Doing Politics Research

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Final paper

- Review the existing work

- Motivate your research; explain why it's interesting

- Work with data (You have to have a datset by now)

Paper outline

- Statem your research question (and say why it matters)

- Introduction and background

- Data description + methods

- Results

- Discussion and conclusion

Last time

- We asked: is age related to ideology?
- Different ways to show what you found
    - Correlation
    - Regression
    - Data visualization

Remember: always start with a **question**

Literature review

- Summarize "what we know"

- What questions are still open?

- What questions are hard to answer?

- Did the literature focus on the most interesting outcomes?

- Are two strands of literature appraoching the same subject differently?

Describe what has been done. (But you're allowed to have an opinion.)

Research design

- What do you expect to find? Why?

- Did someone else report the same findings?

- What would you do in an ideal world? (Imagine no constraints…)

Analysis

- Where did the data come from?

- Who are the subjects?

- Strengths / weaknesses of the dataset

- Describe what you found

- If you have a chart, explain in the text what you are showing

- Inconclusive answer? That's fine

- Speak about limitations

Sidenote - juggling all the terms

How do we describe the data objects? Sometimes different words mean the same thing…

You will see people referring to model **inputs** as:

- Dependent variables
- Regressors
- Right-hand side variables
- Explanatory variables
- Independent variables
- Covariates
- Correlates

What you are explaining is the **outcome** variable (= dependent variable)

Example: physical strength and political views

- A paper on bicep size and political attitudes came out recently

- Before you know the results, tell me your priors

- Are stronger men more likely to favor or oppose redistribution?

Physical strength and political views

- Physically strong low-SES men more likely to support redistribution of income

- What we want to know: does the paper state that *stronger/weaker men are more/less likely to believe X on average* or does it jump to a stronger language?

- Opinions do not cause greater muscle mass, so at least directionally the link *could* be plausible.

Passage from the study

"Our results *demonstrate* that physically weak males are more reluctant than physically strong males to assert their self-interest" [emphasis added]

You can see comments form Gelman.

Paper: Upper-Body Strength Regulates Men's Assertion of Self-Interest Over Economic Redistribution

Discussion

- Nobody was asked to work out, so this not an experiment with exogenous variation in strength.

- Are you comfortable with the assumption that measurement did not have an impact on the dependent variable (political opinions)?

- When you ask a person to measure their upper body, are you just "collecting data"?

Do you think procedures matter? "In the U.S. and Argentina, the study relied on college students measuring college students' biceps while in Denmark "a protocol was devised and presented to the subjects over the internet instructing them on how to measure their biceps correctly.""

Book time with me

Sign up at:

https://jz-nyu.youcanbook.me/

- Monday / Friday afternoon
- Thursday early morning
- (If you have a conflict, email me)
- Give me 24-hour notice