The lecture will discuss the state of survey research in the 21st century. Following its introduction in the late 19th century, the social survey had reached a relatively stable state by the middle of the 20th century. By the beginning of the 21st century, however, the survey had encountered serious challenges to its claims as the pre-eminent source of scientific data about society. The current challenges of sample design, coverage, and nonresponse have their roots in the development of the survey enterprise. The talk will present an interpretation of the history and some suggestions for the future.

Colm A. O'Muircheartaigh is a professor in the Harris School and senior fellow in the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). O'Muircheartaigh's research encompasses survey sample design, measurement errors in surveys, cognitive aspects of question wording, and latent variable models for nonresponse. He is principal investigator on the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Internet Panel Recruitment Survey, and co-principal investigator on NSF's Data Research and Development Center and the National Institute on Aging's National Social Life Health and Aging Project (NSHAP). He is also responsible for the development of methodological innovations in sample design for NORC's face-to-face surveys in the U.S.

He joined the Harris School from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), where he was the first director of the Methodology Institute, the center for research and training in social science methodology, and a faculty member of the Department of Statistics since 1971. He has also taught at a number of other institutions, having served as a visiting professor at the Universities of Padova, Perugia, Firenze, and Bologna, and, since 1975, has taught at the Summer Institute of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research.

There will be two discussants—Bob Groves from the University of Michigan and JPSM and Deborah Griffin from the Bureau of the Census. Please join us on the 11th.

The talk is open to the public, but please let us know you are coming by sending a note to Rupa Jethwa Eapen at RJEapen@survey.umd.edu.