DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Research Methods Posc 302

ASSIGNMENT 4
Multi-way Tables
Due: May 12, 2000

ON THIS ASSIGNMENT WORK COMPLETELY ALONE!
DON'T EVEN ASK TO COMPARE RESULTS.

The purpose of this assignment to make sure everyone can create and interpret multi-way contingency tables, a basic tool in statistical analysis of public opinion.

Political scientists frequently wonder whether or not voters "vote their pocketbooks." If a person is doing well financially will that individual's status affect his or her vote? Or, conversely, suppose someone has lost a job or suffer some other financial hardship. Will the individual "take it" out on politicians? If voters think about what has happened to them in the (immediate) past and vote accordingly, some social scientists say they vote **retrospectively** . If, on the other hand, citizens look to the future when deciding how to vote, they are called **prospective** voters.

Investigate this problem by using the 1996 National Election Study data to explore the relationship between peoples' beliefs about their expected financial situation in the coming year and their choice of presidential candidate. That is, answer these two questions: 1) Are voters prospective–does their assessments of their future financial status (partly) determine their vote? 2) Does this relationship between vote and expectation persist after controlling for party identification? Another way of asking the second question is: "Does party identification create a spurious relationship between candidate choice and assessment of economic position."

Some hints. As we have discussed several times in class, you should first cross-classify vote choice by economic expectations (hint: the variable name is in the codebook is "Pre. Is R better or worse off financially than a year ago.") (We are mainly interested in the **two-party** vote, so **exclude** Perot and other voters. You know how to do this.) These data will help you answer the first question.

Then, control for party identification. Recode party identification so that it has just five (5) groups as follows: 0- "Strong Democrats" (227), 1 - "Democrats" (170); 2-4 "Independents" (241), 5 - "Republicans" (143), and 6 "Strong Republicans" (164). Note: the numbers in parentheses are the number of cases in the subtables. That is, you should have five tables, the first of which will have 227 cases. Each table will show the relationship between voting and financial status for a particular group of partisans. (Be sure to include **only** Clinton and Dole voters. Eliminate the "Perot" and "Other" respondents.) Use them to make sure you are doing the correct thing. The numbers 0, 1,...,etc. are the codes. I've done this example myself and know that it can

be done. If you have trouble with recodes, look carefully at the notes and be sure to ask.

After you have created the tables and interpreted them write a brief report that summarizes your findings. Remember: start with a generalization such as "The data support/do not support the hypothesis of ..." Then explain your conclusion by referring to your tables. It's important that you write clearly. I will first examine the data to draw my own conclusions. Then, I'll read your description of them. If I can't understand your arguments, you'll have to rewrite them.

Some guidelines:
- Use the techniques that I have demonstrated (e.g., "Find in page" command) to locate the variables in the study.
- It's essential that you type the SDA commands carefully. Refer to the notes for directions.
- As always think: what is the dependent variable? What is the independent variable? What is the control variable? Where in the dialog are you going to indicate them?
- Simplify the table by excluding "Perot" and "other" categories, as demonstrated in Class 9.
- Be sure to recode party identification from seven groups to five as described above.
- The paper should contain all of the information a reader needs to assess your argument's merit.
- Format and present your table according to the standards discussed in class and in Assignment 2.
- Use a word processor to prepare your analysis, which incidentally should be no more than two pages including tables.
- Include tables in the text, not as separate pages. (If you need help, ask in class.)
- Your name and student number should be on the title page.
- Strive for simple, clear, direct prose. **Read Woe Is I** and, if appropriate, imitate O'Conner's style. After all, I am going to look at and evaluate the writing and substance of your essay. Pay particular attention to usage: if you are not sure a word is being used correctly or might be misspelled, look it up!
- For this assignment I want everyone to use only the variables mentioned above. Later, you can strike out on your own.

Turn into 347 Smith Hall, the Political Science Department office. Do not leave papers in *my* office!