The Australian National University

Survey Research Centre

Annual Report 1979

Staff:

Director: Kenneth R.W. Brewer, M.Sc.(Lond.), B.A.(Melb.), M.Ec.(ANU), ARCS.
Research Fellow: Roger G. Jones, M.Sc.(Warwick), M.Sc.(So'ton), B.Sc.(L'pool).
Research Officer: Erica R. Fisher, M.A.(Lond.), M.A.Ps.S.
Research Assistant: Jane Mugford, B.A.(Well.).
Assistant Programmer: William J. Craig.
Visiting Fellows: Gigi Santow, B.Sc.(Syd.), Ph.D.(ANU).
Kerry Chamberlain, M.A.(Cantuar), B.A.(Cantuar) from 12 February to 14 December.

During 1979, a substantial portion of the work of the Centre has been in continuing the three major activities of the previous year. The Centre continues to act as the secretariat for the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated (ACSPRI), has conducted two further rounds of the Canberra Population Survey, and has almost completed two bibliographical projects designed to provide information on surveys conducted in Australia.

ACSPRI was established in 1976 with a membership of nine tertiary institutions and has expanded to a current membership of seventeen institutions. This year an agreement for one-for-one data set exchanges was signed with the Roper Center data archive in the USA, giving Australian researchers access to the 9000 data sets stored there in addition to the facilities already available through membership of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at Ann Arbor. Efforts to acquire and archive Australian data sets are being made but progress continues to be slow.

The two bibliographical projects, the Directory of Journal Extracts and the Inventory of Australian Surveys, are nearing completion and will assist greatly in the search for important data sets available for secondary analysis as well as providing researchers with a guide to survey research activities in Australia. The Directory of Journal Extracts is now available in book form and is being distributed by ANU Press. Inventory questionnaires asking for details of 1200 surveys conducted in Australia were sent to principal investigators early in the year and about half of these have been completed and returned. The returns contain extensive details of the survey including sample design, main variables, a summary of results and a list of publications, and are currently being processed for distribution to interested researchers. Where researchers have indicated their willingness to make their data available to others, they will be asked to deposit the data with ACSPRI.
In March and September, rounds of the Canberra Population Survey were again organized by the Centre, with the ACT Schools Authority, the Office of ACT Further Education and Brian Johnston of the Economics Department, RSSS, being the main clients in the March round and the MA(Demography) Program, Jeff Bennett of CRES, the ACT Schools Authority and the Department of Health taking part in the September survey. The MA (Demography) Program and the Department of Health had been clients on the survey in 1978 also.

The Centre continues to offer consultation services to members of the University and to government and community organizations involved in survey work.

Mr Brewer, Mr Jones and Mrs Fisher again taught the Procurement and Analysis of Data unit which is offered in the Master of Administrative Studies Program and Master's Program by Coursework in Statistics. Ms Mugford gave a lecture to social studies students at the College of Advanced Education on ACSPRI and the Centre's bibliographical projects.

Mr Jones is a member of a working party established to provide guidelines for the conduct of surveys of drug usage among young people and has been active in producing a booklet of recommended procedures for such surveys.

Ms Mugford took time out from a period of leave early in the year (March-June) to attend a conference in Ottawa organized by the International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology, and also visited the SSRC Survey Archive at the University of Essex and the Survey Research Unit at the Polytechnic of North London. A major point emphasised at the conference and the SSRC Survey Archive is the lack of adequate information services to accompany the organization of data for secondary analysis.

Mr Brewer took sabbatical leave from the middle of June, spending some time in America, Canada and England. While in America he attended the ICPSR Summer Program and attended the Symposium on Incomplete Data organized by the National Research Council's Committee on National Statistics where he presented a paper written by Mr Jones. Mr Jones has been Acting Director during Mr Brewer's absence.

Kerry Chamberlain from the Psychology Department, Massey University, New Zealand spent most of the year as a Visiting Fellow at the Centre. During the latter six months he has been analysing the data from a national survey of TAFE teachers conducted by the TAFE Council in 1977. He is writing a report on the survey's results which is to be published by the Tertiary Education Commission. The work is being supported by a grant from the Commission.

Gigi Santow, statistician with the National Heart Foundation's National Blood Pressure Study, is engaged in ongoing analysis of this prospective trial, using life table and regression techniques. In addition, she has been working with Michael Bracher of the Demography Department, RSSS, and as such attended the workshop on Child Spacing in Tropical Africa: Tradition and Change, organized by the Inter-university Program in Demography and held at the Free University of Brussels.

In September, the Centre took up new accommodation in the North wing of J Block, Old Administration Area. Accommodation for the earlier part of the year was again provided by the John Curtin School of Medical Research.
PUBLICATIONS


