PSC 202

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ANALYSIS

STUDYING POLITICS SCIENTIFICALLY

HOUSEKEEPING

- Read the syllabus
  - Carefully!
- Sections start Friday
- No class next Monday

HOUSEKEEPING

- Textbook available through Orange Instant Access
- Automatically enrolled, costs $41.30 to have e-book for 180 days
- Can access through Blackboard > Textbook
- Can opt out until Sep 20, 11.59PM and purchase it elsewhere

HOUSEKEEPING

CLASS SCHEDULE

Below is a continuously updated class schedule. It contains information on what topics we are covering as well as on the readings and assignments. Please check this site EVERY WEEK.

Week 1

- Monday (8/30): Introduction to the Course
  - Slides
- Wednesday (9/1): Studying Politics Scientifically
  - Shepsle, Kenneth A. (2010): "It Isn't Rocket Science, but..." p. 3-6. (Blackboard)
  - Monroe, Alan D. (2000): "The Scientific Study of Research Questions." p. 1-12. (Blackboard)

Week 2

- Monday (9/6): No Class (Labor Day)
- Wednesday (9/8): Research Questions in Political Science
  - Barakso, Maryann, Daniel M. Sabet, and Brian F. Schaffner (2014) "The Research Question." (Blackboard)
  - Multiple Choice Quiz due (11.40 AM, Blackboard)

- http://www.simonweschle.com/psc202

HOUSEKEEPING

- Quizzes start now
  - First quiz will be online later (under Assignments)
  - Questions on this lecture and reading for next Wednesday
  - Due by Wednesday start of class

OVERVIEW

- Evolution of the study of politics
- Studying politics scientifically
- Topics in political science

WHAT IS POLITICS?

- Harold Lasswell: Politics is the process of deciding “who gets what, where, and when.”

HISTORY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Political science today is very different from political science 50-60 years ago
- How?

HISTORY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Stories, anecdotes

Thick description, historical writing

EARLY POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Descriptive
  - Description of how a committee (in Congress) works
  - Description of electoral systems (proportional representation, first-past-the-post, etc.)
- Normative
  - Concern about dominance of committees in workings of Congress
  - Judgment whether proportional representation or first-past-the-post electoral system is better

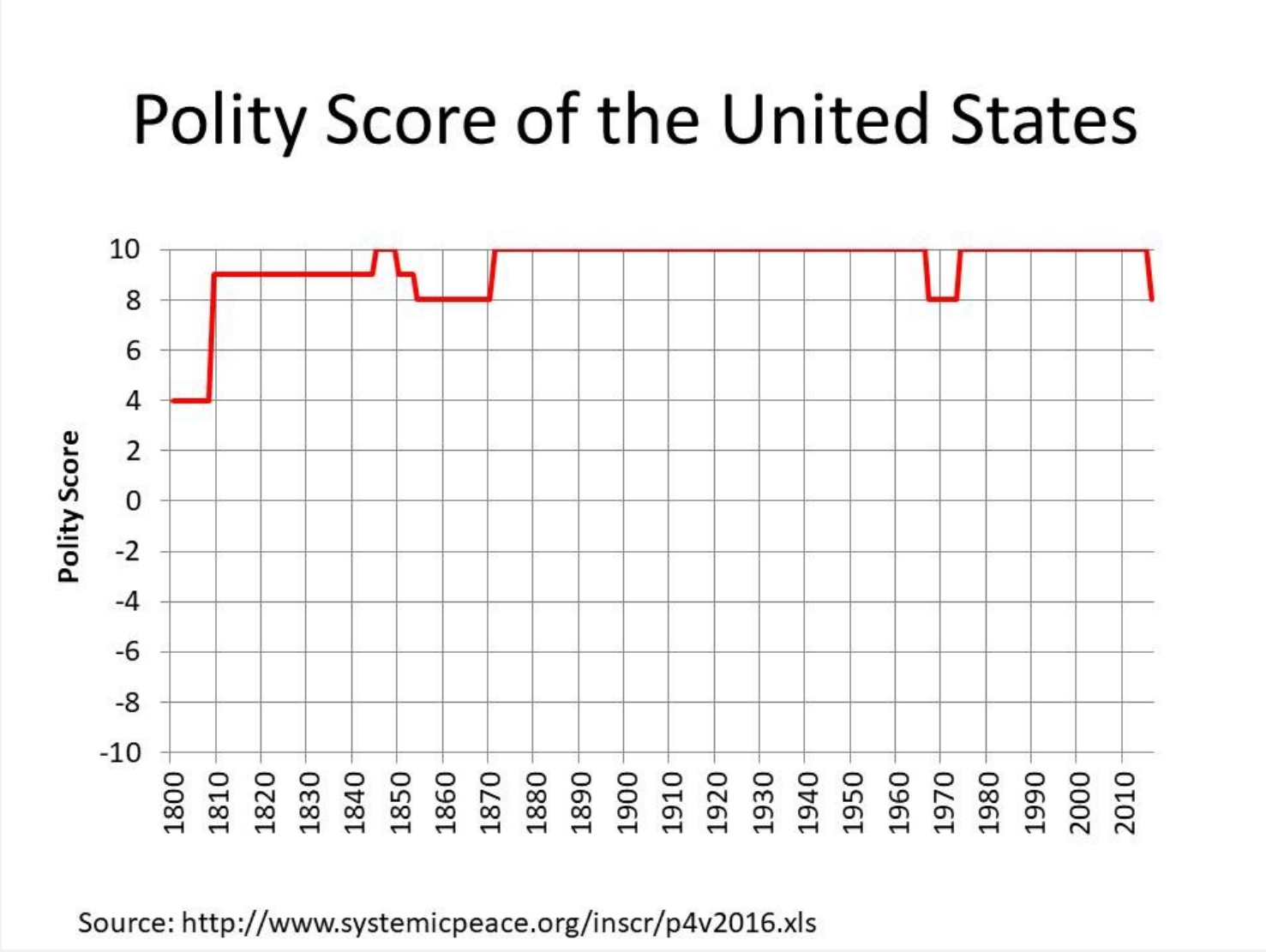
HISTORY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Stories, anecdotes

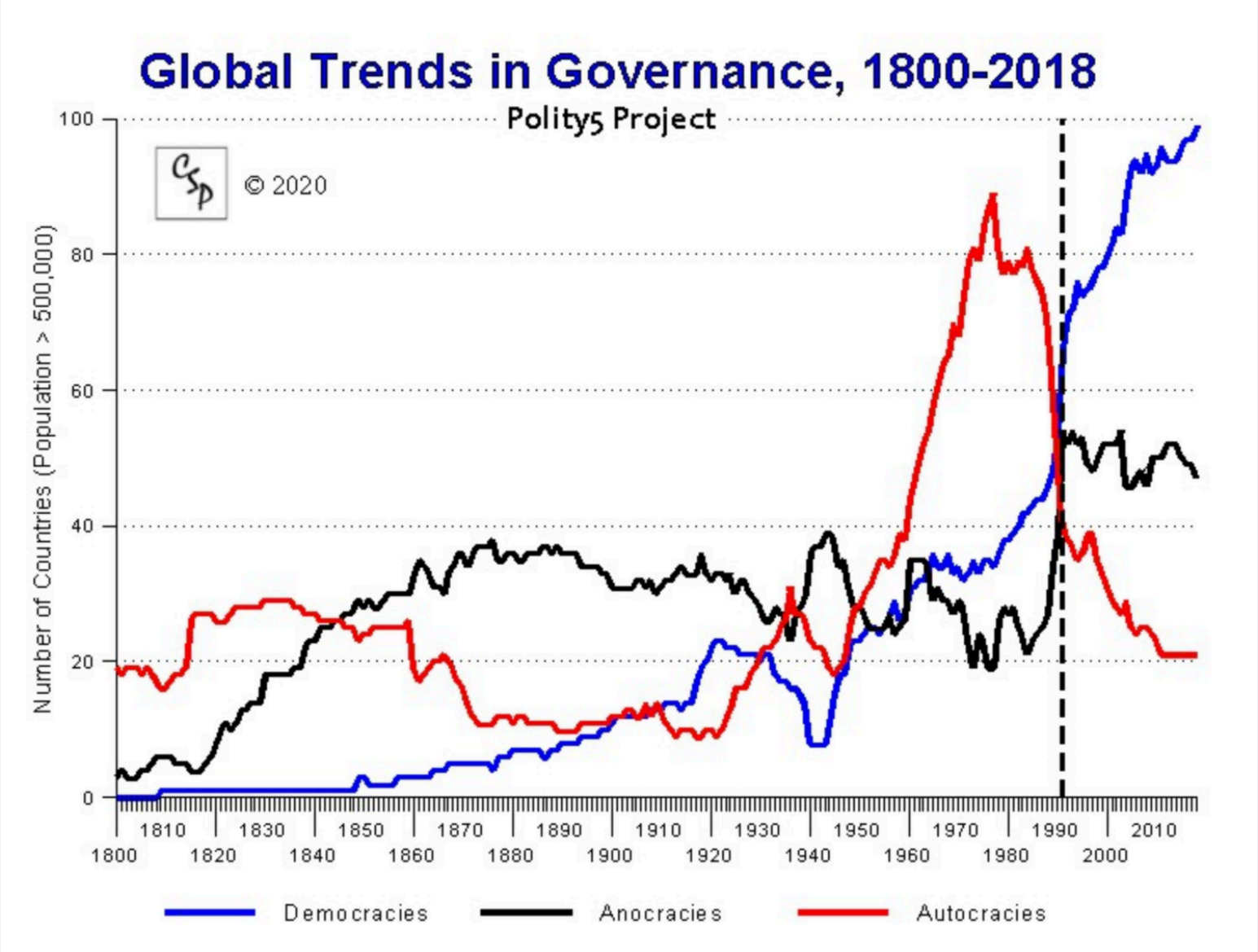
Thick description, historical writing

Systematic measurement

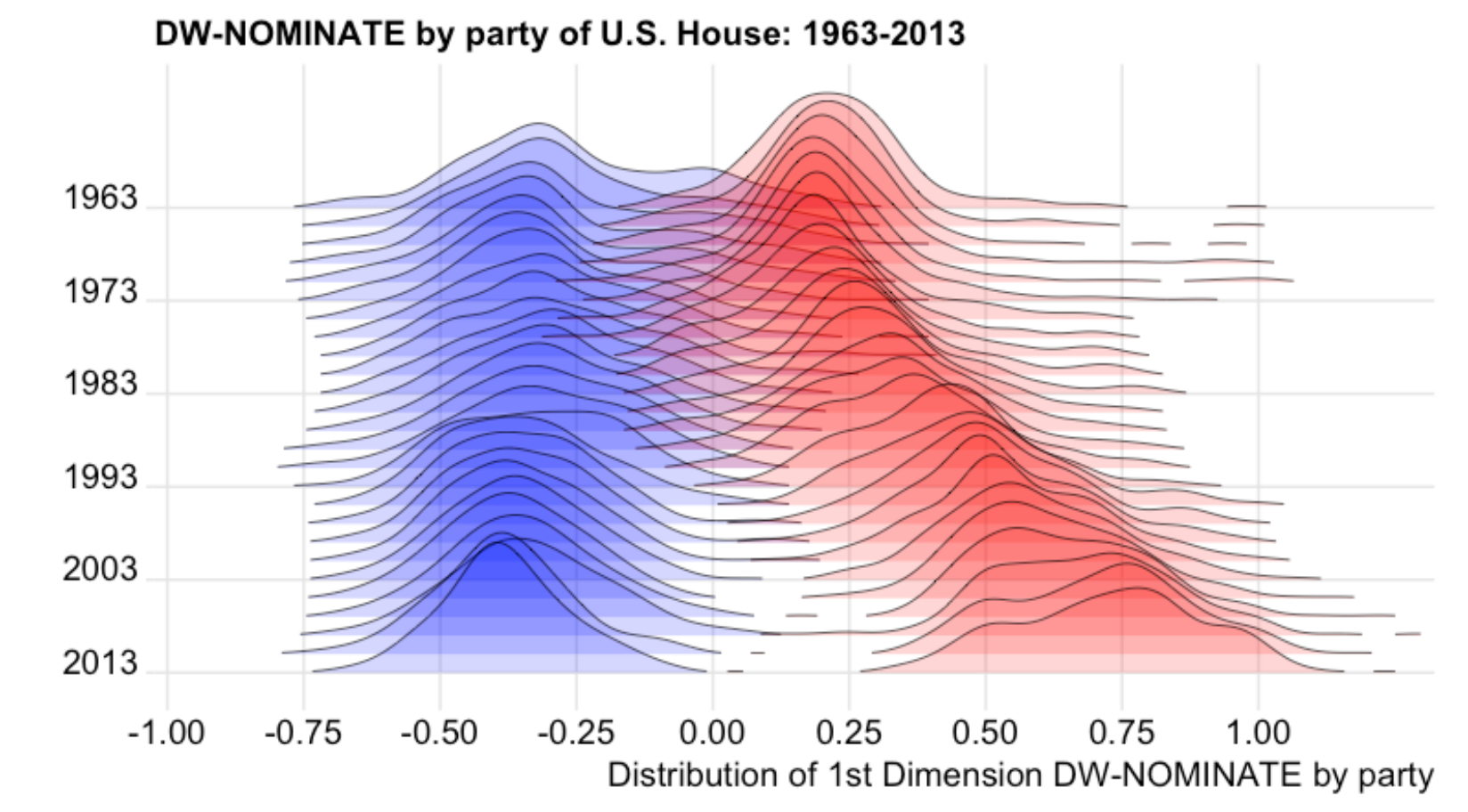
SYSTEMATIC MEASUREMENT



SYSTEMATIC MEASUREMENT



POLICY MEASUREMENT



- DW-NOMINATE (voteview.com)

SYSTEMATIC MEASUREMENT

116th Congress (2019-2021) > Senators

Roster (Graphical List View)

	Name	Party	State	NOMINATE
1.	WARREN, Elizabeth	Democrat	Massachusetts	-0.758
2.	HARRIS, Kamala Devi	Democrat	California	-0.709
3.	BOOKER, Cory Anthony	Democrat	New Jersey	-0.591
4.	SANDERS, Bernard	Independent	Vermont	-0.531
5.	MARKEY, Edward John	Democrat	Massachusetts	-0.513

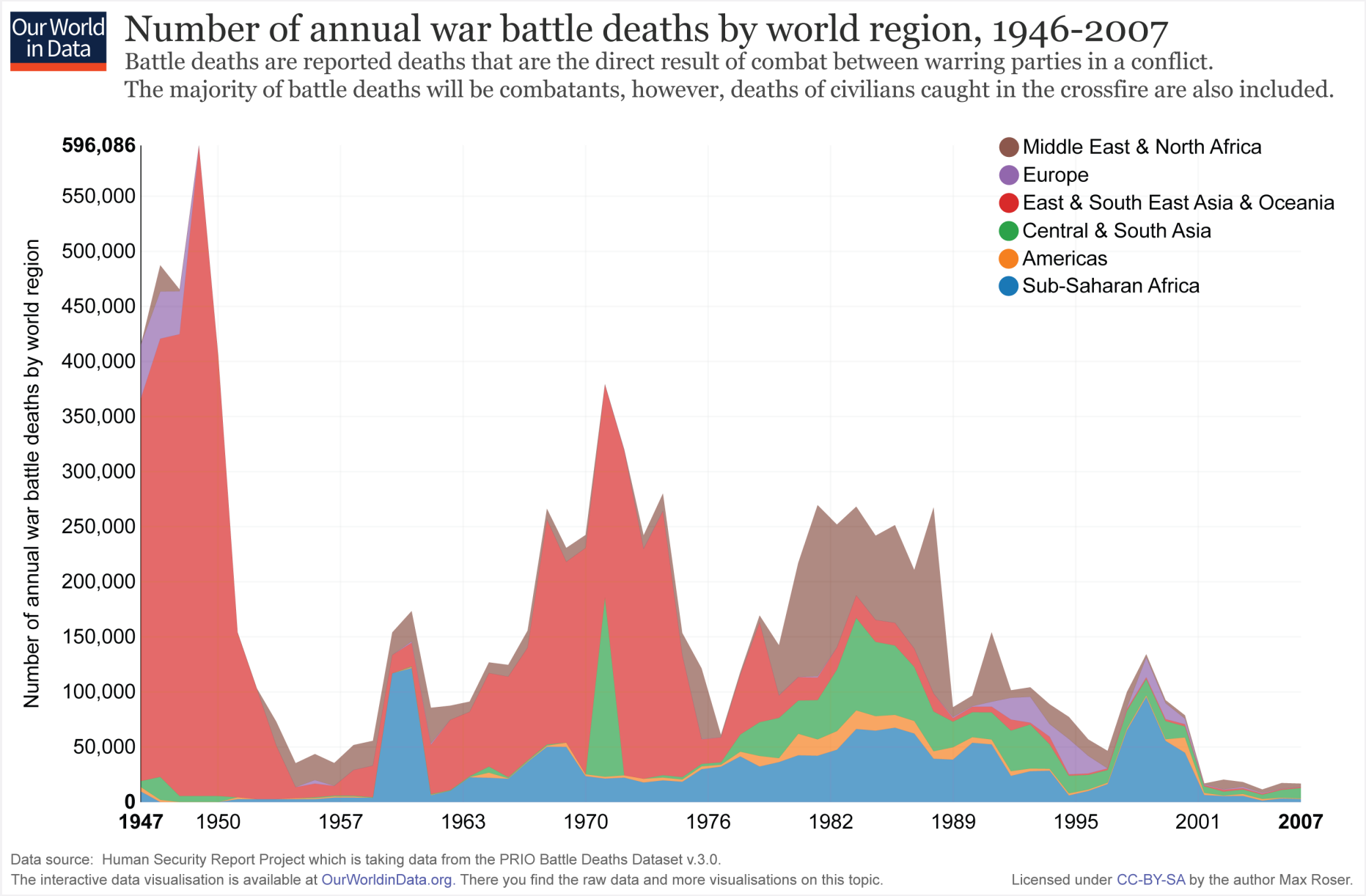
116th Congress (2019-2021) > Senators

Roster (Graphical List View)

	Name	Party	State	NOMINATE
1.	LEE, Mike	Republican	Utah	0.913
2.	PAUL, Rand	Republican	Kentucky	0.878
3.	CRUZ, Rafael Edward (Ted)	Republican	Texas	0.836
4.	BRAUN, Michael	Republican	Indiana	0.8
5.	SASSE, Benjamin Eric	Republican	Nebraska	0.719

- **https://voteview.com/congress/senate/116/text**

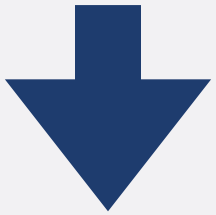
SYSTEMATIC MEASUREMENT



HISTORY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Stories, anecdotes

Thick description, historical writing



Systematic measurement

Explanation, analysis

EXPLANATION & ANALYSIS

- Explanation, not just description
  - Answering "why" questions
    - *Why* does a Congressional committee exist?
    - *Why* do countries with proportional representation have more parties than countries with first-past-the-post?
- Analytical, not normative
  - Understanding what is going on rather than saying what should be going on

OVERVIEW

- Evolution of the study of politics
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- Topics in political science

SCIENCE

- What does it mean to be scientific?

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- “An attempt to identify and test empirical generalizations”

SCIENCE

- What does it mean to be scientific?
- "An attempt to identify and test empirical generalizations"

EMPIRICAL

- Empirical: a statement that can be confirmed or shown false through observation
- Normative: a statement that expresses judgment or belief about what ought to be

SCIENCE

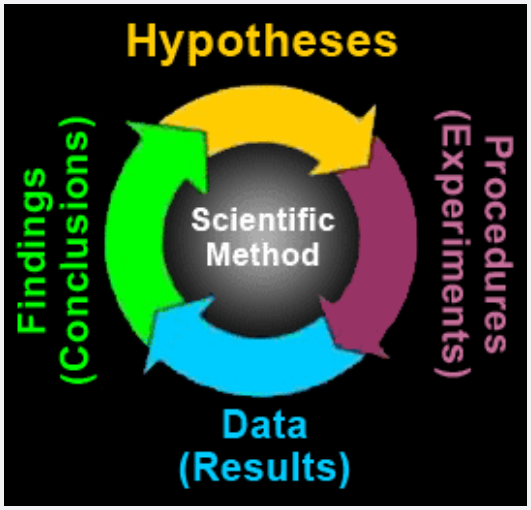
- What does it mean to be scientific?
- "An attempt to identify and test empirical generalizations"

SCIENCE

- What does it mean to be scientific?
- "An attempt to identify and test empirical generalizations"

KEY STEPS IN THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Research design, data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
- Reassess explanation



FORMULATE RESEARCH QUESTION

- Remember: an attempt to identify and test *empirical* generalizations
- What is wrong with these research questions?
  - Was Obama a good president?
  - Should taxes be increased?
  - Is democracy the best form of government?

KEY STEPS IN THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
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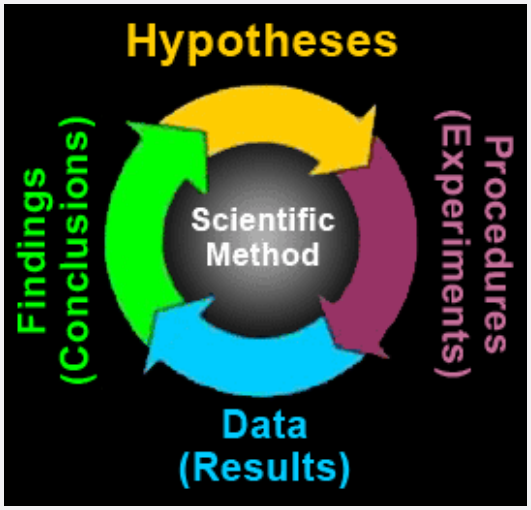
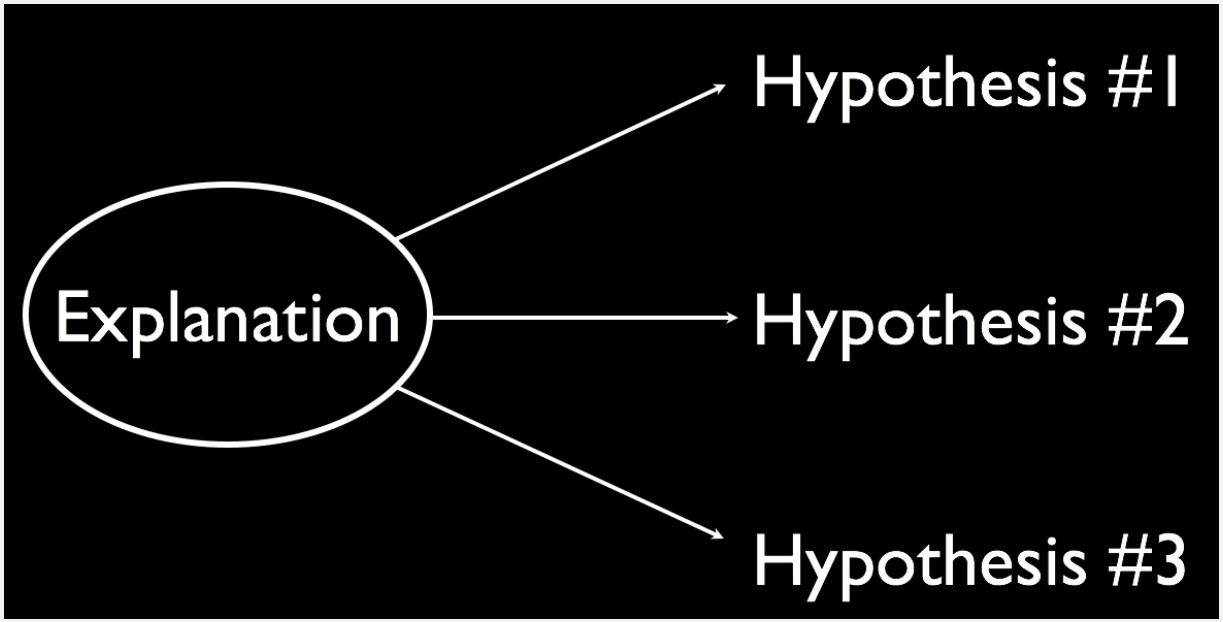


PROPOSE EXPLANATION/ THEORY, HYPOTHESES

- Explanation/Theory: broad statement about how, and why the world works in a specific way
  - Research question: Why do some Americans, but not others, think Obama was a good president?
  - Explanation/Theory: Approval of Obama depends on how well voters' did economically during his presidency
- Hypotheses: empirically testable statement that follows from a theory

PROPOSE EXPLANATION/ THEORY, HYPOTHESES

- Explanation/Theory: Approval of Obama depends on how well voters' did economically during his presidency

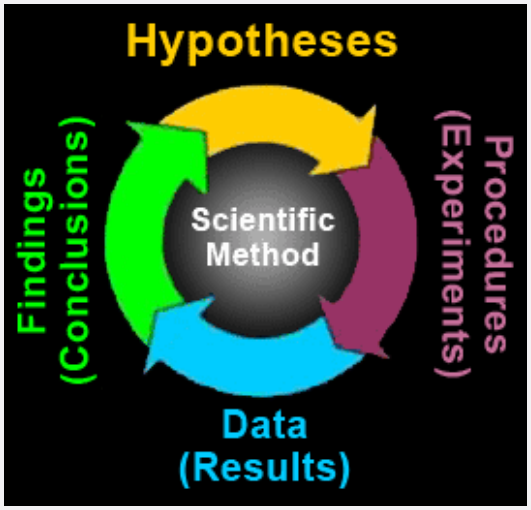


PROPOSE EXPLANATION/ THEORY, HYPOTHESES

- Hypotheses: *Empirically testable* statements that follows from a theory
  - Hypothesis 1: Voters whose income grew between 2008 and 2016 are more likely to think that Obama was a good President
  - Hypothesis 2: Voters who lost their job at any point between 2008 and 2016 are less likely to think that Obama was a good President

KEY STEPS IN THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
- Reassess explanation



DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

- **What kind of data could we collect to test our hypotheses?**

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

- What kind of data could we collect to test our hypotheses?
  - Survey

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

- What kind of data could we collect to test our hypotheses?
  - Survey
  - Need information on:
    - Did respondents think Obama was a good president?
    - Income in 2008 and 2016
    - Unemployed between 2008 and 2016, yes or no?

KEY STEPS IN THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
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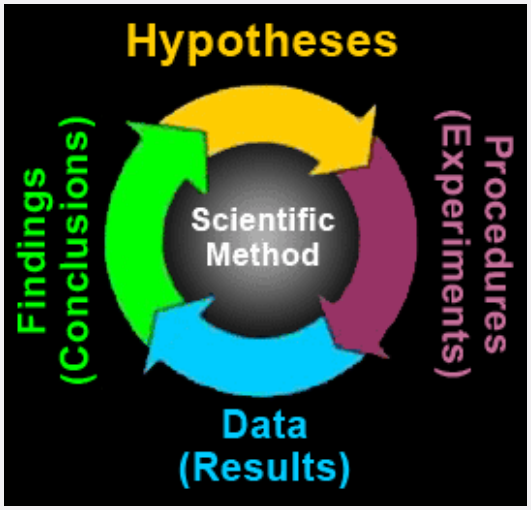

USE DATA TO EVALUATE HYPOTHESES

- Hypothesis 1: Voters whose income grew between 2008 and 2016 are more likely to think that Obama was a good President
  - Use data to decide if true or false
- Hypothesis 2: Voters who lost their job at any point between 2008 and 2016 are less likely to think that Obama was a good President
  - Use data to decide if true or false

KEY STEPS IN THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
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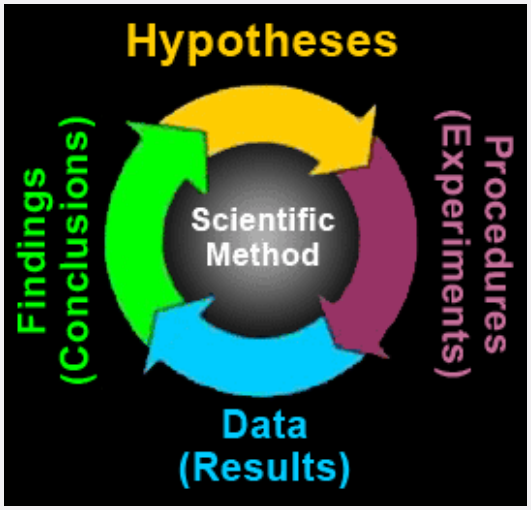

REASSESS EXPLANATION

- Did our explanation/theory find support?
  - Explanation/Theory: Approval of Obama depends on how well voters' did economically during his presidency
- Yes/no/partly?

KEY STEPS IN THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
- Reassess explanation