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The Longitudinal Revolution. Sociological Research at the 50-Year Milestone of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics.

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THE LONGITUDINAL REVOLUTION

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE 50-YEAR MILESTONE OF THE PANEL STUDY OF INCOME DYNAMICS

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Abstract

The U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018. Initially designed to assess the nation's progress in combatting poverty, PSID's scope broadened quickly to a variety of topics and fields of inquiry. To date, sociologists are the second-most frequent users of PSID data after economists. Here, we describe the ways in which PSID's history reflects shifts in social science scholarship and funding priorities over half a century, take stock of the most important sociological breakthroughs it facilitated, in particular those relying on the longitudinal structure of the data, and critically assess the unique advantages and limitations of the PSID and surveys like it for today's sociological scholarship.

Keywords

Surveys; Longitudinal Data; Intergenerational; Family; Neighborhoods

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INTRODUCTION

The US Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is the world's longest-running active household panel study, launched in 1968 with a sample of 4,802 US families to study family income change. The first scientific article based on PSID public-use data was published half a century ago, in 1970. It was authored by a team of economists and focused on fluctuations in family income. In 2018 alone, contributions from sociology addressed educational inequality, multigenerational associations, parenting behavior, child health, obesity, marriage patterns, racial inequality, neighborhood segregation, career mobility, time use, and financial transfers. This review describes how and why the country's longest-running active nationally representative panel survey expanded its scope and disciplinary reach, how in turn it shaped sociological scholarship, some of the landmark sociological findings it enabled, and what its future may hold.

We take a data-driven approach, drawing on PSID metadata including a complete bibliographic database, a topical classification of all variables ever publicly released, Board of Overseers membership rosters, and other sources. We begin with a brief history of PSID and some of its major changes across time, focusing on the historical, institutional, organizational, and social contexts that shaped it. We then present quantitative evidence on the representation of sociology in PSID and how sociological work has used the study. As the latter also allows us to identify the most central topical areas addressed by sociologists using PSID, we proceed to review contributions to some of those areas, namely, intergenerational mobility, family composition, and geographic contexts. We conclude by highlighting what we consider challenges to and promises for PSID's continued relevance in supporting novel sociological insights.

This article can also be read alongside other transdisciplinary reviews, such as a recent special issue that focuses on PSID's contributions over the past half-century to select topical areas (Johnson et al. 2018) and accounts of the history and current status of the PSID (Hill 1992; Brown, Duncan, and Stafford 1996; Duncan 2002; Duncan, Hofferth, and Stafford 2004; McGonagle et al. 2012; McGonagle and Sastry 2015; Freedman and Cornman 2015; McGonagle and Sastry 2016; Sastry, Fomby, and McGonagle 2018).

Design of a National Panel Study: A Primer

PSID was designed to interview families longitudinally to understand the degree of persistence in poverty and the factors that contributed to entry into and exit from poverty. At origin, the nationally-representative sample included approximately 2,000 working age, low-income families and 3,000 families drawn from the general population. The study has a genealogical design. As children raised in PSID families reach adulthood and establish their own households, they too became PSID respondents. Individuals who are related to an original PSID householder are referred to as “gened” sample members. This design feature allows the sample to produce, with occasional immigrant refresher samples, continuous population representation (Fitzgerald, Gottschalk, and Moffitt 1998) and has also enabled decades of research on intergenerational transmission. Study design and content have changed over time. In 1997, in order to contain escalating study costs, roughly one-third of families were removed from the active sample using a probability subsampling strategy that ensured a higher drop rate for households from the low income oversample without young children, and the study moved from annual to biennial interviewing. To maintain population-representativeness, immigrant refresher samples were added in 1997 and 2017. Questionnaire content in the main PSID interview has moved beyond a primary focus on income and employment to broaden its scope, with much of the new content emphasizing adult health and well-being. In 1988 and 2013, PSID included modules on intergenerational transfers of time and money. Since 1997, supplemental studies have captured information on child and young adult development and the well-being of older adults.

The Sociology of a National Panel Study

We begin by treating PSID not as a source but as a *subject* of sociological inquiry. Working from a life course perspective, we situate changes in the study’s design, content, and use in a variety of sociologically relevant contexts to interrogate fifty years of primary data collection as a social field. We consider the *historical context* that led to the inception and maintenance of PSID, the *institutional context* as defined by shifts in federal funding available to the social sciences, the unique *organizational context* of PSID’s physical home, and the *social context* – in particular, changing gender regimes – that shaped its content.

Historical Context

The first PSID interview was completed on March 4, 1968, during a period in US history marked by rapid social change. Over the next month, student protests took root on college campuses, US ground troops killed hundreds of Vietnamese civilians in the My Lai massacre, President Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election, and Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In comparison to the chaotic national mood depicted in contemporary media and in historical accounts of the period, the respondent newsletter (PSID 1968) mailed to PSID families in October described a population that was almost anachronistically staid. Nearly four in 10 workers had been with the same employer for a decade or longer, more than half of families had savings equal to at least two months' salary, and two out of three adults spent their leisure time driving, talking with neighbors, playing cards, or reading.

This portrait of quotidian order belies the more radical impetus to launch the world's first household panel study. PSID grew out of the War on Poverty, an expansive program of federal legislation spearheaded by President Johnson in 1964. At the time, despite an extended period of national economic growth, nearly one in five families was poor, a status that largely cleaved along racial lines. In contrast to the Depression-era New Deal program that was designed to reduce unemployment and benefit the average American household, the War on Poverty targeted those who were excluded from the country's broad economic prosperity (Bailey and Duquette 2014). The Economic Opportunity Act, passed in July 1964, provided the institutional catalyst for PSID. The act was intended to distribute resources to communities to address the root causes of poverty locally and with the participation of the intended beneficiaries. Importantly, those resources could be transferred directly to private or nonprofit agencies rather than through state or local governments. To administer and oversee the distribution of funds, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was located independently in the executive branch. This model effectively insulated the office from federal and state legislatures and other executive departments. As a result, the office was powerful but vulnerable to political change.

In 1966 and 1967, the OEO charged the US Census Bureau with administering the Survey of Economic Opportunity, a time series study to explore the causes and correlates of poverty (US Census Bureau n.d.). The national sample included approximately 30,000 addresses with an oversample of addresses expected to be occupied by African-American families. The same dwellings were visited in each year, regardless of whether the occupants had changed. This design was well-suited to describe the share of the population experiencing poverty in each year but could not discern whether economic circumstances in a family were improving or worsening because families or individual family members who changed residence were not followed. Likely in an effort to balance the value of a more rigorous longitudinal research design against the survey's potential political sensitivity and the cost and complexity of administering it, the OEO arrived at two lasting decisions (Morgan and Smith 1969b). The first was to winnow the sample down to 2,000 families with working-age household heads and family income at or below 200 percent of the 1966 federal poverty line in order to focus on the population the War on Poverty programs were designed to help. The second was to outsource data collection to an external research institution.

From a pool of three applicants, the five-year contract was awarded to the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research under the directorship of economist James N. Morgan (Morgan and Smith 1969b). Morgan, however, hesitated to take on a sample that included only low-income families because it would not identify the conditions that put families at risk of poverty. Instead, he argued successfully to pair the SEO subsample with a nationally-representative sample of 3,000 families from the general population that would be drawn at SRC. Together, these families provided the foundation for PSID.[2]

Institutional Context

At its inception, the purpose of PSID was "to explain the short-run changes in the economic status of individuals and families" (Morgan and Smith 1969a: p. ii). Over the ensuing half-century, the scope and research value of the study have co-evolved with the funding support provided to sustain it. Compared with other long-running studies in the US and internationally, PSID has been particularly reliant on a variety of funders who have valued the study for different purposes over time. In part, this strategy was an unintended consequence of the study's initial attachment to the Office of Economic Opportunity. After the first five-year contract ended, OEO supported one more year of data collection in 1973, with telephone interviews replacing home

[2] The selection of cases for the SEO sample and their transfer to University of Michigan were not straightforward and introduced some error. Brown (1996) describes the probability of SEO sample inclusion in PSID and evaluates its representativeness.

visits under a limited budget. Mention of future data collection in that year's user guide and respondent newsletter imply that OEO intended to continue investing in the study.

But by 1974, the Nixon administration had almost entirely shuttered OEO and many programs and staff were relocated to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW, now Health and Human Services). Although briefly orphaned, PSID survived this move, securing an additional five years of funding under a series of one-year contracts (Duncan et al. 2004). There is nothing to suggest that this continuity was assured; in fact, other research programs that moved from OEO to ASPE at the same time faced scrutiny and skepticism (Greenberg 2003). The study had the good fortune to be championed by "visionary ASPE officials" (Duncan et al. 2004), highlighting the role of institutional actors in shaping the national data infrastructure.

During the 1970s, HEW initiated the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to study family income dynamics longitudinally, a development that made PSID redundant within the agency's portfolio in terms of its original purpose. At the same time, however, the study's longevity and genealogical design were beginning to pay dividends for longitudinal research on the intergenerational transmission of income and status attainment. The National Science Foundation (NSF) had already come to see the potential for PSID to become an enduring component of the national social science data infrastructure (as emphasized in interviews with former PSID leaders) and in 1980 became the primary sponsor through its extramural grants program. Still, what eventually became a source of central support for PSID was initially built on shaky ground; in 1981, President Reagan proposed to cut social science research at NSF by 75 percent. NSF funding was restored by Congress, but support for PSID was substantially cut for several years and the study's long-term prospects appeared to be freshly in jeopardy. In that period, the study's location in an academic research setting may have saved it. The director of the Institute for Social Research negotiated three years of supplemental support from the Ford, Sloan, and Rockefeller Foundations to sustain PSID through the mid-1980s (Duncan et al. 2004).

Also in the mid-1980s, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) first provided funding to develop a questionnaire module on family wealth that is now as a standard component of the biennial main interview. Since then, NIA has become a primary sponsor to support questionnaire content on adult and late life health and a number modules and supplements that provide opportunities to study health and wellbeing over the life course and across generations. In 1997, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) joined as the study's third primary sponsor to interview families with children under age 13 for the newly established Child Development Supplement (CDS) and, later, to support new study content on family formation, fertility, and educational attainment.[3] NICHD also continues to sponsor PSID's substantial supplemental data collection on children and young adults. Sponsorship continues to be awarded through competitive extramural grant programs on a five-year cycle, a strategy that requires PSID to serve as both a foundational component of public social science data infrastructure and as a site for research innovation in order to meet a variety of research purposes.

Organizational Context

Until 1972, SRC field interviewers visited PSID respondents in their homes and completed interviews using pencil-and-paper questionnaires. This seemingly low-tech approach to data collection was actually built upon two decades of advances in survey research and infrastructure development. Two innovations were especially relevant. First, during the Second World War, probability-based survey methodology gained credibility as a reliable, low-cost approach to identify federal agency spending priorities (House, Juster, and Kahn 2004). Second, the war period created novel opportunities for collaboration between the federal government and scientists in universities and private foundations to improve public health management and increase agricultural and manufacturing productivity. In the post-war period, this collaborative effort transitioned to a model of federally-funded research performed in university settings, largely through peer-reviewed extramural research programs established at the NIH in 1946 and at NSF in 1950. Research centers supported by external grants and contracts provided a low-risk opportunity to universities to host scientists carrying out innovative research without requiring long-term budgetary or university tenure commitments. Thus, the extramural research model provided a three-way win during a period of substantial expansion of public investment in science: the federal government could continue its support of scientific research more inexpensively than if it were to directly employ research teams and support staff; scientists could

[3] Other agencies and institutes that have supported specific questionnaire content include the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, the IUPUI Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, the Urban Institute, and the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

continue to develop and apply innovations in data collection to new questions with scientific merit evaluated by peer review rather than by government priorities; and universities could capitalize on the prestige of scientific accomplishment largely supported by external funds.

PSID was launched near the end of this period of scientific expansion and benefited from SRC's established infrastructure, size, and social science culture, including access to the center's standing national sampling frame from which the general population sample was drawn. Furthermore, the availability of skilled professionals and computing resources for the enormous data processing needs of a study of this size enabled a quick and wide release of public data (beginning in 1972 and for many years within a year of the end of data collection), which was crucial in building its user base. Another perhaps unexpected example arose from the study's location in the center's Economic Behavior Program, which included an interdisciplinary team of economists and psychologists. The first PSID questionnaires included measurement of social-psychological concepts such as locus of control, future orientation, risk aversion, and achievement motivation, with the expectation that these personal characteristics would explain transitions into or out of poverty. That expectation received only marginal short-run support (Smith and Morgan 1970), and most related items were eventually dropped from the questionnaire (to be reprised in later topical modules, such as the 2016 Wellbeing and Daily Life Supplement (Freedman 2017). Over time, as PSID sample management has become increasingly complex, the study has continued to benefit from and contribute to the physical concentration of infrastructural and human resources, in particular the expertise in survey methodology and survey data collection at the Institute for Social Research. In sum, the initial coalescence of funding support, organizational context, and personnel experience that enabled the eventual co-development of and integration between local infrastructure and PSID's complex requirements arose in a distinctive historical moment that likely could not be replicated today.

Social Context

The original PSID questionnaire and interview strategy were designed based on the expectation that most households[4] included a primary wage earner, and that in married-couple families, that

[4] PSID uses the term "family unit" to describe individuals who live in a common dwelling and share living expenses. The term "household" refers to a physical dwelling that may be occupied by multiple family units. For ease of presentation, we use the terms family unit and household interchangeably, but they are technically distinct in PSID data and documentation.

person was male. As a result, men were systematically designated as the head of household where they were present, and most questionnaire content about economic activity pertained to the head's experience. Even at the time, this view of household economic organization was incomplete: among married women, more than one-third were employed in 1967 (US Bureau of the Census 1968b, table 321), and over forty percent of married working women in PSID families were working full-time in 1968 (unweighted). Further, twenty-eight percent of 1968 PSID families were female-headed (unweighted).

The initial choice to designate men as head of household when present was consistent with practice at the US Census Bureau, which had used the concept of a unitary family or household head in nearly every decennial census since 1790 (Presser 1998). Even in 1960, wives remained ineligible to be household heads on US Census forms. That this practice was a national standard and that PSID had its origins in a study administered by the Census Bureau likely contributed to adherence to this strategy. But public resistance to this practice increased during the following decade under the argument that headship implied an authority structure that families did not universally recognize (Presser 1998). In its place, the 1980 Census and other federal surveys adopted the more neutral term *householder* to describe the person or persons in whose name the household residence was owned or rented and allowed respondents to select which householder would be listed first if there was more than one.

In contrast, PSID retained the practices that it started with, partly because the study was not designed initially to collect parallel information on all adults in the household. Because much of the early questionnaire content pertained only to the household head, the definition of headship needed to be constant in order to allow meaningful comparison between households. In order to enable longitudinal analysis within families, only a change in family unit composition could trigger the identification of a new head. Specifically, if a male head moved out or died, his wife (or female cohabiting partner since 1983) would become the head of the family unit. Once an unpartnered woman entered a marriage or long-term cohabiting union with a man, her spouse or partner would become the family unit head regardless of whether he was a gened PSID sample member. Thus, unlike for men, a woman's position in the family unit could (and frequently does) change over time.

To simplify data management, distribution, and use, these rules remain in place today. But over time, study leadership has taken steps to neutralize these gendered asymmetries in practice. First, the questionnaire has collected an increasing amount of information about the spouse or partner of the household head since the 1970s. Starting in 1985 with a new set of spouse/partner questions, the content collected on both partners in couple-headed households has become largely parallel and finally, based on minor additional updates in 2017, the survey instrument today yields identical information on both partners.[5] Second, interviewers refer to family unit members by their first names, rather than by the positions they occupy in the household, and the printed materials respondents receive have generally avoided the term "household head" since the mid-1970s. Third, PSID study documentation replaced the phrase *wife/"wife"* with the term *spouse/partner* in 2015 and has used the term *reference person* in place of *head* since 2017. In the same year, the study began collecting parallel information on spouses or partners in same-sex unions.

Though slowly, PSID has come to better reflect changing social and legal norms around families and marriage and has largely left behind the initial male-centric focus in its definition of households and respondents. Over the same period, women have become a growing share of PSID interview respondents. In 1968, nine percent of respondents in married-couple households were women; by 2017, this share (in married or cohabiting couples) had increased to 53 percent. As the sons and daughters of original PSID householders have replaced their parents as active study participants, it is increasingly the case that only one householder in any couple-headed household carries the PSID "gene." That person, rather than their spouse or partner, completes the main PSID interview over 90 percent of the time and, in about half of cases, that person is female. Thus, in practice, PSID has shifted from interviewing a unitary (male) household head to interviewing householders who have an ancestral connection to the study, and about half of those respondents are the daughters or granddaughters of original PSID participants.

REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE AND TOPICS

Having traced the contexts that helped shape PSID's development, we now describe PSID's changing structure and content from a quantitative perspective, focusing on its most proximate patrons, i.e., those involved in collecting the data and those using them, as well as on its content,

[5] The exception is information on relationship to the family unit reference person. The questionnaire does not collect parallel information on all family unit members' relationship to the reference person's spouse or partner. However, those relationships are identified during data processing and the information is available in the standalone family unit matrix.

i.e., the information collected and the information analyzed. We consider several dimensions of inputs – namely, the characteristics of PSID leadership, the PSID Board of Overseers, and the PSID data and outputs – namely, variables and publications – to describe the representation of people and topics in PSID. Details on our data sources and data construction are detailed in the Online Supplement, Table S.1.

Disciplinary Representation in PSID Leadership

James Morgan, the first director of PSID, was an economist with a strong interdisciplinary orientation, a profile that has continued to be represented in the diversity of PSID leadership. The director team has continuously included at least one labor economist, likely both a cause and a result of the enduring content emphasis on income and employment as well as of the disciplinary composition of the majority of the public user base. This continuity has been further institutionalized by the organization of extramural funding to PSID through the Economics and cross-directorate programs at the National Science Foundation.

Over time, the study director team, Board of Overseers, and content collaborators have added disciplinary diversity to PSID's leadership. Represented fields include developmental psychology, demography, epidemiology, social psychology, sociology, and survey methodology. This multidisciplinary orientation has contributed to the inclusion of supplemental studies focused on children, young adults, and older adults; survey content on dyadic relationships between parents and adult children; and innovations in fieldwork efficiencies and respondent engagement. Contributions from sociologists have included directorship of the first two waves of the PSID Child Development Supplement under Sandra Hofferth and collaborative input to the design and content of the 2013 Rosters and Transfers module from Suzanne Bianchi and Judith Seltzer.

The composition of the PSID Board of Overseers has also been marked by substantial disciplinary diversity. Averaged across the span of its existence, the Board has been composed of about a dozen members at any one time, with just less than half hailing from economics, about a third from sociology, and the remainder from other disciplines. Remarkably, this disciplinary diversity and in particular the representation of sociologists among Board members is not a recent phenomenon. In fact, in each decade, there were periods when sociologists and economists were approximately equally represented on the Board (see Online Supplement Figure

S.1). During the most recent years, sociologists were in fact in the majority. Two sociologists have also served as Board chairs, Nancy Tuma (1990-1993) and Suzanne Bianchi (2006-2008).

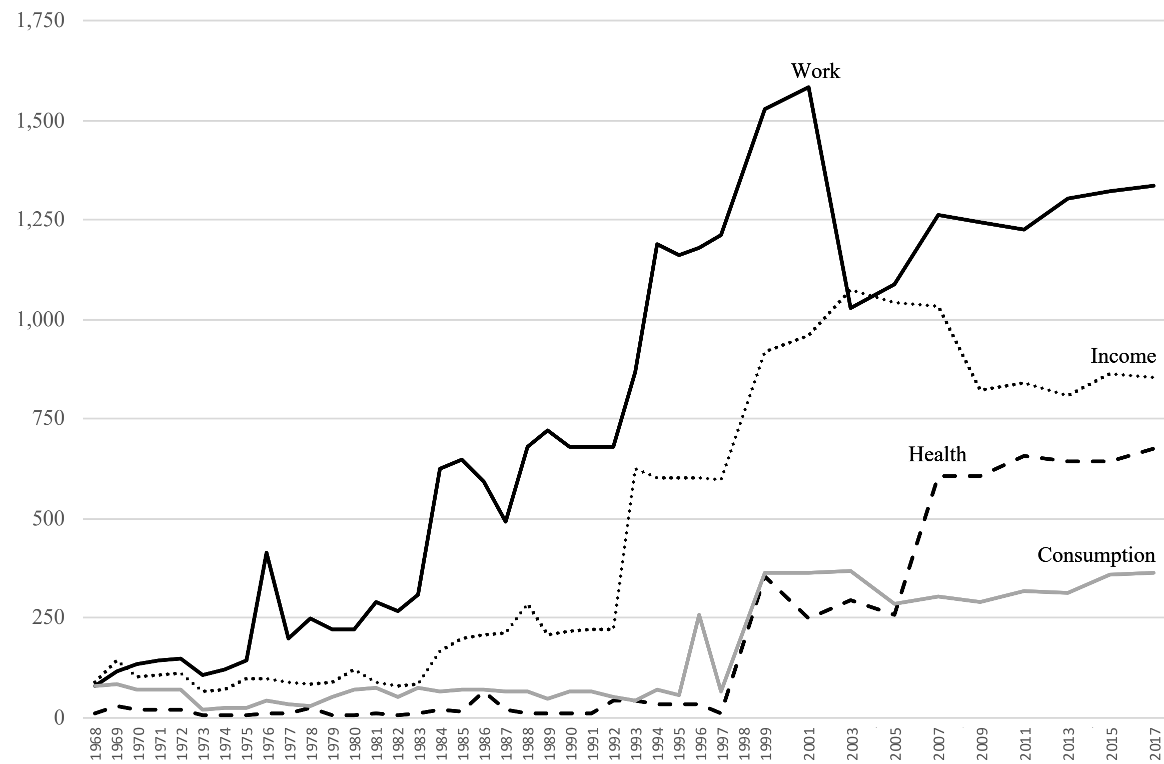
In contrast to the early and stable representation of sociologists on the PSID Board, the community of PSID users in sociology has grown steadily and is now represented by more than 600 PSID-based publications (a conservative estimate; see also Online Supplement Figure S.2 and the description of our data collection in Table S.1). Among those are 64 articles published in the *American Sociological Review* or the *American Journal of Sociology* and 113 dissertations defended in Sociology departments. The first dissertation in Sociology that used PSID data was Erik O. Wright's 1976 doctoral thesis on "Class Structure and Income Inequality."

Topical Representation

From the first survey wave in 1968, the PSID released a total 467 variables to its users. The 2017 wave, in comparison, contained 5,784 separate public-use variables. Here, we draw on a tool maintained by PSID staff, the cross-year index, that allocates each of these variables to a specific topical area. Counts of released variables are an indirect and incomplete indicator of topical representation as they are also influenced by specifics of the survey instrument (for instance, through 'dependent interviewing' a large number of variables may be recorded for just a small number of individuals). We account for and discuss some of these specifics below to provide a more valid analysis of topical trends (Online Supplement Figure S.2 also reports interview minutes by topical area for a more recent period as a validation check).[6] Figure 1 displays the number of PSID variables in the four largest topical areas (each made up at least 15% of released variables in at least one wave): *work* (employment status, occupational information, working hours, and more), *income* (from labor, business, assets, transfers, and others), *health* (health status, health history, health insurance, and health care utilization), and *consumption* (housing expenditures, food expenditures, child care expenditures, and others). As Figure 1 illustrates, the

[6] In principle, we consider interview minutes the preferable indicator of where a survey puts its focus, although it has its own limitations, in particular when interview modes change over time as they have for PSID. For this and other reasons, the available minute counts for topical areas reported in Online Supplement Figure S.2 only go back to 2003 and will be used as a validation check for our discussion of the variable counts. Another minor measurement limitation in our variable count estimates is a small number of duplicate variables that are released at both the individual and family level (though we do not believe that this duplication meaningfully impacts the comparisons for the four main areas selected here) and the exclusion of some restricted-use data (such as those containing geographic identifiers).

Figure 1: PSID variables by topical area



Note: Lines represent the number of variables released for each PSID wave by topic. Only topical areas that represent at least 15% or more of the variables released in any wave are included (Table 1 provides a full list of topical areas). We condense age-specific childhood health variables collected since 2007 into single variables (one variable for each health condition).

number of variables in all of these four topical areas increased substantially across decades: Variables capturing *work* and *income* increased most from 1980 to the early 2000s, with a large set of variables added in the early 1990s (partly due to a switch to Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) which allowed for monthly reporting of work and income) and in the late 1990s (when PSID switched to biennial interviewing and, as a consequence, began collecting work and income information on the years in-between survey waves). The number of variables on work declined in 2003 with the collection of employment history was streamlined but increased again as mentions of additional jobs expanded. The number of income variables decreased in 2009 as PSID aggregated several questions about between-wave income ('T-2 income'). Health variables also expanded over time, first in 1999 and then again substantially in 2007 when a health history section was added. Figure 1 displays an adjusted variable count for health that deflates the large number of variables added due to age-specific reports of childhood health conditions (one variable for each age and condition) by condensing conditions into a single childhood variable. (The increase in health content is also reflected in the average interview minutes spent in the health section of the survey, which increased by about 5 minutes in 2007; see Online Supplement Figure S.3.) Finally, consumption variables were significantly expanded in 1999.

Turning to the scientific contributions PSID has enabled, we draw on the collection of PSID-based contributions published in sociological outlets (see Online Supplement Table S.1 for a detailed definition and discussion). This allows us to describe the representation of topical areas in sociological scholarship and how sociology differs from other disciplines in its use of PSID. Table 1 lists the share of sociology publications and non-sociology publications that fall within each topical field and reveals the ten most commonly studied topics in the PSID-based sociological literature – labor market outcomes, family formation and composition, racial-ethnic differences, aging, intergenerational influences and transfers, educational attainment and achievement, income, neighborhoods and geographic mobility, poverty, and gender differences. To show how sociological use of PSID differs from other disciplines, we compare the share of each topical area covered in PSID-based sociology journals to the share of each topical area covered in PSID-based non-sociology journals, with the ratio reported in the right-most column of Table 1. It shows, for instance, that the attention paid to the topic of racial and ethnic differences compared to all other topics is much higher (2.6 times as high) in sociological PSID publications than non-sociological PSID publications. Other topical areas that are frequently and disproportionately addressed by sociologists (highlighted in grey) are intergenerational influences and transfers, family formation and composition, and neighborhoods and geographic mobility. We review these four areas in more detail below and describe the sociological insights in each area that PSID has been able to support. We note that PSID has also contributed to new sociological knowledge in many other topical areas that we lack space to explore here. Topics that are more often addressed using PSID data in sociology outlets compared to non-sociology outlets also include but are not limited to poverty, educational attainment and achievement, and gender differences.

Table 1: PSID-based publications by topical area

	Sociology	Non-Sociology	Soc./Non-Soc.
Labor Market & Outcomes	10.5%	13.4%	0.8
Family Formation & Composition	8.9%	5.3%	**1.7**
Racial-Ethnic Differences	8.3%	3.2%	**2.6**
Aging	6.9%	7.4%	0.9
Intergenerational Influences & Transfers	6.3%	3.8%	**1.7**
Education Attainment & Achievement	6.2%	4.9%	1.3
Income	5.5%	6.6%	0.8
Neighborhoods & Geographic Mobility	4.8%	2.8%	**1.7**
Poverty	4.7%	3.3%	1.4
Gender Differences	4.4%	3.8%	1.2
Other Topics	33.4%	45.7%	0.7
Total (Publication * Topics)	100.0%	100.0%	

Note: Percentages express the share of sociological/other publications assigned to a given topical area, with each publication typically assigned to multiple areas. The right-most column compares the share of publications in a given topical area between those publications designated to sociology versus those designated to a different field with a ratio above 1 (also highlighted in grey) indicating that sociology publications are more likely to address a given topic. Categories included under "other topics" (in descending order of prevalence in sociology): Wealth, Children, Health, Child Development Supplement, Life Course, Time Use & Home Production, Wellbeing, Government Transfers, Housing, Statistical & Econometric Models, International Studies, Expenditures, Transition to Adulthood Supplement, Food & Nutrition, Retirement, Taxes, Philanthropy, Disability & Use of Time.

Finally, we provide a different perspective on the use of PSID in sociology and the unique contributions of PSID-based research to the sociological literature based on an analysis of the 50 most-cited publications in each of the field's two flagship journals, *American Sociological Review* and *American Journal of Sociology* in two historical periods (1970-2007 and 2008-2018; for details see Online Supplement Table S.1). Strikingly, the PSID-based publications that are among the "top 200" of the discipline all fall into the topical area of intergenerational effects (Duncan et al. 1998; Torche 2011) and, within that, the intergenerational effects of neighborhood conditions (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993; Sharkey 2008; Sharkey and Elwert 2011; Wodtke, Harding, and Elwert 2011). That is, two of the topics identified as the subject of sociological inquiry more often compared to other disciplines – intergenerational influences and neighborhood effects– are also highly influential, as they have become some of the most widely cited contributions in the top journals of the discipline.

SOCIOLOGICAL LANDMARK FINDINGS BASED ON THE PSID

Intergenerational Processes

Intergenerational mobility. Sociologists rightfully claim a productive and long-standing line of research on intergenerational social mobility and intergenerational influences that precedes other fields, including economics (Torche 2015; Mazumder 2018). However, after a replication of the classical status attainment model (Blau and Duncan 1967) by Corcoran (1980), PSID-based contributions were largely absent from the burgeoning literature on social class mobility of the 1980s (Ganzeboom, Treiman, and Ultee 1991). This may be partly due to the initially limited detail of the released occupational information as costs associated with occupational coding and data (tape) storage led to the use of 1-digit occupational codes for the first survey waves. Along with a later switch to 2- and 3-digit occupation coding, an suggestion by a sociologist to add survey items on occupational characteristics helped open the possibility of a sociological class analysis based on PSID (Wright 1979: p. 238) and supported later, long-term assessments of occupation-based class mobility (e.g., Hertel and Pfeffer 2019).

Following seminal contributions in economics (e.g., Solon 1992), sociologists have also focused on intergenerational correlations in earnings and income and documented their heterogeneity across population groups. For instance, Torche (2011) found that intergenerational income and earnings correlations differ by offspring's educational attainment, with those attaining a college degree being most mobile. Bloome (2014) documented stark racial differences in income mobility, with particularly high levels of downward mobility among African-American compared to white sample members (see also Wilson 2009). Bloome (2015) also revealed large differences in the levels of and trends in income mobility across U.S. states and uses this variation to demonstrate that social mobility and social inequality are largely independent from each other, a finding that contrasts with international comparisons of the relationship between income inequality and mobility, also partly based on the PSID (Corak 2013).

Intergenerational associations and education. Sizeable intergenerational correlations have also been found for other dimensions of socio-economic wellbeing, such as poverty status and welfare receipt (Corcoran 1995; Martin 2003), neighborhood poverty (Sharkey 2008), and family wealth (Pfeffer and Killewald 2018). Beyond estimating intergenerational correlations, sociologists have also investigated associations between different characteristics of origin families, such as family structure (Lopoo and DeLeire 2014) or family instability (McLanahan and Bumpass 1988), and different outcomes of the next generation. By far the most heavily studied outcome of the next generation is educational attainment. Here, PSID has supported a more encompassing view of parental resources: Researchers have gone beyond measures of parental degree completion to consider parents' college attendance without a degree (Fomby and Cross 2018) or the prestige of parents' postsecondary institution (Ford and Thompson 2016), in both cases finding a weak relationship with their offspring's probability of obtaining a college degree. Going beyond the role of parental education and family income in predicting educational success, researchers have documented the independent role of parental wealth (Conley 2001b; Williams 2003; Pfeffer 2018), parental home ownership (Conley 2001a; Mohanty and Raut 2009), the quality of parental employment conditions (Yetis-Bayraktar, Budig, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2013), and neighborhood conditions (Harding 2003; Wodtke et al. 2011; Wodtke, Elwert, and Harding 2016). Multiple studies have shown that various parental investments facilitate offspring's educational success, including investments of money (Hill and Duncan 1987; DeLeire and Kalil 2005; Benton and Keister 2017), time (Hsin 2009; Milkie, Nomaguchi, and Denny 2015; Fomby and Musick 2018), and the use of particular parenting practices geared at imparting social capital (Hofferth, Boisjoly, and Duncan 1998, 1999) or cultural capital (Lareau and Weininger 2008; Carolan and Wasserman 2015; Weininger, Lareau, and Conley 2015).

Multigenerational Mobility. As the PSID sample has grown beyond two generations of family members it increasingly supports investigations of multigenerational mobility and associations (Mare 2011; Pfeffer 2014). Recent contributions have documented three-generational associations along a variety of dimensions, including social class (Hertel and Groh-Samberg 2014), income (Wightman and Danziger 2014), education (Pfeffer 2014; Song and Mare 2017), wealth (Pfeffer and Killewald 2018), neighborhood characteristics (Sharkey and Elwert 2011), fertility (Fomby, Krueger, and Wagner 2014), and parenting behaviors (Roksa and Patter 2011). Other research has expanded measures of family background by considering extended family networks, including aunts and uncles (Prix and Pfeffer 2017; Erola et al. 2018) and step-parents (Seltzer 2019; Wiemers et al. 2019).

Prospective Approaches. PSID's panel design also uniquely supports prospective analyses of the maintenance of inequality across generations. Rather than beginning with an analytic sample of offspring and tracing their socio-economic roots back to prior generations, the prospective approach begins with a baseline population and ascertains the channels through which it maintains socio-economic (dis)advantage across following generations (Maralani 2013; Mare 2011; Song and Mare 2015). This approach differs from the classical retrospective perspective as it necessarily takes into account demographic processes involved in intergenerational reproduction processes (Duncan 1966), such as fertility or family formation processes, which we discuss below. The prospective approach is also particularly well-suited to assess the population-level effects of social policies (Hofferth and Stanhope 2005; Hofferth, Stanhope, and Mullan Harris 2002).

Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Labor Market Outcomes and Careers: A large PSID-based literature has focused on racial inequality, most often Black-white gaps, in labor market outcomes and careers. Many contributions documented and sought explanations for the racial wage gap: Contrary to Wilson's (1978) thesis of the "declining significance of race," authors documented that the Black-white wage gap continued to increase during the 1970s and 1980s as well as across individuals' life-courses (Cancio, Evans, and Maume Jr. 1996; Maume 2004b; Wilson and Sakura-Lemessy 2000) and, in the absence of observable explanatory factors, likely increased due to discrimination (Maume 2004b). Underlying these wage gaps are racial differences in occupational positions: Wright (1978) showed that the lower income returns to education for Black men compared to white men are largely explained by differences in social class attainment. Others documented Black-white differences in access to and the wage return to job authority (Mueller 1989; Wilson 1997).

Another set of contributions underlined the importance of economic contexts for racial inequality, tracing the influence of labor market conditions on race differences in wages (Parcel 1979a) and female labor-force participation (Browne 2000). Progress towards racial labor market equality has been shown to be either limited or fleeting: Ren (2019) showed that Black/white earnings gaps have declined only among the college-educated and during economic upswings. Maume (1985) documented that the earnings of Black men and women were higher in areas with a strong public sector; yet more recent shifts towards privatizing public sector institutions eroded the progress towards racial wage parity made within the public sector (Wilson, Roscigno, and Huffman 2015).

Finally, taking full advantage of the longitudinal feature of the PSID, many contributions investigated racial differences in job mobility. Early on, Black workers were shown to be less able to make voluntary moves to improve their career as well as to avoid involuntary changes, such as layoffs (DiPrete 1981; Sorensen and Fuerst 1978). Whether the obstacles to upward mobility faced by racial minorities constitute a "glass ceiling" was debated after an influential article by Cotter et al. (2001) reported that Black men face a consistent race penalty at all points in their career and at all income levels (rather than greater disadvantage at later career stages and higher incomes), a pattern inconsistent with a "glass ceiling" as defined by these authors. Subsequent work, however, found patterns consistent with a racial glass ceiling, in particular in terms of Black employees' access to managerial and other privileged occupational positions (Maume 2004a; Wilson et al. 2019). More broadly, researchers found slower promotion rates to managerial positions among Black and Latino workers compared to white workers, and those promotions are more likely to be based on formal qualifications and experience than for whites (Maume 1999; Wilson and Maume 2014); the reverse pattern holds for downward mobility (McBrier and Wilson 2004; Wilson and McBrier 2005). Again, these racial differences in the patterns of job mobility are less marked in the public sector compared to the private sector (Wilson and Roscigno 2010; Wilson, Roscigno, and Huffman 2013; Wilson, Sakura-Lemessy, and West 1999).

Neighborhood Sorting: Another substantial strand of research on racial inequality supported by PSID consists of studies of neighborhood sorting. Largely motivated by "The Truly Disadvantaged," another seminal work by Wilson (1987), many contributions have compared residential mobility patterns of whites and non-whites to understand high levels of racial and ethnic segregation and inequality in exposure to neighborhood disadvantage. Massey et al. (1994) found that the geographic concentration of poor Blacks, contrary to Wilson's thesis, is not caused by nonpoor Blacks leaving urban neighborhoods. Subsequent research also showed that Blacks were much less likely than whites to escape poor neighborhoods and more likely to move into them, even when they hold similar socio-economic characteristics and despite similar preferences for mobility (Crowder 2001; South and Crowder 1997, 1998a). While non-Hispanic Blacks face the highest risk of moving into a high-poverty neighborhood, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans show the highest rates of persisting in high-poverty neighborhoods (South and Crowder 2005). Furthermore, Blacks and Latinos are more likely to live in and move into neighborhoods with higher pollution hazards (Crowder and Downey 2010; Kravitz-Wirtz et al. 2016).

More recent contributions to this literature have focused on the residential choices of whites as this group is increasingly exposed to racial diversity, albeit in very segmented ways (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2017). Quillian (2002) showed that explanations of continued segregation must take into account whites' avoidance of predominantly Black or multiracial neighborhoods. That avoidance is especially strong among white households with children (Goyette, Iceland, and Weininger 2014) and also extends to the avoidance of multi-ethnic neighborhoods and flight from neighborhoods with a large and growing immigrant population (Crowder, Hall, and Tolnay 2011; Crowder, Pais, and South 2012). Yet, the avoidance of other-race or mixed neighborhoods is not exclusive to whites. For instance, Latinos display a level of avoidance of Black neighborhoods similar to that of whites and Blacks display the same avoidance of Latino neighborhoods as whites (South, Crowder, and Pais 2008). Departing from the more conventional approach of using aggregate geographic data on Census Tracts and Blocks matched to the geocoded PSID data to trace the distribution and movement of different racial and ethnic groups, Bruch (2014) drew on PSID estimates of residential mobility for empirically grounded agent-based models of neighborhood sorting.

Housing and Wealth: Racial differences in neighborhood attainment also contribute to racial inequality in wealth (Thomas, Mann, and Meschede 2018) (although the reverse is not the case, i.e., racial gaps in wealth do not appear to explain minorities' limited access to advantaged neighborhoods; Crowder, South, and Chavez 2006). In particular the lower housing prices in neighborhoods with high minority concentration (Harris 1999) may explain why minority household accumulate less home equity and derive less equity return from their earnings and marital status (Parcel 1982). Furthermore, in a more hidden way, unequal tax benefits disadvantage minority households as white homeowners disproportionally benefit from property tax limitations (Martin and Beck 2015). Besides racial differences in returns to home ownership, home ownership itself is of course also marked by continued and stark racial inequality (Hirschl and Rank 2010; Rank 2009). The Great Recession further increased racial gaps in home ownership as Blacks faced a dramatically higher risk of losing their home during the foreclosure crisis (Sharp and Hall 2014).

With home ownership as the key vehicle of wealth accumulation, these inequalities also translate into large racial gaps in net worth. Racial wealth gaps have grown over time and across the life-course and can be found even among otherwise more privileged segments of the population, such as the college educated (Meschede et al. 2016; Taylor and Meschede 2018). The racial wealth gap is of intergenerational significance, e.g. as family wealth promotes the educational success of Black offspring (Williams Shanks and Destin 2009). Large Black/white gaps in extended family wealth, e.g. grandparental wealth (Chiteji 2010) also exert intergenerational influence, e.g. hindering Blacks' access to home ownership. However, Blacks are also disadvantaged in their ability to translate extended family wealth into home ownership (Hall and Crowder 2011; Pfeffer and Killewald 2018). More broadly, Black/white difference in wealth attainment are partly – but far from fully – explained by differences in parent wealth (Conley 2001c, 2006; Killewald 2013) and ongoing processes of institutional discrimination that impact the current generation of non-whites may account for the higher levels of intergenerational downward mobility in the wealth position of Blacks (Pfeffer and Killewald 2019)

Family Composition and Change

Family structure and poverty. Sociological scholarship using PSID has documented how families experience and negotiate poverty (Harris 1993; Massey and Shibuya 1995; Rank and Hirschl 1999; Timberlake 2007) and measured the impact of childhood poverty on achievement and status attainment across the life course (Duncan and Rodgers 1988; Wagmiller et al. 2006). In a series of influential articles, Sara McLanahan (1983, 1985, 1988) leveraged PSID's longitudinal, intergenerational design and its inclusion of a relatively large number of families headed by unmarried women to illustrate that economic strain and family stress, more so than father absence, explained the observed association between growing up with a single parent and an elevated risk of poverty in early adulthood. This work contributed to re-orienting research and public discourse about the relationship between family structure and poverty away from a pathologized view of “broken families” to one that emphasized the capacity for public policy to bolster children’s and parents’ well-being across family structures.

Gender dynamics in marriage and divorce. Rich longitudinal information on men’s and women’s time use and earnings paired with PSID’s genealogical design have enabled a large literature on couple-level unpaid labor (Brines 1994; Lareau and Weininger 2008; Rexroat and Shehan 1987; Sandberg and Hofferth 2001) and earned income dynamics (Evertsson and Nermo 2004; Farkas 1976; Heckert, Nowak, and Snyder 1998; South 2001) and on gender differences in economic well-being after divorce (Espenshade 1979; Weiss 1984; Zick and Smith 1991). This work has documented that over historical time, women’s higher earned income relative to husbands’ has become an increasingly less salient predictor of divorce (Heckert et al. 1998; Ono 1998; Schwartz and Gonalons-Pons 2016), but men’s declining employment prospects have contributed to a decline in marriage rates (Schneider, Harknett, and Stimpson 2018) and marriages in which men are unemployed remain at elevated risk of divorce (Killewald 2016). Other work has demonstrated that although men’s household income recovers following divorce more quickly than women’s (Duncan and Hoffman 1985b) and men are less dependent on remarriage to regain economic stability (Duncan and Hoffman 1985a), divorce also carries significant financial consequences for them (McManus and DiPrete 2001).

Kin networks and family complexity. The PSID household rosters, marriage and birth histories, time use supplements, and periodic extra-household family rosters have permitted careful analysis of kin networks and dynamic family relationships within and across households (Carr, Cornman, and Freedman 2019; Hofferth 1984; Hofferth and Anderson 2003; Seltzer 2019; Seltzer et al. 2005). Key to this research is the precise work performed by PSID interviewers and data processing staff to update and review field notes that describe family relationships. A significant set of recent innovations describes time and money exchanges between older adults and their children and stepchildren (Friedman, Park, and Wiemers 2015; Wiemers et al. 2019). Other recent work has characterized the full scope of change in household composition to yield new insights about the prevalence of extended kin coresidence among children in African-American and Latinx families (Cross 2018) and the frequency of their experience of household instability beyond parents’ union status changes (Perkins 2019).

Geographic Contexts of Opportunity

Geographic Mobility over the Life Course. Since the first wave of PSID, families have answered questions about their homes and neighborhoods, as well as reporting their addresses and whether or not they moved since their last interview. Parcel (1979b) was one of the first to link geographic identifiers from PSID to aggregated Census data to find that residential segregation and racial competition dampened earnings levels for black individuals. Massey and colleagues linked Census tract and metropolitan data with PSID to examine racial differences in movement into or out of poor neighborhoods (Massey et al. 1994). Also focused on the issue of residential mobility, Crowder and colleagues (2012) used almost 30 years of PSID data to show that even with the emergence of more racially diverse neighborhoods, few black or white families moved to these locations (Crowder et al. 2012). Thanks to the oversampling of African-American families, researchers have also been able to verify the lasting associations between racial segregation, socioeconomic status, and geographic mobility (Massey et al. 1994; South and Crowder 1997, 1998b).

Child Development and Place. Crowder and South (2003) showed that increases in the concentration of urban poverty have reinforced the link between socioeconomic distress and school dropout rates and Harding (2003) found a causal effect of childhood neighborhood characteristics on high school dropout and teenage pregnancy. Wodtke and colleagues (2011) built on this research to establish a large effect of sustained exposure to disadvantaged neighborhoods has on high school graduation rates. Similar research has used PSID to follow children through adolescence and adulthood to study long-term poverty exposure and its negative association with cognitive skills (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993; Jackson and Mare 2007; Timberlake 2007).

Linking Location and Context. Crowder (2001) examined restrictive housing markets and their deleterious effects on the successful geographic mobility of black families. Hunter and colleagues (2005) showed that families in neighborhoods with growing natural amenities have higher incomes but also face higher living costs. South and Crowder (2010) used information about the neighborhoods in which PSID families resided as well as the surrounding neighborhoods to show that contexts of high poverty increase women's risk of becoming an unmarried parent. Corcoran and Adams (1995) found that males' labor supply is related to the working hours observed in their childhood neighborhood context. With advances in spatial analysis and open access to linkable contextual data, the opportunities for geographic mobility and neighborhood research are growing rapidly.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

We end this review with a discussion of some of the characteristics of PSID and similar studies that create challenge and opportunity for its future position in the social science data universe.

The Single Respondent

Unlike other household panel studies, the main PSID interview is conducted with one respondent per family unit (with only two exceptions in 1976 and 1985). In many ways, this is an obvious and economical way to manage a (primarily) telephone interview. Depending on interview content, the time, effort, and expense required to speak directly with multiple family members by telephone may not yield much additional information beyond what a knowledgeable respondent could report on their behalf. The practice of interviewing a single respondent is, however, a convention that remains from the study's first wave of in-person data collection, when household heads were reporting mostly about their own activity.

As questionnaire content has changed, this approach has imposed some constraints on the individuals about whom such content can be collected reliably. Today, a large share of the survey content is collected about reference persons (formerly household heads) and spouses or partners only; very little information is collected about other household members, including minors. Respondents also report on the current employment status and earnings and education, marriage, and birth histories of all adult household members, but with more item nonresponse. For a limited number of items, such as questions about mental health, respondents answer only for themselves and attitudinal measures are avoided (see also Alwin 2007: p.152). In order to collect more detailed information about other family unit members, PSID has regularly conducted supplemental studies of sample children and young adults (many of whom remain in their parents' households) since 1997. The content, design, and analytic utility of those supplements is beyond the scope of this paper, but they have made a significant contribution to life course scholarship by providing much richer information about early life experience than other panel studies have been able to collect (McGonagle and Sastry 2015). PSID has also periodically collected supplements directly from both the reference person and spouse/partner in a couple on topics such as wellbeing, cognitive skills, time use, and childhood circumstances. In addition, data files are available to identify the relationships between all individuals within and between family units over time regardless of whether they have been interviewed directly. These include birth and marriage histories for all adults observed since 1985, the Family Identification Mapping System to identify an individual's vertical (e.g., parent, grandparent, child, and grandchild) and sibling relations, and the family unit relationship matrix, which describes how all co-resident family unit members are related in each wave. Together, supplements and relationship data files leverage the content collected during the biennial Core interview to study intergenerational relationships over the life course and historical time.

The Age of Big Data

By some measures, PSID is big data: Through its 2017 survey wave, it contains information on more than 80,000 individuals and has collected nearly as many variables. But, of course, the excitement and at times lofty expectations of the "big data" revolution in sociology is based on other types of big data, often full-population administrative records (e.g., a Census) or "organic data" continuously flowing from electronic or online systems (e.g., Twitter stream or phone location tracking data). The competitive challenge these data pose to comparatively small social scientific survey data may seem nowhere more obvious than for one of the core areas of the PSID, the study of intergenerational mobility (Grusky, Smeeding, and Snipp 2015). Do we need the PSID for the study of income mobility if we can link high-quality income tax records across generations for the entire United States (Chetty, Hendren, Kline, Saez, et al. 2014)? Full-population records are much better suited for the estimation of an intergenerational income correlation for different areas of the country (Chetty, Hendren, Kline, and Saez 2014) or different parts of the income distribution (Mitnik et al. 2014). However, these data have their own bias-inducing limitations (see Mitnik, Bryant, and Weber 2019). In fact, the PSID has been used to demonstrate and correct for those biases (Mazumder 2016). The clear comparative disadvantage of many of these data sources, however, are the considerably more restrictive access to individual-level records, in the case of IRS tax data, reserved to just a handful of scientists.

The real promise for new insights and innovative sociological research will likely come from combining the comparative advantages of these different types of data through data linkage (Groves 2011: p. 869). For instance, ongoing efforts to link the PSID to the 1940 Census as well as real estate housing data will further expand opportunities for multi-generational and multi-dimensional assessments of social mobility.

Prospective Studies and Population Change

One of PSID's most enduring innovations was the choice to follow "split-off" adult children in PSID families who established their own households is the design element that has enabled intergenerational and multigenerational analysis. In a population with no immigration, this approach would have been ideal as a strategy to maintain population representativeness without sample refreshment. And in the late 1960s, the impact of immigration on population composition might have felt relatively trivial compared to most other historical periods: only about 5% of the US population was foreign-born in 1960 (US Census Bureau 1999), compared to 13.7% in 2017 (US Census Bureau 2016). To account for population change, PSID added new families through immigrant refresher samples in 1997 and 2017.[7] These families included a householder who was foreign-born and entered the United States after 1968 (or 1997 for the more recent refresher) or who was born after 1968 (1997) to a parent who entered the United States after that year (PSID 2019). Samples are proportional in size to their representation in the US population. The PSID refreshers are relatively infrequent compared to international panel studies, which occur in geographically more concentrated populations and also may be able to sample from registry data rather than from door-to-door screeners. In the US context, refreshers on special, hard-to-reach populations are expensive to implement, and the obtained samples are challenging to retain. And while immigrant refreshers offer immediate benefit by providing improved cross-sectional estimates, their payoff to longitudinal and intergenerational analysis takes much longer to accrue.

The Life Course of the Longitudinal Revolution

Like others in their early fifties, PSID today is not what it set out to become. At its core are approximately 2,000 families who were poor or low-income in a time of plenty and a federal government agency that asked how to improve their life chances. Two early innovations – the addition of a population-representative sample and a design that allowed the sample to replenish itself over time – gave the study the momentum to continue beyond its first five years. Built on

[7] An additional 2000 Latino households were included in 1990-1995, but this sample was eventually dropped in favor of an immigrant refresher representative of all places of origin.

this foundation, PSID has ridden out historical, institutional, technological, and social changes that have contoured sample composition, questionnaire content, and the study's position in the national data infrastructure. We argue that it has survived because it has proven flexible to scholarly, policy, and funding priorities across a variety of social science research regimes. It continues to do so, for instance, through web-based survey data collection (Couper and McGonagle 2019) and biomarker measurement (Sastry, McGonagle, and Schoeni 2009). Certainly, the study that PSID has become is likely not the study it would be if it were to begin today. A new study might begin with a larger sample and perform more frequent population refreshers, both to capture new populations and as a buffer against attrition. It might pair survey interviews with linkages to administrative data in order to harness the synergies between these modes of data collection. And like most other current national longitudinal studies, it might obtain the majority of its support from a steady single sponsor, a path that carries its own risks for continued relevance. But of course, were the study to begin today, it might never have begun at all.

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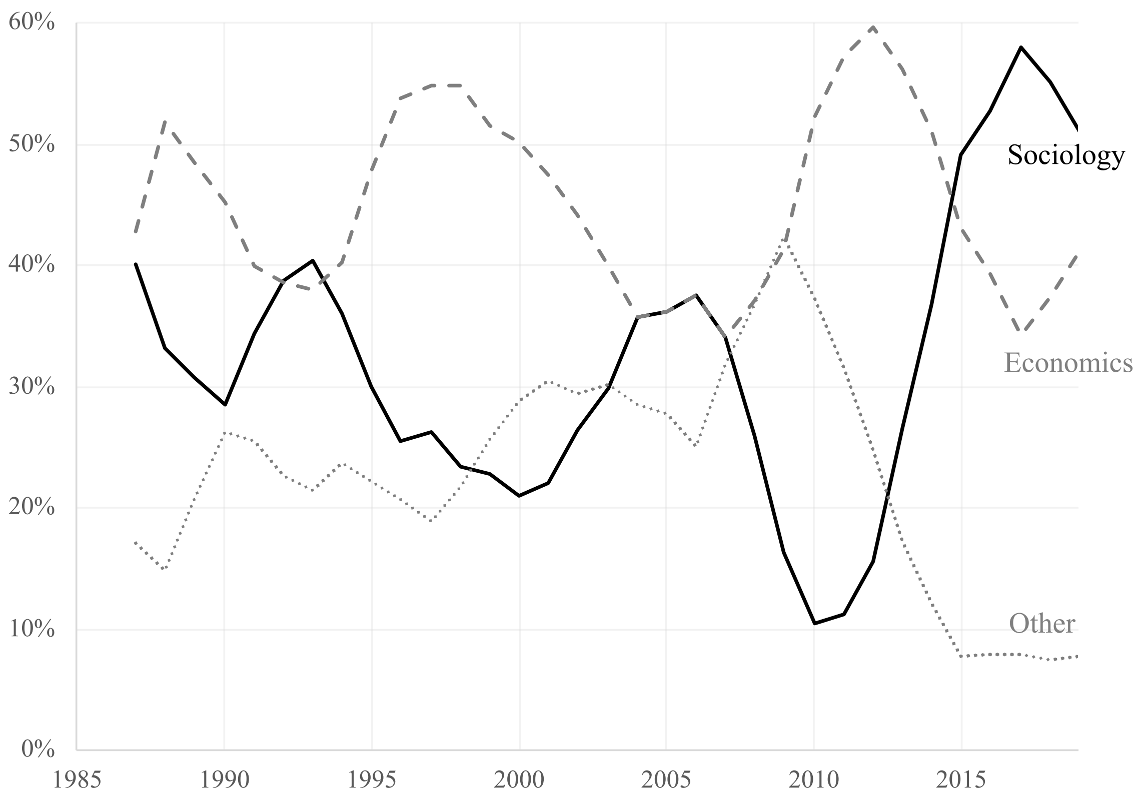
ONLINE SUPPLEMENT

THE LONGITUDINAL REVOLUTION

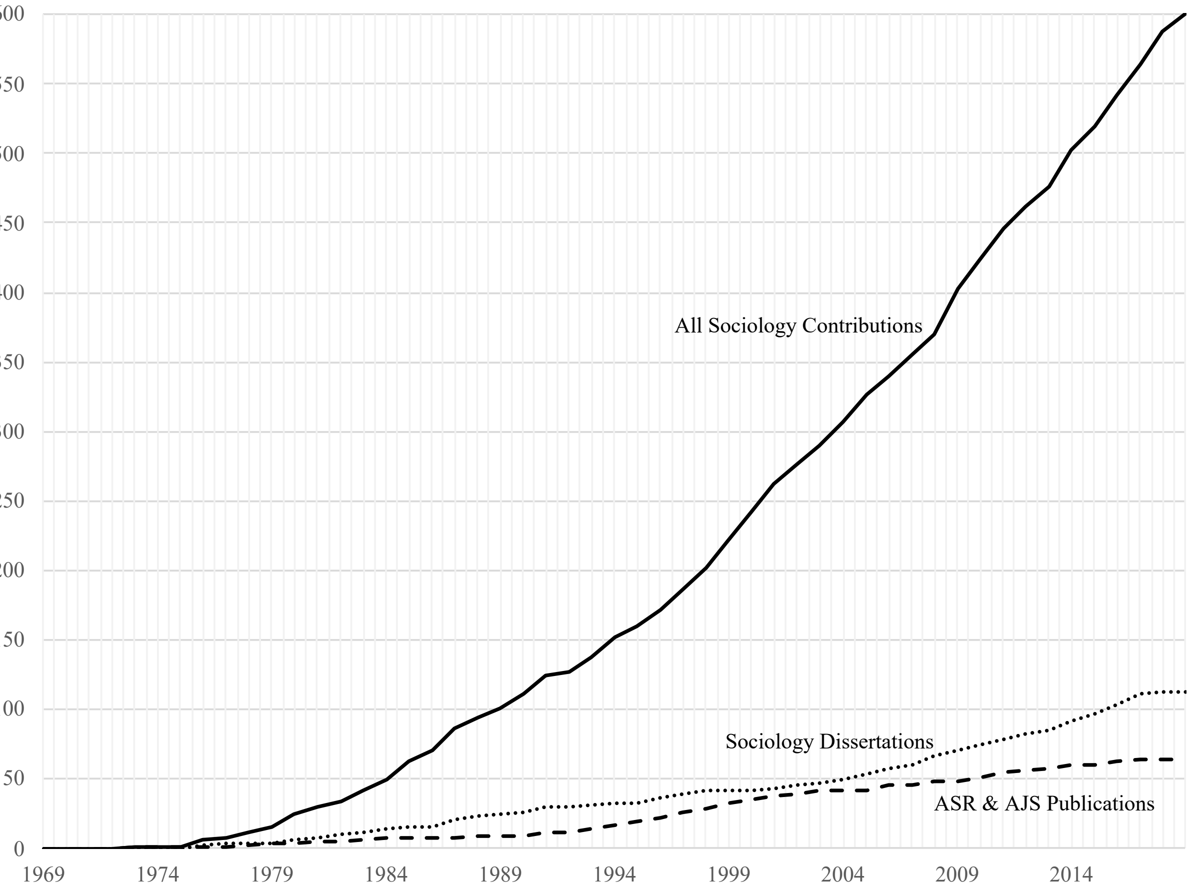
Fabian T. Pfeffer, Paula Fomby, and Noura Insolera

FIGURE S.1. COMPOSITION OF THE PSID EXTERNAL BOARD OF OVERSEERS



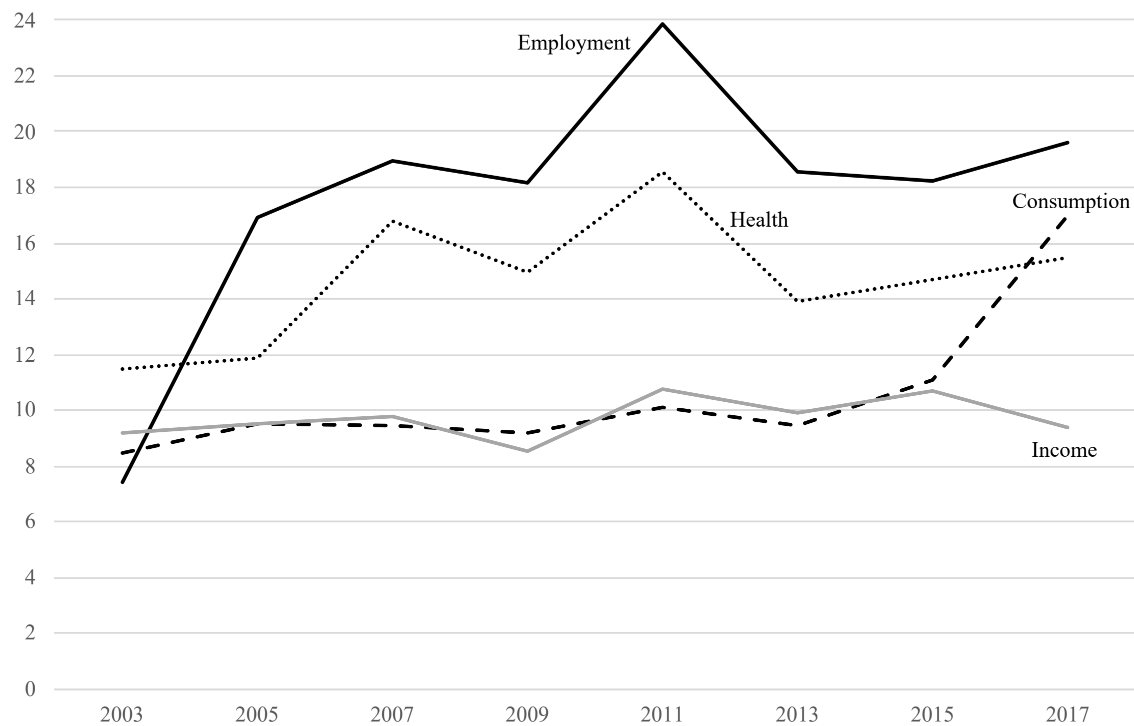
Note: Lines represent 3-year smoothed averages of the relative share of disciplines represented by members of the Board of Overseers (including the Board Chair).

FIGURE S.2: TOTAL PSID-BASED PUBLICATIONS IN SOCIOLOGY



Note: Cumulative count of PSID-based publications in the field of sociology (as designated by Web of Science); included in the total count are dissertations awarded in a department of sociology and ASR/AJS articles.

FIGURE S.3: INTERVIEW MINUTES BY SECTION



Note: Average number of minutes spent on four longest questionnaire sections. Other substantive questionnaire sections that are shorter and not shown are: Housing, Wealth, Philanthropy, Pensions, Background, and Marriage & Fertility.

TABLE S.1: OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

Our review draws on multiple types of data to trace the history of the PSID, the representation the sociology within the PSID, and the uses of PSID within sociological research. To examine the disciplinary representation, we draw on a collection of publications based on the PSID and on historical records of the PSID Board of Overseers. To assess topical coverage in the PSID, we use a topical classification of all public-release PSID variables as well as a classification of PSID-based publications. This table contains information on each data source.

Description	Variables	Access
Board of Overseers		
The describe the disciplinary composition of the Board of Overseers, we use board membership records and ascribe a discipline to each Board member based on their doctoral degree (which we ascertain via a web search for their CVs or other biographic information)	Disciplines: Sociology, Economics, Others	Link
Variable Classification		
PSID staff sorts each public-release PSID variable into topical areas and subareas to enable users to browse data by topical interests. We use and aggregate this classification scheme to 13 broad topical areas and count the number of variables from each topical area and each survey wave as a representation of topical flows in the PSID data.	Areas: education, work, income, wealth, and consumption, as well as health, family relationship, survey methodology, behavior, demographic outcomes, geographic contexts, time use, and "other"	Link
Interviews		
We interviewed all living former PSID directors using a semi-structured interview.	Interviewees: Greg Duncan, Sandy Hofferth, Frank Stafford, Robert Schoeni, Charles Brown	
Bibliography		
The PSID requires its data users to self-report their PSID-based publications but tracks down publications not registered by authors themselves. The resulting bibliographic database includes 6,179 journal articles, dissertations, books, book chapters, and reports at the time of this writing. After reviewing each publication's content, PSID staff also categorize each by topical area ("keywords") using up to 29 categories. To help us identify the sociological contributions in this bibliographic collection, and following other bibliographic analyses, we draw on disciplinary classifications provided by Web of Science (WoS). WoS assigns up to three "subject categories" to each of publication outlet (i.e., typically journal) based on their own analysis of the	Categories: Aging, Child Development Supplement, Children, Disability & Use of Time, Education Attainment & Achievement, Expenditures, Family Formation & Composition, Food & Nutrition, Gender Differences, Government Transfers, Health, Housing, Income, Intergenerational Influences & Transfers, International Studies, Labor Market & Outcomes, Life Course, Neighborhoods & Geographic Mobility, Philanthropy, Poverty, Racial-Ethnic Differences, Retirement, Statistical &	Link

content, scope, and citation patterns among all references in their collection.[8] We count a publication as sociological if "Sociology" is included in any of its subject areas. We also add dissertations written in sociology departments as sociological contributions. The matching of the PSID bibliographic database to their WoS records was accomplished via machine-linkage (on DOI or, where not available, a sequential matching on article title, journal title, and author) as well as hand-linkage (via the WoS search interface).	Econometric Methods, Survey Methodology, Taxes, Time Use & Home Production, Transition to Adulthood Supplement, Wealth, Wellbeing.	
Most Influential Publications in Sociology		
To identify the most influential publications in top sociology journals, we drew on Google Scholar citation records (access date: 11/11/2019) to identify the 50 articles with the highest annual citation count (total citations divided by year since publication) within the two flagship sociology journals and two different time spans. We then reviewed all articles to determine whether they use secondary data and whether they draw on the PSID.	Journals and time spans: - American Sociological Research - 1970-2007 - 2008-2018 - American Journal of Sociology - 1970-2007 - 2008-2018	

[8] Certainly, the resulting field designation is bound to miss some contributions written by sociologists, mostly because they are published in journals primarily associated with other fields (e.g., a publication in the American Economic Review authored by a sociologist) or in books (although WoS does capture and classify some books and book chapters, it does to less reliably than for journal articles). For instance, some may want to identify sociological contributions as those written by researchers with a degree in sociology or an affiliation in sociology irrespective of the journal outlet. Besides its practical drawbacks (we know of no database that contains identifiable individual-level records of the holders of sociological degrees or appointments), this alternative approach would also exclude contributions to sociological knowledge by those outside of the discipline (e.g., a publication in the American Sociological Review authored by a psychologist) as well as those outside of sociology departments and those without academic appointments.

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