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It is obvious from these papers that the two longitudinal studies will provide a great deal of new information on peoples' decisions to enter into, participate regularly, or retire from the labor force. The fact that the samples are relatively large (roughly 13,000 for the retirement study, and 20,000, four groups of 5,000 each, for the labor study) and well designed are encouraging from the standpoint of statistical inference. A great deal of planning and thought have already been invested in the design of the sample. The survey data should be very reliable and allow for powerful statistical tests of competing hypotheses.

The papers, however, have given us little insight on any specific hypotheses to be tested, or generally how the data are to be analyzed. Both longitudinal studies appear to be for the stated purposes of the evaluation of existing policies and the proposal of new policies, but before data can become useful for answering policy questions a thorough analysis must be performed. These papers provide little information regarding the economic or sociological model underlying labor force or retirement behavior. Much theoretical and empirical work has been done on labor force participation, and retirement decisions have been receiving increasing study recently. There are many hypotheses with policy implications that urgently require statistical testing. However, the ability to test many of these hypotheses will be determined partially by the type of data available. It

appears that more resources have been applied to the design of the sample than to how the data are to be analyzed. These papers have provided only vague information on the type of data forthcoming, the variables measured, and the relevance of the data to policy questions.

The analysis of such a vast amount of intertemporal data raises some crucial questions. Economists and statisticians have had a great deal of experience in using standard techniques for assisting in the analysis of cross-sectional data and for the analysis of time series data. But, will the standard tools be sufficient to efficiently analyze the longitudinal data with the repeated observations on the same sample group through time? Many hypotheses may be tested with any one of the yearly samples with standard tools, but in order to use the longitudinal data efficiently, it would seem necessary to analyze the intertemporal and cross-sectional data simultaneously. Techniques such as regression methods combining time series and cross-sectional data, and matrix models of interregional mobility will be required for the simultaneous analysis, and, no doubt, new techniques will have to be developed.

Finally, I would urge the Social Security Administration to make these data widely available to Business and University researchers. Many different approaches will be required to thoroughly analyze the data from these important samples.

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## METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF EVALUATION RESEARCH

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