

Analysis Assignment

Race, Inequality and Community Contexts

Introduction-

In this exercise you will examine social inequality at the community level, looking at income distributions in the U.S. and in different places within the U.S., as well as the ways in which ethnic groups are segregated by geographic area. You will use actual data drawn from the 2000 Census of the United States to compare the place where you currently live, and places where you have lived, with the national distribution. You will also examine some other places in Mississippi and South Dakota. Why these places? Explore and you will see. Crunch the numbers, reflect on them, and answer the questions that follow.

Learning Objectives-

Skill

After using this module, students will gain skills in:

- Quantitative writing
- Learning how to read, and interpret tables displaying frequencies and percentages
- Using real world data to enhance and support key course concepts

Substance

- To understand the income distribution in the United States in 2000
- To understand the representation of racial minorities in the United States in 2000
- Recognize the degree of geographic variation in income and ethnic composition
- Consider how life chances are associated with the social contexts of place

Instructions-

You will create two tables, one representing distributions of incomes and another representing distributions of racial/ethnic groups.

Table 1 instructions

Step 1. Go to CensusScope at <http://www.censusscope.org/>

Step 2. On Census Trend Charts click "INCOME". This will offer data on the household income in the United States in 2000. Household income reflects the combined income of all members of the family. Fill in the data for USA in Table 1 (below). I suggest rounding decimals, such that 9.54% is rounded to 10%. Fill in column on the table below under USA. At the bottom of the table, sum the initial three rows of percentages to determine the percent of households earning \$25,000/year or less.

Step 3. Examine the degree to which Tompkins County NY (which encompasses Ithaca NY), compares with the national income distribution. To do this, go to CHANGE LOCATION. Click the radio button for CHOOSE STATE. Select New York on the drop down menu and click VIEW CHART. This gives you the income distribution for New York State. We want to look at a more restricted geographic area, so go again to the CHANGE LOCATION menu, click the radio button for CHOOSE COUNTY, and select Tompkins county. How do these numbers compare with the national distributions? Fill in the chart. When done ZOOM OUT twice so that you can return to select a new state.

Step 4. Replicate the previous sequences to find the income distribution for the county of your hometown and fill in those numbers. Now step back. How does your home county compare to Tompkins County and the U.S.? Note, if you grew up in Tompkins county, select another county, perhaps a vacation spot, someplace where you might want to live, the home county of the president, its your call.

Step 5. Now look at Tunica County Mississippi, fill in the statistics and reflect on differences between that area and your home county.

Step 6. Now look at Bennett County South Dakota, fill in the statistics and reflect on differences observed.

Table 2 Instructions:

Step 1. Step 1. Go to CensusScope at <http://www.censusscope.org/>

Step 2. On Census Trend Charts click "POPULATION BY RACE". This will offer data on racial composition of the 2000, as well as other years. Looking at trends is interesting, and take some time to do so, but in the table below fill in the data for the 2000 Census using percentage representations. Fill in column on the Table 2 below under USA.

Step 3. Now examine the degree to which Tompkins County NY (which encompasses Ithaca NY), compares with the national racial distributions. To do this, go to CHANGE LOCATION. Click the radio button for CHOOSE STATE. Select New York on the drop down menu and click VIEW CHART. This gives you the racial distribution for New York State. We want to look at a more restricted geographic area, so go again to the CHANGE LOCATION menu, click the radio button for CHOOSE COUNTY, and select Tompkins county. How do these numbers compare with the national distributions? Fill in the chart. When done ZOOM OUT twice so that you can return to select a new state.

Step 4. Replicate the previous sequences to find the racial distribution for the county of your home town and fill in those numbers. Now step back. How does your home county compare to Tompkins County and the U.S.? Note, if you grew up in Tompkins county, select another county, perhaps a vacation spot, someplace where you might want to live, the home town of the president, it's your call.

Step 5. Now look at Tunica County Mississippi. Reflect on how those statistics compare to the places you have already examined.

Step 6. Now look at Bennett County South Dakota, fill in the statistics, and reflect on the findings.

TABLE 1. The Distribution of Household Incomes in the United States 2000.

Income	USA	Tompkins County NY (Ithaca)	Your Home Town's County Name	Tunica County Mississippi	Bennett County South Dakota
<\$9999					
\$10K-\$14999					
\$15K-\$24999					
\$25K-\$34999					
\$35K-\$49999					
\$50K-\$74999					
\$75K-\$99999					
\$100K-\$149999					
\$150K-\$199999					
\$200,000+					
Calculate the percent of households with incomes below \$25,000.					

TABLE 2. The Distribution of Races in the United States 2000.

Income	USA	Tompkins County NY (Ithaca)	Your Home Town's County Name	Tunica County Mississippi	Bennett County South Dakota
Hispanics					
White					
Black					
American Indian and Eskimo					
Asian					
Hawaiian and Pacific Islander					
Other					
Two or More Races					

Analysis Questions

1. Compare the incomes received in these different places in our nation to the income distribution in the United States. Why do you think these differences exist?
2. Compare the racial/ethnic composition of these different places to the distribution in the United States. Why do you think these differences exist?

Reflection Questions

1. Consider lives lived in different social contexts and reflect on the life chances of four poor children, one from Tunica County, one from Bennett County, one from Tompkins County, and one from your hometown. Would these different social contexts have an impact on their lives? How?
2. Are there any types of social programs that would help alleviate the problems you identify?