

Creating the American Opportunity Study(AOS) :

Our Vision

For the May 9th , 2016 Workshop on
The Potential for Research Using Linked Census, Survey, and Administrative
Data to Assess the Longer Term Effects of Policy

Tim Smeeding (University of Wisconsin)

Workshop coordinator for NRC Standing Committee on AOS

The Standing Committee and Its Subcommittees

1. *Workshop planning – **Proof of Use/Demand***-- focus is to build the user community "moving beyond mobility narrowly defined " to other uses of the AOS and CARRA for evidence based policy
2. *Matching and record linkage methodology – **Proof of Concept*** -- focus is to understand the record linkage for AOS merged/linked files and its strengths and weaknesses
3. *Governance – **Proof of Operability*** -- focus is to look long term at the AOS, how it should be structured to allow access but at the same time protect privacy and confidentiality, how it should be maintained, and how its priorities should be assessed.

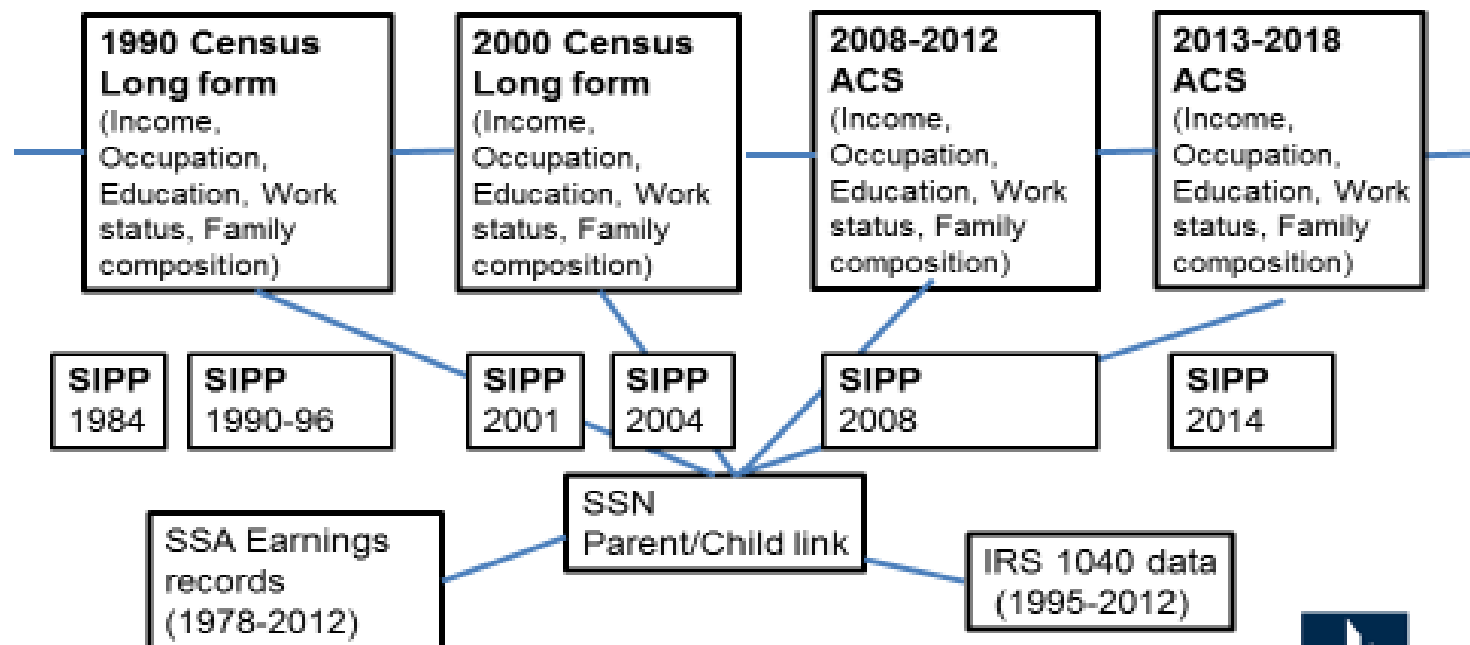
Objectives for today: Proof of usefulness/demand : A workshop on potential sses of the AOS scaffolding

- **Our Vision –this presentation**
- **Your role and charge for the day –this presentation**
- **The larger Census Bureau Linkage Infrastructure where AOS is likely to reside, in the Center for Administrative Records Research & Applications (CARRA), U. S. Census Bureau, Amy O’Hara**
- **What Would This Resource Enable You to Do—Various presentations from our invited guests**
- **Update on Ryan Murray bill**
- **Summary and Wrap Up**

At the beginning in 2012 --What data will allow us to monitor social mobility and how can we improve it ?

- Longitudinal surveys help us focus on one cohort , e.g., start with NLSY, PSID parents as origin and eventually, their offspring as they grow up—so always looking back at a starting sample and waiting for the kids to grow up to where their destination is determined
- Last large-scale government-run survey of mobility in the U.S. was in 1973*- but surveys are increasingly expensive and increasingly under-reported and mis-reported
(* *Occupational Changes in a Generation* (OCG II) a supplement to CPS)
- Lighbulb #1 goes on ---- what can some linked administrative records (inspired by the SIPP Gold Standard model) tell us about income and earnings mobility for recent cohorts ??

The Possibilities with Census and ACS data And SIPP

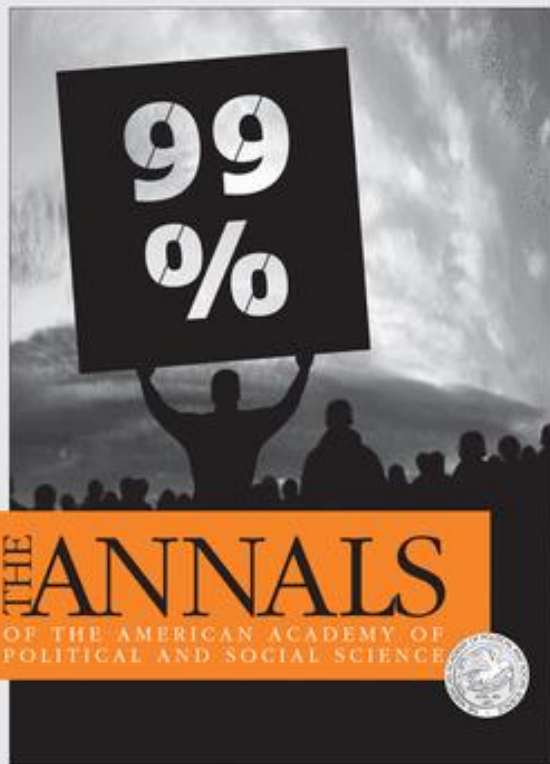


Then we started to envision a new tool

- **A de-facto inter-generational and inter-temporal panel already exists : the decennial censuses !!!**
- **There is great potential to add depth by linking Censuses to administrative data**
- **Adding surveys or other studies which can be slipped into the structure to answer questions not answered in the structure we envision also appeals**
- **Let's use this structure to study mobility—in a broad sense , call it the AOS, and put out a 'visionary' volume on monitoring social mobility**

Monitoring Social Mobility in the Twenty-First Century

Special Editors: David B. Grusky, Timothy M. Smeeding, and C. Matthew Snipp



Volume 657, January 2015

Now--the American Opportunity Study (AOS) is being launched

Goals:

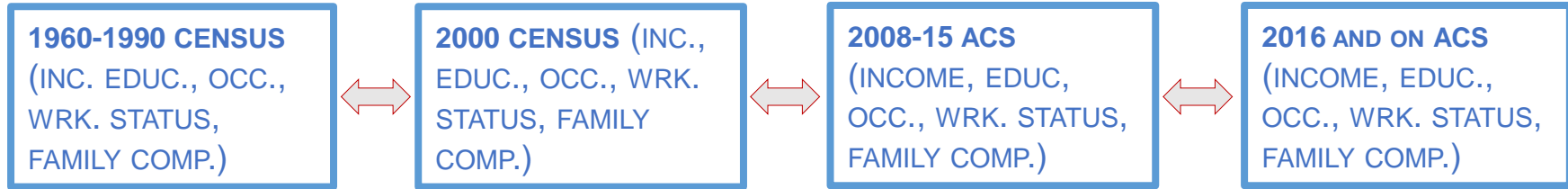
- **Fill in the decennial holes between 1960 and 1990 (others are already filling pre-1960)**
- **Provide expertise to improve matching and linkage across files**
- **Assist in identifying key longitudinal research opportunities**
- **Help with governance issues regarding data access, privacy and confidentiality**

A joint project amongst a large group of stakeholders: AOS Committee, Stanford University, U.S. Census Bureau, and the National Academies of Sciences, and soon we hope other researchers such as those we invited here today, and with additional start up funding beyond the current Carnegie grant

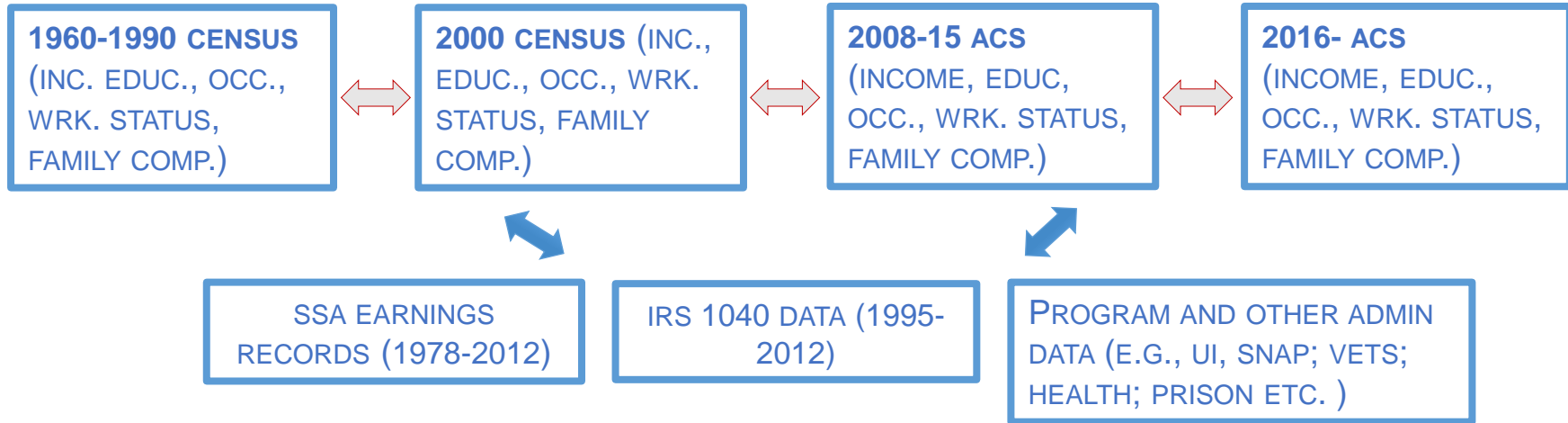
The Technical Hurdles: Proof of Concept

- The digitized 1960-1990 decennial data do not include people's names (other data from the decennials have been captured and digitized. But to reliably link we need the person's name too) .
- 1990 forms are stored on 120,000 reels of microfilm.
- The name is handwritten by the respondent.
- Names on the 1990 decennial remain restricted-access until 2062
- Goal#1: accurately assigned a Protected Identification Key (PIK), which allows for linkage to other data.
- Goal #2 : raise serious money (\$100 million?) to digitize the entire 1990 Decennial and then work backwards in time to 1960, adding links to other datasets, once we have shown it can work .

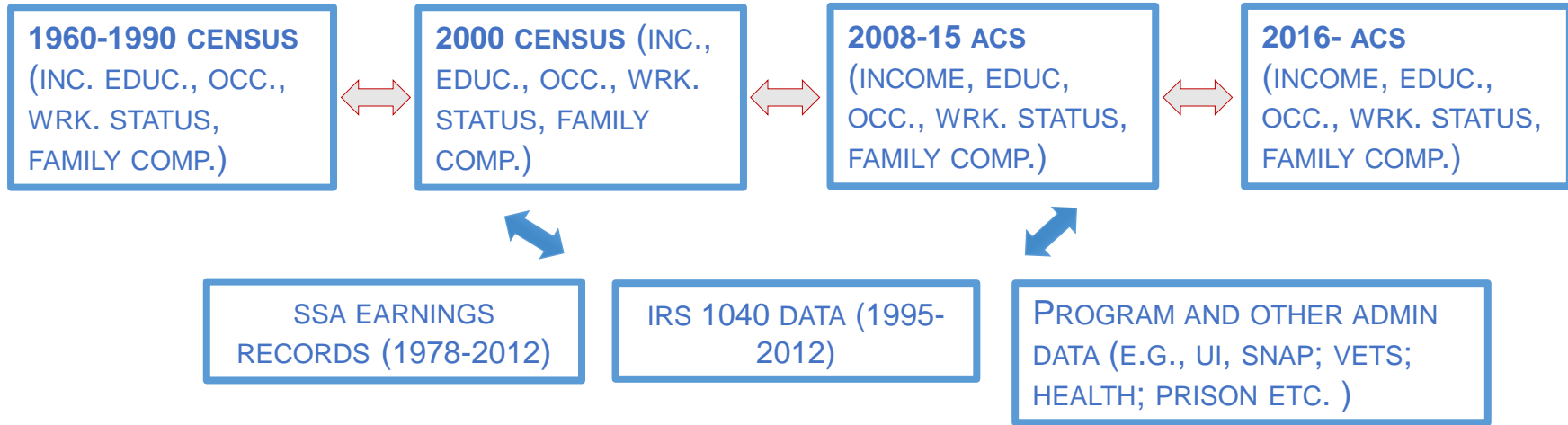
STEP #1: LINKING RECORDS FROM ACS AND CENSUS ACROSS MANY YEARS (SHORT AND LONG FORMS !)



STEP #2: ADDING IN LINKS TO ADMINISTRATIVE DATA



STEP #3: LINKING CHILDREN WITH PARENTS (FOR AOS MAINLY)

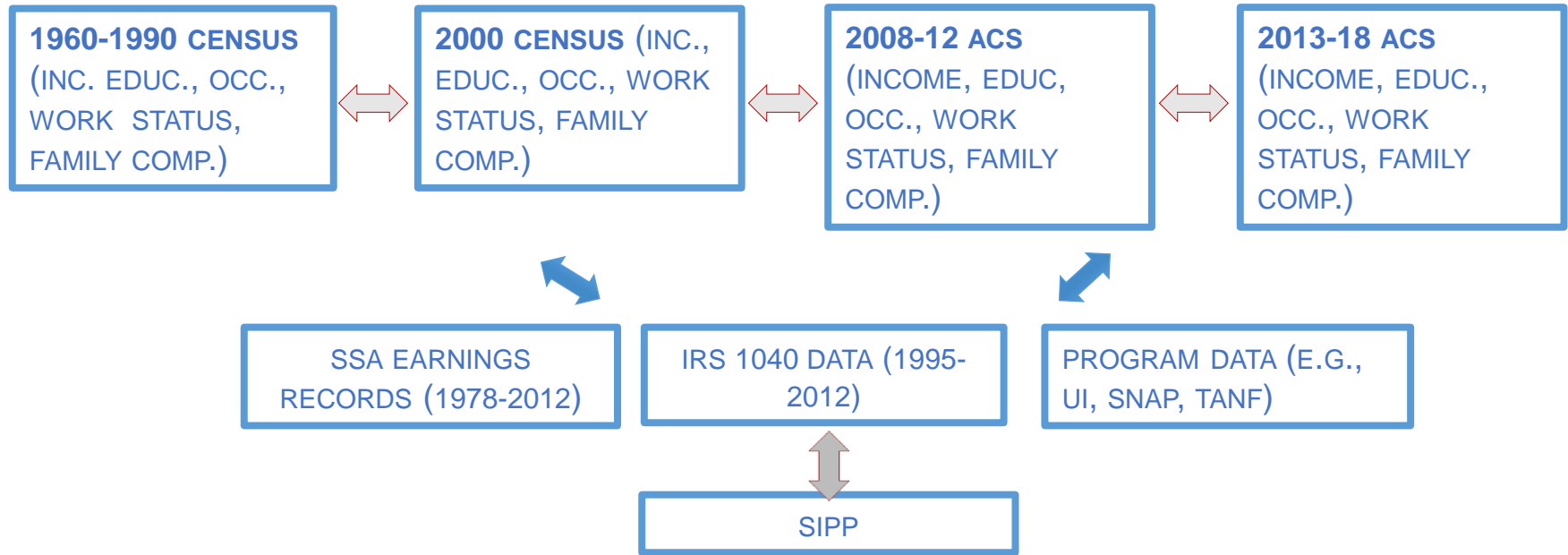


KIDLINK FILES (E.G., FORM SS-5*)

GET CO-RESIDENCY IN ACS, CENSUS LONG/SHORT FORM

***PARENTAL REPORTS OF CHILDREN'S SSN TO IRS SINCE MID 1980's**

STEP #4: SLIPPING IN THE SURVEY (–OR OTHER STUDY)



SURVEYS WITH IDENTIFIERS CAN BE “SLIPPED IN” (E.G., SIPP, OR PSID, NLS, AAdHEALTH, ETC.)

THE SURVEY NOW BECOMES A “LEAN AND MEAN VALUE-ADDED INSTRUMENT” AND WE CAN ENVISION OTHER USES—WITH EDUCATION, CHILD CARE AND OTHER EVALUATION DATA—AND--

And then-- lightbulb #2 went on

- **Wait a minute, cant this structure be used for lots of other types of evidence based policy research—beyond mobility narrowly defined ?**
- **Demand and use of public administrative data are being rapidly expanded, but in a one off way**
- **Can't AOS expand in concert with CARRA to help systematically and democratically allow access to such a scaffolded dataset as we envision, to answer specific questions for specific populations ?**
- **Can't we fill in the evidence deficit on long run effects of policy on a broader range of human outcomes using this scaffolding ?**
- **Result: our JPAM paper on the broader topics as introduction, soon adding the outcomes of todays discussions to help build support for AOS**

Filling the evidence deficit in policy and program evaluation

- **Consider the policy evaluation function: the US cannot adequately evaluate the long-term effects of key social programs without use of administrative data**
- **The key problem is that most of our evaluation efforts require evidence on long-run effects to determine their worth:**

Is there short term wash-out or longer term positive effects (e.g., MTO and increasingly, place based housing strategies) ?

Do returns over the long haul repay the initial investment in training, education ,environmental improvements, access to health care, etc.?

Original examples of possible workshop papers – which were boiled down to today's key examples

- Using AOS in *topical investigation/disciplinary areas* (economics, sociology, demography, policy analysis; program management; immigration; population health; evaluation studies)
- Using AOS for *life 'event history' studies or 'treatments'* (births and subsequent life course stages; schooling; prison; military service; CTE and training ; housing mobility; NITs ; health issues)
- Using AOS for *'methodological' research* : evaluation research; geocoded linkages (e.g. community health issues) ; survey enhancement and the study of survey attrition (NLS, AAdHealth; HRS, PSID, NHANES, Fragile Families)
- Using AOS with *state/local administrative data* (child support, multiple program participation, education experiments, neighborhood observatories)

All leading to today's workshop to build the user community, “Proof of Use/Demand”

Basic Q: What would AOS enable you to do (in 4 parts)?

- **What are the research questions you study? What data, including administrative data, do you now use in that research? What are the limitations of this data?**
- **How would access to an intergenerational AOS panel improve the quality of research in your area? Linkage to which administrative data would be most important for your research?**
- **How would this intergenerational panel, with linked administrative data, improve the evidence base in assessing longer-term impacts of policy on key outcomes in your research area?**
- **What access/barriers to use do you foresee?**

Organization of the day : A sampler of what would this resource enable you to do ?

- **In the Study of Social and Economic Mobility**
- **In the Study of Health, Education and the Life Course**
- **In Program Evaluation and Life Experiences**
- **Used Cooperatively with Other Sources of Data and Information**
- **Then: update on the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016 (viewed as a complement to AOS by the standing committee)**
- **Finally, summary and wrap up – What did we hear? What are the big questions? What else do we need to know before we can move forward ?**

Existing similar efforts are now underway at CARRA, as Amy will describe next

North American Population Project

- Links publicly available decennial censuses
 - 1850-1930 with 1940 on the way

Census Longitudinal Infrastructure Project (CLIP)

- Allows linkage of 1940, 2000, and 2010 Decennials, along with survey data such as ACS, CPS-ASEC, and SIPP
- Can also bring in administrative data

More longitudinal infrastructure project proposals in the offing for NIH and other funders

Our ex-ante vision at completion

- **Much policy relies on assessing longitudinal processes and long-run effects of programs, treatments and life experiences**
- **We need to move beyond the one-off studies to systematically allow limited, orderly, safe, secure access to data which we already have !**
- **We need to build a new infrastructure and evidence base that makes accurate assessments possible, comprehensive, and cost effective**

We hope you agree with us that AOS will vastly improve science and the evidence base for policy, but in any case we want to hear what you have to say --

--And we are happy to answer any upfront clarifying questions that you might have – after we hear from Amy