

When they build it,
will we buy it?



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You'll find the latest ISR research news and news coverage of ISR studies and experts, along with information about events. Connect with friends, faculty, alums, staff and students from around the world.



Weir testifies at congressional hearing on NFL player health

ISR researcher David Weir, left, lead author of an ISR study on the health and well-being of retired NFL players, testified before the House Judiciary Committee Oct. 28 on the role of his research in the debate over the connection between football and dementia.

"Faced with the aging of the U.S. population, we are all looking for policies and programs to serve the needs of people after a lifetime of hard work," said Weir, who directs the ISR Health & Retirement Study. "This unique population of retired football players is an intriguing place to look for challenges and solutions." Seated next to Weir is George Martin, executive director of the NFL Alumni Association.

Photo credit: Mike Waring



The ISR study, led by Weir and ISR Director James Jackson, came to the attention of Congress following articles in the *New York Times* and other news media. To read the full study, visit: <http://umich.edu/news/Releases/2009/Sep09/FinalReport.pdf>

2 ISR Sampler, Winter 2009

ISR
TIME
LINE

1946: Birth of the Survey Research Center



1946: Survey of Consumers



1947: Organizational Behavior Program



THE YEARLONG CELEBRATION OF ISR'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY Year has brought with it many changes. The Institute experienced something of a "brain drain" when President Obama tapped Survey Research Center Director Robert Groves to head the U.S. Census Bureau, and the National Science Foundation selected Myron Gutmann, Director of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, to head its Social, Behavioral, and Economics Directorate. While these appointments have brought great honor to the Institute and to the University of Michigan, they have also made it necessary for ISR to search for new leaders of its two largest Centers. We are fortunate indeed to rely on the steady hand of George Alter who has agreed to serve as Acting ICPSR Director while the search for a permanent ICPSR Director moves forward. And we are delighted that William Axinn has accepted the position of SRC Director. Read more about Bill on page 17 of this issue.

State of the I

Nationally, 2009 has been a memorable year as well. The first African-American president in U.S. history took office, and the U.S. faced the worst economic times since the Great Depression. In helping to assess the impact of this crisis and evaluate opportunities to move forward, ISR studies have once again led the way. The Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers have provided an invaluable measurement of consumer confidence and expectations, as well as intriguing new data on consumer attitudes toward the plug-in hybrid electric vehicles the auto industry is counting on to fuel its recovery. The ISR Health & Retirement Study and Panel Study of Income Dynamics both fielded special survey waves to assess the recession's impact on older Americans and multiple generations of U.S. families.

ISR researchers have successfully obtained NSF and NIH funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to conduct research on topics ranging from the impact of social relations on health and well-being to the interrelationship of environment and human activities and consumption patterns. In addition, we received an NSF grant to develop a database to assess the full economic, social, and scientific outcomes

of social science projects funded by the ARRA.

These and similar enterprises are among the sources of ISR's longevity and influence. Indeed, Sir Roger Jowell, founding director of London's Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, identified the belief in the value of uncompromisingly high-quality social measurements as "the very *raison d'être* of ISR's existence" in remarks he prepared for the Institute's June 19 Anniversary Celebration in Ann Arbor.



James S. Jackson

For those who missed that event, you can watch a video of the symposium at <http://www.isr.umich.edu/home/anniversary/> And on page 8 of this issue you can read an excerpt of Sir Roger's remarks, along with reflections by three former ISR Directors: F. Thomas Juster, Phillip Converse, and David Featherman. Taken together, their perspectives provide invaluable insights into the source of our strengths as we forge a path toward the future.

I also want to let you know about a new opportunity to honor one of the early female pioneers in the social sciences and the first female researcher at ISR – Elizabeth "Libby" Douvan. Well-known for her scholarship on family roles and mental health, the changing American family, and the social development of adolescents, Libby was also a tireless mentor and advocate for women. When she died in 2002, ISR established a fund to honor Libby by assisting junior scholars, and now, with help from the U-M Alumnae Council, we have a chance to continue Libby Douvan's legacy of supporting women to study issues of interest to women. But we need your help to do this.

In this year when our nation has not only elected the first African-American president but also seated the first Hispanic woman as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, we are hopeful that this initiative will meet with success.

1948: Research Center for Group Dynamics



1948: Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques



1948: Michigan Election Studies



1949: Founding of ISR



When they build it,

IT'S A COUPLE OF YEARS IN THE FUTURE, AND YOUR NEIGHBOR waves as she pulls out of the driveway in her trendy new plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, or PHEV. Is she: (a) a committed environmentalist; (b) fanatical about slashing her gasoline bills; (c) an advocate of cutting the country's dependence on foreign oil; or (d) a penny pincher who found a PHEV at a price not too much higher than that of a gasoline-powered car?

Until recently, the likely motivations of future PHEV buyers had been left open to speculation. But with the first PHEVs set for release in 2011, understanding how consumers may react to the vehicles and who might buy them has taken on great importance.

Indeed, such consumer attitudes are crucial to the coming transition to PHEVs. And when it comes to consumer attitudes, the man both business and government leaders have been turning to for more than 30 years now is ISR economist **Richard Curtin**. Director of the influential Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers since 1976, Curtin has called consumers "the elephant in the economy" because they account for three-quarters of total U.S. Gross Domestic Product. For the ailing domestic auto industry, the elephant is firmly in the driver's seat.

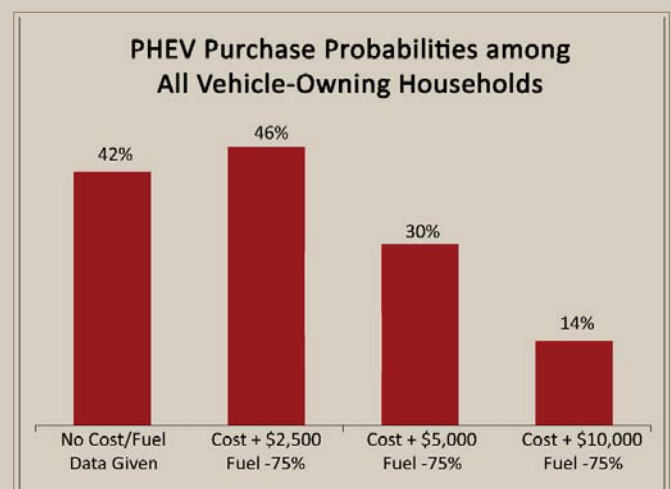
At a conference called "The Business of Plugging In," held in the Motor City in October, Curtin presented some good news and some bad news about consumer attitudes towards PHEVs, drawn from a survey he conducted over a five-month period in the second half of 2008, as part of the monthly surveys of consumer sentiment and expectations. Funded by the UM Transportation Research Institute and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, the survey is the first nationally representative, empirical survey on this subject. About 2,300 men and women over the age of 18 were asked about their current vehicles and driving habits, the probabilities they would buy PHEVs under different cost and expense scenarios, and how important it was to them to drive a car that would help reduce greenhouse emissions and the nation's reliance on foreign oil.

"Consumers are pretty positive about cars like the GM Volt," said Curtin, a man whose stamina in producing consumer surveys could be compared to an ironman athlete who finishes a race once a month, every month, for decades. "But price is a major issue."

Just how big an issue is clear from the survey, which began by asking consumers this question: "On a scale of zero to one hundred, where zero means that you would definitely not buy and one hundred means you definitely would buy, what are the chances that you might buy a plug-in hybrid vehicle sometime in the future?"

With no information about the likely cost of PHEVs compared to traditional vehicles, and no information about likely fuel savings, there was a 42 percent chance that they would buy a PHEV down the road. But when fuel savings of 75% and three different levels of cost premiums were added to the question, the situation changed considerably. There was a forty-six percent chance that vehicle-owning households would buy a PHEV that cost \$2,500 more than a traditional vehicle. But only a 30 percent chance if the vehicle cost \$5,000 more, and just a 14 percent chance if the car cost an additional \$10,000.

Put another way, more than half of all consumers (56 percent) said there was *no* chance they would buy a PHEV if it cost \$10,000 more than a regular car – a price range that carmakers often mention as a reasonable expectation.



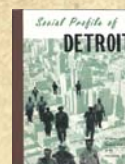
1949:
Rensis Likert,
1st ISR
Director



1950: The
Founding
Group



1951: The
Detroit Area
Study



1953: *Research
Methods in
the Behavioral
Sciences*



will we buy it?

Since vehicles are typically the second largest purchase households make, it didn't surprise Curtin that purchase probabilities were so price-sensitive.

What *did* surprise him, though, was the relatively weak relationship the survey revealed between attitudes about environmental issues and the probability of buying a PHEV.

Half of those surveyed said that showing a commitment to the environment by purchasing a PHEV was "very important" to them. The car would serve as a highly visible badge proclaiming "I'm green." But only 15 percent said that the main advantage of a plug-in hybrid was to reduce vehicle emissions. If consumers were "green" inside as well as out, that percentage should be much higher. After all, transportation accounted for a third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. in 2006, and carbon dioxide emissions have been strongly linked to increasing rates of global warming.



According to Curtin, the data strongly suggest that the most effective approach to selling PHEVs will be to combine economic and social incentives. Expectations that gas prices will continue to fluctuate at near historic highs, concerns about the environment, and the desire to help the nation end its dependence on fossil fuels may power an initial burst of consumer interest. But pricing PHEVs so that consumers can recoup their initial investments over a reasonable time period will be essential.

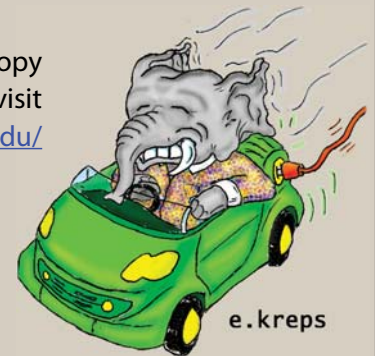
As for that neighbor, chances are she's against depending on foreign oil, wants to pocket more gas money, and likes to look green, but she's not willing to spend very much extra to achieve those goals--all considerations that the PHEV industry would do well to consider.

So the survey results do not provide environmentalists with reason to rejoice: Consumer concern for the environmental advantages of electric- versus gasoline-powered engines is decidedly skin deep. We want to look green, but inside we're largely indifferent.

So the survey results do not provide environmentalists with reason to rejoice: Consumer concern for the environmental advantages of electric- versus gasoline-powered engines is decidedly skin deep. We want to look green, but inside we're largely indifferent.

Saving money on fuel costs wasn't cited as the main advantage of buying a PHEV by many consumers, either. Only about one-third said this would be their biggest incentive. More than half of those surveyed thought the main advantage was to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, which suggests that when it comes to the next generation of cars, more U.S. consumers are red, white, and blue than green.

To see a complete copy of the report, visit <http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/>



1954: Salk Polio Vaccine Trials



1955: Growth of American Families Survey



1957: The Dynamics of Interviewing



1957: Life Course Development Program



Bob Groves begins at Census Bureau



From left, James House, James Jackson, Mick Couper and Cathy Thibault with Census Director Groves at his DC swearing in.



Commerce Secretary Gary Locke administers the oath of office to Robert Groves on July 22, 2009, with wife Cynthia looking on. Former SRC Director Groves is the 23rd director of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Celebrating ISR's

Throughout the year, ISR marked its 60th year with a variety of events commemorating its illustrious history

ISR alums and friends gather in Washington DC



Jean-Marie Mayas, left, Duncan Hume and Diane Willimack review ISR building renovation plans.



DC Reception hosts Bill and Claudia Wilson with James Jackson.

Karin Ringheim, center, and George Brockway, right, talk with Claudia Wilson and David Lam.



Jack Katosh talks with Nancy Burns.



Diane Colasanto, left, talks with Jennifer Madans.



ACTIONS

60th Anniversary

and bringing together alumni, friends, faculty and staff in Ann Arbor and in Washington, DC.

ISR anticipates its centennial celebration

Scott Soderbergh, U-M Photo Services



On October 2, 2009, U-M Provost Teresa Sullivan, third from right, joined ISR Director James Jackson for a ceremony in advance of the burial of a vacuum-sealed, stainless steel time capsule containing examples of the Institute's scientific work and day-to-day work-life, to be opened at the Institute's 100th Anniversary in 2049. Also at the ceremony, from left, ICPSR Acting Director George Alter, SRC Director Bill Axinn, PSC researcher Jeffrey Morenoff, ISR Assistant Director Anna Schork, CPS researcher Mark Tesler, and RCGD Director Rowell Huesmann.

U-M colleagues join ISR for 60th party in Ann Arbor

James Jackson catches up with Pat and Jerry Gurin.



Toni Antonucci talks with Ken Coleman.



Teresa Sullivan visits with Martha Darling.



Narayan Sastry enjoys the celebration.

Bea and Bob Kahn talk with friends.



When ISR celebrated its 60th anniversary in June, the guest address was to be given by Sir Roger Jowell, director of the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys at City University in London and co-founder and director of the European Social Survey. At the last minute, Jowell couldn't make it, but

he expressed some of his thoughts about ISR in a letter of congratulations. Following is the first segment. To read the entire letter, visit <http://www.isr.umich.edu/home/news/sampler/letter.html>

Letter from Sir Roger Jowell in Honor of ISR's 60th Anniversary

18th June 2009

Dear James,

I feel absolutely wretched at not being able to join your celebrations and pay my personal tribute to you and ISR. The medical procedure that has been sprung on me is relatively minor but also relatively urgent. So I uncharacteristically felt I had to comply with doctor's instructions. I had been so honoured to be asked to give a talk on this special occasion for an institution I have admired all of my working life. As I said to my wife at the time, this means miles more to me than a recent honour I had received in Britain. But I asked her please not to tell the queen for fear that her sword might otherwise be drawn even closer to my neck.

First, may I wish you and your colleagues a wonderful celebration of a momentous achievement. For social research institutes to survive for even 60 months against the competition of other academic (and non-academic) priorities is difficult enough. So to have survived for 60 years at the top of an ever-changing and fast-developing field is truly remarkable. You, in common with many ISR directors before you, must be acutely conscious of the fact that you

are standing on the shoulders of giants who for sixty years have been among the most influential collection of people in their field - whether in survey methodology, data archiving standards or a wide range of substantive fields within political science, psychology, sociology and economics.

It is no coincidence that I have been a remote but eagle-eyed observer of ISR for the last 40 years at least. That was the date of my first visit to ISR as a callow young man trained in surveys who had decided more or less unilaterally that Britain needed an ISR clone. Armed with the knowledge and zeal I had gained from reading everything that Angus Campbell, Phil Converse, Warren Miller, Leslie Kish, Howard Schumann, James Morgan and Charlie Cannell had ever written, I appeared on the doorstep – feeling like Jack having just climbed the beanstalk and coming face to face with the giant.

Here I was – a precocious rookie in the field who had the youthful cheek to think that he could even on a tiny scale replicate what ISR had already achieved in its first twenty years. Surely I would just be courteously shown the door? Yet instead I was not only taken seriously but also treated helpfully and constructively by a group of eminent scholars whose names I knew intimately only from the covers of books and articles and whom I had no expectation of actually meeting. As it happened, Angus Campbell and Leslie Kish in particular took me under their wings and I took shameful advantage of their generosity and warmth. These were the beginnings of friendships which lasted until their deaths. They would come over to Britain to monitor progress on our plans, and I would in turn visit Ann Arbor repeatedly over the next few years. It is fair to say that ISR collectively had a massive influence on the shape, structure and vision of what became the British National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). So much so, that my stock response to 'special-event' speeches which exaggeratedly referred to NatCen as the best social survey institute in Europe was to say that they were wrong and that ISR Michigan was actually the best in Europe – just as it was on every other continent too. Although that was of course partly just a cute aside, it was always much truer than it seemed because for six decades people in our field – wherever they are located - have looked to ISR in much the same way that Muslims look to Mecca, both as a source of inspiration and as a place to which pilgrimages ought regularly to be made.

>> [LINK to entire letter.](#)



TIONS

During the last 60 years, ISR directors have dealt with pressing issues ranging from real estate to politics to international engagement to funding. Here, three former directors reflect on some of the key issues they tackled during their tenures.

F. Thomas Juster, 3rd ISR Director (1976-1986)

Nineteen eighty-one began as a bleak year for the social science community. Ronald Reagan had assumed the presidency that January, and among his most prominent goals were cutting the federal budget and pulling government out of “unnecessary” activities. All non-defense research and development work was at risk, but it soon became clear that the social sciences would be a particular target. Most chilling for ISR was the fiscal 1982 budget proposed by the Office of Management and Budget. It slashed funding for the National Science Foundation’s Social and Economic Sciences Division from the \$40 million requested by former President Carter to \$10 million—a draconian 75 percent reduction. Speculation was that the following year’s budget might eliminate social science funding altogether.

In 1981, I was halfway through my time as ISR Director, and my involvement with the Washington public policy community had been minimal: Academics, as a rule, don’t regard lobbying as part of their quest for new truths. But these were uncommon times. ISR presided over a set of the world’s best social science data bases, and was generating increasingly high quality data to expand the world’s knowledge base. If Congress sustained the Reagan Administration’s proposed budget for even two years, it could mean the end of the Institute.

Since the 1960s, a loose coalition of social and behavioral scientists called the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) had been meeting sporadically to discuss common interests. In 1981, faced with the potential for a catastrophic funding drop, COSSA abruptly became the face of the social science lobby, helping the academic community shape its political involvement. Along with more than a dozen leading social scientists, I testified at hearings of congressional committees and subcommittees and prepared numerous position papers. ISR’s Panel Study of Income Dynamics, which has been collecting economic

status data from 1968 onward, and which is probably the most widely cited study in the social sciences, was a particularly strong illustration of the scientific and public policy insights that can be obtained from large-scale measurement projects in the social sciences.

In addition, hundreds of us wrote letters to policymakers, representatives, and senators. Although we represented different disciplines, we had common goals: to better explain the nature of the social sciences—and why they were as vital as the physical and natural sciences; to emphasize the importance of continuity to social science enterprises; and to give concrete examples of the relevance of social science findings to public policy.

In a letter to John B. Slaughter, then director of the National Science Foundation, I stressed both the value of ISR’s work and the necessity of reliable funding to guaranteeing future advances in the social sciences: “The importance of these basic data projects is hard to overestimate. In the physical sciences, there is a long tradition of scientists generating their own measurements, guided by theoretical developments within the various disciplines. The large amounts of support needed for various measurement devices in the physical sciences are well understood to be an important priority. But the social sciences do not have the same tradition, and that is in part why they have not enjoyed the same scientific success in building a secure base of firmly tested and reproducible knowledge.”

We found a receptive audience on Capitol Hill. Although the final 1982 budget approved for the Social and Economic Sciences Division still sustained a serious cut, it was far less than the threatened reduction. Did our extensive and focused campaign persuade the Congress to restore a significant part of the cuts in social science research? Informed discussions suggest that it did. The following year, social science funding gradually began to return to its old levels.



1963:
Taichung
Experiment



1964: Center for
Research on the
Utilization of Scientific
Knowledge

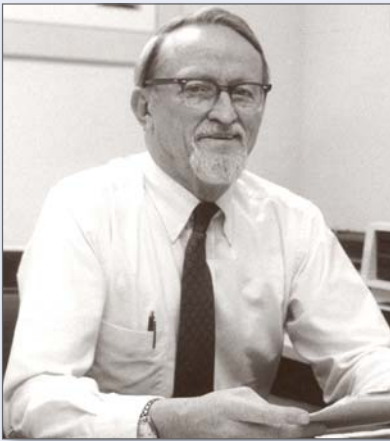


1965:
Thompson St.
Building



1965: Survey
Sampling





**Phillip E. Converse,
4th ISR Director
(1986-1989)**

A main issue in my first months as Director involved an ambitious activity known as the Tobin Report. Vice President for Research Linda S. Wilson had

requested a visiting committee of top social scientists to examine ISR's structure and functioning. Committee Chair James Tobin, Nobel Laureate economist from Yale University, was joined by seven other notables including Kenneth Prewitt, President of the Social Science Research Council, and Larry Summers, the young economist whose future roles would include serving as Director of the National Economic Council in the Obama White House.

When the eventual Report identified ISR as the nation's most prestigious and irreplaceable source of data over many disciplines, we were happy to have our masters in the University exposed to such superlatives. But the Committee also brought firepower to more than thirty pages of suggestions. The greatest attention went to the limited connections between ISR's Economic Behavior Program and the University Economics Department. George Katona, the earliest link with the Department, had died, and James Morgan was approaching retirement. This was in marked contrast to the much stronger sharing of top personnel with the Departments of Psychology, Political Science and Sociology, a sharing the visitors felt had been crucial in lifting these departments to the top rung. ISR management had begun addressing the problem with the acquisition of Charles Brown, but the Report helped strengthen ISR's hand.

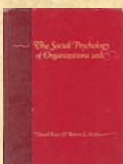
Some few recommendations were not welcome, including a challenge to the very organization of ISR set by Rensis Likert and the founding fathers forty years before. Committee members exclaimed at "how little power, individually and collectively" the Director and the Center Directors held over ISR research, and they recommended a more conventional top-down structure. But our response to the University successfully laid out our long-standing reasons for avoiding any large-scale reorganization of this kind. All told, while the

Committee visit ate up significant time and resources, we embraced the practical suggestions and were pleased the University got a chance to see noteworthy outsiders praise ISR's national importance.

About the time that ISR and the University had digested the Tobin Report, we found ourselves the unfortunate target of a totally different report by a UM professor of intellectual history, David Hollinger. He kindly sent me the manuscript and invited me to lunch to hear my comments about his harsh critique, in which he claimed the intellectual bankruptcy of the ISR operation. Hollinger saw ISR as a monument to the worst in "dust-bowl empiricism" and mindless data-grubbing. At our lunch I did my best to explain ISR's side of the matter, although with little impact on his report. But the shower of kudos from the Tobin Committee easily offset the brickbats in the Hollinger report.

One of the primary functions of the ISR Director is, of course, to manage the ISR-University relationship. In the Likert-Campbell years, the University had let the fledgling ISR operate under a sort of benign neglect. But I had the sinking feeling this arrangement was not to continue under new University governance. For example, after some UM faculty apparently submitted inflated requests for travel reimbursements, the University established a draconian set of rules. It was my role to explain to the Vice President for Research that ISR had an independent travel unit with no problems of fraud. I vividly remember the response: "Exceptions, exceptions: I just can't administer exceptions!!!"

There were also happier interactions with the University. Tom Juster, the previous Director, had responded to overcrowding at our fine Thompson Street building by planning an East End wing, but the plans stalled when the University could not provide sufficient financial help. Later I received an early-morning call from high up. A crucial unit, the Division of Research Development and Administration, had to vacate its quarters suddenly, and ISR's proposed wing was the only campus project already blessed but not yet built. If the University helped ISR with immediate construction, could DRDA temporarily be quartered in the new wing? With guarantees that these tenants would not stay long term, the decision was easy. Tom's plans speedily became an actuality, and in time relieved our space problem for a spell.



David Featherman, 6th ISR Director (1995-2005)

When Bob Zajonc stepped down as ISR director, he and acting director Jake (Harold) Jacobson urged me to take the job and return to Michigan, where I had completed my Ph.D. in the joint Social Psychology Program in the 1960s. All three of us believed strongly in the value of international involvement in social science, and our conversations often turned to the role ISR might play. As president of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in New York, I had seen a new generation of social scientists—supported by SSRC fellowships—prepare to delve into societies and cultures in more than a dozen world regions, and had personally spent significant time abroad building cross-national collaborations and institutional partnerships. Jake was co-chairing SSRC's Committee on the Human Dimensions of Global Climate Change, and Bob had completed a formal institutional partnership with the newly founded Institute for Social Science (ISS) at the University of Warsaw, a project of mutual capacity building. When Bob talked to me about that partnership, he emphasized those mutual benefits, for example, helping ISR social psychologists better appreciate how the cultural, historical, and linguistic context of Poland could reframe concepts and theory.

Influenced by my SSRC experiences and by conversations like those with Bob and Jake, I came to ISR with an intellectual agenda that I hoped would gain traction within the Institute and across the social science faculties at Michigan. That agenda, stated broadly, was to aid in a process of "internationalizing" American social science—to globalize the local (nomothetic science) and to localize the global (ideographic inquiry). ISR was already connected abroad via various individual projects and research faculty, and the partnership with ISS in Warsaw was flourishing, though fewer scientists went to Warsaw than came to Ann Arbor. In addition, Michigan had an International Institute coordinating various world regions or area studies centers. But there was little systematic intellectual exchange between ISR and these other University capacities for comparative social science.

Over the next ten years that began to change. My office helped the Center for Political Studies and Political Science

recruit Mark Tessler, an eminent scholar of Middle Eastern politics, who worked with others to build bridges and collaborations among ISR, area studies centers, and counterpart institutions abroad. (Tessler went on to become Vice Provost for International Affairs and Director of the International Institute.)



I also helped negotiate with LS&A for transfer of the Population Studies Center to ISR. PSC was then directed by David Lam, himself deeply engaged in collaborative research in Brazil and South Africa. PSC's portfolio of research projects and its graduate and postgraduate fellows were the most international of any ISR center, instantly boosting the international posture of social science at ISR.

A bigger challenge was to create a consciously constructed comparative social science. But that, too, began to emerge. CPS's National Election Study became the basis for a multinational, comparative politics program of collaboration. Ron Inglehart's World Values Survey, originating out of CPS, was replicated through collaborations in dozens of nations and spawned a prototype of locally situated "general theory-building." And the Health and Retirement Study, initiated by Tom Juster, Bob Willis, and others, became a model for collaboratively designed theory- and policy-based comparisons of the economic demography of aging—and its societal implications—within Europe, and subsequently, East Asia.

My personal efforts as a scientist and director included assisting the University of Cape Town (UCT) in securing Andrew Mellon Foundation monies to establish a small prototype of ISR. David Lam, a subsequent collaborator, developed a program of research that stimulated other partnerships that have grown into a formalized inter-university agreement recently consummated by Director James Jackson and U-M President Mary Sue Coleman. In effect, the institute at UCT became a sequel to the partnership with the ISS in Warsaw. These collaborations set ISR on a path toward a new understanding of the Institute's global capabilities and mission.

1970: Angus Campbell, 2nd ISR Director



1970: Founding of the Center for Political Studies



1975: Computer-Assisted Interviewing



1975: Monitoring the Future



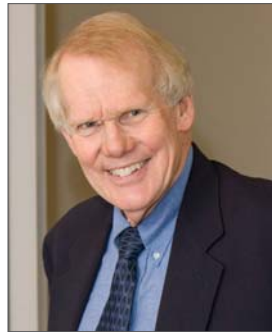
Honors & Awards Honors &



Barbara Anderson received the University of Michigan Regents Award for Distinguished Public Service in October 2008 for her work with

government officials in Estonia, China, and South Africa, and with the Ann Arbor School District.

James House received the Leonard I. Pearlin Award for Distinguished Contributions to Theory and Research in the Sociological Study of Mental Health from the American Sociological Association.



David Lam was nominated as President-Elect of the Population Association of America in April 2009. His term

as PAA President will begin January 2010.

Ted Brader received the 2009 Emerging Scholar Award from the American Political Science Association section on Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior.



Sean Joe received the 2009 Edwin Shneidman Award from the American Association of Suicidology for outstanding research contributions

to the field of suicide studies.



Helen Levy was promoted to Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research.



Jacquie Eccles joined the Dalai Lama, Marian Wright Edelman, and others as a featured speaker at the "Educating World Citizens

for the 21st Century" conference in Washington, D.C., in October 2009. She also received the Distinguished Lifetime Career Award from the Society for the Study of Human Development.

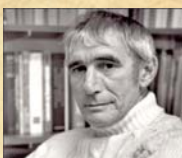
Don Kinder and Shanto Iyengar won the 2009 American Association of Public Opinion Research book award for *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion*, originally published in 1987.



Richard Price received the 2009 Group Psychologist of the Year Award from the American Psychological Association.



1976:
Thomas Juster,
3rd ISR Director



1976: Program for Research
on Black Americans



1976: Centralized
Telephone
Interviewing



1980: World
Values
Surveys





Pamela Smock was named chair of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Population Sciences Subcommittee in July 2008.

Mark Tessler was named a Carnegie Scholar for research on "Popular Conceptions and Preferences Relating to the Place of Islam in Political Life: Insights from Cross-National and Longitudinal Survey Research in the Arab World."



ICPSR's Myron Gutmann heads NSF SBE Directorate

University of Michigan historian Myron Gutmann began his appointment as head of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate in November.

Gutmann, who specializes in historical demography and population-environment relationships, directed the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the U-M Institute for Social Research (ISR) for eight years.

"This is a critical moment for social, behavioral and economic research in the United States," says Gutmann. "NSF is uniquely placed to support work that crosses into every other part of science, including the biological, physical, and geo sciences. I see my role as enhancing the conduct of world-class SBE science, facilitating new inter-disciplinary and international collaboration, and building the technological infrastructure

needed to understand our society in the 21st century."

"Dr. Gutmann is taking on an important role in furthering the study of human society," said U-M Provost Teresa Sullivan. "His scholarly credentials and leadership experience make him especially well-suited for this position."

"At ISR, we will sorely miss Myron's leadership and vision," said ISR Director James S. Jackson. "But we are delighted that we will have such a strong advocate for social, behavioral, and economic research at the NSF."



Photo credit: Steve Kuzma

Warsaw conference will celebrate Robert Zajonc

The University of Warsaw plans to celebrate the scientific achievements of former ISR Director Robert B. Zajonc on May 13-15, 2010.

One of the most creative and influential social psychologists of the past half-century, Zajonc was born and raised in Poland. After he immigrated to the U.S. in 1948, his ties to his motherland remained strong. A member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Warsaw, Zajonc was also instrumental in establishing the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) at the University of Warsaw in 1991 as a sister institution of ISR. To commemorate his role in its founding, ISS will be renamed the Robert B. Zajonc Institute of Social Studies.

As part of the commemoration, a conference will discuss Zajonc's life and work. ISR's Eugene Burnstein and ISS's Grazyna Wieczorkowski extend a warm invitation to all of Bob's colleagues, students and friends to participate in this celebration of the life and scholarship of this most distinguished Polish-American psychologist. For more information, contact geneburn@umich.edu or gw@uw.edu.pl Burnstein is also interested in receiving any photos of Robert Zajonc.



1980:
Research on
the Census



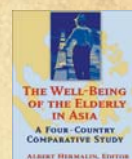
1981:
*Questions and
Answers in
Surveys*



1986:
Philip Converse,
4th ISR Director



1988: Aging in
Asia Research



Faculty Research

Educate yourself to boost achievement in kids



Getty Images

Parents who want to increase their children's academic success may need to go back to school themselves, according to a recent ISR study.

According to psychologist **Pamela Davis-Kean**, who directs the ISR Center for the Analysis of Pathways from Childhood to Adulthood,

funded by the National Science Foundation, a growing number of large-scale, long-term studies now show that parental education beyond high school is strongly linked to language ability in children. In the summer issue of the *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, Davis and colleagues analyze the impact parents have on their children's educational attainment from multiple perspectives.

"In every case, we've found that an increase in parental education has a positive impact on children's success in school," said Davis-Kean. "And this impact is particularly strong when parents start with a high school education or less."

One reason for the power of parental education may be that parents who are in school as well as working need to be more organized to get everything done. As a result, they tend to create a more structured home environment, which many studies have shown has a positive impact on child development.

The relative lack of freedom for children in more structured environments has been questioned lately, Davis-Kean notes. But for the vast majority of U.S. children, she believes that the value of free time has been exaggerated.

"There's this idealistic, nostalgic idea that free time gives children a chance to go out and play, and just experience nature," she said. "But in reality, in today's world where both parents are likely to be employed outside the home, what free time means for most kids is sitting in front of the TV, playing video games and generally being bored with no stimulation."

"What's really valuable for children," says Davis-Kean, "is being engaged in activities that are supervised by adults."



www.ns.umich.edu/podcast/video.php?id=1153

U.S. seniors "smarter" than their English peers

U.S. seniors performed significantly better than their English counterparts on standard tests of memory and cognitive function, according to a study in *BMC Geriatrics*. The study is the first international comparison of cognitive function in nationally representative samples of older adults in the U.S. and England.

"The better cognitive performance of U.S. adults was surprising since U.S. adults had a higher prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors, which are generally associated with cognitive decline and poorer mental function," says University of Michigan researcher **Kenneth M. Langa**, lead author of the study.

For the study, Langa and colleagues compared results for Americans and British seniors age 65 and older on the same set of cognitive tests administered in the same year.

The U.S. advantage in "brain health" was quite large – amounting to almost 10 years of aging. In other words, the cognitive performance of 75-year-olds in the U.S. was as good, on average, as that of 65-year-olds in England.



Getty Images

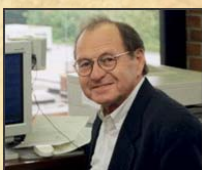
U.S. data came from the ISR Health and Retirement Study (HRS), funded by the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Data on the U.K. study was from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing.

Higher levels of education and net worth in the U.S., and lower levels of depressive symptoms, accounted for some of the better cognitive performance of U.S. adults, according to Langa, who is affiliated with the U-M Medical School and the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Hospital as well as ISR.

ISR economist **David Weir**, Director of the HRS and a co-author of the analysis, suggested that earlier retirement age in England may be another explanation for the cognitive differences. Weir noted that research by ISR economist Robert Willis suggests a connection between early retirement and early onset of cognitive decline.



<http://www.ns.umich.edu/podcast/video.php?id=880>



Video games for better, not worse

Getty Images

Video games can make children kinder and more likely to help other people, according to a research article published in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* and co-authored by researchers from the U.S., Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia.



“Dozens of studies have documented a relation between violent video games and aggressive behaviors,” says lead author Douglas Gentile, an Iowa State University psychologist. “But these studies are among the first to document the positive effects of playing prosocial games.”

“These studies show the same kind of impact on three different age groups from three very different cultures,” says ISR psychologist **Brad Bushman**, a co-author of the report. “In addition, the studies use different analytic approaches – correlational, longitudinal, and experimental. The resulting triangulation of evidence provides the strongest possible proof that the findings are both valid and generalizable.”

In one study of nearly 2,000 Japanese children ages 10 to 16, researchers found a significant connection between exposure to pro-social games and helpful behavior 3 to 4 months later.

“This suggests there is an upward spiral of pro-social gaming and helpful behavior, in contrast to the downward spiral that occurs with violent video gaming and aggressive behavior,” says Bushman, a U-M professor of communications and psychology and an ISR research professor.

Another study, an experiment with 161 U.S. college students (mean age 19), analyzed behavior after the students had played either a pro-social, a violent, or a neutral game. Students were asked to assign puzzles ranked easy, medium, or hard to a randomly selected partner, who could win money for completing the puzzles. Those who played pro-social games were considerably more likely than others to assign more easy puzzles; those who had played violent games were significantly more likely to assign the hardest puzzles.

“Taken together, these findings make it clear that playing video games is not in itself good or bad for children,” says Bushman. “The type of content in the game has a bigger impact on behavior than the overall amount of time spent playing.”

 <http://www.ns.umich.edu/podcast/video.php?id=875Vid>

Why dishing does you good

Why does talking with a girlfriend do wonders for a woman’s mood? A likely reason is that feeling emotionally close to a friend increases levels of the hormone progesterone, helping to boost well-being and reduce anxiety and stress, according to a recent U-M study.

“This study establishes progesterone as a likely part of the neuroendocrine basis of social bonding in humans,” said **Stephanie Brown**, lead author of the article published in the June 2009 issue of *Hormones and Behavior*.

A sex hormone that fluctuates with the menstrual cycle, progesterone is also present in low levels in post-menopausal women and in men. Research has shown that higher levels of progesterone increase the desire to bond with others, but this study is the first to show that bonding with others increases progesterone levels. The study also links these increases to a greater willingness to help other people, even at personal expense.

“It’s important to find the links between biological mechanisms and human social behavior,” said Brown, who is affiliated with the U-M Medical School and the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Hospital, as well as ISR. “These links may help us understand why people in close relationships are happier, healthier, and live longer than those who are socially isolated.”

Getty Images



In the current study, Brown and colleagues examined the link between interpersonal closeness and salivary progesterone in 160 female college students.

According to Brown, the findings are consistent with a new evolutionary theory of altruism which argues that the hormonal basis of social bonds enables people to suppress self-interest when necessary to promote the well-being of another, as when taking care of children or helping ailing friends.

The results also help explain why social contact has well-documented health benefits – a relationship first identified nearly 20 years ago by ISR sociologist James House.

“Many of the hormones involved in bonding and helping behavior lead to reductions in stress and anxiety in both humans and other animals. Now we see that higher levels of progesterone may be part of the underlying physiological basis for these effects.”



Faculty Research



College major and religious faith

College students who major in the social sciences and humanities are likely to become less religious, while those majoring in education are likely to become more religious. But students majoring in biology and physical sciences remain just about as religious as they were when they started college.

Those are among key findings of a University of Michigan study on the connection between college attendance, college major, and religiosity released in July by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The study, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, is based on long-term data from the ISR Monitoring the Future Study.

“Education majors are clearly safe havens for the religious,” says U-M economist **Miles Kimball**, who co-authored the study. “Highly religious people seem to prefer education majors, tend to stay in that major, and tend to become more religious by the time they graduate.”

For the study, Kimball and colleagues **Colter Mitchell**, **Arland Thornton** and **Linda Young DeMarco** analyzed data on approximately 26,200 individuals who graduated from high school between 1976 and 1996. They reviewed information on religious attitudes and college attendance and major for a period of six years.

Among the questions participants were asked: How often do you attend religious services? How important is religion in your life? How good or bad a job is being done for the country as a whole by churches and religious organizations?

Of those who did not attend college right away, those who were more religious were more likely to attend college eventually. One of the reasons for this might be a “nagging effect” of church friends who ask repeatedly about college attendance plans, the researchers speculate.

“Our results suggest that it is Postmodernism, not Science, that is the *bête noir* of religiosity,” Says Kimball.

ISR joins \$50 million study of military suicide and mental health

ISR is one of a consortium of research institutions to carry out the largest study to date of suicide and mental health among military personnel.

With \$50 million in funding from the U.S. Army, the new study is a collaborative program of research that will also involve scientists from the National Institute of Mental Health and the U.S. Army.

“The goal of this five-year study is to identify modifiable risk and protective factors related to suicidal behavior and to provide a scientific basis for guiding the Army’s ongoing efforts to prevent suicide and improve Soldiers’ overall psychological health and functioning,” said ISR research scientist **Steven Heeringa**, who is the U-M principal investigator on the study. Heeringa directs the Statistical Design Group in the ISR Survey Research Center.



Getty Images

Since 2001, the suicide rate for soldiers has climbed, reaching record levels in 2007 and again in 2008 despite major prevention and intervention efforts by the Army over this period.

ISR’s role in this collaborative study will be to design and conduct several large-scale survey data collections and to build and manage the study research databases in a way that protects the identity and privacy of Army personnel.

For the project, ISR will survey 90,000 active Army personnel representative of the entire Army, including active members of the National Guard and Reserves, in order to obtain information on the prevalence of suicide-related behavior, as well as risk and protective factors. In addition to obtaining behavioral information, ISR will also obtain saliva and blood samples for genetic and biologic analyses.

ISR will also survey all 80,000 to 120,000 recruits who join the Army in each of the first three years of the study. The research team will also conduct a case-controlled retrospective study, comparing information on soldiers who have attempted or completed suicide with those who have not.

2001: DAS:
Quality of
Community
Life



2001: Eva Mueller
Honored in
Economics



2001: ICPSR
Delivers Data
over WWW



2002:
Perry
Building





William Axinn appointed Director of ISR Survey Research Center

across numerous substantive domains, to strengthen education in research methodology, and to increase the international reach of the social sciences as we work toward advancing social science in the public interest."

International Family Change: Ideational Perspectives, with Rukmalie Jayakody and Arland Thornton; *Marriage and Cohabitation*, with Thornton and Yu Xie; and *Mixed Method Data Collection Strategies* with Lisa D. Pearce.

U-M SOCIOLOGIST WILLIAM AXINN has been selected to be Director of the ISR Survey Research Center (SRC). Axinn, whose research interests include demography, social change, and intergenerational family relationships in the U.S. and South Asia, brings a strong background in research methods and administration to the position. His five-year term started in September.

"I am delighted that Bill Axinn has agreed to fill this important position," said ISR Director James Jackson. "The entire Institute will benefit immensely from the unique blend of energy, scholarship, and deep commitment to the collection of original social science data that Bill brings to this position.

"I also want to express my gratitude to Jim House, who served as interim SRC Director while we searched for a permanent replacement for Bob Groves, who left this spring to become Director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census."

"It is a privilege to have the opportunity to serve this group of the nation's leading social scientists, and to support SRC's data collection infrastructure which is a core dimension of the country's social science research capacity," said Axinn. "Our mission is to continue to enhance data collection methods, to improve data collection efficiency and quality, to expand the measures available

Axinn, 45, received a B.A. in Sociology from Cornell University in 1986, then went on to obtain an

M.A. and a Ph.D. in that discipline from the U-M in 1988 and 1990, respectively. He joined the University of Chicago as an assistant professor of sociology and a research associate at the National Opinion Research Center. In 1994, he joined the Pennsylvania State University as an associate professor of sociology, and also served as a senior research associate at Penn State's Population Research Institute. In 1997, he attained the rank of full professor of sociology, and the next year moved to Michigan. Here he joined the Department of Sociology, the Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, and the ISR Population Studies Center and Survey Research Center. He served as associate director of the Population Studies Center from 2003 to 2007.

In 1995, Axinn became Director of the Population and Ecology Research Laboratory in Nepal, a position he continues. Earlier this year, he became Associate Director of the ISR Survey Research Center and served as the faculty leader in developing a mixed mode sample management system.

The author of numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters, Axinn is the co-author of three books:

The entire Institute will benefit immensely from the unique blend of energy, scholarship, and deep commitment to the collection of original social science data that Bill brings to this position.

He is a member of the Population Association of America, the American Sociological

Association, and the National Council on Family Relations, which presented him with the Reuben Hill Award in 2002. His book *Marriage and Cohabitation* with Thornton and Xie won the 2008 Outstanding Publication Award from the ASA Section on Aging and the Life Course.

In addition to his scholarly pursuits and extensive administrative service, Axinn continues the ISR tradition of combining leadership with an active research agenda. He has served as Deputy Director of the current cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth, funded by the National Center for Health Statistics. He is the Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator on several major on-going research grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

His professional service includes serving as a member and chair of various committees and panels at the National Institutes of Health, the Population Association of America, the American Sociological Association, the National Council on Family Relations, and the Social Science Research Council.

2002: Michigan Census Research Data Center



2005: James Jackson, 7th ISR Director



2005: Nancy Burns, Director of CPS



2009: ISR's 60th Anniversary



In Memoriam

Irene Hess dies at 98

Survey statistician Irene Hess, who educated generations of graduate students in the conduct of scientific surveys, died July 5 in Ann Arbor, MI, of a cerebral hemorrhage. She was 98 years old.

Although she officially “retired” from the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR) in 1981 at the age of 70, Hess remained active professionally through her late 90s, walking to work at the ISR Survey Research Center from the campus apartment she had lived in since 1954 when she began working at the Center.

“Irene Hess was one of the pioneers at ISR,” said ISR Director James S. Jackson. “She helped to define its core essence in conducting high quality sampling and surveys. Her contributions over so many decades cannot be over-estimated in terms of research, training of new generations of scientists, and friendships. She will be sorely missed.”

Born August 27, 1910 in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, Hess received an A.B. degree in mathematics from Indiana University in 1931 and taught math at a Central City, KY, high school until 1942. Hess learned of a new field of statistics, from an article in the *Reader's Digest*, and was attracted to it as a way to advance her career.

Hess studied statistics during the summer at the U-M, and right after the start of World War II in December 1941, she joined the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and then, after other assignments, the U.S. Census Bureau. At Census she was one of the members of a new group of statisticians who implemented the new ideas of probability sampling into many of the basic demographic and economic surveys. In 1954, she joined the ISR Survey Research Center, as assistant director of the Sampling Section.

As Director Leslie Kish moved to more academic pursuits, Hess became the head of the Sampling Section. In that capacity, she was known to arrive at the office early, to eat her meals in the Section, to check the work of statistical clerks after working hours, and to walk back to her South Forest apartment in the mid-evening. It is likely she spent more hours working than any other employee in the history of the Survey Research Center.

As director of the Sampling Section, she applied the tools of probability theory to the design and selection of complicated

scientific survey samples. She communicated the highest standards of excellence in statistical practice by her example. Her teaching affected scores of the leading sampling statisticians in the world. They practice the basic lessons that “Irene” taught.

“She taught me what I know about rigorous application of scientific sampling and the highest standards of survey research,” said U.S. Census Bureau Director Robert Groves, former director of the ISR Survey Research Center. “She served as a role model for young statisticians of how to be a professional and how to apply practical rules to implement complicated research designs.”

During her long career, Hess published numerous articles, many co-authored with ISR founder Leslie Kish. After her official retirement, she published two monographs, *Sampling for Social Research Surveys 1947 – 1980* (in 1985) and *Controlled Selection Continued* with Steven Heeringa (in 2002). Her latest publication, *The Practice of Survey Research at the Survey Research Center*, was completed in fall 2007.

Hess was a member of the American Statistical Association, where she was elected as the first Chair of the Survey Research Methods Section; the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the International Association of Survey Statisticians. She was recently honored with a biographical article in the magazine of the American Statistical Association.

In addition to her ISR family, she is survived by numerous maternal and paternal cousins, including Maryann Jenkins of Killen, AL; Fred Jenkins of Garber, IA; Lenndel Jenkins of Prairie-du-Chien, WI; Frederick Getz of Vernon Hills, IL; Jerome Getz (Dagmar) of St. Paul, MN; Morman Getz of Vestal, NY; Minnie Hess Busch of Ventura, IA; Marjorie Hess Tisdall of Cerritos, CA; and Madelyn Hess Davidson of Gardena, CA; Bill Surring of Norfolk, VA; and Marsha Sewick, Marilyn Halley-Tarr, Dennis Swartz, Janet Jones, Janice Hartz, Ron Swartz, and Crystal Hartman, all of Waterloo, IA.



Her contributions over so many decades cannot be over-estimated in terms of research, training of new generations of scientists, and friendships. She will be sorely missed.

Sarah Burgard:
Scholar for Life



Rowell Huesmann:
Straight Shooter



James Jackson:
Pushing the
Envelope



Supporting research by and about women

With a substantial new grant from the U-M Alumnae Council Birthday Greeting funds in 2009, the Elizabeth "Libby" Douvan Junior Scholar Fund in Life Course Development is poised for success. With your help, the fund will be able to meet its goal to make an award to a Douvan Junior Scholar on a regular basis.

The only woman in the Founders Generation at ISR, Libby spent her career conducting research on women's issues, and mentoring women at ISR, U-M and the world beyond. The Fund was established following her death in 2002.



As ISR concludes the year-long celebration of its 60th Anniversary, it is particularly appropriate to honor the first female member of the ISR research faculty by contributing to a fund that both honors her contributions and extends her legacy by helping young scholars at a critical point in their careers.

To contribute to the fund, visit <http://www.giving.umich.edu/give/isr> and choose the Libby Fund from the Giving Areas.

Or contact Patrick Shields at peshield@umich.edu; (734) 764-8369.

News & Notes: Program in Survey Methodology

At the October PSM Sponsors Meeting at ISR, student Benjamin Duffey talks with Reg Baker, Chief Operation Officer of Marketing Strategies, Intl.



Photo credit: Jennifer Puckett



2009 graduates of the Program, back row, from left: Donnalee Grey-Farquharson (MS); Huiliang Hao (MS); Sonja Ziniel (PhD); James Wagner (PhD); front row, from left: Dandan Zhang (MS), Chan Zhang (MS), Mandi Yu (PhD). The PhD students defended their dissertations during summer 2008 but returned to take part in the 2009 celebration.

For more information, visit the program web site: <http://www.isr.umich.edu/gradprogram/>

Robert Kahn:
Successful Living



Courtney Kennedy:
Giving Voice to
People



David Lam:
Breaking Through
to the Other Side



REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN: Julia Donovan Darlow, Ann Arbor; Laurence B. Deitch, Bingham Farms; Olivia P. Maynard, Goodrich; Denise Ilitch, Birmingham; Andrea Fischer Newman, Ann Arbor; Andrew C. Richner, Grosse Pointe Park; S. Martin Taylor, Grosse Pointe Farms; Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor; Mary Sue Coleman, *ex officio*

Life and Death in the Great Depression

It seems the Great Depression had a silver lining: During that hard time, U.S. life expectancy actually increased by 6.2 years, according to a recent ISR study. Life expectancy rose from 57.1 in 1929 to 63.3 years in 1932, according to an analysis by ISR researchers **José A. Tapia Granados** and **Ana Diez Roux** published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The researchers used historical life expectancy and mortality data to examine associations between economic growth and population health for the period between 1920 and 1940. They found that while population health generally improved during the four years of the Great Depression and during recessions in 1921 and 1938, mortality increased and life expectancy declined during periods of strong economic expansion, such as 1923, 1926, 1929, and 1936-1937.

They analyzed age-specific mortality rates and rates due to six causes of death that comprised about two-thirds of total mortality in the 1930s: cardiovascular and renal diseases, cancer, influenza and pneumonia, tuberculosis, motor vehicle traffic injuries, and suicide. The association between improving health and economic slowdowns was true for all ages, and for every major cause of death except one: suicide.

Although the research did not include analyses of possible causes for the pattern, Tapia Granados and Diez Roux offer some possible explanations about why population health tends to improve during recessions but not expansions.

“Working conditions are very different during expansions and recessions,” says Tapia Granados. “During expansions, firms are very busy, and they typically demand a lot of effort from employees, who are required to work a lot of overtime, and to work at a fast pace. This can create stress, which is associated with more drinking and smoking. Also, new workers may be hired who are inexperienced, so injuries are likely to be more common. And people who are working a lot may also sleep less which is known to have implications for health.”



iStockphoto