

# Research With Archival Data

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DIY research.



Archival  
research.



# Research Rocks

- But it isn't cheap...or easy.
  - Trust me...it isn't cheap or easy.
  - Not to dissuade you, but even my smallest grant funded projects have required hundreds and hundreds of working hours.
  - Think about the steps involved.
  - 1. Concept to research question.

- But it isn't cheap...or easy.
- 2. Research question to methods.
- 3. Methods to grant proposal.
- 4. Grant proposal to award management.
- 5. Award management to IRB.
- 6. IRB to sample.

- But it isn't cheap...or easy.
- 7. Sample to data capture.
- 8. Data capture to analyses.
- 9. Analyses to dissemination.
- 10. Dissemination to renewal funding!
- You get the picture.

- Is there an easier way?

- Note the complexity, time, and money involved in getting a sample suitable for analyses.

- Steps 1-8!

- Wouldn't it be fabulous if you could find data closely aligned with your research question and bypass these first 8 steps!

- You can with a single caveat.

# Archival Research Requires Flexibility

- **Caveat: You must be flexible with your RQ.**
  - A wealth of public (open source) datasets available.
  - Your tax dollars at work.
  - The hitch? You are stuck with survey items selected by dataset authors/investigators.
  - The trick is to find an archival dataset roughly aligned with your RQ.

- **Caveat: You must be flexible with your RQ.**
  - Then, make adjustments to RQ allowing you to construct meaningful analyses using the archival source.
  - Beware! You still must establish a literature gap for this new RQ.
  - A drawback for these resources is their wide availability.
  - This means the datasets have likely been mined (heavily) by others.

○ Caveat: You must be flexible with your RQ.

○ Don't be discouraged, just be careful.

○ Look very carefully at survey codebooks/items.

○ You may discover novel opportunity.

○ Let's take a tour of the General Social Survey (GSS), managed by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago.

# Health Science Databases

- Nursing and allied health care.
  - CDC Wonder portal.
  - Centers for Disease Control has created a search portal for public access (open source) health databases.
  - <http://wonder.cdc.gov/>
  - National Library of Medicine (NIH)
  - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/datasites.html>

# Education Databases

- Public education.
  - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
    - <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/>
  - US Census
    - <http://www.census.gov/main/www/access.html>
  - Many other options available.

