SOC 60

• Survey Research
History of Survey Research

- **Early censuses**
  - Biblical census
  - 1086 Doomsday Book William the Conqueror
  - Modern censuses from 1830s (England)

- **Beginning of modern surveys**
  - Social Surveys
    - Dubois' Study 1892
    - Other social surveys
      - UK Rowntree's survey of York in Great Britain (1902).
      - US In Chicago: survey Thrasher's survey of juvenile gangs (1927) and
        Reckless's survey of bordellos (1933).
History of Survey Research (cont.)

- Market research
- Election polls
  - Early straw polls
  - Preelection surveys
    - Literary Digest.
    - From the early 1930s polling firms: Gallup, Louis Harris, Roper, Crossley etc.
- Paul Lazarsfeld's Sundusky study
- Panel study
- Academic Institutions
- By the end of the 1930s
- Radio Research Center at Columbia (Lazarsfeld)
- NORC at Denver, later in Chicago
- Office of Public Opinion Research at Princeton (Hadley Cantril)
- Division of Program Surveys at the Department of Agriculture ---> later SRC in Ann Arbor
- Samuel Stouffer's American Soldier Study
- Kinsey Report
Main Sectors of Survey Research

1. Federal Government
   - Monthly Labor Force Survey
   - the annual Current Population Survey
   - National Crime Survey of households about victimization
   - Annual Housing Survey
   - National Health Survey etc.

2. Academic Sector
   - University survey institutes
   - PSID (SRC), General Social Survey (NORC)

   - % of articles reporting survey data in the social sciences in the 1970s:
     - public opinion 87
     - sociology 53
     - political science 33
     - economics 28
     - social psychology 12

3. Private Sector
   - A.C. Nielsen TV's Nielsen ratings (also Arbitron)
   - IMS International specializing measurement of sales and inventories of pharmaceuticals
   - SAMI estimates the in and out of inventory movements of consumer goods
   - Louis Harris and Gallup

4. Mass Media
   - CBS-New York Times poll, and all major networks and newspapers

5. Ad Hoc surveys
Surveys Now

Problems

• 1. Rising Costs
• 2. Less Federal Funds
• 3. High No-Response Rates

Solutions

• 1. New mailing techniques
• 2. Telephone surveys
• 3. More sophisticated analyses of existing data

Cumulative databases
• Social Science Database
Attractive Features of Surveys

• Versatility
• Efficiency
• Generalizability

• The Omnibus Survey
• Split ballot design
General Social Survey

HAPPINESS

Taken all together, how happy would you say you were?

HAPPINESS OF MARRIAGE

% who describe their marriage as "very happy"

EXCITING LIFE

% who find life in general "exciting"

THE AFTERLIFE

% who believe in life after death
Why Do Professional Polls Differ?

- ---- Sampling Error
- ---- Different questions
- ---- Questions ordered differently
- ---- Call-back procedures differ (how persistent they are to track down selected individuals)
- ---- Don't knows!!!
- ---- No well-formed opinions (reliability problem)
- ---- Pollsters are partisan
Developing a Survey Project

- Step 1. Pilot Study
- Step 2. Conceptualization
- Step 3. Measurement
- Step 4. Questionnaire Development
- Step 5. Pretesting of Questionnaire
- Step 6. Sampling
- Step 7. Interviewing
- Step 8. Data Analysis
- Step 9. Writing it Up