Polimetrics

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In preparation for a single seminar class of two hours for advanced undergraduate students on the topic: "What is quantitative political science?", a small number of readings need to be found. On 12 November 2012 an email was sent to the POLMETH mailinglist with a request for suggestions in addition to perhaps King (1991) – this note summarizes the responses.

A useful starting point is the course syllabus by Chris Achen and Arlene Saxonhouse,[1] "The History of Political Science" from 2001.[2] This includes for example a reference to Gosnell (1933), a very accessible paper that is remarkably current even 80 years later on a number of applications of statistics in political science and their respective, primarily measurement-related, concerns. The rest of the syllabus provides more on ideologies and theoretical approaches in political science, and is thus slightly less relevant to this focus on purely the quantitative side of political science, but provides nevertheless an excellent list of readings on the history of political science. Further suggestions include Mahoney and Goertz (2006) and Goertz and Mahoney (2012).[3]

The development of quantitative political science has in recent decades centered around the political methodology section of the American Political Science Association, and the section's journal *Political Analysis*. A brief and amusing history of the early developments of these can be found in Jackson (2012).[4] Franklin (2008) provides a slightly more extensive overview of this history, including more historical background and less focus on the early years. Sigelman (2006) provides another overview of the increase in the use of quantitative methods in published political science research, this time focusing on *American Political Science Review*.[5]

The term "quantitative political science" is of course unclear and perhaps inappropriate.[6] I would be inclined to follow the analogy of econometrics, which could be roughly defined as the application of mathematics and statistics to economic theory – "The Econometric Society is an international society for the advancement of economic theory in its relation to statistics

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[1] http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/moynihan/cqrm/SaxonhouseAchensyllabus.doc, suggested by Robert Franzese.

[2] Another suggested syllabus entry is the first lecture on Peter Hall's "Methods of Political Analysis", which starts with an overview of the evolution of the discipline (http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~phall/Research/Gov2009.pdf), suggested by Ryan Moore.

[3] Suggested by Neal Beck. He further adds: "Check out a piece by Chris Achen in the old Political Methodology (if you can find!)" – alas, I could not.

[4] Suggested by Jeff Gill and Philip Schrodt.

[5] Suggested by Michael Ward.

[6] Furthermore, Paul Gronke is of course right to point out that a proper history of quantitative political science is probably hard to find, since this history is closely intertwined with the application of quantitative methods to social sciences in general and to related disciplines. He suggests looking at "the general transformation in the social sciences pre and post WWII. Then you could read some of the classic 'hits' ", suggesting "Dahl/Bay debate over behavioralism, Converse/Key over the individual voter, Green and Shapiro selections on rational choice;" Ricci (1987); Almond (1989); Dryzek and Leonard (1988).

and mathematics."[7] "Polimetrics" would then be both the application of statistical models in empirical analysis as well as the use of mathematical models in theory formation.[8] For the latter, a useful introduction is provided by Schrodt (2001), which clearly explains and provides examples of the use of mathematical theoretical models in political science.[9]

Finally, Rice (1928) appears very interesting, but I have no access to this book, nor to Gelman (2009)[10] and the same holds for the article by Gow (1985).[11] I can presumably blame cutbacks and the Irish economy.

So what do I prescribe for those undergraduate students? I'll settle on having them read Gosnell (1933) and Schrodt (2001), as well as an example working paper of my own that uses the EITM[12] approach. For interested students, I will also recommend the highly readable Salsburg (2002).

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[7] http://www.econometricsociety.org/ – see Tintner (1953) for an overview of earlier definitions of econometrics.

[8] "Political arithmetick" has also been proposed earlier, see references in Tintner (1953, 32).

[9] Suggested by Elizabeth Miller.

[10] Suggested by Paul Musgrave.

[11] Suggested by Simon Jackman.

[12] http://eitm.sowi.uni-mannheim.de/english/about/what_is_eitm/index.html

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Additional historical references

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