

FAMILIES IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

MARRIAGE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Skill

- Using software to access and analyze census data
- Identifying independent and dependent variables
- Forming testable hypotheses using quantitative data
- Quantitative writing
- Learning how to construct, read, and interpret bivariate tables displaying frequencies and percentages

Substance

- To discuss the topic of division of labor within the households

In this section of the course, we will examine the relationship between men and women in the context of marriage. Primarily, we will be concerned with the division of labor in the household--a topic that has received much attention from sociologists as women have increased their commitments to the paid labor force and a topic that is of everyday concern to millions of men and women (take my word for it). We will consider the complex negotiations that occur between men and women and the historical context in which these negotiations take place.¹

As we consider this topic, we need to explore some facts about contemporary marriage, again with the help of WebCHIP and census data. This time we will do our work in groups and report the results of our data analysis to the class. Each group will answer specific questions using designated data files. Each group will be composed of two people and there will be six sets of questions. Therefore, some groups will be working on the same set of questions independently.

Each group is responsible for answering the questions listed for their topic and for preparing materials to show the results of their analyses for class presentation.

I. COHABITATION

More and more men and women are choosing to live together without being legally married. Although the interpersonal dynamics of cohabitating and married couples differ, these couples face many of the same issues in their relationships.

Get the Data:

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the "Data" in the menu bar
3. From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "census2000" in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find "cohab2k-m.dat" and "cohab2k-w.dat". Highlight and click "submit."

¹ Hochschild's Arlie. The Second Shift. New York: Penguin, 2003.

5. You can also click the link to open "[cohab2k-m.dat](#)" and to open "[cohab2k-w.dat](#)" in WebCHIP.

GROUP 1

1. Are there differences in the characteristics of men and women who cohabit? (Hint: construct crosstabulations from the marginal distributions from both files.)
2. Are there differences between racial and ethnic groups in the characteristics of cohabitators? Are the differences the same for men and women?
3. What hypotheses do you have about the reasons for any differences that you have discovered?

II. MARITAL STATUS AMONG ASIANS AND LATINOS

In the first data analysis exercise, you discovered differences between ethnic groups in marital status. However, we grouped together all Asians and all Latinos--groups that contain subgroups with very different histories and cultures.

Get the Data:

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the "Data" in the menu bar
3. From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "**census2000**" in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find "**marasn2k.dat**" and "**marlat2k.dat**" Highlight and click "submit."
5. You can also click the link to open "[marasn2k.dat](#)" and "[marlat2k.dat](#)" in WebCHIP.

GROUP 2

1. Are there differences in the patterns of marital status between Asian groups.
2. Are the patterns the same for men and for women?
3. Which subgroups most closely approximate the patterns for Non-Latin Whites and African Americans?
4. What hypotheses do you have about the reasons for any differences that you have discovered?

GROUP 3

1. Are there differences in the patterns of marital status between Latino groups?
2. Are the patterns the same for men and for women?
3. Which subgroups most closely approximate the patterns for Non-Latin Whites and African Americans?
4. What hypotheses do you have about the reasons for any differences that you have discovered?

III. AGE AND EDUCATION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Generally, we think people choose to marry people with whom they have fallen in love. But are there patterns in these choices. Specially, do age and education influence marital choices?

Get the Data:

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the "Data" in the menu bar
3. From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "**census2000**" in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find "**spage2kym.dat**", "**spage2kyw.dat**", and "**sped2k-m.dat**". Highlight and click "submit."
5. You can also click the link to open "[spage2kym.dat](#)", "[spage2kyw.dat](#)", and "[sped2k-m.dat](#)" in WebCHIP.

GROUP 4

1. How do 25-year-old men and women differ in the ages of their spouses? (Hint: construct a crosstabulation using the marginal distribution for 25-year-old men and women.)
2. Do men tend to marry women with less, more, or about the same education as they have?
3. Are the patterns you discovered in #2 the same for men aged 25-34 as the patterns for men aged 45-54?
4. What hypotheses do you have about the reasons for any patterns that you have discovered?

IV. INTERMARRIAGE

Another factor influence marriage choices is race/ethnicity. How common are marriages between people of different races and what patterns exist in intermarriages in the United States?

Get the Data:

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the "Data" in the menu bar
3. From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "**census2000**" in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find "**sprac2k-m.dat**" and "**sprac2k-w.dat**". Highlight and click "submit."
5. You can also click the link to open "[sprac2k-m.dat](#)" and "[sprac2k-w.dat](#)" in WebCHIP.

GROUP 5

1. Among what race/ethnic groups are the proportions of men and women choosing to marry outside the group the highest? The lowest?
2. Are the patterns you discovered in #1 the same for women aged 25-34 as the patterns for women aged 45-54? How men of the same age groups?
3. What hypotheses do you have about the reasons for any patterns that you have discovered?

GROUP 6

1. Among what race/ethnic groups are the proportions of men and women choosing to marry outside the group the highest? The lowest?
2. Are the patterns you discovered in #1 the same for men with differing levels of education? How about women of differing levels of education?
3. What hypotheses do you have about the reasons for any patterns that you have discovered?

FAMILIES IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

DIVORCE

In your data analysis paper, you examined changes in marital status over time and differences in marital status by income and race. In this exercise you will discover more about divorce in the United States

Part A

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the “Data” in the menu bar
3. From there, click “Browse” on the left sidebar. Find “**centrend**” in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find “**marr502k.dat**” Highlight and click “submit.”
5. You can also click [here](#) to open the dataset in WebCHIP.
6. Follow three age cohorts (a cohort is a group of individuals born in the same decade) over time to trace the percent that are divorced or separated at different points in their lives.
6. First, look at the percent of 15-24 year olds (the first cohort) who are divorced or separated in 1950, then look at the percent of 25-34 year olds (the same cohort ten years later) who are divorced in 1960, 34-44 year olds in 1970, 45-54 year olds in 1980, 55-64 year olds in 1990 and 65+ in 2000.
7. Create a Percent Down table with “Age” as the row variable, “Marital” as the column variable and “Year” as the control variable. Follow the 15-24 year-old group from 1950 to 1960, when they are 25-34, and so on.
8. Next look at the percent of 15-24 year olds who were divorced or separated in 1960, the percent of 25-34 divorced or separated in 1970, etc. Finally, look at the percent of 15-24 year olds who were divorced or separated in 1970, the percent of 25-34 year olds who were divorced or separated in 1980, etc. Construct a graph or graphs to show your findings.

QUESTION:

- How do the life-time experiences of these three cohorts compare?

Part B

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the “Data” in the menu bar
3. From there, click “Browse” on the left sidebar. Find “**census2000**” in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find “**mrr2k-ym.dat**” and “**mrr2k-yw.dat**” Highlight and click “submit.”
5. You can also click the link to open “[mrr2k-ym.dat](#)” and “[mrr2k-yw.dat](#)” in WebCHIP.
6. In each dataset, look at the percent of young men and young women who are currently divorced in 2000 within different categories of education.
 - i. Create a Percent Down table with “Education” as the row variable, and “Marital” as the column variable.
 - ii. Construct a graph or graphs to show your findings.

QUESTIONS:

- Are the patterns for men and women the same? Which group is protected most from divorce by education?

Part C

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
 2. Click on the “Data” in the menu bar
 3. From there, click “Browse” on the left sidebar. Find “**custom**” in the drop-down box and select it.
 4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find “**marrpov9.dat**” Highlight and click “submit.”
 5. You can also click [here](#) to open the dataset in WebCHIP.
-
1. Look at the income levels of household heads who are divorced or separated among men and women.
 - a. First, combine the following categories from the “Marital” variable: divorced and separated.
 - b. Create a Percent Down table with “Marital” as the row variable, “Income” as the column variable and “Gender” as the control variable.
 - c. Construct a graph or graphs to show your findings.

QUESTION:

- Do men and women who are divorced and who are household heads have similar incomes?
- If there are differences, how large are they?

Write a brief summary of your results (1 - 1 ½ typed pages).