1. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

- **Methodology of most text coding projects: INCORRECT**
  
  **Goal**: Estimating aggregate quantities.
  - Social science is about broad patterns, not idiosyncratic details.

  **(BAD) current practice**: optimize only individual coding accuracy
  
  **Better practice**: Optimize aggregate quantities of interest:
  - Directly assess unbiasedness
  - Some individual errors are irrelevant for unbiasedness
  - Direction of the errors matter!

- **For example, in our application:**
  
  **Goal**: Estimating “% Taunting” (for a Senator, congress, etc)
  
  **BAD practice**: maximize only inter-coder reliability of individual speeches.
  
  **Better practice**: reduce bias of “% Taunting”

  **Details**: Extraordinary difficult task.
  - Weak signal: (e.g., 1 sentence in a 4 page speech)
  - Impossible to automate
  - 31,634 hand-coded speeches, 5% double coded
  - Errors (after coding procedures designed to avoid bias):
    - Unrelated to our quantities of interest (party, time, region)
    - Related to procedural variables (no problem!)
    - Average time used by coders to code each speech
    - Coders’ disagreement on the use of external research

  **Results**: Unbiased estimates (regardless of inter-coder reliability levels)

Partisan Taunting Score:

Using the information about taunting in previous years for each senator, the average taunting of the years and assuming constant variance across Senators:

\[
\text{TauntIndicator}_{\text{sen}, \text{year}} \sim \text{Bernoulli}(\pi_{\text{sen,year}})
\]

\[
\pi_{\text{sen,year}} = \text{TauntingRate}_{\text{sen,year}} + \text{TauntingRate}_{\text{sen,year}}
\]

\[
\text{TauntingRate}_{\text{sen,year}} \sim N(0, 1000)
\]

\[
\text{TauntingRate}_{\text{sen,year}} \sim \sqrt{\text{Unif}(0, 1000)}
\]

2. EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTION

- **Definition of Partisan Taunting**: Explicit and public negative attacks on another political party or its members, usually using vitriolic and derogatory language.

- **Data**:Senate Speeches, 1989 to 2006, 195 Senators \( \approx 162 \) speeches/senator.

- **No evidence for political science (and media) claims about trends**
  
  No evidence of (A) an extraordinarily partisan era, (B) a culture of partisanship, or (C) an inexorable increase in partisan taunting (despite most Senatorial resignation speeches and claims in the literature).

- **Partisan Taunting is a rational behavior**:
  
  - Senators taunt the other party to draw attention to themselves
  - Most prevalent taunters: Senators with the smallest odds of affecting legislation or offending their constituents:
    - Ideological extremists of both parties
    - Minority party members
    - Out party members, especially when the president is unpopular

- **Other Individual incentives exist**:
  
  - Much remaining individual variability in taunting, unexplained by either trends or rational behavior (which we will try to influence below)

3. NORMATIVE CONTRIBUTION

- **Taunting: individually rational but collectively irrational**
  
  - The media picks off the loudest, most extreme voice on any day to appear on the news
  - Each Senator taunts to get their voice above the din
  - Your constituents only hear from you when you make extreme statements
  - Taunting undermines deliberation (spitting on your negotiating partner doesn’t breed trust)

- **Constituents have incomplete information**: they hear from their senator rarely, but more often when taunting and the comments often resonant

- **We will make Senatorial taunting behavior visible (and name names!), to change**:
  
  - One clever taunt may be popular, but what will constituents think if they learn their Senators are spending most of their time taunting rather than trying to solve national problems?
  - Senators who learn they will be ranked on their taunting behavior may change that behavior
  - Perhaps with less taunting, deliberation will increase