# Some General Comments on the Group Projects

Spring 2012

# Most Important

- I know the projects were a typical MIT fire hose experience
- The grading reflects that

# Comment topics

- Writing
- Interpreting Coefficients
- Formatting the paper
- Organization of data analysis paper
- Presenting regression and other statistical results in tables
- Do-files

# Writing

- Writing must be logical and free of *all* grammatical and typographical errors
- Write economically.

# Interpreting Coefficients

- The most basic interpretation point: $\beta = \dfrac{\partial Y}{\partial X}$
- But, that's only the beginning
  - Always keep track of units and scale
  - Aids to dealing with different units
    - Rescale everything to the 0-1 interval
    - Run a standardize regression
    - Multiply the coefficient by the standard deviation of X
    - If appropriate, convert everything to logs
- Remember, it is rare for *any* regression coefficient to predict a knock-your-socks-off effect

# Formatting the paper

- I am serious about you following a style book/sheet
  - Turabian's style manual
  - American Political Science Association style manual:

  - Always use author-date citation system
  - Put figures and tables at back of paper.
  - Number figures and tables consecutively

# Organization of a Data Analysis Paper

- Think inverted pyramid
  - Describe the data
    - Report means, standard deviations, min, and max of all variables
    - Show bivariate scatterplots of important relationships between the dependent variable and independent variables
    - Run regression and report regression coefficients
      - Interpret regression coefficients
      - Discuss goodness-of-fit

# Presenting Regression and Other Statistical Results in Tables

- Leaf through the American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, and Journal of Politics to see what tables look like.

# Descriptive statistics

- Usually not in journal articles, but in conference papers and in online supplemental materials to journal articles

| Variable name* | Mean | s.d. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

*Not the name of the variable in the codebook (e.g., V4067a), but a short descriptive name (e.g., number of parties in the legislature).

7cbhYbh fYa cj YX Xi Y hc Vcdmf][ \h fYghf]Wh]cbg"

.

Hc j ]Yk U hUV Y ZYUhi f]b[ h\Y gi a a Ufm ghUh]gh]Wg cb h\Y V\UfUWh Yf]gh]Wg cZ gi ]WXY hYffcf]ghg UbX h\Y]f UhhUW gž [c hc HUV Y % cZ ˝9Wcbca ]W 7cbX]h]cbg UbX h\Y E i U`]hm cZ Gi ]WXY HYffcf]ga ˝ Vm 9ZfU]a 6Yba Y`YVX ž 7`Ui XY 6YffYV]ž UbX 9ghY ZUb : "? `cf" \hd.##k k k "bVYf"cf[ #dUdYfg#k %*' &$

# Regression results

| Coefficient | (1) | (2) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variable 1 | Coeff.<br>(s.e.) | Coeff.<br>(s.e.) |
| Variable 2 | Coeff<br>(s.e.) | |
| Etc. | | |
| N | | |
| $R^2$ | | |
| RMSE | | |

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To view a table illustrating the effect of economic conditions on the outcomes of suicide attacks, go to Table 4 of "Economic Conditions and the Quality of Suicide Terrorism" by Efraim Benmelech, Claude Berrebi, and Estefan F. Klor.

http://www.nber.org/papers/w16320

# Do-files

- Carefully document your do-files so that your TA and professor can figure out what you're doing.

- Label each section of the do-file according to what it produces (e.g., figure1.do, table1.do)

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