Measurement of Human Rights Violations (4 units)
## Instructor: Patrick Ball
http://hrvd.org/Demog260

Introduction

This class examines how human rights projects collect, code, store, analyze, and make inferences using quantitative data about atrocities. We will refer to examples from human rights data projects conducted by groups in El Salvador, Sri Lanka, and Kosovo. We will look at the measurement of mass killing and genocide, torture, illegal detention, and forced migration, and we will talk about ways human rights groups have created statistical human rights dossiers on individual and institutional perpetrators. We will pay special attention to how truth commissions use quantitative data, including examples from commissions in Haiti, South Africa, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, and Perú.

Throughout the course, we will discuss the relevance and impact of quantitative reasoning and data on human rights arguments. We will learn how to gather and analyze data that can support -- or reject -- claims about how and why violations have occurred. Each class session will discuss one or more human rights project that used statistics to shape a political debate. For example, the graph below was introduced as expert evidence in the trial of Slobodan Milošević at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Figure 2: Estimated total refugee migration and killings over time
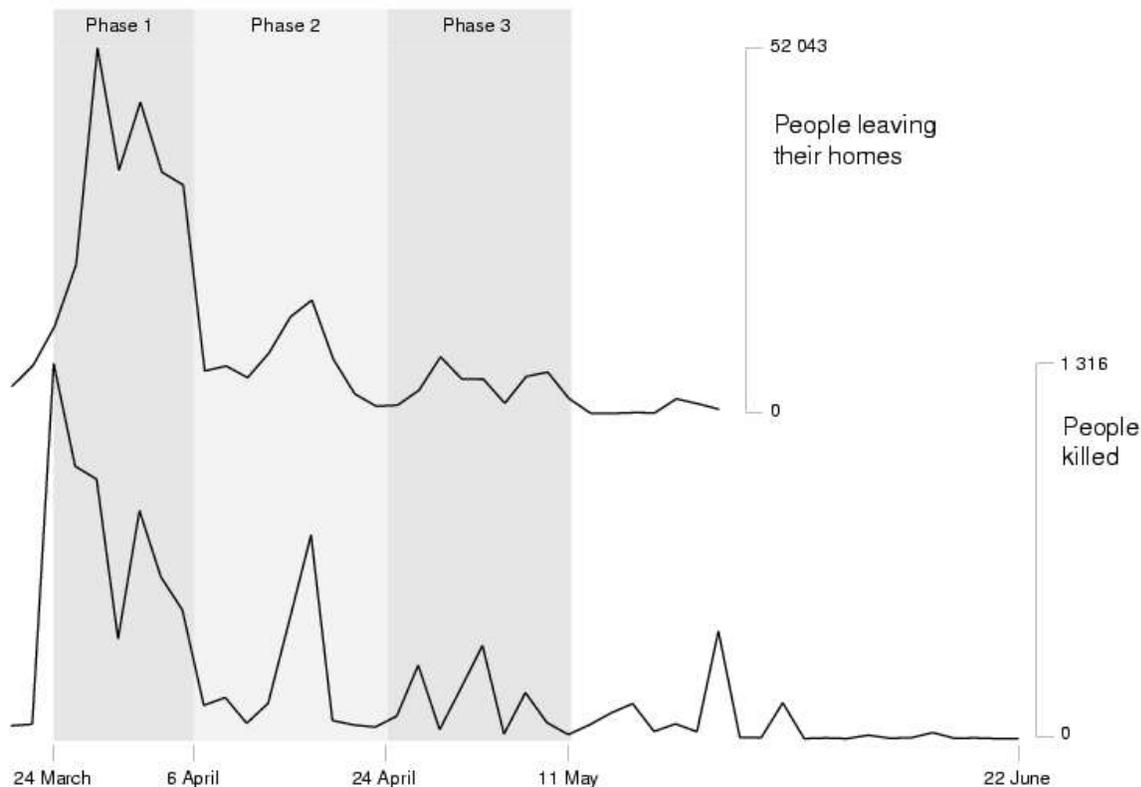
We will learn the following concrete skills:

how to gather data from qualitative sources, administrative records, and pre-existing databases for human rights analysis;

how to design relational databases appropriate for human rights analysis;

how to 'code data' ; in this sense, 'code' means to apply a system of definitions in order to transform qualitative data into quantitative data;

how to test the quality of coding (inter-rater reliability), to search for anomalous data which may indicate errors, to to test the results for sensitivity to specific conditions;

how to manage multiple reports of the same events within a data source, and among various data sources;

how to design analysis using descriptive statistics;

how to calculate multiple-systems estimates and compute variance;

how to integrate quantitative findings into substantive human rights arguments.

Basics

Instructor	Patrick Ball
Lectures	9-12 AM Mondays, location TBD
Email	`pball@demog.berkeley.edu`
Office hours	1-3 PM Mondays or by appointment, location TBD
Webpage	`http://hrvd.org/Demog260`
Lectures	Instructor will deliver 14 lectures during the semester. The lecture content is shown below.
Lab sessions	Two will be organized early in the semester; others as needed to review specific programming issues.
Grading	Three homework assignments (10% each), class participation (20%), 1 final project (40%), and group evaluation (10%). Final grades remain at the discretion of the instructor.
Class participation	Each student will be required to post *at least* one question or answer each week on the class electronic bulletin board (at the webpage above). We will generate a lively discussion of the ideas and techniques in which all can participate.
Final project	The final project will be an original research effort performed in a group of 3-5 students. The research will involve designing a controlled vocabulary and a database; coding qualitative information into quantitative formats; controlling internal duplication; and conducting quantitative analysis of the resulting data. The final result will be a technical report and a technical presentation to be given during class on Week 15.

Group evaluation	Peer evaluations are a central part of science, from job applications to publication and tenure review. After completing the final project, students will be asked to write evaluations of their colleagues in the group project. The purpose of these evaluations is to share the team experience with the instructor. The instructor will weigh the evaluations and assign each student an overall score for group participation.
Course reader	A few readings are suggested below. The course reader will be available by the first week of class.
Homework	There will be three brief homework assignments in the form of programming problem sets.

Prerequisites

Graduate standing or permission of the instructor.

There is no formal programming or statistics prerequisite, although some experience in either or both will make some aspects of the course easier. This class is primarily about creating, manipulating, testing, and analyzing data, so any programming or statistical experience you may have will help learn these techniques. In the group project, you'll have an opportunity to partner with others who will complement your skills.

You need to be comfortable in the operating system you prefer (linux [or some other unix], Macintosh, or Microsoft Windows). That means you need to understand directories, copying and moving files, and installing new software. You need to know a bit about troubleshooting problems with your computer, and you need to know how to edit a text file (e.g., by using notepad in Windows).

In terms of programming skills, you need to have some *minimum* prior experience, in some computer language.[1] I'll show you how to write computer code that does all the things you'll be expected to do in homework.

Readings

(selection will be made from these publications as the course demands)

Who Did What to Whom? Planning and Implementing a Large-Scale Human Rights Data Project, Patrick Ball (AAAS, 1996)
Universal Human Rights, in theory and practice, Jack Donnelly (Cornell, 2002)
The Visual Display of Quantitative Information, Edward Tufte (Graphics Press, 1992)
Discrete Multivariate Analysis, Yvonne Bishop, Steven Fienberg, and Paul Holland (MIT, 1975)
State Violence in Guatemala, Patrick Ball, Paul Kobrak, and Herbert Spirer (AAAS, 1999)
Memory of Silence, conclusions and recommendations of the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (UNOPS 1999)

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1   You might – or might not -- know one or more of the following languages: Basic, C/C++, bash, VisualBasic, SAS, Ruby, perl, java, S/S+/R, or even Microsoft FoxPro or Access; it doesn't matter that much, as long as you're eager to learn more about how to talk to data.

Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for South Africa (Jutta, 1998)
Making the Case, ed. by Patrick Ball, Herbert F. Spirer, and Louise Spirer (AAAS, 2000)

Online readings on human rights, exploratory and descriptive statistics, multiple systems analysis, and other topics, will be announced on the class website.

Course schedule

Week	Topic	Detail	Readings, Homework & Project
1	Introduction and Theory	Origins of human rights Measurement: civil and political, not ESCRs human rights history What are NGOs? truth commissions; HRNGO history What human rights groups **do** Relevance to HR questions & methods: it's about being relevant, not about being clever Purpose of the course: measuring HR violations in ways that make sense to the clients. Three objectives of quantitative HR work "Who did what to whom" -- the basic vocabulary of human rights data	Basic history readings (website, Donnelly)
2	Units of analysis, data models, and database design. Part 1	**Example**: The International Center for Human Rights Research (CIIDH) in Guatemala Basic ideas of normalization: thinking about the "shape" of data using SQL to create, insert, delete records	*State Violence,* SQL readings
3	Databases , Part 2	**Example**: CIIDH, continued Joins and simple summaries Wrapping SQL in Python exercises	*State Violence* Project groups formed
4	Coding: Transforming narratives into countable units	**Example:** The Human Rights Documentation Coalition, Sri Lanka Purpose & principles	Homework 1: database design Coding readings

Week	Topic	Detail	Readings, Homework & Project
5	Why is coding scientific?	**Example**: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Sierra Leone Inter-rater reliability measures kaplan's tao generalizing tao to *n* raters exercises	TRC-SL *Report* selections, IRR readings Project planning: country and database choices due
6	Multiple reporting & matching (part 1)	**Example**: Kosovo sources (subsections of the material will be chosen according to class interest) internal matching within a system [reporting density] reporting bias !reporting density matching with implicit rules by multiple coders, measuring agreement parallel vs. serial matching	ICTY Report, Appendix 1 Homework 2: IRR exercises
7	Descriptive statistics	**Example**: TRC – South Africa purpose dimensions (time, space, victim types, perpetrator types, types of violations, aggregation "shape" of aggregated data "shape" of interpretation limits of convenience data examples	TRC-SA chapters Descriptive & exploratory statistics readings
8	Sanity checking: how to look for errors	**Example**: Guatemalan case studies weird dimensions in data analysis as a sanity check building tests for programming errors examples	Descriptive & exploratory statistics readings, part 2
9	Multiple reporting and matching (part 2): multiple samples	**Example**: Kosovo/ICTY report Matching IRR in matching coder error Source and judgment layers	ICTY report, App. A Homework 3: descriptives & testing exercises
10	Multiple systems estimation	**Example**: TRC - Perú mathematical statistical basis for MSE (from Bishop, Fienberg, and Holland) *Guest lecturer possible*	Perú and ICTY reports Log-linear modeling readings

Week	Topic	Detail	Readings, Homework & Project
11	Variance and Sensitivity	**Example**: Kosovo/ICTY report error simulation date distribution transit time matching variance jackknifing a long process comment on jackknifing and multiple-systems-estimation complexities	Work on projects (project specific readings to be assigned)
12	"Found data"	**Examples**: two or three of the following examples will be chosen, according to interest Salvadoran career data Timorese gravesite survey Chadian prison documents Albanian border records Kosovar exhumation records Haitian morgue data	Work on projects
13	Other methods	**Examples:** two or three of the following examples will be chosen, according to interest Kosovo/ICTY missing dates Imputation allocation network analysis Geographic Information Systems population surveys (e.g., work by Physicians for Human Rights)	Work on projects
14	On modesty	How to write about statistical findings: limiting claims to validity and generalization from data of this kind measurement vs. indicators hypothesis, argument, and forms of conclusion concluding remarks	Work on projects
15	Conclusion	Group presentations	