What does Timling, an isolated mountain-top village in Nepal, have in common with Richardton, a farming community on the plains of North Dakota? A lot, according to ISR Senior Research Scientist Tom Fricke.

Fricke, who is also a professor in the UM Anthropology Department, has done field work in Timling (pop. 650) since the early nineteen eighties. There he watched as a well established culture, with expectations of stability, began to break down. Young people left to find more lucrative work in Katmandu, while the older people who remained could no longer reliably transmit their values and traditions to their offspring.

This scenario was strangely familiar to Fricke, who couldn’t help noticing its resemblance to a similar trend in his home state of North Dakota. In fact, Fricke himself exemplifies the exodus of youth from the Great Plains to the cities, though he still considers himself a North Dakotan at heart.

Fricke became convinced of the importance of applying the insights and techniques of anthropology to the vast cultural changes currently effecting middle-class, Midwestern Americans. He turned the lens of his own research toward Richardton, ND, a town 80 miles due west of Bismarck, whose size and demographics almost match Timling’s. He is talking with older people who have stayed behind in Richardton, and he will also interview their departed offspring, thereby tracking the ways in which relationships and expectations change when parents and children no longer share the same community.

Fricke’s new research agenda has received enthusiastic financial backing from The Sloan Foundation, whose $2.8 million grant has created the new Sloan Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life (CEEL) here at ISR.

Fricke heads up CEEL, which not only supports his own research, but also offers funding for a vast array of projects that trace the effects of changing cultural trends and expectations on work and family life throughout the Midwest. The Sloan Foundation funds three other research centers, at Berkeley, Chicago, and Cornell, all of which share the theme of work and family. But ISR’s Center

--- continued on page 11 ---
How appropriate that the first issue of the ISR Sampler appears in the dawn of the Millennium and follows a year-long celebration of ISR’s 50th anniversary. We of the ISR family—and there are over 6,000 of us who have worked within the Institute as scientists or graduate students, our “alums”—can be justly proud of what has been accomplished over that half century. And we should and do take special pride that our science has been in the public interest. That approach distinguishes us from virtually all other social science institutes. We are known as the preeminent academic research and advanced training center that takes the abiding and arising problems of human behavior and habitat as the laboratories in which the theory and methods of the social and behavioral science are tested, reinvented, and developed. We also have been acknowledged by our University of Michigan senior administrators as one of the “jewels in Michigan’s crown,” an integral part of a great public research university with worldwide scope.

With that signature as our historic legacy, we have great opportunity—and responsibility—to look forward and to lead the social and behavioral sciences into new territory, conceptual as well as methodological and technical. Over successive issues of the ISR Sampler, I shall comment more often on new launchings or explorations of new terrain than on continuities. But in other content of this newsletter, we shall want to feature both in some detail. One of the other distinguishing features of ISR’s science is its commitment to understanding change—for example, in household economics and demography, in electoral politics, and in youth making their way from school to work. And therefore we cherish a commensurate commitment to decades’ long time-series and the difficult task of keeping these series not only “alive” but also freshly relevant to contemporary issues and to leading edge issues in our science.

What lies ahead? Our immediate horizons are both domestic and international. We are in the preliminary stages of proposing a Rackham Ph.D. in Survey Research Methodology, a program that would expand and deepen ISR’s longstanding role as an advanced training center and more fully integrate us within the instructional mission of the UM. Our colleagues in the Survey Research Center and the Survey Methods and Quantitative Methods Programs are leading this initiative, but importantly they are joined by faculty colleagues from LS&A departments and from several professional schools. On the international front, we have benefited greatly from the union with the Population Studies Center, formerly within LS&A, as PSC has become our fourth center. One of the fruits of this union is the growth of research partnerships in South Africa, centered at the University of Cape Town, bearing in mind the model of our working partnership with the Institute for Social Studies at the University of Warsaw (begun under the leadership of Bob Zajonc as ISR director). There is much more to say about both these initiatives, as well as others, in future columns, but they indicate...
new directions that expand the mission and value of ISR both here and abroad.

Finally, I want to introduce Patrick Shields to the ISR family, because Pat represents another new direction for us. Pat is a Ph.D. in political science (Ohio State) who joined us this past September from the Humphrey School of Public Policy at Minnesota where he was director of institutional development. Pat is ISR’s first development officer, and he will work closely with my office and the directors of centers and programs to broaden the base of our fiscal support in the private sector. As many of you know, public universities across the nation often are less able to recruit the most outstanding students and faculty (and to retain the latter) when competing against our peer private institutions. That fact affects ISR, too. And while ISR has been very successful in expanding the federal funding for our research programs—our total research expenditures now approximate $50 million annually—support for infrastructure and building expansion, seeding new initiatives, and subsidizing the tuition of graduate research assistants, for example, have not kept pace from federal and state sources. So, we are embarking on a long-term development program, and we are grateful that Pat has joined us to lead the way.

We look to the future, and we welcome your responses to the content and format of the ISR Sampler, which is one way we hope to share our excitement and new scientific directions with you. More next issue!

— David L. Featherman, Director and Professor of Sociology and Psychology

House Elected to Prestigious Institute of Medicine

James S. House, director of ISR’s Survey Research Center and professor of sociology, has been elected to the Institute of Medicine, the medical branch of the National Academy of Sciences. Election to the Institute is a great honor, reserved for those who have made major contributions to health and medicine or related fields.

Also a research scientist in epidemiology, House studies the role of social support and occupational stress in disease process and outcome. He was one of the first researchers to use survey data to systematically study the effects of social relationships and supports on health and illness. His work shows that deficiencies in social relationships can have as much impact on the rate of mortality as smoking. He documented the influences of occupational stress on health in his book Work Stress and Social Support and has recently been using national longitudinal survey data to examine socioeconomic disparities in health as well as the relationships between health and aging.

House was one of four University of Michigan researchers to be inducted into the Institute of Medicine in October of 1999, an extraordinarily large number to be chosen from one institution in a single year. He is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has been a Guggenheim Fellow.

James S. House, Director of ISR’s Survey Research Center and Professor of Sociology
Population Studies Center Joins ISR

In September of 1998, the internationally renowned Population Studies Center left its longtime home at the University of Michigan’s College of Literature, Science and the Arts and became ISR’s fourth center.

Established in 1961, the Pop Studies Center has always had a close relationship with ISR. In fact, sociologist Ron Freedman, the founder of PSC, was himself trained in survey methods at ISR’s Survey Research Center in the mid 1950’s.

Freedman’s innovative demographic studies of family and fertility issues, both in the US and in Taiwan, provided the nucleus around which the Population Studies Center originally formed. The Center has long served as a demographics training center for researchers from abroad and also offers an interdisciplinary home to UM faculty and graduate students from several university departments and schools, including Sociology, Economics, Social Work, and Public Health.

Over the years, according to Freedman, PSC continued to develop strong ties with ISR’s Survey Research Center, and the idea of building a formal connection between the two organizations was frequently discussed.

Current Pop Studies Center Director David Lam points out several circumstances that converged to make the late 1990’s the time when the merger actually happened: Several PSC faculty are also Principle Investigators on large SRC projects; the National Institutes of Health, a major PSC supporter, encouraged strengthening the link with ISR; and David Featherman, ISR’s new director, provided strong motivational support.

Once the decision was made to undertake the merger, there was, according to Lam, general support from many levels of the University: “The good thing was that there was a very broad recognition in LS&A, in ISR, in the Office of the Vice President for Research, even at the level of the Provost, that this merger just seemed like it made a lot of sense.”

Former PSC director Al Hermalin notes the high level of cooperation and good will that infused the complicated process of making the move: “Everybody acted with a lot of perspective and breadth,” he says, and people were willing to “put the intellectual aspect and the potential synergies up front.”

Hermalin also notes the many advantages to both institutions, now that the merger has successfully completed its first year. People at the PSC are better placed to initiate “broader and larger studies than we could consider mounting on our own,” and they can “draw on units at ISR that it might not have been as easy to involve in the past.”

PSC brings to ISR its wide ranging international connections, which are already bearing fruit in the new Cape Town Area Study, modeled on the famous Detroit Area Study, jointly sponsored by ISR’s Survey Research Center and the Department of Sociology.

And PSC contributes its well established expertise as a training institution and its large pool of graduate students, who will be able to benefit from and make a contribution to new and ongoing projects at ISR.

In fact, the new merger makes so much sense, according David Lam, that “many people, both outside and inside the University thought that we were part of ISR all along.”

A Party for Al Hermalin

On Friday, May 12 and Saturday May 13, 2000, the Population Studies Center hosted a combined Year 2000 Reunion and retirement celebration for long time faculty member Albert I. Hermalin. Hermalin served as Professor of Sociology at UM for 33 years, and was Director of the Population Studies Center from 1977-1987. He recently completed a five year term as Co-Director of the Michigan Exploratory Center on the Demography in Aging. A popular teacher and mentor, Hermalin chaired or co-chaired 32 dissertation committees. Though fully retired from teaching, he plans to continue his research on the elderly in Asia and is completing a book that summarizes his work of the past 10 years.
First ISR Founders Dissertation Fellowships Awarded

The Founders Dissertation Award is one way that the ISR assures continuity from generation to generation. “The Founders gave us a tremendous legacy of multidisciplinary research aimed at society’s most difficult social problems,” according to David Featherman, ISR Director. “The Founders Dissertation Fellowships are one mechanism to assure that we can continue to invest in the future, while being grounded in our roots. I was particularly pleased that many alumni of the ISR contributed to make the Founders Fellowships possible. I believe this is their way of recognizing the importance of their research experiences as graduate students.”

So far, two $15,000 awards were made to promote empirically grounded, social scientific analysis of important intellectual or practical issues pertaining to human behavior or social life, and, to facilitate such analysis in active association with an ISR research project or program area.

JANET DUNN:

Janet Dunn is interested in better understanding the many changes in family structure and composition occurring worldwide. Her dissertation attempts to determine the effect of television exposure on fertility levels in northeastern Brazil. Her work on the unintended effects of television itself on changing fertility levels goes beyond previous studies that have examined the impact of overt family planning messages.

Dunn is a graduate of Wayne State University, where she majored in anthropology and chemistry, and Michigan State University, where she earned her masters in anthropology and archeology. At the University of Michigan, she is studying bio-cultural anthropology under the mentorship of Tom Fricke, ISR Senior Research Scientist, and Conrad Kottak, Chair of the Department of Anthropology.

Dunn’s research interests dovetail with some of the most exciting developments in recent social theory and demographic research. Just as demographers are turning to anthropology to provide more theoretical understanding of transformations they witnessed and analyzed throughout the world, a growing number of anthropologists are training themselves in sophisticated techniques of demographic data collection and analysis.

She recently completed her dissertation so she can pursue her postdoctoral work with the Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life. “I really enjoy teaching and spend too much time doing it. The Founders Fellowship gave me the luxury of time to think and forces me to write.”

MARKUS KEMMELMEIER:

Upon coming to the United States, Markus Kemmelmeier realized that race relations in Germany were more invisible than they are here. Kemmelmeier’s research project is rooted in the classical work on social power conducted by Dorwin Cartwright from the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the ISR. Specifically, he is examining the relationship between power and prejudice among European Americans, a group that is commonly perceived to be the dominant in U.S. society. Using a series of experiments, he activates beliefs about power and determines if this increases levels of prejudice and stereotyping in those participants who believe in “natural” power differentials between certain groups.

Markus Kemmelmeier is a native of Germany who received his master’s degree from the University of Mannheim, where he studied social psychology with Klaus Fielder. Five years ago, he came to the University of Michigan as part of a German training grant. He chose Michigan because of its “outstanding program in social psychology.” Eugene Burnstein, ISR Senior Research Scientist, and David Winter, Professor of Psychology mentor Kemmelmeier.

While he has enjoyed the freedom to explore and pursue his various intellectual interests, finances have been tight. Marcus noted that “as an international student, I am not eligible for — continued on page 10
The four centers at the Institute for Social Research provide homes and facilities for literally hundreds of research projects and programs. Each issue of the ISR Sampler will provide highlights from this vast array of work, with the aim of giving interested parties both within and outside of ISR a taste of what their colleagues are doing and a chance to make new connections. Relevant e-mail addresses are provided for those who want more information on specific projects.

SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER
The Health and Retirement Study (HRS) of the Survey Research Center just won funding for another three waves of its longitudinal research on older Americans. The study began in 1992 with a sample of 8,400 Americans between the ages of 51 and 61. A year later, it merged with the Asset and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old (AHEAD) Project, which focused on subjects 70 years and older, and in 1998, the combined studies added a sample of “war babies” born between 1942 and 1947, and a sample of “children of the depression” born between 1924 and 1930. Since that time, the HRS sample has grown to include some 20,000 subjects and, according to Program Chair Robert J. Willis, “has become representative of the entire US population over the age of 50, with the capability of following respondents longitudinally until they die.” The new funding from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) enables the Health and Retirement Study to maintain a “steady state sample, adding a new cohort of subjects entering their fifties every six years.” By 2004 it will enroll the first wave of baby boomers born between 1948 and 1954. The purpose of the study, says Willis, “is to provide data for the community of scientific and policy researchers who study the economics and demography of aging.” So far, among a host of findings, HRS has provided evidence for the declining disability of older Americans, and has shown a striking link between physical health and economic well being among the elderly.

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The thirty-two year old Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is still going strong and getting national coverage for several of its projects: 1.) A recent analysis of data collected by the PSID shows that only five percent of people in this country remain at the poverty level for life, while 65% will at some time be wealthy, and as much as a third of the population will be both rich and poor over the course of a lifetime. PSID data also demonstrate that the odds are good (65%) of becoming wealthy if you are white, but not so good (25%) if you are black or Hispanic. 2.) Sandy Hofferth, et al., have published a paper showing that high school attendance for teen mothers has improved in the past thirty years, but college attendance rates for teen moms are going down in an era when general rates of college attendance have gone up. 3.) A study by Wei-Jun Yeung, et al., shows that fathers are now spending up to 87% as much time as mothers with their children, an increase of 40% since the 1970’s, but that the increase occurs mostly on weekends, and mothers are still responsible for most of the infant care and housework.

In late breaking news, Director Frank Stafford has learned that PSID will receive special notice at the golden anniversary of the National Science Foundation as one of the “Nifty 50” top science projects in the country. PSID was chosen from among tens of thousands of projects, and is the only social science project on the “Nifty 50” list.
These top projects will be presented in a new NSF Resource Guidebook and were chosen for “their noteworthiness, the general American public’s familiarity with each, and their ability to make life better, easier, or less cumbersome for Americans.”

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In October of 1999, 22 faculty from ISR, the School of Public Health and other branches of the University received funding from NIH to establish the Michigan Interdisciplinary Center on Social Inequalities, Mind, and Body. MICSIMB, headed by Public Health Professor and ISR Research Scientist George Kaplan, supports five independent but thematically inter-related research projects: 1.) an assessment of the effect of parental socio-economic status and stress on the physical, emotional and cognitive development of children; 2.) an analysis of the influences of hormones related to depression and hopelessness on the increased risk of heart disease; 3.) a study of the impact on health of social inequalities and other psychological and psychosocial risk factors in a major urban setting; 4.) an examination of how early and later life factors affect a broad range of indicators of psychosocial well-being and of cardiovascular disease in adulthood; and 5.) a study of the effects of moving from welfare to “workfare” on the health of randomly selected women in Michigan.

The new Center also includes a Methodology and Biostatistics Core to help researchers develop and apply new “multi-level” research models, and it will support a series of seminars and other venues for interdisciplinary exchange. Kaplan is particularly excited about the opportunities the new Center affords “to bring together in the same room epidemiologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, people from social work, public policy, medicine and psychiatry, and have them all address the impact on health of these social and economic inequalities.”

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ISR Senior Research Scientist David R. Williams is one of a group of researchers from multiple institutions who successfully responded to a National Institute of Mental Health special request for proposals on torture and mental health. He received funding to do a large epidemiological study in South Africa that will measure the rate of psychiatric disorders in a sample 5,000 adults from all racial groups in both urban and rural populations. In addition to administering the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI) the study will, according to Williams, develop a scale to “assess exposure to physical and psychological torture during the apartheid era as well as to traumatic events currently, and try to establish the relationship between this exposure and psychiatric illnesses.” In addition to his work in South Africa, Prof. Williams is involved in a wide array of studies in this country that explore the links between race, socio-economic status, and health. He wants to discover the causes for the observable “large social group variations in health outcomes, both by looking at changes in the patterns of distributions of disease over time and by identifying the factors in the larger social environment that are responsible for the persistent patterns in the variation of health.” Williams is also interested in exploring religion as a potential resource that might affect health, and has just completed data collection on the first national study on the effects of forgiveness on mental health.

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Notes
**RESEARCH CENTER FOR GROUP DYNAMICS**

The Achievement Research Program, headed by Jacqueline Eccles, consists of three large longitudinal projects that follow the development of self-schema from childhood through adolescence and early adulthood. 1.) Childhood and Beyond (CAB) is, according to Eccles, a study that “gives us a chance to really understand how parents try to influence their kids’ self-perceptions and interests, and how kids’ internalized psychological constructs actually impact their behavior and their choices of activities and skills.” The subjects for this project, originally kindergarten, first and third graders, are now at least a year out of high school, and Eccles and her team are trying to establish the relationship between values and self-concepts formed in early childhood, and choices made by adolescents as they move into the world of work and higher education. 2.) The Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transition (MSALT) compliments CAB with a larger sample of subjects who joined the study in seventh grade and are now in their late twenties. “What I’m most excited about here,” says Eccles, “is the chance to look seriously at the transition into adulthood and see how it is influenced by experiences in adolescence. Very few longitudinal studies have the kind of rich data across age periods that allows researchers to bridge the links and begin to tell the whole story.” 3.) The Prince George’s County Study examines a sample of middle-class kids from a county in Maryland, 66% of whom are black. This study gives Eccles and her colleagues “an opportunity to look at some of our ideas in a substantially African American population, and what we’ve done is to expand our notion of identity to include ethnic identity and ethnic experiences, which is new and exciting for us.”

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**L. Rowell Huesmann’s Aggression Research Program** seeks “to understand what causes individual differences in the propensity to behave violently.” Currently Huesmann is doing a follow-up survey of 856 subjects who were originally studied as children in 1960. He wants to assess the extent to which early tendencies toward violent behavior in these subjects have persisted into adulthood. His research is teasing out the ways in which the subjects’ neuro-physiological predispositions interact with their learning experiences to create individual differences in tendencies toward aggressive behavior. Since the original subjects in the study are now forty-eight years old, Huesmann also has the opportunity to test their offspring and to find out whether tendencies toward violence are transmitted from one generation to the next. An aspect of Huesmann’s research that has received considerable national attention is his examination of the effects of media violence on children. His studies indicate that media violence can stimulate persistent aggressive behavior in young children. But there is no evidence that media violence provokes increased aggressive or violent behavior in older teens or young adults. Though Huesmann’s work on media violence has generated a lot of popular interest, he insists that the media represent just one factor among the potential causes of violent behavior: “It’s an interesting time because violence is so much in the news, and everyone thinks they’re an expert. But in fact there’s a lot we still need to learn. We don’t yet know enough about how to identify which child will become violent. Our hope is that our research will bring us closer to achieving this goal.”

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**CENTER FOR POLITICAL STUDIES**

In the fall of 1999, Professor of Political Science Ronald Inglehart and his international team of researchers initiated the fourth wave of the World Values Survey. The WVS is a comprehensive...
study of world views, values, beliefs, and motivations that began in 1981 and now is being carried out in sixty countries containing 70% of the world’s population. Inglehart is particularly interested in examining world-wide cultural change and its consequences. Although his data show consistency within national groups on the “subjective well-being” scale (i.e. Russians tend to be melancholy while the Dutch are cheerful), he has also found a strong overall correlation between happiness and the development of democratic forms of government. As countries become more industrialized and more technologically sophisticated, the push for political liberalization and democratization becomes stronger. There is a predictable increase in emphasis on workers’ right, as well as on rights and opportunities for women, and a predictable decrease in emphasis on traditional religious practices. “The most exciting single finding,” Inglehart claims, “is the fact that people’s world views, across a wide variety of national and cultural populations, are changing in a systematic and predictable way.” Prof. Inglehart’s most recent book is *Human Values and Beliefs: A Cross Cultural Sourcebook* (University of Michigan Press, 1998), and his paper called “Modernization, Cultural Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values” appeared in the February, 2000 edition of the *American Sociological Review.*

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**Jennifer Widner** has just completed a book entitled *Building the Rule of Law,* a comparison of judicial systems in a variety of emerging African nations. The book’s aim is to answer the question of why there is so much variance across African nations with common law traditions in the level of judicial independence resulting from separation of powers. The standard American explanations that focus on independence as a function of legislative delegation seem not to apply in these various African settings, and Widner explores the reasons for the difference. The book, which is based on interviews and survey data, examines judicial strategy in a large array of difficult contexts, and Widner comments that writing it posed several challenges: “The rules and institutions that shape judicial behavior in African settings are often based on legal norms with which contemporary Western political scientists are unfamiliar. That meant I had to spend a lot of time in law classes while writing! It also meant that the text had to explain a lot of law to novice readers, without boring the lawyers.” Widner hopes that her book will stimulate further data gathering. Since sending it off to the publisher, she has continued to examine the survey data she collected in several African countries to find out “the effects of community characteristics on public attitudes and political participation in those communities.”

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**POPULATION STUDIES CENTER**

The Population Studies Center has recently initiated a major five-year research and training program entitled Determinants of Fertility Preferences in Southeast Asia. Center Director David Lam is principal investigator for the program, which operates in four Asian countries: China, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. Other researchers include Al Hermalin, Barbara Anderson, John Knodel, Tom Fricke, Alan Thornton, Yu Xie, Bill Axin and Ron Freedman. According to Lam, the countries participating in the program provide ample opportunity for comparison and contrast: they are “similar in terms of settings, but cover a broad range in terms of rates of fertility” and provide ample opportunity for “looking at a lot of determinants of fertility.” China, for example, has long had government restrictions on fertility, while Nepal is just beginning to move away from the tradition of large families. Thailand and Viet Nam are somewhere in between. Of particular interest to researchers is the effect of decreasing fertility rates on the aging population, and the consequences...
Associate Professor of Sociology Pamela Smock explores the intersection of gender, economic well-being, and family patterns in the United States. Her early research examined the economic vulnerability of women outside of marriage. More recently she has looked at issues such as 1.) the enormous increase in pre-marital cohabitation over the last three decades and 2.) the impact of absent fathers on children. The central themes of her research are gender inequality, changing family patterns, and how the two impinge on one another. She is motivated by “a quest to challenge, or at least scrutinize claims found in the scholarly literature and also evident in the popular or semi-popular media. Sometimes this challenge takes the form of identifying overlooked but crucial patterns, sometimes of reframing questions, and sometimes of testing dominant explanations or research practices.” For example, in a paper published in 1997 in *Demography*, Smock and colleagues examined the commonly held belief that women’s increasing economic independence might reduce the attractiveness of marriage and even result in large scale social changes, such as later age at marriage, increases in divorce and increases in non-marital childbirth. In fact, says Smock, “our main finding was that men’s ability to fulfill the ‘breadwinner’ role remains a key consideration in the decision to marry, while women’s economic resources do not appear to matter at all. That these findings emerge even among cohabitators, a subgroup known to be less traditional in terms of gender roles, suggests the intractability of a division of labor that assigns breadwinning to men.”

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Markus Kemmelmeier, Ph.D. candidate plans to move into the job market this fall. He hopes to expand his research on power, beliefs about power and stereotyping to other countries.

Multi-disciplinarity and cross-cultural analysis have always been central to research at the ISR, but this research is often hard to pursue and even harder to fund. The Founder’s Dissertation Fellowship Awards enabled both Dunn and Kemmelmeier to pursue their passions with novel and creative theoretical and methodological approaches. The Founders would be proud!

While the ISR will continue to support this fellowship program to train the next generation of empirical social scientists, the support of ISR alumni and friends is critical to our ability to expand the program. If you want to contribute to the Founders Fellowships, please call Patrick Shields at (734) 764-8369 or e-mail him at peshield@umich.edu.

To find out more about what’s going on at ISR’s four centers, consult our web page at www.isr.umich.edu
for the Ethnography of Everyday Life is the only one that deeply integrates anthropological approaches and concepts.

One of Fricke’s main accomplishments as a social scientist has been to blend ethnography, a primary tool of anthropologists, with survey research instruments of the sort that have made ISR’s reputation. In Nepal, as part of the Tamang Family Research Project, Fricke and his colleagues perfected a new research technique that combines “the protocols of standard surveys with the community focus and intensive data collection of anthropology.”

Social scientists outside of anthropology often criticize ethnography for being merely “anecdotal,” for not leading to generalizable conclusions. Surveys, on the other hand, are often seen by the public, and by some social scientists, as shallow and unappealing because they offer graphs and statistics but “no humanity.” Humans are story telling animals, Fricke explains, and surveys don’t have the complexity or the layers of meaning that make narrative compelling. Only at ISR “is it possible to create a Center like CEEL, that speaks to and resolves both of those criticisms. Ethnography can be linked to existing data sets that show how each of the communities studied ethnographically can relate to a larger population. And on the other side, because we’re linked to these larger data sets, the ethnographic material can be used in articles and reports that come out of the big national data sets as a way to illustrate how the variables that are measured actually play out in real, concrete lives.” In other words, when the two methods are linked, survey research can give breadth to ethnography, while ethnography can give depth to survey research.

This link between ethnography and survey research will be a standard feature of projects supported by the Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life. Fricke himself, for example, is looking for patterns in data obtained from ISR’s Health and Retirement Survey (HRS), and he will use this information when framing questions for the in-depth interviews he’ll conduct with older citizens of Richardton.

Rebecca Upton, a post doctoral fellow who joined the Center last fall, will use information culled from ISR Senior Scientist Arland Thornton’s Intergenerational Studies of Mothers and Children Survey to inform her ethnographic study of the tradeoffs between career ambitions and the timing and desire to have children.

Janet Dunn, another new fellow, is studying children’s use of time and how parents and children experience and manage time constraints. She is making use of a new survey module, designed by Research Scientist Sandy Hofferth, that examines childcare issues quantitatively and was recently added to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID).

CEEL brings together an interdisciplinary Core Faculty who, according to Fricke, have been chosen “for their serious interest in either themselves conducting, or encouraging others to pursue, ethnographic investigation on middle class American life.” In addition to Fricke, Core Faculty members include Sandy Hofferth, ISR Research Scientist and Adjunct Professor of Sociology; Conrad Kottak, Professor and Chair of Anthropology; Leslie Perlow, Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior, the

“...when the two methods are linked, survey research can give breadth to ethnography, while ethnography can give depth to survey research.”
Each year CEEL will support post-doctoral and pre-doctoral fellows from a variety of disciplines. Their research will cover a wide range of topics, the only stipulations being that they limit their focus to work and family issues in the Midwest, and that they have an interest in using ethnographic techniques. The fellows who joined CEEL in Fall ’99 include post-docs Janet Dunn, Elizabeth Rudd, and Rebecca Upton, and pre-docs Todd Goodsell, Sallie Han, and Brian Hoey.

Tom Fricke glows with excitement as he talks about his new Center, which, he claims, has found a perfect home at ISR: “It’s the only place where we can actually do the kind of integrative work we want to do.”

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