

Data Visualization With Stata

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Introduction

- Stata is a powerful and intuitive data analysis program.
- Learning how to graph in Stata is an important part of learning how to use Stata. Yet, the default graphs in Stata can sometimes be less than optimal.
- This document is an introduction to (a) basic graphing ideas in Stata; and (b) a quick note on the use of schemes to make your Stata graphs look more professional.

When this document is presented in *slide show format*, some slides may be long, and you may need to *scroll down* to see the full slide.

What are Variables?

- By variables, I simply mean the columns of data that you have.
- For our purposes, you may think of variables as synonymous with questionnaire items, or columns of data.

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1			
Row 2			
Row 3			

Variable Types

- *Categorical variables* represent unordered categories like *race*, *ethnicity*, *neighborhood*, *religious affiliation*, or *place of residence*.
- *Continuous variables* represent a continuous scale like *income*, a *mental health scale*, or a *measure of life expectancy*.

A Data Visualization Strategy

Once we have discerned the type of variable that have, there are two followup questions we may ask before deciding upon a graphing strategy:

- Is our graph about **one thing at a time**?
 - How much of x is there?
 - What is the distribution of x ?
- Is our graph about **two things at a time**?
 - What is the relationship of x and y ?
 - How are x and y associated?

Data Source



Figure 1: Norway Spruce and Larch Forest in Austrian Alps

Image Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research-topic/forestry/qr-tree-project/norway-spruce>

The data used in this example are derived from the R package *Functions and Datasets for “Forest Analytics with R”*.

According to the documentation, the source of these data are: “von Guttenberg’s Norway spruce (*Picea abies* [L.] Karst) tree measurement data.”



Figure 2: Old Tjikko, a 9,550 Year Old Norway Spruce in Sweden

The documentation goes on to further note that:

“The data are measures from 107 trees. The trees were selected as being of average size from healthy and well stocked stands in the Alps.”

```
. use "https://github.com/agrogan1/Stata/raw/master/data-visualization-with-Stata/gutten.d
> ta", clear
```

Variables

site Growth *quality* class of the tree's habitat. 5 levels.

location Distinguishes tree *location*. 7 levels.

tree An identifier for the tree within location.

age_base The tree age taken at ground level.

For some purposes, it might be best to use a centered age variable, centered at the grand mean of tree age:

```
. egen ageMEAN = mean(age_base)

. generate ageCENTERED = age_base - ageMEAN
```

height Tree height, m.

dbh_cm Tree diameter, cm.

volume Tree volume.

age_bh Tree age taken at 1.3 m.

tree.ID A factor uniquely identifying the tree.

Graphs

One Continuous Thing At A Time (histogram x)

```
. histogram height, title("Tree Height")
(bin=30, start=1.5, width=1.4)

. graph export myhistogram.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/myhistogram.png
saved as PNG format
```

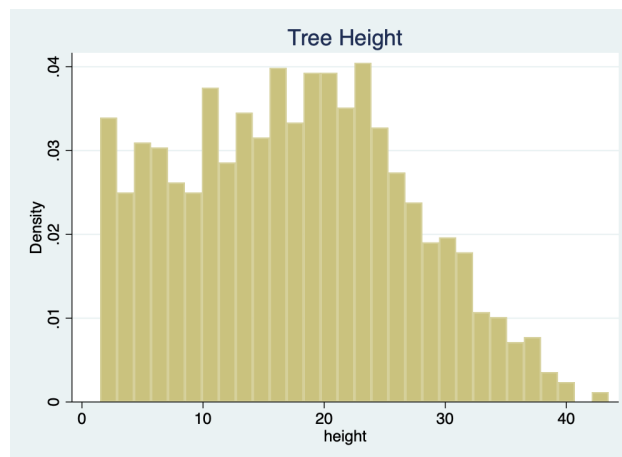


Figure 3: Histogram Of Tree Height

One Categorical Thing At A Time (graph bar, over(x))

```
. graph bar, over(location) title("Tree Location")  
  
. graph export mybargraph.png, width(1000) replace  
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybargraph.png  
saved as PNG format
```

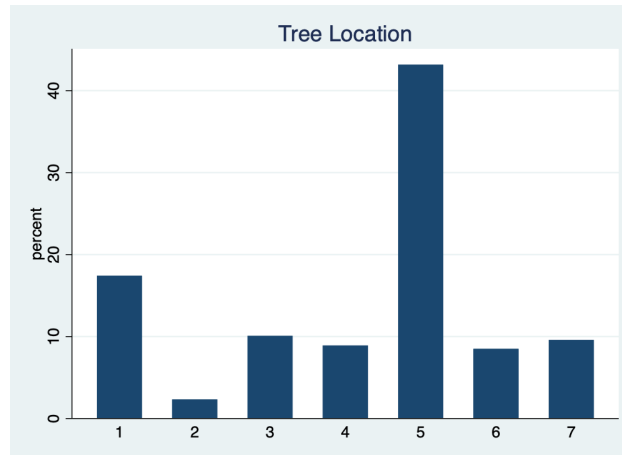


Figure 4: Bar Graph Of Tree Location

Continuous by Continuous (tway scatter y x)

```
. twoway scatter height age_base, title("Tree Height by Age")  
  
. graph export myscatter.png, width(1000) replace  
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/myscatter.png  
saved as PNG format
```



Figure 5: Scatterplot Of Tree Height By Age

Categorical by Categorical (graph bar, over(x) over(y))

```
. graph bar, over(site) over(location) title("Tree Site Growth Quality by Location")
```

```
. graph export mybargraph2.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybargraph2.png
saved as PNG format
```

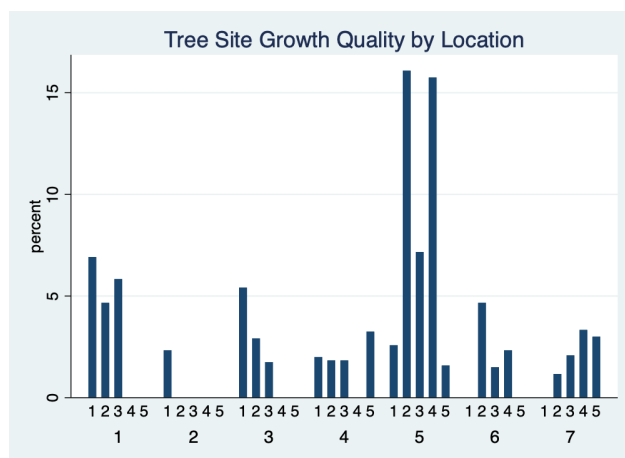


Figure 6: Bar Graph Of Tree Site By Location

Continuous by Categorical (`graph bar y, over(x)`)

```
. graph bar height, over(location) title("Tree Height by Location")
. graph export mybargraph3.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybargraph3.png
saved as PNG format
```

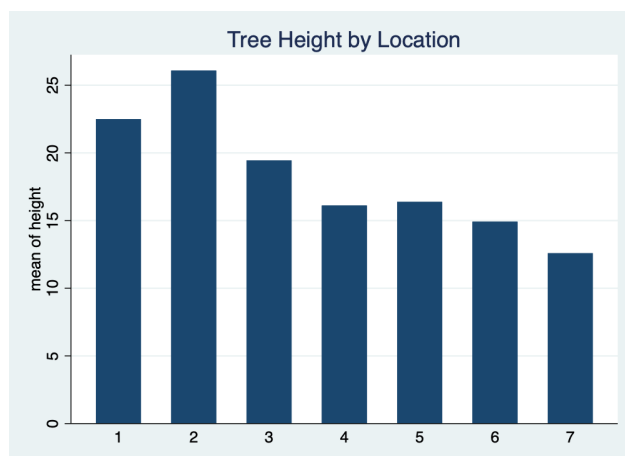


Figure 7: Bar Graph Of Mean Tree Height By Location

Schemes (`, scheme(...)`)

Stata *graph schemes* can substantially improve the look of a graph. Built in graph schemes include `s1color`, the default scheme `s2color`, `sj`, `economist` and `s1rcolor`.

(Notably, as a *quick fix*, the default Stata graph scheme of `s2color` can be substantially improved by adding the option `,graphregion(fcolor(white))` which changes the background fill color of this scheme to *white*.)

`lean2` (type `findit lean2` in the Stata Command Window) is a user written scheme that is very helpful when preparing graphics for publication. I have written a Stata Michigan graph scheme that can be installed. `cleanplots` and `modern` are excellent graph schemes that can be installed directly into Stata from GitHub. `burd` is another user written graph scheme that *somewhat* replicates the look of `ggplot`. Asjad Naqvi has written an excellent and comprehensive set of Stata graph schemes.

Continuous by Continuous (`twoway scatter y x, scheme(...)`)

```
. twoway scatter height age_base, title("Tree Height by Age") scheme(michigan)

. graph export myscatterM.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/myscatterM.png
  saved as PNG format
```

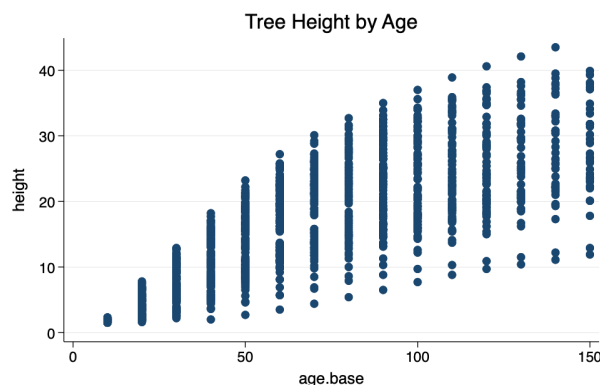


Figure 8: Scatterplot Of Tree Height By Age With Michigan Graph Scheme

```
. twoway scatter height age_base, title("Tree Height by Age") scheme(lean2) msymbol(o)

. graph export myscatterL.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/myscatterL.png
  saved as PNG format

. twoway scatter height age_base, title("Tree Height by Age") scheme(sicolor)

. graph export myscatterS.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/myscatterS.png
  saved as PNG format

. twoway scatter height age_base, title("Tree Height by Age") scheme(burd) msymbol(o) graph
> hregion(lcolor(none))

. graph export myscatterB.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/myscatterB.png
  saved as PNG format
```

Continuous by Categorical (`graph bar y, over(x) scheme(...)`)

Note that in the graph below, I have used the `asyvars` option to give different colors to the different bars.



Figure 9: Scatterplot Of Tree Height By Age With lean2 Graph Scheme



Figure 10: Scatterplot Of Tree Height By Age With s1color Graph Scheme

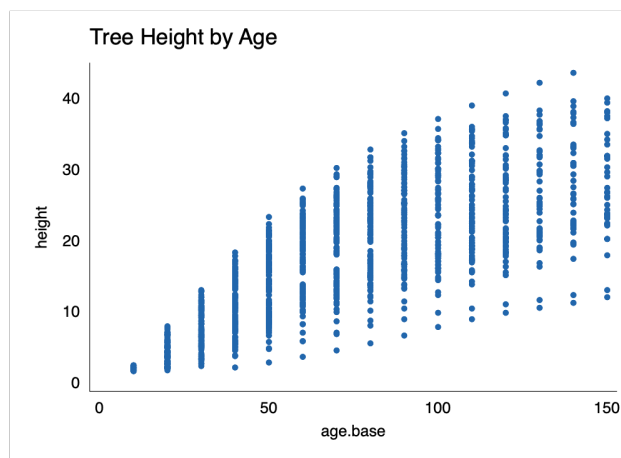


Figure 11: Scatterplot Of Tree Height By Age With burd Graph Scheme

```
. graph bar height, over(location) asyvars title("Tree Height by Location") scheme(michigan)
> n)

. graph export mybarM.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybarM.png saved
as PNG format
```

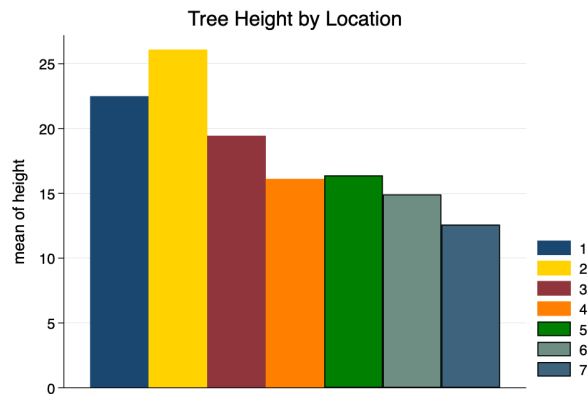


Figure 12: Bar Graph Of Mean Tree Height By Location With Michigan Graph Scheme

```
. graph bar height, over(location) asyvars title("Tree Height by Location") scheme(lean2)

. graph export mybarL.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybarL.png saved
as PNG format
```

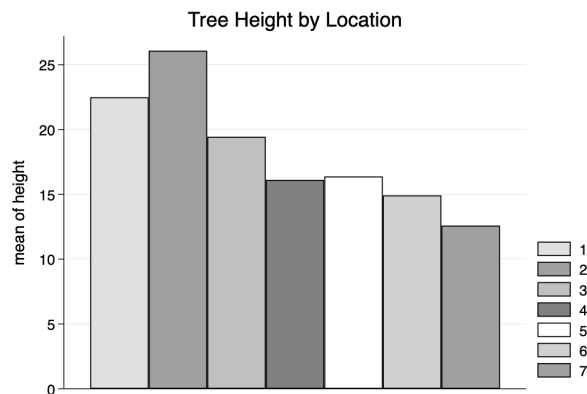


Figure 13: Bar Graph Of Mean Tree Height By Location With lean2 Graph Scheme

```
. graph bar height, over(location) asyvars title("Tree Height by Location") scheme(sicolor)
> )

. graph export mybarS.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybarS.png saved
as PNG format

. graph bar height, over(location) asyvars title("Tree Height by Location") scheme(burd) g
> raphregion(lcolor(none))

. graph export mybarB.png, width(1000) replace
file /Users/agrogan/Desktop/GitHub/Stata/data-visualization-with-Stata/mybarB.png saved
as PNG format
```

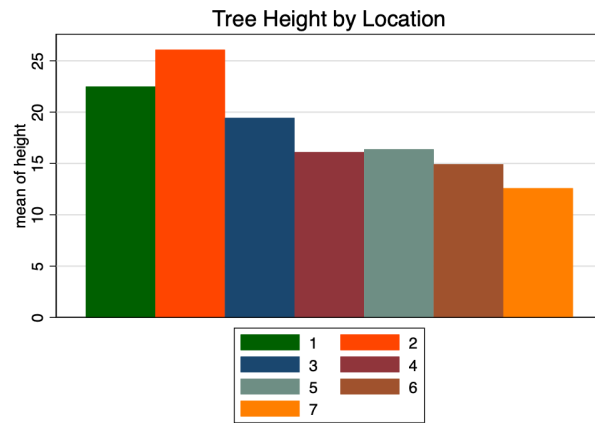



Figure 14: Bar Graph Of Mean Tree Height By Location With s1color Graph Scheme



Figure 15: Bar Graph Of Mean Tree Height By Location With burd Graph Scheme