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Old Data Pose New Questions: Minority Data Resource Center Facilitates Analysis of Minority and Ethnic Populations

The new **Minority Data Resource Center** at ICPSR provides easy-to-use online tools for analyzing raw data about ethnically or racially underrepresented populations in the United States. By archiving and distributing these data, MDRC aims to foster a better understanding of issues affecting these populations and our society as a whole.

Topics range from comparative data on crime, education, health, and political opinions to how emergency room waiting times and rates of capital punishment and substance use vary by race and ethnic origin.

“ICPSR’s holdings and the way we provide access to them usually favor sophisticated users,” says sociologist

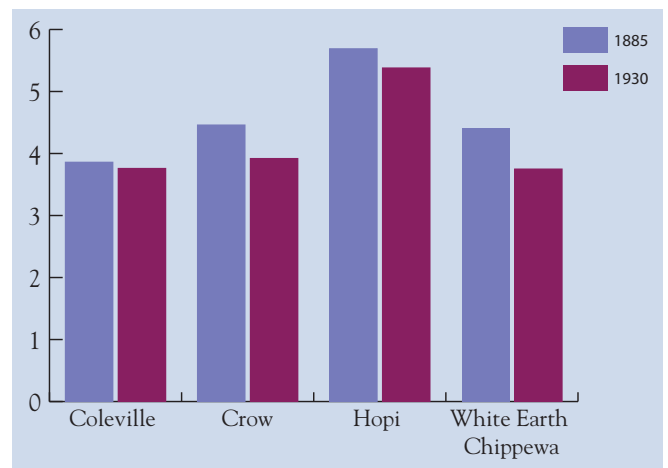
Felicia LeClere, who developed the new archive in collaboration with a team of ICPSR staff. “This is a more user-friendly gateway that includes new tools to help with online analysis. We also feature findings and datasets on a rotating basis to encourage users to go into the site.”

According to historian Myron Gutmann, director of ICPSR, the new center is designed to be a resource for teachers as well as researchers.

Featured Findings Graphs

Featured findings on the MDRC site illustrate trends in the data and suggest additional questions for researchers to investigate. For example, Graph 1 illustrates changes in mean family size for American Indian tribes between 1885 and 1930. Family size decreased

Graph 1: Mean Family Size for Native Americans: 1885–1930



for all the tribes throughout the 45-year period; Crow and Chippewa families were particularly affected during the historical decline of the Native American population. Why did the historical trends responsible for the decline of the Native American tribes affect the family size of these two tribes first? Another featured finding, Graph 2 illustrates changes in the appraised value of slaves by state. Trends by state and time suggest that slaves in the cotton states of Mississippi and

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INTER-UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

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Louisiana were more highly valued than those in the tobacco states of Maryland and Virginia throughout the historical period. Was the market value of cotton or the amount of labor needed to farm cotton responsible for state differences in the appraised value of slaves?

Online Analysis Tools

In addition to historical data, MDRC holdings span the subject range of the ICPSR collection to include data on the economic, social, political, and physical well-being of minority populations. Online analysis tools are available for all studies in the MDRC collection.

The tools available to users include a **sample characteristics tool** that allows interested users to assess whether the sample population of a study has the desired demographic characteristics. The **syntax recoding tool** allows users not only to recode a variable, an option already available through online analysis, but also to write out the syntax necessary for that recode so that syntax may be incorporated into users' own statistical syntax files. The **subsetting tool** allows users to create data subsets dynamically for selected subpopulations of a survey.

Outreach

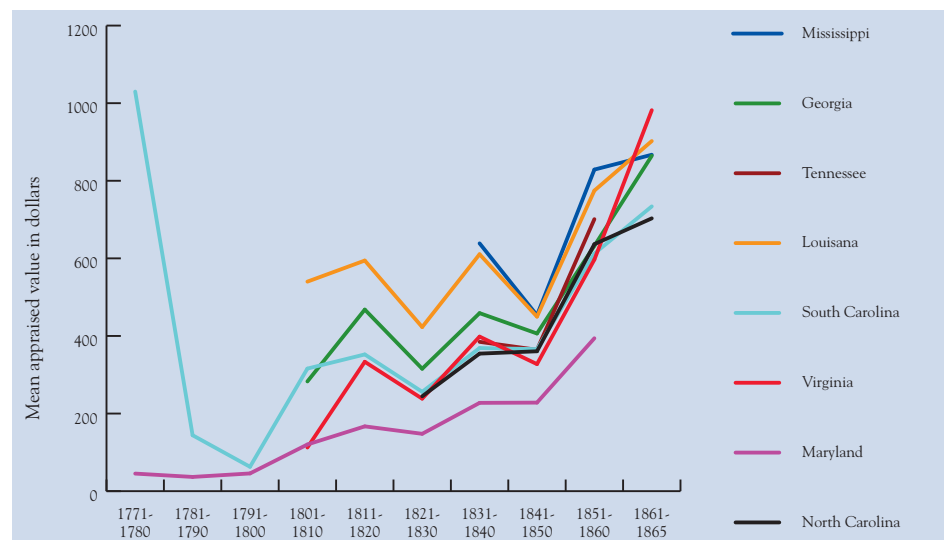
MDRC staff attend meetings such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS), and the Western Political Science Association (WPSA), as well as the annual meetings of the larger national organizations like the American Political Science Association (APSA) and the American Sociological Association (ASA), to inform researchers and students about MDRC data resources.

Looking for More Data

MDRC is reaching out to ICPSR users for assistance in identifying datasets concerning ethnically or racially underrepresented populations. Information about possible datasets for archiving at MDRC can be sent to icpsrmdrc@icpsr.umich.edu.

Access to data in the new online archive is available at www.icpsr.umich.edu/MDRC to anyone affiliated with an ICPSR member university or institution. See www.icpsr.umich.edu/membership/ors.html for a list of members. ■

Graph 2: Appraised Value of Slaves by State and Date of Appraisal: 1771–1865





DATA NEWS

Merged CPES Data and Web Site Now Available

ICPSR and Survey Research Operations of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, are pleased to announce the release of the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys (CPES), which **provide data on the distributions, correlates, and risk factors of mental disorders among the general population, with special emphasis on minority groups**. Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, this project joins together three nationally representative surveys: the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R), the National Survey of American Life (NSAL), and the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS).

The CPES Web site provides a number of ways to explore the CPES data:

- › Use the Interactive Documentation to compare questions and variables across the merged CPES file and the three separate files
- › Download the data in ASCII, SPSS portable, SAS transport, or Stata system format along with the documentation for desktop analysis
- › Investigate and visualize the CPES data through the SDA online analysis system, which enables a variety of analytic tasks
- › Search on specific variables or topics of interest
- › Browse the CPES data by DSM-IV or ICD-10 diagnostic headings

More information on using CPES is found on the Web site: www.icpsr.umich.edu/CPES.

PUBLICATIONS CORNER

ICPSR *Guide* Now Available in Japanese

ICPSR's *Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving: Best Practice Throughout the Data Life Cycle* (Third Edition, 2005) has been translated into Japanese by Dr. Yukio Maeda of the Institute for Social Sciences

HONORS AND AWARDS

Leonard-Gutmann Article Wins *Great Plains Research Award*

An article coauthored by ICPSR Research Scientist Susan Hautaniemi Leonard and ICPSR Director Myron Gutmann has won the Leslie Hewes Award for best social science article published in *Great Plains Research* in 2006. "**Land Use and Transfer Plans in the U.S. Great Plains**" examines the results of a survey of farmers and their spouses between 1997 and 1999.

The authors found that farm transfer trends indicated increasing farm consolidation, changes in farm ownership and management, and loss of land for farm production. Participants were ambiguous about their plans to leave farming, transfer land to others, and even about long-term land use, largely due to concerns about the continued economic viability of farming. Participants living far from metropolitan areas expected to sell or rent to other farmers, while those near residential real estate markets expected to sell to developers. Delays in planning for retirement and succession were common, further threatening the success of intergenerational transitions.

at the University of Tokyo. The Japanese edition of the *Guide* is available in PDF at the Social Sciences of Japan Data Archive Web site: ssjda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp.

McGovern Article Assesses Progress in Digital Preservation

Nancy McGovern, Digital Preservation Officer at ICPSR, published the article, "A Digital Decade: Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going in Digital Preservation?" in the April 15 edition of *RLG DigiNews*.

McGovern reviews the progress within the digital preservation field over the past decade as reflected on the pages of the journal *RLG DigiNews*.



She describes **three essential components for developing feasible digital preservation strategies: organization, technology, and resources.** A decade ago there were no formal shared standards or practice for digital preservation. Important organizational developments over the past ten years include the development and promulgation of the RLG/OCLC report on the Attributes of a Trusted Digital Repository (TDR), an increase in the development of digital preservation policies by organizations, and an acknowledgment of the central role of procedural accountability for audit and certification. Notable technology developments include the OAIS Reference Model and open source repository software and tools. While understanding of the need for resources for digital preservation has increased, McGovern argues that more organizations should designate funds for digital preservation. She proposes the drafting of a community-based report that outlines the extent of resources needed for digital preservation.

View the article at www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=21033s.

Pienta and Colleagues Examine Impact of Mothering on Well-Being in Midlife

Amy M. Pienta, ICPSR Associate Research Scientist and Director of Data Acquisitions, has coauthored an article on factors impacting women's well-being in midlife that was published in *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, Vol. 64, No. 4/2007.

Coauthors of the article are University of Florida researcher, Tanya Koropecj-Cox, who is lead author of the study, and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill graduate student in Sociology, Tyson Brown.

Analyzing data from over 6,000 women between the ages of 51 and 61 from two different national surveys, Pienta said the research found that **"Whether a woman has had children or not isn't likely to affect her psychological well-being in later life."** What is more important is whether or not she has a husband, a significant other, or close social relationships in her life as she ages."

View the University of Michigan News Service article: www.ns.umich.edu/htdocs/releases/story.php?id=5832. ■

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