

A quarterly report on activities and events at the National Opinion Research Center.

New Initiatives

2008 Retiree Health Benefits Survey

NORC's Health Care Delivery and Health Outcomes department is pleased to announce a new award by the Kaiser Family Foundation to conduct the 2008 Retiree Health Benefits Survey. This survey is designed to provide estimates of the proportion of large employers that offer retiree health benefits, costs incurred by both employers and retirees, and levels of offered coverage.

For the 2008 survey, NORC is developing a probability list sample stratified by size of organization and industry type as well as a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) instrument. NORC is conducting telephone interviews with benefits representatives at 1,000 large organizations that may or may not offer retiree health benefits. Tables, a methodology report, and a data file also will be delivered. All of the work is being conducted this summer. Contact Stephen Smith at (312) 759-4023 or smith-stephen@norc.org.

Paid Sick Days Survey

The Economics, Labor, and Population Studies Department will conduct the Paid Sick Days Survey under the sponsorship of the Public Welfare Foundation. The national telephone survey will examine attitudes toward paid time off for illness. Kyle Fennell will direct the project and Tom W. Smith will refine the foundation's questionnaire, analyze the data, and write a final report. Contact Tom Smith at smith-tom@norc.org or (773) 256-6288.

Job Volatility

NORC has received a grant from the Ford Foundation to support analytic work by Julia Lane (National Science Foundation), Harry Holzer (Georgetown University and the Urban Institute), and Fredrik Andersson (Cornell University and the Census Bureau) on job volatility. The grant continues work that Lane, Holzer, and Andersson are undertaking with MacArthur Foundation Support. Contact Chet Bowie at (301) 634-9334 or bowie-chet@norc.org.



Focus Groups for MedPAC

NORC's Health Policy & Evaluation Department has been awarded a contract to conduct focus groups on topics of interest to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. Georgetown University is a partner. Contact Dan Gaylin at (301) 634-9417 or gaylin-dan@norc.org.

Focus Groups for Public Health Accreditation Board

NORC will assist the Public Health Accreditation Board in refining its draft national accreditation standards for public health agencies. NORC will conduct an online survey of users and stakeholders, develop a standardized set of focus group protocols and a focus group data collection form, and analyze survey and focus group results. Contact Project Director Michael Meit at (301) 634-9324 or meit-michael@norc.org.

Public Financing, Accountability, and Oversight Models to Sustain Electronic Health Information Exchange

Under subcontract to the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, NORC will contribute to *An Examination of the Public Financing, Accountability, and Oversight Models to Sustain Electronic Health Information Exchange*, sponsored by the National Governors Association. It aims to develop state models for sustainable HIE efforts. NORC will be involved in project planning, a literature review and an environmental scan of electronic health information exchange models, and research synthesis and contributions to the final report. Contact Prashila Dullabh, M.D. at (301) 634-9418 or dullabh-prashila@norc.org.

Financial Protection and the Value of Individual and Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance: A National Perspective

NORC is undertaking a project sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund to document the comparative affordability of small-group, large-group, and individual market insurance plans, taking into account both premiums and out-of-pocket medical expenses. Contact Senior Fellow Jon Gabel at (301) 634-9313 or gabel-jon@norc.org.

Economic Advisory Panel on the Sustainability of Health Information Exchange

NORC will support the development of health information exchange in the U.S. for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology at the Department of Health and Human Services. A central activity of this project will be to convene an Economic Advisory Panel on the Sustainability of Health Information Exchange.

NORC will conduct a literature search, create briefing materials for the panel, and organize, facilitate, and document panel activities. The panel will focus on the identification of policy levers and market catalysts to improve the value of health information exchange and to develop the market for non-geographic regional and nationwide health information exchange, and to increase the understanding of the interdependence of health information exchange and health care policy reform, with a particular emphasis on payment reform. NORC staff members will incorporate these recommendations into a roadmap identifying particular actors and actions to foster health information exchange. This will be an intensive effort taking place from July to December of 2008. Contact Adil Moiduddin at (301) 634-9419 or moiduddin-adil@norc.org.

Vietnam Land Reform.

NORC will provide advisory services to the government of Vietnam on land reform issues. NORC's Stephen Butler will work with the government's Land Law Drafting Team to facilitate improvements to Vietnam's Land Law of 2003. The envisioned legal and regulatory reforms are intended to enhance business access to and use of land. The project is supported by the International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank Group. Contact Stephen Butler at butler-stephen@norc.org.



Bangladesh Land Administration.

For the International Finance Corporation, NORC will improve how land is administered in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Land Administration project will undertake:

- A process mapping of key land-related transactions;
- Follow-up data collection by conducting focus group with stakeholders at identified field locations;
- Formulation of the draft reform proposals;
- Development of a communications strategy and modification and finalization of the reform proposals.

NORC will provide overall management and quality assurance. Field staff and field management of the data collection will be provided by Uniconsult LLC of Bangladesh, a subcontractor to NORC. Contact Stephen Butler at butler-stephen@norc.org.

Imputation Research for the Current Employment Statistics Program

NORC has been selected to undertake research for imputing total employment data for establishments that did not report their employment figures on the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program as of first closing. The monthly CES surveys about 150,000 non-farm businesses and government agencies—approximately 390,000 individual worksites in all—capturing detailed information on numbers of employees, hours worked, and wages earned. Imputation of missing data will increase the precision of the monthly estimates and reduce the subsequent revisions. NORC's effort will be led by Ken Copeland, who can be reached at (301) 634-9432 or copeland-kennon@norc.org.

NORC/ Mexican Social Development Agreement Offers Hope for Reducing Poverty



NORC's Jeff Telgarsky and John Thompson, University of Chicago's Rob Townsend, and Mexico's Suarez Morales at the April 24, 2008 signing.

On April 24, 2008 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago signed an agreement with the Mexican Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL) that could boost Mexico's social and economic development. The

agreement will facilitate research to improve social programs for the poor and provide critical data for economic analysis of the country as a whole. The agreement will evaluate current programs and devise new approaches to spur economic growth.

Researchers and policy makers from both organizations in Mexico and the United States will come together to determine the research priorities. The Mexican government will provide researchers at the University of Chicago with access to comprehensive data including, census information, survey information, geographic information, and data on the characteristics of beneficiaries of social programs. Researchers will work together to evaluate the impact of different socioeconomic programs implemented by SEDESOL and model policy alternatives.

Professor Robert Townsend will spearhead the research initiative on behalf of NORC. His prior work on entrepreneurship and wealth creation in Thailand will provide the blueprint for analysis on Mexico. Read the University of Chicago [press release](#).

Ongoing Projects



Wave 2 of National Social Life Health and Aging Project is Funded

NORC has been awarded a grant by the National Institute on Aging to conduct the second wave of the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP).

NSHAP's first wave was very successful and obtained questionnaire and innovative biomeasure data on a nationally-representative sample of 3,005 community-dwelling adults aged 57 to 85 in 2005/6. Wave 1 data is now available as a public use data set. The second wave of NSHAP will obtain high-quality data on social networks and social support, marital and cohabitational relationships, attitudes, self-reported health and behavior, and collect an array of biomeasures of physical function and health. Analyses and the public availability of such a broad-based, longitudinal data set will fill a crucial gap in knowledge about the health trajectories of older adults and inform new approaches to reducing morbidity and preventing disability and dysfunction as individuals age.

NSHAP is conducted in collaboration with researchers at the University of Chicago. Sociologist Linda Waite is the principal investigator and co-investigators include Edward O. Laumann, Colm O'Muircheartaigh, Martha McClintock, and Phil Schumm. Stephen Smith will be the Project Director; Angie Jaszczak will be the Associate Project Director. [See related story on page 4.] Contact Steve Smith at (312) 759-4023 or smith-stephen@norc.org.

Georgia Impact Evaluation



The Millennium Challenge Corporation has modified the contract for NORC's ongoing evaluation work in Georgia. NORC is

evaluating the impact of efforts to improve the infrastructure and to foster agriculture and business. The increased value of the contract supports a new quarterly validation survey with a small sample size that covers the target populations of both the Agricultural Development Activity (ADA) and the Samtskhe-Javakheti Road evaluations. Half of the sample is expected to overlap with other samples used in Georgian surveys that form part of the data supporting the evaluation. Part of the sample would be based on following up the same cohort of respondents to observe change within the specific cohort. This is project 6376. Fritz Scheuren is the project director. Contact him at scheuren-fritz@norc.org.

National Former Prisoner Survey (FPS) Nearing Completion

At the end of July, NORC had completed more than 16,000 interviews as part of the National Former Prisoner Survey (FPS). The FPS is one of three major studies undertaken by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), U.S. Department of Justice, in response to congressional mandates in the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. The survey is designed to provide national estimates of sexual violence within prisons.

The FPS involves the random selection of 250 to 300 parole offices nationally. Each office was asked to provide a roster of individuals under active supervision after being released from state prisons. From these rosters, a sample of approximately 33,000 former prisoners was randomly selected nationwide.

After obtaining contact information on all sampled former prisoners, the NORC Telephone Survey and Support Center will contact respondents to make appointments for interviews. Data collection will take place over a two-week period at each parole office, with two to four NORC interviewers conducting interviews. Interviewers will use a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) format to obtain background and criminal history information; then respondents will use touch-screen audio technology (TACASI) to respond on laptop computers to questions that are pre-recorded and are heard by the former prisoners through earphones. Use of this technology provides the privacy and confidentiality needed to address issues relevant to violence and sexual assault while in prison.

In August, interviews will be conducted at six additional sites for which state agreements were recently obtained and a final site may be added after that. NORC also will collect records data on all sampled cases for the purpose of weighting the data for non-response and will ultimately provide BJS with a weighted data file of survey responses. Candace Johnson is the Project Director. Contact her at (301) 634-9319 or Johnson-candace@norc.org.

National Survey of Adoptive Parents

NORC is in the midst of finalizing the data file for the National Survey of Adoptive Parents, which began in April of 2007. Administered as part of the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health, the National Survey of Adoptive Parents will focus on the characteristics and needs of adopted children and their adoptive families.

This project continues work begun in 2005 to develop and field a survey on the experiences of families who have adopted children from foster care and other sources. It examines the factors that facilitate or hinder the success of

adoptions. It will also look at the post-adoption support needed to assure the well-being of adopted children, and how the well-being and service needs of children adopted from foster care compare with other types of adoption. The survey, pretested in 2006 by NORC, is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the Department of Health and Human Services. It is coordinated through the National Center for Health Statistics.

The NSAP is administered using the State and Local Area Integrated Telephone Surveys (SLAITS) model, a telephone survey mechanism designed to benefit from the extensive sampling investment made by the National Immunization Survey. In this manner, SLAITS surveys, such as the NSAP, enjoy the methodological advantages of being based on a large Random Digit Dial (RDD) sample design without incurring the cost of establishing known households. Heather Morrison is the Project Director. Contact her at (312) 759-5087 or morrison-heather@norc.org.

People



Bowie Elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association

Chet Bowie, Senior Vice President and Director of NORC's Economics, Labor and Population Studies Department, was a

Fellow of the American Statistical Association (ASA). Each year, ASA members nominate their peers to receive this honorary title. The ASA By-Laws state that "By the honorary title of Fellow the Association recognizes full members of established reputation who have made outstanding contributions in some aspect of statistical work." Given annually, this is a great honor as the numbers of recipients are limited to no more than 1/3 of 1% of the ASA membership.

Waite Receives Prestigious NIH MERIT Award



CHICAGO -- NORC Research Associate and University of Chicago Professor of Sociology Linda J. Waite became the recipient of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) MERIT award - Method to Extend Research in Time. MERIT awards are among the most selective research grants given by the NIH, with less than 5 percent of NIH-funded investigators selected as recipients. MERIT awards provide

long-term support to outstanding, experienced investigators. The awards recognize researchers who have demonstrated superior competence and outstanding productivity in research endeavors of special importance or promise.

Waite is the Lucy Flower Professor of Sociology and the Co-Director of NORC's Center on Demography and Economics of Aging. Her recent work on biomarkers and pharmaceutical data on population-based aging research – the basis of the MERIT award– has yielded groundbreaking knowledge about the sexual behavior of older Americans as part of the National Social Life, Health and Aging Project (NSHAP).

MERIT awards provide investigators with an opportunity for extension of their current grant for an additional 3 to 5 years without having to submit a traditional competing renewal application. Receipt of the award also allows an automatic carryover of unexpended funds into the subsequent budget cycle. These benefits free the researcher from paperwork and allow them to concentrate their efforts on advancing the research.

Events

NORC Receives Department of Justice Award for Small Business Subcontracting Practices

On June 5, 2008, the Department of Justice awarded NORC a Certificate of Achievement for its work in subcontracting with small and disadvantaged businesses. Senior Research Scientist Candace Johnson represented NORC at the awards ceremony in The Great Hall of the RFK Justice Building Washington, DC.

A Decade of Data: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 Cohort 10th Anniversary Conference



May 29-30, 2008 -- NORC hosted a conference at the headquarters of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to highlight the extraordinary value of data collected as part of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 Cohort (NLSY97) and to promote its use by scholars. The event featured research papers that use the data to show what we know as a result of this survey in the areas of schooling, employment, family behavior, and risky behavior. Several scholars also presented papers about research methodologies associated with the survey.

The NLSY97 collects longitudinal data that broadly and accurately captures measures of resources, relationships, and outcomes of young men and women as they undertake and complete their education, enter employment, and pursue their occupations and their family life. The BLS funds the NLSY97 and the team of NORC at the University of Chicago and the Center for Human Resources Research at the Ohio State University undertook the survey.

The men and women in the NLSY97 cohort statistically represent the U.S. population of teenagers at the turn of the millennium. The group was first recruited as a national probability sample of all youths in the U.S. born in 1980-1984 and these 8,984 men and women have been surveyed annually since 1997. The astounding 84% response rate is an indication of the quality of these data.

The array of information we have collected about them in the past decade is truly breathtaking; over 120,000 pieces of information exists about each of these young adults. We know about their schooling, their initial entry into the experience of employment, and their subsequent work history, job training, earnings and hours of work. We also know about their family of origin, the structure and behaviors within their family, demographic information about their parents, siblings and non-resident biological parents, and their relationship with the latter. Additionally we know about their dating and early sexual histories and about their "anti-social" behaviors including drinking, smoking,

illicit drugs, criminal activities, run-ins with the law, convictions, incarcerations and rehabilitation.

The conference was sponsored by the NICHD-funded Population Research Center and the Spencer Foundation. The agenda and a list of papers and presenters are available [here](#).

Access to Business Microdata: A Professional Development Workshop

A professional development workshop will be held on August 8, 2008, from 3-6 pm at the [Academy of Management Annual Meeting](#) in Anaheim, California. New ways are being developed both nationally and internationally to promote researcher access to business microdata -- particularly researchers who are geographically dispersed. This professional development workshop is intended to introduce attendees to a new modality, the [NORC Data Enclave](#).

The enclave also promotes user/producer interaction through wikis, blogs and discussion groups, as well as encourages the development of a broader infrastructure by sharing additions to the dataset. The enclave approach, which started in July 2007, already provides access to micro data from NIST and USDA/ERS, and expects soon to have data from other statistical agencies. Because of this we also want to engage attendees, as part of the research community, to provide input into some components of the enclave, such as:

- What are appropriate metrics of success?
- What are the best incentives to put into place to achieve success?
- What is the appropriate organizational structure – centralized or decentralized?

NORC Sponsors International Conference on Survey Methodology

NORC was a sponsor of the International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional, and Multicultural Contexts (3MC) that took place in Berlin from June 25 - 28, 2008.

The conference presented state-of-the-art research on all aspects of cross-national and cross-cultural survey methods related to design, data collection, quality assurance, analysis and archiving. The conference focused on the methods, tools, strategies and protocols to help maximize comparability across countries, languages and cultures.

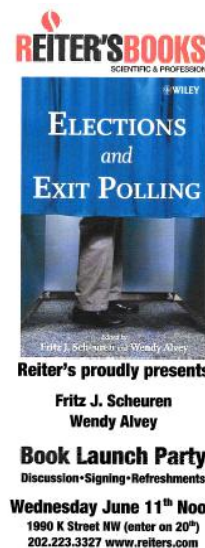
Several NORC staff and associates presented papers to the conference:

- NORC Senior Fellow Tom W. Smith presented "The Globalization of Survey Research."
- NORC Senior Fellow Norman Bradburn presented "Key National Indicators Initiative."
- NORC Senior Fellow Colm O'Muircheartaigh (with Steve Heeringa) presented "Sampling Designs for Cross-cultural and Cross National Studies."
- NORC Vice President and Senior Fellow Fritz Scheuren (with NORC Survey Statistician Safaa Amer and Miranda Berishvilli) presented "Reducing Poverty through Growth: Meta Analysis of Benin, Georgia, and Vanuatu."

For more information, visit the conference website: www.3MC2008.de

Publications

Elections and Exit Polling



NORC Senior Fellow Fritz Scheuren and coauthor Wendy Alvey were on hand at a book signing party at Reiter's Books in Washington, DC on June 11 to celebrate the publication of a new book, "Elections and Exit Polling."

NORC Staff to Present Papers at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August

Between August 4 and August 7, 2008, more than 20 NORC staff members will present a paper, participate in a panel, or chair a session of the Joint Statistical Meetings in Denver, Colorado. A list of all presenters and publications can be found at the [JSM 2008 Conference site](#).

NORC in the News

Selected coverage of NORC projects and staff in the popular press. To subscribe to the weekly news email, contact: savage-cathleen@norc.org

Gaylin, Dullabh Quoted on Personal Health Records

NORC Executive Vice President Dan Gaylin and Health IT Program Manager Prashila Dullabh were interviewed by Kevin Heubusch, editor in chief of the Journal of American Health Information Management Association (Citation: Heubusch, Kevin. "[IT Standards for PHRs: Are PHRs Ready for Standards? Are Standards Ready for PHRs?](#)" Journal of AHIMA 79, no.6 (June 2008): 31-36.) In the article, Gaylin says, PHRs are in their infancy, so a lot of the learning is establishing what we don't know—we as a nation—which is an awful lot." In enumerating the list of areas included in a recent environmental scan, Dullabh explained it considered "everything that is currently being done that remotely intersects with what PHRs might do."

Obesity Costly for Employers

May 22, 2008 -- NORC Senior Fellow Jon Gabel was interviewed by NPR (listen here) about his recent analysis of employer and employee attitudes on weight management programs in the workplace. The story also was featured on [Occupational Hazards](#), Fox Business Channel ([play clip here](#)), [voluntary.com](#), and [Kansas City Infozine](#). The survey findings were revealed by the Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance May 22 during a Washington D.C., briefing at the National Press Club. A summary of the briefing including a photo and the survey results are now available on the [STOP Obesity Alliance web site](#). Findings include:

- 71 percent of employers view offering obesity-related services as appropriate;
- 73 percent of them also saw them as effective;
- 80 percent of employees surveyed agreed that weight management programs belong in the workplace;
- 67 percent of employers are concerned about medical costs associated with obesity;
- 11 percent of employers strongly agree that obesity is genetic in origin, while 70 percent of those surveyed "somewhat agreed" with that assessment.

Working Without a Net

In a July 6 opinion piece for the [Los Angeles Times](#), reporter Peter Gosselin noted that "...60% of everything we own -- is accounted for by the value of our homes." The figure comes from the [Survey of Consumer Finances](#) (SCF), which NORC conducts on behalf of the Federal Reserve Board. The column explored Gosselin's theory about why Americans' confidence levels are so low.

Small Businesses Can't Afford Health Care for Workers

The July 10 issue of the [New York Times](#) quoted NORC Senior Fellow Jon Gable in an in-depth article about the difficulties small businesses face in offering health insurance to their workers. Gabel estimates that small firms pay 18 percent more for the same insurance than big companies.

Happiness Research Gets Lots of Attention

The comic strip [Pickles](#) ran a series of strips in July about happiness (June 30 - July 4). While NORC and the General Social Survey (GSS) are not mentioned specifically, the study mentioned is definitely the work of NORC Research Associate Dr. Yang Yang, who analyzed GSS data on happiness. Yang found that older Americans are the happiest.

Happiness also was the topic of a story in the July 2008 [Reader's Digest](#) by Arthur C. Brooks. He referenced NORC's General Social Survey.

Finally, NORC Senior Fellow Tom Smith, Director of the GSS, was interviewed on happiness by a talk radio show in West Virginia (thanks to Field Interviewer Richard Fleming for reporting this) and by the [Washington Post](#) and [Seattle Times](#) (July 15).

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