Missing Data[[1]](#footnote-1)

In this exercise, we will identify examples of “missing data” and reasons some data is not collected or not available​.

In [The Library of Missing Datasets](https://mimionuoha.com/the-library-of-missing-datasets), artist Mimi Ọnụọha brings our attention to “missing data,” “the blank spots that exist in spaces that are otherwise data-saturated” ([Ọnụọha, The Library of Missing Datasets](https://mimionuoha.com/the-library-of-missing-datasets)).

## **Your library of missing datasets**

### Identify three examples of missing data.

In this exercise, identify examples of what’s in your library of missing datasets. These can be datasets that you wish you had for your personal lives, such as the rental fee for all comparable apartments in your neighborhood or comprehensive family tree data for 10 generations. You could also identify data that would help you in your work, such as the locations and file names for all files.

### Think about the following categories of missing data:

1. Data that doesn’t exist;

2. Data that exists but hasn’t yet been assembled into a dataset;

3. Data that exists, is assembled in one place, but isn’t available to you;

4. Data that exists but is incomplete, inconsistent, not representative, or of insufficient quality.

In the table, list your datasets and categorize them using the above categories.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **My Library of Missing Data** | **Category of missing data** |
| Example 1: | Percentage of homeless youth that are POCs or gay |
| Example 2: | Sexual orientation or gender identity of those people who have dementia related disorders |
| Example 3: | Data on relationships between caregivers and patients |

### Causes of Missing Data

Next, brainstorm reasons for missing data. Why might data not be collected, assembled, or made available? List any reason you can think of. Try to identify at least 5 reasons.

1. Not enough resources

2. Not enough interest at the time

3. People didn’t want to explore gay rights and relationships

4. People were scared of having that information available because of misuse

5. Hard to access with certain populations

1. This exercise and worksheet is adapted from an exercise created by Bob Gradeck, University Center for Social and Urban Research at the University of Pittsburgh. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)