

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

## New Initiatives

### NORC to Provide Analytic Support to TRIO Education Programs

NORC has been selected to provide analytic support to the federal Department of Education's TRIO programs. Named for the original three TRIO grants, the program now consists of seven grants that seek to improve postsecondary preparation and access, as well as college persistence and completion rates of at-risk students. Two programs target educationally disadvantaged students at higher education institutions. The others target instructional and other student support practices starting in middle schools and high schools, and extending into 2-year and 4-year colleges. All grantees are postsecondary education institutions or community organizations.

NORC will work with existing TRIO program datasets and will, in some cases, combine and improve existing databases to yield data appropriate for examination. Data analysis and several reports will follow, and will include presentations at annual grantee meetings. NORC will work with William Trent of the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana, previously a TRIO program director, and with Christopher Stahnke of Shakti Consulting in Falls Church, Virginia. NORC's Sam Bedinger is the project director. Contact him at (301) 634-9420 or [Bedinger-Sam@norc.org](mailto:Bedinger-Sam@norc.org).

### NORC to Evaluate Microlending in Mongolia

NORC has secured a contract with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to undertake two Microfinance Impact Assessment Surveys in Mongolia. These surveys are part of a randomized impact assessment that will analyze the impact—in terms of poverty alleviation (for households) and profitability of the participating microfinance institution—of the provision of different types of microcredit to indigent women in rural areas. In particular, it will look at the impact of providing group lending versus individual lending to women in rural areas.

NORC will provide overall management and quality assurance for the data collection, including development of the questionnaire and training materials, operational planning, Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification, data quality review during data collection and of final data sets, and analysis of the data. Field staff and field management of the data collection will be provided by Marbis Consulting of Mongolia as a subcontractor to NORC.



The microfinance bank participating in this impact assessment is XacBank, which proposes to expand its lending operations to

borrowers that currently have no access to finance: indigent women in rural areas.

This is NORC's first ever project in Mongolia. Stephen Butler (see announcement below) is the project director. He can be reached by phone at (203) 761-1183 or at [butler-stephen@norc.org](mailto:butler-stephen@norc.org).

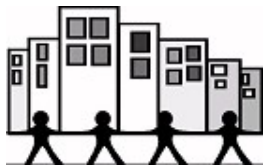
## Ongoing Projects

### Chicago Resident Relocation Survey Data Available

Datasets from the Resident Relocation Survey are now available to researchers and students. The Resident Relocation Survey is a longitudinal study of Chicago Housing Authority Leaseholders that is part of the city's Plan for Transformation.

The study, sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, collects information about the relocation and resettlement experiences of current and former public housing

residents in two phases (2002 and 2003) of movers. Each cohort was interviewed at three points in time.



Three student datasets are available directly through NORC's public website at: <http://www.norc.org/projects/Resident+Relocation+Surveys.htm>. They are meant to give students an

opportunity to see if the data are useful to their research interests. As such, they have been altered to protect respondents' identities and are, therefore, not meant to be the basis of analyses for reporting about this population. Students who determine that the data are useful to their research interests are encouraged to complete a Data Sharing Agreement form (also available on the site) for access to the researcher dataset.

The researcher dataset includes data from all five rounds of data collection and a codebook. These data have undergone a disclosure analysis to determine the risk of identifying a particular individual in the study. As a result, some data are top-coded, included in broader categories, or excluded from the file altogether. Researchers interested in using the dataset must first agree to the conditions, and provide the information outlined, in the Data Access Agreement form. Please submit the signed agreement form to [haggerty@norc.uchicago.edu](mailto:haggerty@norc.uchicago.edu).

Questionnaires for each survey and the NORC report associated with each round of data collection are also available through our public website.

Please contact Cathy Haggerty at (312) 759-4065 with any questions about this project.

## People

### NORC Welcomes Senior Fellow Mike Samuhel



Michael Samuhel has joined the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Samuhel, who works from NORC's Chicago Loop office as a senior fellow, is best known for his work in the health and social sciences disciplines. He has over 20 years experience as a senior

research statistician and as a manager,

working on a broad range of topics including health information technology, data privacy, global health, environment, energy, education, health services, military health, public health and epidemiology, AIDS, cancer, and maternal health.

Before joining NORC, Samuhel served as a senior research statistician at RTI International, where he directed large grants and contracts related to statistics and epidemiology. One of Samuhel's recent projects at RTI was a multinational study of how the human body responds to low-level nuclear radiation at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant site that exploded in 1986. Analysis from the study is expected to inform efforts to detect low levels of exposure and serve as a foundation for tools to predict short- and long-term effects of exposure and therapies to protect victims and clean-up workers.

Samuhel's additional research and management experience includes positions with the Battelle Memorial Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Samuhel holds a Ph.D. in Statistics and a M.S. in Mathematical Statistics from the American University in Washington, DC and a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Toledo. He is a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellow.

Contact Mike at (312) 759-4043 or by email at [samuhel-michael@norc.org](mailto:samuhel-michael@norc.org).

### Stephen B. Butler Joins International Group

Stephen Butler has joined the International Projects Department of NORC as a Senior Associate. Since 1992 he has engaged in an independent consulting practice in international development under his Jurisconsult LLC, working with the World Bank, International Finance Corporation, Interamerican Development Bank, USAID and various private sector consulting firms, including spending much of the 1990s as an affiliated consultant of the International Activities Center of the Urban Institute. Prior to his work in international development he was in private sector legal practice and an executive in housing and commercial property development. Butler will work out of NORC's Washington, DC office while continuing to live in Connecticut.

Butler has advised international donor agencies and ministries, central banks and regulatory commissions in 25 transitional and developing countries in 5 regions, assisting with policy review and development, institution building, design and implementation of regulatory action programs, and evaluation of public sector initiatives. His work has focused on property rights, development of commercial law, barriers to business start-up and investment, housing markets and housing finance, and land reform and administration. In recent years a large part of his practice has been focused on increasing the efficiency of public administrative processes, in particular licensing, permitting and registration of property, and development of regulatory frameworks for mortgage markets.

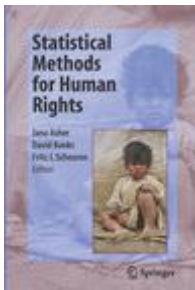
Just prior to joining NORC, Butler worked with Viet Nam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment on a project to assess the impact of that nation's Land Code on business creation and growth and to guide revisions to land and property law. This effort entailed a survey of small and medium enterprises and market professionals, and in-depth interviews with government officials in 12 provinces.

Other recent projects include work with the Government of Egypt on the creation of a mortgage refinancing authority, and work with the Financial Services Commission of Mongolia on behalf of USAID to aid in the creation of the legal and regulatory framework for mortgage and asset backed securities.

Butler can be reached at (203) 761-1183 or [butler-stephen@norc.org](mailto:butler-stephen@norc.org).

## Publications

### Statistical Methods for Human Rights



Not just anyone could combine these topics very easily but NORC Vice President and former President of the American Statistical Association Fritz Scheuren and his colleagues have done it. Springer published a 451-page volume today aimed at researchers, statisticians, and graduate students who want to apply their quantitative skills to social issues such as human rights. The book, [\*"Statistical Methods for Human Rights."\*](#) edited by Jana Asher, David Banks, and Fritz Scheuren, contains a collection of papers on statistics and human rights.

## Events



### May Conference Set for NLSY97

NORC is pleased to announce the award of a grant by the Spencer Foundation to support a conference marking the tenth anniversary of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 Cohort (NLSY97). Planned for May 2008 at the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington, the conference will feature papers based on the survey, highlighting the extraordinary value of the NLSY97 data.

The NLSY97 cohort was first recruited as a national probability sample of all youths in the U.S. born in 1980-1984 and these 8,984 young men and women have been surveyed annually since 1997, in a face-to-face, 60-minute, computer-assisted survey. Some additional data has been gathered by a variety of approaches, including a lengthy interview with the mother in 1997, an extensive aptitude/ability test, and high school transcript collection. After 10 years of work, the NLSY97 program has gathered a broad array of data on education, employment experiences, family of origin, family formation and other topics. The data capture important aspects of the multiple transitions that young people make as they move toward becoming fully independent adults. Additionally, the data set is of very high quality. The NLSY program has been characterized by very high response rates. The tenth annual survey has achieved a response rate of 84 percent of the original group of teenagers.

Robert Michael is the NLSY Project Director. He will oversee conference planning activities with the support of NORC Vice President Rupa Datta. The conference is sponsored by the Chicago-based Spencer Foundation, which has a primary focus on education. The foundation has sponsored a number of conferences at NORC.

## *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](mailto:savage-cathleen@norc.org)

### **Retirees Hold 25 Percent of Nation's Personal Wealth but Suffer during Economic Downturn**

A January 24, 2008 *Associated Press* story, about the difficulty some retirees are having during the economic downturn, was published on [MSNBC.com](http://MSNBC.com). The story noted statistics from the 2004 [Survey of Consumer Finances](#) (SCF), stating that retirees as a group are fairly well off, accounting for more than a quarter of the nation's personal net worth. NORC collects data for the Federal Reserve, who sponsors the SCF every three years. The 2007 SCF is currently underway, with field interviewers working on data collection nationwide.

### **Poetry Appeals to Hip Hop Crowd**

The [Orlando Sentinel](#) featured a January 19, 2008 commentary about the growing popularity of poetry among the hip hop generation. The piece referred to the [Poetry in America](#) survey, conducted by NORC for the Poetry Foundation. The survey found that nine out of 10 Americans felt that "poetry deepens experience and enriches the reader's life whenever we inadvertently encounter it in the public square."

### **Young American Parents**

The [Washington Post](#) published a January 15, 2008 story on the parenting patterns of young Americans. One source of data for the story was an analysis by University of Maryland sociologist Steve Martin of data from the 2000 – 2006 [General Social Survey](#). Martin found that 13 percent of men and 31 percent of women ages 25 to 29 with four-year college degrees have had children.

### **Change Creeps Up on Us**

NORC Senior Fellow Tom W. Smith was interviewed by syndicated columnist David Ignatius for a story about how social change happens in America. Smith noted that change happens gradually, giving an example from the [General Social Survey](#) about whether Americans are willing to vote for a black presidential candidate. FYI, the figure increased gradually from 75 percent in 1972 to 93 percent in 1996. The story was published on January 15, 2008 in the [Hartford Courant](#).

### **DC Program Modeled After Washington State Achievers**

The website [Examiner](#) published a December 11, 2007 story about a new scholarship program in the nation's capital designed to help students with high achievement potential from low-income homes and underserved neighborhoods to attend college.

According to the story, the DC Achievers program is modeled after the [Washington State Achievers](#) (WSA) program that NORC monitors and evaluates on behalf of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Full Professors are Older than You Think**

Several data points from the National Science Foundation's 2006 [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) were referenced in the December 5, 2007 [Chronicle of Higher Education](#)'s "on Hiring" section. The story noted that it takes the average PhD recipient longer than one might expect to earn the degree, get tenure, and finally gain full professorship. NORC conducts the SED on behalf of the NSF.

### **Will More Massachusetts Employers Drop Health Coverage?**

[Congressional Quarterly Politics](#) reported in its November 26, 2007 Healthbeat section on an analysis released earlier this month about the effect of health care reform in Massachusetts on employer coverage there. Jon Gabel, NORC senior fellow and the report's lead author, found little evidence employers in that state planned to drop coverage in order to save money as many had feared.

### **Keeping Track of 100,000 Kids**

The [Chicago Tribune](#) featured a November 20, 2007 story about the [National Children's Study](#) (NCS) and the local center's part in that study. The National Children's Study (NCS) is the largest and most comprehensive long-term study of children's health and development ever attempted in the United States. The NCS will track the health status of 100,000 children from before birth through age 21, with the overall goal of improving the health and well being of children. With Northwestern University as the prime contractor, NORC will partner with the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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