DATA ANALYSIS FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE

A FRIENDLY AND PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION

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To my students,
Elena Llaudet

To Christina, Keiji, and Misaki,
Kosuke Imai

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PREFACE

With this book, we hope to make data analysis for the social sciences accessible to everyone. Drawing conclusions from data and being able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of social scientific studies are critical skills that should be available to all. Not only can these skills lead to a job as a data scientist, but they also help us better understand and address important issues and problems facing society.

This book project was born when Elena suggested to Kosuke several ways to make more accessible the materials covered in *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction* (Princeton University Press, 2017; aka QSS). Like QSS, this book teaches the fundamentals of data analysis for social science while analyzing real-world data from published research. This book, however, focuses on a smaller set of essential concepts with an emphasis on reaching students with no prior knowledge of statistics and coding and with minimal background in math. Our goals are to lower the barriers to becoming a data scientist and to share more broadly the excitement of quantitative social science research.

Many people have contributed their knowledge and talents to the production of this book. First and foremost, we would like to thank Kathryn Sargent for the countless hours she spent improving our writing and helping us bring our vision to reality. She has been an integral part of the project from the very beginning, and this book has greatly benefited from her attention to detail, editorial expertise, and good cheer. We are also grateful to all those who have given us feedback, especially our students, early adopters, and reviewers. In particular, we want to thank Alicia Cooperman, Michael Denly, Max Goplerud, Florian Hollenbach, Justin Leinaweaver, Emilee Martichenko, Davi Cordeiro Moreira, Leonid Peisakhin, Sheila Scheuerman, Tyler Simko, Robert Smith, Omar Wasow, and Hye Young You. Our thanks also go to Eric Crahan at Princeton University, who encouraged us to take on this project, and to Bridget Flannery-McCoy and Alena Chekanov, who made sure that the review and production process was as smooth as possible. In addition, Elena would like to offer special thanks to Harvard professor Stephen Ansolabehere for being a constant source of advice, support, and friendship.

Finally, we would like to thank our families and friends for their love and patience throughout this project. Elena thanks her mom, Didi, and brother, Jorge, for always being there for her, despite being on the other side of the Atlantic. She also thanks her friends, especially Bulbul, Baptiste, and Émile, for keeping her fed, sane, and high-spirited during all these years. Kosuke thanks Christina for a lifelong partnership that has made everything, both personal and professional, possible. He also thanks Keiji and Misaki for making sure that their family had many fun moments together, even during the pandemic.

Elena Llaudet and Kosuke Imai
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