

## SOCI 385

### Week Two, Class One

#### Descriptives

- Less interesting maybe but really important. Always “Table 1” in a paper.
- Sense in sociology that we need more descriptives about how the world works.
- Khan: Less theory, more descriptives.
  - “Sociology must worry less about theoretical innovation and more about empirical description.”
- Like Opportunity Insights and Chetty’s work here. You may have seen it in other classes. Methods aren’t difficult. Power is in the data and the simple descriptives.
  - This new research is definitely at my sweetspot of higher education and income inequality so it’s particularly fun for me and hopefully interesting to you.
- We talk about “simple descriptives” but that doesn’t mean they are easy. A lot of work goes into summarizing descriptives. That starts with figuring out what to describe. Amartya Sen wrote of “description as choice.”
- What are some of the choices Chetty had to make for this project?
  - What colleges to include, looking at attendance rather than admission, looking at income rather than wealth, using birth cohorts rather than entry years, how to combine cohorts, etc.
- Turn to notebook\_02\_01 on Canvas