Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind: working with alien SPSS files

Outline of presentation for ASSESS 2014, York, 31 October 2014

An alternative working title would be: Pig's Ears and Silk Purses: working with other peoples' SPSS files as a follow-up to Old Dog, Old Tricks, my 2006 presentation to ASSESS. Thought about using Old Dog, New Tricks, but it doesn’t carry the same sense of horror and fun.

Slide-shows will cover recent work on other people’s files, including a live demo of Jon Peck’s Python code to move question numbers from the end to the beginning of variable labels and to change labels from UPPER to Mixed case text. Will also include some new tricks and demos of things I didn’t know SPSS would do until I tried. I haven’t used PowerPoint since York 2006, but I have found [Alt][PrintScreen] and MS Snip incredibly useful for getting screenshots into Word, and they also copy easily into Ppt. I’ll be running SPSS live, drawing on my explorations of one or more of:

British Social Attitudes
Commentary on SPSS file for British Social Attitudes 2011
Notes on British Social Attitudes 2004 teaching data set
(as used by Marsh and Elliott, 2008)

Understanding Society
Commentary on Understanding Society 2010

NORC General Social Survey (GSS)
Commentary on full NORC General Social Survey 2008
Commentary on subset of General Social Survey 2008
Commentary on GSS 2008 SPSS files for Babbie et al
(as used by Sweet & Grace-Martin)
(as used by Babbie, Halley, Wagner & Zaino)

ONS National Well-being
Unrestricted Access Teaching Dataset (ONS Opinions Survey, Well-Being Module)
(Data set and user guide originally from Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, Manchester)
This dataset (SN7146) contains a selection of variables from the April 2011 wave of the ONS Opinions Survey, Well-Being Module, April - August 2011 (SN 6893) which in turn is part of the regular government survey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, run in various guises since 1990

Relative Deprivation and Social Justice
Book: W G Runciman Relative Deprivation and Social Justice (RKP 1966)
Relative Deprivation and Social Justice 1966 (UKDS SN 28)
(created 1975 by Dr Annette Scambler, Sociology, Surrey: fully restored 2014 by John Hall)
SN28 Commentary on Relative Deprivation and Social Justice
(This is a bit too long and I am going to break it up into smaller sections)
SN28 Appendix 1 - Download of original data from UKDS
SN28 Appendix 4 - Annette Scambler’s 1975 version

SSRC Survey Unit Multi-purpose Social Survey (1975)
First ever such survey in UK (data set SN 680) on which my then research trainee, the late Cathie Marsh, cut her survey and SPSS teeth.
Commentary on Multi-purpose 1975

The above links are to introductions and critical commentaries (draft only at this stage) aimed at making the distributed data sets easier to understand and use. The commentaries are listed on my website pages Teaching with Survey Data and SPSS files and documentation used for tutorials and exercises.

John F Hall
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Email: johnfhall@orange.fr
Website: www.surveyresearch.weebly.com
SPSS start page: www.surveyresearch.weebly.com/1-survey-analysis-workshop