lecture 6:

Part III: Methods
government/official statistics and surveys

Part III: how do we know the social facts?

- varieties:
  - government and official statistics
    - FBI's UCR, EEOC, Census...
  - surveys
    - GSS, MTF, NLSY
  - experiments
    - Supported Work, Audits, survey experiments
  - range of qualitative approaches
    - field research, intensive interviews, archival work...
- bias, validity and reliability

official statistics

- Adlers:
  - cheap/easy (?)
  - often include population/not sample
  - validity and systematic biases
  - “shallow and unreliable”
- Uggen:
  - extremely valuable (e.g., incarceration, turnout rates)
  - often very reliable
  - changes tell us a lot about deviance
examples

- EEOC – equal employment opportunity commission
  - discrimination as deviance
  - changes in who files and why
- UCR – uniform crime reports
- Imprisonment
- Suicide (NIMH)
- Priest sexual abuse (?)
- MN voting and recidivism records
World incarceration cartogram
(Shannon & Uggen, TSP)
http://thesocietypages.org/papers/visualizing-punishment/

Figure 5: Incarceration Rates Per 100,000 by Country, 2000

Chris Uggen – Sociology 4111

u.s. correctional pops

Chris Uggen – Sociology 4111
U.S. Suicide Rates by Age, Gender, and Racial Group

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, National Center for Vital Statistics

Deborah Carr and Julie Phillips 2013 (TSP)
http://thesocietypages.org/specials/social-fact-suicide/

Unemployment and Suicide in the U.S.

Regression

\[ y = 0.3362x + 9.533 \]

R² = 0.4336
child abuse reporting

Douglas Besharov and Lisa Laumann 1996
- "measurement artifact" in reporting trends
  - legal change: professionals (who?) must report physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, maltreatment
    - reported cases rose from 150,000 in 1960 to 3,000,000 in 1993
    - but deaths fell from 5,000 to 1,000 per year
- Underreporting (50%?) vs. rising number of unsubstantiated cases (65%)
- 25-50% of child abuse deaths were cases previously known to authorities

summary

- value of "official data"
  - a "baseline" that must be defended and addressed (e.g., threat to DOJ/BJS)
  - managing bias
    - magnitude and direction
  - need for social science data series
  - deviance and deviance statistics are both social constructions
  - weak or non-existent for some purposes
- supplementing with independent sources of data

II. surveys on deviance

- sampling
- response bias and internal validity
- "operationalization"
  - "drinks or dinner"
- Causality: Adler v. Uggen (p. 112)
  - Experiments best (JEHT stigma example)
- But longitudinal surveys can speak to causality (evidence drugs cause crime)
  - Matrix reloaded
(Ed.) Laumann's 1992 Sex Survey

- National Health and Social Life Survey
  - sampling: EPSEM
  - sample size (n) = 3,432
  - response rate: 80%
  - mode: face-to-face
  - cost: $450/interview; 220 interviewers
  - training: neutral
  - terminology: non-technical
  - confidentiality
- General public will talk about sex

Sexual norms in NHSLS (% agree)

1. Premarital sex is always wrong: 20%
2. Premarital sex among teenagers is always wrong: 61%
3. Extramarital sex is always wrong: 77%
4. Same-gender sex is always wrong: 65%
5. There should be laws against the sale of pornography to adults: 34%
6. I would not have sex with someone unless I was in love with them: 66%
7. A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if she was raped: 88%
8. A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if she wants for any reason: 52%

-source: Michael et al., 1994

substance use - Michigan's "Monitoring the Future" survey

- Sample: 50,000 students in 400 schools each year since 1975
- Data: use, availability, perceived dangerousness, and disapproval
- Trends: illicit use peaked around 1980, declined until 1992, rose to 1996, decline since
  - Lifetime meth use declining – from 8.2% in 1999 to 3% in 2008 (<1% in past 30 days)
lifetime use: 2012 12th graders

- Alcohol 69% (-1% since 2011)
- Cigarettes 40% (-1%)
- Any illicit drug 49% (-1%)
- Marijuana 45% (-.3%)
- Vicodin 8% (-.6%)
- Cocaine 5% (-.3%)
- MDMA (X) 7% (-1%)
- LSD 4% (-.2%)
- OxyContin 4% (-.6%)
- Methamphetamine 2% (-.4%)
- Steroids 2% (flat)

summary

- critique
  - Internal validity (sometimes external)
  - Reporting biases
- value
  - External validity/generalizability
  - Independent of social control
  - How else would we know?
lecture 6B:

participant observation, interviews, and other qualitative methods

qualitative methods

- Adlers:
  - Problems with surveys and official
  - Need “deeper” or “richer” data
- Field research – observe deviance in its natural setting
  - degrees of participation
    - Tearoom Trade and covert participation
  - degrees of subjectivity

varieties

- case studies (e.g., a life history)
- focus groups (e.g., community standards)
- passive observation
- intensive interviewing (e.g., harassers or harassed)
- qualitative historical and comparative work (but hist/comp can also be quantitative)
- many more...
**adler: dealers and smugglers**

- **Field research** - “only way to acquire accurate knowledge about deviant behavior” (?)
  - “difficult hours and dangerous situations”
  - participation and lawbreaking
  - safety and trust
  - 1 ton pot/week; 40 kilos of coke every few months
- taped life histories (10-30 hours; 6 yrs)
- sampling: snowball
- managing bias?

**jody miller – girls in gangs**

- **Multi-method:** survey and intensive interviews with 46 female gang members and non-members
  - Learning from interviews v. surveys
- **Violence:** protection and victimization
  - Status: violence and connections
  - Gender inequality and devaluation
  - Consequences of “sexed in” v. beat in;
  - violent gang rape – “could have just killed her”
  - Subcultural norms: “weak” v. “hard”

**methods summary**

- **Judge method and data**
  - relative to existing knowledge
  - likely magnitude and direction of bias
  - right tool for the job?
- **More multi-method work today**
  - **Sexual harassment:** survey (1000), plus interview with 33 based on responses
  - Voting:
    - official statistics on those affected
    - surveys to predict voting; attitudes; recidivism; public opinion
    - qualitative historical research to get laws, interviews with prisoners to get meaning
methods exercise

• Work together in groups of 3-5 to answer the questions
• The goal is to get you thinking concretely about how we learn the social facts in (your) specific area of deviance
• Turn in one sheet signed by all

next

• Midterm!
  – Catch up on any reading you missed
  – Study notes (preferably with others)
  – Prep questions on review guide