IRP contributions to ICPSR

The Institute for Research on Poverty has recently contributed two data sets to the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Since 1962, ICPSR has provided a central repository and dissemination service for machine-readable data in the social sciences. Over 360 colleges and universities located in seventeen countries are participating members, making use of the ICPSR services and archives.

1. "The Uniform October CPS Person-Household File, 1968–1990," constructed by Robert M. Hauser, Linda Jordan, and Taissa S. Hauser. This file is an enhanced version of the annual October Current Population Surveys (CPS) from the late 1960s to the present. The October CPS enrollment supplement provides timely information on school enrollment, attendance, and completion for persons between the ages of 3 and 34. Because it includes questions about enrollment in previous years, it provides a measure of high school dropout. Lacking, however, is information on social and economic background of the school-aged population, with the exception of family income.

The enhanced file rectifies this deficiency by matching the children's October CPS records to those of adult household members. The resulting file contains complete demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the householder and the spouse of the householder (if any) in the household in which the school-age individual resides, and it includes as well some other household variables, such as the number of children in the household. Thus it is now possible to specify the age, education, labor force status, and occupation of adults in the household and to link the records of siblings in order to measure the resemblance in educational outcomes within families. This set of repeated cross-section measurements of the schooling process and the factors affecting the risk of school failure is being used to study trends and differentials in social background and school progression. Differences in early school entry, grade progression, high school dropout, and postsecondary school entry among ethnic/racial groups are being analyzed while controlling for family and parental characteristics.

2. "Individual Level Extracts: March CPS, 1968–1992," constructed by Robert Moffitt. The CPS files are organized by household. This file reorganizes the March CPS to provide data on the individuals within the household. It contains multiple records for each family, one for each member of the family between the ages of 16 and 64 in each year. It enables researchers to study trends among individuals of approximately 100 key economic and socioeconomic variables—including earnings and income, labor force participation and employment, and family structure. It has been used to study earnings inequality, rates of AFDC participation, rates of female headship among U.S. women, and men's average earnings and returns to education over the 1980s. It has recently been used to examine trends over a twenty-five-year period in high school dropout rates of single mothers and to track welfare participation rates among single mothers with varying amounts of schooling. The data are used by Peter Brandon in this issue of *Focus* to explore factors affecting the well-being of poor children over a twenty-five-year period.

Information on the immense data resources of the ICPSR Archive can be obtained from ICPSR, the University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.