



Survey Research Lab

Spring 1969

Newsletter

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Note from the editor:

Now that summer is here it seems a good time to publish the Spring Newsletter. As with all good periodicals, the Newsletter is just a bit off schedule. I'd say better late than never, but perhaps I should let you judge that for yourself!

--Linda Spence

University of Illinois
June 1969

NEW PROJECTS

Project 041, Nursing Home Study. This survey was conducted by the Hospital Planning Council for Metropolitan Chicago to obtain a census of patients in long-term care facilities. SRL will edit, key-punch and verify 27,000 coded questionnaires from the census and prepare tabulations. The study will be completed by the end of the summer.

Jo Cobin of Data Reduction and Dick McKinlay at our Chicago branch will coordinate the project.

Project 042, Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. For this study, SRL's Data Reduction Section will keypunch and verify approximately 50,000 cards on land-use data collected by the Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission.

Jo Cobin of Data Reduction will coordinate the study.

Project 043, Mini-Omnibus. This statewide study, for Professors Arnould and Corley of the Department of Business Administration, College of Commerce, Urbana, will survey people's experiences with lawyers during the past ten years. The study will also survey people's attitudes toward the Illinois Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) and proposed laws, including Illinois tax reforms, for Professor Pisciotte of the Institute of Government.

We hope to complete 800 telephone interviews by the end of June or early July. Mati Frankel is coordinating this project.

Project 045, Faculty Benefits, Chicago Circle. A questionnaire was sent to 1500 faculty members at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus to determine their evaluation of the present benefits

system and what future benefits they would find attractive.

The study is sponsored by F. G. Stubbs of the Faculty Benefits Committee, Chicago Circle. Jo Cobin of Data Reduction and Dick McKinlay at our Chicago branch will coordinate the study.

Project 046, Urbana Campus 1980. For this study, a questionnaire was mailed to 1500 Urbana faculty to seek their opinions on what the University should be like in 1980 and the directions in which the campus should move.

The study is sponsored by the Urbana Long-Range Planning Committee, Office of the Chancellor. Mati Frankel and Jo Cobin will coordinate this project.

Project 047, Black-White Subjective Culture. This study will involve content analysis of representative current literature to identify significant conflict roles and issues bearing on the question of black-white subjective culture. Sharon Hall, a half-time assistant, will assist project coordinator Tulsi Saral by reviewing recent popular fiction magazines with a predominantly Black readership to select for analysis stories that may reflect inter-group social, political, or economic conflict.

This project is sponsored by Harry C. Triandis of the Center for International Studies at Cornell and the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois, and will be completed by the end of the summer.

NEW FACES AT SRL

Said Atama is a research assistant working with Seymour Sudman. Said is presently analyzing research--he has a high stack of research reports on his desk--to study factors influencing response.

Said is from Israel and got his bachelor's degree in statistics and sociology from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is presently working toward a Ph.D. in business administration at the University of Illinois.

Said's native language is Arabic, but he studied in Hebrew while working toward his bachelor's degree. Here at the U. of I. he's having to reorient himself to a third language!

Noreen Cain is a research assistant working in the Field Section. Born in Belgium, Noreen moved to Canada when she was six months old. At the age of five, she returned to Belgium to do undergraduate work in kindergarten. After kindergarten she returned to Winnipeg, Canada, to live and has been back to Belgium only for visits.

Noreen got her bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Manitoba. She then worked for the Canadian government doing job analysis and got some experience with interviewing. She returned to the University of Manitoba for another year to get an honors degree in commerce and work for a few months at a department store where she received management training.

After a vacation in Belgium, she came to the United States and headed for the University of Illinois. She will study for a master's degree in advertising at the U. of I. beginning this summer. During her first few days of getting acquainted with the campus, she was impressed by its size. So were her feet, but they retaliated with blisters!

Susie Holleman is a new secretary for SRL. Before coming to SRL, Susie worked in Gregg Hall as a secretary for WILL radio.

Born in Urbana, she later moved to Champaign and graduated from Champaign Central High School in 1967. Susie was

planning to leave the scenic twin cities and move to California, but the Midwest had much more to offer, namely, a young man called Terry. So she spent one month in California, returned and married Terry.

Sherren (Dan) Waung is a research assistant who has been working for Seymour Sudman since last November. When Alex Berndt leaves SRL in July, Dan will be the new head of the Sampling Section.

Dan got his bachelor's degree in economics from Middlebury College in Vermont and his M.B.A. at Columbia University. He had two years of research experience as a market research analyst for a trucking firm in his hometown New York.

Dan is studying for a Ph.D. in marketing at the U. of I.

Gerlinde Weindlmaier is a research assistant working at the Control Desk. Born near Salzburg, Austria, she studied marketing at the University of Vienna. In the midst of her doctoral study, she married and came with her husband to Illinois.

While her husband studies for his doctorate in agricultural economics at the University, Gerlinde will finish her thesis in marketing for a Ph.D. from the University of Vienna.

Gerlinde's stay in Urbana is not her first experience with Midwestern corn. During high school she lived in Indianapolis as a foreign exchange student.

Working for SRL is also not her first experience with a research organization. At the University of Vienna she worked for a small research institute that did location analysis for retail stores.

Though Gerlinde likes the Midwest, she and her husband plan to live in Germany after finishing their college studies.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE FIELD

by
MATT HAUCK

Now that SRL is over five years old, let's look at the past, present and future of the Field Section.

When SRL was young, 175 interviewers were selected throughout Illinois to coincide with the location of the Master Sample for statewide surveys. After the interviewers received general training to familiarize them with SRL operations and how to conduct interviews, they were put on stand-by basis to wait for surveys in their locality. So far SRL has used these interviewers for 19 surveys.

The interviewer staff has changed over time. To supplement interviewers for specific areas in the state, additional interviewers have been hired. SRL now has a capable staff of about 200 interviewers located throughout Illinois.

During the early years of SRL's growth, the Field Section policies and procedures were developed. The new research assistants working in Field are following general plans and procedures that have proved most efficient. They are, however, in a position to review, evaluate and improve these standardized procedures.

The forms and instructional materials have also improved with experience. For example, the interviewers' time and expense sheet has been simplified.

In the future the Field staff will be supplemented by trained supervisors in regions where large scale studies will be conducted. Chicago, for example, now has its own Field Section head who is responsible for all surveys in the Chicago area.

The major effort in the future will be an emphasis on interviewer training.

This emphasis will include general training, specific training for particular studies, and the development of improved training materials. Training will concentrate on areas of interviewing that need improvement, such as probing, handling at-the-door situations, quality of recording answers and following questionnaire instructions, and eliminating interviewer bias.

These changes planned for the future have been largely due to results of final report questionnaires completed by the interviewers at the end of each survey. We hope to continue to improve the quantity and quality of the survey data we obtain and strive to make the interviewer's job more enjoyable.

INTERVIEWERS EVALUATE THEIR JOB

To find out what our interviewers like or dislike about interviewing and some of the problems they encounter, we sent a questionnaire to some of them. This article presents some of their comments.

Dislikes

Some interviewers said they dislike interviewing in very hot or cold weather--a problem SRL will have difficulty solving! Besides mentioning that her ballpoint pen won't write in cold weather, Mrs. Garland Cramer of Downers Grove wrote about interviewing in the rain:

Eyeglasses should be made with automatic wipers for surveying in the rain. One cannot manage an umbrella very well while writing--on the way around the block.

Other dislikes were long questions because some people don't understand lengthy explanations or don't have the patience to listen to them. Some interviewers also dislike imposing on the respondent for long interviews.

Problems

Some of the problems mentioned were a respondent's reluctance to answer questions about income and politics, delay in getting interviewer's supplies, and running out of material. Other problems were small children interrupting the respondent's train of thought, and finding the exact boundaries in new neighborhoods.

Likes

Almost every interviewer said their greatest enjoyment is meeting people. The interviewers are genuinely interested in people and find excitement in knocking on strange doors to find new faces! One interviewer admitted, though, that she guessed she was nosy!

Mrs. Dorothea Will, an interviewer from Collinsville, likes the touches of surprise in some of the answers:

I recall one question in particular on the last survey I worked on where the respondent was asked if he felt that making men financially responsible for their illegitimate children would tend to reduce promiscuous sex. I was interviewing a male high school teacher who with no hesitation and great exasperation stated, "Good heavens, who considers finances in a moment of passion!"

Many interviewers enjoy the challenge of each new survey and being involved with current questions of social concern.

Mrs. Mary K. Grider of East St. Louis likes everything about interviewing and had difficulty listing any problems or dislikes. Here are some of her comments:

I like interviewing. If I didn't, I wouldn't do it. I like the freedom. I like not punching a time clock. I did that once. It didn't last long. I like being out in fresh air.

OMNIBUS NUMBER I: SOME RESULTS

One set of questions in the first Omnibus survey (034) conducted last spring concerned the causes of racial disturbances and evaluation of preventive measures.

On most questions whites and Blacks were in disagreement, with the strongest area of disagreement relating to police. Of the Blacks interviewed, most felt "unfairness and mistreatment of Negroes" by local police was an important cause of civil disorders, but only a third of whites agreed. "Too much softness" toward Blacks by police was rated an important cause by two-thirds of whites and a third of Blacks.

Philip Meranto and Louis Gold of the University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs who sponsored these questions attributed much of the difference of opinion to the social distance between the middle-class white and the ghetto Black.

"Whites," they said, "are much more likely to base their impressions of the police on their own experience with the friendly patrolman who safeguards the school crossing than on the experience of a young ghetto Negro viewing a cruising canine patrol."

Another cause of racial disturbances considered important was lack of opportunity for housing, employment and education for Negroes; almost all Blacks and half the whites agreed. Also, half the Blacks and three-fourths of whites rated a "general lack of respect for law and order among Negroes" as important. White racism was considered an important cause by almost all Blacks and half the whites. Outside agitators were considered an important cause by half the Blacks and most whites.

Concerning preventive measures, both races agreed that communications between the races should be improved. Still, most whites took a "law and order" stand. Most whites felt local police departments should have special anti-riot equipment as a preventive measures, but less than half the Blacks agreed.

Special laws to prohibit outside agitators were seen as a helpful preventive measure

by almost all whites and less than three-fourths of Blacks. Attitudes were reversed regarding laws to prohibit discrimination; these were seen as good preventive measures by almost all Blacks but less than three-fourths of whites.

Many whites and a few Blacks felt riot-torn areas should be refused special programs because "Negroes should be taught that violence does not pay." At the same time, both races agreed that special programs to increase opportunities for Negroes would help to prevent racial disturbances.

Since both races agree on the need for special programs, Meranto and Gold feel that public officials should take the lead in developing such programs. Whether public officials choose to develop positive programs or use negative, repressive measures "may well determine the future of race relations in the state."

INTERVIEWING IN THE TROPICS

by
FRANCOISE (GAUDRON) RUTHERFORD*

Have you heard about the SRL International Secret Service Section? Its members do a volunteer's job--without a section chief or weekly reports. Their underground work is aimed toward destroying anybody's belief that good surveys can be conducted outside SRL. As the first member of this Section, I have been canvassing Honolulu, and I am planning my next mission in the Australian territory of the Solomon Islands.

I spotted a newly born competitor to SRL at the University of Hawaii, but I have been unable to convince them to recruit their interviewers in Illinois. Sorry, it is still beyond their financial means. In fact, they are still too small to need a field supervisor. So I am doing missionary work in the Department of Agricultural Economics by showing them how good field work should be

*Francoise worked as a research assistant in the Field Section during the 1967-68 school year. She then followed her husband to the University of Hawaii.

supervised. (You would probably recognize a strong touch of Matt Hauck's gentle style in my so-called "instructions.")

We are doing a survey on recreational fishing, and the February pretest included some personal interviewing. I took my car (a 1958 Volkswagen still going strong), clipboard, pack of cards, stock of pens and questionnaires, and bravely faced the tropical rains.

But I quickly gave up knocking on doors before 5 p.m. on week days because no one was home. Everyone does not spend all their time on the beach, though. Almost every wife in town works and men often hold two jobs; this is necessary for survival given the high Honolulu prices.

Another problem was communication. Japanese and pidgin-English are common in some areas. But after all, the purpose of the pretest was to discover such problems.

The main survey has been going on for two weeks, and I still do not have enough interviewers. In desperation I tried hiring some wives of my husband's professors and nearly succeeded!

I will not mention the response rate since it is a touchy subject, but I am proud of some telephone interviews that lasted up to an hour. Friendly people and keen fisherman live on this island.

I am looking forward to experimenting with new interviewing problems next August when I will be helping my husband, an anthropologist, study the customs and beliefs of Melanesians in the Solomon Islands. How to prevent your respondent from cooking you up in a dish? How to learn your respondents' unwritten language before the interview? How to probe further such answers as, "I do this because this is the custom of my people." With luck, watch for some answers in the 1971 Spring Newsletter.

SRL'S NEW TELETYPE TERMINAL

Processing SRL data by a computer involves a lengthy series of steps. A keypunch operator punches data from the questionnaires onto IBM cards which are then sorted and boxed. Then one of SRL's strongmen loads the cards into the staff car (if the car is available) and delivers them to the Digital Computer Laboratory on campus. Hours later someone drives back to DCL and picks up the computer printout of the results and the IBM cards.

The Data Archive recently acquired a machine (a teletype terminal) that has great potential for simplifying this process. Data can be entered into the computer from the keyboard of the teletype terminal in Room 3. Instructions to run a program can also be given directly from the Lab. And, after giving the computer time to run the program, output can be read from the terminal right in the office.

Computer programs and study data are stored in the computer in files composed of a series of lines, each line containing information that one IBM card would contain. With this versatile system, we can easily interchange programs and change or add to the data on file.

SRL's keypunchers (and strongmen) won't be out of their jobs, however. Data from questionnaires will still be punched onto cards that will be taken to DCL and transferred to tapes. But instructions for running programs with the data on tapes will be given through the teletype terminal, thus reducing the amount of travel time.

The teletype terminal will be used for only part of SRL's data processing... Machines haven't taken over completely!

INTERVIEWING IN INDIA

by

PADMINI KAMASWAMY

Research Assistant

Field Section and Control Desk

"How many men have you got?"

"None! I'm out of luck today. Oh, there's one. Let me get him before he slips away!"

A passerby overhearing this conversation between two young Indian girls would probably be startled and wonder if this was the latest imported technique for catching husbands. No, it was not; the girls were only trying to fill up their quotas for the market research study they were working on.

Survey research and market research are fairly new and rare in India. A few social scientists conduct studies, but there are no survey organizations like SRL which are part of the academic world. Some advertising and marketing firms have market research departments but most of these are concentrated in Bombay or Calcutta. For the sporadic studies they do, these firms use a small core of interviewers. Only a few firms employ a permanent staff of interviewers.

The typical Indian interviewer is a woman, as in the United States. But she is generally not a housewife doing survey work as a part-time job. She is usually a girl just out of college who either depends on her job as her means of livelihood or works for pocket money before getting married. She is often biding time while looking for a permanent job that is as far away from teaching as possible.

Many of the older generation frown on interviewing as a job for a young girl since it involves knocking on strange doors and often traveling to other towns

and villages. (Since interviewers always live in large cities, traveling is part of the job.) But the firm tries to get around these objections by establishing a team of interviewers under a field supervisor, booking accommodations at decent hotels, etc.

The Indian interviewer would envy her U.S. counterpart for not having to walk and walk all day. In India the interviewer's day begins at 8 a.m. After a long bus ride to the area chosen for the day, she gets her assignment from the supervisor and trudges on foot from house to house until, say, 2 p.m. Her only relief, apart from a mid-day break with her coworkers, is when she has a long questionnaire to fill out or the respondent offers a cool drink! After 2 p.m. most housewives prefer a siesta to answering questions, so unless the interviewer has an appointment for, say, a product test, work is finished for the day. She may interview again in the evening, though, to contact men or to avoid the heat.

Since the interviewer is often part of a permanent team, training is a continuous, on-the-job affair. Apart from being briefed on the particular study and doing mock and practice calls, she is periodically accompanied on calls by the supervisor whose job it is to keep the standards of her team high. After or during a pretest or study, the study directors often find that a discussion with the interviewers yields greater insight into the study.

The interviewer enjoys the companionship of her team, but as with interviewers everywhere, the best part of the job is the rapport she establishes with the respondent. Refusals are generally rare; the Indian woman, especially, loves to talk and is glad to find one more listener!