

Contextualising the Teaching of Quantitative Methods in Politics

Or: How to get the terrified to love statistics

Overall aims

- *Basic* quantitative methods for all
- *Advanced* quantitative methods for some
- Link quantitative academic study of politics with existing 'knowledge' of politics
- Link UG training with PG training/careers

Dilemma

- Statistics anxiety, denial, ignorance...

Solutions

- Subject specific
- Link with 'real' world
- Stress application & interpretation
- Variation in activities, teaching & assessment
- Time

Level 2 Political Analysis

- Theories, approaches, scientific method...
- Quantification of Politics
- Research design in Political Science
- Methodology in Political Science
- Data collection
- Data analysis

Exercises: Data Debate

e.g. the rate of immigration should be lowered/raised

Projection of numbers of households

Year	Number of households (thousands)	Average household size
1992	22,487	2.44
1993	22,624	2.43
1994	22,758	2.42
1995	22,896	2.41
1996	23,025	2.40
1997	23,132	2.40
1998	23,260	2.39
1999	23,406	2.39
2000	23,597	2.37
2001	23,927	2.36
2002	24,152	2.35
2003	24,365	2.34
2004	24,555	2.33
2011	26,235	2.25
2016	27,526	2.20
2021	28,732	2.15
2026	30,042	2.11

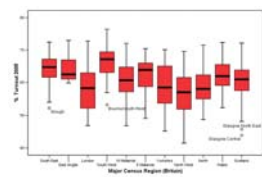
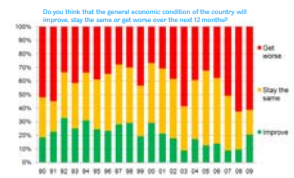
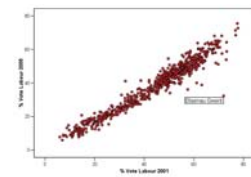
 Communities and Local Government (www.communities.gov.uk)

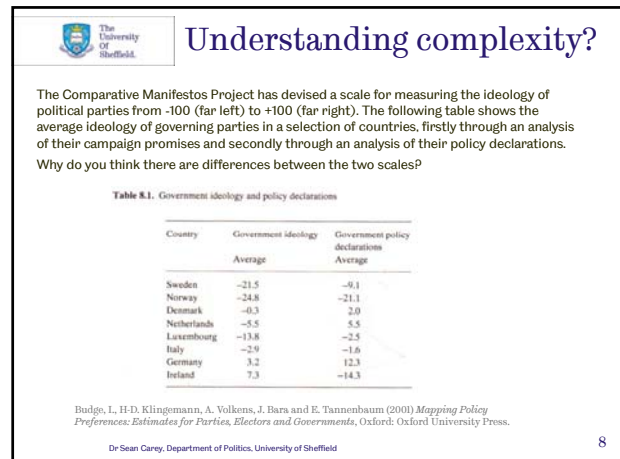
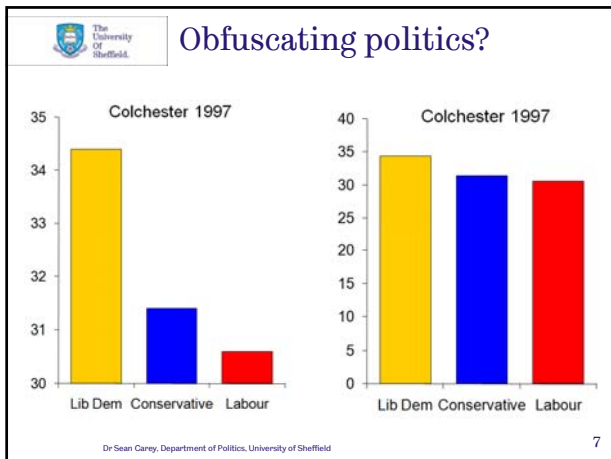
Total International migration

Year	inflow	outflow	balance
1992	268	281	- 13
1993	266	266	0
1994	315	238	+ 77
1995	312	236	+ 76
1996	318	264	+ 54
1997	327	279	+ 48
1998	391	251	+ 140
1999	454	291	+ 163
2000	479	321	+ 158
2001	479	306	+ 173
2002	513	358	+ 155
2003	508	361	+ 147
2004	586	342	+ 244
2005	563	359	+ 204
2006	591	400	+ 191

Office for National Statistics

Lectures: simple techniques





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- ## Assessment
1. Questionnaire design
 2. Comparison of 2 political organisations' use of statistics
 3. Data Analysis
 4. Unseen exam
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- ## Assessment 3 datasets
1. British Election Study
 2. British Social Attitudes Survey
 3. Eurobarometer
 4. Political Terror Scale / Polity / COW / WDI
- ↓ # of variables
provide meaningful variables names/labels
create easy-to-read codebooks
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- ## Assessment 3 support
1. SPSS workshops
 2. SPSS how-to guides
 3. FAQs & message board on VLE
 4. SPSS surgeries
 5. Alternative dataset sessions
 6. SPSS output interpretation seminars
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- ## Level 3 Quantitative Dissertation in Political Science
- *Advanced* data collection (on demand)
 - *Advanced* data analysis (on demand)
 - Visual presentation of quantitative data
Visual presentation of research design
 - Dual supervision
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General approach

- No maths background assumed
- Subject specific
(Sub-discipline specific)
- Link to 'real' politics
- Student research-led teaching/assessment
- Variation in learning activities/assessment