Seminar 2 10.00-11.00

1. What does it mean to say that causal inference is in the head?

2. Why is balancing covariates important?

3. Post-stratification. How does it work?

4. Discuss RCTs in more depth.

5. Why are RCTs so important? Why not parity of esteem for other methods?

6. Conditions for external validity of RCTs.

7. Replication and RCTs/observational studies.

8. Explain the equation (the one with epsilon) in lecture 2 part 3.

9. RCTs and ethics.

10. Effects of causes/ causes of effects – is the latter more important for qualitative research?

Seminar 2 11.00-12.00

1. What is post-stratification?

2. Do we have to know all the things we should condition on?

3. What do covariates do?

4. Re-randomisation, why can't you do it?

5. Why is the null hypothesis = 0 unlikely to be literally true?

6. Are RCTs better than methodologically robust observational studies?

7. What is regression to the mean?

8. Are RCTs ethical?

9. Is epistemological pluralism important?

10. How does external validity apply to observational studies?

11. Social mechanism/causal effect – what is the difference?

12. How can we ever identify the causes of very complex things like civil wars?

13. What is the degrees of freedom problem?

Seminar 2 12.00-13.00

1. What is meant by covariance?

2. When are RCTs useful given that we never know all the relevant variables?

3. Can we know a priori that covariates (which we want to balance) affect the outcome?

4. Do large sample sizes increase the usefulness of RCTs?

5. What's the target? Balance and the population.

6. Confounders that are not part of the known background conditions. How do we deal with them? (different graders/observers).

7. Is the Cartwright/Deaton/Worrall argument about randomization nonsense?

8. Are RCTs of any relevance to sociology?

9. Natural experiments: what about the draft dodgers? (Some like it Hot)

10. How can we know the sequence/ magnitude of effects when we are dealing with multiple causes?

11. Descriptive research versus research focusing on causality – any reading?