

Sociology 350
Lab Challenge #7
Subject: Secondary Research-
National Social Surveys

Research Team
Names: _____

The general purpose of this lab is to help you start to launch your individual term research projects as described in the course syllabus and as reproduced, for your convenience, on the back pages of this assignment. Remember that these research projects are restricted to **two** person teams. You will be given the opportunity to pair off voluntarily, but if it becomes necessary, I will help the remaining solitary persons to pair off. There are unique problems that result from doing this project as a solitary researcher and there are different problems that result from groups larger than two.

Today you are asked to acquaint yourselves with the GSS data files. You are asked to begin to think about selecting a dependent variable and some independent variables that you wish to analyze as being somehow causally interconnected. This is an exercise that runs parallel to the *Practice Paradigms* that we did in class. To facilitate this process, *Lab 7* is structured so as to introduce you to the basics of data analysis as it relates to the GSS94, GSS2000 and GSS2004 data files. However, you are asked to download GSS94 for the purpose of this particular lab. Keep in mind that all of the GSS data files overlap and many of the variable names are included in each of the data sets with identical variable names. Codebooks are available to you for the GSS2000 and GSS2004 data sets on-line on my D2L for this course which you reviewed during the first lab session of this semester. I will provide you with paper copies of the GSS2000 codebook in an upcoming lab. I also have one paper book copy of the GSS1994 and GSS2000 codebook that is complete and that you may examine during lab sessions or during my office hours.

Once you have mastered the steps contained within *this Lab*, you should have little problem branching off and conducting your own independent research project. In several weeks I will pass out your last short paper assignment (#4) and this paper will ask you to commit to a particular dependent variable to study as well as ask you to provide a provisional listing of independent variables along with your rationale for selecting each one of them. So begin planning ahead for your term projects and thinking of dependent variables from those available to you in either the *GSS2000 or GSS2004 data* sets. Keep in mind that these particular data sets are of the very best quality that money can buy and are the type of data from which professional social scientists conduct and publish their research. All the GSS data files are national probability samples of the adult American population. And realize that you are free to submit your findings to any professional journal of your choosing or to submit your work to virtually *any* student research grant competition.

1. To begin today suppose that your research interest involves explaining *why* some people are *less inclined* to endorse egalitarian sex role attitudes and *more inclined* to endorse traditional sex role attitudes. [Traditional sex role orientations are basically that the woman's place is in the home ... barefoot and pregnant and the like ... whereas the man's place is out of the house working for a living ... and basically ruling society politically if not domestically.]

For **each** of the variable items listed below (taken from the GSS94 data files), write a perfectly clear statement as to how you would *recode* the data in such a way as to make it possible to add all the scores from these five items together into a meaningful multiple-item indicator that would measure what you want it to measure. In this case you want to measure the extent to which a person holds a traditional (versus egalitarian) sex-role attitude. To do this, you will need to refer to **the class handout** provided to you.

Make all the highest scores equate with traditional sex-role orientations and all the low scores equate with egalitarian sex-role orientations and make all irrelevant codes equal to System-Missing. Handwrite the recode statement for each of the six items in the space provided below.

A) Variable name = **fehome** [see page 200 of the codebook in the class handout]
Question 199. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
“**Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men.**”

fehome =

B) Variable name = **fechld** [see page 229 of the codebook in the class handout]
Question 252A. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with:
“**A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.**”

fechld =

- C) Variable name = **fehhelp** [see page 229 of the codebook in the class handout]
Question 252B. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with:
“**It is more important for a wife to help her husband’s career than to have one herself.**”

fehhelp =

- D) Variable name = **fepresch** [see page 229 of the codebook in the class handout]
Question 252C. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with:
“**A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.**”

fepresch =

- E) Variable name = **fefam** [see page 230 of the codebook in the class handout]
Question 252D: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with:
“**It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.**”

fefam =

2. What exactly would you have to do to create a meaningful multiple-item index measuring adherence to traditional sex roles **out of these five items**? More specifically, write the exact compute statement that would suffice to accomplish this in the space below. Next, add all your five recoded variables – namely, using your recoded variable names for **fehome**, **fechld**, **fehhelp**, **fepresch**, and **fefam**, write the **compute** function under the **Transform** icon off the *SPSS main menu* bar and name your newly created multiple item index “**sexistx**.” (Be sure to use your recoded variable names and **not** the original variable names listed above in doing this.)

Compute =

3. Now after loading the GSS94 data file off your CD Rom, actually make these same recodes that you previously hand wrote starting with the variable called "fehome". When you recode each of these five variables use the **"Into Different Variables"** option and change each of these variable names by dropping off the last letter and substituting the letter "x". So, "fehome" will then be recoded into "fehomx". And so on. **Note: You may write alternative recode names for these five variables, but the use of the "x" ending on the variable name is convenient and I do recommend it.**

4. Next, in order to determine whether or not you have done a good job constructing your multiple item indicator have the computer calculate the **bivariate correlation coefficient** for "**sexistx**" and each of the five items that you used to create this variable. Now inspect these correlations and determine if each item correlates with the "sexistx" index in a strongly positive way; in other words, are all the correlations above **+.60**? (If these correlations are all above **+.60**, then okay. If not, then that means that those items that do not correlate highly should be removed from the index before proceeding with your research. Because this weak correlation indicates that whatever this item does measure is not the same as what the other items in the index are measuring.)

Correlations with sexistx

Write the correlations you have for each of your

1)

2)

individual variables with the *sexistx* index here.

3)

4)

5)

5. Now, suppose that you want to test the following four hypotheses using the **GSS94** national probability sample and codebook:

A) **First hypothesis**---*The less intelligent a person is the more likely that he or she will endorse traditional sex roles as being more desirable than egalitarian sex roles.*

This is not a joke. Think carefully about which independent variable or combination of variables you might want to use to test this hypothesis (you will need to read down the GSS94 Subject Index provided to you). Once you have selected the *variable names* you want, describe in the space below what you would have to do by way of *recoding* so as to be able to test *this particular hypothesis*.

[Hint: How intelligent a person is may be inferred from his or her level of formal education or it may be more directly measured through a “reasoning ability” or “vocabulary” test both of which may be found in GSS94]

Write your statistical finding below. What exactly is the correlation and statistical significance between your two variables?

And what is your “intelligence variable” name?

B) **Second hypothesis**---*The more religious a person is the more likely that he or she will endorse **traditional** sex roles as being more desirable than **egalitarian** sex roles.*

Which independent variable or combination of variables would you want to use to test this hypothesis (review the GSS94 Subject Index provided to you as well as the codebook as needed). Once you have selected the *variable name* or names that you want, describe in the space below exactly how you would go about recoding these variables so as to be able to test this hypothesis.

[Hint: There are various different ways that you might go about measuring how

religious a person is ...for example, church attendance, personal prayer, strength of belief in God, etc. may all be considered separately ... for example, see page 332 of the codebook to identify persons who profess to have “no doubts about God’s existence”]

What exactly did you discover? How is a particular type of a person’s religion related to his or her attitude about “traditional sex roles?”

What is the correlation coefficient that you have found here between traditional sex role attitudes and “**sexistx**?”

- C) **Third hypothesis**---*Males in contrast to females are more likely to accept traditional sex roles as being more desirable than egalitarian sex roles.*

Which independent variable would you want to use to test this hypothesis (review the GSS94 Subject Index provided to you as well as the codebook where it may be appropriate). What do you anticipate the result of this test would be?

Assuming that this independent variable turns out to be significantly correlated with the dependent variable, what do you predict the sign of this correlation to be: positive (+) or negative (-)? Now actually run the bivariate correlation for the variable “sex” and “sexistx”. Interpret your finding. Are you surprised?

What is the correlation coefficient that you have found here between “**sex**” and “**sexistx**?”

- D) **Fourth hypothesis**---*The less total family income a person has the more likely that he or she will endorse traditional sex role attitudes as opposed to egalitarian sex role attitudes.*

Which independent variable or combination of variables would you want to use to test this hypothesis (review the GSS94 Subject Index provided to you as well as the codebook where appropriate). Once you have selected the *variable name* or names that you want, describe in the space below exactly how you would go about recoding them so as to be able to test this hypothesis. What do you anticipate the result of this test would be?

What is the correlation coefficient that you have found here between “**family income**” and “**sexistx?**”

6. Lastly, you should begin thinking about possible topics around which to build your term paper report. The *GSS2000* and *GSS2004* data files give you a wide range of topic possibilities. For example, some of the many dependent variable options to be found in the *GSS94* data files are:
- a) personal racial prejudice (236; 145)
 - b) individual life satisfaction (161-162)
 - c) personal confidence in American institutions (162-165)
 - d) attitudes towards abortion rights (203-205)
 - e) birth control attitudes (209)
 - f) premarital sex attitudes (211)
 - g) extramarital sex attitude (212)
 - h) gay sex attitude (212)
 - i) pornography (213-214)
 - j) suicide (216-217)
 - k) right to die attitude (216)
 - l) extent of individual's religiosity (332; 636-637; 624-625)
 - m) attitude towards an English Only policy (480-481)
 - n) attitudes towards immigrants (482-484)
 - o) affirmative action attitudes (484-485)
 - p) reverse discrimination attitude (492)
 - q) person's faith in science (640-641)
 - r) respondent's verbal intelligence (732-734)
 - s) respondent's socioeconomic index (776)

These variables are also found in *GSS2000* and *GSS2004* along with many additional variables unique to those data sets.

Your assignment is to have selected two different **dependent variables** (one or both may be multiple-item indicators) as the possible focus of your upcoming term project. We will proceed from this point in the next lab. So, carefully review the Subject Index before then and be thinking about the topic area that you wish to target.

Think about what you want to do your research project on and keep this lab as a reference. We will review it in class. Don't panic ... Be happy.