

Dr. Ralph Scott

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of Bristol
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Appointments

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of Bristol 2024-27

I am investigating the effect of education on political attitudes and behaviour, through a research fellowship funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Through this work, I aim to generalise the effect over time and across contexts, investigate the mechanisms by which education changes politics in greater depth, and explore the importance of the educational divide in party competition and among political elites.

WISERD Postdoctoral Fellow, Cardiff University 2022-24

Investigating political inequality by protected characteristics, through secondary analysis of longitudinal data, as part of this ESRC-funded research institute. Contribute to the design and analysis of new research as well as dissemination of research outputs to support impact.

British Election Study Research Associate, University of Manchester 2021-24

Contributing to the leading study of political behaviour in Britain. Duties include: preparing primary datasets for publication and archiving; authoring peer-reviewed outputs using the data; supporting the analysis for the BES team's 2019 General Election book; contributing to the design of survey questions; validating voter turnout using Electoral Commission data; and coding open-response survey responses.

Education

University of Manchester, PhD Politics (with no corrections) 2019-2022

Estimating the effect of university education on political values, by applying methods appropriate for causal inference to longitudinal data including the 1970 British Cohort Study and British Election Study Internet Panel. Supervised by Prof Rob Ford and Prof Ed Fieldhouse, examined by Prof Paula Surridge and Dr Rosalind Shorrocks.

Birkbeck College, University of London, MRes Politics (Distinction) 2014-2016

Pursued alongside full-time work, studies included modules on quantitative and qualitative research methods, and public policy. My dissertation was supervised by Prof Rosie Campbell and examined the effect of a MP's localness to their constituency on their vote share, based on an original dataset collated for the project, achieving a mark in the top 1%.

University of Edinburgh, MA Philosophy and Politics (2.1) 2005-2009

Research

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Martin, N., Scott, R., Kappe, R. (2025). 'School Subject Choices in Adolescence Affect Political Party Support'. *West European Politics*. (in press)

Scott, Ralph (2024). 'Why Are Graduates More Socially Liberal?: Estimating the Effect of Higher Education on Political Values Through Variation in University Experience'. *Political Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217241266029>

Comment piece for [UK in a Changing Europe](#).

Fieldhouse, E., Scott, R., Prosser, C., Bailey, J., Mellon, J. (2024). 'Who Lacks Voter Identification? The Electoral Implications of the UK Elections Act 2022'. *Parliamentary Affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsae039>

Comment piece for [The Conversation](#) and the [Constitution Unit](#).

Scott, R., Jones, M. (2024). 'Does Disability Affect Support For Political Parties? Evidence From a Household Longitudinal Study'. *Electoral Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2024.102881>

Comment piece for [WISERD](#).

Mellon, J., Bailey, J., Scott, R., Breckwoldt, J., Miori, M., & Schmedeman, P. (2024). 'Do AIs Know What the Most Important Issue Is? Using Language Models to Code Open-Text Social Survey Responses at Scale'. *Research & Politics*, 11 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20531680241231468>

Received coverage in [THE](#).

Scott, Ralph. (2022). 'Does University Make You More Liberal? Estimating the Within-Individual Effects of Higher Education on Political Values'. *Electoral Studies* 77 (June). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2022.102471>.

Received coverage in [The Times](#), [THE](#), [FT](#), [New York magazine](#), [Spectator](#), [Observer](#), and [Resolution Foundation](#).

UNDER REVIEW

What Did You Learn In School? School Subjects Studied in Adolescence Predict Political Beliefs in Adulthood (with Nicole Martin and Roland Kappe) at *British Journal of Political Science*

WORKING PAPERS

Is Higher Education a New Political Cleavage in Great Britain? Evidence from Original Survey Experiments (with Prof Robert Ford, Prof Maria Sobolewska and Hannah Bunting)

WORK IN PROGRESS

Fitting In or Changing Minds? The Dynamic Effects of Full-Time Study on Political Values (with Jonathan Mellon and Prof Geoffrey Evans)

Does Education Always Liberalise? A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Literature (with Elizabeth Simon)

Teaching

POLI71042: Understanding Political Change (Manchester, PG) 2022-23

Planning, writing and delivering a lecture and seminar to postgraduate students on political values and the rise of issue politics.

POLS0010: Data Analysis (UCL, UG Q-step) 2021-22

Teaching applied statistics in R, including OLS regression and extensions (polynomials, interaction terms), survey methods, multiple imputation and GIS methods to 60 second-year undergraduate students, through weekly seminars, office hours, formative assessment, and first and second marking of summative assessments.

POLI10301: Making Sense of Politics (Manchester, UG) 2020-21

Teaching introductory statistics and their application to social science questions of interest to 80 first-year undergraduate students, through weekly seminars, office hours and feedback on two assessments.

Additional Research Activities

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship (£96,000)

ESRC Studentship Award, Advanced Quantitative Methods enhanced stipend (£66,000)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

University of Bath, PoLIS departmental research seminar	2025
King's College London, King's Policy Institute seminar	2025
Centre for Global Higher Education webinar	2025
PSA Political Psychology Specialist Group seminar	2025
University of Bristol, Political Parties and Organizations Research Group seminar	2024
Demos think-tank staff seminar, London	2024
Keynote presentation at Social Research Association annual conference	2023
University of Manchester, Democracy and Elections seminar	2020, 2022
University of Essex, PhD colloquium	2020

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

American Political Science Association annual meeting	2021, 2023
European Political Studies Association conference	2021, 2022
Midwest Political Studies Association conference	2021
PSA Elections, Public Opinion and Parties conference	2021, 2023, 2024
Political Studies Association conference	2022
APSA Education Politics and Policy spring conference	2022
University of Manchester, Democracy and Elections conference	2020, 2021

METHODS TRAINING

Machine Learning (Oxford Spring School)	2021
Handling Missing Data in the British Cohort Studies (Centre for Longitudinal Studies)	2021
Causal Inference and Experiments in the Social Sciences (Essex Summer School)	2020
Introduction to Understanding Society using R (University of Essex)	2020
Bayesian Data Analysis (University of Exeter Q-step)	2020
Latent Growth Models using R (NCRM and University of Southampton)	2020
Longitudinal Data Analysis (University of Manchester)	2020
Structural Equation and Latent Variable Modelling (University of Manchester)	2020
Regressions in R (UCL Centre for Applied Statistics)	2019

RESEARCH ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

<i>Prof Peter John and the King's Policy Institute, King's College London</i>	2021
Undertaking a rapid review to support the establishment of a new What Works Centre for democratic participation, including a literature review and key informant interviews.	
<i>Prof Ed Fieldhouse and Dr Jon Mellon, University of Manchester</i>	2020
Constructing a dataset for the BES team to examine campaign media effects on voter behaviour in the 2019 General Election, based on information shared by national broadcasters.	

Additional Experience and Service

Reviewer for the UK Economic and Social Research Council, Political Analysis, Comparative Political Studies, British Journal of Political Science, British Journal of Sociology, European Societies, European Journal of Political Research, Political Behavior, Electoral Studies, Higher Education and Australian Journal of Social Issues.

Played a leading role in organising the 2020 University of Manchester Democracy and Elections doctoral conference, which featured a keynote from Prof Anja Neundorff, University of Glasgow.

Non-academic appointments

ITV NEWS

Psephologist (2024-)

Supporting the ITV News Elections team with on-the-night analysis and forecasting for the 2024 UK General Election.

TEACH FIRST

Head of Research and Learning (2017-2019)

Leading a high-performing team of 5 technical experts at the UK's largest single provider of initial teacher training. Responsibility for evaluation of Teach First's programmatic activity, investigatory research to support improvement in performance and evaluating the organisation's impact to develop future strategy.

THE CHALLENGE

Research Manager (2016-2017)

Established a programme of thought leadership research at the UK's leading social integration charity, including design of original surveys and analysis of official statistics.

DEMOS

Head of Citizenship (2014-2016)

Responsible for a think-tank research programme with a focus on citizenship, education and political participation, managing two researchers. Fundraised over £320,000 for research, performed evaluations for the Department for Education and Home Office, presented findings to ministers and senior civil servants and achieved coverage on the World at One, Sky and BBC News, the LA Times, the Sunday Times, the Guardian and the Economist.

Head of Editorial and other roles (2010-2014)