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*A national organization for research
at the University of Chicago*

2001
ANNUAL REPORT

community empowerment

best hospitals

doctorates

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arrestees and drugs

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earnings and human capital

response to tragedy

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NORC is a national organization for research at the University of Chicago—with offices on the University's campus, in Chicago's downtown Loop, and in Washington, D.C., as well as a nationwide field staff. NORC's clients include government agencies, educational institutions, foundations, other nonprofit organizations, and private corporations. Although NORC's national studies are its best known, NORC projects range across local, regional, and international perspectives as well.

Established in 1941, NORC was unique among survey research organizations. Instead of collecting, analyzing, and reporting commercially motivated opinion polling data—the typical national survey practice at that time—NORC's mission was to pursue objective research that served a broadly conceived public interest. NORC's early survey work provided the first rigorous empirical standard against which to calibrate the beliefs of policy makers claiming to represent and respond to "the people's will" on vital issues of the day. NORC was also a pioneer in improving the speed and accuracy of surveys through electronic technologies. And NORC led in the development of survey methodology as a field of study and progress in its own right.

Continuing to work in the public interest, NORC pursues research to help resolve the issues facing society in the new century—through the design and implementation of complex surveys and other data collection strategies and through the objective, sophisticated interpretation of social science data using advanced statistical and other analytic techniques. NORC's cadre of specialists in statistics and methodology are joined by distinguished experts in four major substantive areas: economics, labor, and population; education and child development; health; and substance abuse, mental health, and criminal justice. NORC's longstanding affiliation with the University of Chicago provides privileged access to the University's world-renowned faculty and its resources, including the notable University of Chicago Libraries.

NORC's project work is done in an interdisciplinary framework, with strong staff cooperation across substantive areas. NORC is an equal opportunity employer committed to facilitating the personal and professional development of everyone on its staff.

2001 ANNUAL REPORT



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Letter from the Chairman and President

The year 2001 saw NORC celebrate its 60th anniversary as a premier social science research organization. In a challenging year, we did much in which we can take pride.

Among other major accomplishments, we built our backlog of research funding to a record high for NORC — \$125 million at the end of 2001, about double what it had been a year earlier. We are particularly proud to have attracted multi-year funding from major private foundations. In the last part of 2001 alone, for example, we secured funding (a) from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for a five-year project to track disadvantaged youth who have received funds from the Foundation, (b) from the MacArthur Foundation for a three-year project to track the relocation of low-income housing tenants in Chicago, and (c) from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to partner with the Urban Institute in laying the groundwork for a series of community and city-wide surveys. These will support the Foundation's 10-year initiative to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping strengthen their families and neighborhoods.

Other major projects we won in 2001, described later in this report, include:

The Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) project. This multi-site data collection and analysis project is the centerpiece of the National Institute of Justice research program on drugs and crime.

The Tragedy of September 11. Within 16 days following the terrorist attack, NORC designed and conducted a major telephone survey to gauge the tragedy's impact on the American psyche. This quick-response study recalls NORC's survey following the Kennedy assassination. Funders include the National Science Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the Chicago Tribune.

Assessing the Healthy People 2010 Initiatives. These Initiatives constitute a nationwide health improvement agenda. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has funded NORC to carry out an assessment of *Healthy People 2010* that will help clarify many questions about the use of the Initiatives and how they may have affected public health priorities.

The National Earned Doctorate Project. This National Science Foundation project comprises the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) and the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR), each with at least 40,000 respondents. The project also contains a large analytic component, with NORC preparing reports, tabulations, and analyses for the federal sponsors and others.

Counting Uncertified Florida Ballots. A group of the largest U.S. news organizations selected NORC to count the almost 180,000 ballots in Florida's 67 counties that were uncertified because they failed to register a "valid" vote for President. The results of NORC's study will help state legislatures, other decision makers, and developers of ballot systems to work toward more reliable ballot systems in the future.



Edward O. Laumann,
Chairman



Craig G. Coelen,
President

In addition to major successes in securing new funding, NORC continued to attract distinguished new staff in 2001. Additions at the Vice President level include:

Barbara K. Campbell, Senior Vice President for Survey Operations. She comes from seven years of marketing research and planning at Snap-On Tools, but was a wonderful addition to our group of senior managers primarily because of her considerable earlier experience as a senior survey director and department manager in NORC's survey division.

Daniel S. Gaylin, Senior Vice President for Business Development. He previously served as senior advisor for research and planning, Office of Health Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Jennifer A. Kelly, Vice President and Special Assistance to the President. She has been Director at ACNielsen in Australia, as well as Assistant Director of the New South Wales Statistics Consultancy of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Cathleen C. Savage, Vice President for Human Resources and Administration and manager of our Washington, DC office. She brings extensive experience in the corporate, nonprofit, and government contracting sectors at The Travelers Companies, the American Diabetes Association, and The Urban Institute.

Fritz J. Scheuren, Vice President for Statistics. He previously served as Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute, National Technical Director at Ernst & Young, LLP, and Professor of Statistics at George Washington University.

Michael S. Tilkin, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer. He served as national practice director for e-business intelligence at FutureNext and previously completed all course work for a PhD in economics at the University of Wisconsin.

Frederic R. Van Deusen, Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance. He brings to NORC two decades of quality management experience with the Hewlett-Packard Company.

Looking Forward

We close with brief mention of two new initiatives we are particularly excited about: establishing a formal quality assurance program and building new business with a high information technology content.

The Quality Enhancement Initiative. NORC has had a number of quality initiatives in the past that have met with varying degrees of success. Where we have been less successful, we often have failed to hold the gains that we initially had achieved. We hope to avoid this pitfall in our future efforts by

building a staff dedicated full time to the design, implementation, and institutionalization of quality enhancement projects. The commitment to quality assurance at the highest levels of the organization is manifest in our hiring of Fred Van Deusen as Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance.

He has already worked with senior NORC staff to build an improvement plan that is owned and driven by the leaders of the company. He has also hired an excellent Quality Leader in Laura Knapp, a former Senior Survey Director at NORC. They are hard at work directing a variety of quality improvement projects, which will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

New Business in Information Technology. We have always thought of NORC as being in the business of data collection and analysis. The more general tasks of processing, storage, and sharing of information, although inherently important in what we do, have been less prominent in our perceived mission. We now declare our intention to pursue new business opportunities as aggressively in these latter areas as we have done and will continue to do in data collection and analysis. We shall begin with projects that involve social science research but are predominantly involved with processing, storage, and sharing of data. This approach allows us to build on strengths we have already established on existing projects. As our general capabilities in the area of information technology grow, we shall strengthen our staff and our technical expertise in ways that benefit our core survey research activities at the same time that they improve our ability to capitalize on the opportunities, and overcome the challenges, presented by future technological change.



Edward O. Laumann, *Chairman*



Craig G. Coelen, *President*

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Working in the public interest NORC pursues research to help resolve the issues facing society in the new century—through the design and implementation of complex surveys and other data collection strategies and through the objective, sophisticated interpretation of social science data using advanced statistical and other analytic techniques.

MAKING CONNECTIONS—ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Making Connections is the centerpiece of the Annie E. Casey foundation's multi-faceted effort to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping strengthen their families and neighborhoods. The first part of this important project consists of a three-year demonstration designed to stimulate and support local movements that engage residents, civic groups, political leaders, grassroots groups, public and private sector leadership, and faith-based organizations to help transform tough neighborhoods into family-supportive environments. These local movements are called Local Learning Partnerships.

NORC is currently collaborating with the Urban Institute on Phase I of a primary data collection initiative underlying *Making Connections*. This 10-month planning and design phase includes developing a questionnaire and custom-tailoring a data collection strategy in each of five sites selected for initial evaluation: Denver, Des Moines, Indianapolis, San Antonio, and Seattle. NORC and the Urban Institute look forward to continuing their collaboration in Phase II, which includes data collection, data file delivery, analysis, and support to the Partnerships in understanding and using the data.

Both citywide and neighborhood data will be collected. Citywide data will be collected from NORC's centralized telephone facility, using an RRD list sample. Neighborhood data will be collected via in-person interviews, using an area probability sample. Each survey, both citywide and neighborhood, will involve about 800 completed interviews. Following a rolling schedule, each subsequent site will begin three to four weeks after the previous site. In each locality, citywide and neighborhood data will be collected simultaneously.

A project of NORC's *Economics, Labor, and Population Department*, Richard M. Rubin, Director

USES, AND USERS, OF *THE HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010* INITIATIVES

Healthy People 2010 is a nationwide health agenda designed to improve the health of all Americans. NORC is carrying out an assessment of the *Healthy People* initiatives, sponsored by the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation and the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

NORC's assessment—the first broad-based data collection and analysis of health improvement initiatives of this type—will contribute directly to the mid-course review of *Healthy People* products and activities. NORC's systematic analysis is also expected to be valuable to public and private stakeholders in national, state, and local health improvement programs.

The data collection phase will include telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaires. Input from phone interviews with 30 key informants will inform the instrument and protocol design for the self-administered questionnaire, which will be directed at members of two primary user groups: the *Healthy People Consortium* and *Partnerships for a Healthy Workforce*. About 600 organizations in all will be involved. NORC will also collect richly detailed qualitative data from structured interviews and focus groups with special user groups—insurers, minority health groups, provider associations, and institutions of professional health education.

NORC will then analyze the data and provide recommendations to HHS to help clarify who, at an organizational level, is using the initiatives; how they are being used; which aspects are most relevant to different user groups; why the initiatives are not used by some groups; what can be done to refine the initiatives; and how, more generally, *Healthy People 2010* may have affected public health priorities.

A project of NORC's *Health Studies Department*, Daniel S. Gaylin, Director





GENERATIONS OF RHODES SCHOLARS

The roles that social origin and educational prestige play in the attainment of career prominence among American Rhodes Scholars is the goal of this study, funded by the Spencer Foundation. The study focuses on five eras of recipients: post-World War II, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

Data collection design and implementation was NORC's responsibility, under subcontract with Boston College. In all, 34 class years and 1,018 eligible respondents were in the sample. Many of these are extremely well-known and have professional gatekeepers, illustrating NORC's prowess in collecting data from elite, hard-to-interview groups.

Telephone interviews and self-administered web questionnaires were the data collection strategies used. NORC conducted telephone interviews and entered the replies on a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. The self-administered Web questionnaire was developed for use by respondents who were unable to complete the telephone interview. The two instruments were designed so that their file layouts were comparable and the two data sets could be seamlessly merged with a single computer-assisted data entry (CADE) system.

Research questions addressed by the study include:

- How does the process of democratization in American society and the expansions of higher education affect the social class, baccalaureate origins, race, ethnicity, and gender of Rhodes Scholars?
- What is the relative influence of social origins, schooling, and networks in determining the success and failure of potential national leaders?
- Are there emerging lines of cleavage and realignment among elites—associated with fragmentation of attitudes, spheres of influence, or networks of social relations?
- How do demographic, historical, and cultural contexts affect Rhodes Scholars' perceptions of their public role and the meaning of leadership?

A project of NORC's *Education and Child Development Department*, Harrison N. Greene, Director

SOCIAL INFLUENCES AFFECTING AIDS TREATMENT EXPERIENCES AMONG INJECTION DRUG USERS

The optimism stimulated by breakthroughs in HIV treatment has heightened the implications of health care disparities for communities with high rates of HIV/AIDS yet lacking adequate access to health care and HIV medication. These implications are especially stark for injection drug users (IDUs)—now a principal source of new AIDS cases. Injection drug users are known to receive the new drugs at lower rates than other groups, at least in part due to their stigmatized identities and marginal access to public health care. But little has been done to understand the influences that lead to their reduced use of such therapies.

NORC has integrated epidemiology and ethnography in a study examining the HIV/AIDS treatment patterns of IDUs in relation to their health status, interaction with health care providers, and the discourses of their wider social context. Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the study followed IDUs from six predominantly African American neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., where IDUs congregate to purchase and inject drugs. Structured interviews were conducted every six months over an 18-month period. Oral HIV testing was also done twice, and ethnographic observations and interviews with HIV-positive respondents provided qualitative data on attitudes to and patterns of HIV medication use.

Findings strongly confirm that wider social problems inhibit provision of HIV treatment and care for IDUs. In addition to issues related directly to drug abuse, problems include access to health care and housing, and social and historical divisions that still affect the lives of IDUs and their communities. These long-term problems demand policy and community responses. But research and programs are urgently needed to help understand and improve the immediate context of use of the new therapies among IDUs. The ethnographic findings make it particularly clear that IDUs themselves are a critical source of information, and should participate in designing and evaluating culturally appropriate and supportive health care services for HIV-positive injection drug users.

A project of NORC's *Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Department*,
Dean R. Gerstein, Director

COUNTING THE FLORIDA BALLOTS

A group of the largest U.S. news organizations selected NORC to provide the definitive picture of the uncertified ballots in the Florida presidential election of November 2000. This consortium was made up of *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post Co.*, *Tribune Publishing*, *Cable News Network (CNN)*, *Associated Press*, *St. Petersburg Times*, and *The Palm Beach Post*. *The New York Times* owns *The Boston Globe*, *the Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, and *the Lakeland Ledger*, among others. *Washington Post Co.* owns *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*. *Tribune Publishing* owns the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, and the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, among others. The consortium chose NORC because of its long-standing reputation for nonpartisan, objective, and analytically rigorous data collection and analysis.

Almost 180,000 ballots in Florida's 67 counties are uncertified because they failed to register a "valid" vote for President. These ballots include those in which no vote was recorded (undervotes) and those in which people voted for more than one candidate (overvotes). There is a fundamental problem in (re)counting ballots, however. Every method produces slightly different results with each pass through. NORC made its assessment of reliability by comparing the results for the three types of ballots used in Florida with the results of a hand count, which is widely recognized as having the least variation from count to count. NORC's use of expert three-person teams, each member of which gave his/her independent assessment, further reduced any variation coming from hand counting.

It was not NORC's intent to declare a "winner." Members of the sponsoring consortium published their own assessments when the results of the study were released in November 2001. Consistent with its mission to perform research in the public interest, NORC has placed all the data related to the ballot counting project on its Web site (www.norc.org). Access is free and available to all. There is a raw database, which is the definitive historical archive of every mark on every uncertified ballot. Additional files provide analytic help, plus contextual and supplemental information for the ballot-level files.

A project of NORC's *Statistics and Methodology Department*, Kirk M. Wolter, Director

Vote
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CHINESE HEALTH AND FAMILY BEHAVIOR

That China is at risk of a major epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is clear from survey evidence and government and clinical reports. This University of Chicago-NORC study is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. It is designed, among other things, to help characterize the probable course of the epidemic and identify subpopulations at highest risk, for the purpose of targeting of public health interventions. It will provide valid empirical findings regarding the incidence and prevalence of a range of sexual activities, the social and cultural conditions shaping such activities, and possible sources of their change over time.

The first nationally focused systematic investigation of the sexual behavior and attitudes of the 1.2 billion people living in China, this study is based on a population sample, a migrant sample, and an STD clinical sample. The migrant sample is particularly significant, since migrants are a growing group in China and have not been captured systematically by any surveys to date. The China survey will replicate as much as possible the earlier University of Chicago-NORC study of sexual behavior and attitudes, thus permitting cross-cultural comparisons that cast additional light on how culture and society may affect sexual expression.

Findings show that current efforts to control STDs (including HIV infection) in China are in considerable part misdirected. Instead of young, poor, immigrants—who are the easy targets of public blame and sympathetic foreign donor support—the highest risk groups are non-migrant, rich businessmen who fail to use condoms in commercial sex and bring home infections to their wives. In addition, comparisons between Chinese and Western patterns of sexual dysfunction indicate that (a) older Chinese tend to discontinue having sex once problems emerge, and (b) some problems are far more frequent among the young in China than commonly noted in the general literature on the epidemiology of sexual dysfunction.

A project of NORC's *Academic Research Centers*, Kathleen E. Parks, Administrative Director

PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE TRAGEDY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

NORC has a long tradition of gauging the mood of Americans. In 2001 NORC measured reactions to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC. The first such study immediately followed President John F. Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963. As with that study, all Americans will remember where they were, what they were doing, and with whom they spoke when they first heard of the disaster on September 11, 2001. The initial round of the September 11 study was funded by the National Science Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the Chicago Tribune. A reinterview, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, was conducted to gauge the duration of the effect of the event, and assess reactions to the war in Afghanistan and the threat of bio-terrorism.

NORC's September 11 study used questions from the Kennedy assassination study, as well as public response questions from the General Social Survey (GSS), one of NORC's national flagship surveys administered every two years. This design allows assessment of America's response to the recent tragedy in relationship to: (1) its response during a national tragedy 38 years earlier and (2) recent national data collected during normal times. Since these surveys are based on statistically representative samples, they provide scientific evidence—rather than anecdotes of selective individual experiences—on how Americans react to and cope with disaster, and how those reactions and coping mechanisms may have changed over time.

The survey findings, based on data collection within 16 days after the attacks, show that national pride, confidence in American institutions, and faith in people and human nature were at higher than usual levels. The psychological, emotional, and behavioral reactions of New Yorkers after September 11 were at least as extreme as national reactions to the Kennedy assassination, compared with similar but less extreme national reactions to September 11. Responses to the two tragedies reveal one striking difference: A predominant public reaction after the Kennedy tragedy was shame; after the terrorist attacks it was anger.

A project of NORC's *Economics, Labor, and Population Department*, Richard M. Rubin, Director

HEALTH EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO CONTAMINATED WATER

In utero exposure to volatile organic compound (VOC) contamination in drinking water may be strongly associated with childhood leukemia. In 1982, VOC was identified in groundwater wells that provided drinking water to a U.S. Marine Corps base camp. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) called on NORC's extensive experience in finding hard to reach populations to locate either the biological parents of or the 12,493 children born to women who were pregnant while living in the affected housing, plus the parents of the 4,000 children born to parents who lived in the affected housing but gave birth elsewhere.

The project involved development of a CATI instrument to screen individuals for eligibility and identify potential childhood cancer and birth defect cases. The CATI instrument was designed to capture data from respondents who called back with additional information, as well as data at the interview. Because social security numbers were provided for only 54 percent of the sample, NORC collaborated with ATSDR and the U.S. Marine Corps to initiate other locating tactics, which included a national and regional media campaign to identify additional sample members. Over a two-month period, NORC responded to more than 19,000 inquiries, yielding nearly 2,800 completed interviews. By the end of data collection, 78 percent of the sample without social security numbers had been located and interviewed; ultimately NORC screened 12,594 people for an overall response rate of 76 percent.

Obtaining medical confirmations for reported diagnoses and a case-control study are planned for future phases, to learn more about the association between the exposure and childhood cancer and birth defects. To confirm medical diagnoses, NORC will re-contact respondents to obtain a signed medical records release form plus provider contact information. NORC will then contact providers to obtain, either a signed diagnosis confirmation form, or a copy of the medical record related to the diagnosis.

A project of NORC's *Health Studies Department*, Daniel S. Gaylin, Director





IDENTIFYING AND TRACKING RECIPIENTS OF U.S. DOCTORATE DEGREES

The most definitive data on the nation's most educated elite come from two surveys funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and carried out by NORC: the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) and the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR). The SED is administered annually to 41,000 respondents, the SDR every two years to 40,000. For both surveys, NORC is also responsible for analytic products.

The SED gathers information about graduates' educational histories, funding sources, and postdoctoral plans from all recipients of a research doctorate earned from any degree-granting institution in the United States. The institutions collect the census forms along with final dissertation forms. They then send the census forms to NORC with an official listing of graduates. NORC follows up any individuals on the lists who have not filled in the census forms. Each year the SED data are added to a larger historical record, the Doctorate Records File (DRF). This file was begun in 1920 and contains annual information used to track the numbers of graduates in various fields; the educational paths of scientists, engineers, and humanists; movement of graduates into the labor market; and similar information. NORC launched a web-based instrument for this survey in 2000 and is continuing to beta-test it.

The SDR tracks the employment history and research productivity of doctorate recipients as they move through their careers in research and practice. It is one of three surveys of individuals in the NSF's program to track the science and engineering work force. (The other two focus on bachelor's and master's degree recipients in science and engineering.) Each two-year cycle includes both the previous wave panel and a new sample of recent doctorate-degree graduates. Retiring panel members (those who reach age 75) are replaced by recent graduates. An additional sample of NSF fellows augmented the 1997 survey. In connection with the 2003 and 2005 rounds of the survey, NORC will launch a web version of the SDR instrument for beta testing.

A project of NORC's Education and Child Development Department, Harrison N. Greene, Director

RANKING AMERICA'S BEST HOSPITALS

A set of rankings of U.S. hospitals by specialty is published each year by *US News and World Report*. The data collection and analysis are carried out by NORC. The 2001 edition of "America's Best Hospitals" was published in the July 23, 2001 issue of *US News and World Report*. The 2002 edition is expected to appear in July 2002.

NORC creates a three-component Index of Hospital Quality (IHQ) using NORC survey data and secondary analysis of data from the American Hospital Association. The three components are: a structure/technology score for each specialty/hospital; a mail survey of board-certified physicians in each specialty; and risk-adjusted mortality rates for the specialties/hospitals. These components are designed to represent the three key aspects of care quality: structure, process, and outcome. The components are combined to give an overall score for each hospital, and the published rankings are based on these scores.

NORC continues to refine its procedures and computations, in particular by modifying the standardization procedure for mortality scores. The 2000 ranking included for the first time a ranking of hospitals in nephrology. In 2001/2002, NORC is undertaking a comparison of different measures of mortality, contrasting *mortality at discharge* (in-hospital mortality) with *mortality 30 days after discharge*.

The *US News* rankings are highly regarded by the medical profession and receive considerable attention. From time to time the rankings are used to underpin other investigations. The January 1999 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, for example, featured an article examining whether "America's best hospitals" perform better for acute myocardial infarction, and a related editorial entitled "Hospitals, Heal Yourselves."

A project of NORC's *Statistics and Methodology Department*, Kirk M. Wolter, Director



ARRESTEE DRUG ABUSE USE MONITORING

The Arrestee Drug Abuse Use Monitoring (ADAM) program is the centerpiece of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) research program on drugs and crime. ADAM staff working at a local level conduct confidential interviews and drug tests with a stratified random sample of individuals in lockups and booking centers in metropolitan areas. These data are collected within 48 hours of arrest and cover a wide variety of offences. With the cooperation of local criminal justice and research agencies, the ADAM program is now collecting data from arrestees in 35 urban sites across the country.

NORC is responsible, as the national contractor, for ongoing administration of the ADAM program, the training of site personnel, maintenance and management of the data, reporting findings to NIJ and to the local sites, working with the sites to help them use the data and findings to inform local policy and practice, and working with NIJ on the annual ADAM meeting and report. In addition to conducting its own research, NORC participates with NIJ and the site organizations in developing plans for analysis and designs for research.

ADAM provides communities across the country with timely information about drugs and crime, patterns of drug use treatment, emerging drug trends, drug markets, the effect of law enforcement on drug use, treatment needs, and many related issues. As a research platform, ADAM can be used to examine safety issues such as domestic violence, sexually transmitted diseases, gang membership and activities, gambling, and the acquisition and use of firearms. ADAM can also be used to assess the effects of law enforcement and criminal justice strategies such as community policing and drug courts. ADAM has become an important source of valuable data and information on crime in communities around the United States.

A project of NORC's *Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Department*, Dean R. Gerstein, Director

DYNAMIC MODELS OF EARNINGS AND CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

A shift in demand for skilled workers and increased wage inequality have renewed interest in the determinants of the aggregate supply of skills. Policy proposals have been advanced to use tax policy, tuition subsidies, and transfers to promote skill formation and reduce inequality. The goal of this University of Chicago-NORC research, funded by the National Science Foundation, is to construct a general equilibrium model of the aggregate supply of skills with a secure micro foundation, as a tool for exploring the likely impact of these and similar policies.

The methodological approach consists of three parts: (a) formulating and estimating economically interpretable and econometrically stable microeconomic lifecycle models of earnings, labor supply, school, and on-the-job training as inputs into rigorously justified policy simulations; (b) developing a comprehensive assessment of the current and past tax and subsidy treatment of human capital; and (c) aligning general equilibrium forecasts with micro estimates. Among the large data files used are the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.

The models explaining investment in school and on-the-job training are consistent with micro evidence on earnings and with the recent macro evidence on rising wage inequality. The work is not yet complete. Products to date include four papers assessing alternative methods for analyzing human capital policies, one on the effectiveness of job training programs, one presenting a formal analysis of the econometric identifiability of dynamic schooling models, and two additional models used to study disparity in educational attainment between African Americans and white Americans.

A project of NORC's *Academic Research Centers*, Kathleen E. Parks, Administrative Director

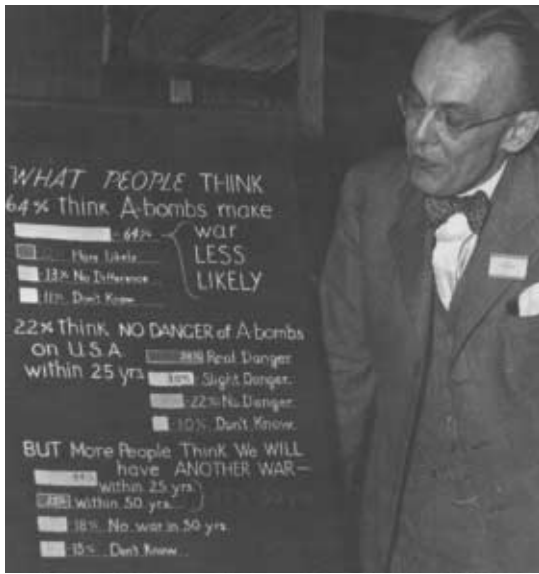
Sixty Years at NORC: Its Leaders and Its Work

An extraordinary group of researchers have been part of NORC during the past sixty years, some focused just on their research and others taking time to also lead the organization. The body of work that they have created is just as extraordinary – literally hundreds of important studies on research methodology; thousands of books, journal articles, and unpublished papers on a broad range of applied research topics; and a vast archive of rich data, much of it longitudinal information, on large samples of individuals, households, and institutions. The organization's history begins with Harry Field.

In 1941, Field founded the nonprofit National Opinion Research Center at the University of Denver. It was unique from the start. In contrast to other organizations then conducting household interviews, the new organization conducted surveys of public opinion with the goal of giving citizens a real voice on the political, economic, and social issues of the time. In 1947, Clyde Hart succeeded Field, moved the organization to the University of Chicago, and changed its mission from measuring public opinion to designing and executing major social research projects. Recruiting distinguished academic researchers, Hart guided the organization through 13 years of path-breaking studies, including race relations, Senator Joe McCarthy's anti-communist crusade against universities and their faculties, and the potential effects of interviewers on respondents' answers.

In 1960, Peter Rossi became the organization's head, recruiting a distinguished group of academics, including Norman Bradburn, James Coleman, Andrew Greeley, John Johnstone, Mildred Schwartz, Joseph Spaeth, and Seymour Sudman. Important studies marking Rossi's tenure include national surveys of medical costs, a study of the structure of psychological well being, a survey of the public's reaction to President Kennedy's assassination, studies of Catholic education, and a very large longitudinal study of 1961 college graduates. Paul Sheatsley had been a key figure in the series of studies on racial attitudes that began in the 1940s. Herbert Hyman was his collaborator in the New York office and later from Columbia. Sheatsley ran the New York office for Hart and Field. In 1962, Sheatsley moved to Chicago when Rossi asked him to establish a Survey Research Service, making the organization's field staff available to outside researchers and thereby effectively creating the new NORC.

Between 1966 and 1976, Norman Bradburn (until 1971) and then James Davis (until 1976) headed the organization. The National Opinion Research Center, as it was still called, collaborated with many other social science research organizations on the major large-scale experimental and non-experimental studies of federal social programs — including the housing allowance supply and demand experiments, the Health Insurance Study, and the Community Development Block Grant program evaluation. We also began our partnership with Ohio State University on the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience, joined with Research Triangle Institute on the National Medical Care Expenditure Survey, and started the in-person General Social Survey, which has since interviewed a new cross-section of the population at least every two years. Davis created the General Social Survey, which he and Tom Smith have directed ever since. Among the researchers drawn to NORC during these years were political scientists Kenneth Prewitz, Norman Nie, and Ben Page, and economists James Heckman, Robert Michael, and Joseph Hotz.



Harry Field at the Rocky Mountain Conference on Atomic Energy in December 1945.

Between 1977 and 1988, Kenneth Prewitt (until 1979), then Norman Bradburn (until 1984), then Robert Michael (until 1989) led the organization. Prewitt led it through the great challenges of the first field period of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and laid the foundation for the creation of the Economics Research Center, a very productive part of NORC during the 1980s and into the 1990s. Bradburn returned

to guide the organization through the drastic reductions in federal funding for social research that occurred in the early 1980s. Michael's leadership saw the organization formally change its name to a set of initials — NORC — to reflect its long-ago change in emphasis from opinion to behavior measurement. He initiated an intense and extended collaboration between NORC and the extraordinary economists at the University of Chicago, created a new center for research on survey methodology, and served as Principal Investigator for the 1997 Cohort, National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and other major surveys.

NORC continued its record of path-breaking studies, including the 1985-86 Study of Homeless in Chicago (the first attempt to interview a large probability sample of this hard-to-locate population) and William Julius Wilson's 1986 study of urban poverty and family life in Chicago. This was also a period of intensive involvement in early longitudinal surveys of high school students (follow-up interviews for the Education Longitudinal Survey that was started in 1972 and another started in 1988, as well as High School and Beyond, started in 1980), continuation and expansions of studies with an economics focus, and establishment of the Journal of Labor Economics with the University of Chicago Press.

In 1988, Bradburn returned to lead NORC for three years, in a period of increased competition in the survey research field. The year 1989 was marked particularly by the first large-scale application of computer assisted personal interviewing, with a split-sample test conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics on the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. In 1990, Bradburn proposed recruitment of a manager from outside the faculty community at the University of Chicago to lead NORC in this tougher business environment. Phil DePoy, former head of the Center for Naval Analysis, became president and led NORC through six years of rapid business growth. The last four years have seen a major reorganization of NORC's research and survey staff into substantive departments more in line with the programmatic focus of the federal agencies who are the primary sponsors of our survey work. We have also embarked on major infrastructure improvements, to accommodate the much higher level of project activity and remain technologically current.

On the research front more generally, the period since the late 1980s has seen NORC's work in the areas of mental health and substance abuse expand considerably, including the important National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study. Standing out as unusually challenging projects on a long list of other major NORC studies begun in the last 12 years are the National Health and Social Life study of sexuality in the United States, the Prospective Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (with the University of North Carolina), the HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study (with RAND), the 1997 Cohort National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (with the Center for Human

Resources Research at Ohio State University), and the more recently launched New Immigrant Survey (with RAND and researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and New York University).

A continual theme through NORC history is its methodological work. When he wrote proposals for funding to launch NORC, for example, Harry Field characterized the new organization as an “Audit Bureau of Polls,” seeking to evaluate and improve upon the questionnaires and sampling methods used in opinion surveys. Herbert Hyman and others continued this focus with important research in the 1950s on measurement and control of interviewer effects. Sudman’s work on *Reducing the Costs of Surveys*; his important book, *Interviewing in Social Research*, with Clyde Hart, Jacob Feldman, and others; and his collaboration with Norman Bradburn on response effects and the application of cognitive psychology to the development of survey questionnaires provide examples from the 1960s and 1970s. Building upon earlier work at Stanford University, Norman Nie and his colleagues developed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, or SPSS, at NORC in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In recent years, NORC’s methodological work has been continued by Martin Frankel, Roger Tourangeau, Kenneth Rasinski, Kirk Wolter, Tom Smith, Colm O’Muircheartaigh, and others.

NORC looks forward to continuing its work in the public interest—pursuing research to help resolve the issues facing society in the new century.

Pearl Zinner Celebrates Her 50th Anniversary at NORC

A New Yorker born and bred, Pearl Zinner has spent her energy and indomitable spirit on NORC’s behalf for 50 years and counting. She joined NORC in 1951, first working out of the New York office as an interviewer at an hourly wage of 50 cents, moving through the survey department ranks, and becoming its director from 1963 until it closed operations in early 1985.

Pearl has worked under Directors Clyde Hart, Peter Rossi, Norman Bradburn (3 or 4 times), Jim Davis, Ken Prewitt, and Robert Michael, and Presidents Phil DePoy and Craig Coelen. Her current title, Special Assistant to the President, gives her entry to every nook and cranny of NORC operations—where her experience, good nature, and attention to detail are particularly valuable.

For many years Pearl has been especially interested in training initiatives, and in ensuring that NORC’s institutional memory is accessible in proposal and study data bases.

“Over these years,” Pearl says, “NORC has always permitted me to make the best use of my skills. My fond memories of relationships with colleagues and rewarding work experiences reinforce the warm and strong feelings I have about this wonderful and important organization.”

The contributions this wise, wonderful, and important woman has made to NORC have added significantly to its success. Her influence will continue, on a somewhat reduced schedule, as will her presence.





TRUSTEES' MEETING FALL 2001

NORC took the occasion of the Fall 2001 Trustees' meeting to host a celebratory reception for trustees, senior staff, and friends of NORC.

First row (left to right): Arthur C. Nielsen, Jr. and Joseph P. Sullivan; Judith M. Tanur and Dorothy P. Rice.

Second row: Robert T. Michael, James Walker, and A. Rupa Datta; Ananth G. Koppikar, Randall T. Horton, and Jason Williams.

Third row: Joseph P. Sullivan and Dorothy Rice; Craig G. Coelen and Edward O. Laumann; Phil Depoy and Richard P. Saller.

Fourth Row: Robert Zimmer and Edward Lawlor; Edward O. Laumann and Pearl Zinner; Craig G. Coelen and Geoffrey R. Stone.





MAJOR ISSUE AREAS

NORC's cadre of specialists in statistics and methodology are joined by distinguished experts in four other major substantive areas: economics, labor, and population; education and child development; health; and substance abuse, mental health, and criminal justice.

In addition to NORC senior staff, this section notes NORC's affiliated scientists. These are principal investigators on projects for which NORC is either the primary data collector or provides, through its Academic Research Centers, administrative and/or financial support.

NORC Senior Staff

Leslie A. Athey

Senior Survey Director

Robert F. Bailey

Senior Survey Director

Bruce A. Carnes

Senior Research Scientist

Atreyee Rupa Datta

Senior Survey Director

James A. Davis

Senior Research Scientist

Leonid A. Gavrilov

Senior Research Scientist

Karen H. Grigorian

Senior Survey Director

Catherine Haggerty

Senior Survey Director

Kymn M. Kochanek

Senior Survey Director

Michael R. Pergamit

Vice President

Richard M. Rubin

Vice President

Thomas W. Smith

Senior Research Scientist

Associated Scientists

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Princeton University

Lars P. Hansen

University of Chicago

James J. Heckman

University of Chicago

Patrick C. Heuveline

University of Chicago

Guillermina Jasso

New York University

Robert J. Lalonde

University of Chicago

Edward O. Laumann

University of Chicago

Peter V. Marsden

Harvard University

Douglas S. Massey

University of Pennsylvania

Robert T. Michael

University of Chicago

Randall Olsen

Ohio State University

William L. Parish

University of Chicago

John Robinson

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Mark R. Rosenzweig

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Robert J. Sampson

University of Chicago

Allen R. Sanderson

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James P. Smith

RAND Corporation

Freya Sonenstein

Urban Institute

Ross M. Stolzenberg

University of Chicago

Robert Townsend

University of Chicago

Margery A. Turner

Urban Institute

James Walker

University of Wisconsin (Madison)

Kazuo Yamaguchi

University of Chicago

ECONOMICS, LABOR, AND POPULATION

Richard M. Rubin

Director

William L. Parish

Director

Population Studies Center

Edward O. Laumann

Director

Ogburn-Stouffer Center for the

Study of Social Organizations

Linda J. Waite

Director

Center on Demography and Economics of Aging

Economics, labor, and population studies is the institutional home of NORC's large-scale flagship surveys covering a wide range of factors that contribute to the nation's economic and social life. These include development of children as future members of the labor force, youth transition to work, job schedules and work injuries, and the finances of consumers and small businesses. NORC's economics and population focus includes the study of immigrants, in particular their labor force characteristics, their health, and the schooling of their children. It also includes NORC's acclaimed General Social Survey.

Selected Current Projects

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth

General Social Survey

Work Schedules and Injuries

Understanding the Social Impact of the Internet

Improving Work Productivity Data Quality

Fathers' Involvement in Permanency Planning and Child Welfare Work

Evaluability Assessment of Independent Living Programs

EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Harrison N. Greene

Director

Barbara L. Schneider and Linda J. Waite

Co-Directors

Alfred P. Sloan Center on Parents, Children, and Work

From its earliest studies on the impact of the GI Bill and public views concerning the federal role in education in the 1940s and 1950s, to the pioneering use of cognitive testing tools with pre-school children, to recent reports on the production and career trajectories of Ph.D. scientists and engineers in 2000, NORC has been a leading contributor to research in the education and child development fields. Major studies have focused on such diverse populations as Head Start enrollees and their parents; elementary and secondary school students, teachers, and administrators; postsecondary students and faculty in all sectors; and developers of innovative education and training programs.

Projects range from the highly technical development of testing programs to assess student mastery, to completion of decade-long longitudinal studies of education and labor force activity of middle and high school students, to assisting state and local governments in determining what works to promote educational improvement, to helping federal agencies collect and distribute high quality data resources that support continuing analyses by researchers, policy makers, and educators.

Selected Current Projects

NAACP Membership Survey

Gates Millennium Scholars' Longitudinal Study

National Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform

National Study of Title I Schools

Randomized Study of *Success for All*

Success for All: Middle School Study

After the JD

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Senior Research Scientist

Bronwyn L. Nichols

Senior Survey Director

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HEALTH

Daniel S. Gaylin

Director

Michele T. Koppelman

Associate Director

NORC's health analysts engage in all aspects of social science research in the areas of health services, epidemiology and biostatistics, public health, and health policy. This work is grounded in NORC's long tradition of designing and conducting complex longitudinal studies and studies of hard-to-locate people. In addition to extensive survey and other primary data collection capabilities, NORC expertise covers the spectrum of techniques available to study health and health care issues — analysis of large public data sets, analysis of secondary data such as administrative records, health policy analysis, program evaluation and evaluation design, social experiments, needs assessments, epidemiological case-control and cohort studies, cognitive studies, and use of qualitative methods, such as case studies and focus groups.

Selected Current Projects

Evaluation of Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010

African American and White Differences in Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices

Regarding SIDS

Evaluation of CMS End-Stage Renal Disease Capitation Demonstration

New York Child Health Plus: an Assessment

Comparative Study of Ethical Issues in Multinational Clinical Research

Managed Care, Financial Incentives and Physician Practice

Patient Preferences for Disclosure: A National Survey

SUBSTANCE ABUSE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Dean R. Gerstein
Director

The substance abuse, mental health, and criminal justice group continues NORC's vigorous program of research on alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, crime and justice, and mental disorders, which began in the 1940s and 1950s. Broad topic areas in which NORC has substantial experience include individual substance use histories and networks of relationships among substance users; development and prevalence of mental health disorders in clinical, intergenerational, and socioenvironmental perspectives; sexual, criminal, economic, and other personal and social behavior connected with substance use, abuse, and dependence; public attitudes, stereotypes, and policy views concerning crime, substance abuse and mental health disorders; and the operation and effectiveness of treatment, prevention, education, and law enforcement and criminal justice programs. NORC is particularly well known for its key role in large-scale studies of a wide range of treatment outcomes.

Selected Current Projects

Dimensions of Child and Adolescent Psychopathology: A Twin Study
Factors Affecting Vulnerability to Mental and Behavioral Disorders among Adolescents
Stigma Attached to Mental Illness
Impact of Managed Care on Drug Abuse Treatment
Alcohol Risk Perceptions
National Survey of Indigent Defense Systems
National Study of Health and Life Experiences among Women

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STATISTICS AND METHODOLOGY

Kirk M. Wolter

Director

Statistics and methodology staff are important contributors to virtually all NORC projects. They not only provide statistical services under the direction of the individual project's manager. A senior statistician also monitors the statistical integrity of these projects. NORC statistics and methodology staff also build infrastructure that benefits all projects. These include establishing statistical standards for use throughout the company to ensure consistently high quality. Specific areas of expertise include sampling design and execution, development and testing of questionnaires and other instruments, statistical process control, design and development of estimation systems, statistical computing, disclosure and confidentiality analysis, record linkage, unduplication, and geocoding. In addition to these support functions, staff develop and execute projects with particular statistical or methodological complexities.

Selected Current Projects

Technical and Analytical Support for OSHA

Estimation Methods Research for the Census Bureau

Extension of Small Domain Estimation for the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Respirator Use Survey

American Time Use Survey

Indian Trust Accounts

'97 Youth Demographic Book

NORC'S ACADEMIC RESEARCH CENTERS AND WIDER AFFILIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NORC's longstanding affiliation with the University of Chicago provides privileged access to the University's world-renowned faculty and to its resources, including the notable University of Chicago libraries.

Kathleen E. Parks
Administrative Director

NORC'S ACADEMIC RESEARCH CENTERS

The four academic research centers at NORC provide a collegial, interdisciplinary environment in which University of Chicago faculty can conduct social science research as NORC research associates. This research may be part of the large-scale survey and analytic projects housed in NORC's related research departments, although that is not a requirement for center membership. The centers provide office space for these faculty members and their students, computing services, training programs, grants administration, services from NORC's special library (see further below), workshops and conferences, and specialized services to meet the needs of individual projects. Three of the four centers receive general grant funds to support their infrastructure: the Population Research Center through a population center grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development; the Center on Demography and Economics of Aging from a National Institute on Aging center grant; and the Sloan Center on Parents, Children & Work from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

The Alfred P. Sloan Center on Parents, Children & Work

Barbara L. Schneider and Linda J. Waite
Co-Directors

This center is built on the conviction that studying the issues facing working parents and their children requires understanding the dynamics of working families—not only from the perspective of adults in the household, but also through the voices of the children. University of Chicago faculty from psychology, sociology, economics, child development, human development, and public policy work collaboratively to examine how families invest time and resources, how these choices are made, and the effects they have on the quality of relationships in the household and the resulting socialization of school-age children and adolescents.

The Center on Demography and Economics of Aging

Linda J. Waite
Director

This center provides support to research projects in four key areas: demography of aging, economics of aging, health policy, and biodemography. Center associates are drawn from the University of Chicago departments of sociology and economics and the graduate school of business, the medical school, and the Harris School of Public Policy Studies. The center awards small pilot-project grants and seeks to develop an innovative international network to facilitate collaborative research ties and data resource development with the United Kingdom.

The Ogburn-Stouffer Center for the Study of Social Organizations

Edward O. Laumann
Director

This center houses and supports social organization research and the sociology of education. It also provides on-the-job training for graduate students in the University of Chicago's sociology department.

The Population Research Center

William L. Parish
Director

This center facilitates interdisciplinary population research by economists, sociologists, and other population scientists. Topics include family, aging, health, schooling and employment, as well as determinants of fertility decisions and their dynamics. In each area, our researchers work at the margins of traditional demography, thus helping expand the domain of the field. The Center's training program in population and demography coordinates training for postdoctoral fellows and for graduate students in both the University of Chicago's Division of the Social Sciences and its Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy Studies.

WIDER UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO AFFILIATION

Faculty Resources

The relationship between the University of Chicago and NORC is mutually beneficial in many ways. NORC provides University of Chicago faculty with stimulating intellectual challenges in important policy areas. The key to this collaboration lies in the interplay between NORC staff and University of Chicago faculty. Joint appointments provide benefits to both university and NORC departments that are more than the sum of their separate parts. So does faculty affiliation with NORC's research centers which, as already discussed, provide a collegial and supportive working environment for faculty and on-the-job training opportunities for graduate students. The University of Chicago's Division of the Social Sciences is particularly prominent in this connection. Additional enormous benefit derives from teaming agreements and more informal collaboration between NORC and other institutions affiliated with the university. The most important of these other units for NORC's work are:

- Chapin Hall Center for Children
- Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy Studies
- Joint Center for Poverty Research
- School of Social Service Administration
- School of Medicine
- University of Chicago Hospitals

Library Resources

Patricia D. Cloud
NORC Library Director

NORC's library is a valuable specialty library in its own right. It maintains a comprehensive collection of monographic and periodical literature in survey research methodology and history, as well as selected literature on statistics, education, health care administration, public health, demography, program evaluation, and U.S. and international census and vital statistics.

The considerable independent value of NORC's library is immeasurably enhanced by its affiliation with the University of Chicago, with respect to both user services and acquisitions. First, the affiliation makes available to NORC's library the wide range of resources of the University of Chicago Libraries. NORC staff may, through both its library and all networked NORC workstations, make full use of a large and growing number of specialized online resources that the University of Chicago Libraries provide to their patrons, as well as interlibrary loan, document delivery, and other special library services. Second, availability of one of the world's preeminent research collections--through the University of Chicago Libraries--allows NORC to concentrate its own library resources on the acquisition of highly specialized materials that directly support current NORC research.

SPECIAL CAPABILITIES

NORC's early survey work provided the first rigorous empirical standard against which to calibrate the beliefs of policy makers claiming to represent and respond to "the people's will on vital issues of the day". NORC was also a pioneer in improving the speed and accuracy of surveys through electronic technologies.

And NORC led in the development of survey methodology as a field of study and progress in its own right.

Kirk M. Wolter
*Senior Vice President, Statistics
and Methodology*

Barbara K. Campbell
*Senior Vice President, Survey
Operations*

Colm A. O’Muircheartaigh
Vice President, Methodology

Fritz J. Scheuren
Vice President, Statistics

SURVEY DESIGN AND OPERATIONS

The survey design and operations of a field research study are crucial to reliability, validity, and credibility. These study components include design and execution of the sample; mode of interviewing (telephone, field, internet); use of Web interviewing; hiring, training, and management of interviewers; questionnaire design; sample management; data collection procedures and execution; data coding, editing, and imputation; and weighting and variance estimation. All these aspects feed into the analysis of the data and the reporting of substantive findings. NORC organizes these crucial survey functions into four management categories: questionnaire design and survey methodology, data production, field operations, and sampling and weighting.

Questionnaire Design and Survey Methodology

Colm A. O’Muircheartaigh
Vice President and Director

NORC has been a leader in methodological innovation in survey research since its founding. Inherent in NORC’s approach is the integration of theoretical developments into survey practice. Among current initiatives are comparing different respondent incentive strategies in a controlled randomized experiment and developing a web/internet response option in self-completion surveys.

NORC’s inhouse resource group for the design, evaluation, and development of questionnaires uses a variety of approaches—including cognitive interviews, expert review, and focus groups—to provide guidance to NORC project directors and associated scientists on the strengths and weaknesses of alternative data collection strategies. This group is developing an archive of questionnaires and questions spanning the range of topics covered in NORC surveys. They are also developing, in collaboration with others at the University of Chicago, a program of courses in survey research methods. This educational initiative, which is a cornerstone of NORC’s professional development program, has a twofold purpose--educating and training NORC staff and University of Chicago faculty and students, and consolidating NORC as a center of excellence in all aspects of survey research methodology.

Production Centers

Jennifer A. Kelly
Vice President and Director

Lynn A. Hamilton
Director Downers Grove Operations and Telephone Center

Shirley Williams
Director 1 North State Operations and Data Preparation Center

NORC has two state-of-the-art production facilities devoted to telephone data collection and data preparation activities. One is in Chicago's downtown Loop area. The other is about 30 miles southwest of Chicago. Establishing two centers in separate locations with different population characteristics allows for flexibility and diversity in the hiring of interviewers, clerks, and supervisors. The Loop facility has a 120-seat capacity and the Downers Grove facility a 132-seat capacity. Both are equipped to perform computer-assisted survey research functions. Tasks at the facilities include telephone data collection, respondent locating and screening, survey response coding, hard copy document management, computer-assisted data entry, and survey material and corporate mailings. At peak times in the year 2001, total staffing levels at the two Production Centers reached 170 interviewers and clerks, 32 supervisors, and 6 survey coordinators.

Production Center staff are chosen to represent the diverse backgrounds necessary to serve the needs of NORC's many data production functions. These include several bilingual interviewers who speak Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Khmer and other Asian languages. Work experience and educational background at both production centers are also varied. Some staff members come to NORC with previous production center experience in survey research, market research, and customer service. Others have experience in such areas as the medical field, social work, education, law, anthropology, broadcasting, engineering, and military service. Still others are small business owners, homemakers, students, artists, and musicians.

Field Operations Center

Charlene J. Weiss
Vice President and Director

Suzanne H. Bard
Associate Director

NORC supports a permanent field structure, managed by senior field staff, all of whom started as field interviewers at NORC over the past 25 years. Each of 12 geographically defined regions is headed by a regional manager. These managers are responsible for

recruiting, hiring, staffing, training, and developing/supporting all field interviewers and field managers within their region. The regional managers also manage field data collection projects and serve as liaisons with departments of NORC's central office that serve the field—particularly accounting, human resources, and information services. In addition to the regional managers, there are about 55 field managers who support NORC's field data collection needs.

NORC's 700 currently active interviewers display a broad array of backgrounds, talents, and skills. NORC depends on this diversity to help build its successful track record of high completion rates with markedly different target populations across widely varying types of communities. People have come to NORC's professional interviewing staff from backgrounds as college professors, freelance photographers, writers, marathon runners, bilingual interpreters for the court system, adult literacy coordinators, retirees from the Internal Revenue Service and the military, social workers, and sky divers. Some interviewers on staff have grown up and continue to live in tiny rural communities where they are small business owners, ranchers, or community volunteers.

Sampling and Weighting

Rachel M. Harter
Director

Sample design and weighting are crucial to the quality of any survey data collection effort. The sample must be representative of the study's target population, or the survey statistics may be misleading and biased. It must also be as efficient as possible, to maximize reliability of the information within the constraints of the project budget. NORC exclusively applies probability sampling—the only sampling method that ensures the representativeness and lack of bias crucial to high quality scientific studies. Its statisticians and methodologists have many years of experience in using such techniques as stratification, clustering, and probability proportional to size sampling, to maximize sample efficiency. They also design and execute sophisticated cross-sectional and longitudinal samples that achieve specified oversamples of targeted domains at minimum cost.

Weighting is almost always required to achieve absence of bias. NORC's survey statisticians and methodologists are world leaders in the development and calculation of survey weights and variance estimates. Weighting compensates for unequal probabilities of selection, screener nonresponse, subsampling, and main-interview nonresponse. It also permits calibration of survey statistics to known (or presumed known) population parameters. One current NORC initiative is assessing alternative weighting procedures for combining cases across parallel samples for a single population.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Information technology (IT) has become a critical enabler of today's complex social science research and analysis projects. With the rise of the Internet, relational databases, mobile computing, and other powerful technologies, researchers face increasingly complex and interconnected technology challenges. The NORC IT staff is committed to providing our clients and researchers with the information and solutions necessary to successfully navigate the myriad IT options and challenges they face each day.

Data Collection and Survey Operations

As a pioneer in computer assisted interviewing (CAI), NORC has a rich history in developing leading-edge information systems to support survey operations and data collection. Over the last decade NORC has developed *NORCSuite*, an integrated set of software components that support the administration of surveys and the processing of survey response data. With *NORCSuite*, NORC provides clients with flexible solutions that blend best practices in survey operations and software development with the ability to customize software to meet a project's specific requirements.

This past year saw release of a major *NORCSuite* component: a new case management infrastructure called CM-Field. CM-Field leverages the latest internet technologies, including Java and XML, to provide field workers with the latest in CAPI capabilities: a disconnected mode for laptop-based interviewers and a connected mode for field managers, production shop personnel, and central office project staff. Through a common code base of object-oriented software and a common relational database, CM-Field provides projects with the flexibility to serve our most complex mixed-mode surveys and the security to protect our clients' data. Typical tasks managed by CM-Field include assignment and transfer of cases, field contact management, survey disposition, synchronization of offline data, post-processing, and real-time access to the rich metadata surrounding each case. CM-Field continues the *NORCSuite* tradition of CAI-tool independence by integrating with both commercial and custom CAI solutions.

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e-Services

The Internet provides the survey industry with both new opportunities and new challenges. From secure web interviewing to remote collaboration, the web promises to become increasingly central to how we conduct business internally, as well as how we interact with our clients, respondents, and the public at large.

This past year, NORC continued to expand its use of the web to reach respondents. In addition to launching several new web survey efforts, NORC began to integrate web-based interviewing into our *NORCSuite* software framework, moving this mode from a stand-alone capability into a more seamless mixed-mode tool.

In addition to using the web to reach respondents, the e-Services team restructured our public web site to more effectively disseminate information about NORC to the broader public. In conjunction with release of this newly restructured corporate site, NORC deployed project-specific sites designed to disseminate information, research papers, and data sets for several very timely, high-profile studies.

Finally, NORC continued to expand its use of network-based collaborative technologies. Project extranet sites allow the asynchronous exchange of information with clients, while a new videoconferencing system provides an effective means of synchronous communication for distributed project and client teams.

Data Products and Services

Led by NORC's Data Programming Services Department, NORC's data delivery capabilities are central to NORC's research mission. Data services include technical questionnaire analysis, complex data programming, and secure delivery of client data. In addition to these traditional strengths, NORC has added analytical data systems (or data warehousing) to its portfolio of data products.

One of the most exciting developments this past year was the launch of the NORC corporate data warehouse. In the first stage of a multi-phased effort, the data warehousing team launched the CM-Decision Data Mart. Using a proven set of commercial technologies and techniques, NORC developed a web-based Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) system that allows NORC's survey management team to monitor the progress of field interviewers, both at an individual case level and at various levels of aggregation. Because this system incorporates data from the case management database as well as core financial and administrative systems, central office and field personnel have an integrated and very timely view of project activity. This has proven invaluable to the monitoring and management of field resources.

Infrastructure and Communication

NORC's technical infrastructure team supports a wide variety of applications and a large distributed population of users, clients, and respondents. Providing a stable, reliable, secure platform for computing and communication is its primary mission. To accomplish it, NORC has invested over the years in robust, scalable technologies such as its Storage Area Network (SAN) and advanced monitoring tools. With the rise in importance of the internet, the team has invested substantial resources to allow NORC to leverage this tool to its fullest extent without compromising security.

Over the last year, the infrastructure team expanded its default monitoring capabilities to detect increasingly fine levels of application-level problems. By simulating very detailed transactions on regular intervals and testing for appropriate levels of application response, the infrastructure team can manage network, server, and now application-level issues as soon as they appear. These capabilities increase the ability of the infrastructure team to respond proactively to problems and potentially head off more significant system failures. These monitoring capabilities along with continually increasing levels of system redundancy provide NORC with the stable infrastructure necessary to operate in a 24/7 world.

With a more interconnected world comes an increase in the need to protect against the compromise of systems and data. Security is a matter of both process and technology, and this past year saw continued improvements in each. In order to leverage the power of the internet in a secure manner, NORC implemented a firewall to protect internal systems and a virtual private network (VPN) to allow for secure distributed computing. Along with intrusion detection, these technologies—combined with strict behavioral protocols— provide the security necessary to protect our interests and those of our clients. In addition to this base level of security, project-specific protocols have been devised to provide clients that have unique privacy or security concerns the highest levels of protection.

Delivery Management

In a move that mirrors proven best practice in the information technology industry, NORC's IT department established a separate Delivery Management team, responsible for Methodology, Project Management, Business Analysis and Quality Assurance. By establishing a separate center of excellence for these related functions, the NORC IT department has been able to more consistently execute the delivery of robust, on-time, on-budget technology solutions for all internal and external IT engagements. By standardizing on a process and developing a sophisticated team of resources experienced in it, NORC's IT department has been able to minimize risk and increase the productivity of all IT activities.

RECENT NORC PUBLICATIONS

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