions for the SSI, Medicaid, and public housing programs, lifetime-reciprocity questions should be restricted to the food stamp and **AFDC** programs.

## I, INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, research on welfare reciprocity has concentrated on the characteristics of recipients, their turnover in programs, and the duration of their time on welfare. The **two** main sources of data to support analyses of program participation over time are the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (**SIPP**).

This report evaluates the quality of the retrospective data on program participation collected in SIPP. SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted by the Census Bureau to collect subannual information on the income, labor-force participation, and government program participation of the U.S. noninstitutional population. At each interview, SIPP **asks** all adults in the sampled households a fixed set of questions on these three topics (the “core” interview). Supplemental questions collect information on a variety of other topics that vary across interviews (the “topical modules”). One of these topical modules asks respondents a set of questions on their history of welfare reciprocity prior to the time period covered by the survey (the “Reciprocity History Topical Module”). Respondents who are currently participating in a transfer program are asked to provide the month and year in which they first began participating in that program. In addition (but only for a limited number of welfare programs), all adult respondents are asked questions about their history of welfare reciprocity over their lifetimes.

This retrospective information supports research on the dynamics of program participation. The purpose of **this** report is to evaluate the quality of the data collected in the Reciprocity History Topical Module of SIPP. The analysis proceeds in three main directions: it investigates the extent of nonresponse to the topical module questions; it compares the information provided by **SIPP** respondents with administrative data; and it examines the consistency of the responses in the topical module with the consistency of responses in other parts of the SIPP interview.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Chapter II describes the structure of **SIPP** and the content of the Reciprocity History Topical Module in more detail. Chapter III examines the extent of nonresponse to the topical module questions. Chapter IV analyzes the duration of program participation constructed from the beginning dates of reciprocity as collected in the topical **module**. Chapter V examines the quality of the responses provided to the other questions on reciprocity during the respondent's lifetime. Chapter VI summarizes the findings and contains some recommendations for modifying the design of the topical module.

## II. SIPP AND THE RECIPIENCY HISTORY TOPICAL MODULE

Data for this report are derived from the 1986 Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) collected by the Bureau of the **Census**.<sup>1</sup> **SIPP** is a nationally representative longitudinal survey of the civilian noninstitutionalized population in the United States. Adults in the initial sample are interviewed at four-month intervals for a period of up to approximately two and one-half years (typically eight interviews). In February of each year, a new sample (“panel”) is fielded. Each sample consists of four rotation groups, and each rotation group is scheduled for an interview every four months. The interview collects monthly data on earnings and program participation for the four preceding months. For example, the first rotation group in the 1986 Panel was interviewed in February 1986 for the **first** time, and respondents in this rotation group were asked questions about the period from October 1985 to January 1986. The interviews that are administered in four consecutive months to the four rotation groups form a “wave” of data.

At each wave of interviews, all adult members in the sampled household (those 15 years of age and older) are asked a fixed set of questions, and some information on younger children in the household is gathered from their parents. These core questions yield detailed information on monthly income sources, household composition, and participation in the labor force and in government transfer programs. Several researchers have used the monthly information on participation in welfare programs to analyze the household characteristics and “trigger” events that are associated with entry into and exit from these programs (**Burstein, 1990; Long, 1990; and Fitzgerald, 1991**). All these studies were based on the 1984 and 1985 panels of SIPP, which did not contain a topical module on reciprocity history similar to those fielded in the 1986 and all subsequent **panels**.<sup>2</sup> Miller (1991) is

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<sup>1</sup>The discussion that follows is a brief overview of SIPP. For a more complete description of SIPP, see U.S. Department of Commerce (1990).

<sup>2</sup>A reciprocity history module was also administered in the 1984 Panel, but not until the fifth wave of interviews. Moreover, the wording of the questions in the 1984 module differs considerably from the wording of the questions in the module analyzed here.

the only example of research to date that has linked the retrospective information from the Reciprocity History Topical Module to the core data on **monthly** participation in order to examine patterns of exit **from** the Food Stamp Program.

The topical module examined in this report was fielded during the second wave of the 1986 Panel. However, the description of the questions in this module also applies to all reciprocity history modules included in subsequent SIPP panels. This module was designed with two goals in mind. The first goal was to provide information on the duration of program participation prior to the beginning of the survey among those who were already in a program at the beginning of the survey. This information is ascertained for a large number of programs, ranging from Social Security and Medicare to Unemployment Insurance and Workers Compensation. The second goal was to collect information that could be used to re-create a lifetime history of welfare program participation. This information is collected for a much smaller number of programs--the Food Stamp Program (FSP), the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, the Supplemental Security Income (**SSI**) program, the Medicaid program, and public or subsidized housing programs. These two distinct goals are reflected in two distinct sets of questions, one on the beginning dates of reciprocity for current participants, and the second on lifetime welfare reciprocity. We describe these two sets of questions in more detail in the next two sections.

#### A. QUESTIONS ON THE BEGINNING DATES OF RECIPIENCY

The first section of the module's questionnaire consists of a precompiled roster that contains the sources of **nonwage** income reported by the respondents during Wave 1 of the interview. For each source of **nonwage** income (with some exclusions), Wave 2 respondents are asked to report the month and year in which their reciprocity began. The actual question from the module reads: "During

*our last visit we recorded that \_\_\_\_\_ received (source) sometime during the period (8 months ago) through (5 months ago). when did first begin to receive (source)?"<sup>3</sup>*

The wording of this question is rather ambiguous. It is not clear what “first begin to receive” means. Is it the beginning of the *current spell* of reciprocity or the beginning of the first spell *ever experienced* by the respondent? From the context of the overall topical module, it is clear that the purpose of these questions is to ascertain the beginning date of the current spell, since the beginning of the first spell ever experienced by a respondent is ascertained later in the topical module. However, the respondent does not have this frame of reference for the question on the beginning date of reciprocity. In Chapter IV we compare SIPP and administrative data to determine whether the response to this question indicates the duration of the current spell or the duration of precompiled lifetime reciprocity.

The reciprocity roster contains up to 8 programs and income sources for each respondent. *The* beginning-date question is asked for all sources listed in the roster, and in the order in which they are listed. These sources comprise a set of 28 possible cash and in-kind transfer programs (reproduced in Table **II.1**.) The reciprocity unit for most of these transfer programs is the single individual, but in some cases the reciprocity unit is the household or a subset of the household. In these cases, only the person legally authorized to receive the benefits is asked the question on the beginning dates of reciprocity. For example, for the FSP, only the person authorized to receive food stamps is asked this question, while the reciprocity roster of other members of the food stamp unit does not list food stamps.

## B. QUESTIONS ON WELFARE PARTICIPATION OVER A RESPONDENT’S LIFETIME

All adult respondents age 18 and older are asked consecutive sets of questions about participation in the Food Stamp, AFDC, SSI, Medicaid, and public housing programs over their

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<sup>3</sup>Appendix A provides a facsimile of the topical module questionnaire.

TABLE II.1  
INCOME SOURCES LISTED IN THE RECIPIENCY ROSTER  
OF THE SIPP TOPICAL MODULE

Income Source	Number of Wave 1 Recipients Interviewed in Wave 2	
	Unweighted	Weighted (thousands)
Social Security	3,919	32,065
Medicare	3,369	27,410
Pension from Companies	946	7,799
Food Stamps <sup>a</sup>	846	7,154
Unemployment Insurance	494	<b>4,064</b>
Child Support	472	3,936
Federal SSI	403	3,332
Veterans Compensation/Pension	366	3,051
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) <sup>a</sup>	347	2,986
State Government Pension	223	1,781
Pell Grant	218	1,807
Federal Civil Service Pension	209	1,757
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	173	1,407
U.S. Military Retirement	155	1,264
Workers Compensation	135	1,122
U.S. Government Railroad Retirement	<b>128</b>	1,043
Local Government Pension	117	<b>1,009</b>
General Assistance (GA)	113	992
Alimony	70	575
GI Education Benefits	26	206
Supplemental Unemployment	18	165
Other Welfare	18	146
Foster Care	10	89
Other VA Assistance	8	58
Other Unemployment Compensation	7	63
Black Lung Payments	0	0
Indian, Cuban or Refugee	0	0
National Guard or Reserve	0	0
Sources Recoded for Confidentiality	41	326
All Income Sources	12,832	NA

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

<sup>a</sup>The response is for the entire reciprocity unit.

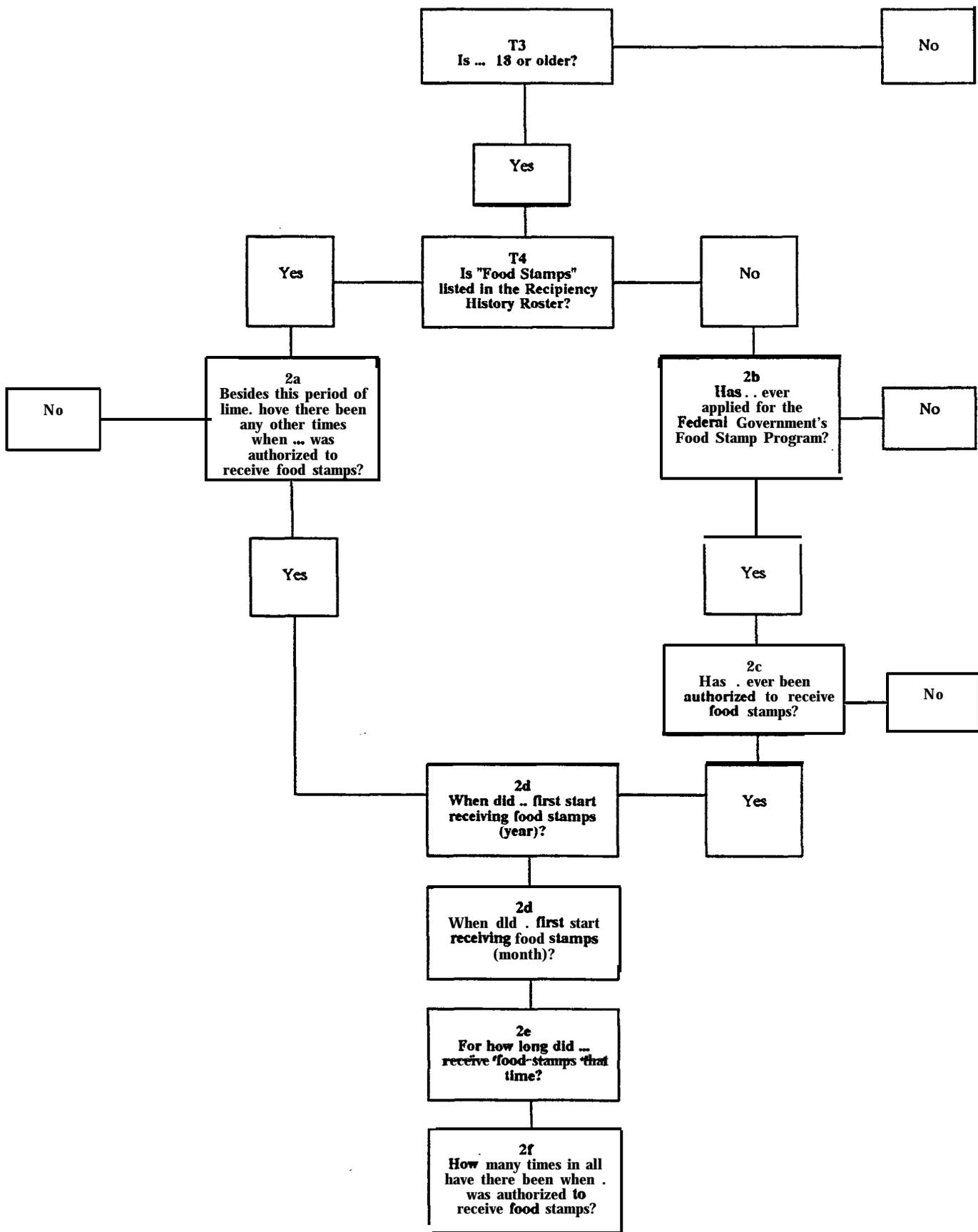
lifetime. Information collected from these questions pertains to events that occurred prior to the beginning of the respondent's current spell of participation or, if the respondent does not have a current spell, prior to the beginning of the survey.

As an illustration, Figure II.1 contains a flow chart of the structure of the lifetime participation questions for the Food Stamp Program. (Appendix A provides a facsimile module that contains the complete sets of questions on the FSP, **AFDC**, SSI, Medicaid, and public housing programs.) An interviewer check item (whether food stamps is listed in the reciprocity history roster) determines whether respondents are asked the questions listed on the right or left side of the flow chart. Respondents who reported receiving food stamps in Wave 1 ("current recipients") are asked the questions on the left side of the flow chart, beginning with whether they had been authorized to receive food stamp benefits prior to the current spell (**2a**). If respondents are not current food stamp recipients, they are asked questions on the right side of the flow chart--whether they have ever applied for food stamps (**2b**) and whether they have ever been authorized to receive food stamps (**2c**).

Persons who have never applied for nor received food stamp benefits (on the right side) and persons who have not received food stamps before the current spell (the left side) are not asked the remaining food stamp lifetime reciprocity questions. All current and previous food stamp recipients are asked to provide the month and year in which they **first** started receiving food stamps, the length of time they received food stamps for the first time, and the total number of times that they have been authorized to receive the benefits (**2d-2f**). No question is asked to establish the duration of spells between the **first** and the *current* spells.

After responding to the lifetime FSP reciprocity questions, respondents are asked similar questions about the AFDC and SSI programs. A shorter list of questions is then asked about Medicaid participation, private health insurance coverage, and public or subsidized housing (see facsimile in Appendix A).

FIGURE II.1  
 FLOW CHART OF QUESTIONS ON  
 FOOD STAMP LIFETIME RECIPIENCY



### HI. THE EXTENT OF NONRESPONSE IN THE RECIPIENCY HISTORY TOPICAL MODULE

Survey statisticians distinguish between *total* (or unit) nonresponse--when a sampled individual or household does not provide information--and *item* nonresponse--when a respondent fails to answer specific questions (Kalton, 1983). This chapter focuses on (item) nonresponse to specific questions in the Reciprocity History Topical Module of the 1986 Panel of **SIPP**. We examine nonresponse to the set of questions on the beginning dates of reciprocity and to the set of questions on reciprocity over the respondent's **lifetime**.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. NONRESPONSE TO THE BEGINNING-DATE QUESTIONS

As explained in Chapter II, the beginning dates of reciprocity are ascertained from the question about the month and year in which current recipients "first began to receive" a particular income source. As one would expect, some respondents are able and willing to supply both the year and the month in which their reciprocity began, some are able to supply only the year, while others cannot supply either the month or the year. As with most other cases of item nonresponse in SIPP, the Census Bureau replaces the missing values for the beginning-date questions with values that are imputed. However, the **SIPP** public-use files contain imputation flags that facilitate computing rates of nonresponse to these questions.

From an analytical standpoint, knowing the year in which reciprocity began (hereafter the "begin-year") is more important than knowing the month in which reciprocity began (the "begin-month"),

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<sup>1</sup>A special case of unit nonresponse pertains to individual household members who refuse the interview while the other household members agree to be interviewed. These nonrespondents are defined in SIPP as "type-z" refusals. When processing **SIPP** data, the Census Bureau imputes the entire record of type-z refusals with the record of a statistically matched person in the sample. Of the 6,668 individuals with income sources listed in the Reciprocity History Topical Module, approximately one percent are type-z refusals. In light of this very low prevalence rate, we treated these cases as regularly interviewed individuals. In other words, a type-z refusal contributes to the nonresponse rate for a specific question only if his/her statistically matched person did not respond to that specific question.

except for programs for which participation is very short on average, such as Unemployment Insurance or Workers Compensation. Not surprisingly, **the rate** of nonresponse for the begin-month question increases dramatically as the duration of reciprocity (measured in years) increases. As long as the begin-year is known, knowing the month in which reciprocity began is less important as duration increases. Therefore, we begin our analysis of nonresponse by concentrating on the begin-year question.

### 1. Begin-Year Nonresponse Rates

Table III.1 presents nonresponse rates for the begin-year question, ranked in ascending order by the level of nonresponse. The median duration of reciprocity since the begin date is also included to provide a sense of the importance of the information on the begin year versus the begin **month**.<sup>2</sup>

The begin-year nonresponse rate for all income sources is 26.5 percent. However, the nonresponse rates for the specific income sources also vary widely. In fact, the rate for all but two programs are *below* the overall rate. Among all income sources, **AFDC** has the lowest rate of nonresponse, at only 11.8 percent. At the opposite extreme of the spectrum, the Medicare program has a begin-year nonresponse rate of 52.7 percent, which is at least twice as high as that of any other program (excluding Pell Grants.) Because Medicare alone represents over a quarter of all income sources listed, its exclusion from the list of income sources lowers the overall nonresponse rate to a much smaller 17.2 percent (last row in Table **III.1**).

The high nonresponse rate for Medicare is puzzling, particularly in light of the fact that Social Security has a begin-year nonresponse rate of only 15.1 percent, the fourth lowest. A possible explanation for the high nonresponse rate for Medicare is that beneficiaries do not receive Medicare

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<sup>2</sup>Of the income sources reported in Table **II.1**, three had no respondents, and six had less than 30 potential respondents. These income sources are not included in Table **III.1**. Their sample size is so small that their **nonresponse** rate is highly unreliable, and if included they would disrupt the ranking of the other 19 income sources. However, the estimates for these sources are included in the total nonresponse rate reported at the bottom of Table **III.1**.

TABLE III.1

## NONRESPONSE RATES COMPUTED FOR THE YEAR IN WHICH RECIPIENCY BEGAN

Income Source	Number of Potential Respondents	Nonresponse Rate	Median Duration of Participation (in months) <sup>1</sup>
<b>AFDC</b>	347	11.8%	<b>28</b>
<b>WIC</b>	173	12.1	13
State Government Pension	223	14.3	85
Social Security	3,919	15.1	86
Pension from Companies	946	15.9	72
Child Support	472	16.1	44
U.S. Military Retirement	155	16.1	141
Federal Civil Service Pension	209	16.7	101
Workers Compensation	135	17.8	5
Food Stamps	846	17.8	21
U.S. Government Railroad Retirement	128	18.0	116
Veterans Compensation/Pension	366	18.3	176
<b>Local</b> Government Pension	117	19.7	89
General Assistance (GA)	113	20.4	20
Unemployment Insurance	494	21.1	4
Alimony	70	21.4	43
Federal SSI	<b>403</b>	23.6	71
Pell Grant	218	45.4	10
Medicare	3,369	52.7	77
All Income Sources	12,832	26.5	<b>NA</b>
<b>All</b> Income Sources Excluding Medicare	<b>9,463</b>	17.2	<b>NA</b>

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

benefits on a regular basis, but only when they incur medical expenses. Regardless of the underlying factors, this high nonresponse rate suggests that Medicare should be dropped from the list of programs included in the reciprocity roster.

The begin-year nonresponse rate for the **FSP** ranks tenth out of 19 income sources. The nonresponse rate among the 846 respondents who reported receiving food stamps was 17.8 percent, similar to the overall begin-year nonresponse rate excluding Medicare (17.2 percent).

## 2. Nonresponse **Rates by the Order in Which the Source Is Listed in the Roster**

Of the 21,721 adults in the first two waves of the 1986 Panel, 6,668 individuals reported at least one type of income source during the first interview. Of these 6,668 recipients, 36 percent reported only one income source, 39 percent reported two sources, 21 percent reported three sources, and 3.6 percent reported between four and six sources, for a total of 12,832 income sources. Therefore, approximately two-thirds of all respondents to the question on the beginning date of reciprocity are asked about more than one income source.

Table III.2 shows a positive relationship between the begin-year **nonresponse** rate and the order in which the income source is listed. The **nonresponse** rate for the first reported income source (regardless of the type of income source) is 16.2 percent (the first panel in Table III.2). The rate doubles to 33.2 percent for the income sources listed second, and is above 50 percent for the sources listed fourth. This pattern becomes less pronounced but still noticeable if one excludes Medicare from the computation (the second panel in Table III.2), since Medicare has a very high nonresponse rate and also tends to be listed after other income **sources**.<sup>3</sup>

We offer two possible explanations why nonresponse increases with the order in which the question is listed. On the one hand, the increase could represent a ‘burden effect,’ as respondents become less willing to answer questions at each repetition. On the other, it could simply be a

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<sup>3</sup>In particular, Medicare accounts for 43 percent of the incomes sources listed second, and is usually listed after Social Security.

TABLE III.2

NONRESPONSE **RATES** BY THE ORDER IN WHICH THE  
INCOME SOURCE IS LISTED IN THE RECIPIENCY ROSTER

Income Sources	Order in Which source is Listed	Number of sources	Nonresponse Rate
<b>All Sources</b>	first	<b>6,668</b>	16.2%
	second	4,259	33.2
	third	<b>1,646</b>	46.7
	fourth	244	51.2
	<b>fifth</b> and up	15	60.0
	total	12,832	26.5
<b>All Sources Excluding Medicare</b>	<b>first</b>	6,508	15.9
	second	2,416	18.0
	third	472	28.4
	fourth and up	67	26.9
	<b>total</b>	<b>9,463</b>	17.2
FSP	<b>first</b>	270	13.7
	second	439	16.4
	third and up	137	30.7
	total	846	17.8
<b>AFDC</b>	<b>first</b>	<b>296</b>	11.1
	second	38	18.4
	third and up	13	7.7
	<b>total</b>	347	11.8

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

“composition effect,” as respondents with multiple income sources tend to differ from respondents with fewer income sources.

We examined the pattern of nonresponse rate for the Food Stamp Program in more detail. Among FSP participants, the pattern of nonresponse is similar to the pattern observed for all income sources excluding Medicare: a modest increase in nonresponse if listed second rather than first, and a sharp increase if listed third rather than second. Of the FSP recipients who listed food stamps as the first source (270 respondents), 63 percent did not report any additional income sources. Among recipients who reported food stamps as the second source, 62 percent listed AFDC or other types of welfare as the first income source. Finally, among FSP recipients who listed food stamps as the third source, 72.8 percent listed Social Security as the first income source. These different patterns of income receipt clearly reflect a different sociodemographic composition of the food stamp units in the three groups, which might account at least in part for the pattern of nonresponse. For example, older **FSP** recipients might have more difficulty in remembering when they first began receiving food stamps. The fact that older **FSP** recipients are also concentrated among those who list the FSP as the third source might contribute to the higher nonresponse rate.

### **3. Begin-Month Nonresponse Rates**

Table III.3 reports the nonresponse rates for the month in which reciprocity began. The 19 income sources are ranked in ascending order of **nonresponse**. As one would expect, the **begin-month** nonresponse rates are much higher than the begin-year rates, and they range from a minimum of 23.5 percent for Unemployment Insurance to 65.3 percent for the SSI program (second column). These are total rates, in the sense that they include both respondents who reported a begin-year and those who did not. While these total rates are important for illustrating the quality of the data, the conditional rates--that is, the rates of nonresponse to the begin-month question among those who reported the begin-year of reciprocity--probably have greater substantive importance. Only in these

TABLE III.3

## NONRESPONSE RATES COMPUTED FOR THE MONTH IN WHICH RECIPIENCY BEGAN

Income Source	Number <b>Eligible</b> to Respond	Total Nonresponse Rate	Nonresponse Rate When Begin-Year Reported
Unemployment Insurance	<b>494</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>9.2</b>
Workers Compensation	13s	24.4	15.3
<b>WIC</b>	173	26.0	17.8
U.S. Military Retirement	<b>155</b>	26.5	13.1
State Government Pension	223	30.9	19.9
<b>Local</b> Government Pension	117	32.5	16.0
Pension from Companies	946	32.8	21.2
AFDC	347	33.1	<b>25.8</b>
Federal <b>Civil</b> Service	209	34.0	23.0
Child Support	472	36.2	25.3
Social Security	3,919	39.5	29.8
<b>Alimony</b>	70	42.9	27.3
Food Stamps	846	44.0	33.8
General Assistance (GA)	113	44.2	34.4
U.S. Government Railroad Retirement	128	46.9	36.2
<b>Pell</b> Grants	218	47.2	8.4
Veterans Compensation/Pension	366	59.3	51.8
Medicare	3,369	62.0	27.1
Federal SSI	403	65.3	<b>54.5</b>

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

cases does nonresponse to the begin-month question represent a true loss of information. These conditional nonresponse rates are shown in the third column of Table III.3.

Table III.4 shows that the missing information on the begin-month increases dramatically as the start of the spell of reciprocity is further in the past. For **FSP**, AFDC, and SSI, we present the begin-month nonresponse rates disaggregated by the reported year in which reciprocity began. (In other words, this table excludes cases for whom begin-year information is missing.) For all three programs, we see a sharp increase, from a zero nonresponse rate when the year is 1986 to about 10 percent when the year is 1985, to well over **50** percent when the year is before 1980. These results imply that when the begin-month information is important from an analytical standpoint--for spells that started in the previous two calendar years--the begin-month nonresponse rate is at acceptable levels.

## **B. NONRESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS ON WELFARE PARTICIPATION OVER A RESPONDENTS LIFETIME**

All adult respondents age 18 and older are asked a set of questions about their lifetime participation in the Food Stamp, AFDC, SSI, Medicaid, and public housing programs. These questions pertain to events that occurred prior to the beginning of the survey. We first analyze nonresponse for the questions on **FSP**, **AFDC**, and SSI, whose format is similar, and then analyze the questions on Medicaid and public housing.

### **1. Questions on Lifetime Participation in the FSP, AFDC, or SSI**

The structure of these questions has been discussed in Chapter II relative to FSP participation (Figure **II.1**). Appendix B displays similar flow charts for the AFDC and **SSI** questions. Table III.5 shows the nonresponse rates for these questions.

Due to an **idiosyncrasy** in the public-use file (a missing imputation flag), we could not compute the nonresponse rate for current recipients about whether they had participated in a program at any other time. Thus, we do not know the number of responses to this question that are real or that are imputed.

TABLE III.4

NONRESPONSE RATES COMPUTED FOR THE MONTH IN WHICH RECIPIENCY BEGAN,  
BY THE CALENDAR YEAR IN WHICH RECIPIENCY BEGAN:  
SELECTED PROGRAMS

Reported Year in Which Reciency Began	Food Stamps		AFDC		SSI	
	Number Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate	Number Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate	Number Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate
Before 1970	16	62.5%	9	44.4%	26	80.7%
1970-1974	36	58.3	18	50.0	56	60.7
1975-1979	88	56.8	50	52.0	82	74.4
1980	28	71.4	12	58.3	19	68.4
1981	32	53.1	18	38.9	18	44.4
1982	42	61.9	19	21.0	13	38.5
1983	74	41.9	43	9.3	19	57.9
1984	92	42.4	40	30.0	26	<b>38.5</b>
1985	193	10.9	66	9.1	37	13.5
1986	94	0.0	31	0.0	12	0.0
Total	695	33.8	306	25.8	308	54.6

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Recipiency History Topical Module.

NOTE: This table is limited to cases who provided a response to the begin-year question.

TABLE III.5

## NONRESPONSE RATES COMPUTED FOR THE LIFETIME RECIPIENCY QUESTIONS FOR THE FOOD STAMP, AFDC, AND SSI PROGRAMS

Topical Module Question	Food Stamps		AFDC		SSI	
	Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate	Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate	Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate
Besides this period of time, have there been any other times when . . . was authorized to receive (program)?	843	NA	313	NA	<b>395</b>	NA
Has . . . ever applied for the Federal Government's (program)?	20,582	4.8%	<b>4,048</b>	6.9%	21,030	4.4%
Has . . . ever been authorized to receive <b>(program)?</b>	<b>1,860</b>	2.4	393	2.5	394	4.3
When did . . . first start receiving (program)?						
Year	1,738	21.2	404	16.8	220	44.1
Month	1,738	64.8	<b>404</b>	51.7	220	72.3
For how long did . . . receive (program) that time?	1,738	16.6	404	17.3	220	37.3
How many times in <b>all</b> have there been when . . . was authorized to receive (program)?	1,738	10.5	404	13.4	NA	NA

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

Individuals who are not current program participants are asked whether they ever applied for a program and, if so, whether they ever received benefits from that program. The nonresponse rates for these questions are remarkably low, ranging from 2.4 to 6.9 percent. The next question asks for the year and the month in which respondents first received benefits. Analogously to what we saw in Section A, the nonresponse rate for the begin-month is much higher than for the begin-year. We also observed large differences in nonresponse among the three programs. The nonresponse rate to the begin-year question for AFDC is the lowest (16.8 percent), the nonresponse rate for the FSP is the second (21.2 percent), and the rate for SSI is the highest (44.1 percent). The nonresponse rates for AFDC and the FSP mirror those for the begin-year of spells in progress at the beginning of the survey presented in Table III.1 (11.8 and 17.8 percent, respectively), while the SSI rate of 44.1 percent in Table III.5 is much higher than the rate in Table III.1 (23.6 percent).

The next question asks about the duration of the first spell of participation, measured in months or in years. Table III.5 shows that the nonresponse rates for FSP and AFDC are **very** similar (16.6 and 17.3, respectively) and the rate for SSI is much higher (37.3 percent). Finally, respondents with a previous history of **FSP** and AFDC reciprocity are asked to provide the total number of times they participated. Here, the nonresponse rate is lower for the FSP than for AFDC (10.5 versus 13.4 percent), while the question is not asked for the SSI program, in light of the lower turnover among SSI recipients.

## 2. Questions on Medicaid, Private Health Insurance, and Public Housing

The **last section** of the topical module questionnaire contains questions on Medicaid, private health insurance, and public housing. The **nonresponse** rates for the questions about these programs are summarized in Table IU.6. Fiit, we should point out that the question on the beginning date of coverage by Medicaid is asked only of persons not currently receiving AFDC or SSI, because persons **eligible** for **AFDC** and SSI are usually eligible for Medicaid coverage. This explains the small number of persons asked this question. The **nonresponse** rate among those asked is rather high (28.0

TABLE III.6

NONRESPONSE RATES FOR THE LIFETIME RECIPIENCY QUESTIONS FOR  
MEDICAID, PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE, AND PUBLIC HOUSING

Question	Eligible to Respond	Nonresponse Rate
When did . . . first begin to be covered by Medicaid?		
Month	305	50.5%
Year/never covered	321	28.0
How long has . . . been covered by health insurance without interruption?	<b>2,006</b>	11.2
When was the last time that . . . was last covered by private health <b>insurance?</b> <sup>b</sup>		
Month	2,450	45.8
Year/never covered	5,024	8.5
How long has . . . been living in public or subsidized housing?	5 3 2	31.6
Is . . . on a waiting list for public or subsidized housing?	719	127

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

<sup>a</sup> The universe for this question consists of **all** persons 18 and older who reported Medicaid coverage and did **not** report receiving SSI or AFDC in Wave 1. In addition, persons who responded that they were never covered by Medicaid were not included in the universe for the month in which coverage began.

<sup>b</sup> The universe for this question consists of **all** persons 18 and older who were not covered by a health insurance plan in Wave 2. In addition, persons who responded that they were never covered by health insurance were not included in the universe for the month in which coverage began.

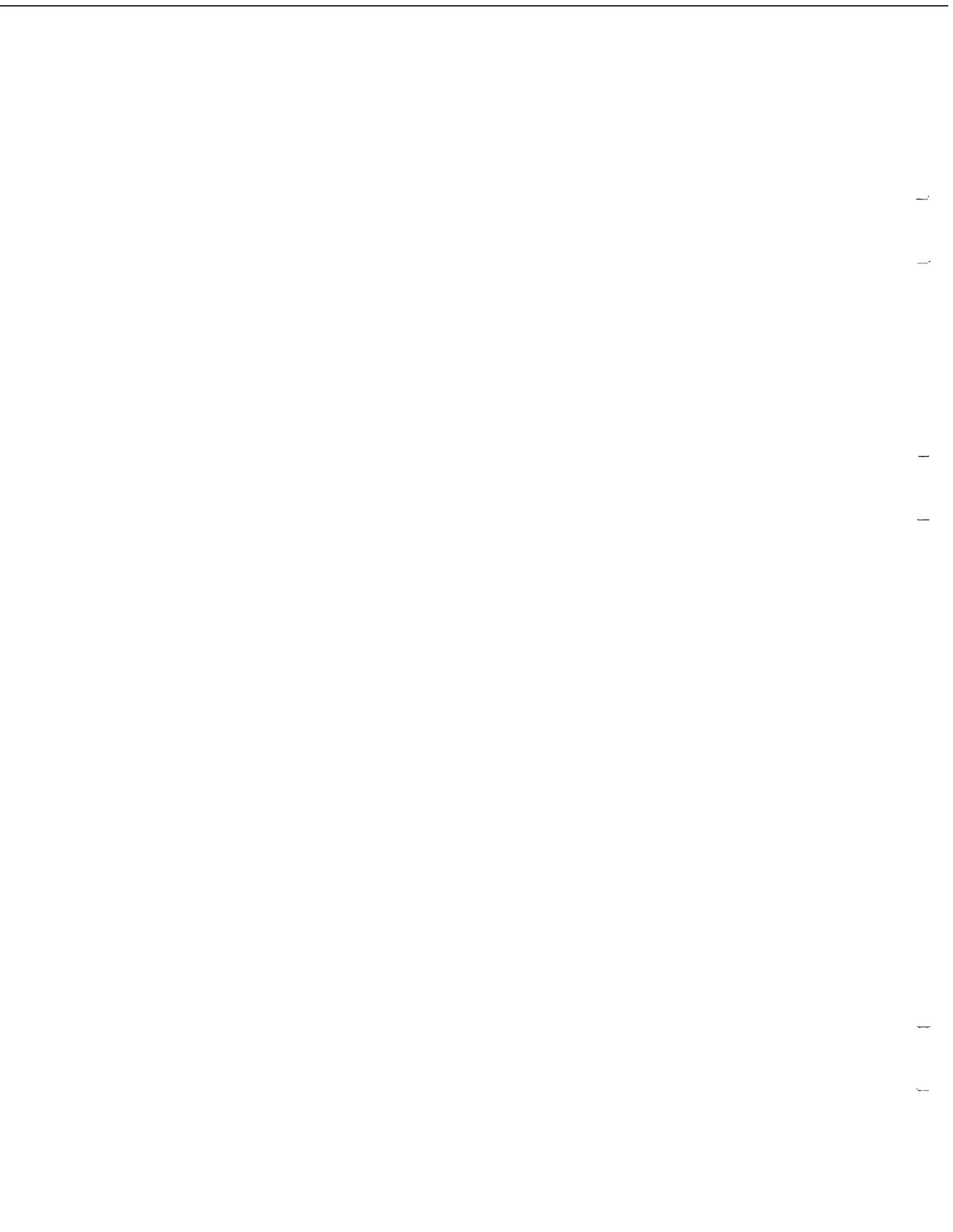
percent for the begin-year and 50.5 percent for the begin-month) but still much below the nonresponse rate for Medicare discussed in Section A.

Persons currently covered by private health insurance are asked how long they have been covered without interruption (a nonresponse rate of 11.2 percent), while those not currently covered are asked when they were last covered (a nonresponse rate of 8.5 percent for the year and 45.8 percent for the month). Those who currently live in public or subsidized housing are asked how long they have been living there (a nonresponse rate of 31.6 percent), and persons who are currently participating in some form of means-tested programs are asked whether they are on a waiting list for public housing (a nonresponse rate of 12.7 percent).

### C. SUMMARY OF **THE** FINDINGS ON NONRESPONSE RATES

**Nonresponse** rates for the question on the year in which current reciprocity began range from a low of 12 percent for **AFDC** to a high of 53 percent for Medicare; the **nonresponse** rates for the majority of the programs are between 15 and 21 percent. The rate of nonresponse varies with the order in which the income sources are listed in the questionnaire. Nonresponse rates to the **beginning** month of reciprocity are higher, ranging from 24 to 65 percent; also, the rate of **nonresponse** for the begin-month question increases dramatically as the duration of reciprocity increases.

The **nonresponse** rates to the lifetime reciprocity questions differ greatly by the question that is asked. The nonresponse rates for questions about application for and the receipt of benefits are very low, ranging from 3 to 7 percent. The beginning-date nonresponse rates for the first spell ever experienced range from a low of 17 percent for **AFDC** recipients to a high of 44 percent for SSI recipients. **Nonresponse** rates for the questions on Medicaid and public housing are also high.



#### IV. MEASURES OF THE DURATION OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION CONSTRUCTED FROM THE BEGINNING DATES OF RECIPIENCY

The responses to the topical module questions on the beginning dates of reciprocity can be translated into measures of the *duration* of program participation, calculated as the number of months between the beginning date indicated by the respondent and the date of the SIPP interview. It should be emphasized that the measures of duration obtained with this type of retrospective question differ **from** the measures of duration used in most analyses of the dynamics of program participation. For example, Burstein (1990), Long (1990), and Fitzgerald (1991) analyzed the duration of program participation by using spells of participation for which the beginning date was observed during the life of a SIPP panel. In other words, they used spells sampled from **the flow** of new **entrants** into the program. By contrast, the measures of duration obtained from the beginning-date information refer to spells in progress at a given point in time--that is, spells sampled from the stock **of recipients**. The retrospective measures obtained in the SIPP topical module are analogous to the measures of unemployment duration collected in the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS), in which the question on time spent looking for work is asked only of persons unemployed at the time of the **interview**.<sup>1</sup>

The distinction between spells sampled from the stock of recipients and spells sampled from the flow of new entrants is fundamental in analyses of duration data, and is also important for understanding how the information in the SIPP topical module is used to analyze the dynamics of program participation. Due to the importance of this distinction, we devote the next section to it.

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<sup>1</sup>The question used by the CPS is, "how many weeks have you been looking for work?" An important difference between the wording adopted in the CPS and in the SIPP topical module should be noted: the CPS asks "how long," while SIPP asks, "when did you first begin." The former type of questions are more likely to cause respondents to round off of reported durations at certain values, such as 6 months or 1 year.

## A. A STYLIZED REPRESENTATION OF THE SPELL DATA PRODUCED BY SIPP

The statistical relationship between the distribution of spells sampled from the stock of recipients and the distribution of spells sampled from the flow of recipients is a rather complex one (Heckman and Singer, 1984, and Lancaster, 1990). Rather than present a formal discussion of this topic, we offer a graphical explanation. In the stylized example shown in Figure IV.1, a cohort of new spells starts each month--equivalently, a cohort of new entrants joins the program rolls each month. (Cohorts are indicated with a letter on the vertical axis. The number and length of the spells are made identical for all cohorts.) The spells indicated with a solid line are those that cross the vertical line drawn at month 1--that is, the *stock* of spells in progress in a given month. This stock comprises one entire cohort of new entrants (cohort G) plus the "survivors" from all previous cohorts (from A to F). For example, only one spell, the longest, has survived from each of the cohorts A through C. Only the two longest spells have survived from cohorts D and E, the three longest from cohort F.<sup>2</sup>

It is apparent that the distribution of the duration of the spells in progress at one point in time (sampled from the stock) differs from the distribution of the duration of spells taken from a typical cohort of new entrants (sampled from the flow). Although the longest type of spells comprise only one-sixth of a typical cohort, they comprise almost half of the stock. On the other hand, the shortest spells comprise half of a typical cohort, but the stock contains only **three** of these spells. Among other things, this different composition implies that spells sampled from the stock are longer on average than spells sampled from the flow.

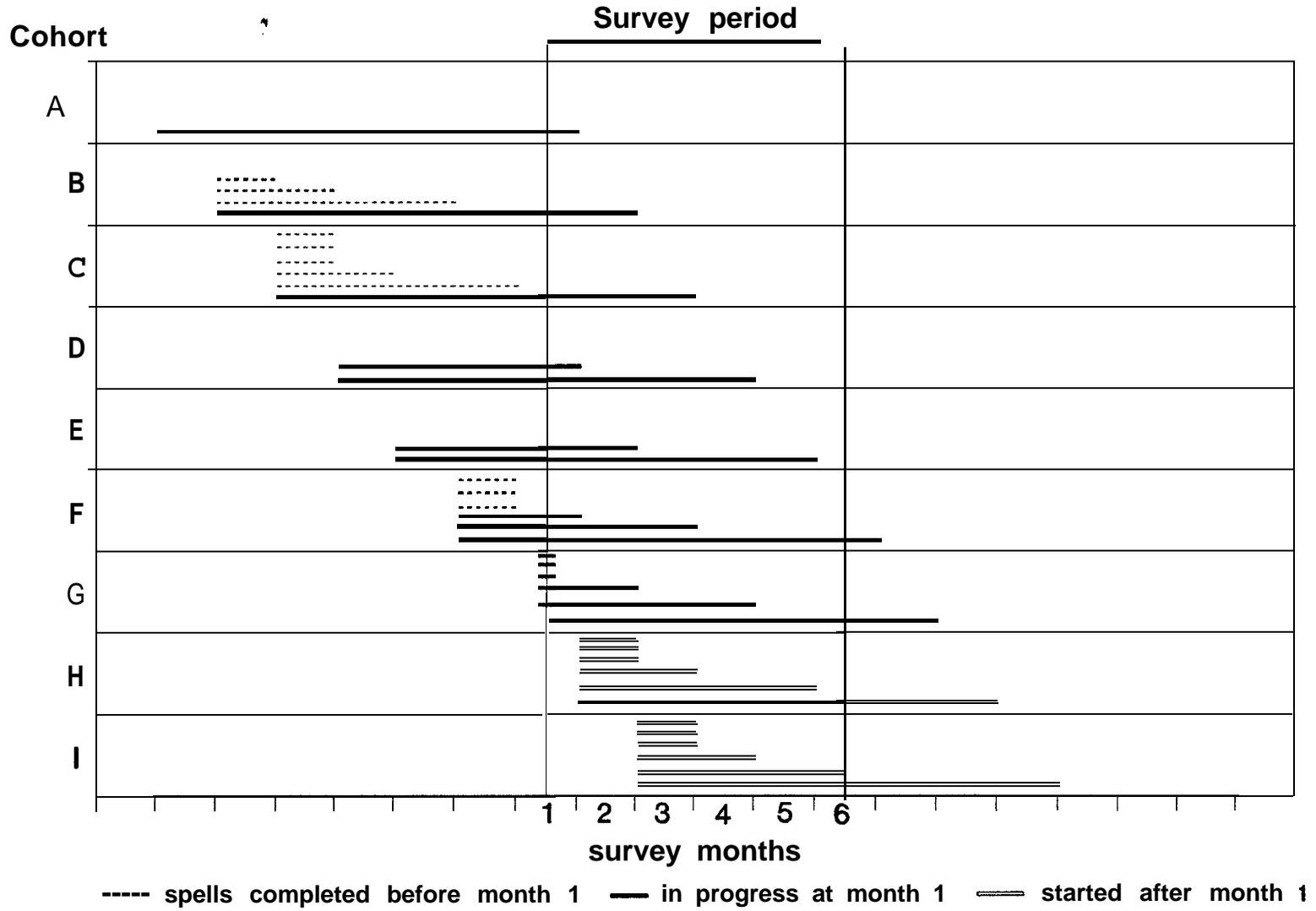
The two vertical lines in Figure IV.1 (at month 1 and month 6) symbolize the six-month period of time covered by a hypothetical survey that collects monthly participation data, such as the SIPP core **interview**.<sup>3</sup> Such a survey provides information on the spells sampled from the cohorts that enter after the start of the survey (such as cohorts H and I), and on the spells already in progress at

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<sup>2</sup>Spells from cohorts A through F that did not last until month 1 are indicated with a dotted line.

<sup>3</sup>The fact that the survey illustrated in Figure IV.1 covers only six months is purely for explanatory reasons, and has no connection with the length of a SIPP panel.

**FIG IV.1 A STYLIZED REPRESENTATION  
OF SPELL DURATION DATA**



the beginning of the survey (cohorts A through G). For the spells in cohorts A through G, the survey provides information on the portion *after* the beginning of the survey (also known as “forward,” or “remaining,” duration), but not on the portion *before* the beginning of the survey (“backward,” or “elapsed,” duration). If, as in **SIPP**, the survey is augmented with retrospective questions asked of persons in the program in month 1, then the backward durations can, at least in principle, also be observed.

The studies of participation dynamics cited earlier in this chapter based their analyses on spells of participation for which the beginning was observed *during* the life of the SIPP panel. They followed recipients from the time they entered the program until they left the program or until the end of the survey, whichever came first. Due to very limited length of the SIPP panels, this design implies that the entry and exit behavior of most long-term recipients cannot be observed. This type of SIPP analysis does not enable us to determine how trigger events affect recipients who have been on the program for many years; we do not know whether the relationship between individual characteristics and the probability of leaving the program differs for short- and long-term recipients. For welfare programs such as AFDC and Food Stamps, such exclusion detracts from the usefulness of the SIPP-based analyses, because long-term recipients attract most of the attention from policymakers, and absorb a large share of program expenditures.

In addition, limiting the analysis to spells of participation for which the **beginning** is observed entails excluding all the spells in progress at the beginning of the survey period (referred to as “left-censored spells”). In a survey such as SIPP, the exclusion of these spells greatly reduces the available sample size, because a large portion of persons ever observed in the program during the life of the panel are already participating at the time of the first interview. One of the reasons that it is difficult to incorporate left-censored spells into an analysis of spell duration is that the amount of elapsed time at the beginning of the observation period is **unknown**. Retrospective information, such as the information collected in the SIPP topical module, provides a measure of elapsed duration. A solution

worth exploring in order to learn more about the behavior of long-term recipients **would** be to include left-censored spells “augmented” with the elapsed data provided by the topical module. This solution has not been explored carefully by researchers, primarily because this type of retrospective information was not collected in the first panels of **SIPP**.<sup>4</sup>

Two issues must still be resolved to determine whether this retrospective information can be integrated successfully into analyses of participation dynamics. The first pertains to *data quality*. *Are* the retrospective questions in the **SIPP** topical module providing reliable information on the duration of the current spell of participation? The second pertains to *statistical modelling*. How can the statistical model incorporate this additional information? In particular, how does it handle the fact that the topical module provides information only on the duration up to the start of the survey, and not on individual and household characteristics up to that point?

Resolving the statistical issues is clearly beyond the scope of this report. In the remainder of this chapter, we instead examine the quality of the data. More specifically, we address the following:

- What is captured with the SIPP question on the beginning date of participation? Does the question reflect the beginning of the *current* spell or the beginning of *the first* spell of program participation ever experienced by the person? The wording of the question currently in use is ambiguous, as discussed in Chapter II.
- When answering the beginning-date question, do respondents take into account short periods off the program? This is both a recall issue (can they recall short periods off the program that occurred in the distant past?) and a cognitive issue (how long must a period off the program be in order to allow respondents to distinguish the beginning of a new spell?).
- To what extent are the SIPP core data and retrospective data comparable? If short lapses in program participation are forgotten (or ignored) by respondents when they answer the retrospective questions in the topical module, but if they are reported correctly when the respondents answer the core questions on monthly benefit receipt, then the two types of data are not comparable.

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<sup>4</sup>More precisely, the 1984 SIPP panel did contain a topical module that collected retrospective information on program participation. However, because this topical module was administered at the fifth interview, the information collected at that point cannot be used to construct the backward durations of spells in progress at the beginning of the survey.

In order to address these concerns, we conducted two types of analyses. First, we validated the data provided in the SIPP topical module by comparing them with data on “time on the program” obtained from administrative sources. We attempted this comparison for both the FSP and the **AFDC** program, but, due to **idiosyncracies** with the **FSP** administrative data, this comparison can be conducted meaningfully only for the AFDC program. The results of the AFDC comparison suggest that the retrospective information collected in SIPP correctly reflect the duration of the *current* spell of participation.

Second, we compared the distribution of “backward” durations obtained from the SIPP topical module with the distribution of “forward” durations obtained from the SIPP core for the same sample of recipients. A simple intuitive argument (explained in more detail later) suggests that, if the core interview and topical module provide the same type of information, then the two duration distributions should look similar. The results of this comparison are again favorable, implying that the measures of backward duration provided by the topical module can be used to augment the forward durations to “alleviate” the left-censoring problem. Whether this additional information can really “solve” the left-censoring problem depends on the resolution of the statistical modelling issues.

#### B. VALIDATING RETROSPECTIVE DURATIONS IN SIPP WITH ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services assembles **AFDC** administrative caseload data using the Integrated Quality Control System’s (IQCS) monthly sample of cases. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, assembles Food Stamp Program administrative caseload data using a similar IQCS administrative form. However, the **AFDC** and FSP information contained in the IQCS differ in one important respect that is particularly relevant to this study: while the AFDC data contain the date of the most recent *opening* for the case, the FSP data contain the date of the *most recent recertification*. *The* instructions for caseworkers are as follows (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1985):

- For **AFDC**: Enter the month, day, and year for which the first money payment was made under the most recent opening. Ignore a payment lapse of 3 months or less. For former recipients whose assistance has been discontinued for a period of more than 3 months and then reopened, enter the date of reopening.
- For Food Stamps: Enter the date the application was filed in the appropriate Food Stamp office for the certification period under review.

If these instructions correspond to actual practice, the “dates of application” contained in the IQCS file for FSP recipients will not yield a distribution of time on the program that is **comparable** to the distribution obtained **from** the SIPP topical module. The average time elapsed from the most recent **recertification** is bound to be much shorter than the average time since the opening of the case. By contrast, the instruction given to AFDC caseworkers seems likely to produce durations that, at least in principle, are comparable to those collected in **SIPP**.<sup>5</sup>

In Table IV.1 we report the distribution of time on AFDC, based on both SIPP and IQCS data, and the distribution of time on FSP and SSI, based on SIPP data only, as a point of comparison. The figures in the table represent “survival” rates--that is, the percentage of recipients who are on the program for **longer than** a given amount of time. It is important to remember that this “time on the program” is the time that current recipients have spent on the program **up to the** point of data collection.

For ease of comparison, Figure IV.2 plots the distributions of time on AFDC based on SIPP and the IQCS. The similarity between the two distributions is **remarkable**.<sup>6</sup> Both survival rates **indi-**

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<sup>5</sup>The SIPP topical module was fielded between June and September 1986, according to the different rotation group. Thus, the retrospective durations from SIPP pertain to spells in progress in spring 1986. The IQCS data that pertain to AFDC are obtained from the 1986 Characteristics of AFDC Recipients (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1988) and refer to the period from October 1985 to September 1986.

<sup>6</sup>This comparison is based on aggregate data. A comparison based on microdata would be more informative, but it would require the availability of a file of SIPP data matched with administrative records, such as that used by Marquis and Moore (1990). Constructing this type of matched **file is very** expensive, and it could not be released for public use for **confidentiality** reasons.

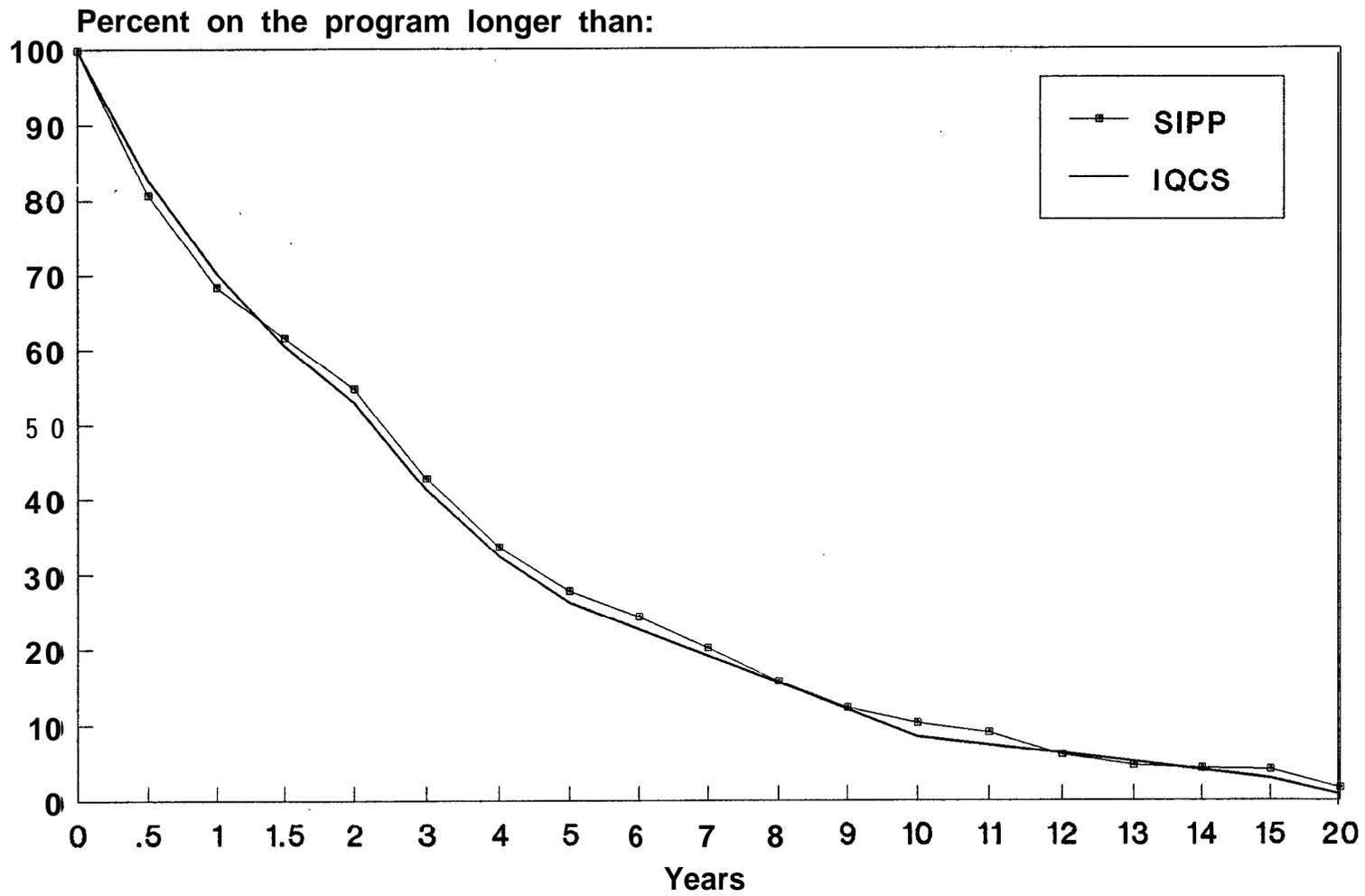
TABLE IV.1  
 DISTRIBUTION OF TIME ON AFDC, THE FSP, AND SSI  
 AMONG THE STOCK OF CURRENT RECIPIENTS:  
 SIPP AND IQC-S DATA

On the Program Longer Than:	AFDC		FSP	SSI
	SIPP	IQCS <sup>a</sup>	SIPP	SIPP
6 months	80.7%	82.8%	74.2%	90.4%
12 months	68.4	70.2	60.4	80.4
18 months	61.6	60.6	53.1	70.6
2 years	54.8	53.0	46.4	67.7
3 years	42.7	41.2	36.5	62.4
4 years	33.6	32.4	29.3	56.3
<b>5 years</b>	27.8	26.3	24.9	52.4
6 years	24.4		20.6	48.3
7 years	20.2		<b>16.9</b>	39.5
8 years	15.7		13.6	36.1
9 years	12.2		10.7	33.1
10 years	10.2	8.4	8.7	28.6
11 years	9.0		7.5	23.4
12 years	6.0		6.4	17.8
13 years	4.6		4.9	15.1
14 years	4.2		4.3	11.1
15 years	4.0	<b>2.9</b>	3.6	9.5
20 years	1.6	0.8	0.6	4.3
Number of Observations	347	66,557	846	403

SOURCES: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1988); and 1986 Summer IQCS Food Stamp File.

<sup>a</sup>The administrative data for AFDC were reported only for the frequencies displayed in this table.

FIG. IV.2 DISTRIBUTION OF TIME ON AFDC  
AMONG THE STOCK OF CURRENT RECIPIENTS:  
COMPARISON OF SIPP AND IQCS



**cate** that 50 percent of recipients have been on the program for more than two and a half years, and that about 27 percent have been on the program for more than 5 years. In addition, the fact that administrative data ignore lapses in the receipt of AFDC benefits that last less than three months, combined with the strong similarity between the duration distributions in **SIPP** and the IQCS, might indicate that **SIPP** respondents also tend to forget or simply ignore very short periods off AFDC.

### C. COMPARING BACKWARD AND FORWARD DURATIONS OF SPELLS IN PROGRESS AT THE START OF THE SURVEY

The purpose of this section is to address another of the concerns expressed in the introduction to this chapter--the comparability of data on program participation collected *during* the survey period and topical module data that refer to participation *up to the beginning* of the survey period. Our informal "test" of whether these two sources of duration data are comparable is based on the following intuitive argument. As we can see in Figure IV.1, the distribution of the forward durations is identical to that of the backward durations. In fact, Figure IV.1 reveals that every forward portion of a spell in progress at month 1 has a corresponding backward portion of the same length that belongs to another spell in progress at month 1.

This result is not fortuitous, in the sense that it does not depend on the particular values used in this example. Rather, the correspondence is a characteristic of all duration distributions, as long as the process that generates the data is stationary--that is, as long as the size and composition of the flow of new entrants into the program are constant over time.' This is the same as saying that the size and composition of all cohorts of new entrants are the same, and it implies that the size and composition of the stock of recipients are also constant over time. Stationarity is created artificially

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'The following is a way to think about the equality between the two distributions. We are dealing with the stock of spells in progress at an arbitrarily chosen point in time. If stationarity exists, then this point in time is uncorrelated with the duration of the spells in progress at that time, in the sense that any point along the duration of a spell has an equal probability of falling at the chosen point in time. This probability implies that the backward and forward portions of these spells are equal *on average*, although they are not equal for each given spell.

in Figure IV.1, in which each cohort of new entrants is constructed to comprise six spells with the same mix of durations.

In reality, the stationarity of program entry and exit is rarely found, due to changes in legislation and in the economy. Therefore, if a comparison of the sample distributions of backward and forward durations shows that they differ, then the test is inconclusive, since the difference could be due to the nonstationarity of program entry and exit, or to the fact that the two sources of data (retrospective questions and participation data collected during the survey) are not comparable. On the other hand, a similarity between the two distributions is likely to indicate that the process is sufficiently stationary and that the two sources of data are **comparable**.<sup>8</sup>

In order to conduct this test, one must construct the cumulative frequency distribution of both the backward and forward durations for the spells in progress at the beginning of the survey. As we discussed earlier, the distribution of the backward durations can easily be obtained from the retrospective questions in the SIPP topical module. By contrast, constructing the distribution of the forward durations is a challenging task, because SIPP follows respondents for a maximum of **28** months. A large proportion of spells of program participation that are in progress at the beginning of the survey period are still in progress at the end of the survey **period**.<sup>9</sup> These spells are observed only for a fraction of their forward duration, while, by construction, the backward durations are always observed completely.

Fortunately, a simple statistical method exists for computing the distribution of durations which corrects for the fact that some spells cannot be observed until their completion--that is, they are "right-censored." This method is known as the "product-limit," or Kaplan-Meier, estimator of the survival rates (Kalbfleish and Prentice, 1980). The survival rate at duration *t* is simply the proportion

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<sup>8</sup>A third possibility is that the process is not stationary and that the survey generates different types of data, but the two sources of error compensate each other, producing similar distributions. This third outcome is very unlikely, although we cannot rule it out.

<sup>9</sup>In addition, some respondents provide less than **28** months of data because they drop out of the survey before it is concluded.

of spells longer than  $t$ . The fact that SIPP follows respondents only for **28** months implies that we can estimate the survival rate for the forward durations only up to **28** months, and that the comparison with the backward durations must be restricted to this time range. Despite this limitation, the comparison is still meaningful.

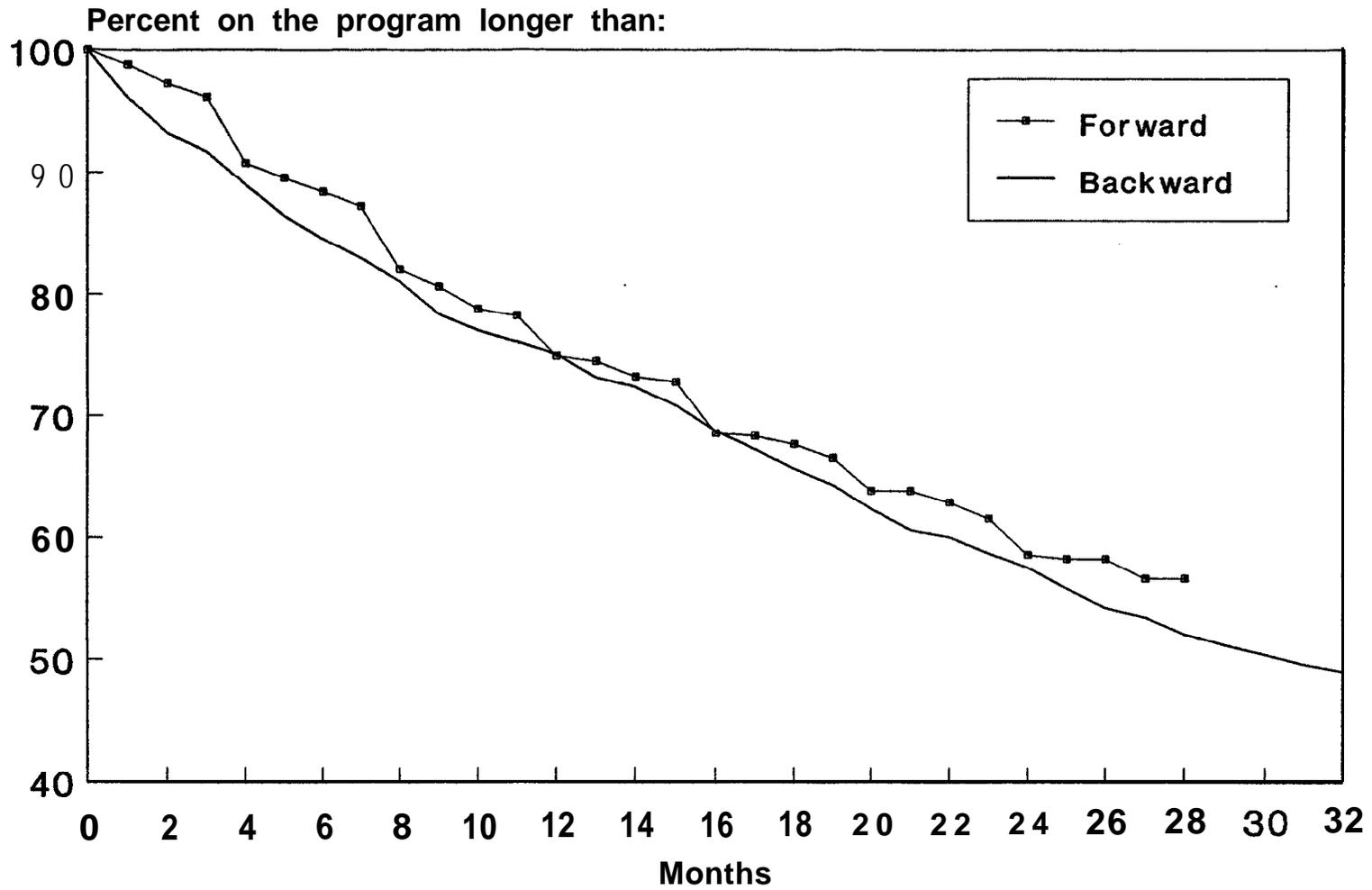
Figure IV.3 compares the backward and forward food stamp survival rates--the percentage of spells that last longer than the number of months shown on the horizontal axis. The two survival rates are very similar, with the forward rate above the backward rate most of the time. This pattern implies that the durations constructed from the retrospective data are somewhat **shorter** than those constructed **from** the **SIPP** core data. This result counters the a *priori* expectation that the retrospective durations tend to be longer because respondents tend to forget short periods off the program when they report participation retrospectively but are more likely to report these short periods when they are interviewed every four months.

The corresponding results for the AFDC program in Figure IV.4 are even sharper; apart from the “choppiness” in the forward survival rate, the two lines essentially coincide. This choppiness is due to the so-called “seam effect” in **SIPP**: an abnormally high number of transitions in labor-force and program participation is observed every four months during the period covered by the survey, due to inconsistent reporting at successive interviews (Marquis and Moore, 1990).

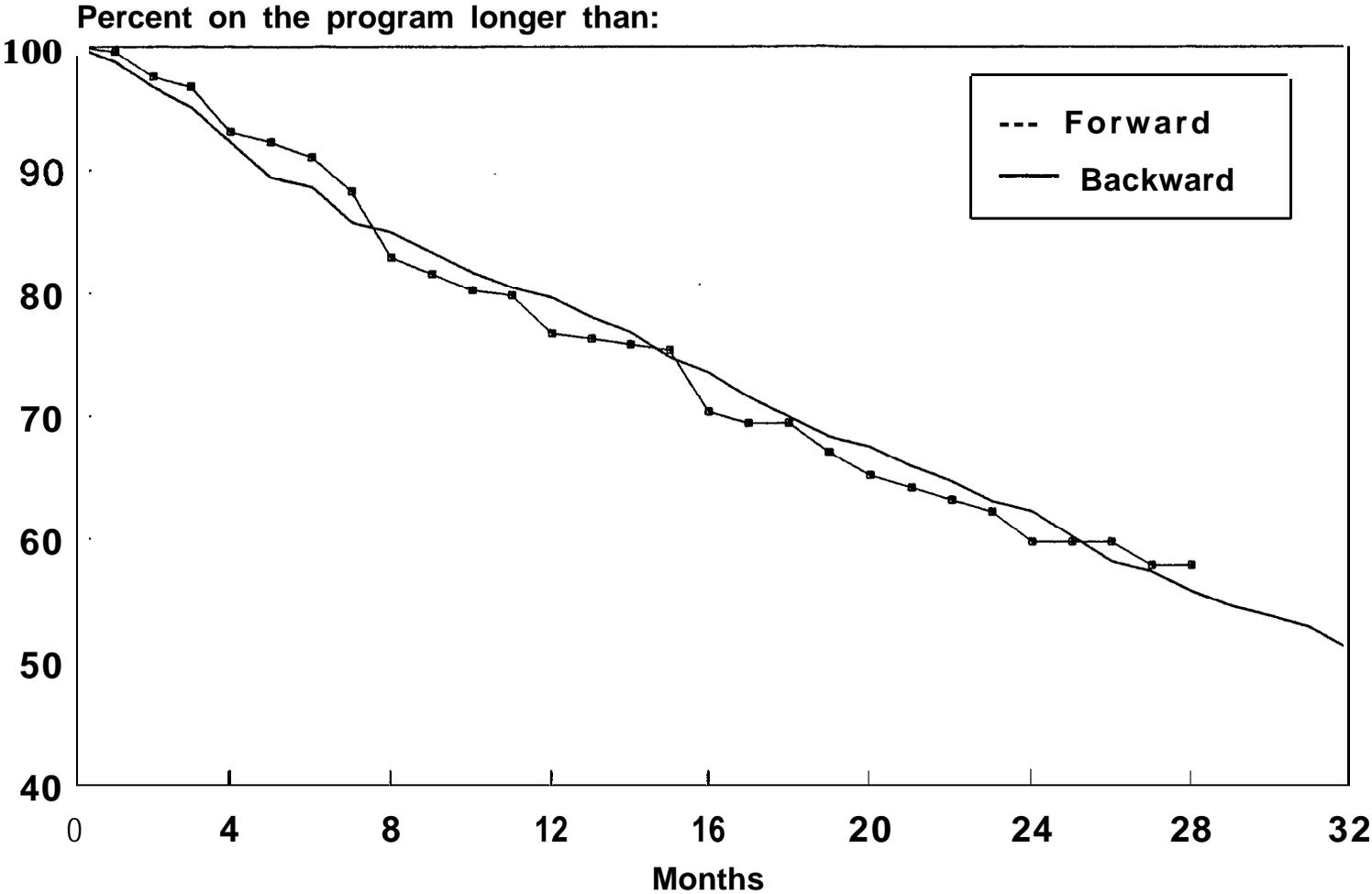
#### D. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Two major conclusions can be drawn from the analysis conducted in this chapter. First, the distribution of time on AFDC based on the **SIPP** topical module closely resembles the distribution found in administrative data, suggesting that **SIPP** is largely obtaining the beginning date of the **current AFDC** spell, rather than the beginning date of the **first** spell of AFDC participation ever experienced by the person. The fact that lapses in AFDC reciprocity of less than three months are ignored in the administrative data, combined with the strong similarity between the duration **distri-**

**FIG. IV.3 COMPARISON OF THE SURVIVAL  
RATES FOR BACKWARD AND FORWARD  
DURATION: FOOD STAMP SPELLS**



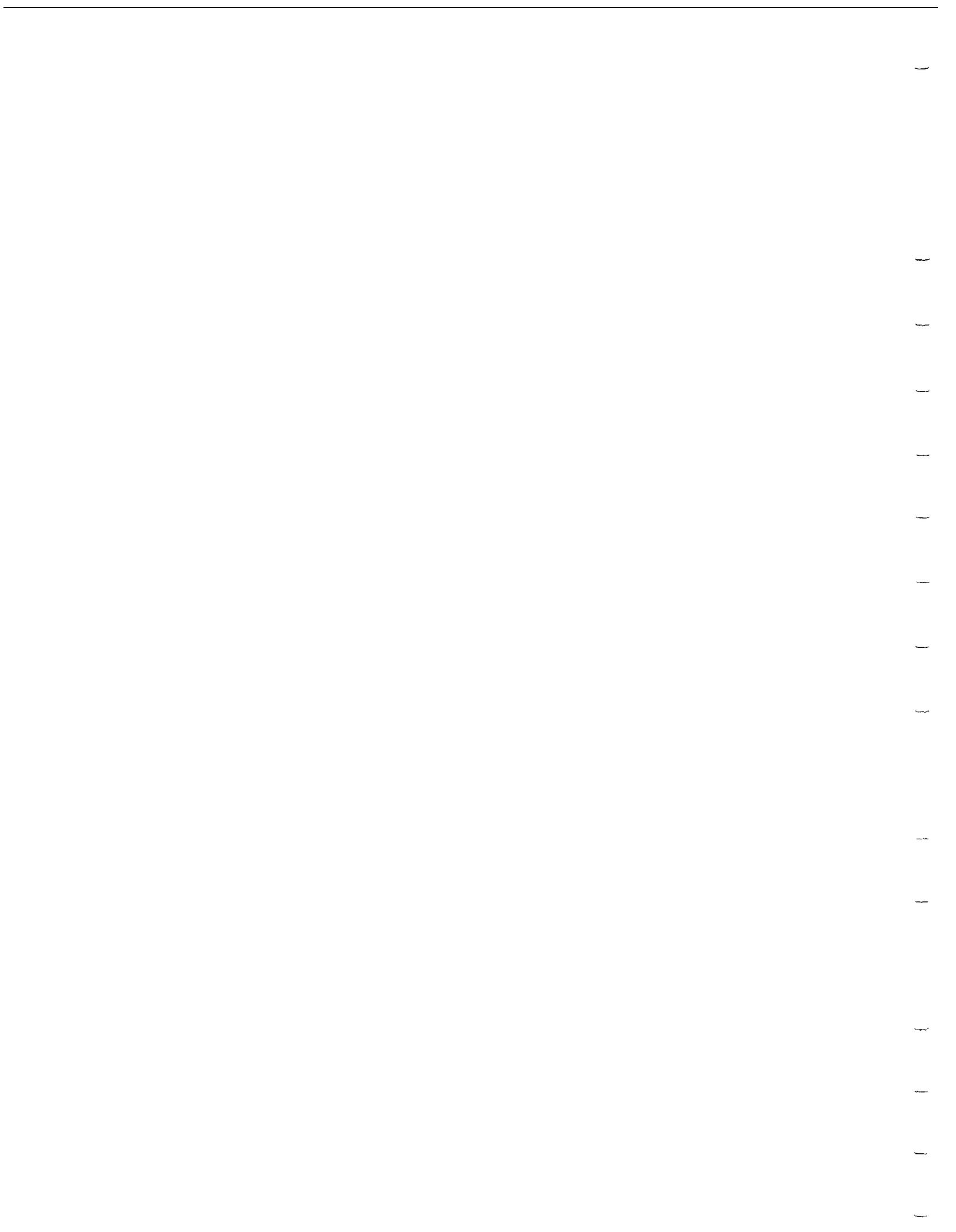
**FIG IV.4 COMPARISON OF THE SURVIVAL RATES FOR BACKWARD AND FORWARD DURATION: AFDC SPELLS**



**butions** in SIPP and the IQCS, represents some evidence that SIPP respondents might also forget or simply ignore very short periods off **AFDC**.

The same conclusions cannot be drawn for the **FSP**, due to how FSP administrative data are collected. However, based on the positive result obtained for **AFDC**, we believe that SIPP also measures the duration of the *current* spell among food stamp recipients.

Based on our comparison of the backward durations of current spells obtained from the topical module and the forward durations for the same spells constructed from the SIPP core, we conclude that the beginning dates of reciprocity collected in the SIPP topical module yield measures of duration on welfare that are largely comparable to those provided in the SIPP core interview.



## V. MEASURES OF WELFARE PARTICIPATION OVER A RESPONDENT'S LIFETIME

In this chapter we present some descriptive statistics on measures of lifetime participation in two selected welfare programs, AFDC and food stamps. The very high nonresponse rate to the lifetime participation questions for the SSI and Medicaid programs (Chapter III) casts much doubt about the representativeness of the sample of those respondents who did answer these questions. Thus, we do not analyze lifetime participation in SSI and Medicaid. **This** chapter is organized as follows. Section A examines the answers to the questions on the beginning date and duration of the *first spell* of program participation ever experienced by the respondents in their lifetime. Section B analyzes recidivism--that is, the number of spells of welfare participation experienced in the respondent's lifetime.

### A. THE FIRST SPELL OF WELFARE PARTICIPATION

As explained in Chapter II, respondents who are currently receiving AFDC or food stamps **are** asked whether they participated in these programs at any other time. Fifty-five percent of food stamp recipients and 27 percent of AFDC recipients answered this question affirmatively. In addition, respondents who are not currently receiving **AFDC** or food stamps are asked whether they had ever applied for and received these benefits in the past. Seven percent of *all* adults **not** currently participating in the FSP did so in the past. The question pertaining to **AFDC** is asked only of adults who at *the time of the interview* are the designated parents or guardians of children younger than age 18 who live in the households. Almost 8 percent of them had participated previously in **AFDC**. All respondents who indicated having participated previously (whether or not currently on the program) are asked questions about the beginning date and the duration of their first spell of participation (hereafter the "first-ever" spell).

Table V.1 examines the distribution of the calendar year indicated as the beginning date of the first-ever spell (the first and third columns, for FSP and AFDC, respectively). The distributions of

TABLE V.1  
 DISTRIBUTION OF THE BEGINNING YEAR OF THE FIRST SPELL  
 OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Calendar Year at the Beginning of the Spell of Participation	FSP		AFDC	
	First-Ever Spells	First-Current Spells	First-Ever Spells	First-Current Speiis
Before 1965	0.3%	0.2%	1.2%	15%
<b>1965-1969</b>	3.6	3.2	4.8	3.0
1970-1974	20.3	6.4	18.2	8.0
1975-1979	25.8	16.4	29.2	20.1
<b>1980-1984</b>	42.0	43.1	39.3	42.2
1985	5.3	21.9	4.8	20.1
1986	2.8	8.7	2.7	5.0
Number of Observations	1,367	438	336	199

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

the beginning calendar year for first-ever spells look very reasonable. Less than 3 percent of those reporting a first-ever spell indicated that the year 1986 was the start date, which might reveal an inconsistency with the information provided in the core interview.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, only an insignificant proportion of respondents report a first spell of food stamp participation prior to 1965--that is, from a period when the FSP was implemented only as a small-scale program.

It is interesting to compare the distribution of the begin-year for first-ever spells with the distribution of the beginning date of spells that are still in progress at the beginning of the SIPP panel but that are also first spells, in that the respondents do not report any previous participation (we define these **first** spells still in progress as “first-current” spells). A strong similarity between the two distributions would cast some doubt about the conclusion that we reached in Chapter IV--that the beginning dates collected in the first part of the topical module reflect the start of the current spell, rather than the start of participation during the respondent’s lifetime. Let us compare the first and second columns for the FSP and the third and fourth columns for AFDC. The two distributions look rather different for both programs. Thirty percent of first-current FSP spells started in 1985 or 1986, while only 8 percent of first-ever FSP spells did so. (The two percentages for the AFDC program are 25 and 7.5 percent.) At the other end of the distribution, 26 percent of first-current FSP spells started before 1979, versus 50 percent of first-ever FSP spells (33 percent versus 53 percent for AFDC). Although these figures do not rule out the possibility that some respondents report the start of lifetime participation rather than the start of the current spell, they suggest to us that this possibility does not apply to the majority of cases.

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<sup>10</sup>**Current** recipients are defined as those ever on the program during the first four months covered by SIPP. However, the Wave 2 interview takes place nine months into the time period covered by SIPP. Thus, persons who have entered the program for the first time between the fifth and eighth months would not be included in the topical module reciprocity roster, but could indicate 1986 as the begin-year of their first spell. A similar situation would occur if recent entrants did not report their participation during the first interview, but then correctly reported the date they entered the program during the second interview.

Table V.2 examines the age of the respondents when they first received benefits. (This age is not reported directly by the respondents, but is constructed from the self-reported date of birth.) This examination should be considered a further check on whether these reported dates are reasonable. We would expect that no one received benefits for the first time before they were age 15, and that first-time FSP recipients are older *on average* than first-time AFDC recipients, because FSP eligibility is not tied to the presence of children. The results shown in Table V.2 meet both expectations.

Next, we examine the duration of first-ever spells of AFDC and FSP participation. These are spells sampled from the flow rather than the stock of recipients. In this sense, they are more comparable to the spells that are observed to begin during the life of the SIPP panel than to the spells in progress at the start of the **SIPP** panel. In Figures V.1 and V.2, we compare the duration distribution of these first-ever spells with the duration distribution of the no&left-censored spells constructed from the SIPP panel (for brevity, “panel” spells). This comparison is conducted with two caveats in mind. First, the panel spells are sampled from the flow of recipients who entered these programs between 1986 and 1987, while the first-ever spells are sampled from the flow of recipients who entered the programs during a long period of time up to 1985, a period in which the U.S. society and the operational characteristics of these programs differed a great deal. Second, these two sets of spell measures are constructed in very different ways. The duration of the first-ever spell is ascertained from a question that asks “how long” the person was receiving benefits. The response can be given in months or in years, but durations of longer than one year are not reported in months. This response pattern produces a much rougher duration distribution than is constructed from the SIPP panel monthly data. Moreover, the distribution of panel spells is truncated at 28 months--the length of the SIPP panel--while the other distribution has a very long tail.

Figure **V.1** shows the survival rates for food stamp first-ever spells and **SIPP** panel spells. At shorter durations, the two distributions follow roughly the same pattern, implying that about half of a cohort of food stamp recipients leave the programs within the first 6 to 7 months. This pattern is

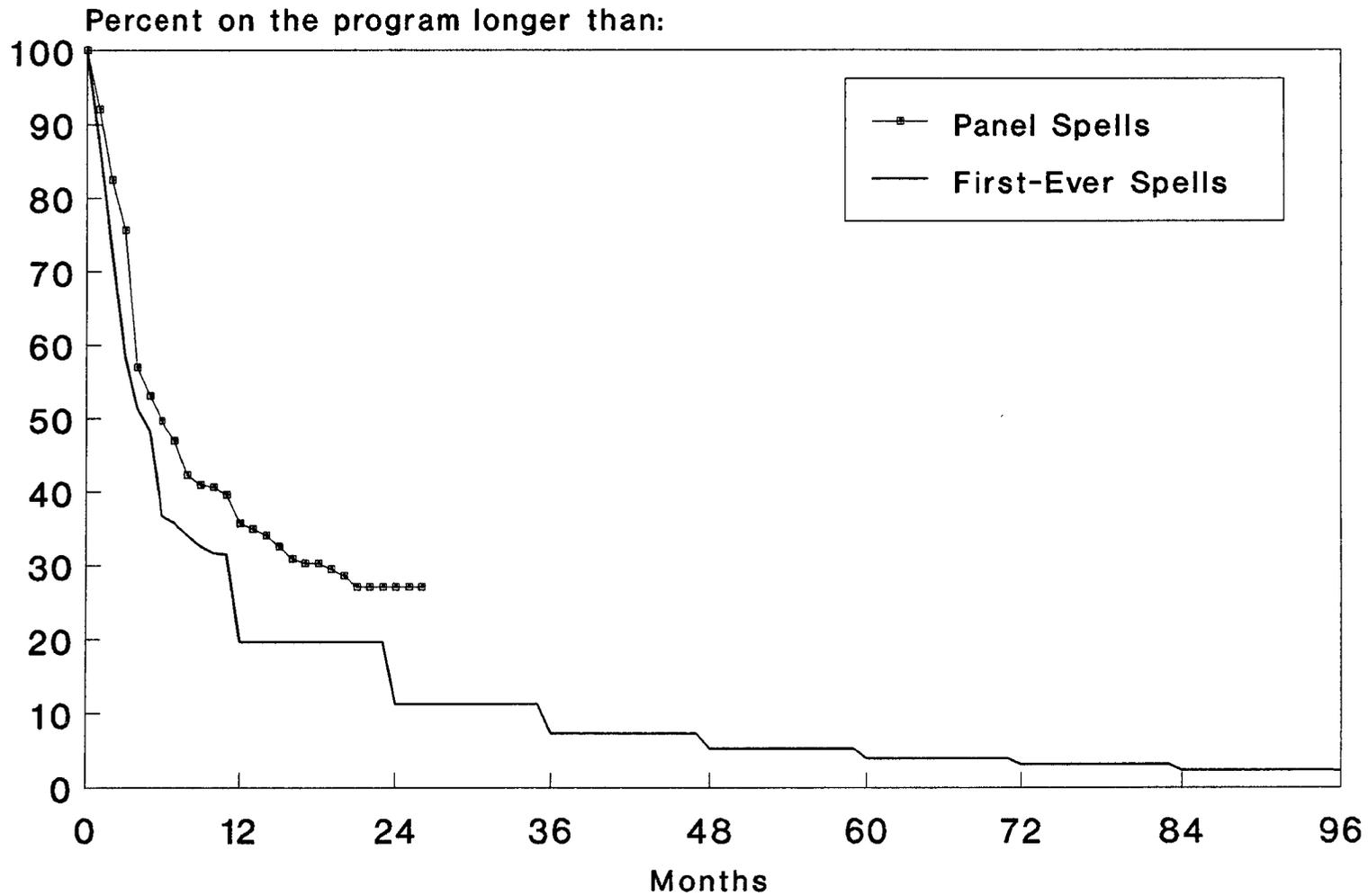
TABLE V.2

AGE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST SPELL  
OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

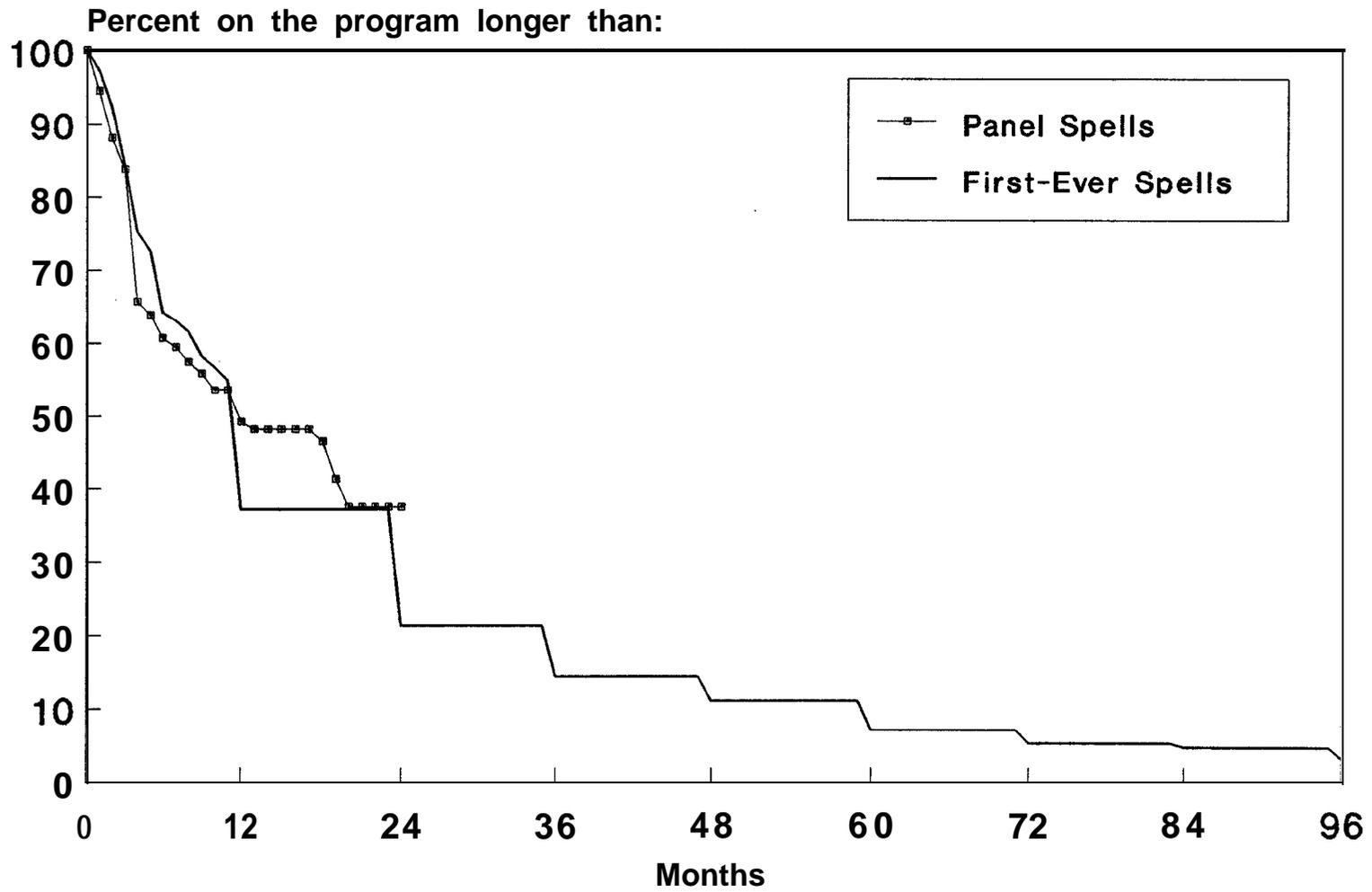
Age at the Beginning of the First Spell	FSP		AFDC	
	First-Ever Spell	First-Current Spell	First-Ever Spell	First-Current Spell
Younger than 15	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
<b>15-18</b>	6.5	8.5	19.4	24.6
19-24	28.8	19.9	41.7	33.2
<b>25-34</b>	33.7	26.7	30.4	25.6
<b>35-44</b>	14.1	15.5	7.7	9.6
44 and Older	16.8	29.2	1.0	6.5
Number of Observations	1,367	438	336	199

SOURCE: 1986 **SIPP Wave 2** Reciprocity History Topical Module.

FIG V.1 COMPARISON OF THE SURVIVAL RATES FOR PANEL AND FIRST-EVER SPELLS: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM



**FIG V.2 COMPARISON OF THE SURVIVAL  
RATES FOR PANEL AND FIRST-EVER SPELLS:  
AFDC PROGRAM**



consistent with the results found by other researchers (Burstein, 1990). The two distributions tend to diverge after **12** months, but they also become more difficult to compare, because the first-ever spells are measured in years rather than in months. The survival rates of first-ever and SIPP panel spells are even closer when we consider AFDC spells (Figure V.2). **For the first 12 months of duration, the two rates virtually coincide.**

## **B. THE NUMBER OF PREVIOUS SPELLS OF WELFARE PARTICIPATION**

The section of the questionnaire on lifetime participation in FSP and AFDC concludes by asking respondents to provide the total number of times that they have received benefits from these programs. We distinguish between current recipients (regardless of whether they are in their first spell) and former recipients. The results are shown in Table V.3. Sixty-six percent of current FSP recipients report only the current spell, another **22** percent also report one previous spell, while the remaining 15 percent report three or more spells. The distribution of responses among former FSP recipients is very similar, with a slightly larger percentage reporting only one or two spells. The tail of both distributions is very long, with some respondents reporting up to 16 spells of FSP participation. We believe that this surprising frequency pertains to how the question is worded: ***“How many times in all have there been when \_\_\_\_\_ was authorized to receive food stamps?”*** Some respondents may believe that this question means, ***“How many times have you been recertified by the food stamp office.?”*** Many recipients are recertified as often as six months, which would explain the large number given as a response to this question. A rewording of the question should be sufficient to avoid this problem, and might also help reduce the rate of nonresponse to this question.

The distributions of the number of previous AFDC spells reported by current and former AFDC recipients have the same overall pattern as the distributions of previous FSP spells, with the exception of a much shorter **tail**: no one reports more than six spells, and only about 1 percent report more than four spells. This shorter tail could be due to lower turnover in the AFDC relative to the Food Stamp Program, or simply to the different wording of the AFDC question: “How ***many times in all***

TABLE V.3  
NUMBER OF SPELLS OF **PROGRAM** PARTICIPATION  
DURING THE LIFETIME

Number of Times Participated in Total	FSP		AFDC	
	Current Recipients	Former Recipients	Current Recipients	Former Recipients
1	65.9%	68.3%	75.0%	60.6
2	21.7	20.9	18.6	28.2
3	6.9	6.1	3.0	7.2
4	3.3	2.5	2.3	2.9
5	1.1	1.0	0.8	0.9
6	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.3
<b>7+</b>	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.0
Number of Observations	693	1,553	264	348

SOURCE: 1986 SIPP Wave 2 Reciprocity History Topical Module.

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***have there been when \_\_\_\_\_ received AFDC?*** We believe that similar wording should also be used for the FSP.

## VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report has evaluated the quality of the data collected in the Reciprocity History Topical Module of the SIPP. Two types of questions are asked as part of this topical module. Respondents who are currently participating in a government program or receiving other sources of unearned income are asked to provide the month and year in which they first began to receive those sources of income. For a more limited number of welfare programs, all respondents 18 years of age or older are asked questions about their history of reciprocity during their lifetimes. We evaluate three aspects of the quality of these data: the extent of nonresponse to the topical module questions, the comparability between the information provided by SIPP respondents and the information provided in administrative data, and the consistency of responses given in the topical module with the responses provided in the SIPP core interview.

Our overall conclusion is that, with few exceptions, ***the data collected in this topical module are of good quality***. SIPP data should be useful to researchers who are studying the dynamics of program participation.

### A. NONRESPONSE TO THE TOPICAL MODULE QUESTIONS

**The** nonresponse rate to the question on the year in which reciprocity began--asked of respondents who are currently in the program--is 26.5 percent for all income sources combined. The nonresponse rates vary considerably across the specific income sources. AFDC is ranked the lowest among the 19 **income** sources, with an 11.8 percent nonresponse rate. The FSP ranks tenth, with a 17.8 percent rate. Medicare ranks highest, with a 52.7 percent rate. Because half of all respondents who participate in any program receive Medicare, simply excluding Medicare lowers the overall nonresponse rate to 17.2 percent. We also find that the **nonresponse** rate to the question on the **month in** which reciprocity began increases sharply with the length of recall.

The nonresponse rates to the questions on lifetime reciprocity--asked of all adult respondents but restricted to the Food Stamp, AFDC, SSI, Medicaid, and public housing programs--vary considerably according to the nature of the question. When respondents are asked whether they ever applied and received benefits from these programs, the rate of missing responses is very low, well under 10 percent in all cases. The questions on the beginning date of the first-ever spell of reciprocity and on its duration elicit a higher rate of nonresponse, between 10 and 20 percent for Food Stamps and AFDC, and over 30 percent for SSI, public housing, and Medicaid

Based on these findings on the rate of nonresponse, we make the following recommendations. The list of program sources for which a beginning date of reciprocity is asked should be shortened. We recommend that two types of programs be excluded: (1) programs for which there is a less policy interest (in particular, programs in which turnover among recipients is not a relevant issue, such as private pensions or Pell Grants), and (2) programs for which the nonresponse rate for the year in which reciprocity began is very high, such as Medicare. The month in which reciprocity began should be asked only when the reported year is not in the distant past--for example, no more than five years. Finally, the lifetime reciprocity questions should be restricted to the Food Stamp and AFDC programs, in light of the high nonresponse rate for the other programs.

## **B. COMPARISON WITH ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

The responses to the topical module questions on the **beginning** date of reciprocity can be translated into measures of the *duration* of program participation, calculated as the number of months between the beginning date indicated by the respondent and the date of the **SIPP** interview. Due to the ambiguity of the question on the beginning date of reciprocity, we do not know *a priori* whether what is actually collected is the beginning of the current spell of reciprocity or the beginning of reciprocity at any time during a person's lifetime. The measures of duration obtained from the topical module for AFDC can be compared with those found in IQCS administrative data, which record the time elapsed since the most recent application. This comparison is possible only for the

AFDC program, since FSP administrative data record the elapsed time since the most recent recertification. The strong similarity in the distribution of **AFDC** duration between SIPP and IQCS suggests that SIPP is indeed capturing the duration of the current spell--as is the intention of those who designed the topical module. We still recommend that the wording of the question be modified so that it refers more explicitly to the spell in progress at the beginning of the survey period.

### C. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TOPICAL MODULE AND SIPP CORE DATA

Studies of program participation dynamics based on **SIPP** data have been hampered by the fact that SIPP is relatively “short” when compared with the average spell length of participation in such programs as AFDC and food stamps. In particular, the length of the SIPP panel prevents researchers from analyzing the behavior of long-term participants. The retrospective data from the SIPP topical module can at least alleviate this problem. However, incorporating retrospective data into analyses requires resolving several complex statistical modelling issues, as well as addressing data quality issues associated with the comparability of the data collected retrospectively in the topical module with the data collected as part of the SIPP core. We addressed the latter issue by comparing the distribution of the time spent by current recipients on the program up to the beginning of the survey period with the distribution of the time spent by the same recipients after the beginning of the survey. The two distributions look very similar for both the Food Stamp and **AFDC** programs, suggesting that the two types of data are comparable, despite the very different methods by which they are collected.

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APPENDIX A

FACSIMILE OF THE RECIPIENCY HISTORY  
TOPICAL MODULE QUESTIONNAIRE



## Section 5 – TOPICAL MODULES

### Part A – RECIPIENCY HISTORY

<b>CHECK ITEM T1</b>	Was an interview obtained for ... in Wave 1?	8000 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to Check Item T3
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**INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION**

Review the "Income Roster" on page 5 to determine if any changes were reported in the reciprocity of ISS Codes 1–10, 20–35, 40, and 41 during the previous reference period. Make any necessary changes in the "Reciprocity History Roster" below.

<b>CHECK ITEM T2</b>	Are any income types or special indicators listed in the Reciprocity History Roster below?	8002 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to Check Item T3
----------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. During our last visit we recorded that ... received (Read all sources listed below) sometime during the period (8 months ago) through (5 months ago). When did ... first begin to receive (Read each source)? (In column d, record beginning date of reciprocity that was occurring sometime in the period 5 to 8 months ago.)

RECIPIENCY HISTORY ROSTER (ISS Codes 1–10, 20–35, 40, 41, 172, 176)							
Line No. (a)	Source (b)	ISS code (c)	Date reciprocity began (d)				
			Month OR DK	Year	OR DK		
1		8004	8006	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8008	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
2		8010	8012	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8014	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
3		8018	8018	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8020	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
4		8022	8024	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8026	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
5		8028	8030	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8032	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
6		8034	8036	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8038	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
7		8040	8042	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8044	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>
8		8048	8048	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>	8050	1 9	x1 <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>CHECK ITEM T3</b>	Is ... 18 years of age or over?	8052 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to Check Item T10
----------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>CHECK ITEM T4</b>	Is "Food stamps" (code 27) listed in the Reciprocity History Roster?	8054 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to 2b
----------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

28. Besides this period of time, have there been any other times when ... was authorized to receive food stamps?	8056 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – SKIP to 2d 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to Check Item T5
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

b. Has ... ever applied for the Federal Government's Food Stamp Program?	8058 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to Check Item T5
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

c. Has ... ever been authorized to receive food stamps?	8060 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No – SKIP to Check Item T5
---------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

d. When did ... first start receiving food stamps?	8062 <input type="text"/> Month x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know 8064 1 9 Year x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
----------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

e. For how long did ... receive food stamps that time?	8066 <input type="text"/> Years OR 8068 <input type="text"/> Months 8070 x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

f. How many times in all have there been when ... was authorized to receive food stamps?	8072 <input type="text"/> Times x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------

TOPICAL MODULES

**Section S — TOPICAL MODULES (Continued)**

**Part A — RECIPIENCY HISTORY (Continued)**

<b>CHECK ITEM T5</b>	Is . . . a designated parent or guardian of children under 18 who live in this household?	<b>8074</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T7
<b>CHECK ITEM T6</b>	Is "AFDC" (code 201 listed in the Reciprocity History Roster)?	<b>8076</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to 3b
<b>3a.</b>	Besides this period of time, have there been any other times when . . . received AFDC (ADC)?	<b>8078</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes — SKIP to 3d 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T7
<b>b.</b>	Has . . . ever applied for benefits from the program called AFDC — Aid to Families With Dependent Children (or ADC)?	<b>8080</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T7
<b>c.</b>	Has . . . ever received AFDC (ADC) benefits?	<b>8082</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T7
<b>d.</b>	When did . . . first start receiving AFDC (ADC) benefits?	<b>8084</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Month      x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <b>8086</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year      x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<b>e.</b>	For how long did . . . receive AFDC (ADC) that time?	<b>8088</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Years OR <b>8090</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Months <b>8092</b> x1 <input type="checkbox"/> DK
<b>f.</b>	Wow many times in all have there been when . . . received AFDC (ADC)?	<b>8094</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Times x1 <input type="checkbox"/> DK
<b>CHECK ITEM T7</b>	Is "SSI" (codes 3 or 4) listed in the Reciprocity History Roster?	<b>8096</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to 4b
<b>4a.</b>	Besides this period of time, have there been any other times when . . . received SSI benefits?	<b>8098</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes — SKIP to 4d 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T8
<b>b.</b>	Has . . . VOF applied for benefits from the program called SSI (Supplemental Security Income)?	<b>8100</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T8
<b>c.</b>	Has . . . ever received SSI benefits?	<b>8102</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T8
<b>d.</b>	When did . . . first start receiving SSI?	<b>8104</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Month      x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <b>8106</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year      x1 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<b>e.</b>	For how long did . . . receive SSI that time?	<b>8108</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Years OR <b>8110</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Months <b>8112</b> x1 <input type="checkbox"/> DK
<b>CHECK ITEM T8</b>	Is "Medicaid" (code 173) marked in cc item 47 for Wave 1?	<b>8114</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No — SKIP to Check Item T10
<b>CHECK ITEM T9</b>	Is "SSI" or "AFDC" (codes 3, 4, or 20) marked in cc item 45 for Wave 1?	<b>8116</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes — SKIP to Check Item T10 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No

TOPICAL MODULES

Section 5 -- TOPICAL MODULES (Continued)

Part A -- RECIPIENCY HISTORY (Continued)

<p><b>5.</b> During our last visit we recorded that . . . was covered by (Use focal name for Medicaid). This question concerns the coverage that was being received at that time. When did that period of coverage first begin?</p>	<p><b>8118</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Month <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  <b>8120</b> <input type="text"/> 1 <input type="text"/> 9 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  <b>8122</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Never covered by Medicaid</p>
<p><b>CHECK ITEM T10</b> Was . . . covered by a health insurance plan? (Is item 27s or 27b, page 10 marked "Yes"?)</p>	<p><b>8124</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No -- SKIP to item 7</p>
<p><b>6.</b> We have recorded that . . . is covered by private health insurance plan. For how long has . . . been covered by health insurance without interruption?</p>	<p><b>8126</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Months  OR  <b>8128</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Years  <b>8130</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Have always had Insurance  <input type="checkbox"/> DK</p> <p style="text-align: right;">} SKIP to Check Item T11</p>
<p><b>7.</b> We have recorded that . . . is not currently covered by private health insurance plan. When was the last time . . . was covered by private health insurance?</p>	<p><b>8132</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Month <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  <b>8134</b> <input type="text"/> 1 <input type="text"/> 9 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  <b>8136</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Has never been covered</p>
<p><b>CHECK ITEM T11</b> Is . . . the reference person?</p>	<p><b>8138</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No -- SKIP to Check Item T14, page 49</p>
<p><b>CHECK ITEM T12</b> Refer to cc item 16a. Is this housing unit public or subsidized?</p>	<p><b>8140</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No -- SKIP to Check Item T13</p>
<p><b>8.</b> For how long has . . . been living in public or subsidized housing?</p>	<p><b>8142</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Months  OR  <b>8144</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Years  <b>8146</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Have always lived in public housing  <input type="checkbox"/> DK</p> <p style="text-align: right;">} SKIP to Check Item T14, page 49</p>
<p><b>CHECK ITEM T13</b> Is one or more of the following codes marked on the ISS for . . . : code 3, codes 20-27, or code 173?</p>	<p><b>8148</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No -- SKIP to Check Item T14, page 49</p>
<p><b>9.</b> Is . . . on a waiting list for public or subsidized housing?</p>	<p><b>8150</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

NOTES



**APPENDIX B**

**FLOW CHARTS OF THE QUESTIONS ON  
FOOD STAMP, AFDC, AND SSI RECIPIENCY  
OVER THE RESPONDENT'S LIFETIME**



FIGURE B.1  
 FLOW CHART OF QUESTIONS ON  
 FOOD STAMP LIFETIME RECIPIENCY HISTORY

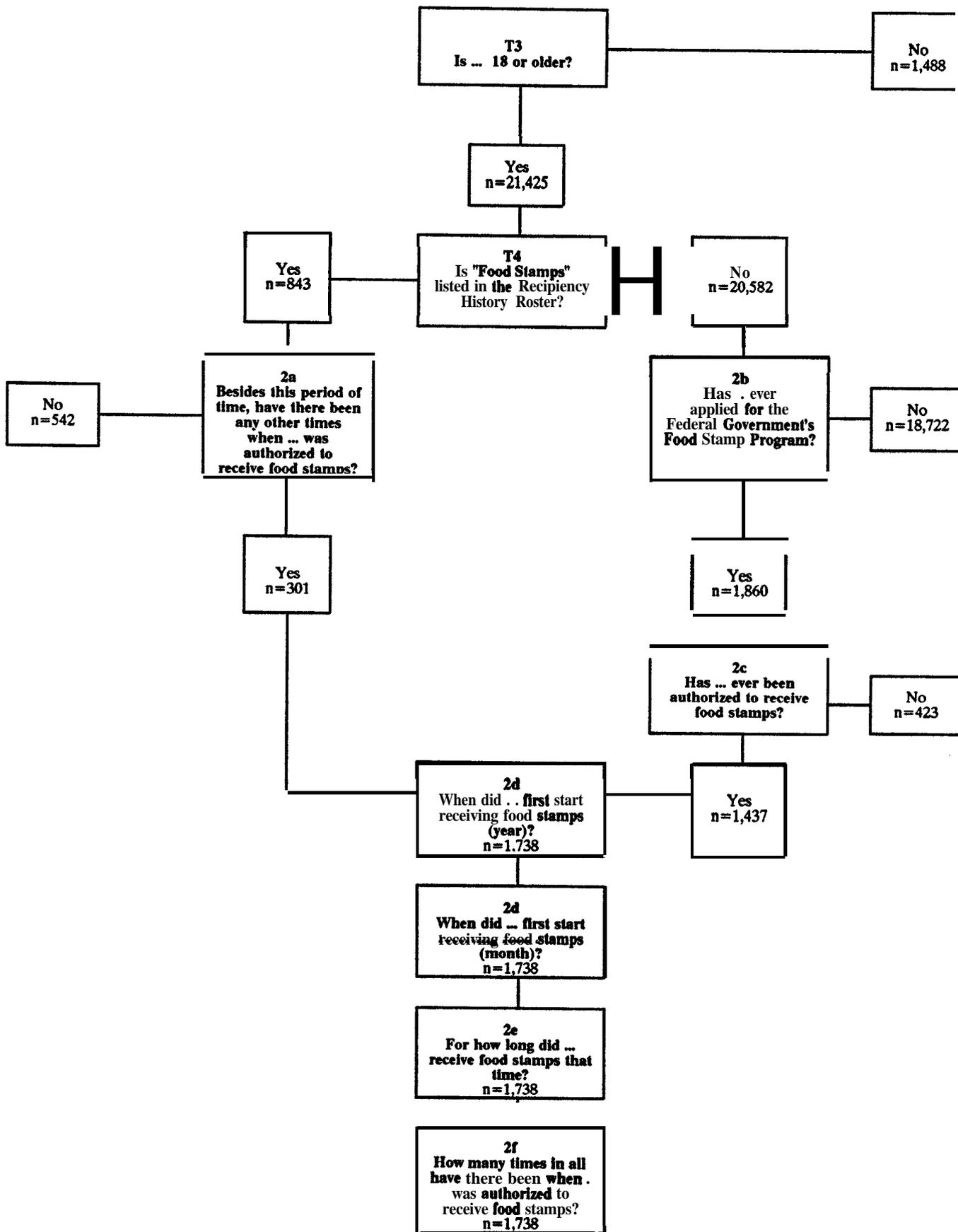


FIGURE B.2

FLOW CHART OF QUESTIONS ON  
AFDC LIFETIME RECIPIENCY HISTORY

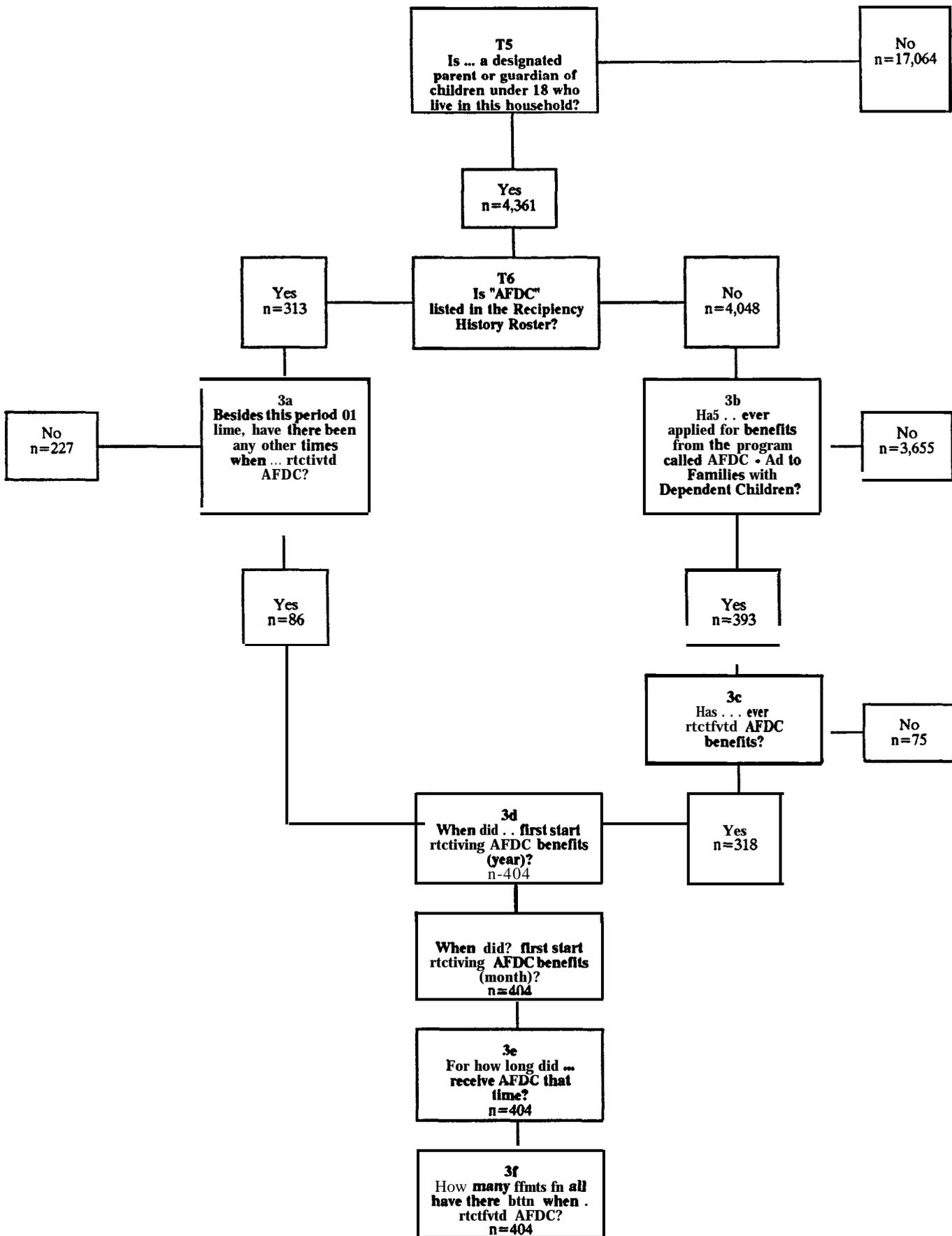


FIGURE 8.3  
 FLOW CHART OF QUESTIONS ON  
 SSI LIFETIME RECIPIENCY HISTORY

