

GOVT 2304 - Research Exercise 3

Due Wednesday, November 4

Note:

All work, unless otherwise noted, is to be typed, double spaced in 12 point font with 1" margins, left aligned and are pages are to be stapled together. There will be substantial grading penalties for violating the above standards or if this or any future assignment contains one or more of the following:

Contractions; these should never appear in academic work.

"Spell check errors," where a homonym or similar word takes the place of the word you intended because you assumed a spell checker would correct all your errors magically; proofread your paper. (If you lose your way I will let loose the red ink).

Superfluous use of bold or italic text; quite frankly, you should very rarely use either effect outside of titles or section headings. Unnecessary capitalization will obtain similar results.

Using bullet points; you have been directed specifically to write in paragraph form. Inconsistent margins (e.g. having narrower margins in certain parts of your paper because it "feels right") will also be penalized.

Use of the pronoun "we;" you are writing this paper alone. Avoid the temptation to begin every statement with "I," however. Do not narrate the steps of your work, either; present the information required without a "song and dance" as to how you acquired it.

Using the one-word names of the database you are using is inappropriate (e.g., "STATES"). Refer to the collection data by its more formal name, as if you were describing it to someone who does not own the MicroCase® software. Likewise,

reference to the variable names by the short, cryptic way the software does is unacceptable. Refer to the variables in plain English so that someone unfamiliar with your project could easily understand. (Variable names should be a good description of the concept they purportedly measure.)

Read all directions carefully and follow them closely.

Part I: Analyzing an Alternative Governmental System for Comparison

I have assigned each of you a state to describe the particulars of its political system and how it differs from that of the United States or is similar to it. Some questions you will need to answer include: Does the state have a constitution; when, why and by whom was it drafted? Is the state popularly sovereign; since when and to what extent? How are the insular territories organized and empowered (e.g., federalism, etc.)? How is the electoral system set up; who elects which offices, how often and under what electoral rules do candidates get access to the ballot and voters choose representatives? How many major political parties are there, what are their salient policy issues, and do any tend to dominate? Who holds the reins of power currently? What is the relative balance of power among the branches (assuming separate branches exist)? Type a description of your state that addresses the above questions, and be sure to compare and contrast your state with the U.S. Be prepared to discuss your findings in class on Wednesday, November 4. Below is the list of states assigned to students:

Italy
Poland
Thailand
Japan

Don Tran
Jason Rivera
Carissa Pham
Mariel Perez

Nicaragua	Monica Pepping
Kazakhstan	Ruchir Narula
Greece	Mario Montano
Australia	Stefanie Manzo
Indonesia	Austin Haviken
Egypt	Cassandra Evans
Brazil	Preston Condra
Belgium	Mason Benefield

Part II: Formalizing hypotheses for the research project

Your task is to select two variables for which you have data that you think are related and formulate a formal hypothesis explaining their relationship. (Choose only nominal/ordinal level variables *or* interval/ratio level variables; do not mix upper and lower levels of measurement.) Be sure to posit a cause-effect relationship where an independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable. State the null hypothesis you will be testing and explain the concepts you are measuring and why the issue is politically important. You have been given *specific* instructions in class of how to state hypotheses correctly; follow those instructions precisely. You must next discuss the operationalization of the above concepts by describing the variables in substantial detail. Accomplish this by answering at a bare minimum, the following (in paragraph form; do not give curt answers):

What is the subject matter of the data; what is the unit of analysis?

How were the data collected? (Survey, experiment, etc.)

What is the level of measurement of your variables?

Next, describe how the data are distributed by revealing the number of cases, range of values (both possible and observed), and give any appropriate measures of central tendency; mention if the data seem skewed or not and whether a lack of variation is an issue (univariate analysis will accomplish all of this). A graph can help illustrate this, but is by no means sufficient by itself. For nominal and ordinal level

data, you will need to reveal what percent of the cases fall into each of the observed values. Then explain a variable you will be employing as the control, and posit why you think it is important to include it in the model that better explains the relationship between your independent and dependent variables. Formulate your revised research hypothesis by including the control variable, and state the more inclusive null hypothesis you will be testing. Finally, describe the operationalization and distribution of the control variable in detail as you did for the first two variables (univariate analysis).

Here are some examples that might give you ideas of what to examine (and may turn out to be completely erroneous):

Using data collected from the various nations of the world: The literacy rate in a country helps to explain the amount of freedom the citizenry enjoys when controlling for economic inequalities. (Economic equality may affect the level of freedom as well.)

Given aggregate data on the fifty states: The divorce rate a state has may explain the suicide rate when controlling for education. (States with a high percentage of educated residents may be less likely to have suicide rates affected by their divorce rates).

Using the National Election Survey: A person's income is a good predictor of their likelihood to vote in an election even when controlling for education. (An individual with a high income is more likely to perceive a stake in an election's outcome, and the more educated he is, the more this relationship is true.)

Analyzing members of the U.S. House: If a member is a lawyer, he will be less likely to vote for an amendment making the desecration of an American flag a criminal act, controlling for party. (Lawyers might have a different view of civil liberties than do laymen, and this relationship might be tempered by partisan affiliation.)

Phrase your hypotheses as Le Roy and I (especially when using nominal level data) have instructed you, taking special care to use sufficient detail to explain the relationship you will test, and taking into account if your variables have order and the direction of the relationship you are positing. Stating the null hypothesis correctly is very important as it is the one you will actually be testing later. Remember, you are not trying to enlighten the world with some amazing discovery, but choose a subject that would likely be a salient area of existing political discussion. You are welcome to find new data for your assignment, but it will be far easier to use data included with the course software.

Provide no statistical analysis regarding the relationship among your variables. That you will do later to complete your research project. Again, you are *not* to test the relationship between your variables yet.

After completing your work, reread the assignment to make sure you have followed every direction correctly and performed each task fully.