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Department of Methodology
London School of Economics

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would like to be considered for the band 5 level position of LSE Fellow in Quantitative Methodology.

My existing research focusses on the voting and speech making behaviour of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In my PhD thesis – which I aim to complete in August 2015 – I have three papers, all of which use advanced quantitative methods to explore questions of legislative politics. My first paper, which was awarded the Wildenmann Prize for best paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of workshops in 2012, explores how party leaders in the European Parliament restrict access to the plenary agenda so as to preserve party unity on roll call votes. In the second paper, co-authored with Ben Lauderdale, we use a Bayesian ideal-point model to estimate the effect of the financial crisis on voting coalitions in the European Parliament. In my final paper, I have collected a new dataset of a quarter of a million legislative speeches and use recent advances in quantitative text analysis to estimate the 'expressed agenda' of MEPs, which I link to constituency level public opinion estimated from a multilevel regression and post-stratification approach. I hope to submit all three of these papers for publication in the course of the next six months, as well as a co-authored paper – a survey experiment with Simon Hix, Andrew Eggers and Dominik Hangartner – which will also be submitted shortly.

During the next two years, in addition to completing my PhD, I aim to develop a strong publishing record in the area of European politics and quantitative research. Specifically, I am particularly interested in the burgeoning field of 'text as data', and applying many of the methods developed in this field – in both political and computational science – to questions of European politics. The final paper in my dissertation is clearly a step in this direction, but I feel that there is great potential for applying these tools further.

As my CV makes clear, I have taken several courses in quantitative methods here at the LSE as well as in Oxford and, more recently, at Harvard and MIT. I therefore have a strong command of the material of all of the courses I might be required to teach in this position. While in Oxford, I tutored extensively for 'Blue Tutors' – a private tutoring group, specialising in preparing high-performing A-level students for Oxbridge entry. I also taught at the LSE annual Politics Conference in 2013. I am keen to develop my teaching experience, and feel that my ability to deliver clear and engaging classes is one of my major strengths. I am confident of both teaching and supervising graduate students to a high level.

As a final point, I believe that I could be a productive and engaged member of the Methodology Department. During my PhD, I have worked extensively with members of the department, and my own work has benefitted enormously from interactions with methodology faculty and students. I would relish the opportunity for more extensive contact with those in the department, and believe that I have a lot to offer in this role.

I would appreciate your consideration of my application for this position.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Blumenau