Social scientists have always been interested in how environment affects behavior. But now, with widespread agreement that human activity is causing global warming, research on how human attitudes and behavior affect the environment is starting to accelerate.

A new project at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR) will monitor the evolving attitudes of the American public toward plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and provide the first national-level empirical data on how driving behavior differs with these vehicles compared to conventional gasoline, diesel and hybrid vehicles. Headed by ISR researchers James Jackson and Richard Curtin, the project is part of a collaboration between the U-M Memorial Phoenix Energy Institute and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

“This research will focus on the optimum role of electric hybrid vehicles in meeting the transportation needs of households,” said Curtin. “The vehicle choices made by households depend on their driving and usage patterns, the length and frequency of trips, the cost of ownership, vehicle safety and reliability, their environmental impact, and the influence of government energy policies.”

“We believe this data will prove to be critical in developing public policy options regarding energy alternatives,” said Jackson.

Another project at ISR examines the behavioral aspects of energy use and conservation. Directed by ISR research professor Robert Marans, the pilot study was conducted in partnership with the U-M Plant Operations Department and the U-M Utilities Reductions Committee. Its goal: to find out what people are actually doing to conserve energy, how they feel about efforts to reduce energy use, what they know about the most effective ways to save energy and what steps they might be willing to take to cut energy use at home and on the job.

Starting last fall, the research team launched web surveys of approximately 1,400 U-M faculty, staff and students in four major campus buildings. They have also conducted focus groups and on-site observations.

The researchers are still analyzing the preliminary findings. But several intriguing facts have already emerged. Among them:

- Many people are confused about the best ways to reduce energy use. Should they turn off computers and lights when they leave the office, or leave them on to permit remote access and to avoid security failures and energy surges? “We found that 37 percent of staff and faculty did not use remote access and yet never or rarely turned off their office computers,” said Marans.
- Half of the faculty and staff members surveyed said they had decreased their use of energy at home during the last year, but less than a third said they had done so at work.
- More than two-thirds said they would be willing to work in cooler buildings in the winter and warmer
buildings in the summer. But at the same time, about 40 percent said their job performance had been negatively affected by uncomfortable conditions in the past year.

- Nearly 90 percent said that global warming was “probably happening,” compared to 70 percent of people in a national sample. U-M participants were also much more likely than those in a national sample to say that global warming was caused by human activity and to believe that they could do something to affect the process.

“This pilot study is a way to help develop and assess new policies that will lead to energy conservation,” said Marans, who is also an emeritus professor at the U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. “We believe the study can serve as a model for behavioral research that can be used not only at the U-M but also in other organizations concerned about rising energy costs and global warming.”

“Research like this is a way for ISR to give knowledge back to the University and to the larger community,” says ISR Director James Jackson. “We’re all facing this challenge together, and we need to do what we can to help build a sustainable future.”

For more information on the U-M Energy Conservation and Sustainability Study, visit the study website at: http://www.isr.umich.edu/energypilot.
This spring, the University of Michigan announced that it had reached its fund-raising goal of $2.5 billion at the mid-point of the Michigan Difference campaign. An impressive accomplishment! This is the first U-M campaign that the Institute for Social Research has participated in, and I am delighted to announce that we, too, have wonderful news to report. As of March 30, 2007, we have raised a total of $30.6 million – exceeding our initial campaign goal of $30 million.

Our success in attracting support for our work is also a credit to the vision and commitment of a growing number of individuals and corporations. With their help, we are now able to provide support for more than 30 graduate students and junior faculty members, affording them the opportunity to travel and to work in the field. This newsletter contains more information about some of these students, and the sources of their support.

Still, there is much to be done. With our 60th anniversary celebration approaching in 2009, we are committed to raise our support to 60 young scholars. We believe that to be a meaningful way of celebrating our past accomplishments – by investing in our future. And we believe that supporting the next generation is one of the major ways we are giving reality to the theme for this phase of the ISR Campaign – Building for the Future.

Training the next generation of empirical social scientists is vital to the continuing success of ISR. But we must also plan for other ways of Building for the Future. We must create an environment that provides a home for 21st Century research, that accommodates the needs of today’s senior research scientists at the same time as it anticipates those of the next generations to come.

I welcome your thoughts and ideas about the many ways we can move forward toward this dream together, and I deeply appreciate the support ISR has received from all of you. In the very near future, I look forward to sharing some details about the vision we are creating together and how we can move toward Building for the Future.
Building for the Future
Supporting the Next Generation Initiative

For most of its long and illustrious history, ISR has relied on funding from federal research grants. But according to Patrick Shields, ISR Director of External Relations and Development, this situation has started to change.

“As our research scientists look beyond the traditional sources of support, a growing proportion of ISR funding is now coming from foundations, corporations and individual donors,” says Shields.

“With these newer sources of support, including gifts and bequests from ISR faculty members, we have now been able to assist more than 30 young scholars, including graduate students, fellows and junior faculty members.”

Part of the ISR Next Generation Initiative, these gifts are allowing students and younger scholars to strengthen their understandings of their disciplines through travel, conferences, research collaborations and other activities that cannot be funded through traditional grants. Here are the 2007 Next Generation Initiative award winners:

**Charles Cannell Fund in Survey Methodology**


“I am delighted to receive the Cannell Fund award. This award will enable me to apply linguistic tools to explore how ethnicity may be conveyed by African American interviewers to survey respondents and whether these linguistic expressions of ethnicity affect survey data. To my knowledge, this type of research has never been done before, and I am very excited to see what materializes. I am deeply grateful to the Cannell Fund Committee for their support, as well as for their very thoughtful feedback on my proposed research.”

-Rachel Davis


**Kenneth Organski Scholars Fund**


**Roy Pierce Scholars Fund**


(See story on next page.)


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Photo by Jerome King

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Photo by Ian Tadashi Moore
Megan Reif, a Ph.D. candidate in political science, was introduced to Roy Pierce in 2003 by an ISR scientist who saw potential in their shared interest in political geography, and Reif began working as a research assistant for Pierce. Soon they discovered that they shared another interest: Roy and Winifred Pierce enjoyed spending time in Wyoming, where they collected Western art, and Laramie, Wyoming was where Reif was born and raised.

Now, with funding from the ISR Roy Pierce Scholars Fund, Reif is able to continue collecting data for her ambitious dissertation project — “Making Democracy Safe: Institutional Causes and Consequences of Electoral Coercion and Violence.”

“I’m incredibly grateful to be able to have my research assistants continue working on the project while I’m doing fieldwork in Algeria and studying to improve my command of Arabic,” said Reif, who has studied and worked in Oman, Pakistan, and London as well as France. She has also served as an accredited international election observer in Maluku, Indonesia, where she proposed new measures for observing and measuring coercion in the electoral environment for The Carter Center.

Since the fall of 2005, Reif has been working with faculty sponsor, political scientist Allen Hicken, and with students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, to compile a large, multi-national data set on electoral violence and coercion. Her aim: to develop an annual indicator of election violence and fraud.

Having the means to continue mentoring a talented cadre of undergrads as she completes her own dissertation work is important to Reif. She proudly notes that several members of her team were selected to present their research projects at a recent national conference spotlighting high-caliber undergraduate research. The mentoring she received from Pierce, Hicken and others has been a vital part of her professional life. But in her research team directory, Reif points out that while most undergrads – and most graduate students, too — look to people who are older and more established for career advice and assistance, peers can also be valuable sources of help and information – not only now but in the future.

“I am just delighted to be able to keep my research assistants working while I’m in the field,” she explains. “It’s so rare to get funding that is flexible enough to allow you to use it for travel, or research assistance, as well as for a particular project.”
Michigan graduates its second class of survey methodologists

Seven students graduated this spring from the Michigan Program in Survey Methodology, six with Master of Science degrees and one with a Ph.D. in Survey Methodology – the first Ph.D. to be awarded by the program.

Pictured from left are acting program director Roger Tourangeau, Andy Peytchev, Patty LeBaron, Zeina Mneimneh, Frost Hubbard, Christina Lien, and Joe Sakshaug. Zeynep Suzer-Gurtekin is not pictured.

Peytchev defended his dissertation this last winter and has been working as a survey methodologist at RTI International in North Carolina. Hubbard continues to work at SRO as a research area specialist; LeBaron joined RTI International in Chicago; Lien joined DC public opinion research firm Beldon, Russonello and Stewart; Mneimneh and Sakshaug are going on for their Ph.D.s this fall; and Suzer-Gurtekin continues with the CFI Group in Ann Arbor.

In June Kristen Olson defended her dissertation and will join the University of Nebraska Survey Research Program as an assistant professor.

Executives meet and mentor PSM students

Members of the PSM External Advisory Committee met at ISR in October 2006 to discuss the future of the field and enjoy a mentoring luncheon with students.

Among those attending (pictured counter-clockwise below) were David Sirota, talking with D.C. public opinion research consultant Diane Colasanto; Judie Mopsik, VP of Abt Associates; PSM student Julie Pacer and Frank Newport, editor-in-chief of the Gallup Poll; and Wayne McCullough, Chrysler Director of Market Research.

At the annual meeting, committee members provide support for the program in a variety of ways, including employment, internships and fellowships allowing students to finish their training.

Photos by D.C. Goings
there was an increase in condom use among sexually active teenagers and a decrease in the percentage that had multiple sexual partners in the previous twelve months. This is some of the first evidence of significant behavioral change in response to South Africa’s rising HIV prevalence rates.

Father and daughter team up to study the roots of close relationships

“It’s particularly wonderful and just really nice that the speakers have a genetic and fitness interdependence on each other,” said ISR psychologist Jennifer Crocker as she introduced ISR faculty associate Stephanie L. Brown and her father, Michael Brown, a psychologist at Pacific Lutheran University. Brown and Brown teamed up to present “From Selfish Genes to Selfless Behavior,” the last session of the Winter 2007 series of Group Dynamics Seminars at ISR.

“Before the term ‘evolutionary psychology’ was even invented, my dad had co-authored a textbook chapter on the topic,” said Stephanie. “My dad has been a wonderful mentor for me.”

Stephanie Brown’s basic interest is why humans form close relationships – and together with her father, she has developed an evolutionary theory of altruism that presents a striking alternative to traditional self-interest accounts that tend to emphasize what we get from others, not what we give. Citing evidence from animal behavior, human relationship science and neurophysiology, Brown and Brown explained the outlines of the theory, and discussed some of the implications. “We assume that the benefits of social contact come from receiving support,” said Stephanie. “But altruistic behavior buffers stress. People who give, live longer.”

Faculty Research

South Africa after apartheid

ISR Population Studies Center economist David Lam and South African colleagues released the third wave of data from the longitudinal Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS) early this year. Started in 2002, the study is a collaboration between ISR and the University of Cape Town, funded primarily by the NIH.

The CAPS dataset on the first three waves of the study is publicly available for download at www.caps.uct.ac.za. The fourth wave of the study, conducted in 2006, includes a new sample of adults age 50 and over in addition to interviews with the original panel members and their families.

“This series follows the lives of a large and representative sample of adolescents in Cape Town as they go through the many transitions to adulthood,” said Lam. “But it is also a study of transition – and of lack of change – in the ‘new’ South African society as a whole. We are hoping to learn how opportunities have changed since the end of apartheid, and what factors shape whether South Africans end up rich or poor, healthy or sick, happy or unhappy.”

At the 2007 meeting of the Population Association of America, Lam and collaborators from UCT and U-M presented three papers with findings from CAPS. A study tracking racial differences in progress through school finds that only 30% of black students who were in Grade 8 in 2002 had advanced to Grade 11 by 2005. A study of the relationship between teen fertility and schooling finds high rates of pregnancy among black teenagers, but also finds that about 40% of these teen mothers remain in school. A study of links between poverty and HIV finds evidence that between 2002 and 2005

Group Dy Seminars

The Group Dynamics Seminars hosted by the ISR Research Center on Group Dynamics have been described as “the longest-running traveling crap game in academia.” Started by RCGD founder Kurt Lewin in 1920s Berlin, when he invited graduate students and visiting psychologists to join him at local beer halls to continue their discussions. Dorwin “Doc” Cartwright moved the seminars and the RCGD to Michigan when Lewin died in 1947, and they have been running ever since. The current seminar series takes place during working hours, however, with non-alcoholic refreshments.
SMART instead of one treatment for all

Tailoring treatment strategies to individuals and using different approaches at different stages of their treatment is clearly the future of medicine. But until recently, clinicians lacked a means to make the complex series of repeated adjustments to treatment regimens for each patient struggling to lose weight, quit drinking, or keep functioning in spite of depression, AIDS or other chronic conditions.

With funding from the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Drug Abuse, ISR statistician Susan A. Murphy has developed a new tool to help doctors make the complex decisions that go into individually tailored, adaptive, treatment strategies that change along with an individual’s response to the treatment.

She calls the tool SMART: sequential multiple assignment randomized trials.

“Currently, scientists use a combination of clinical experience, trial and error, behavioral, psychosocial and biological theories, results from observational studies and randomized experiments conducted for other purposes to formulate the decision rules for adaptive treatment strategies,” she said. “SMART is designed to enhance, rather than replace, the clinical judgment of practitioners,” she said.

A treatment that appears best initially may not be best in the long run, says Murphy. So adapting treatment regimes not only makes sense for individual patients, but it also allows researchers to collect data on intermediate outcomes that can be analyzed to guide treatment of others.

As part of a national network of computer scientists, statisticians, chemical engineers, psychiatrists, psychologists and others interested in SMART and similar techniques, Murphy has established a website (http://neuromancer.eecs.umich.edu/cgi-bin/twiki/view) designed for physicians interested in learning about adaptive treatment strategies.

“Getting older is not all downhill,” Smith says, “and it’s important that people understand that.”

Adapted from the LSAmagazine, spring 2007
Mothers and Others

How does having children – or not having them – affect a woman’s happiness in later life? A new study examining nearly 6,000 women provides an unexpected answer – it’s not so much whether you have children as when you have them. But even more important than when you become a mother is whether you have anyone else to love in your life.

“Being unmarried in mid life is more important than whether or not you have children when it comes to well-being,” said ISR sociologist Amy Pienta, pictured here with her daughters.

If you just look at women who had kids compared to those who didn’t, childless women reported being somewhat less happy and more depressed,” said Pienta, an associate research scientist and director of data acquisitions at the ISR Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. “But when we factored in socioeconomic characteristics and marital status, there was no difference between the two groups.

To see whether the timing of motherhood mattered, Pienta and colleagues examined how the late-life well-being of childless women compared to that of three different groups of mothers who had their first children early (before age 19), on-time (between 19 and 24) or late (age 25 or later).

Early mothers were the least satisfied and most depressed of all four groups, while delayed or late mothers were the most satisfied with their lives and the happiest.

All other things being equal, the childless women were about as satisfied and happy with their lives as the on-time mothers.

“Most studies have shown that psychological well-being tends to decline when people have kids,” said Pienta. “And it only rebounds much later, when the children have left home. So it was surprising to find the highest level of well-being among the group that was most likely to have children still living at home or still in college. It suggests that delaying motherhood may have some benefits for women – probably related to being more career focused and having higher social standing.”

Born to lose?

How much a baby weighs at birth has significant and lasting effects, according to an analysis of data from the ISR Panel Study of Income Dynamics that provides the most detailed look to date at how well-being and disadvantage are transmitted across generations within families.

The study, presented May 22 in Washington, D.C. at the National Summit on America’s Children, is the first to link birth weight with adult health and socioeconomic success using a full, nationally representative sample of the U.S. population.

Funded by the National Institute on Aging, the analysis includes data from 12,000 of the original study families, plus their descendants who have gone on to form families of their own. Because of the study’s unique genealogical design, the researchers were able to compare outcomes for siblings to isolate the impact of low birth weight apart from other common family conditions siblings share.

In their analysis, economists Rucker C. Johnson at the University of California, Berkeley, and Robert F. Schoeni at the U-M found that weighing less than 5.5 pounds at birth increased the probability of dropping out of high school by one-third, reduced yearly earnings by about 15 percent and burdened people in their 30s and 40s with the health of someone who is 12 years older.

Not only does birth weight have large and lasting effects across the life course, the researchers note, but its effects become larger later in life. For example, low birth weight children are nearly twice as likely as their normal birth-weight siblings to have health problems by ages 37-52 (23 percent versus 12 percent).

The earnings penalty for being born low weight also increases with age, from 10.2 percent at age 25 to 15.6 percent at age 35.

A copy of the working paper from the U-M National Poverty Center by Johnson and Schoeni is available at: http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/working_papers/?publication_id=117&

The ISR Panel Study on Income Dynamics is funded primarily by the National Science Foundation, the National Institute on Aging, and the National Institute on Child and Human Development. The study, started in 1968, is co-directed by Schoeni and U-M economist Frank Stafford.
Honors & Awards

Toni C. Antonucci was appointed Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Interdisciplinary Studies at the U-M Rackham Graduate School. Antonucci, who directs the ISR Survey Research Center Life Course Development Program and is the Elizabeth M. Douvan Collegiate Professor of Psychology, serves as the primary liaison between the Graduate School and the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Albert Hermalin, professor of sociology emeritus and research professor emeritus at the ISR Population Studies Center, was honored for his contributions to the field of global health and to the U-M’s teaching mission at the M-Global Health Research Training/Minority Health International Research Training reception in November 2006.

James S. House, professor of sociology and research professor at the ISR Survey Research Center, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in recognition of his distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. He also received the 2007 Cooley-Mead Award from the American Sociological Association for outstanding career contributions.

Arthur Lupia, the Hal R. Varian Collegiate Professor of Political Science at U-M and a research professor at the ISR Center for Political Studies, received a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship to complete his book on political knowledge and civic education. Lupia and Diana Mutz of Stanford University received the 2007 Innovator’s Award from the American Association for Public Opinion Research for the creation of TESS – Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences. For more information on TESS, see http://www.experimentcentral.org. Lupia was also named to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Gregory B. Markus, U-M professor of political science and a research professor at the ISR Center for Political Studies, received a 2006-2007 fellowship at the National Center for Institutional Diversity.

Rosemary Sarri received a 2007 Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award from the U-M Rackham School of Graduate Studies, for her consistent and successful mentoring of doctoral students. Sarri is professor emerita of social work and research professor emerita at ISR.

Pamela J. Smock was appointed U-M Associate Vice President for Research – Social Sciences and Humanities. A professor of sociology who served as Associate Director of ISR from June 2002 to July 2005, Smock is a research professor at the ISR Population Studies Center. She specializes in the study of family, gender and social inequality.

The National Science Foundation highlighted the work of ISR political scientists Mark Tessler, Ronald Inglehart and Mansoor Moaddel for a March 2007 Committee of Visitors review of the NSF Political Science Program. Tessler, the Samuel J. Eldersveld Collegiate Professor of Political Science, Vice Provost for International Affairs, and a research professor at the ISR Center for Political Studies, has carried out political attitude surveys in seven Arab countries in close collaboration with local scholars and institutions.

ISR economists Robert Willis and Matthew Shapiro were elected fellows of the Society of Labor Economics, and Willis was elected President of the group. Willis, a research professor at the ISR Population Studies Center and the ISR Survey Research Center, directs the ISR Health and Retirement Study. Shapiro is the Lawrence R. Klein Collegiate Professor of Economics, Chair of the U-M Economics Department and a research professor at the ISR Survey Research Center. He is also a Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research.
 ISR Alumnus Robyn Dawes

Ph.D. in mathematical psychology, University of Michigan, 1963
James McKeen Cattell Sabbatical Fellow, ISR Research Center for Group Dynamics, 1978-79
Charles J. Queenan, Jr. University Professor, Carnegie Mellon University

In 1958, the Everley Brothers topped the charts with “All I Have to do is Dream,” and Robyn Dawes arrived in Ann Arbor. He couldn’t believe that he had been admitted to what he considered the best clinical psychology program in the country. He had majored in philosophy at Harvard, but by his own account, he was an indifferent student. He came to see the discipline less as a matter of seeking truth and more as a matter of how well you could argue. But a course on experimental psychodynamics caught his attention. He enjoyed examining empirical questions that seemed intractable.

“They notified me I had been accepted on the last day possible. When I told my adviser I just got into Michigan, he said, ‘Wire them back immediately before they realize they’ve made a clerical error.’”

The author of more than 150 articles and four books and an international expert in scientific decision-making, Dawes went on to earn his PhD in mathematical psychology, experiencing a growing alienation from clinical psychology, with its emphasis on psychoanalytical techniques and clinical intuition. He gravitated instead to the mathematical psychology program started by Clyde Coombs, where he found his real intellectual home.

His objections to clinical psychological practice grew over the years and finally gained public attention with his best-selling 1996 book, House of Cards. Here Dawes compared the claims of mental health experts to the scientific evidence showing that many clinical assumptions were false and many therapeutic models yielded results no better than chance. You didn’t have to love yourself to love others.

You didn’t have to have a happy childhood to lead a happy life. Psychologists who act as ‘expert witnesses’ in custody hearings and courtrooms often claim predictive powers that they simply don’t possess.

Later, after Dawes got his PhD in the University of Michigan psychology department in 1963, he worked at the Ann Arbor VA hospital for about four years. “It took my first wife Carol a long time to finish her PhD” (also at the University of Michigan, in clinical psychology), he explained. He went to Oregon as a researcher in the Oregon Research Institute and professor in the psychology department, which he headed for a total of five years, before leaving for Carnegie Mellon University in 1985, where he then became head of the department of social and decision sciences for seven years. He also returned to Ann Arbor in 1979 during his Cattell Fellowship sabbatical from the Association for Psychological Science.

“I used to walk to work every day from the place I was renting,” he recalled. “There was an easy way to tell if it was above four degrees or below. If it was below, my mustache froze.”

Dawes went on a scientific exchange mission to Russia in 1979. “It was the last scientific exchange,” he said, “and they had finally decided that psychology was a science.” A few nights before he was supposed to leave for Russia, his Ann Arbor apartment was burglarized. Swept up in the paranoia of the times, Dawes cut up the list of Soviet refuseniks and others he contacted into one-inch squares that he hid in packs of cigarettes. Then, President Jimmy Carter cancelled U.S. participation in the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Later scientific missions were called off as well.


“I got more done during my fellowship at ISR than I did when I was at Stanford’s Center for Advanced Study,” he recalled. “Clyde Coombs thought I would have an outstanding secretary at Stanford, as he had about 10 years earlier. But you can’t live in Palo Alto on a secretary’s wages.”

Dawes, more than a bit dyslexic, is a highly ‘secretary-dependent’ person. For example, he dictates everything he believes important, rather than typing it. (He is not attuned to the individual letters in mere words—as he discovered when he was presented with his first spelling test in second grade.)

“...
In June, Groves hosted an international group to discuss alternatives to response rates as indicators of survey quality. “With the exception of sample size, response rate is generally believed to be the most important criterion of survey quality,” said Groves. “Since response rates have been declining, this is seen to be a major problem. But a growing body of research has found that lower response rates do not in fact have a major impact on survey accuracy. The question is what alternatives we can use as indicators of nonresponse error.”

In addition to Groves and a number of other ISR survey methodology experts, attendees included Westat’s J. Michael Brick, OMB’s Brian Harris-Kojetin, NORC’s Tom Smith, UNC’s Bill Kalsbeek, Cheryl Eavey of NSF and Barry Schouten of Statistics Netherlands.