SC101 Researching Social Life I Week 8: Data Collection II, Quantitative Data
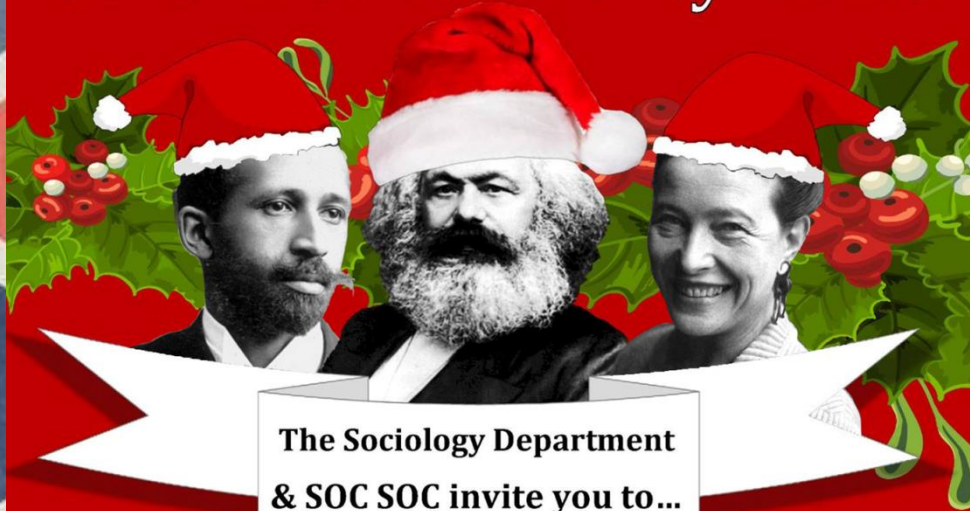
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It's Christmas Party Time!

The Sociology Department & SOC SOC invite you to...

Frangos

Thursday 8th December, 8pm-1am

Food, DJ and FREE BAR (until funds run out)

All welcome (UG/PG students & staff)

Dress to impress Christmas Style!

TICKETS Students £5 Staff £10 available online from

http://tinyurl.com/jc24n9m

Assignment 1: **25% week 10**

- Building your research project: Combine research area + relevant method (2000 words)

So far, we have looked at examples of other people's research and have discussed how researchers use particular methods, what design they have chosen and why.

For this assignment, you need to see yourself as a researcher, choose a topic and a relevant method.

- ***Structure of the report***
1. Introduction: Describe your research question and why it is of sociological interest.
2. Literature review – what have other researchers done
3. Discussion of the Research Design you have chosen. Why this design?
4. Which method would you choose to implement this design? What sampling technique would you use?
5. Discussion of possible shortcomings of this study (how would it relate to previous research, what are the weaknesses)
6. Conclusion: what the potential impact of this research will be.

Reference List: 10 to 15 references

Examples of Previous work:

- Student Resource Centre (5A.307)
- Our Undergraduate Journal: https://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/ug/ideate.aspx

What is Secondary Analysis?

Primary data is data we collect ourselves and *Secondary* data is that collected by others.

Secondary analysis is done on secondary data.

In other words, <u>someone else gathered the data</u> – for their own purposes – and then <u>we analyse it</u> for our own purposes.

Advantages of Secondary Analysis

1. Saves money and time
2. Offers high quality data *(many 3rd year projects fail because of inadequately gathered data)!*
3. **Enhance your analytical and**
4. **research skills using secondary data analysis (employability)**
5. Gives an opportunity for longitudinal analysis
6. Allows subgroup or subset analysis
7. Gives an opportunity for cross-cultural studies
8. Allows more time for data analysis
9. Enables the application of recent theory to old data
10. Gets more value from the original data

...but there is a down-side...

1. You need to become familiar with how the data was collected, coded and managed
2. The data can be very large and complex
3. The quality of the data should never be taken for granted
4. Variables important to your analysis might be missing

Bryman (2012): 315-316

UK Data Service

- What is the UK Data Service?
- a comprehensive resource funded by the ESRC
- a single point of access to a wide range of secondary social science data
- support, training and guidance
- listen to the recorded webinars at ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-andevents/webinars.aspx

Official Statistics

- Collected by agencies of the state, in the course of their business
    - e.g. the Employment Service compiles data for the level of unemployment
- Advantages over quantitative data from surveys
    - reduced time and cost
    - no problem of reactivity
    - cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis
    - cross-cultural analysis

Problems with the *Reliability* and *Validity* of Official Statistics

- **Reliability**
  - definitions, categories and allocated resources change over time
  - reflects priorities of agencies/organizations
  - e.g. changing definitions of crime
- **Validity**
  - variation may be caused by factors not studied by official reports
  - the ecological fallacy

What is Ecological Fallacy?

- **Definition:** It is the error of assuming that inferences about individuals can be made from findings relating to aggregate data.

- For example, official statistics might demonstrate a higher incidence of crime in regions with high concentrations of ethnic minorities but the members of the minority groups might not be responsible for the high level of crime.

Research in Focus: Wilkinson and Pickett (2009)

Research Observation: Societies with lower income inequality have better health.

- **First Step**: Establish if this pattern is really true.

- **Second Step**: What factors can explain this relationship (with grave policy implications)?

Inequality and Health: The Evidence
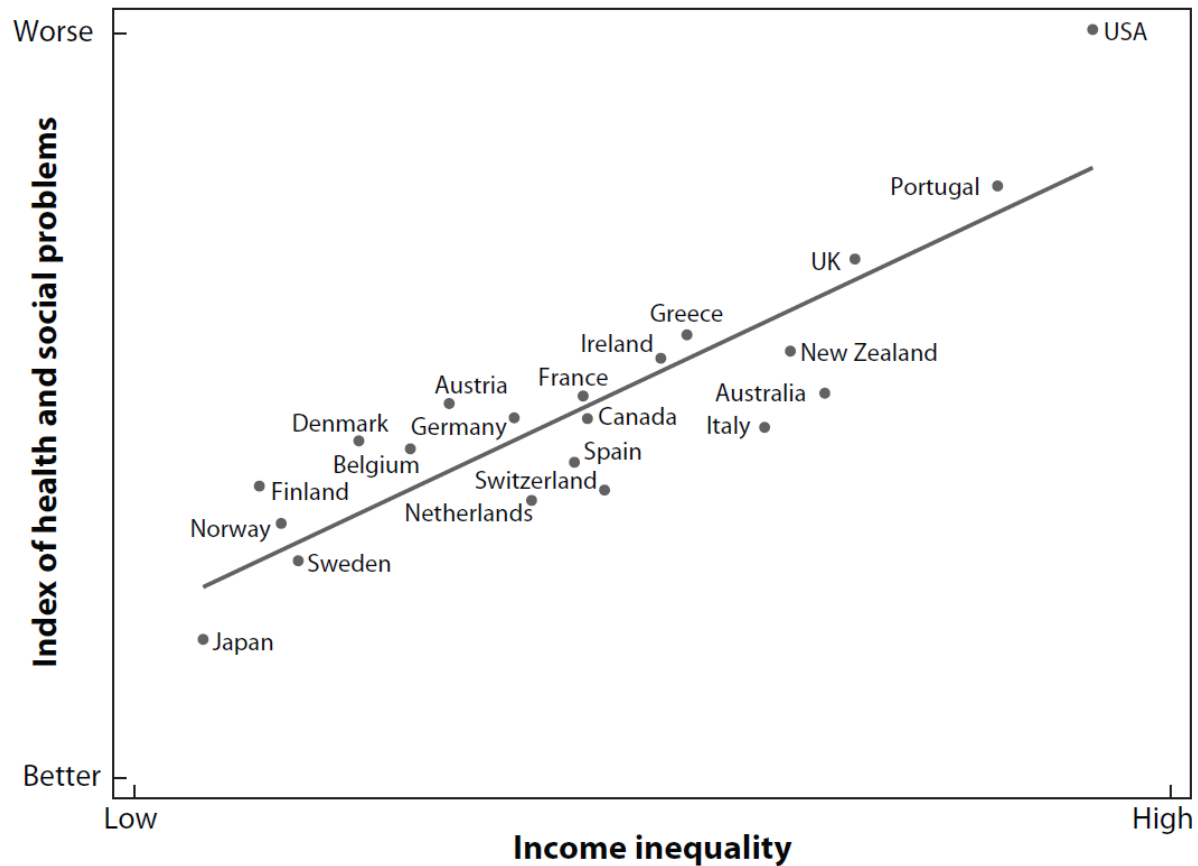
Inequality and Social Problems: The Evidence

Table 1 Associations of social problems with income inequality[a]

Outcome	International comparison	U.S. state comparison	Key sources
Homicide—adults	+	+	Hsieh & Pugh 1993, Kaplan et al. 1996, Kennedy et al. 1996
Homicide—juvenile	n.a.	+	Pickett et al. 2005b
Violent crime	+	+	Hsieh & Pugh 1993, Kaplan et al. 1996, Krohn 1976
Property crime	~	~	Krohn 1976, Kelly 2000
Conflict—children	+	n.a.	Pickett et al. 2005b
Obesity—adults	+	+	Pickett et al. 2005a, Wilkinson & Pickett 2009
Overweight—children	+	+	Pickett & Wilkinson 2007
Math and reading scores	+	+	Kaplan et al. 1996, Pickett & Wilkinson 2007
School drop-out rate	n.a.	+	Kaplan et al. 1996, Pickett & Wilkinson 2007
Racism	n.a.	+	Kennedy et al. 1997
Smoking	~	~	Diez-Roux et al. 2000, Pampel 2002
Suicide	~	~	Lester 1987, Andres 2005, Kowalski et al. 1987
Teenage births	+	+	Gold et al. 2001, Pickett et al. 2005b
Child well-being	+	n.a.	Pickett & Wilkinson 2007

Average Income per Person **Does Not** Explain this Association (1)

Figure 3

Average Income per Person **Does Not** Explain this Association (2)

UK Data Service

ukdataservice.ac.uk

Data Sources

Overview service

Kinds of data:

UK Surveys	Longitudinal	International
large-scale government funded surveys	major UK surveys following individuals over time	multi-nation aggregate databanks and survey data

Census	Business	Qualitative
Census data 1971 – 2011	microdata	range of multimedia qualitative data sources

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Examples (1)

UK surveys - examples

- Labour Force Survey, 1973-

- Skills and Employment Surveys Series Dataset, 1986, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2012

- British Social Attitudes Survey, 1983-

- General Lifestyle Survey (previously known as General Household Survey), 1971-2012

- Integrated Household Survey, 2009-

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Examples (2)

International data - examples

- Africa Development Indicators

- World Bank
  World Development Indicators

- OECD
  Education Statistics

"The primary school completion rate for eight Sub-Saharan countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Niger) more than doubled between 1990 and 2009."

Examples (3)

Longitudinal data – some examples

- National Child Development Study (NCDS)
- 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)
- Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)
- British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)
- Understanding Society/
  UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS)
- Families and Children Study (FACS)
- English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)
- Next Steps (Longitudinal Study of Young people in England - LSYPE)
- Growing Up in Scotland (GUS)

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Examples (4)

Qualitative/mixed methods data - examples

- International Students' Intercultural Experiences: a Comparative Study, 2006-2008

- Discourse of the School Dinners Debate, 2004-2008

- School Leavers Study, 1978

  Ray Pahl, SN 4867

  Teachers at a comprehensive school on the Isle of Sheppey were asked to set a particular essay to those pupils who were students in English lessons about ten days before they were due to leave school. The students were asked to imagine that they were nearing the end of their life, and that something had made them think back to the time when they left school. They were then asked to write an imaginary account of their life over the next 30 or 40 years.

  The resulting data: 142 handwritten essays in 1978 by school leavers aged 15 and 16 years old.

  UK Data Service

Get Data (1)

Get Data (2)

http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/

Get Data (3): [Search](#)

Summary: Keywords

primary, secondary data analysis, UK Data Service, variable/concept search, official statistics, ecological fallacy, variables, statistical relationships

SC111

- Linsey McGoey   Lectures 7 & 8. Race and Racism