

Race and Changing Household Structure

Introduction:

The textbook for this course discusses cross-cultural variations in household structure, as well as changes across time in household structure in the United States. The purpose of this exercise is to examine variations in household structure in the United States according to race and historical period.

Learning Objectives:

Skill

The exercise is intended to provide students with an opportunity to discuss difficulties in defining variables, provide descriptive information, identify testable hypotheses relating independent and dependent variables, and construct a simple test of the identified hypothesis using cross-tabular procedures.

Substance

By the end of the exercise students should have a better appreciation of the fact that household structure in the U.S. is very fluid and that changes over time in household structure have not progressed uniformly for all race groups.

Preliminaries:

Please provide a brief response to each of the following questions.

1. According to the U.S. Census, what constitutes a family? What constitutes a household?
2. Using the Census definitions, provide a brief description of the distinction between households and families. An example or two might be useful.

Exercise:

This exercise will use the data called **HH5090.DAT**. You can access the dataset and WebCHIP through the SSDAN website. Use these instructions:

- <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts/data/>
- From there, click “Browse” on the left sidebar. Find “**centrend**” in the drop-down box and select it.
- Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find “**HH5090.DAT**”. Highlight and click “submit.” This will bring up the data set in the WebCHIP program and it is ready for analysis.
- You can also click [here](#) to open the dataset in WebCHIP.

These data are taken from U.S. Censuses conducted between 1950 and 1990. You will note that there are five household types included (married couple households, male-headed family households, female-headed family households, male-headed non-family households, and female-headed non-family households). There are also six age groups sorted according to the age of the householder (15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+), two races (Black and non-Black), five household sizes (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5+), and five years corresponding to censuses (1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990).

1. *Defining variables.* In this exercise, you are limited by the variables available to you. A variable like age is reasonably straightforward, but does involve somewhat arbitrary age groupings. The variable race is measured as a dichotomy and thus masks considerable variation, particularly within the non-Black category (which includes Whites, Asians, and so on). Household type also includes considerable variation. To illustrate this point, identify three different types of families that would be included under the category ‘married couples.’
2. *Describing the data.* Provide a frequency distribution for each of the variables in the database using the ‘Marginals’ function.

Year: 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990

%

Race: non-Black Black

%

Age: 15-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

%

Integrated Data Analysis Assignment

HH Married Male family Female family Male non-family Female non-family

%

Size 1 2 3 4 5+

%

3. *The relationship between year and household type.* Which of these two variables would you consider to be the independent variable? Which variable would you consider to be the dependent variable?

To examine the relationship between year and household type create a percent across cross-tab. Select 'Year,' as the row variable and 'Race,' as the column variable. You will then see your results. Note: you must select percent across in order to obtain the correct percentages (this point will be discussed in class). Complete the following table using the results you obtain.

Year	Household Type				
	Married Couple Headed	Family Male	Female Headed Family	Male Headed Non-Family	Female Headed Non-Family
1950					
1960					
1970					
1980					
1990					
Total					

What does this table tell you about change in the various types of households over time?

4. *The relationship between year, household type, and race.* Now consider the relationship between household type across time as it varies according to race. Which variable(s) are dependent? Which variable(s) are independent?

To create a table indicating the change across time in household type for the two race groups, create a percent down crosstab using 'Race' as the control variable. You will now see your results. Complete the following table using the results you obtain.

Non-Blacks

Year	Household Type				
	Married Couple Male Headed	Family	Female Headed Family	Male Headed Non-Family	Female Headed Non-Family
1950					
1960					
1970					
1980					
1990					
Total					

Blacks

Year	Household Type				
	Married Couple Male Headed	Family	Female Headed Family	Male Headed Non-Family	Female Headed Non-Family
1950					
1960					
1970					
1980					
1990					
Total					

Integrated Data Analysis Assignment

What do these results tell you about the relationship between race and household type?

What do these results tell you about the change in household type across time for the two race groups? In particular, is change more dramatic in some household types for one of the race groups?