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The Department of Methodology is an internationally recognised centre of excellence in research and teaching in the area of social science research methodology. The disciplinary backgrounds of the staff include political science, statistics, sociology, social psychology, anthropology and criminology. The Department coordinates and provides a focus for methodological activities at the School, in particular in the areas of graduate student (and staff) training and of methodological research. The Department is an interdisciplinary group and its primary role is to facilitate collaboration between departments and to provide courses where appropriate. The Department provides methods training to students from across the School. The Department is central to the LSE’s Doctoral Training Partnership scheme.

The Department offers its own MSc and PhD programmes and also provides advanced level courses in methodology for students across the School, in the form of seminars and workshops in research design, quantitative analysis and qualitative methods (see page 4 for further information). Many other departments in the School require students to take Department of Methodology courses as part of their MSc and PhD programme.

The Department of Methodology’s newest frontier is in data science. The new MSc in Applied Social Data Science will train and provide students with core skills in data manipulation and analysis, computer programming, and research design for applications in data science, preparing them for a variety of careers in the private, non-profit and public sectors.

LSE has always been at the forefront of methodological development in the social sciences. With the training in the core social scientific tools of analysis and research offered by the Department of Methodology, coupled with its numerous workshops in other transferable skills such as computer programming and the use of methods-related software, the Department of Methodology ensures that the School’s students and staff have the expertise and training available to maintain the School’s excellence in social scientific research. We also work closely with colleagues in the Departments of Statistics and Mathematics to cover advanced topics, including in the interdisciplinary area of social applications of data science.
AUDREY ALEJANDRO
Assistant Professor of Qualitative Text Analysis (qualitative)
Key research interests: the Commonwealth of Dominica; the Caribbean; agricultural sustainability and resilience; community-based data systems, international cooperation, technical assistance programs; international political sociology, anthropology of knowledge; discourse analysis, reflexivity, methodology of writing, action research, participatory research.

PABLO BARBERÁ
Assistant Professor of Computational Social Science (quantitative)
Key research interests: Social media and elections; comparative electoral behaviour; political polarization and misinformation; social network analysis; text as data methods; ideal point estimation.

KENNETH BENOIT
Professor of Quantitative Social Research Methods (quantitative) (on sabbatical leave in 2018/19)
Key research interests: quantitative text analysis; computational social science; comparative party competition; statistical methodologies for the social sciences.

FLORA CORNISH
Associate Professor in Research Methodology (qualitative) (on sabbatical leave in 2018/19)
Key research interests: community health interventions; HIV prevention; community participation and multi-stakeholder partnerships; the social constitution of intervention success; evidence and evaluation of social interventions; dialogue between grassroots communities and their significant others; pragmatist social science; ethnography; quality/rigour in qualitative research, community response to disasters.

NIMESH DHUNGANA
LSE Fellow in Qualitative Methodology (qualitative)
Key research interests: Development and disaster; social accountability in the global South; rights-based development/humanitarianism; community mobilisation in health sector; participatory governance; qualitative research in aid and disaster context.

DANIELE FANELLI
LSE Fellow in Quantitative Methodology (quantitative)
Key research interests: meta-science; scientometrics; research integrity; bias and misconduct in research; science communication, reproducibility; research policy; empirical philosophy of science.

DAVID HENDRY
Assistant Professor in Research Methodology (quantitative)
Key research interests: laboratory, survey and field experiments; social networks; social pressure; cultural evolution; racial and ethnic politics; survey design; event history analysis.

JONATHAN JACKSON
Professor in Research Methodology, Head of Methodology Department (quantitative)
Key research interests: criminology, legitimacy, trust, punishment, measurement.

ALASDAIR JONES
Assistant Professor in Research Methodology (qualitative)
Key research interests: relationship between built form in cities and social practices; public space; masterplanned developments; public transport; citizenship as experienced in urban settings; sustainable living practices; ethnographic methods; qualitative methods in evaluation.

ELEANOR KNOTT
Assistant Professor in Qualitative Methodology (qualitative)
Key research interests: politics of ethnicity and nationalism; citizenship; democratization; post-Soviet politics (Crimea, Ukraine, Russia, Romania and Moldova); secession and conflict; comparative political ethnography/interpretivism.

JOUNI KUHA
Associate Professor in Statistics and Research Methodology (quantitative)
Key research interests: social statistics; categorical data analysis; measurement; missing values; latent variable modelling; analysis of cross-national survey data.
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For enquiries about: MSc in Applied Social Data Science, Methods Surgery and Workshops, and the Seminar Series.

**KATE SUMMERS**
LSE Fellow in Qualitative Methodology (qualitative)
Key research interests: Poverty, riches and inequality; working age social security policy; welfare reform; sociology of money; qualitative methods.

**JEN TARR**
Assistant Professor in Research Methodology (qualitative)
Key research interests: chronic pain; ethnography, visual and sensory methods; ethnography; qualitative interviewing; qualitative research methodologies; sociology of health.

**CHANA TEEGER**
Assistant Professor in Qualitative Research Methodology (qualitative) (on leave in MT and LT 2018/19)
Key research interests: inequality; race and ethnicity; education; collective memory; culture; transitional justice; elites; research design; in-depth interviewing; ethnography.

**MILENA TSVETKOVA**
Assistant Professor in Quantitative Methods (quantitative)
Key research interests: computational and experimental social science; online experiments; network analysis; social phenomena such as cooperation, contagion and inequality.

**BENJAMIN LAUDERDALE**
Associate Professor in Research Methodology, Deputy Head of Methodology Department (quantitative)
Key research interests: US politics, UK politics, measurement, survey methods, latent variable models; zBayesian methods.

**SONJA MARZI**
LSE Fellow in Qualitative Methodology (qualitative)
Key research interests: Urban Socio-Spatial mobility, Aspirations, Gender and the Right to the City, Place-Making, Urban Youth, Participatory and Qualitative Research Methodologies.

**ELEANOR POWER**
Assistant Professor (quantitative)
Key research interests: social network analysis; ethnography; religion; South Asia; signaling theory; social capital.

**INDRANEEL SIRCAR**
LSE Fellow in Quantitative Methodology (quantitative)
Key research interests: comparative politics; Europeanization; EU enlargement; environmental governance; rule of law; western Balkans; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Serbia.

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Workshops in Advanced Qualitative Research (MY530)

These workshops address advanced problems in qualitative social research. The programme will (a) bring together software developers and researchers, (b) will present examples of researchers who put computer tools to creative use and (c) provide a forum for discussing key papers in qualitative research. The workshop will be a forum for open discussion on philosophical and technical issues that arise in qualitative research practice.

This programme consists of workshop modules at PhD level, offered during MT, LT and ST by research active experts from LSE. Each module focuses on one particular technique or issue for qualitative research. Students are welcome to raise issues or questions from their own research for discussion.

**Topics include:** Research Ethics, Participant Observation, Interviews, Thematic Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Content Analysis, Designing Mixed Method Evaluation Research, and Participatory Research Methods.
Workshops in Advanced Quantitative Analysis (MY560)

MY560 is a series of workshops on advanced topics in quantitative research methodology. These workshops assume a background in quantitative methods at least covering basic statistics, linear and logistic regression. While many of the workshops are part of a series on related topics, each workshop is self-contained, and can be attended without attending prior workshops.

Topics include: design of experiments, questionnaire design, machine learning, matching methods for causal effects, regression discontinuity designs, event history analysis, social network analysis, quantitative text analysis, and Bayesian methods.

Workshops in Applied Analysis Software (MY591)

The workshops in Applied Analysis Software offers targeted training sessions on software used in analytical research, including statistical analysis packages, qualitative analysis software, and tools for text analysis. The workshops are open to all students and staff. Like MY530 and MY560, sign up is exclusively via the LSE’s Training and Development System which opens two weeks before each class takes place. Classes are usually around three hours long and are repeated at least once a term. Classes which are more popular are held twice per term where resources permit and the schedule is published on the MY591 Moodle page around the beginning of each term.

Topics covered usually include: NVIVO, QDA Miner, SPSS, Stata and Wordstat. Occasionally, we may run one-off classes or sessions on Python and R should the demand arise and the resources permit.

Methods Surgery

The Department of Methodology offers a walk-in ‘methods surgery’ weekly during term-time on Thursdays 10am-12pm in the PhD Academy on the 4th floor of the Lionel Robbins Building. Staff and students can drop in for advice on methods-related problems they may have.

Two members of staff, one with a background in quantitative methods and the other in qualitative methods, are present at each session to help with a range of methodological problems.

Please note that entrance is only via the Portugal Street side of the building. The PhD Academy cannot be accessed via the LSE Library.

This service is based on a first-come, first-served policy: no appointment is necessary.

Top tip: If you need methods advice for your dissertation, please ensure you plan this well in advance in the academic year, as the Methods Surgery is available in term time only.

Methods courses for auditing

Students from across the School may audit courses from the following list. Please note that as places are limited, students wishing to audit methodology courses should liaise with Esther Heyhoe, the Graduate Teaching Administrator (e.heyhoe@lse.ac.uk) prior to attending courses. Full and up-to-date details of each course can be viewed on the Timetables pages.

MY400 Fundamentals of Social Science Research Design
MY405 Research Methods for Evaluation in Health, Development and Public Policy
MY421 Qualitative Research Methods
MY427 Qualitative Research with Non-Traditional Data
MY428 Qualitative Text Analysis
MY429 Special Topics in Qualitative Research: Introspection-based Methods in Social Research
MY451 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis
MY452 Applied Regression Analysis
MY454 Applied Statistical Computing using R
MY455 Multivariate Analysis and Measurement
MY456 Survey Methodology
MY457 Causal Inference for Observational and Experimental Studies
MY459 Special Topics in Quantitative Analysis: Quantitative Text Analysis
MY461 Social Network Analysis
MY465 Intermediate Quantitative Analysis
MY470 Computer Programming
MY472 Data for Data Scientists
MSc in Social Research Methods

Central to the Department’s activities is the MSc Social Research Methods, which provides advanced training in core social research methods skills, while simultaneously providing students with the opportunity to develop sophistication in research design and quantitative and qualitative research while maintaining a focus in a social scientific discipline. Students will acquire skills of “practical scholarship” and the ability to design, conduct, analyse and report a social research project.

This programme draws on the range of expertise available within the Department, as well as related academic departments, in order to provide an advanced training in social research methodologies, combined with a focus on one of a number of special areas in the social science. Specialist options are available in: Social Policy, Social Psychology, Sociology, Statistics, Philosophy, Development Studies, Government, Management, Population, and Decision and Policy Sciences.

The syllabus for the MSc goes beyond the ESRC’s requirements for the first year of a 1+3 PhD programme, and it is designed as a training for doctoral research and as a pre-professional training for careers in social research in the public and private sectors.

MSc in Applied Social Data Science

The MSc in Applied Social Data Science provides training in data science with an emphasis on real-world applications to social, economic, and political fields. With the rise of new and big forms of data, and computation and analytics forming ever-increasingly important elements of a wide range of professions. This multi-disciplinary programme provides students with core skills in data manipulation and analysis, computer programming, and research design for applications in data science, preparing them for a variety of careers in the private, non-profit and public sectors.

Students on the MSc programme in Applied Social Data Science take a series of data, programming, and applied quantitative methods courses. They learn to use a variety of programming languages and applications, to create and manipulate large databases, and to think creatively about how to deploy these skills in the context of specific projects. This programme shares core courses with the MSc in Data Science (Department of Statistics), but differs in that its focus is more applied and is specifically designed for students without a formal computing or statistical background.

Students also have the opportunity to choose substantive electives, allowing them to tailor the programme to their particular interests. The programme culminates in a capstone project where students creatively apply the technical skills learned to a project of their own design.
PhD in Social Research Methods

The Department of Methodology welcomes applications to its PhD programme from students with proposals in qualitative and quantitative research, as well as interesting ways of combining them. Candidates should demonstrate a potential for methodological innovation as well as a firm grounding in a substantive area of research. This could involve collecting innovative new data, new analytic techniques, method comparison, evaluation or validation, method critique, applying existing methodology in new contexts, or cost-benefit analysis of methodologies. At the end of the first year, students produce a 10,000 word research proposal, outlining the theoretical and conceptual framework, the aims and methods of the thesis, and defend this proposal before a committee. In second through to the fourth year, students spend more time on independent study under the guidance of a supervisor. This will involve the collection, organisation and analysis of data, and writing up the results. PhD students also contribute to research seminars by presenting papers and joining in the discussions.

Department seminars

The Department of Methodology holds three seminars per term on Thursday afternoons during Michaelmas and Lent Terms. These are open to everyone (including members of the public) and places are given on a strictly first-come, first-served basis.

Where the speaker permits, seminars are recorded for a downloadable podcast.

A sample of previous seminar series titles include:

Documenting atrocities: Using new technologies to uncover crimes against humanity in Myanmar’s Rakhine State
Speaker: Laura Haigh, Amnesty International.

Does online activism affect legislative behaviour?
Speaker: Jack Blumenau, Assistant Professor in Political Science and Quantitative Research Methods, UCL.

Speaker: Huseyin Naci, Assistant Professor of Health Policy, LSE.

Trumping Hate on Twitter? Online Hate Speech and White Nationalist Rhetoric in the 2016 US Election Campaign and its Aftermath
Speaker: Joshua A. Tucker, Professor of Data Science, New York University.

Estimating regression models with latent variables: One, three, or two steps?
Speaker: Dr Jouni Kuha, Associate Professor of Statistics and Research Methodology, Department of Methodology and Department of Statistics, LSE.

If you wish to be kept updated with the details of forthcoming seminars, please e-mail methodology.admin@lse.ac.uk with a request to be added to the seminar series mailing list.
Data science seminars

The Data Science Seminar Series runs on alternate weeks from the Department seminars, in the same Thursday slot. Part of an interdisciplinary initiative organised around the Social and Economic Data Science Unit (SEDS), the seminar series includes speakers from around the world on a variety of data science topics focusing on social, economic, political, computational, and statistical applications. SEDS is an inter-departmental research unit jointly run between the Departments of Mathematics, Methodology and Statistics with input from other departments across LSE, and hosted in the Department of Methodology.

For further information on SEDS and its events, please see lse.ac.uk/seds or email seds.admin@lse.ac.uk to request to be added to the data science seminars mailing list. You can also follow SEDS on Twitter @SEDS_LSE.

Topics discussed in the 2017/18 academic year included:

**Electronic FX trading – where Game Theory meets Data Science**
**Speaker:** Roel Oomen, global co-head of electronic FX spot trading, Deutsche Bank.

**How do governments determine policy priorities? Studying development strategies through networked spillovers**
**Speaker:** Dr Omar Guerrero, Said Business School, University of Oxford.

**Modelling Human Behaviour using Mobile Data**
**Speaker:** Mirco Musolesi, reader in Data Science, UCL, and Turing Fellow, the Alan Turing Institute.

**Normalizing Digital Trace Data**
**Speaker:** Andreas Jungherr, Assistant Professor for Social Science Data Collection and Analysis, the University of Konstanz, Germany.

**On Elicitation Complexity**
**Speaker:** Ian Kash, researcher at Microsoft Research in Cambridge, UK.

**Optimal Economic Design through Deep Learning**
**Speaker:** David C. Parkes, Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard University.

If you wish to be kept updated with the details of forthcoming seminars, please e-mail methodology.admin@lse.ac.uk with a request to be added to the seminar series mailing list.
Methodology staff carry out research in a number of disciplines. Below are some examples of current research in the department.

**Seed funded: Measuring community in an urban age**

Alasdair Jones, together with Meg Bartholomew (LSE Cities International Centre), is currently working on this LSE Cities’ seed fund project, which covers the initial phases of a planned multi-year empirical investigation into the social and material dimensions of community belonging.

The notion of ‘community’ is an enduring concern both in urban studies and urban planning despite numerous critiques of its utility as a social scientific concept. One methodological domain of sociology that retains particularly strong links with ideas of community is social network analysis (SNA). This is not only conceptual, but also technical, insofar as ‘community detection’ techniques have become a core analytical approach in SNA.

Technical SNA procedures offer one set of empirical approaches for measuring (dimensions of) community. In an increasingly ‘urban age,’ however, and in the era of research impact and evidence-based policy making, a more pressing concern is arguably how do we build community (or, under what sort of conditions is a sense of community for urban dwellers likely to emerge). This project seeks to provide the research basis for developing a theoretically-informed multi-year study to address one facet of this urban policy problem, namely how to measure community belonging not only in relation to social networks (or connections between people) but also as a function of material-institutional embeddedness (or connections to physical and institutional components of ‘place’ or neighbourhood).

To establish the basis for this larger multi-year study, the research supported by the LSE Cities seed fund will comprise rigorous and highly structured reviews of three interrelated sets of literature pertaining to the wider proposal described above. The first two sets of literature are more substantive. The first review will focus on gathering and thematically synthesising existing studies that have employed an understanding of social and/or infrastructural networks to understand issues related to community and belonging. This review would be delimited to the broad ‘urban studies’ literature. The second would be concerned with studies that use network approaches to analyse the social (including wellbeing) consequences of different modes of transport in a range of urban settings. The third piece of work would be a ‘methodological review’ (Kennedy 2007), conducted to distil the range of methodological approaches that have been employed to date to analyse neighbourhood-level networks constituted by both ‘soft’ (social) and ‘hard’ (infrastructural/institutional/service-based) networks. This review would include SNA literature from across the social sciences.

This seed-funded research will form the substantive and methodological basis for a larger funding application for the wider study described earlier. By providing a rigorous review of existing network-based studies of urban ‘community’ (and related concepts), and of studies that have emphasised travel behaviour in particular, a much clearer case for the proposed empirical study (and the precise parameters of the gaps in the existing literature) can be provided. Moreover, a research design for this work can be developed that builds on recent methodological developments from across network science.

Alasdair Jones
Paying Attention to Attention: Media Exposure and Opinion Formation in an Age of Information Overload

The project “Paying Attention to Attention: Media Exposure and Opinion Formation in an Age of Information Overload”, funded by a generous grant from the Computational Social Science Initiative of the Volkswagen Foundation, seeks to explore how individuals consume news in the digital era. This project, a joint initiative with Simon Munzert (Hertie School of Governance), Andy Guess (Princeton University), and JungHwan Yang (University of Illinois), will combine a longitudinal survey study in Germany and the U.S. with web tracking data, relying on large-scale computational methods, including machine learning and field experimentation, to obtain more granular measures of exposure to political news than any study before. These innovative methods and data sources will improve our understanding of how the new media environment affects news outlets’ incentives to cover political issues, inequalities in citizens’ consumption of political information, and in turn, their political preferences and behaviour.

Pablo Barberá

Pablo Barberá is an Assistant Professor of Computational Social Science in the Methodology Department at the London School of Economics.

He received his PhD in Political Science from New York University in 2015, where he was also a graduate research associate in the Social Media and Political Participation lab and a Moore-Sloan Post-Doctoral Fellow at the NYU Center for Data Science. Pablo’s current research agenda develops new network science and text analysis methods that can provide researchers with the necessary tools to collect and analyse digital trace data. His work explores how social media data can advance our knowledge about key questions related to political and social behaviour.

His broader substantive interest is to understand how the now widespread adoption of social media platforms is transforming different aspects of democratic politics: ideological polarization, politicians’ responsiveness to their constituents, the emergence of social protests, public diplomacy, etc.

Qualitative research methods allow us to investigate grassroots, frontline, and ‘ordinary’ experiences and practices, often revealing how those realities differ from the official, formal, or idealised versions that get a lot of airtime. We study how significant social problems play out, and how they are understood, contested, neglected or tackled, in the interest of positive social change.

Flora Cornish
When we think of “influential” people, we inevitably think of distinguished, prominent individuals who command respect. We expect people to pursue such prominence because we see it as constituting influence and power.

In a study of social relations in rural South India, Eleanor found these expectations to be only partially true. Drawing on both qualitative ethnographic fieldwork and quantitative social network analysis, she found that it was not being known as an influential person, but actually being known as a generous person that was most closely associated with getting the support of others. Further, she found that there was a whole class of people who were not explicitly recognised as influential, but who actually were in terms of their position in the social network. Not surprisingly, this included many women and other marginalised individuals who could not aspire to positions of prominence. Eleanor continues to study how such inequalities play out at this intersection of social support, reputation, and influence.

ELEANOR POWER

Eleanor Power is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Methodology.

She completed her PhD in Anthropology at Stanford University in 2015.

Eleanor is an anthropologist interested in how religious belief, practice, and identity interact with and shape interpersonal relationships. She studies these dynamics through fieldwork conducted in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, primary among which is social network analysis. Her work is informed by signalling theory and the wider scholarship of human behavioural ecology. She is interested in the dynamics of social networks, especially relative to the factors that influence cooperation, competition, trust, and prestige. Prior to joining LSE in 2017, she was an Omidyar Postdoctoral Fellow at the Santa Fe Institute.

"Social data science involves the application of scientific analysis to data from the social, economic, and political world, especially big data, using statistical and computational tools such as machine learning. Our focus is not just on teaching the methods for doing this, but also in a thorough grounding of the social scientific approaches to the research questions we can use such tools to answer."

Kenneth Benoit

Developing models to predict election results

Ben is currently working on several projects related to assessing the consistency of judicial decision-making in different court systems around the world. He is starting a book project on UK public opinion, including developing new methods for measuring the importance of different political issues to voters. He also has a long-standing interest in polling and forecasting methods, including working with YouGov to predict a hung parliament in the 2017 UK general election and 93% of individual parliamentary seats, when nearly every other forecaster expected an enlarged Conservative majority.

Benjamin Lauderdale

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Benjamin Lauderdale

BENJAMIN LAUDERDALE

Benjamin Lauderdale is an Associate Professor of Social Research Methods and an Associate Editor of the American Political Science Review (2016–19).

Ben’s research is focused on the measurement of political preferences from survey, voting, network and text data. Applications of these methods have included citizens, legislators and judges in the US, UK and EU. He received his PhD in Politics from Princeton University in 2010 and joined the Department of Methodology 2011.
The Emergence of Inequality in Social Groups

From small organisations to entire nations and society at large, socioeconomic inequality is one of the most significant problems facing the world today. Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, this four-year project will approach the problem of inequality from a new perspective and with new computational social science methods. An interdisciplinary team of sociologists, computer scientists, and physicists will develop and conduct large-scale controlled experiments online. This method will allow the construction of “artificial societies” comprising dozens of individuals who interact over days or weeks. Manipulating the structure of these multiple parallel worlds will help identify the structural conditions that give rise to inequality and inform policy and managerial interventions that reduce it.

Milena Tsvetkova

MILENA TSVETKOVA

Milena Tsvetkova is an Assistant Professor in Quantitative Research Methodology.

Milena’s research interests lie in the fields of computational and experimental social science. She employs online experiments, network analysis, and agent-based models to study fundamental social phenomena such as cooperation, contagion, segregation, and inequality.

Milena’s current work investigates the structural conditions under which inequality emerges and worsens when individuals interact in large social groups. She is collaborating with computer scientists to combine gamification and citizen science and develop new methods for large-scale social interaction experiments online.

She received her PhD in Sociology from Cornell University.
Data science

Big data is transforming almost every aspect of science, engineering, geography, and medicine, from mapping genes to exploring galaxies. In the study of human affairs, there is an emerging ‘data society’, in which increasingly comprehensive aspects of human behaviour and the economy are quantified through data.

Data science is a discipline concerned with the processes and systems required for extracting knowledge and insight from data sets, which are then translated into meaningful action. This data can come in many forms: it can be structured or unstructured, and its scope and scale can vary dramatically. The theoretical foundations of data science often lie at the intersection between statistics, mathematics and computer science.

In an increasingly data-driven age, governments, organisations and researchers are questioning how to harness the good that can come from responsible use of data while at the same time minimising inherent risks to individuals, groups, and society at large.

By leveraging its position as a world leader in social science research, LSE aims to develop the necessary tools for analysing large data sets and to answer questions regarding how organisations can make well informed data-driven decisions.

With the launch of the Department of Methodology’s new MSc in Applied Social Data Science programme, the department will be at the forefront of equipping students with the knowledge and skills to work in this industry. Methodology has recently recruited new members of staff who specialise in data science to take this initiative forward, who have expertise in computational methods, natural language processing, the analysis of social networks and social media, and machine learning.

For further information on SEDS and its events, please see lse.ac.uk/seds or email seds.admin@lse.ac.uk to request to be added to the data science seminars mailing list. You can also follow SEDS on Twitter @SEDS_LSE.
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