

Sociology 205
Final Exam
December 8, 2003

NAME:

Instructions: Answer all questions. Use the space provided, or go to the back of the page if necessary. The value of each question is given in parentheses. Ask me if you aren't sure how you should interpret a question.

1. (8) Research has shown that people who have fewer siblings tend to go farther in school and to obtain better jobs as adults than people who have more siblings. For example, in one recent representative sample of American adults, 27% of the people who had two or fewer siblings obtained a college degree, but only 13% of the people who had three or more siblings obtained a college degree. Does this fact prove that having more siblings causes people to be less "successful"? If not, what else could explain it?

2. (8) Suppose that a researcher were interested in knowing how American values have changed during the 20th century. What would be the most useful method (or methods) for this research? Be as specific as possible.

3. (10) Suppose that you are working for a political candidate who is running for election next November. What research methods would be most useful in helping your candidate to run a successful campaign? Be specific about what you would do with them and what you might learn (for example, don't just say something like "it would be good to do an experiment").

4. (6) What is the difference between complete participation, participant observation (including both participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant), and complete observation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

5. (6) There are two basic types of research: experimental and non-experimental (observational). What is the difference between them? Which type is more commonly used in sociology and why?

6. (10) People may act differently when they know that they are being studied. Why is this a problem for sociological research? Which methods are more affected by this problem, and which (if any) are not affected?

7. (6) Suppose that a sociologist was doing a content analysis of "popular music" between 1950 and today. Explain what the major steps in his research would be.

8. (8) In class, we read about a field experiment which showed that resumes with "black" names (e. g., Jamaal and Lakisha) and got fewer responses from employers than identical resumes with "white" names (e. g., Emily or Greg). How could researchers go about discovering exactly how and why this difference occurred? (Note: you can discuss either additional field experiments or different methods).

9. (8) Random sampling is generally considered to be the best method of sampling. But random sampling is not always used in sociological research. Which of these methods usually use random sampling and which ones don't? For those that don't, explain why not.

a) surveys

b) qualitative interviews

c) observation (ethnography, fieldwork)

d) experiments

10. (8) There are many ethical issues involved in doing experiments with people. What ethical principles are generally accepted in experimental research? What ethical issues are controversial? Give specific examples when possible.

11. (6) What are the similarities and differences between standard surveys (questionnaires and structured interviews) and qualitative interviews? What can you learn from an qualitative interview that you can't learn from a standard survey?

12. (8) In experiments, there are two major ways to assign participants to groups: matching and random assignment. Why do researchers use these methods rather than just letting participants choose which group they want to be in?

13. (8) Suppose that a social scientist wants to compare trends in unemployment in different countries. She finds the table given below. What issues should she consider before starting to analyze these data?

Table 8. Employment and unemployment

	Unemployment as a percentage of the labour force	
	1980	1995
Argentina	2.3	18.8
Costa Rica	5.9	5.2
El Salvador	12.9	7.7
Trinidad and Tobago	10.0	17.2
United States	7.0	5.6
Venezuela	5.9	10.3
Australia	6.1	8.5
Japan	2.0	3.2
Philippines	4.8	8.4
Finland	4.7	17.4
France	6.4	11.6
Israel	4.8	6.9
Norway	1.7	4.9
Spain	11.4	22.9
Sweden	2.0	7.7